

Michigan Agritourism Convention 2026



Celebrating 20 Years of Michigan Farm Fun!

March 10-11, 2026

Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn Lodge, Frankenmuth, MI

[MICHIGANFARMFUN.COM/CONVENTION26](https://michiganfarmfun.com/convention26)

Join us for this special celebratory event aimed at recognizing, inspiring, and educating agritourism farmers in Michigan.

Who should attend?

- Michigan Agritourism Members
- Farmers that have retail markets that are open to the public or who offer activities (U-Pick, tasting rooms, educational activities and tours, farm-to-table dining, farm animal visits, farm stays, corn mazes, agritainment, farm weddings and events, school trips, festivals, etc.)
- Farmers that are considering agritourism or expanding their current agritourism operations



Red Barn Market, Lowell



Frankenmuth Convention & Visitors Bureau

Convention Schedule

Tentative Schedule

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026

1 - 5 PM – Exhibitor Registration and Set up
3 - 5 PM – Attendee Registration Booth Open

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

6:30 AM - 8 AM – Registration and Breakfast
7:30 AM - 2 PM – Exhibit Booths Open
8 AM - 10:30 AM – Opening Program
10:30 AM - 11:15 AM – Morning Break/Exhibitor Visits
11:15 AM - 12:45 PM – Mid-morning Program
12:45 PM - 2:15 PM – Lunch and Exhibitor Visits
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM – Off-site Tours
6:30 PM – Bavarian Inn Dinner

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026

6:30 AM - 8 AM – Breakfast
7:30 AM - 1:30 PM – Exhibit Booths Open
8 AM - 10:30 AM – Morning Program
10:30 AM - 11:15 PM – Morning Break/Exhibitor Visits
11:15 AM -12:30 PM – Break-out Sessions
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM – Lunch and Exhibitor Visits
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM –Keynote Address
3 PM - Convention Ends

Convention Highlights

- A look back at the last 20 years of agritourism in Michigan and recognizing the many people that have been supporting this industry for the past two decades.
- Practical education on important issues that are relevant to agritourism farmers from local, state and national experts.
- Information on the new Michigan Agritourism Toolkit.
- Networking opportunities to connect with other agritourism farmers and supportive partners.
- Agritourism Trade Show.
- Inspiring farmer presentations and motivational speakers.
- Farm tours and hands-on workshops.



WILLKOMMEN.

In German, it means welcome, an offer to come and join in. It's something we don't hear enough of these days. Well, there's a place that's all about being welcome. Welcome to family time. Welcome to playtime. Welcome to Christmas time. Welcome everyone... Always.

1-800-FUN-TOWN



Convention Location & Accommodations:

Group Room Rate: Room rates are \$139 per standard double room, \$149 per premium queens or king room, plus a \$34.95 daily resort fee and 6% state sales tax. Reservations include admittance to the Bavarian Blast Waterpark.

Reservations: (989) 652-7200
Group Name: Michigan Agritourism Convention



Featured Speakers



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MICHELE PAYN, CSP

Celebrating Agritourism

Michele Payn, CSP, connects the people and science of food and farming as principal of Cause Matters Corp. She is known for being a community catalyst, a passionate advocate for global agriculture - and antagonizing people into action.

Michele has worked with farmers in more than 25 countries and raised millions of dollars for 4-H & FFA. She is the author of four books: Science Story Speak, Food Bullying, Food Truths from Farm to Table, and No More Food Fights!. Michele's degrees are in Agricultural Communications and Animal Science from Michigan State University. She has earned the Certified Speaking Professional designation, awarded to less than 10% of professional speakers globally. She resides with her 'city slicker' husband and cow-loving daughter on a small farm in central Indiana. She enjoys Registered Holsteins, the MSU Spartans, and creating a wildflower venue. Michele connects conversations around the food plate at www.causematters.com and on social media with @mpaynspeaker.



SUZI SPAHR, Executive Director

NAFDMA INTERNATIONAL AGRITOURISM ASSOC.

Agritourism is the Answer: A Global Perspective

Suzi will share insights on agritourism trends, challenges, and opportunities from across the country and around the globe.

Suzi is right at home with NAFDMA International Agritourism Association as she grew up on a grain and beef farm in Northeast Indiana, part of the 5th generation of the farming family. As Executive Director, she provides networking, resources and education to the agritourism sector worldwide. Prior to her current role, Suzi headed up the Indiana Grown program and served as Director of Constituent Services for Governor Mitch Daniels.



RUSTY RUMLEY, Senior Staff Attorney

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE LAW CENTER

Landowner Liability for Agritourism Operations

This session will look at landowner liability in general and how agritourism operations face enhanced exposure due to inviting the paying public onto their property. It will also discuss practical strategies to reduce this liability risk.

Rusty is a Senior Staff Attorney with the National Agricultural Law Center and was born and raised on a family farm in Cogar, Oklahoma. After law school, Rusty earned his LL.M in Agricultural Law at the University of Arkansas and is licensed Oklahoma and Michigan. His primary areas of interest are in estate planning, taxation, business organizations, landowner liability, industrial hemp, leasing and agritourism.



