

# OREGON AGRITOURISM HANDBOOK

2022



PHOTO: MICHAEL HANSON



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# Welcome to the Oregon Agritourism Handbook

This resource was created for a wide range of people with a common interest in the intersection of agriculture and tourism. So whether you're a farmer or rancher, have a tourism business that works with farmers and ranchers, or are a budding entrepreneur with no land but an agritourism venture idea, this handbook is for you.

If you're just starting out, you may want to work through the information in the order of the Table of Contents. If you have an existing operation, just skip around to the sections that seem most relevant. You can download and print whatever you need.

What do we mean by "agritourism?" While the term "agritourism" just entered the Merriam-Webster dictionary in 2006, the activity has a rich history. Basically, agritourism is *any activity that generates supplemental income for working farms and ranches by connecting their agricultural resources and products with visitors*. It includes on-farm and off-farm activities. To borrow from California's language\*, agritourism "promotes farm products and generates additional farm income, in the process of providing visitors with entertainment, recreation, hands-on participation and education."

Here in Oregon, where culinary tourism is already a major draw, we incorporate elements of culinary tourism into agritourism. Here, tourists participate in agritourism when they experience a working landscape by visiting a farm or ranch, meeting producers and tasting local products.

Oregon statutes define agritourism more narrowly from a legal and regulatory perspective, permitting very specific activities on exclusive farm-use (EFU) land. For the purposes of compliance, [Section III](#) of this handbook is geared toward this narrower definition.

This handbook focuses on welcoming visitors, as opposed to local residents. Travel Oregon uses a specific definition of "tourist" to differentiate their activity from that of local customers: Tourists travel at least 50 miles from home, or they stay overnight at their destination. That's not to say that local residents don't visit local farms and ranches. But visitors from outside your area bring new dollars into your community. That's our focus here.

This handbook is brought to you by the [Oregon Agritourism Network](#), established in 2015 to grow high-quality Oregon agritourism, guided by these [goals and vision for the future](#). Please check back in the future, as the handbook will be regularly improved and updated. If you'd like to see or contribute additional information, please contact [development@traveloregon.com](mailto:development@traveloregon.com).



\*An often-used definition of agritourism is included in "Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California," a publication of the University of California's Small Farm Center. The full definition specifies activities that occur on a working agricultural or horticultural operation. Here in Oregon, we also consider some off-farm/ranch activities to fall under the agritourism umbrella.





# A Brief History of Agritourism, Internationally and in the United States

## INTERNATIONAL AGRITOURISM\*

“As populations increase and the cost of land and labor sky-rockets, farmers and ranchers across the U.S. Excerpted with permission from Chapter 2, Colorado Cultural, Heritage and Agritourism Strategic Plan, 2013. are following the lead of Europe, Australia and New Zealand, turning to agritourism as one way to diversify their revenue. In Italy, this business is termed “Agriturismo,” and in Britain, Australia and New Zealand it is known as “farm stay holidays.”

As small-scale farming became less profitable in Italy in the 1950s to 1970s, farms were abandoned when farmers left to search for work in larger towns and cities. An agriturismo law was passed in 1985 to regulate and encourage Italian farm stays. Estimates place today’s number of agriturismo locations in Italy between 9,000 and 20,000, and their success has led many other European Union countries to enact similar national policies to help increase farm income and create jobs in rural communities. There are three types of agriturismo classifications in Italy: one that provides light meals or self-service snacks; one that offers full-service meals; and one that provides farm holidays that include meals, lodging and other activities. In Italy, agriturismo farmers are also allowed to sell value-added farm products including locally-produced wines, olive oils, pasta, prepared meats, cheeses, jellies and jams, honey, baked good and crafts.

One subset of farm stay holidays currently attracting many young travelers is called WWOOFing. This acronym has variously meant ““Working Weekends on Organic Farms,” “Willing Workers on Organic Farms” and, most recently, “World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms.” WWOOF was established in the fall of 1971 when a secretary in London organized a working weekend at a farm as an affordable way to get to spend time in the British countryside. Currently,

there are 1,634 WWOOF farms located in 43 different countries, and the numbers are growing.”

\*Excerpted with permission from Chapter 2, Colorado Cultural, Heritage and Agritourism Strategic Plan, 2013.

## AGRITOURISM IN THE UNITED STATES\*

“Agritourism and entertainment farming enterprises have an extensive history in the United States. Farm-related recreation and tourism can be traced back to the late 1800s, when families visited farming relatives in an attempt to escape from a city’s summer heat. Visiting the country became even more popular with the widespread use of the automobile in the 1920s. Rural recreation gained interest again in the 1930s and 1940s from folks seeking an escape from the stresses of the Great Depression and World War II. These demands for rural recreation led to widespread interest in horseback riding, farm petting zoos and farm nostalgia during the 1960s and 1970s. Farm vacations, bed and breakfasts, and commercial farm tours were popularized in the 1980s and 1990s.

The demand for a slower-paced farm experience, once supplied by rural family members, seems to be somewhat difficult to satisfy today because of the four- and five-generation gap between farming and non-farming citizens.” (Georgia)

“Today, with fewer farmers producing more food, people have become disconnected from the sources of their food. Agritourism offers a new way to fulfill the desire to reshape this food/source connection. This past decade has seen tremendous growth in the number of statewide agritourism programs in the United States.” (Colorado)

\*Excerpted with permission from Considerations for Agritainment Enterprise in Georgia, 2002 and the Colorado Cultural, Heritage and Agritourism Plan.



# Goals and Vision for Agritourism in Oregon

## OREGON AGRITOURISM: OUR VISION FOR 2025

- Oregon is recognized as a world-class destination for interesting, educational, fun and life-changing food, farm and ranch-based experiences.
- Visitors find diverse, accessible and high-quality opportunities to experience excellent food and bountiful landscape throughout the state.
- It's easy for Oregon visitors to explore, dine and experience life on a farm or ranch, and to connect agritourism experiences with other nearby activities and attractions.
- While agriculture remains the primary function of farms and ranches, exposure to visitors through agritourism enhances these operations.
- The success of agritourism brings increased prosperity to Oregon communities.

## GOALS FOR THE OREGON AGRITOURISM NETWORK

### Improved Policy

The state and local regulatory framework for agritourism is clear and improved, so agritourism businesses that are compatible with the intent of land-use law and public health regulations are able to operate efficiently.

### Effective, Industry-Driven Network

Agritourism businesses are well networked with each other to produce exceptional visitor experiences, promote their offerings, learn best practices and pursue supportive policies.

### Targeted Marketing

Oregon has implemented a strategic agritourism marketing plan that is appropriately connected with culinary tourism marketing.

### Meaningful Standards

Based on a clear definition of agritourism (including its crossover with culinary tourism), locals and visitors can discover agritourism products and services that have been vetted for authenticity and quality.

### Stewardship Education

Young people have a close and knowledgeable connection with the state's agricultural sector as part of Oregon's history, culture, health and economic vitality.

### Economic Impact

Agritourism tangibly contributes to the vitality of Oregon agriculture and communities.



# Why Consider Agritourism?

There is a growing market for agritourism in Oregon and if it's a fit for your farm, ranch or business, it can provide many opportunities for creative products and services. This section provides background information on the market for agritourism, the pros and cons of expanding into agritourism, and a list of possible activities to consider. When you're done, you should have an initial sense of what form your agritourism enterprise might take.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

According to the Vermont Agritourism Collaborative's "Assessing Your Farm for Agritourism" guide, the following factors contribute to the well-being of farmers. How does your agritourism enterprise stack up in terms of delivering these benefits?

- Goals that are based in deeply held values
- An atmosphere with good communication and mutual respect
- Reliable access to information and services that support the business
- A symbiotic connection between the farm/ranch and its community: the community provides value to the farm and the farm provides value to the community
- Good relationships with employees and neighbors
- A long-range view with the well-being of the next generation in mind
- Taking time to enjoy one's self, family and friends





# Why People Travel

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In thinking about the experience you hope to create for your visitor, it's helpful to know what visitors are seeking. The following list shows the reasons people travel. Most content is adapted with permission from the Agri-Business Council of Oregon's Agritourism Workbook (revised in 2007).

## **To build and strengthen relationships**

The primary reason Americans travel on vacation is to spend time with family. They want to be together in stress-free surroundings, and they consider a trip away from home to be the ideal opportunity. They view travel as a time to rekindle and strengthen their relationships, as well as an opportunity to make new friends.

## **To improve health and well-being**

Vacations are vital to travelers' physical and mental well-being. They seek an experience that gets their blood pumping or their mind cleared. Many Oregon travelers do this by participating in outdoor activities.

## **To rest and relax**

Americans on vacation want to rest and relax. A trip away from home is a trip away from work and worry. When they return, they feel refreshed and renewed.

## **To experience adventure**

Some travelers vacation away from home to find adventure. They want their vacations to provide excitement, be it dangerous or romantic.

## **To experience places they have read about or seen through media**

Travel-related visuals can incite a sense of "wanderlust" that inspires an intense desire to physically visit a destination. Social media, television, internet sites and other travel publications highlight a diversity of options that can incite that travel bug—as well as highlight hidden gems outside the typical well-known destinations.

## **To escape and find connection**

Many people travel to escape daily routines, worry and stress, and to attain what they sense is missing in their lives (Krippendorf 1986). They seek something different: perhaps a better climate, a slower pace of life, cleaner air, prettier scenery or quieter surroundings. This connection can be to other people, the environment, or themselves and their purpose.



## **To check something off their bucket list**

Travel can be a major focus for those who have created a list of personal milestones and accomplishments to complete. For example, it is common for Europeans to want to visit every U.S. national park. Completing a travel-related bucket list item can be a source of external bragging rights, or provide a sense of accomplishment.

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### To learn

Some travelers travel to learn and discover. They want to see, hear, touch and feel unfamiliar things. More specifically, they want to learn or practice a language, study a culture, explore gourmet foods or wines, investigate spirituality, etc. Visitors want to meet people from other cultures and be exposed to new perspectives, and acquire an understanding of a different culture's lifestyle, food and daily life.

### To mark a special occasion

Many Americans vacation away from home to celebrate life milestones and special occasions. New relationships, marriages, birthdays and professional achievements provide a reason.

### To save money or time by traveling locally

People sometimes take short, local vacations to save money or time. Some vacationers are very frugal. Some vacationers want to enjoy a "staycation" to stretch their vacation dollars and reduce travel. Sometimes travelers will seek an opportunity to combine a work-related trip with a visitor experience, not only to see the area beyond the office or meeting location but to expand the cost-effectiveness of the trip.

### To reminisce

Travel can evoke the past. Some vacationers—particularly older ones—visit a farm to rekindle memories of the simple rural lifestyle they once knew. Although these people do buy food, lodging, transportation and souvenirs, they are primarily purchasing a sentimental journey.

### To view nature

A recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife survey reported that nature tourists view wildlife to observe nature's beauty, relax from daily pressures, get away from home, and be with family and friends (Leonard 2008). Social interaction and relaxation are particularly important, sometimes secondary only to seeing wildlife. These tourists like learning about nature, being physically active and meeting people with similar interests.

### To visit places they have heard about from friends and family

Recommendations from friends and family are a strong motivator in selecting a location for travel. Endorsements help travelers select locations, because they know their friends and family have vetted the location based on common interests and general qualities like safety and the amount and type of amenities.







PHOTO: JONI KABANA

# Increasing Farm Viability Through Agritourism: An Oregon Producer Study

As part of a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded grant, a multi-state research and extension team conducted a [national survey](#) of farms that are open to visitors for product sales or experiences. The goal of the survey was to better understand the types of experiences and products offered, the economic viability of agritourism enterprises, and ways to support a healthy future for producers and their communities. The online survey was open from November 2019 to February 2020.

In Oregon, we collected 191 responses from farmers, ranchers and vineyard operators who offered agritourism experiences and product sales. Of these, 166 responses provided enough detail to constitute data used in this report. For socio-demographic information of respondents, please see the [full Oregon report](#).

Note: Since the survey was conducted in the winter of 2019–20, responses reflect the state of agritourism in Oregon before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR OREGON:

- Today, in Oregon, just over 1% of the population lives on farms, and fewer than 20% of the population lives in rural areas. On-farm agritourism experiences help provide the remaining small farms with additional revenue streams, while also educating visitors from urban areas about the importance of farming.

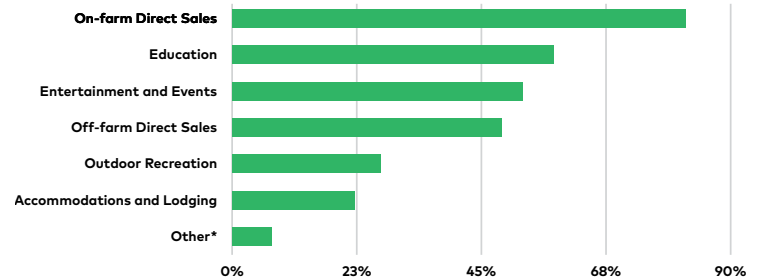
*“It is more than just profits. It’s really important today, if you have the attitude to do it, to open your door to people who aren’t in farming and ranching, to help them see the truth about the good work farmers and ranchers do. It’s really important that the voice of the ranchers and farmers, the real people that do the work, be heard by most people who don’t.”*

~ Oregon livestock producer

- Oregon agritourism operators reported 2,028,516 visits in 2018 with an average of 12,226 visits annually per farm, with 34% of visitors traveling from 50 miles away or further.

- 23% of farms and ranches reported a gross revenue of \$25,000–\$99,999 from agritourism sales and services.
- 43% of farms are open to visitors 261-365 days each year; 21% keep their farms open 101–250 days each year and 36% open seasonally for 100 days or fewer each year.
- Many farmers and ranchers in the study reported supplementing on- and off-farm product sales with experiences such as visits with the farmer or rancher, farm tours, refreshments, train rides, etc. In addition, many of the farmers and ranchers sold standalone services including education, outdoor recreation such as hiking or hunting on their property, and in some cases, lodging to provide a multi-day experience.

