

Tour Dates

May 15 & 16, 2010

2010 Spring Farm Tour Summary Report



Tours by Marina Genn, World Class Dressage Competitor, at the American Academy of Equestrian Sciences, Leesburg

Visitors to Loudoun County enjoyed a free, self-guided driving tour to participating farms and wineries during the Loudoun Spring Farm Tour. The Spring Farm Tour began in 1996 and offers educational programs as well as an overview of farm life in Loudoun. The tour also serves as an introduction to Loudoun's growing season and provides a boost to the Loudoun economy.



Donnie Ulmer of Milcreek Farm serving up local lamb sausage sandwiches at Corcoran Vineyards, Waterford

The magic formula of perfect weather, ample publicity, and great farms resulted in a record-breaking turnout, big sales, and good times. The tour featured 47 venues including a distillery, nurseries and greenhouses, privately owned farms, wineries, country stores, the Purcellville Heritage Days, Leesburg Animal Park, and the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum.



Jerry Dutcher talks alpacas at Butterfly Hill Alpacas, Waterford

Tour feedback, both verbal and from a written survey sent by the Department of Economic Development (DED) May 17, suggests the majority of rural businesses on the tour experienced both good exposure and

financial benefit from the event. Each reported big crowds of visitors enjoying themselves. Several sites provided local music and local foods such of Angus beef, Angus sausage, and grilled lamb sausage sandwiches providing tour-goers the full "eating local" experience!

The high visitation numbers were also reflected in the reported gross sales. Of the 31 farms who responded to the post-event survey, a total of \$93,120.50 was sold. Approximately 73 percent of those reported direct increased sales from event, and 100 percent expressed a desire to be on the tour in the future.

Feedback from visitors was similarly positive and expressed enthusiasm for the farm tour and the variety of activities available on the tour (see page 3).



Sunny's Corner, Middleburg

"... this promotional event by Loudoun County was fantastic, and a great way to spread the word on Western Loudoun's wineries and farms and all it has to offer."

Publicity for the farm came through five channels: *the tour brochure, signage, paid advertising, website and emails, and press coverage.* Of these, the tour brochure was the most widely distributed, having been mailed to 108,000 homes in Loudoun County as an insert in the Piedmont Environmental Council's *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guide.



Weaving demonstrations by Linda Brown at WeatherLea Farm & Vineyard, Lovettsville



A very young competitor at the Sunny's Corner Horse Show in Middleburg

The Department of Economic Development also distributed 5,000 additional copies, made in-house copies to provide the regional libraries and participating farms, and gave Visit Loudoun 2,000 additional addresses for out-of-town requests for the publication. Feedback from two farm participants on the brochure was that their visitors had not seen the Buy Fresh Buy Local Guide, and that they preferred the original farm tour brochure as it was “a good size and more appealing than the Buy Fresh insert.”

Signage included flyers posted at the Leesburg Flower and Garden Show and at several stores in the Leesburg area. Over 100 directional signs were installed the week prior to Farm Tour weekend and removed immediately following the tour. Farm Tour information was also available at the Leesburg and Purcellville farmers markets, as well as the DuPont Circle farmers market. Individual farms were encouraged to publicize their participation in the Spring Farm Tour.



Enjoying strawberry sundae at Wegmeyers Farm in Hamilton



Hayrides at Ballentine Farm, Waterford



Pony rides at Chase Run Stable Hamilton



David Clark of Al's Orchids Greenhouse, Leesburg

Advertising was done in the *Loudoun Times Mirror* (covering Leesburg and Ashburn), *Leesburg Today*, *Purcellville Gazette*, *Middleburg Life*, *Recreation News*, *Flavor Magazine*, *Piedmont Virginian*, *Loudoun Independent*, *Talk Loudoun*, *The Washington Post* (Loudoun Extra Sunday and Thursday sections) as well as the *Weekender* and *Washington Express*. \$5,424 was spent on advertising and all ads were created in-house. One farm expressed that most of their visitors had learned of the farm tour from these outlets.

Brochures were sent to all Loudoun County schools for distribution in teachers' lounges. Tour information was distributed via email to all Loudoun Girl Scout leaders, and website coverage included prominent placement on both www.loudounfarms.org and the Loudoun Farms' Facebook page. There were over 1,000 views of the interactive Google farm tour map, and 6,318 unique visitors to www.loudounfarms.org during the month of May, double the number of website hits in April.

**"GREAT tour this year
... we look forward to
next year ..."**

Visitor Comments sent via email or Facebook

Jennifer Stanley Marsala Had an awesome day on Saturday!

