



Major Challenges and Necessary Supports for Agritourism

**Findings from a National Study
of Agritourism Operators**

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Acknowledgements

This report presents results from Cooperative Agreement AM230300WAMSC005, funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service.

The study was conducted by Lisa Chase (University of Vermont), Claire Whitehouse (University of Vermont), and Kacey LaBonte (University of Vermont), with assistance from Shiva Soroushnia (University of Vermont) and Gianni Solorzano (University of Vermont).

Contents do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA. For more information, contact Claire Whitehouse at claire.whitehouse@uvm.edu.

We would like to thank the many farmers who shared their experiences with agritourism through interviews and/or took the time to complete the survey. We are especially grateful to the cooperators on the project including the American Indigenous Tourism Association (AITA), Farmstay, the National Agricultural Law Center (NALC), and NAFDMA International Agritourism Association.



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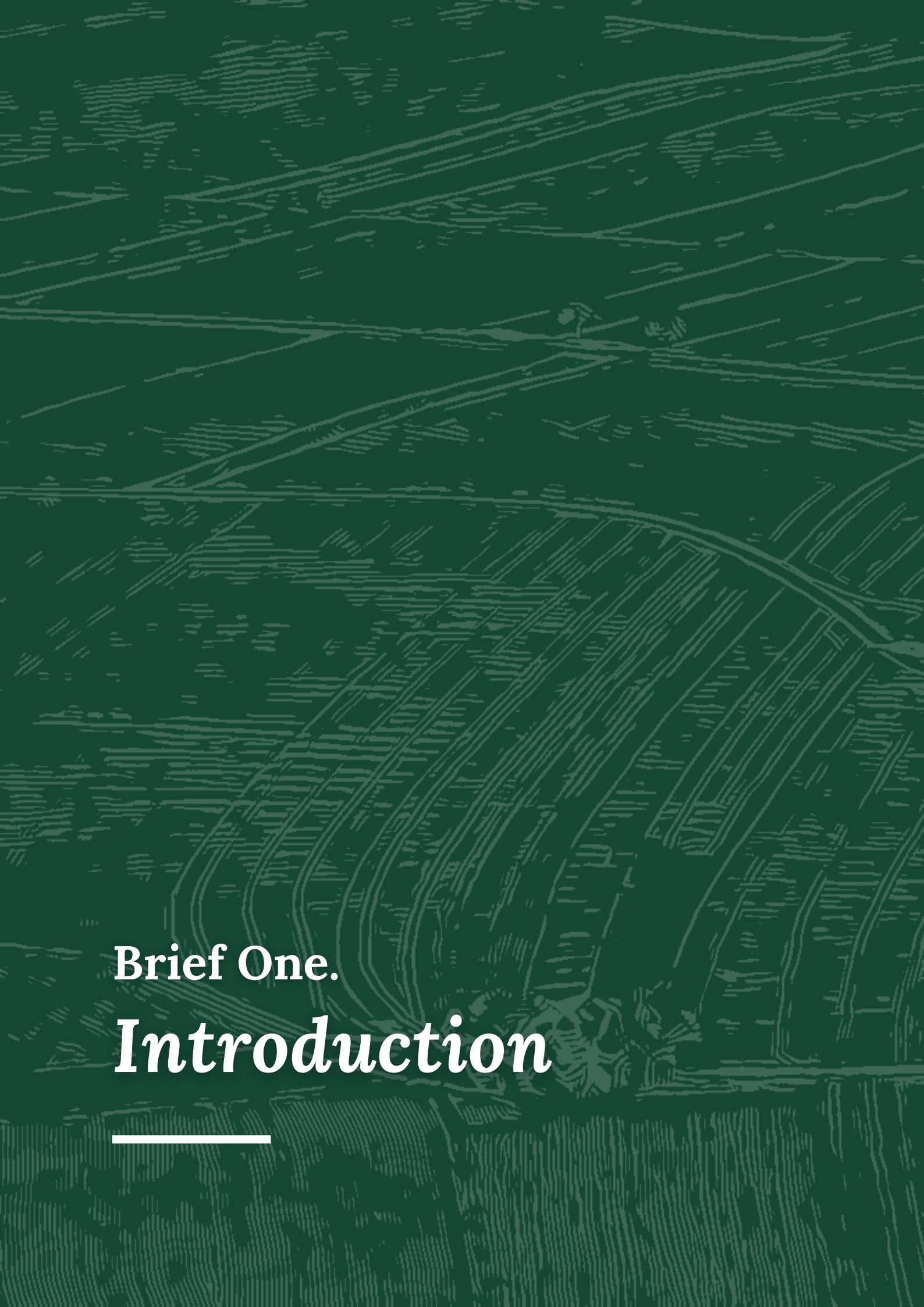
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An aerial photograph of a terraced field, likely in a mountainous region. The terraces are arranged in a series of curved, parallel lines, creating a rhythmic pattern across the landscape. A narrow, winding path or road cuts through the terraces, leading towards a small, dark building or structure in the distance. The overall scene is captured in a high-contrast, black and white style, emphasizing the geometric forms of the terraces and the organic shape of the path.