Types Of Agritourism Experiences Offered By Oregon Farmers And Ranchers



\*Other types of experiences are listed in the full report

- 88% of operators ranked “building goodwill in community” as an important or very important motivator behind offering agritourism activities on their farms and ranches.
- When asked about the types of support that have helped to increase success with their agritourism operation, respondents ranked information around how to operate legally and navigate liability the highest, followed by social media marketing and management support and marketing plan development assistance.
- Respondents ranked regulations and permitting as “very challenging” when asked about barriers to achieve success.



# Market Trends for Agritourism: Information from Other Regions

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Agritourism can attract visitors with diverse interests and market profiles. This is because “agriculture is one of the few industries that tap our connections with the natural world as well as our cultural past. Farms are unique repositories of biological, historical and cultural wealth, and thus hold a fascination for many people. Agritourism provides an opportunity for people to experience a real change of pace, get closer to nature, learn how food is produced and farmers live, and have a good time and memorable experience while doing it” (Washington State University Extension—Agritourism: Cultivation Tourists on the Farm, 2008).

The big picture is that Oregon’s farms and ranches are well positioned to take advantage of many favorable market trends. At the same time, there are differences in market opportunities based on specific location and amenities. This document summarizes market trends from several state and national studies. For more detailed trend information, refer to the reference documents. As new data becomes available, it will be added to the handbook.

## **SOCIAL TRENDS THAT FAVOR AGRITOURISM**

Much of what draws national and international visitors to agritourism is already strong in Oregon. Our state has a strong appreciation for good food, offers easy access to nature and celebrates local culture. These intrinsic characteristics are the basis for authentic agritourism experiences.

### **Growing interest in knowing the source of food and how it is produced**

- Nutrition
- Health and safety
- Environmental resiliency
- Interest in strong food systems and “buying local”

### **The rise of artisan production and respect for “making/makers” versus consumption**

- Small-scale producers and small-batch production
- Niche products
- Value-added products
- Not limited to food

### **Food and travel as a cultural experience**

- Slow food movement
- Desire to experience an “authentic sense of place”
- Especially for international travelers, experience “The West”
- Interest in interactive learning while on vacation

### **Technology overload**

- “Unplugged” family time
- Nostalgia for traditional skills and lifestyles
- Reconnecting with nature
- See stars in the dark open skies



## TOURIST ACTIVITY TRENDS

Travelers interested in agritourism share an interest in several other types of tourism. This suggests opportunities for cross-marketing and itineraries that include a mix of activities.

- Many travelers interested in agritourism come from a short distance away, especially in the case of rural areas close to urban areas. These travelers are often day-trippers, coming for a singular experience such as a festival, a farm-to-table dinner or a roadside stand. For travelers from farther away, agritourism is typically one of many activities they enjoy on the same trip.
- The primary audiences for agritourism are families seeking fun and educational activities, seniors and children's groups. While visitors from across the U.S. and around the world are not uncommon, they usually don't visit agritourism sites as their primary destination, but rather tend to find out about agritourism experiences while in the area and add them to their itineraries (Agritourism: Cultivating Tourists on the Farm—WA State Extension). There are exceptions—for example, destination ranches—but in general, attracting visitors from far away requires connecting your agritourism experience with the array of other things visitors do in your region.
- In general, local people from nearby rural areas tend not to visit local agritourism sites except when hosting family or friends from out of town — if they consider your place a “must see” activity. Locals do participate in festivals or tours especially designed for them. Harvest festivals are popular (Agritourism: Cultivating Tourists on the Farm).
- Agritourism that integrates active outdoor recreation is more likely to occur in non-metropolitan rural areas with natural amenities and scenic landscapes (Southwest Ontario Agritourism Development Strategy and Marketing Plan, 2011). Multi-day itineraries that link agritourism and outdoor recreation tend to be found in similar areas.
- Across tourism sectors, long extended vacations have been replaced by short intensively active vacations, with key markets two to three hours away from a given destination (Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition 2011).

- California links nature tourism and agritourism development together, because the markets overlap and draw travelers to rural areas. Nature tourists tend to be affluent, and their numbers are growing: According to a 2006 study by the International Ecotourism Society, nature tourism grew by 20 to 30% annually starting in the early 1990s. Bird-watching is the fastest-growing segment of nature tourism; it is more popular than hiking, camping, fishing or hunting (Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California).
- Canadian travelers participating in agritourism in 2007 were much more likely than other pleasure travelers to participate in wine, beer and food tasting, aboriginal cultural experiences and participatory historical activities. They also participated in outdoor activities, including wildlife viewing, ocean/lake activities, hiking, climbing and paddling (Southwest Ontario Agritourism Strategy).
- Colorado links heritage, cultural and agritourism development together in an integrated plan. This is because nearly 75% of Colorado visitors include an agricultural, food or heritage activity on their trip. Of those, a third are traveling specifically for agritourism. There is also a strong connection to outdoor recreation, through a long tradition of farms and ranches hosting hunters (Colorado Cultural, Heritage and Agritourism Strategic Plan, 2013).
- National Geographic has promoted the emergence of “geo-tourism” to capture and promote traveler preferences for destinations that protect the authenticity and geographic character of their place. Agritourism is a good fit for geo-tourists, and Oregon's Central Cascades are already a [featured geo-tourism destination](#) in partnership with National Geographic.
- Oregon already has a strong brand for culinary tourism that is well-known internationally; culinary tourism overlaps with agritourism when the culinary activity takes place on a farm or ranch, or when it involves meeting the producer. 55% of Oregon visitors participate in at least one culinary activity, according to the 2011 [Oregon Bounty Visitor Behavior and Attitudes Related to Oregon Products](#) report. The growth of food and farm trails here in Oregon and elsewhere is a harbinger for the potential of agritourism to benefit from interest in culinary tourism.

PHOTO: JONI KABANA

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic trends indicate a mixed bag for agritourism.

- The market for agritourism and nature tourism industries serves primarily senior citizens and middle-age baby boomers (Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California). This could create issues if interest in agritourism does not grow among younger generations.
- There is a trend toward grandparents traveling with grandchildren, which is an opportunity for agritourism.
- As noted above, most agritourists are day-trippers from urban areas, and they travel within a 40-mile radius at best ([USDA 2007 Agricultural Resource Management Survey, Farm-based Recreation Report](#)). This is a sizable source of dependable customers for farm-direct sales near urban areas, even if these local customers do not “count” as tourists.
- While agritourism enthusiasts tend to be well-educated (33% have at least a bachelor’s degree, compared with 20% of the U.S. population), they have moderate income levels. This contrasts with similarly educated heritage, cultural and nature tourists, who are more affluent.
  - Oregon visitors tend to skew even more toward being highly educated: 47% of Oregon visitors surveyed in 2011 had at least a bachelor’s degree (Oregon Bounty Visitor Behavior and Attitudes Related to Oregon Products, 2011).
- While there is some overlap between outdoor recreation and agritourism activities, outdoor recreation enthusiasts are younger and tend not to travel with children.
- Culinary tourists are also more affluent and younger than non-culinary tourists (How to Get Started in Culinary Tourism, Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources).

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The research related to spending associated with agritourism is scant, outdated, and uses different methodologies. Because the activities are so broad-based—from stopping by a roadside produce stand to embarking on a week-long farm-based culinary course—and because agritourism is often one of many visitor activities on a given trip, there is no typical spending amount. Below is select data that may be helpful.

- The most available data is on farm visits, primarily farm stands.
  - Tennessee, 2005 survey — The median expenditure per visitor was \$15 (product and admission/user fee). It was much higher for wine tourists, where the average expenditure was over \$25 per person ([Visitors to Tennessee Agritourism Attractions: Demographics, Preferences, Expenditures, Projected Economic Impact](#)).
  - California, 2004-2005 — 61% of respondents (residents of Yolo and Sacramento counties) spent between \$5 and \$40 on a farm; 16% spent more than \$40.
  - Southwest Ontario, 2011 — Typical visitors spent \$16-\$50 per visit.
- The Oregon Bounty 2011 research revealed that half of all Oregon tourists bought local food products, and two-thirds bought such products to take home. They spent an average of \$142 on such products.
- Connecting agritourism with heritage and cultural travelers creates more opportunities for revenue, as these travelers spend more and stay longer in a destination than other travelers ([Exploring Authentic Oregon: The Importance of Cultural Tourism, 2006](#)).



# Benefits and Challenges with Agritourism Enterprises

With agritourism, “opportunity knocks at the doors of farmers and ranchers who have vision, skills and commitment. This opportunity unites tourists’ pursuit for of well-being and rural experiences with farmers’ and ranchers’ need to supplement their income. It provides operators an opportunity to diversify and protect themselves from fluctuating markets, and can allow landowners to benefit financially from wise use of their land” (Holly George and Ellie Rilla, *Agritourism and Nature Tourism in CA*, 2011).

While agritourism began as a strategy for developing supplemental farm and ranch income, many operators today are as interested in sharing their passion for food production, land stewardship, rural lifestyles and authentic agricultural experience as they are in generating income. There are many other associated benefits you can realize, but also some challenges to consider. The table below lists some of these. The “Assessing Your Potential” section of the handbook will help you identify which benefits best fit your circumstances, as well as which challenges you’ll need to anticipate.

## BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM

### Increased and more diversified income

- Provides an opportunity to generate more income. This will probably not take the place of current agricultural crops, but it can add a new profit center to the current operation.
- Can be a small, part-time focus to supplement farm operations, or a main featured activity and income generator.
- Can extend the season for income generation beyond the normal farm/ranch cycle.
- Often, it is a means to add value to farm products through processing and direct marketing.
- Gives more opportunity to be a price-maker versus a price-taker; you can make higher profits from direct-to-consumer marketing of your products.
- Can help you capture the consumer’s food dollar as well as some of what they spend on entertainment and recreation each year.

- Builds future customers for your products; once they return home, they may order more product from you.
- Expands your market; beyond tourists, local people are a built-in market for farm- and ranch-based experiences and high-quality, locally-grown food.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PLATE AND PITCHFORK



### More value from existing assets

- Offers a way to increase revenue without increasing acreage.
- Provides an opportunity to build a new business with resources that already exist. It takes advantage of underused buildings, land and talent.
- Can build additional physical infrastructure that has value.

### Strengthened opportunities for families

- Provides a way to include future generations on the farm or ranch and keep the land in the family.
- Creates new working opportunities for a spouse, children and family members that tap into varied talents.
- Maintains family interest in and attention to the farm.

### Sharing of your way of life and promotion of the value of agriculture

- Gives you the chance to educate people about rural living, nature and the agriculture industry, which can lead to improved local policies.
- Can build bridges between farmers and consumers, and between rural and urban populations.
- Demonstrates and showcases how producers protect and care for the land and natural resources.

- Provides an opportunity to educate people about both historic and modern methods of farming, and the risks involved in everyday agriculture.
- Improves people's understanding of local food systems.

### **Contribution to the economic vitality of your community**

- Promotes farming in your community.
- Increases demand for locally-grown farm products.
- Keeps youth and entrepreneurial activities in the local community.
- Addresses the shortage of lodging in rural areas (through farm and ranch stays).
- Presents an opportunity to organize itineraries related to agritourism and other experiences that together draw more visitors to your community.

### **A fun experience**

- Allows you to meet visitors from all walks of life.
- Gives you creative expression.
- Is personally rewarding.

## **CHALLENGES OF AGRITOURISM**

### **More work**

- Can provide low financial return, at least at first.
- Can be hard work for you and family members.
- May require developing new skills.
- Requires more work to keep the farm clean, safe and presentable, which can sometimes affect primary operations.
- Can create staffing issues and increase paperwork.
- It's time-consuming and complicated to learn about and comply with a host of applicable laws and regulations.

### **More risk**

- Presents more regulatory and liability risks.
- Often requires you to spend money upfront to improve facilities for visitors and meet regulatory requirements.
- Depends on travelers having discretionary income to spend, and thus is sensitive to economic downturns even though tourism is a growing sector.
- Potentially creates conflict with neighbors as business ramps up and traffic increases.
- Is not a familiar term for most travelers, and thus the market is not well-defined. There is a need for education to make visitors aware of agritourism experiences as a viable option.

### **Less down time**

- Demands your full and constant attention, and can interfere with family time and activities.
- Requires that you are always “on” — upbeat and available.
- Involves a loss of privacy.

These lists were compiled from several sources, including: Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition – University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; The New Agritourism – Barbara Berst Adams; Agritourism: Cultivating Tourists on the Farm – Washington State University Extension; Agritourism Master Plan for Clackamas County, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council; Creating Successful Agritourism Activities for your Farm – Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture; Getting Started in Agritourism – Cornell Cooperative Extension; and Oklahoma Agritourism Resource Manual.

PHOTO: GREG ROBESON





# Checklist: Types of Agritourism Activities

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The following is a list of possible agritourism activities, to stimulate your thinking about what might best fit your skills, interests and facilities. Check the ones that interest you.

Clearly, some are more complex undertakings than others; as you continue planning, be sure to analyze liability issues and the compatibility of your options with the character of your farm/ranch, as well as your values, goals and financial resources. You'll refer back to this checklist as you proceed.

Keep in mind that Oregon land-use codes and regulations can limit the frequency and types of certain agritourism activities, as well as the percentage of farm or ranch income derived from non-production uses on land zoned for exclusive farm use (EFU). See the [“Legal and Regulatory Requirements”](#) section of the handbook for more specific guidance.

## Direct Sales of Fresh or Value-added Products

- Roadside farm stand
- Farmers market
- Sale of handcrafted products
- Sale of value-added food products
- Sale of farm/ranch promotional items (shirts, aprons, mugs, etc.)

