



MONTANA'S AGRITOURISM MANUAL



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	p. 2	Stories from Montana.....	p. 7
What is Agritourism.....	p. 3	Marketing.....	p. 11
Types of Agritourism.....	p. 4	Safety and Risk Management	p. 15
Considerations Before You Start...p. 5		Additional Resources.....	p. 19



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to AERO's Agritourism Manual! Developed by AERO staff with the support of the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, and the Agritourism Working Group of the Montana Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, MSU Extension, Governor's Office of Economic Development, Food and Ag Development Center Network, and the Montana Farmers Union, this manual is a resource for farmers, ranchers and producers specific to the state of Montana geared towards helping them gain a deeper understanding of agritourism and how it can impact the connections between their community and farm. These resources can serve as a jumping off point to help you support or launch agritourism in your area and enhance the agritourism activities you already offer.

These resources are designed to help farmers and

ranchers decide whether or not they want to pursue agritourism as an additional product offering within their current operation. We aim to connect farmers and ranchers with basic information on how to start their own agritourism business through the process of building a business plan, listing important contacts and resources, and inspiring them by sharing existing agritourism successes around the state.

[Important note: Agritourism is young in the state of Montana; practices, policy, definitions, and legal guidelines are in their early stages, and will surely develop and change as the state explores this unique form of tourism. If you have questions, concerns, comments, success stories or examples, etc., related to the content of this manual, please contact us at aero@aeromt.org. Please also check back periodically for updates as this opportunity develops in our state!]



A farm visitor could be from a city far away, or a neighboring town.’ In the Abundant Montana Directory, there are many types of agritourism activities listed, including farm and business tours, farm-to-table dinners, farm stays, workshops, internships and volunteer opportunities, and special events such as weddings.

For a more detailed description of agritourism activities, please see the What are the Different Types of Agritourism section of this resource.

WHAT IS AGRITOURISM?

Montana is in the early stages of establishing a commonly accepted definition for agritourism. However, the definition used in 2017 legislation addressing liability is as follows: “Agritourism” means a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or agricultural processing with tourism in order to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors. House Bill 342 was passed into law in March 2017, adding agritourism to the list of Montana Recreational Activities in which participants assume the liability for the inherent risks of those activities. For more information on insurance and liability, please see the Safety and Risk Management section of this resource site. At its heart, agritourism connects farms to communities. According to the state of Vermont, ‘it is the business of establishing farms as destinations for education, recreation, and the purchase of farm products.



Images - Upper left: Touring the Underground photo by AERO. Lower right: White Park cow and calf at B-Bar Ranch.



TYPES OF AGRITOURISM

According to the language passed in the 2017 Montana legislature, “Agritourism means a form of commercial enterprise that links agriculture production or agricultural processing with tourism in order to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors.” Within the scope of that definition, you can group the various agritourism activities into three main groups:



Direct-Market, Education and Experience, and Recreation and Event Based agritourism. Roadside produce stands are a great example of direct market agritourism. Farmers sell their products directly to consumers with the added appeal of being on site where the products were grown/made. Education and experience agritourism includes pick-your-own apple groves, farm tours, bed-and-breakfasts and packages aimed at giving guests a hands-on education in farm life. The farm itself is marketed as a tourist destination. Whether agritourists pay to pick their own produce, attend wine tastings at a vineyard or participate in workshops/farm camps, the draw is first-hand experience. Farm-to-table dinners have grown tremendously in popularity, connecting visitors through a shared meal in a beautiful setting. Once visitors are acquainted with the farm more closely, they may also be more inclined to buy its agricultural products. Harvest festivals, corn mazes,

haunted hay rides, farm stays, and rural bed and breakfasts fall under recreation and event based agritourism as they rely heavily on the farm’s atmosphere. These recreational opportunities attract a wide range of visitors, some who are looking for an evening event to experience with their family and others who are looking to recreate off the beaten path, making a longer trip out of the experience.

Another category of temporary on farm visitors include interns, apprentices, volunteers, and WOOFers (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). These work based educational opportunities allow folks to contribute and learn in a number of areas, while sometimes staying on site for the duration of their experience. Note that our use of the terms “intern,” “apprentice,” “volunteer”, and “WOOFer” does not necessarily related to the US Department of Labor’s definitions and each opportunity is specific to the farm that’s listing it. In Montana, the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition has some great resources on the legality of labor laws. For more information, visit their site here.

All of the above types of agritourism can help foster meaningful connections between the consumer and the farm. From that, long-term relationships can be forged. This customer loyalty and repeat business is key to the success of many agritourism businesses.



Images - Upper left: A hay-ride at Red Hen Farm in Missoula
Lower right: Farm to Fork bike tour. Far right: Grapes after harvest at Spotted Bear Vineyard and Lavender Farm.



CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE YOU START: IS AGRITOURISM FOR YOU?

If you are considering the development of an agritourism enterprise or want to add agritourism as a new enterprise for your farm, the place to start is with an assessment of your abilities and goals; also consider those of your family members. Discuss the idea, consider the options, assess your skills and time realistically, visit other farms, and most of all, develop a plan. Start by generating a list of all the possible types of agritourism enterprises you could realistically develop. Write down pros and cons of each including how much work it will take, and the cost. Narrow the list by considering which ideas you or family members feel most excited about and are most realistic and doable. Also, consider what skills and time you and your family members will have to devote to developing the enterprise. Think hard about what would work best given the physical resources and location of your farm.