Dezel Quillen I went on Saturday and had a great time! Picture perfect weather, Loudoun Farms, Virginia wine, and ended with a trip to Tusksies. I call that an awesome day :) Thanks

Bonnie Patnoe My mother and I went to Al's Orchid Exchange. They have such a big selection and huge plants on display. We didn't even know something like that was in Leesburg. Very cool, will definitely be going back.

Steve Kelley Enjoyed Chicama Farms - very well run. Enjoyed the eggs and the grass-fed beef. This is the way farming should be... they were our first stop, and they were the best! It was also great seeing the skateboard demo in Purcellville!

Heather Randolph Had a great time picking strawberries at Great Country Farms!

Dorinne Smith Banks Spent Saturday visiting several farms--enjoyed being with alpacas, horses, chickens and pigs. Nothing is more relaxing to me than being out in the countryside on a sunny day! Thanks to all the participating farmers!

Stephanie Ellison Macleod Thank you to the organizers of this event and to all the participating farms who welcomed us everyone please support your Loudoun County farmers and vineyards!!!!

Elaine Dubin I was perusing the Loudoun Farms website and noticed you're looking for comments on the Spring Farm Tour. My husband and I went on Saturday the 15th and had a wonderful time. We're regulars at the Leesburg Farmer's Market, so we go on the farm tour almost every time it's offered to get the chance to see the farms we've been buying from all year. It's a wonderful way to spend a spring day out in the country, I really look forward to every tour. We started at Zephaniah Vineyard and had a delicious lunch from Mill Road Farm. Bill and Chris Hatch were friendly and great to talk to as always. We then visited the Catocin

Creek Distillery, new to the farm tour this year. My husband had a great time learning about their distillery, and we are overjoyed to have another local item added to our shopping list. Their Rye Whiskey makes great Manhattans. Our last stop was Chicama Run where we chatted with Dana, loved her adorable puppies, and fed her chickens. We went home with a cooler of pork, their chicken had already sold out. THANK YOU for providing this tour each season and supporting local agriculture. It means the world to my husband and I, going to the Leesburg market is the highlight of my week, every week.

Meredith Lefforge WE had so much fun at the Spring Farm Tour with the kids this year..PLEASE bring it back next year..it's a tradition in the family now! great job you're doing promoting local farms in such a GORGEOUS county! Glad I am a Loudouner!

Kimberly Federico My two boys and I had a great time on Sunday during the tour. We went to WeatherLea Farms, Chicama Run, and Wegmeyers. We ate lamb sausage sandwiches, toured the new B&B, watched the wool spinners in action, saw a sheep get shorn, and talked with the alpacas (all at WeatherLea). At Chicama Run, we fed chickens, gathered eggs from the chicken coop, saw the Great Pyrenees pups for sale (adorable), crowed at the roosters and admired the big black hog. Gorgeous weather and gorgeous drive out to Wegmeyers to pick strawberries - unfortunately they were all picked out but they handed my boys a coupon for the next time. GREAT WEEKEND!!!!



Dave Daley explains how Loudouners used to live at Edgegrove Farm in Purcellville

...“we were VERY pleased with the turnout, and the sales we had ...”



The horse show at Sunny's Corner, Middleburg

“We had so much fun at the Spring Farm Tour ... it's a tradition in the family now!”

County of Loudoun

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Leigh Ann Kiendl Took the girls to Temple Hall Farm on Saturday and had a great time! Had a wagon ride, fed the horses and goats, a beautiful day!!!

Meredith Thomas A great day out at Heritage Day in the Park in Purcellville! We had it all right there! Awesome local music, fine wine from Loudoun vineyards, farmers market, petting zoo, donkey and pony rides, facepainting, hayrides, letterboxing ... so much fun.

Dawn Childs of Jefferson County WV submitted this poem following the Spring Farm Tour!

Spring is here, the month of May-
support local farms, it's the way.

The Farm Tour, we were there-
enjoyed good wine and farm fresh fare.

It was beautiful, I must say-
the sky royal blue, what a day.

The tour brochure, helpful indeed-
meandering our way, with slow speed.

Great music, good cheer by all-
we will return, many times before fall.



*Planting a pumpkin to take home at
Ballentine Farm, Waterford*



*Wool shop at Butterfly Hill Alpacas
Waterford*



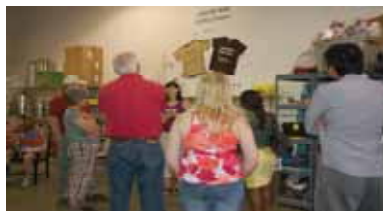
*Sheep shearing at WeatherLea Farm
& Vineyard, Lovettsville*



Chase Run Stable, Purcellville



*Relaxing at Corcoran Vineyards
Waterford*



*Becky Harris gives a tour of Catoctin
Creek Distilling Co., Purcellville*



*A wedding at Loudoun Valley
Vineyards, Waterford*