## Overnight Accommodations

- Bed and breakfast
- Cabins
- Camping sites
- Farm stay/farm vacation
- Full-service farm vacation with activities and meals

## For-fee Recreation

- Archery
- Bird-watching
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Game preserve or guided hunts
- Guiding and outfitting for recreation
- Hiking trails
- Horse stables
- Horseback trail riding
- Pack trips
- Shooting range

- Swimming area
- Trap and skeet shooting
- Wilderness experiences
- Wildlife viewing

## Demonstrations and Displays

- Animal husbandry
- Antique tools and equipment demonstrations
- Barn raising
- Beekeeping, homeopathy
- Bread-making, flour milling
- Cattle roundup and branding demonstration
- Cider pressing
- Conservation technology
- Demonstrations related to agricultural enterprise (sheep shearing, pruning, etc.)
- Display gardens
- Food preparation (cheese-making, canning, etc.)
- Harvest demonstrations
- Historic museum or display
- Traditional crafts (wool spinning, quilting, wreath-making, soap-making, weaving, etc.)

## Hands-on Experiences

- Animal birthing
- Candle-making with local beeswax
- Caring for animals (helping with feeding, herding, etc.)
- Children's camps
- Classes in farming or ranch skills, including cooking, planting, harvesting
- Classes in recreational activities (fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing)
- Classes on crafts, especially traditional crafts
- Classes on medicinal herbs and homeopathy
- Crafting herbal remedies
- Cutting flowers, flower arranging
- Cutting own Christmas tree
- Educational camps for adults
- Experience “a week in the life of” to learn and test a new occupation
- Farm or ranch work experience
- Fly fishing or tying clinics
- Habitat improvement activities (native planting, tree planting)
- Hay-making (moving, raking, baling, stacking)
- Hay rides

- Petting zoo
- Photography/painting classes
- Pony rides
- Pumpkin painting
- U-pick produce
- Weed identification, seed saving
- Wine, beer, cider or other tasting
- Working farm stay

## Tours

- Alternative crop tours
- Foraging for wild mushrooms, berries, plants, flowers, rocks and gems
- Forest ecology
- Guided crop tours
- Habitat improvement projects
- Heritage buildings and heritage trails
- Production process tours for agriculture professionals
- Self-guided farm loops and specific farm product tours (honey trail, cheese trail, food or farm trail)
- School tours or activities
- Vineyard, winery, brewery or cidery tour

## Festivals and Events

- Casual farm-to-table events ( pancake breakfast)
- Crop art
- Gourmet farm-to-table events
- Historic or culturally themed festival (cowboy poets)
- Hunting, cattle, sheep dog training and competition
- Living history events
- Presentations on local community history, culture or customs
- Rodeo
- Seasonally themed festival (harvest, holiday)
- Specific crop- or product-themed festival
- Square dances or other similar events

## Entertainment

- Contests (apple bobbing, corn shucking, cherry-pit spitting, rooster crowing, etc.)
- Corn or tall-grass maze and related seasonal activities
- Farm-themed playground
- Gourd golf, pumpkin bowling
- Haunted barn or house
- Outdoor games
- Storytelling

## Other Hospitality Services

- Catering services
- Picnic baskets for sale, picnic area
- Refreshment sales



This list has been compiled from Oregon's experience and several other agritourism development manuals, including: Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition - University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; The New Agritourism - Barbara Berst Adams; Agritourism: Cultivating Tourists on the Farm - Washington State University Extension; Agritourism Master Plan for Clackamas County, Clackamas County Tourism Development Council; Creating Successful Agritourism Activities for your Farm - Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture.



## II. Assessing your Potential for Agritourism Success

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Now that you have a sense of visitor interests, market trends and the range of possible activities, the next step is to assess how agritourism fits your skills and interests, your property, and the marketplace. When you're done, you'll have some specific ideas to research and develop.

It's essential to assess the likelihood of success for your agritourism venture. Instead of looking outside of your business, consider investing time in self-assessments to identify gaps and opportunities that may not have been considered. This intentional reflection can open doors by being intentional about how you proceed. Sometimes it's easier to make decisions once you've set aside time to discern what works best for you, your business and your family. The following self-assessment process has five parts, some of which include consulting with family members, employees and possible partners.

### ACTIVITIES

This chapter offers several activities to help assess your potential for agritourism success.

#### Self-assessments

- Is agritourism a fit for you and your family?
- Is your property suitable for agritourism?
- Do you have time?
- Is there a customer base for your idea?
- What connections are important to your success?

#### Goal-setting

- Setting goals for your agritourism enterprise

#### Success Factors

- Keys to agritourism success

Enjoy exploring what's possible! Keep in mind that you have many choices about how to proceed.





# Assessment: Is Agritourism a Fit for You and Your Family?

Agritourism may provide additional income for your farm or ranch, but it's not for the faint of heart, and it's not for everyone. Take the time to assess whether this is really something that will enhance your life by first assessing your skills, personality and preferences according to the questions in the table below. Have your family members

and, if applicable, key employees and partners answer the same questions, and then discuss your results together, using these three questions to focus your conversation:

- What conclusions do you draw from your personal and collective responses?

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
<b>Entrepreneur Attributes and Skills</b>				
I am a self-starter				
I am prepared to invest substantial time in planning and operating a new enterprise				
I follow through on what I start				
I have a strong work ethic				
I am in good health and have plenty of energy				
I am comfortable making important decisions				
The idea of taking on more responsibility excites me				
I am creative in developing ideas and solving problems				
I adapt well to change				
I am comfortable with assessing and managing risk				
I am willing to risk losing an investment				
I will be able to survive financially if a new enterprise does not generate a profit for a few years				
My family is 100% committed to starting and operating an agritourism venture				



	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
<b>Hospitality Attributes and Skills</b>				
I like meeting and working with all types of people				
I enjoy finding common ground with people who are different than me				
I would enjoy having more people visit my farm/ranch				
I'd like to show people my farming/ranching operation				
I don't mind losing some privacy at home				
I value a clean farm/ranch				
I am not afraid of working long hours, including holidays, weekends and evenings when visitors would be most able to visit				
I can be patient and sensitive to the needs of visitors				
I don't mind serving people; I actually like it				
I enjoy being around and responsible for a large number of people, including children				
I am knowledgeable about agriculture				
I am knowledgeable about my community and region – its natural and cultural history beyond my own farm/ranch				
I like the idea of teaching people what I know				
I have customer relations experience				
I am an effective communicator				
I have a good sense of humor and am not easily offended				
I'm generally an even-keeled and cheerful person				
<b>Managerial Skills and Attributes</b>				
I have experience managing and operating a business				
I can manage the additional business responsibilities associated with an agritourism operation				
I am good at managing and organizing my home and business expenses and financial records				
I enjoy learning new things				
I am flexible in my approach to work, depending on what the circumstances call for				
I have knowledge of basic business law				
I have sales skills				
I have supervisory skills				
I am effective at setting and meeting deadlines to accomplish tasks				
I am determined to succeed				

- Are there critical gaps in skills or attributes among the group? If so, can you tailor your business to work around those gaps? (For example, if privacy is a non-negotiable, perhaps your agritourism activity could take place off-site such as at a farmers market, or you could limit visitors to certain parts of your property that are away from your house.) Or could you enlist the help of someone who could fill the critical gaps?

- Looking back at the “Types of Agritourism Activities” checklist in Part I of the handbook, do any ideas stand out as particularly promising given what you’ve uncovered about your personal skills and interests?

**Specific Skills/Interests of Family Members, Key Employees or Partners**

Name	Delivering / Producing	Managing	Marketing

This list has been compiled from Oregon’s experience and several other agritourism development manuals, including: Agritourism in Focus: A Guide for Tennessee Farmers, University of Tennessee Extension; Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition – University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; Creating Successful Agritourism Activities for your Farm – Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture; Agri-tourism – Virginia Cooperative Extension; Oklahoma Agritourism Resource Manual; Are you Ready to Host Visitors at Your Farm? University of Vermont Tourism Research; Assessing your Farm for Agritourism, VT Farms! Association and Nebraska’s Guide to Agri-tourism and Eco-tourism Development, 2005.





# Assessment: Is Your Property Suitable for Agritourism?

Your land and what's on it are the foundation of your agritourism venture. You'll want to systematically take stock of what you have, so that your agritourism activities can both draw visitors and co-exist with your primary agricultural activity. You'll also need to pay careful attention to Oregon land-use law, state and local regulations, and risk management; see Sections [III](#) and [IV](#) of the handbook for more information.

This assessment will help you think about how you want to use your land — especially those features that don't require much additional investment to be suitable for agritourism.

For example:

- Access to a roadside may enhance your ability to sell produce directly from the farm.
- Farms or ranches with wooded areas can be ideal for mushroom production, hunting or trails.
- Open areas might be good sites for festivals, events and demonstrations.
- Fallow fields might provide hunting areas.
- Pastures could be used for alternative livestock.
- Scenic areas and outlooks lend themselves to outdoor recreation and other activities such as photography.
- Water access can support hunting and water sports.
- Structures and sites with heritage can anchor guided tours and storytelling.

## INSTRUCTIONS

This is another exercise that benefits from involving your family and, if applicable, your key employees. On the following pages you'll find a blank assessment form for evaluating the agritourism potential of your property's natural and physical assets. There is also a simple example of how you might fill it in. Here are the steps:

- Complete columns 1–3 based on what already exists on your property and how well it works for your current agricultural

activities. You may want to draw a map showing the location of key assets, current activities and potential hazards.

- In column 4, note if there is anything of historical, cultural, artistic or educational significance (for example, an old barn or orchard).
- Next, keeping in mind your self-assessment as well as the checklist of potential agritourism activities in [Section I](#), put some preliminary ideas in column 5 about what could work on your property. You may want to ask friends, family or potential partners to walk your property with you and get their “fresh eyes” on the possibilities.
- Finally, use column 6 to note the pros and cons of your ideas. Will you need to invest in property improvements in order to implement the ideas?

If possible, visit with other agritourism businesses and learn from their experiences as you mull over the possibilities. Feel free to keep updating and modifying your ideas as you begin the business planning. Sections [V](#) and [VI](#) of the handbook offer more specifics on how to move forward with your new business enterprise.



This document has been compiled from Oregon's experience and several other agritourism development manuals, including: *Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition* – University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; *Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide* – Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board; *Your Agritourism Business in Pennsylvania: A Resource Handbook* – The Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Sample:

Assets	Current use	Benefits/limitations	Heritage element?	Potential uses	Benefits/limitations
Barn	Empty	Esthetic value Requires repair		Office Store Product processing Historic barn Cattle feeding	Centennial barn Visitor attraction Education center
House	Family home	Living		Historic attraction	Visitor attraction
Farm worker's cabins	Disrepair	Being preserved		Historic attraction	Education Farm history
Granary	Storage	Esthetic value leaky roof		Haunted house Education center Chicken house	Cash income Education Farm history

Sample reproduced with permission from [Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide](#) – Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board.

Assets	Current use	Benefits/ limitations of current use	Heritage element?	Potential agritourism uses	Benefits/ limitations of potential new uses
<b>Natural assets: Features that occur naturally</b>					
High-value agricultural soil					
Lower-value agricultural soil					
Water features and resources (river access, farm pond, stream, etc.)					
Scenery (vantage points, atmosphere)					
Topography (landscape features; e.g., flat area, dry lake, butte, mesa, etc.)					
Wildlife and insects, including special habitat areas					
Vegetation (plant life, crops, special crops)					
Other natural assets from adjacent neighbors or surrounding community (woodlot next door, river nearby, etc.). These are assets to which you could connect your own agritourism activities					

Assets	Current use	Benefits/ limitations of current use	Heritage element?	Potential agritourism uses	Benefits/ limitations of potential new uses
<b>Physical assets: Constructed features</b>					
Residential buildings					
Non-residential buildings					
Structures with other functions (wind towers, open-air pavilion, etc.)					
Transportation routes on the property					
Other improved spaces (campsites, trails)					
Decorative elements					
Other physical assets from adjacent neighbors or surrounding community (a trail system, a mountain, a woodlot next door, a river nearby, etc.). These are assets to which you could connect your own agritourism activities					







# Assessment: Do You Have Time?

Time is one of the major limitations for agritourism entrepreneurs. The following table will help you assess whether and when you'll have time available to add the responsibilities of planning for and accommodating visitors on top of what you're already doing. If you find that you're stretched too thin, you don't have to give up on your idea: You can strategize on how to fill the gap with other family members, partners or employees.

Instructions: List your current farm/ranch operations or tasks, and mark the "month" column for each month when the operation requires labor. Include time spent in all aspects of the task, including preparation, implementation and follow-up activities. Then, following the same process, add proposed agritourism activities, with their labor and timing requirements. Now take a look: Do you have the time and labor resources to manage and operate your existing farm/ranch enterprise, take care of personal obligations, and conduct agritourism activities effectively?

Task Schedule	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Current tasks</b>												
<b>Proposed agritourism tasks</b>												

Table from: Agritourism in Focus: A Guide for Tennessee Farmers, University of Tennessee Extension (used with permission), as adapted from A Primer for Selecting New Enterprises for Your Farm, University of Kentucky, 2000.





PHOTO: SIONNIE LAFOLLETTE

# Assessment: Is There a Customer Base for Your Idea?

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Now that you've thought about your capacity and interests related to agritourism, it's time to circle back and connect your ideas with concrete market trends... and your ideal customers! As you develop a business and marketing plan you'll create more specific action steps.

First, consider the information about market trends in [Section I](#) of the handbook. What are the key market trends that will affect your success? What types of customers are you most likely to attract, given these trends?

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Next, consider the types of agritourism activities and experiences you're potentially interested in developing – both in the short term and the long term. Of those options, which activities/experiences are the best fit with market trends in terms of delivering what customers are seeking? The “Why People Travel” information in [Section I](#) of the handbook is an additional resource to revisit for this question.

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Now, what are the attributes of customers you'd like to have? And, just as important, what type of customer would you rather not have?

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Finally, imagine the profile of your ideal visitors. You may have more than one, so there are two identical charts below that you can use to profile different types of customers/visitors as needed. Make additional copies if you need more. Thinking about this now will help you with your marketing strategy later.