Once the ideas seem solidified, don't assume you and your family are the best judge of what may work or not. Run the ideas past friends and acquaintances, tourism and extension staff, visitors to the area, and business representatives. Get their honest appraisal of the ideas you have selected. Would they visit your farm to participate in activities you are considering offering? A key point to remember is that agritourism brings people to your farm, so you must enjoy meeting people and plan activities that visitors will want to participate in, all the while managing the situation to avoid risks.

Are you a self starter? Are you willing to give up spare time to lay the foundation and maintain another business? Are you willing to give up nights and weekends that your new business may demand? Do you and your family enjoy working with the public? Do you and your family have the personality to work with the public? Are you and your family willing to give up some of your privacy? Is your farm or ranch neat and clean?

These are just a few of the questions you need to consider before launching into an agritourism business.

There are many steps that should be taken in order to be confident your agritourism business is a good fit for you. Having patience, being organized, communicating well with others, and adapting to change are all necessary qualities. It is important to think about the goals you are looking to achieve with this venture: Are you interested in making a supplemental income, if so, how much money will you need? If you are not interested in supplemental income, are you aware of the cost involved in launching this venture and can you support it from your own funds?



Anyone beginning an agritourism venture will need the full support of his or her family. The time and energy needed to run an operation will require work and support from the whole family. Most agricultural owners already have workers and those workers will need to adjust to changes. For example, when the cows are not being milked, workers can assist with the fieldtrips or plant corn for the corn maze. Lots of multi-tasking and learning of new skills will be necessary. If you cannot run your new agri-tourism venture with the help of your family and existing workers, will you have sufficient funds to hire people? Hiring people affects your bottom line, but if it's the difference between offering a good attraction and charging more, choose charging more. Remember, people want the "experience," so it needs to be a good one.



Additional considerations before you start: choose something you love to do. What are your talents, skills and interests? Get the whole family involved, follow demand driven product, create a high quality product, keep informed and education about the industry, start small and grow naturally, develop a sound business plan (see the business plan resource section) and form partnerships working with neighbors, community members, and regional partners.

Assessing your resources is an important step in this process, such as land use, land features, land location, soil type, farmstead features, climate, wildlife, new facilities, and opportunities for collaboration.

Financial benefits – diversified income stream:

- More income without increasing acreage
- Building a new business with existing resources

Meets the need of increasing trend for people to be connected with their food and educates the public on:

- Where food is grown
- Farming methods
- Youth engagement opportunities
- Marketing opportunities



Examples of benefits of agritourism:

- Cash flow during the off season
- Opportunity to sell the “experience” of your agricultural venue
- Opportunity to sell products grown and harvested in your agricultural operation
- Opportunity to share your passion of agriculture with others

Ready to host? Check out

http://www.uvm.edu/tourismresearch/agritourism/saregrant/agritourism_enterprise_self_assessment.pdf for a great self-assessment worksheet from the University of Vermont!

Images - Left: The straw bale maze at Whitefish Stage Organic Farm. All images from the Stories from Montana section provided by the farms and businesses.



STORIES FROM MONTANA:

HOW IT'S ALREADY DONE IN THE BIG SKY STATE

Farm tours – Glenwood Farms, Polson, MT

Farmer(s): Jan and Will Tusick

Agritourism Story: Farm activities include school tours and occasionally they will bring sheep into school settings to teach students about shearing. Glenwood Farm is located 5 miles south of the beautiful Flat-head Lake. They run 100 head of Coopworth Cross Ewes and direct market their lamb and wool. They have housing for on farm stays and are developing an educational program in lambing, shearing and general sheep management. Will Tusick is their Head Shepherd. Their farm products include: lamb, produce/vegetables, wool/fleece/roving/yarn.

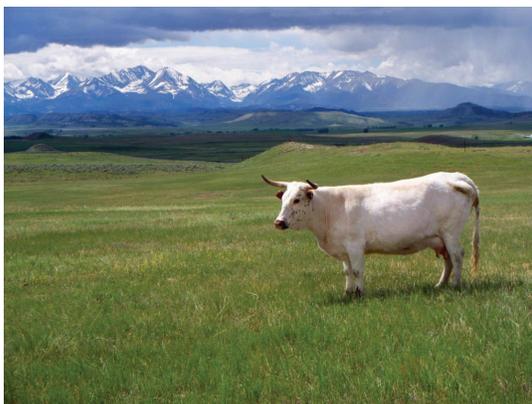
Contact them at:

Email: jt@ronan.net
Phone: 406-883-4093
Facebook: [@jantusick](https://www.facebook.com/jantusick)

Farm to Table Dinner – B Bar Ranch, Emigrant, MT

Farmer(s): Ellen Webb

Agritourism Story: The B Bar Ranch in Big Timber, Montana started raising Ancient White Park Cattle to preserve the breed. From



our start with 15 cows and a bull in 1989, the herd has grown to over 150 females and a full battery of bulls. They also offer certified organic heirloom varieties of produce in addition to our certified organic grass-finished organic beef. The guest ranch welcomes commercial groups, non-profit groups, retreats, weddings



and family reunions who experience the ranch in a number of ways. On ranch activities include hiking, observation of low-stress livestock handling, wildlife viewing and tracking, skiing, and snowshoeing.

