



DEAR DEB - OCTOBER



Dear Deb: My family loves this time of year. Are there other things we can do to get a full seasonal experience at local farms besides visiting pumpkin patches? - Jamie, San Leandro

Farmers' markets are filling with all things fall - pumpkins for jack o' lanterns, decorative gourds for your porch, hearty winter squash for fall cooking, and juicy pears and apples for scenting the house with fruit-filled baked goods. They're also a center for fun fall activities like costume contests, booth decorating, and guessing the weight of giant pumpkins!

But farmers' markets give just a taste of fall events! October is one of the finest months to enjoy the rural experience by visiting local farms. Wander through pumpkin patches, take a hayride, lose yourself in a corn maze, and pick up homemade jams. Drive up to Sebastopol or out to Apple Hill in Camino to pick apples at [Rainbow Orchards](#) or take a trip to [A. Cozzolino Farms](#) in Half Moon Bay to gather pumpkins. Take a walk through a corn maze at [Swank Farms](#) in Hollister. Family farms across the state are all about agritourism this time of year. They welcome customers to their farms with exciting fall activities, fresh products, value-added purchases, and educational events.

Beyond direct-to-consumer sales at farmers' markets, agritourism can significantly supplement a farm's income. From farm stands and u-pick experiences to elaborate corn mazes, educational workshops, and

festive events, the possibilities are endless.

Some farms even offer unique experiences like farm-to-fork dinners, concert series, or wedding venues. For those seeking a more immersive experience, lodging, and camping options may also be available.

According to the latest [Census of Agriculture for Agritourism](#) agritourism has become a significant source of income for farms across the country. In California, this trend is particularly pronounced, with agritourism generating millions of dollars annually. California's agritourism has primarily been organized on the county and regional level with "Farm Trails" maps by county that follow each location with different experiences at each stop.

Recognizing the economic potential of agritourism, the UC Small Farm Program has recently been looking into a statewide strategy to provide resources and guidance to help farmers capitalize on the growing popularity of agritourism.

Farmers are passionate about sharing their stories and connecting with the community! By offering a wide range of events that might interest the public they can experience some of the magic of farm life firsthand. Engaging with the public helps to promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of local agriculture.

Supporting local agriculture is more important than ever as the cost of farming continues to rise. By visiting local farms and participating in agritourism activities, you're not only enjoying fresh, delicious produce but also contributing to the sustainability of our local food system.

So, what are you waiting for? Grab the family and visit your local farms this fall to discover the joy of agritourism! Pick out some pumpkins, take home a big bag of apples, and savor the delicious flavors of the season.

TAGS

[pumpkins](#) [corn](#)