Where is this customer from?	
Are they single or married? Do they have children?	
What is their age?	
What is their income?	
In what type of group do they travel? Solo? Couple? With family? With friends? With a club or organization? As part of a small organized tour? A large organized tour?	
What magazines, newspapers, books and social media appeal to them?	
What are their hobbies and interests?	
How much time do they have for the activities you offer?	
How much time do they spend in your community when they visit?	
What types of experiences are they seeking? Demonstration and guidance? Relaxation? Entertainment? Action or physical activities? Other?	
Other notes:	

Where is this customer from?	
Are they single or married? Do they have children?	
What is their age?	
What is their income?	
In what type of group do they travel? Solo? Couple? With family? With friends? With a club or organization? As part of a small organized tour? A large organized tour?	
What magazines, newspapers, books and social media appeal to them?	
What are their hobbies and interests?	
How much time do they have for the activities you offer?	
How much time do they spend in your community when they visit?	
What types of experiences are they seeking? Demonstration and guidance? Relaxation? Entertainment? Action or physical activities? Other?	
Other notes:	

The ideal visitor profile chart is adapted from information in [Agri-Business Council of Oregon's Agritourism Workbook](#) and [Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition](#).

PHOTO: ANDREA JOHNSON





# Setting Goals for Your Agritourism Enterprise

You may have had some sense of goals for your agritourism enterprise when you first started exploring potential ideas. This worksheet is a tool for articulating and aligning your agritourism enterprise with your deepest values and future aspirations. Ask your family and/or key partners to each work through this goal-setting process, and then compare notes to ensure you're on the same page as you move forward.

## PART I: WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM YOUR AGRITOURISM ENTERPRISE?

Below is a list of some reasons you may have become interested in agritourism. How would you rank these business goals in terms of their importance for you? Ask your family and/or key partners to do the same, and then discuss your conclusions.

- \_\_\_ Diversifying farm and ranch income.
- \_\_\_ Increasing farm and ranch income.
- \_\_\_ Reducing debt and putting away money for the future.
- \_\_\_ Modeling and teaching the public about responsible agricultural practices.
- \_\_\_ Bringing variety to your work and meeting new people on a regular basis.
- \_\_\_ Ensuring a place for the next generation to viably farm.
- \_\_\_ Creating more diverse on-farm employment opportunities for family.
- \_\_\_ Providing agriculture, business and customer service learning opportunities for family.
- \_\_\_ Engaging local community members as friends of the farm or ranch.
- \_\_\_ Strengthening connections to local community well-being.
- \_\_\_ Partnering with other farms and ranches to attract visitors.
- \_\_\_ Gaining more free time by developing a line of business that can easily be delegated.
- \_\_\_ Creating a beautiful working landscape or environment.
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## PART II: WHAT MATTERS MOST TO YOU IN TERMS OF A WELL-LIVED LIFE?

From your perspective, what are the four most important aspects for leading a satisfying life? When you look back on your life, what factors would you consider? For example, you might want a close-knit family, professional success, financial independence, early retirement, good health, positive impact on your community, improved health or beauty of your land, life-long learning, fame, etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrant exercise used with permission from Pat Flynn, author of "Will It Fly? How to Test Your Next Business Idea So You Don't Waste Time and Money," 2016.

PHOTO: SIONNIE LAFOLLETTE



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On the chart below, label each quadrant with one of the four key aspects of your life. For each quadrant, imagine what your life will be like in five years if you're progressing toward these goals. You don't need to know HOW you will get there, just what's possible if you apply yourself. Write the specifics down in the appropriate quadrant as if they are already true; the more specific you can be, the better.


### PART III: WILL THIS BUSINESS IMPROVE YOUR LIFE IN WAYS THAT MATTER?

Next, consider what you have described as your future life in the previous exercise. How does your top business idea reinforce or conflict with the future life you see for yourself and your family? If you have more than one potential idea, repeat the analysis for each idea.

Agritourism Enterprise Idea:	
How could this enterprise reflect my values and help me achieve my life goals?	How might this enterprise potentially compromise my values or distract from my life goals?

### PART IV: FIVE-YEAR GOALS

Now let's tie everything together. For your agritourism enterprise and your life, how will you track your progress in the next five years?

	What milestones will you ideally reach with your business?	What milestones will you ideally reach toward your life goals?
In one year		
In three years		
In five years		





# Assessment: What Connections Are Important to Your Success?

By its very nature, successful agritourism depends on successful partnerships — because it crosses so many interests. It encompasses your family and employees; your neighbors and community leaders; your local and regional economic development and tourism advocates; a wide range of related businesses; planning and regulatory

professionals and public lands managers; your elected officials; your banker and your insurance agent — and even your competition. There are many relationships to build and nurture. Begin thinking now about who to talk with, about what, and when. And then start talking, to seek input and build support for your venture.

WHO? (Note specific people)	WHAT? (Add to these suggestions as needed)
Your family and employees	Be sure everyone is on board, and has an opportunity to get involved according to their skills and interests.
WHEN?	
Your banker	If you need to borrow as part of your venture, what might you qualify for, and what information do you need?
WHEN?	
Your insurance agent	What safety practices and insurance coverages are needed to minimize risk?
WHEN?	
Your lawyer/accountant	What is the best legal structure for operating your agritourism business?
WHEN?	
Your neighbors	Brief them on your ideas, and seek input and support. Identify issues to be addressed, including activities near property lines, access, etc.
WHEN?	
Your local or county planning department	Ensure that specific activities are legal, what permits are needed, the timing and fees for permits, and any issues to address.
WHEN?	
Your local or county health, public works or public safety departments, as appropriate	Ensure that specific activities are legal, what permits are needed, the timing and fees for permits, and any issues to address.
WHEN?	

WHO? (Note specific people)	WHAT? (Add to these suggestions as needed)
Your local elected officials and other community leaders	Do they understand and support your proposal? Do they have any advice? Do they see any concerns or barriers?
WHEN?	
Your local and regional tourism promotion and development organization (see <a href="#">Section VI</a> – Marketing Your Agritourism Venture)	What resources are available for marketing and promotion? What opportunities exist to connect with complementary businesses and events?
WHEN?	
Your economic development organization and chamber of commerce	What small business development programs support entrepreneurs? What are appropriate networking opportunities?
WHEN?	
Other ventures with agritourism	Do they understand and support your proposal? Do they have any advice? Do they see any concerns or barriers? Are they interested in collaborating /cross-promoting?
WHEN?	
Other non-farm businesses with related services (outfitters, event planners, chefs, lodging facilities and restaurants, tour guides, educators, etc.)	Are they interested in collaborating? Do they have any advice?
WHEN?	
Community event and festival sponsors related to farms and ranches	Are there mutually beneficial opportunities to support each other?
WHEN?	
<a href="#">Oregon Agritourism Network</a> and other associations (see <a href="#">Section VIII</a> )	Who can you learn from? Who can you help? What are the big issues you need to address together?
WHEN?	







# Keys to Agritourism Success

“Agritourism activities are dramatically different than most traditional farming activities. Customers who visit you may want to participate in various activities, such as harvesting crops, hiking, hay rides, feeding animals and many others. These customers often do not come from a farming background, and will ask many questions about daily farm activities that may seem trivial.” (Assessing your Farm for Agritourism, Vermont Farms! Association, 2014). You’ll have to be patient!

Agritourism is, above all, a people business that fosters genuine and beneficial connections between agricultural producers and visitors. As the Vermont document referenced above notes, “the ideal agritourism host requires many of the same personality traits that make a good host at any tourist attraction or any kind of service industry.” If you don’t have the personality traits to make customers feel welcome, and their questions valued, you’ll want to have someone on your team (a family member or employee) who can fill this role. Alternatively, you can choose an agritourism enterprise that doesn’t require you to interact with the public beyond your comfort level.



## A BAKER'S DOZEN KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Choose something you love to do, as this will give you energy to persevere.
- Offer a high-quality product or service that delivers on what visitors are seeking: fun, education and/or relaxation.
- Start small and grow naturally.
- Be responsive to what customers want.
- Nurture a loyal customer base.
- Provide an experience, not just a product.
- Don't go it alone. Involve family members, partners and trusted advisors to tap different skills and talents. Look for opportunities to connect with your community.
- Track relevant trends affecting your business, and network with your peers.
- Create a realistic business plan for the future, but also stay open to exploring unanticipated opportunities that emerge as you move forward.
- Keep good records (production, financial, regulatory, marketing).
- Continually monitor and evaluate your business against your goals, and make adjustments as you learn.
- Secure adequate capitalization, either through your cash reserves or by creating a business that uses assets you already have without much additional investment.
- Don't give up — ideas take a long time to become reality.

This material is adapted from Oklahoma Agritourism Resource Manual and Assessing your Farm for Agritourism, Vermont Farms! Association.

TOP PHOTO: CHRISTIAN HEEB





## III. Complying with Legal and Regulatory Requirements

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Now that you have some preliminary agritourism business ideas, you're ready to identify the permits required to operate. This section is designed to provide the information needed to successfully tackle this challenge without hitting too many obstacles.

In Oregon, the first and most complex factors to consider are statewide land-use laws. While most agritourism land-use regulations focus on preserving real working farms on land zoned "Exclusive Farm Use" (EFU), there are also land-use implications for forest and mixed-zoned acreage. As you may know from your current business operations, rules and regulations change often — thus, you'll also find website links to the latest information from the relevant agencies in charge of administration and enforcement.

An additional complexity is that these laws are primarily implemented at the county level, and each county interprets the law in its own way. This means that, although we reference activities deemed legal and acceptable on farm land as defined by the Oregon Revised Statutes, your county may not have adopted these statutes into local code. In fact, the regulations vary dramatically from one county to the next. So you'll want to investigate how your specific county treats agritourism ventures. The state statutes offer a useful framework and a common language for discussions with your local officials.

As you're wading through this process, keep in mind that rules and regulations are generally written by lawyers; those of us without a legal degree can feel like we must speak a second language to figure out exactly what we need to do to comply. To save yourself time and headaches, we highly recommend reading the regulations, making a list of questions, and contacting the licensing agency before you begin your application. An informal review meeting, or

in some cases just a phone call, will make the application process much easier for you and the agency. By establishing that relationship early, you can cultivate an ally, an advocate and an expert to guide you not just in your start-up phase, but also as you discover new wrinkles or new ideas.

When you're done with Section III, you'll have more insight about the legal feasibility of your idea, as well as a timeline for addressing the legal and regulatory steps associated with your specific location and business activity. As you get your legal ducks in a row, you may want to look ahead to [Section IV](#). It will help you identify, reduce and even eliminate other risks associated with your operation.

### State Land-Use Law Related to Agritourism

- State Law Summary Chart: "Allowable Activities in Exclusive Farm Use Zones, as Included in ORS 215.213 and ORS 215.283."
- Companion to Summary Chart: "Guidance on Specific State Land-Use Regulations Affecting Agritourism."
- A-Z Glossary of Common Land-Use Terms.

### Specific Permitting Considerations

- Uses Permitted in EFU-Zoned Farms vs. Wineries.
- Using BLM Land for Events.
- Keeping It Legal: Regulations and Licenses for Growing and Selling Food in Oregon.



# Allowable Activities in Exclusive Farm Use Zones

Allowable Activities in Exclusive Farm Use Zones, as Included in ORS 215.213 & ORS 215.283						
Permitted Uses	Farm Use	Commercial Activities with Farm Use	Room & Board	Mass Gathering	Farm Buildings	Farm Stand
<b>Types of Agritourism</b>	Permits vary by county, please always contact and consult your local planning department for assistance.					
<b>Recreation</b>	Fishing, hunting					
<b>Education</b>	Farm tours & demonstrations					Farm product promotional activities
<b>Agri-tainment</b>					Equestrian events & dog trials	Corn mazes, hay rides, harvest festivals, petting zoos
<b>Food Service</b>				Catered food		Farm-to-table dinners
<b>Accommodations</b>			Room & board for up to five unrelated persons in existing residence who work on the farm			
<b>Sales</b>	U-picks, CSA	Business-to-business sales; e.g., fertilizer & seed		Concerts, festivals, etc.	Farm stand sales	Raw & processed farm products
<b>Celebratory Events</b>						Farm-themed birthday parties

**Allowable Activities in Exclusive Farm Use Zones, as Included in ORS 215.213 & ORS 215.283 (Continued)**

Permitted Uses	Home Occupation	Private Park	Guest Ranch	Other Commercial Events	Wineries/ Cideries/ Breweries
Types of Agritourism	Permits vary by county, please always contact and consult your local planning department for assistance.				
Recreation		Low-intensity uses such as hiking trails	Fishing, hunting		
Education	Farm skills, craft and cooking classes		Farm/ranch skills classes	Farm skills, crafts and cooking classes	Tasting & tours
Agri-tainment	Farm skills, craft and cooking classes			Seasonal festivals and farm-related events (up to 18 days)	Up to 18 events that may include concerts & dances
Food Service	Food processing, breakfast for B&B guests		Meals for guests	Farm-to-table dinners	Limited food service for tastings; catered food service
Accommodations	B&B, up to five rooms	Camping in a limited number of tents or yurts	Up to 25 units		
Sales					Wine/cider/beer & incidentals
Celebratory Events					Weddings & retreats

Oregon Agritourism Network Policy Action Team: 2019



# Guidance on Specific State Land-Use Regulations Affecting Agritourism

Chances are you've had success in life and business by adopting the motto "better to ask for forgiveness than beg for permission" – after all, it's a hallmark of creative thinkers, pioneers and business innovators. Unfortunately, when it comes to navigating the policies and regulations regarding agriculture, failing to ask for and obtain permission can put you and your customers in jeopardy.