Contact them at:

Email: bbar@bbar.com
Phone: 406-848-7729
Website: <http://bbar.com/>
Facebook: [@b bar ranch](https://www.facebook.com/bbar.ranch)

U-pick farms – Red Hen Farm, Missoula, MT

Farmer(s): Greg and Julie Peters

Agritourism Story: Red hen Farm and Orchard are an organic berry, vegetable and fruit tree farm. They offer both pre-picked and u-pick berries throughout the summer and fall seasons. They also offer tours, educational farm classes and events.



Contact them at:

Email: julieandgreg@redhenfarm.net
Phone: 406-728-8313
Website: <http://www.redhenfarm.net/>
Facebook: [@MontanaRedHenFarm](https://www.facebook.com/MontanaRedHenFarm)



Straw bale maze and hay rides – Whitefish Stage Organic Farms, Whitefish, MT

Farmer(s): Megan and Scott Lester

Agritourism Story:

Whitefish Stage Organic Farm began in 2016 by Megan and Scott Lester. They grow organic vegetables for the flathead valley and offer a CSA share each year. In addition to farm tours and CSAs, each fall the farm offers a straw bale maze made of 3500 bales. Visit the maze and participate in a maze puzzle, pumpkin bowling, hay rides, see farm animals and do other family fun activities.



Contact them at:

Email: megan@whitefishstage.farm
Phone: 406-755-4769
Website: <https://www.whitefishstage.farm/about-us/>
Facebook: @WhitefishStageOrganicFarms

other fruits, all turned into wine. Ask for a tour of the operations, visit during one of their harvest parties, or if you are a Harvest Hosts member you can park your self-contained RV and stay the night. OR Tongue River Vineyard is approximately 3 acres with grapes, haskaps, cherries, apples, pears, raspberries, plums and more, grown to produce wine. Tongue River Winery has a production area in the garage and basement, with a tasting room on the main floor that seats 45 people, with a scenic overview of the vineyard. The winery provides tastings, and hosts small to medium sized groups upon request. Wine is sold by the glass, bottle or case. Tours of the vineyard and winery are generally available. A nice leg-stretching walk to the Tongue River is available on the site.

Contact them at:

Email: trwinery@midrivers.com
Phone: 406-853-1028
Website: <http://www.tongueriverwinery.com/>
Facebook: @TongueRiver-Winery



Educational Programming – Homestead Organics, Hamilton, MT

Farmer(s): Laura Garber and Henry Wuenshe

Agritourism Story: Homestead Organics Farm is a small, family run vegetable farm located 3 miles south of Hamilton, MT. They grow a wide variety of vegetables and greens, serving the community through a summer and fall CSA program, an on site Farm Stand, and a variety of youth educational programming. The Youth Roots Project welcome youth from the Bitterroot Attention Home to tend to their own garden located at the farm while working side by side farmers and interns in the field. Farm Camp takes place each July for children ages 6-12 and the middle school age group called Girls Using Their Strength stay at and participate in the farm during the summer.



Harvest Parties – Tongue River Winery, Miles City, MT

Farmer(s): Bob and Marilyn Thaden

Agritourism Story: Established in 2010, Tongue River Winery is eastern Montana's Premier Vineyard and Winery experience. It is the only commercial

vineyard/winery east of Missoula, with two acres of grapes and sundry

(continued on next page....)



(Homestead Organics, cont....)

Contact them at:

Email: homesteadorganicsmt@gmail.com
Phone: 406-363-6627
Website: <http://www.homegrownmontana.org/homestead.html>
Facebook: @HomesteadOrganicsFarm



Farm Stay– ABC Acres, Hamilton, MT

Farmer(s): James Southwell

Agritourism Story: ABC acres focuses on sustainable food production, healthy living systems and regenerative ecological design. Their cattle, chickens, goats, turkeys, and pigs graze on open pasture while their vegetables, herbs, fruits, and nuts are grown with the same approach. This permaculture farmstead in Western Montana’s Bitterroot Valley offers self-guided tours, weekly social events, farm-fresh goods and two first-class, cain-style homes available for unique farm stays

and vacation rentals.

Contact them at:

Email: james@abcacres.com
Phone: 406-210-7688
Website: www.abcacres.com
Facebook: @ABCACres



Cultural Tour and Farm stand – King Hutterite Colony, Lewistown, MT

Farmer(s): Rita Hofer

Agritourism Story: The King Hutterite Colony offers a walking tour of the colony, giving visitors an insight into the Hutterite culture and way of life. The tour lasts for about 1.5 hours and shows the communal lifestyle of the Hutterites. Tours cost \$17 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Handcrafted items are for sale at the end of the tour.

Contact them at:

Email: ritahofer2000@hotmail.com
Phone: 406-350-2307





Fork to Farm tour (cycling adventure to farms and culinary bliss!)

