



Teri McCall picks pattypan squash next to the 120-year-old farmhouse that's now a B&B (left). Above: A flag adds even more color to the McCalls' front yard.

Their Kids Are Gone, but the Upstairs Bedrooms Are Full

By Ruth Ann Angus
MORRO BAY, CALIFORNIA

AFTER GRADUATING from college with a degree in crop and fruit science, Jack McCall thought he would spend his life farming. Now, however, his wife, Teri, has talked him into redecorating two upstairs bedrooms in their farmhouse and going into the bed-and-breakfast business.

Jack and Teri still sell avocados, oranges, lemons, apples, plums, tomatoes, peppers and pumpkins to local restaurants and at farmers' markets near their farm in Cambria, California. But they also frequently have paying guests who hike on trails around the farm and pick their own fruit for breakfast.

"I never envisioned myself being in a business like this," says Jack. "But tourism is this state's biggest industry, and it makes sense to profit from it. As Teri pointed out when she came up with this idea, our income from farming comes between July and November.

"Our bed-and-breakfast operates year-round."

Jack and Teri's farmhouse was built in 1885, and at one point was headquarters for a quicksilver mining company. To go into the bed-and-breakfast business, they turned one upstairs bedroom into the Yellow Bird Room, the other into the Rose Room.

One is painted pink, the other yellow. Both have fancy queen beds, nice furniture and good views. "We're only 30 miles from Hearst Castle, and people often like to stay here instead of in a motel," says Teri. "We also get customers from Los Angeles and San Francisco who just want a taste of farm life.

"When city folks stay on a farm, it promotes a better understanding of agriculture."

A few years ago, Jack and Teri joined other farmers and ranchers to form the Central Coast Agritourism Council. The non-profit organization helps market all kinds of agricultural activities to tourists, including roadside stands, U-picks, horseback trail rides, festivals and farm stays.

The farm stay industry really got off the ground in California when the state passed the Agricultural Homestay Bill in 1999. It relaxed certain standards that still apply to commercial hotels and restaurants.

Now that Jack and Teri's kids are grown and gone, the couple has come up with another way to fill those upstairs bedrooms—and maybe make a little money at it.

Editor's Note: To visit the Web site of the Central Coast Agritourism Council, go to www.farmandranchliving.com and click on "Links."