## BACKGROUND ON OREGON LAND-USE LAW

In response to competing interests and a desire to strengthen the state's economy while simultaneously conserving farmland and natural resources, the Legislative Assembly passed the original Oregon Land Use Act in 1973. This act required all cities and counties to adopt comprehensive plans that met mandatory standards set by the state. These programs, and the semi-independent roles of the state and local jurisdictions, set the foundation for the land-use policies we encounter today.

For instance, even though the state legislature adopted Senate Bill (SB) 960 in 2011, which created a process and structure for agritourism events, each of Oregon's 36 counties has the option to respond by implementing those parameters as they are written in statute, to implement a lesser version, or to implement nothing. It's important to keep this in mind as you continue reading this section: Just because there's a policy in place at the state level doesn't mean it will directly translate to your location.



PHOTO: JOSHUA RAINEY PHOTOGRAPHY

## FIRST STEPS: PREPARING FOR PERMITS

As you embark on this venture, it's important to remember that you're doing something new, and the very thought of agritourism can cause quite the kerfuffle. Your neighbors may associate tourists with increased traffic and noise rather than with spending that bolsters the local economy. Planners and inspectors find themselves in the challenging position of meeting your needs and those of your neighbors, while ensuring the safety of the public. As you proceed through the permitting process, patience and frequent communication will work to your benefit as you gain allies rather than make enemies.

Give yourself plenty of time to deal with the agencies regulating the industry. Agencies are often understaffed and can seem slow to process applications. Your business idea may be brilliant, but it may take time to build the regulator's understanding of your proposed operation and goals. Sometimes rules and regulations can themselves be confusing: Keep in mind that regulations were written by lawyers, and it might take both you and the agency representative time to figure out what tools at their disposal can yield you the proper permits. You may need to appear before a board or committee whose agendas require a 30-day advance public notice. Given all these factors, arriving at your regulator's or inspector's office with only a few days to act tends to cause unnecessary conflicts and stress. Don't be afraid to ask questions, but remember to be patient and courteous.

Finally, don't be discouraged if your county hasn't adopted a policy that you feel you need to operate your business. Oftentimes, a lack of resources or a lack of demand is the only reason a policy hasn't been changed. You can work with your planners and regulators to make some improvements.

## COMMON REGULATIONS THAT IMPACT AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES

Below you will find information about the most common regulations that impact agritourism in Exclusive Farm Use zones.

### A. FARM USE

Farm use is regulated by ORS 215.203. This statute allows direct sales and marketing of farm crops.

#### Types of Allowable Uses

Uses may be subject to county review, and include:

- Direct sales and marketing
- U-Pick
- U-Cut
- Christmas tree sales
- Community-Supported Agriculture (CSAs), limited to crops grown/harvested on-site

#### Limitations and Requirements

- Sales are limited to crops grown and harvested on-site.

### B. MASS GATHERINGS

Mass gatherings are defined and regulated by ORS 433.735(1), ORS 433.750, ORS 433.755 and ORS 433.763(1). These statutes define “outdoor mass gatherings” to mean an anticipated assembly of more than 3,000 persons that continues, or can reasonably be expected to continue, for more than 24 consecutive hours but less than 120 total hours within any three-month period.

Other gatherings are defined as an assembly of 3,000 or fewer persons not anticipated to continue for more than 120 hours in any three-month period. Counties are allowed to make modifications to this definition (e.g., “large gatherings” in Marion County).

#### Types of Allowable Uses

- Concerts
- Festivals
- Fairs
- Carnivals

#### Limitations and Requirements

##### *Mass gatherings:*

- Subject to review by the planning commission.
- Demonstrate compatibility with existing land uses.
- Not materially alter stability of land-use pattern of the area.
- No permanent structures are allowed.
- Have very detailed requirements for sanitary services, parking, medical services on-site, sewage, trash and food service.

##### *Small or “other” gatherings:*

- Not subject to review (e.g., not a “land-use decision”).

*Note: If you have an agritourism permit, you may not also apply for a mass gathering permit. If your county has adopted an agritourism policy based on SB960, you may not use “mass gathering” permits in lieu of an agritourism permit.*



## C. FARM STANDS

Farm stands are defined by ORS 215.283 (1)(o), which defines farm stands as structures “designed and used for the sale of farm crops or livestock grown on the farm operation, or grown on the farm operation and other farm operations in the local agricultural area, including the sale of retail incidental items and fee-based activity to promote the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand.”

### Types of Allowable Uses

- Direct sales of farm crops and livestock produced on the farm or other farms in Oregon, and retail incidental items.
- Fee-based activity to promote the sale of crops could potentially include a variety of uses, but it’s worthy to note that these uses are based on a Court of Appeals case:
  - Small-scale gatherings such as a birthday or picnic
  - Corn mazes
  - School tours
  - Pumpkin patch events
  - Hay rides
  - Farm animal exhibits
  - Farm product food contests
  - Food preparation demonstrations
  - Outdoor farm-to-table dinners

### Limitations and Requirements

- This statute does not include temporary or permanent structures designed for occupancy as a residence, or for activity other than the sale of farm crops or livestock.
- Nor does this statute provide for temporary or permanent structures designed for banquets, public gatherings and/or public entertainment.
- Annual sales of incidental items and fees from promotional activities are limited to 25% of total annual farm-stand retail sales.

## D. AGRITOURISM/COMMERCIAL EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES

This is the core of SB 960, approved by the Oregon Legislature in 2011 and referenced earlier in this chapter. While agritourism events are defined by ORS 215.283(4), the statute doesn’t specifically define the term “agritourism.” The customary definition is any commercial enterprise at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner. To date, your county may have chosen to adopt these regulations in whole, in part or not at all.

What is consistent no matter where you are is that agritourism and other commercial events must be related to and supportive of agriculture. All the activities approved by these provisions must be “incidental and subordinate to existing farm use.” To define that phrase a little further, think of it this way: Is this event secondary to your on-site farming in terms of income generated, area occupied and off-site impacts? Does this event generate supplemental income that will support your farming efforts?

### Types of Allowable Uses

The statute is not clear about the types of events and activities that might be allowed, so counties may interpret these uses differently. In general this permit could include activities related to:

- Education
- Hospitality
- Entertainment
- Outdoor recreation

### ***More specifically, we see agritourism permits issued for:***

- Cooking classes using farm products
- School tours (which could also be conducted with a farm stand permit)
- Farm/garden/nursery tours and stays
- Festivals and “Harvest Days”
- Pony rides, petting zoos, corn mazes
- Farm-to-table events



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## Limitations and Requirements

State law requires that the activities and events must be related to and supportive of agriculture, and be incidental and subordinate to existing farm use.

State law provides for a variety of permits; they increase in cost and intensity as the events do.

They are:

- One expedited event permit.
- One-event permit with a conditional land-use permit.
- Up to six events with a conditional land-use permit.
- Up to 18 events with a conditional land-use permit.

Conditions associated with these permits are set by the local jurisdiction, but are likely to include:

- Parking
- Noise
- Sanitation
- Signage
- Food service

Although there is no specified limitation on annual agritourism event revenue in relation to overall farm income, these events are intended to be subordinate to existing use.

## E. WINERY, CIDERY AND BREWERY BUSINESSES

Wineries, as related to land use and events, are regulated by ORS 215.452 and ORS 215.453. A small winery is defined by statute as less than 50,000 gallons on at least 15 acres, or more than 50,000 gallons on at least 40 acres. A large winery is defined as at least 150,000 gallons on 80 acres or more. A cider business, as related to land use and events, is regulated by ORS 215.451 and may be established on land zoned for EFU if the cider business produces less than 100,000 gallons of cider annually and owns an on-site or contiguous orchard of at least 15 acres; or produces at least 100,000 gallons of cider annually and owns an on-site or contiguous orchard of at least 40 acres. It's worthy to note that statute defines cider as a product made of apple or pears. In general, wineries and cideries have a wider array of allowable activities. Certain activities are more restricted for wineries than for farms with permitted farm stands. However, there are also activities that are only permitted on EFU land occupied by wineries.

In 2019 SB 287 passed the Oregon Legislature and affords breweries the same opportunities based upon their size and crops. Specifically, a farm brewery may be established in an EFU zone if it produces less than 150,000 barrels of malt beverages annually, a portion of the production may be produced offsite. Additionally, if the farm brewery produces less than 15,000 barrels of malt beverages annually on site; owns an on-site or contiguous hop farm of at least 15 acres; has a long-term contract for the purchase of all of the hops from at least 15 acres of a hop farm contiguous to the farm brewery; or obtains hops from a total of 15 acres from any combination of sources described in the statute.

## Types of Allowable Uses

Operations that are directly related to the sale or marketing of wine, cider or malt beverages produced in conjunction with the business may be allowed.

This includes limited service restaurants and the sale of incidental items directly related to on-site sales, including:

- Tours and tastings
- Buying club meetings
- Winemaker/cidermaker/brewer luncheons and dinners
- Business activities for wine/cider/brewing industry professionals
- Open houses to promote wine, cider or beer
- Bed-and-breakfast and room-and-board facilities

Agritourism or other commercial events in conjunction with these facilities are also allowed.

The promotion of wine, cider or beer produced in conjunction with the business is a secondary purpose of the event. Such events include:

- Outdoor concerts for which admission is charged
- Educational, cultural, health or lifestyle events
- Facility rentals
- Celebratory gatherings
- Charitable activities for which the winery does not charge a facility rental fee
- Other events



## Limitations and Requirements

- Income from limited-service restaurants and sales of incidental items must not exceed 25% of income from wine/cider/beer sales.
- The size of the business and frequency of events determines what permits are required. For small operations that host events more than six days per year, and large operations that host events more than 24 days per year, land-use permits are required.
- Both 7-18 and over 25-day applications must address potential impacts and must be subordinate to the production and sales of wine/cider/beer and may not create adverse impacts to uses on surrounding land.
- Small wineries/cideries/breweries are allowed a maximum of 18 days per year for events.
- 1-6 days is not a land-use decision.
- 7-18 days requires a land-use decision.
- Large wineries/cideries/breweries are allowed a maximum of 25 days per year for events.
- A land-use permit is required.
- Restaurants, where permitted, may operate 25+ days.

## F. GUEST RANCHES

Guest ranches as related to agritourism and events are regulated by ORS 215.296 (1)(2) and ORS 321.805. The guest ranch must be located on a lawfully established unit of land that is at least 160 acres, contains the dwelling of the individual conducting the livestock operation and is not on high-value farmland.

### Types of Allowable Uses

- Lodging
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Biking
- Horseback riding
- Swimming

- Food service (only for guests of the guest ranch, individuals accompanying the guests and individuals attending a special event at the guest ranch)

## Limitations and Requirements

You may not establish a guest ranch if the proposed site of the guest ranch is within the boundaries of or surrounded by:

- A federally designated wilderness area or a wilderness study area.
- A federally designated wildlife refuge.
- A federally designated area of critical environmental concern.
- An area established by an Act of Congress for the protection of scenic or ecological resources.

Additionally:

- A guest lodge must include no fewer than four and no more than 10 overnight guest lodging units.
- It may not exceed a total of 12,000 square feet in floor area, not counting the floor area of a lodge, that is dedicated to kitchen area, rest rooms, storage or other shared or common indoor space.
- For every increment of 160 acres that the lawfully established unit of land on which the guest ranch is located exceeds the minimum 160-acre requirement, up to five additional overnight guest lodging units not exceeding a total of 6,000 square feet of floor area may be included in the guest ranch, for a total of not more than 25 guest lodging units and 30,000 square feet of floor area.
- Recreation may not include the development of golf courses.
- The cost of meals, if any, may be included in the fee to visit or stay at the guest ranch; a guest ranch may not sell individual meals to an individual who is not a guest of the guest ranch, an individual accompanying a guest or an individual attending a special event at the guest ranch.

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN HEEB



# A-Z Glossary of Common Land Use Terms

**Accessory Structure:** A building or structure subordinate to the property's primary use.

**Administrative Decision:** A discretionary decision on a land-use permit, made by city or county staff without a hearing.

**Applicant:** The person who fills out an application for a permit to develop or divide land (see "Property Owner").

**Building Official:** The official who administers the building code and issues building permits.

**Building Permit:** Approval from the local building official to build, alter or place structures on real property.

**Comprehensive Plan:** A document adopted by the local government that provides the long-range land-use planning goals and policies of a city or county. The plan is composed of text and a map.

**Conditional Use:** A use that may be allowed, if it meets prescribed conditions in the zoning ordinance or additional conditions set forth by the decision-making body.

**Complete Application:** An application is deemed complete when all the information necessary to process it is provided to the planning official.

**Decision-Making Body:** The body that has the legal authority to make decisions on requests for development permits and adopt or amend land-use ordinances (i.e., planning commission or city council).

**Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD):** The administrative arm of the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

**Easement:** A right to use, for a specified purpose, a particular piece of land owned by another.

**Evidentiary Hearing:** A hearing in which evidence may be presented.

**Findings:** A statement of the standards, facts and conclusions used in decision making.

**Floodplain:** Low areas adjacent to rivers, lakes, estuaries and oceans that are periodically flooded at intervals of varying frequency.

**Height Requirements:** The maximum distance, from the ground to the highest part of the structure, that is allowed by a zoning ordinance.

**Land-Use Application:** A form on which a person requests a land-use action.



**Land-Use Action:** A final decision or determination made by a decision-making body affecting land use.

**Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC):** A seven-person volunteer commission appointed by the Governor to develop and administer Oregon's statewide planning goals.

**Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA):** An independent, three-person board appointed by the Governor to hear and rule on appeals of land-use decisions made by local governments and special districts. LUBA is the only forum that can hear appeals of local land-use decisions.

**Legislative Decision:** Decisions that create general rules or policies. A legislative matter affects an entire jurisdiction or a broad area, and a wide range of property owners. Making a legislative decision is generally optional.

**Ministerial Decision:** A non-discretionary decision on a proposed use of land, often made by staff. An example is a building permit for a structure that is an outright permitted use in the zone (see "Outright Permitted Use").