Farmer(s): SweetRoot Farm, Lifeline Dairy, Mill Creek Farm and Willow Creek Vineyard, Bitterroot Valley

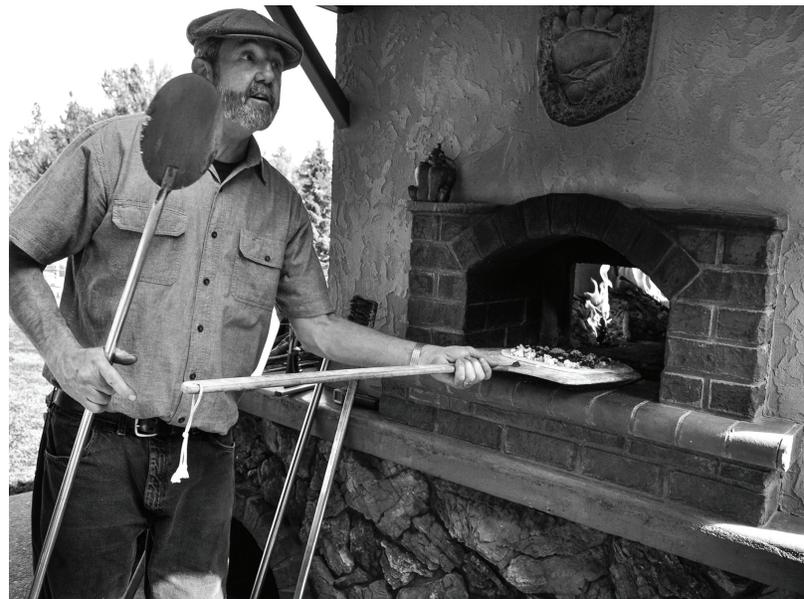
Agritourism Story: The Fork to Farm tour is a celebration of the diversity of agriculture and cycling in the Bitterroot Valley. The 40 miles ride includes stops at four Bitterroot Valley farms where riders will enjoy food and drink produced from locally grown vegetables, fruits, and livestock. The ride begins and ends at the Western Agriculture Research Center in Corvallis where riders will enjoy live music, a locally sourced dinner, and local cider and beer. Proceeds from the event will support Bike Walk Bitterroot's efforts to make the Bitterroot Valley a safe and accessible place to walk and bike.

Contact them at:

Email: bikewalkbitterroot@gmail.com

Website: www.bikewalkbitterroot.org

Facebook: [@bwbitterroot](https://www.facebook.com/bwbitterroot)



All photos from the Montana Stories section were graciously provided by the farm or organization associated with each photo.



HOW TO MARKET YOUR AGRITOURISM BUSINESS

Marketing Resources

“Marketing is the process of determining what customers want, and of using that information to produce and sell a good or service to satisfy that want” (Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board). Marketing includes identification of your customer base; a clear description of the goods, services, and experiences offered; and advertising and promotion of your agritourism business.

Create a Business Plan

Anyone planning to start an agri-tourism venture should look at the venture as a BUSINESS. First ask yourself, what type of agri-tourism business do I want to operate? Will it be (1) to supplement cash flow (2) earn a profit or (3) provide educational fun and enjoyment to others without making a profit? A business plan is a written plan that fully describes every aspect of a proposed business. It is a roadmap to developing your successful Agritourism business.

The process of developing a business plan forces you to seriously think through all of the aspects of starting and operating a new business. You can be sure that you will face challenges in your business venture. Therefore, a business plan helps you assess problems that may arise before you encounter them. It helps create a vision for what you want to accomplish. It helps you evaluate your future needs and can be used as a tool for measuring and improving the operation.

Business plan elements should include a business description, farm site evaluation, production planning, marketing analysis, marketing plan, operations, organizational plan, financial plan, milestone schedule, and a legal and risk management plan.

The Farm Link Montana program, hosted by the Community Food and Agriculture Coalition has excellent resources on business start up steps and general business planning. You can find more information

about them here <https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/resources/business-startup-steps/> and here <https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/resources/other-resources/business-planning-resources/>. Additionally, the University of Vermont has developed a great agritourism business planning guide here <https://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/agritourism-guide/bestpractices-business-planning.pdf>

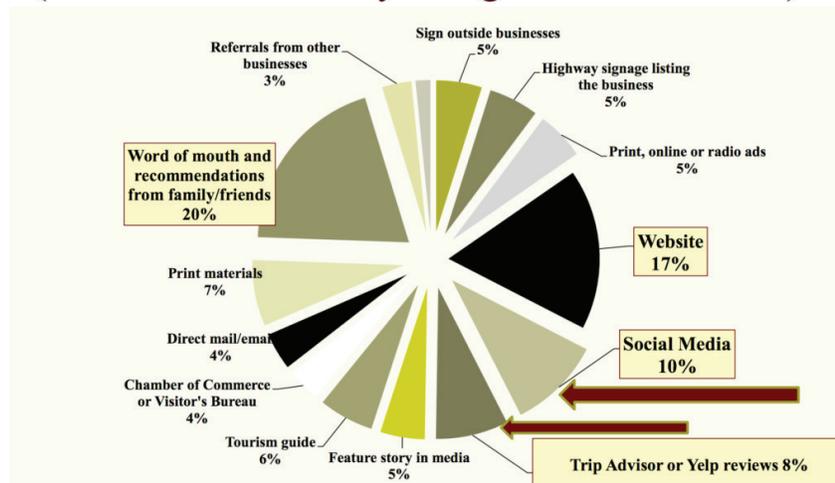
Create a Marketing Plan

One of the most important aspects of marketing your business venture is the formulation of a marketing plan. This should include:

