

Speaker Introduction to: Jane Eckert Eckert AgriMarketing

Raised on her family's farm outside of St. Louis, Jane Eckert learned about farming from the day she was born. She also learned about the tour business at an early age—the farm attracted many customers, and, as a young girl, Jane helped direct the guests from attraction to attraction.

After college, Jane pursued an executive career in corporate marketing for more than 15 years, working for such giants as Atlantic Richfield Oil Company. Eventually, though, her strong ties to the family farm drew her back to the Midwest.

At Eckert's Orchards & Country Store, she became Vice President of Marketing, where she used an innovative corporate marketing approach to turn the farm into a major tourist destination. Today Eckert's attracts almost 400,000 visitors each season!

Jane has the rare view of understanding agritourism from the perspective of the farmer as well as the travel professional. Through her work at Eckert's, she interacted with hundreds of motor coach operators and travel professionals. And, through her work consulting with hundreds of farmers, she has become the leading expert on how to turn a farm into a successful tourist destination.

Today Jane is principal of Eckert AgriMarketing, a consulting firm that offers a variety of services that help the tourism industry and agricultural operations harvest the rewards of agritourism. She is also CEO of RuralBounty.com, an Internet directory helping citizens of the U.S. and Canada to locate agritourism farms and ranches.

Jane has been an active member of the Convention and Visitors Bureaus both in Missouri and Illinois, and is past president of both the St. Louis Attractions Association and Belleville Tourism in Illinois. Jane is an active member of the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association, and served two terms as their president.

Please welcome Jane, who will tell about the advantages of tourism, country style.