**Nonconforming Use:** A land use not permitted by current zoning regulations. The term is frequently used to describe a structure that was legally established but is no longer permitted. An example may be a house constructed prior to zoning regulations in an area that is now designated industrial.

**Nuisance:** That which substantially interferes with the enjoyment and use of one's land.

**Off-Street Parking:** An area on private property designated for parking motor vehicles.

**Oregon Revised Statutes:** The laws passed by the Oregon Legislature (also referred to as "ORS" and "statutes").

**Outright Permitted Use:** A use permitted by a zoning ordinance that does not require consideration of discretionary approval criteria by a planning official.

**Partition:** An act of partitioning land, or an area or tract of land that is partitioned. "Partition land" means to divide land into two or three parcels within a calendar year.

**Planning Commission:** A group of laypeople appointed by the governing body of a city or county to advise the governing body in matters pertaining to land use and comprehensive planning.

**Pre-Hearing Contact:** Contact between a decision-maker and an applicant or citizen on a matter that is to be heard by the decision-making body.

**Periodic Review:** A formal process by which the local government's land-use planning documents are reviewed to address changing circumstances and ensure compliance with new laws and rules.

**Public Notice:** Information about a land-use decision or a hearing to be held regarding such a decision. Such notice is published in a newspaper, mailed to property owners of adjacent property, or both.

**Quasi-Judicial:** The application of existing regulations to specific properties. The local government is generally required to make a decision on a quasi-judicial matter.

**Residential:** Structures intended for or used as living quarters for human beings (single-family dwellings, apartments, manufactured homes, etc.).

**Setback:** The placement of a building a specified distance away from a property line, other structure or feature.

**Sign Ordinance:** An ordinance that regulates the size, shape, color and elimination of signs.

**Site Plan:** A map showing the land and buildings involved in an application for a development permit.

**Statewide Planning Goals:** The state of Oregon adopted 19 planning goals, 14 of which are applicable to every jurisdiction in the state. The remaining five goals cover the Willamette Greenway (Goal 15) and the coastal area (Goals 16-19).

**Structural Plan:** A plan describing how a building will be constructed.

**Subdivision:** Either an act of subdividing land, or an area or tract of land that is subdivided. "Subdivide land" means to divide land into four or more lots within a calendar year.

**Subsurface Facilities:** Facilities installed beneath the earth's surface, such as septic tanks and electrical, sewer and water lines.

**Urban Growth Boundary (UGB):** An imaginary line around cities separating urban from rural land. Upon establishment, an UGB contains sufficient land to accommodate 20 years of growth for residential, commercial, industrial and public uses.

**Variance:** A decision to lessen or otherwise modify the requirements of a land-use ordinance as it applies to a particular piece of property.

**Zoning Ordinance:** An implementation tool of the comprehensive plan or zoning code. It identifies specific land-use zones and provides the regulations affecting uses within each zone. It includes the processes to administer various types of land-use actions. Sometimes it is combined with the regulations for dividing land.

**Zoning Map:** A map that shows parcel-specific zoning districts.



# Using BLM Land for Events

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Any individual or group conducting commercial activities and business on federally or state-managed lands must obtain a special use permit from the agency managing the land on which the business is being proposed. For agritourism, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands are the most common public lands in question.

Furthermore, anyone charging a fee to lead, guide or assist an outdoor recreation activity on public lands must also be registered with the Marine Board (503.378.8587, 435 Commercial Street, Salem OR 97310) as an outfitter/guide. Both the BLM and U.S. Forest Service require proof of a guide registration before issuing a permit.

## To gauge if you need a permit for your agritourism operations, consider these questions.

- Will your event be held on public lands?
- Will you be rafting a river that requires a permit?
- Will you be traveling in a designated wilderness area?
- Will you advertise?
- Will you charge a fee?
- Do you expect to make a profit on the event, or is the fee purely to cover expenses?
- Will there be a competition?
- Will you mark a course for an activity?
- Will you be expecting vehicles at your event? (How many?)
- Is anyone being paid to organize, lead or participate in your activity?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you need a permit from the BLM.

For all uses requiring a Special Recreation Permit, you must apply to your local BLM office at least 180 days prior to your event. Contact your local BLM office directly for more information.

## Why is a permit needed?

The permit process is intended to identify any potential land-use or resource conflicts that may arise; identify applicable procedures, permits and special conditions needed to protect resources and public uses; achieve a common understanding between the agency and the applicant about the objectives of the activities; and identify time frames, limitations and responsibilities.

In addition, fees generated by the commercial use of lands managed by the federal government are returned to the U.S. Treasury as revenue.

PHOTO: CHRISTIAN HEEB



## TYPES OF PERMITS

### Commercial Use

Commercial use is defined as recreational use of public land and related waters for business or financial gain. When any person, group or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receive money, amortize equipment or obtain goods or services as compensation from participants in recreational activities occurring on public land, the use is considered commercial.

Examples: Outfitters and guides, jeep tours, horseback and wagon-train rides, cattle drives, educational tours or uses and photography associated with a recreational activity.

## Competitive Use

Competitive use means any organized, sanctioned or structured use, event or activity on public land in which two or more contestants compete and either: 1) participants register, enter or complete an application for the event; or 2) a predetermined course or area is designated.

Examples: Off-Highway Vehicle races, horse-endurance rides, mountain bike races, rodeos.

## Special-Area Use

Special areas are areas officially designated by statute (law) or secretarial order.

Examples: Camping in Oregon and Washington, floating many BLM-managed rivers, backpacking in primitive areas, hiking in wilderness areas in Oregon and Washington.

## Organized-Group Activity

Organized-group activity permits are for noncommercial and noncompetitive group activities and recreation events.

Examples: A large scout campout, a fraternity activity, a large family reunion, an educational tour or use, or a dual-sport event.

## Vending

Vendor permits are temporary, short-term, nonexclusive, revocable authorizations to sell goods or services on public land, in conjunction with a recreation activity.

Examples: T-shirt sales in conjunction with a raft race, a hot-dog stand at a motocross event, firewood sales in a BLM campground, and shuttle services.

To obtain a permit, complete the form found [here](#). Use the instructions found [here](#).

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PHOTO: CHRISTIAN HEEB



# IV. Managing Risk

Agritourism can help your farm or ranch reduce its operating risks by diversifying your income sources and your customer base. But, with any customer service venture comes the potential for additional operating risks.

However, there are steps you can take to minimize risk and protect yourself and your farm and ranch if things go wrong despite your best efforts. And it's easier than ever before in Oregon to find that sweet spot between excellent, safe visitor experiences and viable business operations. That's because Oregon has joined most other U.S. states in developing limited liability protection statutes specifically for agritourism. When you complete your risk assessment and management plan, you should have a good sense of what agritourism activities are appropriate for you from a risk standpoint, and the risk management costs you need to account for in your business plan.

## Overview and Oregon liability laws related to agritourism

- Oregon Equine Inherent Risk Law ([OR 360.687 to 360, 697](#)) passed in 1993 establishes special liability protections for agritourism activities associated with horses.
- Oregon Agritourism Inherent Risk Law ([OR SB341](#)) passed in 2015 extends liability protections for all Oregon agritourism activities as defined by statute.

## Managing risk

- [Top 10 Ways to Limit Your Liability When Visitors Come to Your Farm](#), Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Poteau, OK.

## Additional risk assessment and management resources

- Risks can be quite different from one agritourism operation to another, depending on size and specific focus. A small family farm with no outside employees, for example, will have very different potential risks than a large commercial operation with value-added processing and events in the mix. As a result, risk management takes many different forms, depending on the appropriate level of detail required. This handbook aims for a middle ground starting point. However, if these tools don't fit your circumstances, the following page contains links to many other planning resources.



# More Useful Tools from Other States for Risk Assessment and Management

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The following publications have more detailed tools for assessing and managing agritourism risk.

- [Agritourism and Nature Tourism in CA, 2nd Edition](#), University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources pp. 70-88. See especially the “Accessibility Checklist” on page 87.
- [Managing the Safety Risks of Agritourism Farms](#), Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
- [Agritourism General Farm Safety Assessment Checklist](#), Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
- [Agritourism Onsite Farm Safety Guide, Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom](#), University of Vermont.
- [Agritourism Emergency Response and Legal Liability Assessment Checklist](#), Rutgers Cooperative Extension.



# Reducing Risk by Managing Liability

## Why risk management matters, in the words of farmers and ranchers with agritourism operations.

- Visitors are coming for an experience; we want those experiences to be positive ones.
- We want visitors to have fun and be safe.
- We want our employees to be happy (and not have to spend their time chasing people away from where they shouldn't be).
- We don't want to be sued; we want to get paid.
- We need to know the details of our policies — what we are protected against and how we can protect ourselves.
- We must actively manage risk through such things as fencing off areas we don't want people to explore and hiring extra help for busy times.
- In farming and ranching, we often learn by doing, but in the case of managing risk, preparation is really important.

## RISK IS EVERYWHERE

There is a degree of risk inherently associated with most activities. Risk can be high or low, but as panelist Keith Barnhart of Willow Springs Ranch noted, “every time someone comes on your ranch, it's a risk. We just need to accept that as a given.” Risk cannot be eliminated, but it can be managed.

While it's safe to assume that you already have liability policies for your farming and ranching operations, the minute you invite someone onto your property and charge a fee, this negates the liability protections in your general policy unless the fee-based operations have been included specifically. For that reason, you need to consider additional insurance, specific to your planned agritourism activities, that specifically protects you for risks associated with those activities. In the case of Willow Springs Ranch, the outfitter's liability policy covers their agritourism activities, while general liability policy covers ranching operations.

## RISK COMES IN MANY FORMS:

There are several classes of risk to consider in order to protect your assets. You have more control over some than you do others.

- Economic — Changes in the market that affect your operations.
- Legal — What compliance/statutory liability laws affect your activities?
- Political — Laws and policies change over time.
- Social — This includes public/neighbor relations, the potential loss of reputation, and scenarios that could irritate neighbors.
- Physical property and people on your property — If people are staying on your farm or ranch and they venture off your property, you may still be liable for anything that happens to them over the period of time that they are your guests. Ask your insurance agent about how this applies in your case.
- Judicial — Judge/jury decisions can cause changes in public attitudes.





## MANAGING RISK INCLUDES SEVERAL STEPS

Risk management is the process of protecting your assets by analyzing and planning for risks associated with your operation.

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- Identify the specific risk exposures for planned activities at your business. In other words, imagine all the ways people can injure themselves. Keep in mind that adults are usually a greater challenge than children, who tend to obey rules.
- Analyze the degree of risk associated with specific activities. Are there situations that could cause serious injuries? These are especially critical to address.
- Develop strategies for controlling exposure to risk. For example, can you put something away, fence it off, add a sign, provide advance information, etc.?
  - Keep in mind that you want to balance being hospitable and avoiding risk. For example, if you go to extremes and tack up “Do not” signs everywhere, this may detract from the welcoming experience you want to give your guests.
- Determine how to finance losses associated with risk. Through sound risk management strategies alone, you can reduce, but not entirely eliminate risk. In purchasing liability insurance, you transfer the risk costs to your insurance company in exchange for your premium payments; your deductibles represent what you directly assume as your share of the risk beyond what the carrier pays.
- This only works well if your insurance agent fully knows what your operations entail. Otherwise, you may have issues when/if you need to make a claim.
- If you have vendors providing agritourism services on your property, you can have them add you as an Additional Insured on their liability insurance for their operations (e.g., someone holding an event or a farm dinner).
- Having waivers and releases signed by your customers with “hold harmless” language can also alleviate your risk-exposure issues if you aren’t negligent, but such waivers don’t keep you from being sued. Most insurance policies do provide for legal defense.
- Since you cannot transfer the risk costs associated with your negligence, you need to consistently implement and monitor your risk management activities: Have clear policies and procedures in place and be sure you consistently apply them. For example, Willow Springs Ranch sends its release form to customers as part of a welcome package of information that people can review before sending their payment. The form has a check box to acknowledge that the information has been read and understood. It’s best to send that information in advance for activities that have some real risk (e.g., horseback riding is more risky than u-pick strawberries), or else you could be accused of “unfair inducement,” which means giving folks no option but to sign after they’ve already paid for an experience.
- If you need to make a claim, it should not preclude you from securing insurance in the future, but it may increase your rate, depending on the size of the claim, the state of your industry, whether you informed the insurance company of all your activities in advance, and whether you were actually negligent.
- Remember that even if you have done everything “by the book” to ensure your visitors’ safety, it will still impact you if someone gets hurt on your property. So try your best to anticipate and address as much as you can with risk management, and ensure that you are never negligent.

## TIPS FOR FINDING A GOOD INSURANCE AGENT

- The questions on the following page should give you a good vocabulary for interviewing agents. If your prospective agent isn't asking you these questions, he/she may not have the expertise to insure a farm, ranch or agritourism operation.
- Ask others with similar operations about whom they use.
- Check with your state insurance commission regarding reputation and complaints against your prospective insurance agent.
- Trust your intuition to tell you if it's a good fit.

## OTHER RESOURCES

- [Oregon Equine Inherent Risk Law](#) (1993), offers specific liability protections for agritourism activities associated with horses.
- [Oregon Agritourism Inherent Risk Law](#) (2015), expands liability protections for all Oregon agritourism activities as defined by statute.

*Excerpted from a presentation at the 2012 Oregon Agritourism Summit by Lance Adams, PayneWest Insurance, Baker City, OR, along with Keith Barnhart, Willow Springs Guest Ranch, Lakeview OR.*

The information included in the Oregon Agritourism Handbook should not be construed or treated as legal advice or counsel on matters of legal, tax, land-use or other policy. The Oregon Agritourism Handbook is strictly written to provide information to individuals interested in pursuing an agritourism business. This information is intended as a guide and resource hub. It is the responsibility of the individual to determine and understand all applicable laws, rules and regulations for each specific business and location. This handbook only offers information on where and how to connect with those resources. In no way is the information compiled intended to replace advice obtained from professionals such as an attorney, insurance agent, financial planner or land-use planner. Content and outside links found in the Oregon Agritourism Handbook do not necessarily reflect the views of Travel Oregon, Oregon Tourism Commission, or the State of Oregon. While the writers of this content have taken precautions to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, please note that content is subject to change. The advice of qualified and licensed professionals should be sought before embarking on any new or expanded business venture

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# Questions for Your Insurance Agent

## General

- Do you understand what I propose to do?
- Where do you see the risks? (This will help you see how well the agent understands.)