Who are your customers? Identify customers coming to your area for similar attractions. Such information may be found through agritourism associations, regional tourism councils, or local chamber of commerce and other outlets. Be specific in identifying the group of consumers you wish to target.

Become familiar with your market. What types of agritourism activities are popular or increasing in popularity? Notice where growth is taking place in the industry and the types of activities and goods consumers are seeking. What changes and developments in the agritourism market might be expected in the foreseeable future?

Information Sources Used by Agritourists (from National Survey of Agritourism Visitors)





Your niche. What makes your agritourism business unique? What would set you apart from competitors? Some examples: a farm/ranch operated by your family for generations with unique heritage components; a unique location with attractive amenities; specialized attributes of your products or services, such as organic produce or meat, raising exotic animals, or unique activities available.

Budget. A rule of thumb for a beginning agritourism operation is that 10 to 30 percent of gross revenues should be invested in marketing.

In your plan, clearly state marketing goals with regard to the number of visitors, revenue and expenses, etc. Assess your success in meeting these goals over time. Make sure your plan is flexible, so you can adapt to changes in the marketplace or results that do not match expectations as you monitor your business's progress.



available at: <http://travelmontana.mt.gov>. Reach out at 1(800) 847-4868.

Business Assistance

The Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development works with the Business Technical Assistance Bureau to provide assistance in the areas of Marketing, as well as Small Business Counseling, Indian Country Programs, Export Trade, and Capital Formation and Intellectual Property. Those resources can be accessed at http://marketmt.com/BusinessAssistance#_

Other Resources

Montana Office of Tourism:

All of the MT Office of Tourism's programs and connections with tourism research & partners are

The Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation is the annual gathering of Montana's tourism and recreation industry, offering resources, local success stories, access to marketing workshops and data, and more. The conference moves locations each year. Find more at <http://marketmt.com/Events/GovernorsConference/Welcome>

Tourism Market

The Department's main consumer website is www.visitmt.com

Their Things To Do: Food and Drink Page compiles items such as breweries, craft distilleries, farmers' markets, and agricultural tours, and is searchable by region at <http://www.visitmt.com/things-to-do/food-and-drink.html>

The Montana Brand

In 2007, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development facilitated a statewide initiative to unify, under a single brand, the diverse collective of organizations working to market Montana. Today, the Montana Brand is the foundation of MOTBD's programs to promote the state as a place to visit and do business.

The Montana Brand consists of three pillars:

- 1) More spectacular, unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48
- 2) Vibrant and charming small towns that serve as gateways to our natural wonders
- 3) Breathtaking experiences by day, and relaxing hospitality at night

You can learn more about using the Montana brand at this site:

<http://marketmt.com/Resources/TheMontanaBrand>



other resources (cont....)

The Community Food and Agriculture Coalition (CFAC)



Identifying Your Market

CFAC's Farmlink Program identifies two key steps in identifying and understanding the market for your products – market analysis, and market differentiation. Farmlink has published two accessible workbook modules to help producers work through these two steps, including worksheets and templates to help producers organize and understand their data, and develop a plan to move forward to successfully market their product. Each workbook is around a dozen pages and both are available at <https://www.farmlinkmontana.org/resources/marketing/>.

AERO

The Abundant Montana Directory



Formerly a printed booklet, AERO's Abundant Montana Directory is now online at www.abundantmontana.org, and is the largest and most comprehensive directory in the state of local food and sustainable agriculture opportunities. It links locals as well as tourists to Montana food experiences, and provides free advertising and outreach for producers, farmers, local food and beverage markets, and more. Explore, learn more, and submit your listing today.

Touring the Underground: A Two Day Tour of Sustainable Farming in Montana's Golden Triangle

With the participation of five farms and Lentil Underground author Liz Carlisle, AERO put on a two-day farm tour that traveled hundreds of miles across the state to visit five farms featured in the award-winning

book about lentil growers and sustainable farms in Montana. AERO received a small grant for the program through Western SARE PDP. While we have not released a public narrative, we are happy to talk with you about our marketing successes, mistakes, and lessons learned. Give us a call at (406) 443-7272.



Images - All images by AERO from Touring the Underground, and include Prairie Heritage Farm, and the Manuel Ranch



Resources from Beyond Montana

North Carolina Agritourism Manual

So You Want to Start an Agritourism Farm?