Brief One.

Introduction

1. Introduction

Project Overview

This report summarizes the findings of a national study of agritourism, an umbrella term for activities that welcome visitors onto a working farm, ranch, or other agricultural operation (Chase et al., 2018; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013).

This project, entitled “Agritourism: Understanding Producer Benefits, Challenges and Needs throughout the US,” began in 2023 as a Cooperative Agreement between University of Vermont Extension and the Local and Regional Foods Division of the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, in collaboration with project advisors American Indigenous Tourism Association, Farmstay, NAFDMA International Agritourism Association, and the National Agricultural Law Center. This study builds on two prior national studies of agritourism operators: a 2019 study led by the University of Vermont, and a 2024 study led by Penn State University (Chase et al., 2021; Schmidt et al., 2025).

This report summarizes the key findings from our research for a mixed audience of farmers, tourism professionals, outreach providers, policy makers, scholars, and others. There are 11 briefs in this series that can be read together or stand alone as individual briefs.

This study had four main objectives:

OBJECTIVE ONE.

Identify national and regional patterns contributing to successes and challenges for producers;

OBJECTIVE TWO.

Explore motivations of producers, benefits and challenges of agritourism, and barriers to entry and expansion;

OBJECTIVE THREE.

Populate a national directory of farms and ranches engaging in agritourism;

OBJECTIVE FOUR.

Communicate research findings.



Final Project Report

This report dives deeper into project methodology and summarizes all findings to date.



Story Map

Check out this online story map to hear directly from farmers interviewed for this project and learn about their agritourism offerings and advice.



USDA Local Food Directories

To see the directory built for this project, go to the USDA Local Food Directories site and select “Agritourism.”

Methods by the Numbers

2.5

Years of
Research

10

Farms
Interviewed

11

Hours of
Interviews

2

Nationwide
Surveys

1,353

Farms Added
to Directory

1,065

Valid Research
Survey
Responses

Did you know the US does not have an official definition of agritourism?

This study uses the definition adopted by the AMS Local Food Directory, which includes commercial enterprises that combine agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a working farm, ranch, agroforestry, or aquaculture operation, and produces supplemental income for the farm operator.



Methods

This project used a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative social science research methods. To meet the objectives above, the project team conducted three data collection activities:



Interviews with 10 farms around the US, representing different regions, agricultural products, agritourism activities, and farmer experiences.



Short national survey of agritourism operators, with the primary goal of populating the agritourism directory.



Long national survey of agritourism operators, with the primary goal of addressing research questions.

This report summarizes the results of the interviews and the longer survey. To see the directory built in step #2, visit the USDA Local Food Directory for Agritourism. To read more about our methodology, check out the Final Project Report.

About This Report

“Major Challenges and Necessary Supports for Agritourism” summarizes key findings from interviews with 10 US farmers and survey responses from 1,065 US farmers for a general audience of farmers, tourism professionals, technical assistance providers, and other agritourism practitioners and supporters. It is designed to be used in multiple ways: it can be read through as a contiguous report, and each chapter can also be used as a standalone educational brief. Chapter topics and key findings are summarized in the following page.

Table 1. Chapter Topics and Key Findings

Brief Topic	Key Findings
Brief 2. Respondent Overview Summary of respondents to the long survey, including farm products, agritourism activities, farm business profile, and farmer demographics.	Most farms have direct sales (87%) and educational activities (69%). Farms in our sample trended small. Median acreage was 66 acres, and 61% of farms had net profits under \$100k.
Brief 3. Why Agritourism? What motivates farmers to adopt agritourism, and farmer-to-farmer advice for new operators.	Farmers have agritourism for two main reasons: to increase farm revenue, and to educate the public about agriculture. Farmers emphasized that agritourism is a people business, and operators must be prepared for the reality of welcoming visitors onto their farms. They also recommended that new operators be proactive about safety, build slowly, and focus on their strengths.
Brief 4. Agritourism Activities Across the US Summaries of different types of agritourism activities and analysis of what activities are happening where.	There was no relationship between state and type of agritourism reported in the survey. There was a significant relationship between agritourism type and the percentage of out-of-town visitors, suggesting that local visitors and out-of-town tourists are interested in different activities. This chapter includes a list of questions for farmers to help decide what agritourism activities are right for them.
Brief 5. Profitability in Agritourism Exploration of the role of agritourism in farm revenue and profit.	75% of survey respondents reported success at increasing farm revenue through agritourism. Analysis of survey questions on revenue & profit, though limited, suggests that agritourism is important to the farm bottom line and may help absorb losses from agricultural productions. Interviews with farmers corroborate these findings.
Brief 6. Challenges to Agritourism & Suggested Supports Summary of the top challenges to agritourism reported by research participants, and of the most commonly suggested resources to help farmers address these challenges.	The top challenges were all related to the twin restrictions of time and money. The top requested type of support was grant funding and other financial resources for agritourism.