## Existing policies

- What exactly does my general farm liability insurance already cover? Where are the gaps? (Think about those yourself ahead of time, so you can probe with specifics.)
  - Am I covered for sales made off the farm or ranch (e.g., farmers markets)? To what extent?
  - Are farm employees covered for anything they may do in association with the agritourism operation?
  - Does my automobile coverage on farm vehicles cover agritourism-related travel? If not, what type of policy do I need?
  - Any other questions (based on your operation).
- What are the specific reasons, if any, that indicate I need to supplement my general farm liability policy with a more specialized commercial business policy?

## Agritourism-specific insurance

- To what extent would this proposed policy cover:
  - My premises and operations liability?
  - My product and operations liability?
  - My contractual obligations to others?
  - My personal liability to or injury to others (e.g., slander, invasion of privacy)?
  - My advertising liability to others?
  - My property liability to others?
  - Incidental medical malpractice resulting from my helping an injured person?
  - Host liquor liability?
  - Court cost for defense?

- Are there any specific exclusions?
- What size umbrella policy will provide adequate coverage, and what coverage levels would you recommend for each type of liability coverage? Why?
- Is my policy a “claims and occurrences” policy? And what happens if I change insurers?
- What are my options, including options for deductibles?
- How is the company you’re recommending rated? Based on what?

## Risk management

- Will guests have to sign anything special to be covered, such as a waiver?
- Should groups using my farm or ranch for an event be required to show evidence of insurance? When should I ask to be an Additional Insured?
- Should my contractors (e.g., outfitters, caterers) be required to show evidence of insurance? When should I ask to be an Additional Insured?
- What types of documentation should I keep to protect myself from negligence claims?

This information was adapted from several sources, including: *Creating Successful Agritourism Activities for your Farm*; *Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture*; *Agritourism in Focus: A Guide for Tennessee Farmers*, University of Tennessee Extension; and *Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide*, Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board.





# Assessing Risks for Your Agritourism Enterprise

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Agritourism can be a risk-management strategy for your farm or ranch as a whole, because it diversifies your income streams, creates new marketing channels and possibly evens out your seasonal cash flow. Agritourism is not without risk itself, however. The risks associated with agritourism, or any business operation, fall into eight major categories:

1. Physical safety of your site.
2. Safety of products for sale, including food safety, compliance with direct-sales regulations, etc.
3. Compliance with environmental and land-use regulations.
4. Compliance with other applicable laws and general business regulations, including employee safety and welfare, as well as animal safety and welfare.
5. Market changes.
6. Business interruption due to natural disasters or weather.
7. Legal and management structure.
8. Financial solvency.

This risk assessment will primarily focus on the first two categories of risk. The Risk Management Plan in this section of the handbook includes space to develop strategies for all eight risk factors.

## INSTRUCTIONS

Take a walk around your farm or ranch as if you were a visitor. If possible, bring along a friend who may be able to observe with fresh, less familiar eyes. Make a list of potential hazards and specify the location (Worksheet 1); take pictures as needed to help you remember and/or to convince a partner not walking with you that certain things are problematic.

Next, use Worksheet 2A to assess the specific risks associated with agritourism activities. List the specific agritourism activities you're considering and where they will take place (Column 1). List the associated risks that visitors could encounter from the moment they arrive on your farm or ranch (Column 2).

Then assess the importance of the risk to your operation, along two dimensions: the likelihood of injury and the magnitude of potential loss (Columns 3 and 4). Finally, identify ideas to avoid, reduce, accept or transfer risk (Column 5), and guesstimate the cost of implementing these risk management strategies (Column 6).

Finally, complete the related Worksheets 2B and 2C as per their slightly different column headings.

Now you're ready to develop a Risk Management Plan.



This list has been compiled from Oregon's experience and several other agritourism development manuals, including: *Agritourism in Focus: A Guide for Tennessee Farmers*, University of Tennessee Extension; *Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California*, 2nd Edition; University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; *Creating Successful Agritourism Activities for your Farm*; *Community Involvement in Sustaining Agriculture*; and *Vermont Agritourism Collaborative: Agritourism Best Practices: Safety and Risk Management*. Worksheets 2A, 2B and 2C are directly adapted from Tennessee's *Agritourism in Focus*, with permission.

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## WORKSHEET 1

Risk assessment: Where are the risks located?

Specific Risk/Hazard?	Where?

## WORKSHEET 2A

What are the specific risks by location? What ideas do you have to manage these risks?

Agritourism Activity and Location	Risk	Likelihood of Injury (low to high)	Magnitude of Potential Loss (small to large)	Potential Strategies to Address	Estimated Cost
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		

## WORKSHEET 2B

What risks are associated with agritourism that are not location-specific?  
 What ideas do you have to manage these risks?

Agritourism Activity and Location	Risk	Likelihood of Injury (low to high)	Magnitude of Potential Loss (small to large)	Potential Strategies to Address	Estimated Cost
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		

\* Consider legal and regulatory compliance issues reviewed in [Section III](#) of this Handbook. For example, risk associated with sale of products, and tastings, pesticide storage, watershed protection, ADA accessibility, employee relations, etc.

## WORKSHEET 2C

Are there other general risks for your agritourism operation that are not activity-specific?\*

What ideas do you have for risk management?

Agritourism Activity and Location	Risk	Likelihood of Injury (low to high)	Magnitude of Potential Loss (small to large)	Potential Strategies to Address	Estimated Cost
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		
		1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5		

\* For example, issues with neighbors, market changes, etc. Keep these in mind as you move forward into business planning.





# Strategies to Avoid, Reduce, Transfer and Adapt to Agritourism Business Risks

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## AVOID RISK

- Just say no to the activity with unacceptable risk. Explore other ideas instead.

## REDUCE RISK

- Be familiar with laws and regulations and follow all requirements.
- Develop and implement safety measures and procedures for customers and employees and post rules.
- Define visitor areas, visitor activities and visitor supervision procedures.
- Keep visitor areas clean and free of hazards.
- Provide visitors a map and post property boundaries.
- Provide sanitary restrooms.
- Make hand-washing facilities available for employees and customers.
- Flag unsafe areas on your property, and create signage that directs people away from risky places.
- Safely store pesticides, herbicides and other toxins.
- Identify and lock “do not enter” areas.
- Keep implements and machinery away from visitors
- Develop and implement an emergency response plan.
- Block off bodies of water.
- Guard against fire.
- Develop and implement safe food-handling procedures.
- Ensure your products are labeled correctly.
- Orient and train employees in proper operational procedures.
- Keep your animals vaccinated and healthy.
- Get first aid training and require the same of employees.

- Retain an on-site first aid kit, fire extinguishers and a weather radio.
- Place lists of emergency phone numbers with directions to your operation at all phones.
- Provide adequate parking that eliminates roadside hazards.
- Develop and implement an accident reporting system to preserve contact information for injured parties and witnesses, as well as photos and other relevant information.
- Seek assistance from professionals such as lawyers, accountants, production specialists and others as needed.



## ADAPT TO RISK:

- Set up a beneficial legal structure for your agritourism operations that limits associated risks.
- Have a strong business plan.
- Have a strong management team and structure for monitoring risk on an ongoing basis.
- Create an emergency fund to pay for insurance deductibles and unplanned expenses.

## TRANSFER RISK:

- Obtain property insurance.
- Obtain liability insurance that fits the specific activities you are planning.
- Obtain health and disability insurance.
- Obtain crop insurance.
- Ensure you are protected for off-farm or ranch liability: “sponsored activities that cause off-farm harm, hazard or injury.”
- Learn and follow insurance requirements and claim procedures.
- Require customers to sign lease or rental agreements for appropriate activities (such as fee hunting or equipment rental).
- Require vendors and independent contractors to maintain current licenses and insurance while operating on your property; and when they are earning money from other customers while on your property, have them add you to their liability policy as an Additional Insured.
- Require customers to sign hold harmless agreements or liability waivers.

Adapted with permission from Agritourism in Focus, University of Tennessee Extension Service; Agritourism and Nature Tourism in CA, 2nd Edition.



CHRISTIAN HEEB



## V. Developing a Business Plan

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Sure, you have an agritourism idea for your business, but do you have a business plan? And do you need a written plan? It depends. The format for your business plan can vary greatly. If you're seeking outside financing, you will likely need a formal, comprehensive business plan, for which there are many guides. If you're establishing a partnership or other legal structure, you'll want a written plan to spell out agreements regarding business goals, operations, and key roles and responsibilities.

The following resources can help you get started on your business plan.

### General resources for business planning and management

- [Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farms Management](#) — OSU Small Farms Program
- [Online Tool for Building Your Business Plan](#) — Small Business Association
- [Agriculture Business Planning Workbook](#) — Colorado State University Extension
- Oregon Start a Business Guide — Oregon Secretary of State ([English](#), [Spanish](#))
- [Small Business Resource Guide](#) — Oregon/Washington edition from Small Business Administration
- [State of Oregon Business Resources](#)

### Financing your agritourism operation

- [Creative Financing for Agricultural Businesses](#) — From Columbia Gorge-based farmer and author [Rebecca Thistlethwaite](#)
- [Business Oregon Business Finance Programs](#)





# VI. Marketing Your Agritourism Venture

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Marketing can feel intimidating, but you can tackle it step by step. Determine the most likely customers for your product or service; communicate what you offer in terms of what your customers value; deliver what you promise and delight your customers, who will recommend you to others; and price your offerings for a profit.

The marketing strategy ties into your general business plan (see business planning resources in the previous section); it should be consistent with your overall business values, goals and budget. But the marketing plan is different because it focuses on detailed tactics. Below are some Oregon resources, as well as selected tools from other states that are particularly useful.

## Market data

- Part I of this handbook, “Why Consider Agritourism?” contains information about market preferences and trends for agritourism.

## Marketing resources and advice from Travel Oregon

- An overview of Travel Oregon’s marketing resources for tourism entrepreneurs, as well as general marketing tips are available in the two resources below:
  - [Agritourism Marketing Toolkit](#)
  - [Agritourism Customer Service Basics](#)

## Developing a marketing strategy

- [Marketing Strategies for Agritourism Operations](#) — Holly George and Ellie Rilla, University of California at Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources.
- [Developing a Marketing Plan for Your Farm](#) — Communities Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA).
- [Making a Marketing Plan](#) — Small Business Administration.

## Other marketing tools

- [Agritourism Signage: A Study of Best Practices](#) — MARStewart Group
- Digital marketing for agritourism: At little to no cost, businesses can use web-based communications to disseminate information and impart their unique brand identities. Below are examples of effective digital marketing messages from agritourism businesses and partners based in Oregon. These examples showcase three types of online tools: websites, blogs and social media. The website is your general resource for customers, like a paper guide that doesn’t change often. The blog is a window to your world, speaking more broadly about industry topics than your business alone, as well as a way to boost your website’s SEO (search engine optimization). Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram can serve as newsletters, where you announce upcoming events and showcase recent happenings. All these tools help you connect, and stay connected, with customers.
  - [Leaping Lamp Farm Stay \(Alsea\)](#)
  - [Plate & Pitchfork \(Portland\)](#)
  - [Camas Country Mill \(Junction City\)](#)
  - [Dragonfly Farm and Nursery \(Langlois\)](#)
  - [Winding Waters River Expeditions \(Joseph\)](#)





# Oregon Agritourism Marketing Strategy Template

Here is a simple, three-part template to help you think about and capture the essential ingredients of your marketing strategy:

## PART 1: BIG PICTURE

**Focus on defining the unique features and benefits of your product and service, and how you will position them in the marketplace\* given your target audience.**

The key variables that determine market position are what marketing professionals call the “Four P’s:” product (or service), place, price and promotion. The concept has evolved more recently to the “Four C’s,” which reflect the same four categories, but from the point of view of your customers: customer benefit, convenience, customer cost and (two-way) communication.

TOP PHOTO: CHRISTIAN HEEB, BELOW: GREG ROBERSON



<p><b><i>Product/Customer Benefit</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does your target customer want?</li> <li>• What features must your product or service offer to meet these needs?</li> <li>• How is your product different from your competitors? Quality? Style? Beauty? Personality? Service packages?</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Place/Convenience</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where do buyers look for your product or service?</li> <li>• Is it easy to find? If not, is that a disadvantage?</li> <li>• How often is your product or service available?</li> <li>• When your product is available, do you keep reliable business hours?</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Price/Customer Cost</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the value of the product or service to the customer?</li> <li>• Are there established prices?</li> <li>• How will your prices compare with your competitors?</li> <li>• Will your price be considered fair?</li> <li>• Will you offer volume discounts?</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Promotion/Communication</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where and when can you get your message across to the people you are targeting as customers?</li> <li>• What mediums will you use to communicate? (Keep in mind that advertising is the most expensive medium!)</li> <li>• How will you engage with your customers?</li> </ul>

\* Note that your competition is not just other farm stays, farm stands, ranch vacations, etc. Try to think broadly about what choices your customers have for their leisure time: to stay home and relax, to visit exotic places, to make their own jam, to hike in a forest, etc.

## PART 2: TACTICS

**Focus on the specific types of promotion and public relations you will undertake to connect with your customers.**

The medium is the method for delivering your message to your potential customers, as well as the method for two-way communication with your customers.