ANDREW J. KOK, General Counsel and Secretary

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU FAMILY OF COMPANIES

Liability in Michigan

Andy will share insights on protecting your agritourism business in Michigan.

As General Counsel for Michigan Farm Bureau for 16 years, Andy advises on legal matters affecting its members, the agricultural industry and Farm Bureau Insurance. He previously held positions as Assistant General Counsel and partner at Varnum Law Firm in Grand Rapids, after earning his law degree from the University of Michigan. His experience includes legislative and regulatory matters, liability issues affecting farmers, agricultural real estate and estate planning and complex environmental issues.

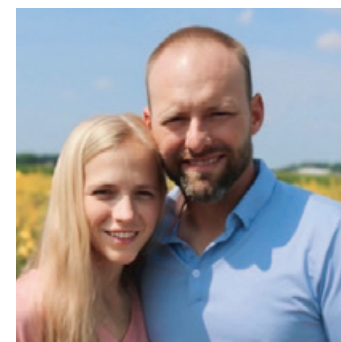


GREG SHOOKS, Co-owner

SHOOKS FARM AND CELLAR 1914

From Beef to Fruit: Forging a New Direction and Preserving the Story

Greg is a 4th-generation farmer in Central Lake located in Antrim County where he and his family grow cherries, wine grapes, hay and small grains. In 2017, Greg and his brother, Rob, started transitioning their farm from 500 head-of-beef cattle to an agritourism destination. In 2019, they opened up Cellar 1914 in honor of the year their great grandfather started the farm.



GRACE & JIMMY MCMONAGLE

KREPS APPLE BARN

New Life for an Old Apple Orchard

In 2009, Jimmy took a chance reviving his grandfather's apple orchard, which was slated to be pulled out and returned to cash-crop farmland. What began as a risk has grown into a thriving agritourism destination. Today, Jimmy and wife Grace proudly own and operate a popular family farm in La Salle, welcoming southeast Michigan families to enjoy fresh peaches, crisp apples, festive pumpkins and the simple joy of life on the farm.



KASSIE (BOWERMAN) GRASMANIS, Owner

BOWERMAN'S BLUEBERRIES

Knowing When to Say Yes and Assembling the Right Team for Success

Kassie serves as Office Manager for the Bowerman family businesses, overseeing payroll, accounts receivable and payable, the farm's PrimusGFS food safety program, and the farm market bakery. In 2021, she took a leap alongside her two brothers-in-law to open Bowerman's on 8th Bakery & Café, extending the farm experience into downtown Holland. Kassie is passionate about helping Bowerman's adapt, grow and thrive in a changing world.



AMIE KETT, Experience Coordinator

BOWERMAN'S BLUEBERRIES

Knowing When to Say Yes and Assembling the Right Team for Success

Amie serves as the Experience Coordinator, overseeing catering, events and retail at both Bowerman's Farm & Market and Bowerman's on 8th Bakery & Café. She joined the business in 2022 as a Front of House Manager at the restaurant, helping shape the guest experience and launch the catering program. In 2024, Amie transitioned to her current role where she enjoys sharing the Bowerman's story and coordinating events that allow guests to create lasting memories.



DEDE & MIKE BECK, Co-owners

UNCLE JOHN'S CIDER MILL

Looking Back: What We Learned and What We Would Do Differently

Mike and Dede Beck are fifth-generation farmers who have successfully guided Uncle John's Cider Mill and its Hard Cider Taproom through strategic change while honoring its heritage. Mike oversees operations and is active beyond the farm, supporting others entering the hard cider industry, advocating on legislative issues and serving as a resource to fellow farmers. Dede manages accounting, purchasing, marketing and staffing and is passionate about helping others navigate being a daughter-in-law in a family business.



Frankenmuth, Michigan, Courtesy of Frankenmuth Convention & Visitors Bureau

Special Guests

TIMOTHY BORING, DIRECTOR, MDARD

KATHY ANGERER, CHIEF OF STAFF, MDARD

BEN LACROSS, PRESIDENT, MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

DON SIMON, CEO, FARM BUREAU INSURANCE

TIM ROGERS, MANAGER, MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

BEN SMITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MICHIGAN STATE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

GREG BIRD, MICHIGAN VEGETABLE COUNCIL

And more!

Tours

GUESTS WILL SELECT A TOUR OF CHOICE



Weiss Centennial Farm

Weiss Centennial Farm is a sixth generation family dairy farm and home of the Frankenmuth Corn Maze. During our visit, we'll see the corn maze viewing platform, watch the cows and the milking robot at work, learn about their soon-to-be-launched creamery operation and how they renovated a farmhouse into a classroom for school groups and Culinary Heritage Adventures. We'll also make a batch of German-style pretzels!



