

# Evaluating your resources

## Is agricultural tourism for you?



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### Agritourism is:

- Any income-generating activity conducted on a **working** farm or ranch for the enjoyment and education of visitors.



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## Why Agritourism?

### For Visitors

- Relaxation
- Authentic Experience
- Participation
- Time with family & friends
- Memories
- Excitement and adventure
- Connection with farmers & ranchers & the natural world



## Why Agritourism?



### For Farmers and Ranchers

- Additional income
- Educate about agriculture
- Promotion of agricultural products

## Overview: Evaluating your resources

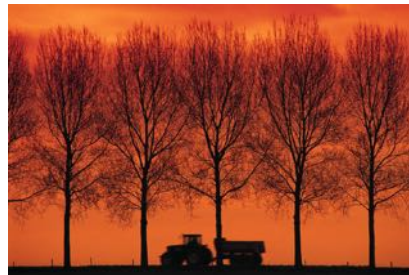
- Revisit your goals
- Identify your competition, customers & collaborators
- Assess your community
- Assess what you have
- What you can do – defining limitations
- Revisit your goals again
- Plot activities



## Overall business goals

Some examples:

- Support family
- Maintain rural lifestyle
- Provide employment for family members
- Provide for retirement on farm or ranch
- Help support sustainable community
- Get rich



## **Operation's current capabilities and situation**

- How well is current operation meeting your business goals?
- What changes are planned for your current operation?



## **How could a tourism venture contribute to your business goals?**



- What goals do you have for an agritourism or nature tourism enterprise?

## Identify your competition & potential collaborators

- With your family & other business partners:
  - Find out what agritourism and nature tourism exists in your community
  - Visit if you can
  - Talk with successful operators
    - Book a room or a tour
    - Observe & ask questions



## Assess your Community Resources



- Natural Beauty
- Cultural & Social Characteristics
- Cultural and Recreation Offerings
- Food, Lodging, Shopping & Entertainment
- Public Infrastructure
- Attitudes Toward Tourists
- Accessibility
- Existing Tourism Activity

## Begin to identify your ideal customers

- “Shotgun” approach is expensive and rarely effective
- Choose and target a customer sector within the agritourism and nature tourism industry

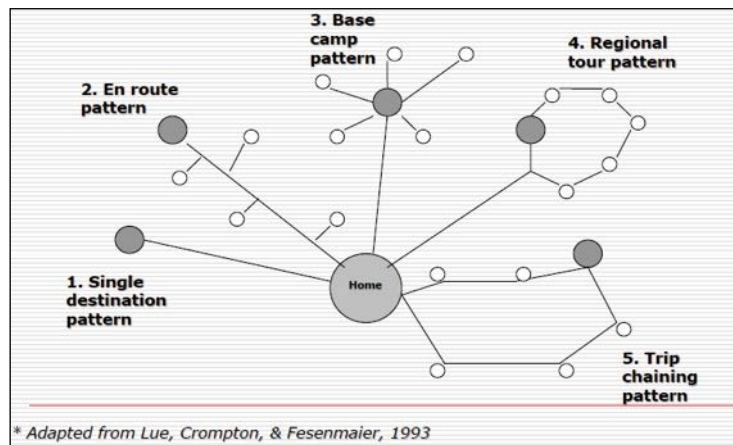


## Study YOUR Target Tourists

- Where are they coming from?
- Where else are they going?
- What is their age range?
- Families, individuals or groups?
- Income range?
- What do they want?
- When do they want it?
- Who else offers what they want?
- What do you offer that is competitive or complimentary?
- What will keep them coming back for more?



## Where Else are they Going? (Who are your partners?)



## Assessing what you have

- Agriculture has Unique Features and Benefits and **YOU** have Very Special Stories to Share



## Review your physical resources

- Land ownership or access
- Land Use, soil type
- Land Features, Water Bodies
- Farmstead Features
- Additional Attractions



## Side-note: Your neighbors' land use

- As you inventory your own properties, you also have to think about the broader picture.
- How are your neighbors using their land?
- How do you affect your neighbors?
- How do your neighbors affect you?



## Farm and ranch activities

- What current farm or ranch activities might appeal to the public? What you consider routine might be unusual and interesting to the non-farming public.

### Examples:

- Cattle drives
- Viewing baby animals
- Pastured poultry operations
- Sheep sheering
- Fruit tree pruning
- On-site food processing
- Roadside produce stands
- Harvesting, U-Pick



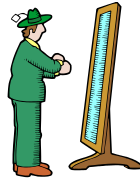
## Assess your Financial Resources

- What are your financial resources?
- Do you have access to capital?
- What are your start-up costs?
- What can you realistically afford to spend?
- How much money are you willing and able to risk?



## What are YOUR Personal Skills?

- Do you like to entertain & serve strangers?
- Are you patient and sensitive to the needs of visitors?
- Do you have the physical stamina and vigor to maintain your operation while properly serving customers?
- BE HONEST!



## Your special skills and knowledge

Knowledge and skills are intangible assets that can help create a farm or ranch tourism operation

### Some examples:

- Livestock management
- Gardening
- Local history, natural history
- Cooking, food preservation
- Horseback riding
- Music, arts and crafts
- Brewing or winemaking



## Rate your Human Resources



- Staff: Family & Hired
- Management Team
- Neighbors
- Government Staff & Officials
- Business & Tourism Associations
- Other Local Businesses

## What you can do - Defining limitations

- Good neighbor limitations
- Natural resource limitations
- Human Resource limitations
- Legal limitations



## Legal limitations

- Zoning, permitting
- Easements
- Building codes
- Septic requirements
- Labor laws
- Food safety
- Direct marketing – reselling regulation
- Liability



## Have your goals changed?



### Remember to consider:

- Are the goals realistic and achievable?
- Will your acreage support what you want to do?
- Do you have enough money?
- Who is going to do the work?
- How long will it take?

## Now... Evaluate some Possibilities

- Consider different potential agritourism activities
- With family or management team, ask evaluation questions for each activity
- List pros and cons for each of the possible activities
- Think about where, sketch a map