This manual, available online, is somewhat dated but includes useful basic steps and checklists, with a worthwhile discussion on networking and tips and ideas for marketing your farm's unique experience on pages 7-8. Online at <http://nc-ana.org/docs/StartingAgritourismBusiness.pdf>

Vermont Agritourism Best Practices and How To's

The University of Vermont's Agritourism Collaborative has a number of resources available at <http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/?Page=guides.html> including a Best Practices in Communications Marketing, which directly address topics such as the Five P's of Marketing, writing a marketing plan, and price-setting. This short document is highly readable, contains local success stories, and an excellent additional resources section. Find it at <http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/agritourism-guide/bestpractices-marketing.pdf>

Oklahoma Agritourism Partnerships

Business Development and Marketing

The Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department have teamed up to offer a producer website for the Oklahoma Agritourism Program which you can find online at <http://producer.oklahomaagritourism.com/>.

Their program focuses on business development and marketing, providing an online manual, producer workshop information, a calendar of events, and more. The resource manual can be found at <http://producer.oklahomaagritourism.com/files/OKResourceManual.pdf>



Images - Above: All images by AERO, from the corn harvest work party (Bob Quinn Ranch), the 2016 AERO Expo and Annual Meeting, with a sampling of carrot varieties from Fresh Root Farm, and the strawbale work party (River Ranch). Right: Inspecting new equipment at the Manuel Farm (by AERO).



SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Managing risks to prevent incidents at agritourism operations is a very important consideration. Liability insurance exists to help you mitigate losses in the event of a mishap on the farm. An agritourism operation may require a separate policy or a rider on your existing farm policy. You may also structure your agritourism operation as a separate business entity, thus shielding farm and personal assets from agritourism business losses.

supplement your basic farm and home policy. You may need a completely separate insurance policy to cover the agritourism activities. Start the conversation by asking the following questions: As an insurer, do you understand the proposed agritourism plans? To what extent does this policy cover product liability, premise liability, operations, and contracts? Would a \$1 million umbrella policy provide adequate coverage, or should we insure to a higher level? Are farm employees covered under this policy? Would guests have to sign anything special to be covered under this policy, or



Talking to your insurance agent about your agritourism plans should begin when your business planning starts. Most farm insurance agents want to support your operation, even if it involves agritourism; they should never be “the last to know.” They will explain what is and is not allowed under your current policy. Additional terms of insurance can be specified in a rider, which can be used to amend your coverage to

would a waiver form be necessary? Should groups be required to show evidence of insurance? Is a property inspection necessary as part of the terms of the policy? If so, what might be inspected? What coverage levels would you recommend for liability (product, premises, operations, personal, and contracts)?



Montana Law

In the 2017 Legislative Session, Montana passed House Bill 342 which can be found at <http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2017/billhtml/HB0342.htm>.

This new law impacts producers regarding what type of insurance they need to carry in order to provide agritourism activities. The intent of the law is that it makes insurance more affordable for agritourism activities. Prior to this law, agritourism activity producers had to have insurance that protects them from general negligence. Now they have to have insurance that protects them from gross negligence. For all intents and purposes, every farm and every farm activity will be a unique situation depending on their current insurance situation. So the bottom line, as Montana law currently reads, is that anything apart from your usual farm activity needs to be discussed with your insurance agent. That is the only way you will know what is currently covered under existing policies and what additional coverage you might need to cover your new agritourism activities.

In the future, there are three main agritourism topics that need further discussion and decision making, either at the state level or the federal level:

1) On Farm Educational Opportunities

A. Will the farm host a large number of kids on a regular basis? Or will the farm host a small number of visitors more sporadically?

2) Farms as scenic destinations

A. Ex. wedding photography - does this count as agritourism?

3.) WOOFer as volunteers

A. This is a labor law issue

General Safety Concerns to Consider

It's important to thoroughly identify safety issues associated with your business. Here are some questions to ask yourself: Are you ready for visitors? Is your facility handicapped accessible? Are there plenty of restrooms? Are there hand-washing areas? If not, do you plan to offer hand sanitizers? Are ponds or other

dangerous areas fenced off from visitors? If your mode of on farm transportation is wagons, what safety features do they have? Do they have high rails to keep children in? Are there safety barriers to prevent accidents? Are the steps into moving forms of transpor-



tation safe and secure? Are people in place to assist visitors who might have difficulty? Is there a plan in place to care for someone who has an accident? As the owner it is your responsibility to see that your visitors are safe and protected, but accidents happen. To protect yourself legally, from the actions of people employed by you, you might want to consider becoming a limited liability company (LLC). An LLC is a form of business organization that is a "legal person" having one or more members organized and filing articles with the Secretary of State. As an LLC you are removing liability from you personally for others' negligence. Legal issues are complex, and you should consult your local attorney for advice in this matter.

Should you have a waiver for visitors to sign before they engage in agritourism activities on your property? Yes, probably a good idea. The next page contains an example of waiver language you should consider in conjunction with your insurance agent.

Image - A pair of Suffolk Punch Draft horses at B-Bar Ranch.



FARM VOLUNTEER ASSUMPTION OF RISK OR SHORT-TERM EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

[Paragraph describing your farm, its history and current day operations]

Farming is inherently dangerous. There is large equipment, many moving parts and significant time outside in the elements. Schedules and activities often change on short notice based on weather, field conditions and other factors. The Farm headquarters is located X miles from the nearest town in a very rural location with limited population.