Leaman's Green Applebarn

Leaman's is a seventh generation apple orchard, bakery and pumpkin patch that offers U-pick apples, fresh cider and donuts, goat yoga, sunflowers, and a petting barnyard. During our visit, we'll tour the farm market and bakery, meet the farm animals, and see the Back Orchard Barn where they host weddings and special event. The team will be getting ready for St. Patick's Day, so prepare to bring along your Irish spirit!



Bavarian Inn Restaurant

Tammy Weiss, Bakery Manager at the Bavarian Inn Restaurant will take us on a behind-the-scenes tour of the restaurant's famous kitchen and bakery where they work all night long to bring guests the freshest of baked goods from family recipes since 1888, including stollen, butterhorns, and more. During our visit, we'll learn how to make Bavarian Inn Apple Strudel!



Country Roads Farm

Country Roads Farm is a 1st generation family farm that's soon to be a Choose and Cut Christmas Tree Farm. They feature a farm market, where they sell a variety of produce and plants that they grow, and they offer U-pick pumpkins and flowers, a petting farm with miniature cows, as well as field trips, farm tours and special events. During our visit, we'll visit the Christmas tree farm, learn about the Kids Farm Camp, yoga sessions, hands-on workshops and do some mini-cow cuddling!



St. Julian Winery and Distillery Tasting Room

St. Julian's is Michigan's longest running winery and first craft distillery. We'll visit their tasting room in the heart of downtown Frankemuth and learn about the history of the operation, enjoy samples of wine, and hear about the grapes and/or special notes about the wine. We'll also gather in the Barrel Room that holds over 300 barrels of Solera Cream Sherry, St. Julian's most awarded wine. We'll learn how the Solera system works and sample out of the barrel.

Breakout Sessions



Navigating Right to Farm, GAAMPs and Local Zoning

Ryan Coffey Hoag, Extension Educator Land Use, Government & Community Vitality, MSU Extension.

This session will provide understanding of the Right to Farm Act, Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) and local zoning as they relate to agritourism operations, help navigate complex land use issues, and assist with proactive decision-making for agritourism business to avoid legal conflicts, protect investments, and secure long-term property rights.



Championing Your Business

Michele Payn, CSP

This practical and interactive workshop will provide attendees with 6.5 steps to develop a marketing plan and the story of your agritourism business. Michele will help you identify target audiences, hot buttons, and how to develop programs, products, messages to appeal to your target audience. Attendees will leave with a template to evaluate new business opportunities and challenge assumptions about your customers. This is a combination of small group brainstorming and individual work, so each person can take an action plan home for their business!



Cultivating Curiosity: Farm-based Youth Education

Barbie Kellner, Extension Educator for Camps and Public Programs, MSU Tollgate Farm

This session will spark ideas to add educational programs to your farm or build on the programming you already offer. We'll dive into creative ways to design programs that inspire curiosity and connect kids to agriculture. From school field trips that align with curriculum standards to scout badge workshops, summer camps, and early learner experiences, we'll explore strategies for making your farm a destination for hands-on learning. Discover how to meet the needs of schools and youth organizations, create age-appropriate activities, and incorporate food system education and STEM concepts into your offerings. You'll experience a hands-on activity and leave with practical ideas and resources to turn your agritourism site into a vibrant resource for farm-based learning.



From Pantry to Posy: Best Practices for Hands-on Cut Flower Workshops

Casie Fobush, Stiles Pumpkin Barn and Back Road Blossoms U-Cut Flowers Join us this session and hear from co-owner and operator, Casie Stiles, of Stiles Pumpkin Farm and Back Road Blossoms U-Cut Flowers on how to use and pick the right flowers each season to create beautiful and thoughtful gifts! In this session, you'll also learn about different types of vessels to hold the flowers, including using recycled jars from around your home! Casie will share tips and best practices for teaching hands-on workshops. Attendees will make their own floral arrangements to take home with them.



Get to Know GreenStone

Mike Schwab, VP of Traditional Lending

Wayne Sevilla, Regional VP of Sales and Customer Relations

Learn about GreenStone Farm Credit Services products and services, hear a lender's perspective on the agricultural outlook and ask questions of GreenStone team members.

Convention Registration Information

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 24, 2026

REGISTRATION COST:

Michigan Agritourism Members: \$199
Non-Member Farms: \$249

Rate includes full convention registration for March 10 and 11, 2026, including breakfast, lunch and snacks/beverages on both days, Bavarian Inn dinner on March 10th, main educational sessions/speakers, farm tour of choice, breakout session, trade show and more!

To register, please complete this [Google Form](#).
Note: There is a payment link at the event of the form.

Cancellation Policy:

Full cancellation is available through February 23, 2025.

Please contact us if you have any questions at [616-952-1151](tel:616-952-1151) or info@michiganfarmfun.com

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN MARCH!

Sponsors

JOIN OUR GROWING LIST OF SPONSORS!



GreenStone Farm Credit Services

Lipari Foods

Michigan Apple Committee

NAFDMA International Agritourism Association

Bavarian Inn



Photo courtesy of Bavarian Inn Lodge



Photos courtesy of Frankenmuth Convention & Visitors Bureau

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