



Front Porch Series – Fast Facts

Title: **Diversifying Your Revenue Stream**

Event Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024

Featured Presenter: **Ellen Reynolds, Beagle Ridge**

Facilitators: **USLGA Education & Research Committee, Barbara Cesiro & Mary Pilotte, Co-Chairs**

Tech Support: **Michele Hyson, Executive Director**

Event Goal: Many who consider lavender farming are unaware that their passion for growing lavender can be turned into an income-producing year-round business. To make this a reality, there are many considerations and questions to be asked. Ellen Reynolds shares how Beagle Ridge operates generating a year-round income while leveraging the talents and interests of their family.

Terms used during the event:

- **Assets:** Ellen refers to “assets of the farm”. In this context it may apply to any natural geographic attribute, physical structure or inherent interest or talent that can be shared/leveraged as part of the business consideration and opportunity prospects.

Key Points Summary:

- **It is critical to take stock in your personal interests and natural attributes as you plan for a year-round operational endeavor.** Doing what you naturally enjoy makes things easier. You may think you enjoy doing something, but then find out you do not. Feel free to test, see, and then pivot as necessary. (ref: Wedding events)
- **Work with what you have to start.** You don’t need permanent structures/buildings to get the operation going, look for temporary low-cost options like rental tents, temporary structures, etc. ***Pro-Tip*** Consider paying as you go and can support the operation rather than diving into debt.
- **Make use of local history.** People from out of town may be your largest portion of visitors. Share with them the history of your location, region, etc. as this only enhances their overall appreciation for the site/region.

- **Learn from your customers/clients.** Aspects of your operation/farm that you do not love (ref: outhouse), may be just the unique attribute that visitors love. Let them help guide your operation and growth opportunities.
- **Work with planners/vendors you know, like and trust.** It takes time to learn about other's capabilities. Work with people you know represents the operation/values you want to project from your farm.
- **Work with and support your local tourism association.** No matter your location, people are looking for unique experiences and encounters. By connecting with local outreach efforts, your marketing efforts are made easier, and can leverage events and activities going on in the region.
- ***Pro Tip*- Know your streams of revenue.** This allows you to consider what elements of that effort you enjoy or can be outsourced to suppliers or other vendors. Consider aspects such as what working hours you want to offer, what days of the week. If you are hosting weddings, you will need to work weekends. Are you ok with that? When it comes to value added products, what can you offer at what time of year that you are not currently offering?
- **Experience sells!** From ATV rides through farm trails, to the simple act of allowing customers to fill their sachets, let them do more. They want to – and will pay for the opportunity to do it!
- **Connect with high-schools and Scouting –** These can not only be sources of visitors, but sources of workers for things like plant growing, etc. Get creative.
- **After Hours and "down time" events can get creative and fun.** Don't limit yourself to the obvious events. Look for opportunities to fill holes in the calendar with unique experiences to get return visitors to the farm.
- ***Pro tip* Know your local restrictions and legal considerations.** Don't get caught off guard and know your risks planning appropriately.
- **Become a meeting place, rental site, tour site, and educational hub** ***Pro Tip*-** Companies, clubs etc. are frequently looking for new locations to host their events, learn about new topics, see new things. Why not offer your site, wisdom (and products of course!) for consideration.

Other Session Notes: Attendees – 33