We need you to know that volunteering and/or working on our farm can expose you to personal injury or damage to your property. We will do everything possible to ensure your safety, but we expect you to honor your responsibility to actively participate in creating safe working conditions. You are agreeing to participate in the activities of a working farm. Violation of any federal, or state laws, company policies or house rules will be grounds for immediate removal off the farm.

I/we have read the above rules and have had any questions/concerns clarified by the Farm Managers. This agreement covers participation in farm activities from _____ to _____.

I agree to be a:

_____ Volunteer. By signing below I acknowledge that I have read the Volunteer Assumption of Risk and Release of all Claims. As a volunteer if you are injured or hurt on the farm our farm liability insurance has a limit of X to aid in any medical needs.

_____ Short Term Employee and will be compensated at a rate of \$ _____ plus Room and Board valued at _____. As a short-term employee you will be included on our payroll and covered under our workman's compensation plan. You agree to fill out a W4 and I9 forms.

Signature(s) _____

Date: _____

Farm Manager Signature

_____ Date:

List contact information and any allergies or conditions we should know about in case of emergency.

Volunteer Assumption of Risk and Release of All Claims

Volunteer Status.

I would like to volunteer in activities at X. I understand that as a volunteer I will not be paid for my efforts and I will not be covered under workers compensation insurance. I am at least 18 years of age and I will get the consent of the Farm to bring anyone younger than 18 to the Farm.

Risks of Volunteering

I understand that the activities at the Farm involve serious risks. I may be exposed to, for example, but not limited to: insects; wildlife; farm animals; inclement weather; extreme temperatures; heavy machinery; tools; the actions and negligence of employees, volunteers, and other people present on the farm; and dangerous conditions on the land such as holes in the ground or barbed wire. I understand that these examples are not all-inclusive and there may be additional risks, all of which may involve serious personal injury, death, or damage to my property.

Release of Claims and Assumption of Risk

In exchange for the opportunity to participate in activities on the Farm, I (and my family, heirs, and personal representatives) willingly and knowingly release the Farm and its officers, owners, employees and agents from any and all liability for any personal injury or damage relating to my participation. I (and my family, heirs, and personal representatives) agree to assume all of the risks and responsibilities of my participation. I understand that I am solely responsible



for any hospital or other costs arising out of any personal injury or property damage relating to my participation on the Farm.

Medical Care Authorized

I am physically fit to participate in activities at the Farm. I understand that there are no medical services available on site, and I give permission to the Farm to authorize emergency medical treatment for me. I release the Farm and its officers, owners, employees and agents, from liability for any injury or damage that might extend from such emergency medical treatment.

I further agree that this waiver should be interpreted as broadly and inclusively as state law permits.

ing, Emergency Response, The Four P's of Liability: Premise Liability, Product Liability, Property Liability, Personal Liability, Protecting Yourself Legally. To read the full publication, follow this link: <https://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/agritourism-guide/bestpractices-safety-risk-management.pdf>

On a more local level, the Farm Link Montana program provides a useful website on risk management that includes a link to a fifteen page module which covers food safety, market risks, financial risks and more. You can find those resources here: <https://www.farm-linkmontana.org/resources/risk-management/>

National Resources on farm safety and risk management include the following:



Resources

A safety and risk management publication from the University of Vermont covers the following topics: Develop a Farm Safety Plan, Maintain a Safe Environment, Plans of Operation, Staff Education and Train

National Ag Law Center: <http://nationalaglawcenter.org/>

Farm Commons: <https://farmcommons.org/insurance>



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Montana

Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development

Industry Services & Outreach Bureau
301 South Park
P.O. Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0133
Ph: 406-841-2870

www.Marketmontana.com , www.MadeinMontanaUSA.com

Our efforts are focused on helping the state's communities and businesses utilize tourism as a tool to improve the local, regional and state economy while protecting or improving the quality of life for Montana's residents through education and grants. This program supports Farmer's Markets and agritourism

opportunities through the Made in Montana program, which also includes the Grown in Montana logo, and by promotion of events through destination visitor websites and social media.

MT Department of Agriculture

Steph Hystad
Montana Department of Agriculture
302 N Roberts
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: 406.444.5425
E-mail: shystad@mt.gov
Fax: 406.444.9442
<http://agr.mt.gov/Agritourism>

Our website offers a sampling of agritourism activities available in Montana. We'll be continually updating this information, so check back often for new events and destinations.





MT Food and Ag Development Centers

<http://agr.mt.gov/FADC>

The Montana Food and Agricultural Development Center (FADC) Network helps Montanans innovate and grow businesses that produce and commercialize food, agricultural and renewable energy products and processes, creating wealth and jobs in our communities and on our farms and ranches. The centers – located in Joliet, Havre, and Ronan – operate as a statewide network serving community-based businesses throughout Montana.

Community Food and Agriculture Coalition

<http://www.missoulacfac.org/>
Phone: 406-926-1004
Email: cfacinfo@missoulacfac.org
Mail: P.O. Box 7025, Missoula, MT 59807
Office: 328 E Main, Missoula – feel free to stop by!

