



DIRECT MARKETING STRATEGIES

AGRITOURISM

The National Agricultural Law Center defines Agritourism as “a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch or business owner.” Agritourism can be a great way to diversify your marketing strategies and increase cash flow. Bringing folks directly to your farm or ranch can increase your on-farm sales, especially sales of any value-added products, while educating the public about farming and ranching.

Agritourism is increasing in popularity. Growing numbers of people are traveling to rural areas for leisure purposes. Teaming up with other farmers or ranchers with non-competing enterprises to jointly market your agritourism enterprises can increase the number of visitors to your farm and the profitability of your agritourism enterprise. Having multiple agritourism enterprises in one area draws more tourists and can provide a seasonal festival experience.

AGRITOURISM VENTURES

Agritourism ventures are as varied as the farms or ranches that host them. Some operate on a seasonal basis where others are open all year, with a variety of consumer services available.

Farm Stays

Another activity that is gaining popularity among consumers is visiting or staying on farms. These often include hands-on experiences where the customer can help with farm and ranch chores to learn more about farming. This can include seeding, weeding, harvesting, feeding, milking animals, etc. Farm stays typically include lodging and often meals.

WHERE TO START

If you want to add an agritourism enterprise to your existing operation or start an agritourism business, you must first assess your goals and abilities. Visiting or researching other agritourism operations with activities you are interested in offering to gather ideas is a good place to start. Assess what options are available to you, assess your skills and time realistically, and most of all, develop a plan.

Zoning

Before you break ground, you'll want to ensure the zoning and building laws affecting your property allow for your chosen agritourism venture. Some agritourism ventures are affected by land use rules or prohibitive zoning. Contact your city or county clerk about your prospective agritourism enterprise and obtain a copy of the local land use and

COMMON EXAMPLES OF AGRITOURISM

Pumpkin patches
Corn mazes
U-Pick operations
Petting and feeding zoos
Hayrides
Cut-your-own
Christmas tree farms

Horseback riding
Farm festivals
Fee fishing and camping
Demonstration farms
Agricultural museums, or
living history farms

On-farm farmer's markets
and farm stands
Winery tours and wine tasting
Rural bed & breakfast
Guided and self-guided tours
Wedding or other event venues
Dinners on the farm

zoning rules applicable to your property to confirm the necessary permits you may need to obtain. Farms commonly must apply for Conditional Use Permits (CUPs), especially if hosting overnight guests such as farm stays.

Accessibility

Some aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act may apply to your property if you are hosting events. Visit ADA.gov for more information on requirements and ways to make your property safe and accessible for all.

POSTING SIGNS

Road signs help identify your business and direct customers to your farm. Do your research before erecting any signs. The use of signs is governed by federal laws, state statutes, and local ordinances. Contact your local county planning and zoning department or commission for information on zoning restrictions and other regulations.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Keeping those who visit your farm or ranch safe should be your first priority. Make sure you assess your farm or ranch for potentially dangerous conditions, do your best to minimize them, and make plans for how to deal with the unavoidable risks of farming and ranching. (See *Fact Sheet 2.3 Liability for more information*).

Health Codes

Contact your local health district with a detailed overview of your agritourism venture ideas. They can help you identify which activities they oversee and point you to best practices for each. Things like apple bobbing, apple pressing, petting zoos, or any food or drink service are regulated by the health department. Regulations related to some on farm activities, such as providing a simple hand washing station, are easy to comply with so don't be deterred by the thought of regulations! As always, it is best to ensure you can meet and be completely compliant with applicable regulations before investing time

and money into an agritourism enterprise.

Liability

One essential tool to manage risk is liability insurance. Before hosting groups of visitors or planning a public event, check with your liability coverage. An event insurance rider may be necessary. Make sure that you have an adequate insurance policy before beginning. (See *Fact Sheets 2.2 Insurance and 2.3 Liability for more information*).

Title 6, Chapter 3, in Idaho Code titled "Idaho Agritourism Promotion Act," provides some liability protections for inherent risks associated with agritourism activities as long as you post the necessary warning signs.

Warning Signage

The State of Idaho requires that every Agritourism professional post and maintain signs that contain a specific warning notice of potential dangers on your farm or ranch. See Section 6-3004, Idaho Code for more information. Failure to comply shall prevent an agritourism professional from invoking the privileges of immunity provided by the law.

RELATED FACT SHEETS IN OTHER CHAPTERS:

- 1.5 Licenses & Permits*
- 2.2 Insurance*
- 2.3 Liability*
- 3.2 Weights, Measures, & Device Licensing*
- 3.8 On-Farm Stands*
- 3.10 U-Pick*