<b>Examples of Marketing Mediums:</b>	
Website	Add a blog to your site
Posters around town	Better signage
Hand out flyers at events	Hold events
Product demonstrations, trainings, presentations	Monthly e-newsletter to customers
Distribute brochures/business cards	Sales, discounts, contests
Cultivate relationship with media, pitch stories and make yourself available for interviews (“earned” media)	Distribute take-homes (e.g., bookmarks with recipes) at point of sale
Cross-promote or package with other related businesses	Direct mail to prospective customers
Cultivate word-of-mouth network	Promote to clubs and associations
Go to trade shows	Create videos
Join appropriate marketing associations, from the local chamber to the Cheese Guild, depending on what fits	Encourage past customers to review on platforms such as TripAdvisor, etc.
Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter – What fits you best?	Buy cooperative advertising
Travel Oregon marketing platforms	Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) platforms

Content adapted from Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd edition.

## PART 3: ANNUAL SCHEDULE

**Create a monthly to-do list of marketing activities.**

## AGRITOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY — PART 1: BIG PICTURE

<b>TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	
Who are your target customers? (location, income, age, etc.)	
What do your target customers need and desire?	
<b>MARKET MIX AND POSITION</b>	
What specific products and services will you offer?	
What makes your product or service unique?	
How does your product or service meet your target market's needs and desires?	
What advantages do you have over your competition?	
How will you price your product or service relative to the competition?	
What positive associations do you want to convey to your target customers about your product and service? What are your biggest selling points?	
<b>MESSAGE</b>	
What information does the customer need to make a decision?	
<b>TACTICS</b>	
What budget can you set aside annually for marketing?***	
What are the best ways to reach your target customer? (continue with Part 2)	
<b>MARKETING GOALS</b>	
What can you specifically measure to determine if your marketing efforts are effective?	

\*\*\*During the first four years of operation, expect to spend 10-25% of your total agritourism-related operating costs on marketing, according to the authors of Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd edition.

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## AGRITOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY – PART 2: TACTICS

Communication Medium	Target Audience	Features and Benefits to Highlight	When/ How Often?	Cash Cost	Other Cost	Who?



## AGRITOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY – PART 3: ANNUAL SCHEDULE

Month	Recurring Marketing Activities	Seasonal or Special Marketing Activities	Expected Cost
Jan			
Feb			
Mar			
Apr			
May			
Jun			
Jul			
Aug			
Sep			
Oct			
Nov			
Dec			

GREG ROBERSON



## VII. Delivering a Great Visitor Experience

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In an era of lightning-fast communication via social media, a great visitor experience can make a big impact. Happy visitors can become extremely valuable ambassadors for your products and services. This section of the handbook contains resources for great customer service, as well as guides to creating specific types of agritourism experiences.

### Exceptional Customer Service

- [Oregon Guest Service Training Program](#) is a partnership between the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association Education Foundation and Travel Oregon. Through the program, you and your employees or family members can participate in an accredited and internationally recognized customer service training program, starting at a cost of \$30/person. Learn more from the [course introduction video](#).

### High-Quality Experiences

- [Offering High Quality On-farm Experiences](#), by the Vermont Agritourism Collaborative, explains how to build authenticity, safe environments and facilities, educational experiences (both farmer-led and self-guided) and strong customer service.

- The following guides for specific activities are sourced from several states. Some regulatory information is specific to the state, but the content on how to deliver memorable experiences is broadly applicable.
- Farm Stays
  - [How to Develop a Farm Stay](#), Vermont Agritourism Collaborative.
  - [Farm Stay USA](#), the national association for farm stays, based in Oregon.
  - [What to Expect During a Farm Stay](#) (a customer perspective), Farm Stay USA.
- On-Farm Sales
  - [How to Develop a Farm Stand](#), Vermont Agritourism Collaborative.
  - [How to Develop a Pick-Your-Own Business](#), Vermont Agritourism Collaborative.
- Events
  - [How to Develop Farm-to-Table Dinners](#), Plate and Pitchfork, Erika Polmar.
- Educational Experiences
  - [How to Develop a Farm Tour](#), Vermont Agritourism Collaborative.

[Section VIII](#) of the handbook provides additional examples of high-quality experiences created through win-win partnerships.





PHOTO: PLATE & PITCHFORK

# How to Develop Successful Farm-to-Table Dinners

Farm dinners provide an opportunity for food lovers to learn more about the people and places that grow their food. By participating in a dinner, they will hopefully develop greater appreciation for the process of growing, harvesting and preparing meals with high-quality, locally grown ingredients.

There is not one model to follow to produce a successful farm dinner. Creating an experience that best represents your farm and your goals will provide your guests with the most authentic and enjoyable experience. Producing successful dinners is time consuming and can be complicated, especially when it comes to executing them without disrupting your current workload. You will need to address elements such as safety, signage, liability, permitting, event production and zoning. This section is intended to get your planning off to a good start.

## Zoning

Your land use zone determines which activities are permissible on your property with and without a permit. Refer to [Section III](#) of this handbook for more detailed information. Before you begin planning your farm dinners, contact your local planning office and determine if permits are required and if so, what the process to obtain them entails. See page X for more detailed guidance.

## Liability Insurance

Although your current insurance may cover having guests on your property, make sure you also have coverage for the preparation or consumption of food and alcohol. Be sure to contact your insurance agent and share your intentions so they may provide you with the proper policy. There are numerous types of liability insurance, but you will want to discuss the following with your agent:

- Premises
- Product
- Property damage
- Personal
- Liquor
- Employees

## Meal Preparation and Permitting

Food served to the public must be prepared with health and safety in mind. If you are planning to do the cooking yourself, you will need to speak to your local health inspector to determine how to safely and legally prepare food on your property. You will also be required to obtain a temporary restaurant permit to serve food to the public if you are not currently operating a commercially licensed kitchen on your premises. Typically, a permit application must be submitted six weeks prior to an event and will require an onsite inspection of your refrigeration, sanitation and cooking equipment.

PHOTO: PLATE & PITCHFORK



One way to simplify the planning of your dinner is to hire a commercial caterer who not only holds the necessary licenses to serve food and alcohol, they will also be skilled at setting up events and have a relationship with a party supply rental company that will provide the equipment you need to create both a field kitchen and dining area.

You might choose to work with a local chef who uses your products in their restaurant. Although restaurants operate with their own set of permits, you will still be required to obtain a temporary restaurant permit for the food preparation on your farm.

Any individual who is producing or serving food must have a current food handler's permit issued by a county health department in Oregon.

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## Alcohol Service Permits

If you will be selling or serving alcohol at your dinner you will need a liquor license.

A liquor license is needed at special events where:

- Alcohol will be sold.
- Alcohol is available (but not being sold) and you are charging or accepting donations for admission, or where payment is required to attend the event.

A liquor license is not needed at special events where:

- You are making alcohol available, but there is no payment or purchase required and no donations of money are accepted for alcohol or for entry/admission, or for any other product or service (e.g. a wedding reception where you make alcohol available, but you don't require payment or purchase and don't accept donations of money).

Temporary/Special Event liquor permits are available for a small fee. Your local planning office will need to review your permit before you submit the application to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) and in some instances they may charge a fee as well. Plan on a minimum of six weeks for this process. Applications and instructions are available here.

Individuals serving alcohol must have a current, state-issued service permit.

## Top Ten Tips for a Successful Farm Dinner

Think about the experience from the customer's perspective, from the time they arrive at your farm until they head home.

1. There's clear directional signage and plenty of parking.
2. Attendance is limited so guests can easily engage with the hosts and the location.
3. Outdoor events will be subject to factors like heat, rain and stinging insects. Find methods for deterring/repelling

critters without offending your guests. Monitor weather forecasts and adjust your plans accordingly.

4. Staffing is sufficient to serve the meal and provide guest service.
5. Presenters at the dinner are clear on the key messages you wish to deliver to your guests, prepared to answer questions and concise in their delivery.
6. Keep your dishes and décor simple and elegant. Minimalist décor offers a more authentic experience and frees up time and resources that could be put into the execution of the event.
7. Make sure that as many ingredients as possible are from your farm and work closely with your culinary partners to craft a menu that best represents you and your community.
8. Have materials ready for people to take home: your CSA order form, a schedule of future events or a schedule of farmers markets you attend. If you have a mailing list, make sure a sign-up sheet is available.
9. If your event is raising money for a specific cause — new fencing, expanding beehives, remodeling the farm stand, supporting CSA shares for low-income families — share this information and make sure your staff provides consistent messaging about how the funds will be used and how guests may contribute.
10. Preparing your property to host an event of this scale can be more time consuming than anticipated. Take care to determine where you can set up the dining area and kitchen so that it makes the least impact on your daily operations. Budget time to prepare for the event and to return the space back to its regular working order.

This information was compiled from information presented on the websites of various Farm Dinner operations, and then combined with the personal experience of the author. This information is for education only, and should not be considered legal advice.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PLATE AND PITCHFORK





## VIII. Productive Partnerships

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Working together – with both the obvious partners and more unusual candidates – can help you build a successful and resilient agritourism product or service. Partnerships among similar businesses, such as farms in a particular area, can generate economies of scale for marketing. Partnerships with other hospitality operations, such as chefs, outfitters and guides, can yield incredible and seamless visitor experiences that increase revenue potential. Partnerships with schools and heritage organizations can build local support and enlist community ambassadors that help you diversify your customer base. Partnerships with government and land management agencies can accelerate permitting and access.

### Food Trails

One of the oldest agritourism collaborations in Oregon, the Hood River Fruit Loop was organized in 1992 as a self-guided 35-mile driving tour to market farm products and activities as a destination experience. Today, there are more than 30 different attractions, with activities that vary throughout the agricultural season.

- [Grant's Getaways Spring Tour of Fruit Loop](#)
- [Hood River Fruit Loop Map](#)

In 2018, Travel Oregon launched the Oregon Food Trails program to provide communities a way to package and showcase their local farm, ranch, seafood and other agricultural assets, as well as local culinary businesses that feature locally-sourced products. There are now several trails participating in the program across the state. Explore the Oregon Food Trails on [oregonfoodtrails.com](http://oregonfoodtrails.com).

### Culinary and Outdoor Recreation

Winding Waters River Expeditions in Wallowa County launched in 2005 as a guided river-tour operator. Over time its owners established many partnerships, including with local ranches and a farm-to-table dinner company, to create memorable visitor experiences.

- [Winding Waters River Expeditions partnership networks](#) (“Faces of Travel and Tourism” series, Travel Oregon)
- [Plate and Pitchfork Collaboration](#)

### Agricultural Heritage

Camas Country Mill in Veneta has grown beyond producing heritage grains to becoming a visitor attraction, by engaging local schools and renovating an old schoolhouse with a crowdfunding campaign.

- [Grant's Getaways Camas Country Mill Travel Oregon Forever project](#)





# Tips for Building Marketing and Community Partnerships

Establishing relationships and cooperative alliances with your community is a key element of long-term success.

1. Speak about your project early on with neighbors, family and local businesses. Share your ideas. Listen to their concerns and feedback. Address any problems early in the development of the project.
2. Develop a comfortable level of public presentation. Speak at service clubs, association meetings and other gatherings.
3. See your shortcomings or weaknesses as future opportunities for collaboration. Inventory your community and seek out those who have what you need to complete your goals. Return the favor.
4. Define who shares potential customers with you. Align yourself with other businesses and attractions, and openly discuss potential customers. Develop exchange promotions and track where your leads come from.
5. Comply with local ordinances. Work through compliance issues as required by law and in the spirit of cooperation with surrounding properties and interests.
6. Engage adversaries. Most simply want to be heard or are afraid of unknown impacts. Sit down one-on-one and listen. Address the concerns; don't shrug them off or disregard them.

7. Manage physical growth of your operation to ensure quality of life for all citizens affected.

8. Work to foster a sense of community.

Excerpted with permission from the 2003 Agri-Tourism Workbook: Agri-Business Council of Oregon



TOP AND BOTTOM PHOTOS COURTESY OF PLATE AND PITCHFORK





# Agritourism Partnership Self-Assessment

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Consider the people, businesses and organizations you work with already, or would like to work with to support your agritourism venture. This worksheet helps you assess what mutual value your current partnerships generate, as well as who else might be a good partner and what you might be able to do together. The columns in the following exercise show a variety of potential collaborative activities, from the least intensive/interdependent to the most. More intensive is not necessarily better: While they can yield great benefits, intensive activities require a high degree of trust and often a lot of time as well. It's up to you to decide how much collaboration makes sense for you. Here's how to proceed:

- Start by listing your current partners and check the items that apply to the activities you conduct together. The last three columns ask you to analyze the value of these partnerships: Do you have something valuable to contribute to this partner so you both win? Do you have ideas for working together in new ways? Given your business goals, is this partner a priority for the future?
- After you've assessed your current partners, think about potential partners. For example, if you would like to reach visitors from outside your area, perhaps you can partner with a local inn or farm stay. If you want to offer horseback riding, perhaps you can partner with a public park manager. Go through the same steps of identifying the types of activities you could pursue with new partners, the benefits you could offer, and the priority order to approach these potential new partners.
- What do you conclude about the value of partnering for your venture?



See the following page for the Partnership Self-Assessment Activity.

Partners											
	Current (C) or potential (P)?	Refer customers to each other	Borrow from each other	Joint marketing activities	Buy and/or sell from each	Package visitor activities together	Invest together in visitor products or services	Other	What do you have to offer this partner?	Potential ideas for deepening work together	Priority





# Appendix: Agritourism Resources and Industry Organizations in Oregon

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[Oregon Agritourism Network](#)

[Travel Oregon](#)

[Oregon State University Small Farms Program](#)

[Oregon State University – Extension Service](#)

[Oregon Department of Agriculture - New and Small Farms Program](#)

[Farm Stay USA](#)

[Oregon Aglink](#)

[Department of Land Conservation and Development](#)

[Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association](#)

[Oregon Farm Bureau](#)

[Lavender Northwest](#)

[Oregon Wine Board](#)

[Oregon Cheese Guild](#)

[Oregon Brewers Guild](#)

[Oregon Farmers Markets Association](#)

[Oregon Food Innovation Center](#)

TOP PHOTO: SIONNIE LAFOLLETTE