CFAC envisions a future where houses, farms, and ranches thrive; people are well-fed and food secure; family farms are sustainable, successful, and supported within a community food system; and farmers and ranchers can access the land they need.

MSU Extension

Patricia McGlynn, Ph.D.
Montana State University
Agriculture Extension Agent
Phone: 406-758-5554
Fax: 406-758-5881
pmcglynn@flathead.mt.gov

Montana Farmers Union

<https://montanafarmersunion.com/>

P.O. Box 2447
300 River Drive North
Great Falls, Montana 59403
Phone: (406) 452-6406
Toll Free: 1-800-234-4071

Fax: (406) 727-8216

The Montana Farmers Union is a statewide grassroots organization working for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities through conferences, scholarships and other educational opportunities as well as legislative representation and support for producer-owned co-ops.



National Resources

For Agritourism locations around the U.S. and the world visit <https://agritourismworld.com/>

Ag Resource Marketing Center

A National Information Resource for Value Added Agriculture

From marketing, to production, to management, this national site provides resources that span the spectrum of agricultural business development. Learn more here <http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism/>

Images - Left: Pumpkins at Red Hen Farm.
Right: Goat kids at ABC ACres.



Suggested Online Reading References

This website site provides links to other states resources in agri-tourism: <http://www.naturalresources.msstate.edu/resources/agritourism.html>

Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism: Farming for Profit and Sustainability Resource Manual: This Resource Manual contains 2,300 pages of reference material. It is divided into 20 chapters and 37 subchapters to guide you to



a subject of interest. Among the most interesting parts of this manual are the 200 pages devoted to success stories in agri-tourism.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/RESS/altenterprise/resmanual.html>

Agritourism in Focus, A Guide for Tennessee Farmers, Extension PB 1754 from the University of Tennessee has 10 chapters and an appendix that deals with topics of agri-tourism operations. This is an excellent manual to assist people beginning an agri-tourism venture. <http://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1754.pdf>

The New American Farmer is available on this website. It contains success stories of on-farm operations. www.la-tour.lsu.edu is a Louisiana tourism data Web site maintained by the Louisiana Sea Grant College program at LSU and the Louisiana Office of tourism, Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism. The site contains recent statistical data, resource materials such as impact reports, demographic projections, industry

trends, and links to various tourism websites. <http://www.sare.org/publications/naf2/naf2.pdf>

Agricultural Tourism Publications and Web Resources “Agritourism in New York: A Market Analysis,” Duncan Hilchey and Diane Kuehn. Available from <http://www.nysgextension.org/tourism/tourism/agritou.htm>; several other documents can be found via this link.

Agritourism in New York State, Opportunities and Challenges in Farm-based Recreation and Hospitality.

<http://www.mda.mo.gov/AgBusiness/resources/agritourism.htm> This site has a fairly comprehensive list of resources some of which you can access from their site – some of the resources on their list are below.

Agritourism, Virginia Tech, Publication Number 310-003, 2001. Available on line at: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/agritour/310-003/310-003.html>

A Primer on Agritourism and Ecotourism Start Ups and Management, Desmond Jolly. <http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/agritour.html>

Marketing on the Edge: A Marketing Guide for Progressive Farmers. Available from the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, 888-232-3262 or www.nafdma.com – look under publications in bookstore. North American Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association- This is the number one organization promoting Agritourism and Farmer to Consumer Direct Marketing.

ATTRA – National Sustainable Agriculture Information Center www.attra.ncat.org — 1-800-346-9140 ATTRA has an extensive list of publications if you have not discovered them, you will find many useful titles. Look for the publication: Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism – Business Management Guide – this is a good overview of what is involved.

Getting Started in Agritourism, page 19 USDA-NRCS www.nrcs.usda.gov They have a publication entitled Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism (not accessible via the web). Check with your county/regional NRCS office and ask them to get you a copy.



Helpful Agritourism Links by Topic

Safety

University of Vermont – Safety Plan
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/presentations/visitor-food-safety-action-plan.pdf>

University of Tenn. Extension. – Safety Considerations
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/safety-considerations-purdue-extension.pdf>

Guides

Fat Moon Farm – Guide to Farm to Table Event
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/presentations/farm-to-table-dinners.pdf>

Fat Moon Farm – People Friendly Farm Guide
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/presentations/creating-people-friendly-farms.pdf>

Pam Knights Communications – What is Your Niche
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/presentations/niche-within-agritourism-industry.pdf>

Business/Financial Planning

University of Tenn. Extension Agency
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism/files/business-planning-purdue-extension.pdf>

University of Minnesota – Building a sustainable business
<https://www.misa.umn.edu/publications/buildinga-sustainablebusiness>

Rutgers – Budgeting for a maze
http://agritourism.rutgers.edu/corn_maze/

OK State University – Cash Records to Cost of Production
<http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/costpricingfact-sheet.pdf>

Rutland Area Farm and Food – Step by Step to Setting
http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/marketing/marketing_resources/Pricing_RAFFL.pdf

Marketing

Marketing your Enterprise – University of California Cooperative Extension
<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/factsheets/market1/>



Image - The vineyard in winter at Spotted Bear Vineyard and Lavender Farm.