Workshop sessions on guest ranches, farm dinners, growing hops

As agri- and eco-tourism continue to grow in popularity, new niches are constantly developing.

Keep on top of these hot trends at the 2013 Nebraska Agri/Eco-Tourism Workshop on Feb. 5-6 at the Sandhills Convention Center in North Platte.

Culinary tourism, combining agriculture, specialty foods and tourism, is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. This year's workshop will offer two sessions on the newest twist in the genre: farm-to-table dinners.

Chef Paul Kulik of The Boiler Room in Omaha and Krista Dittman of Branched Oak Farm in Raymond will explain what it took to serve a four-course meal to 80 people in the middle of a Nebraska field. The second session will feature Erika Polmar of Oregon's Plate & Pitchfork, who has been hosting farm dinners for 10 years.

With the continuation of the craft beer craze, it may be time to consider growing hops. The owners of Rhynalds Hops in Prague, Neb., will share their story and the latest growing techniques.

Want to know what it takes to operate a guest ranch?

Find out from Tammy Rowse. Her Burwell ranch is recognized by the Dude Ranchers Association as a top ranch vacation destination and was selected as one of the 50 premier ranch vacations worldwide by Top50Ranches.com for the last two years.

Other sessions will explore community hunting events, trail projects, watchable wildlife and farmers' markets, as well as ways to work with your spouse and stay married.

For more details, or to register, go to VisitNebraska.com/indus try. Early registration is $75 until Jan. 25. After Jan. 25, registration is $90.