Brief Topic	Key Findings
Brief 7. Regulatory Barriers Analysis of challenges to regulation by respondent state, for the 12 states for which we received 30+ survey responses.	Challenges to regulation differed significantly by state. Respondents in Oregon and California experienced the greatest challenges with state and local regulations. The National Agricultural Law Center updated their agritourism regulation resources as part of this project; this chapter also summarizes and links to these resources.
Brief 8. Marketing Agritourism Summary of findings related to marketing, including how farmers market their operations, challenges to marketing, and requested supports.	The most popular marketing tool was social media pages (87%), followed by word of mouth (85%). No other strategy was used by the majority of survey respondents. Most farmers found all aspects of marketing at least somewhat challenging. Farmers expressed a need for free or low-cost marketing assistance from professionals familiar with agriculture to help them direct their limited marketing budget where it is most effective.
Brief 9. Visitor Data Collection Exploration of the need for farm-level data on agritourism visitors in order to provide the marketing expertise suggested in the previous brief.	Most farmers do not actively collect and analyze data on their visitors, which is not surprising given the demands on their time. Research on agritourism customers is likewise limited. We recommend researchers partner with farmers to explore what attracts visitors to agritourism activities.
Brief 10. Financial Support for Agritourism Spotlight on the top requested support from surveyed farmers: grants and other financial resources for agritourism.	Many farmers expressed a common need for funds to construct or improve visitor-facing infrastructure like farmstands, bathrooms, and parking areas.
Brief 11. Proposed Actions and Considerations Review of the top action items resulting from this project.	



Brief Two.

Respondent Overview

2. Respondent Overview

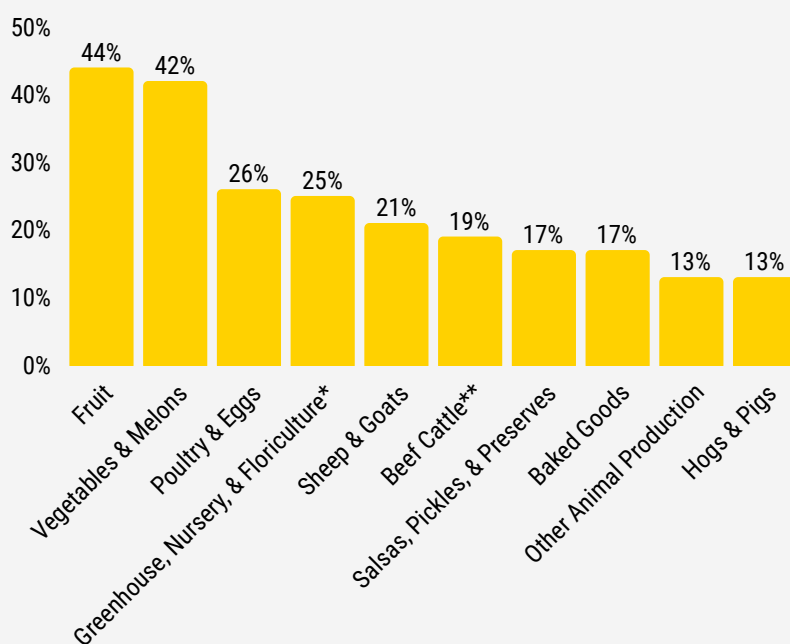
The longform survey was shared with over 22,000 farmer email addresses and received 1,065 valid responses representing all U.S. states and territories except for Delaware and Puerto Rico. Twelve states received 30 or more responses.

Agricultural Products

Farmers began by reporting what they grew or raised in 2024 in three overarching categories. Most farmers (80%) grew crops and forest products. Half raised animals, and almost as many sold value-added products.

For each overarching category they selected, farmers answered a follow-up question about specific agricultural products (i.e., respondents who selected “animals and animal-related products” then selected from a list of common farm animals). The research team combined the answers from these follow-up questions into a single ranked list to identify the most common agricultural products. The top ten products are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Top Ten Agricultural Products



*Including Christmas trees
**Including feedlots

States That Recieved 30 or More Survey Responses

1. California
2. Florida
3. Maine
4. Massachusetts
5. Michigan
6. New York
7. North Carolina
8. Oregon
9. Pennsylvania
10. Vermont
11. Virginia
12. Washington

Agricultural Products: General Categories

49%

Animals and Animal-Related Products

80%

Crops and Forest Products

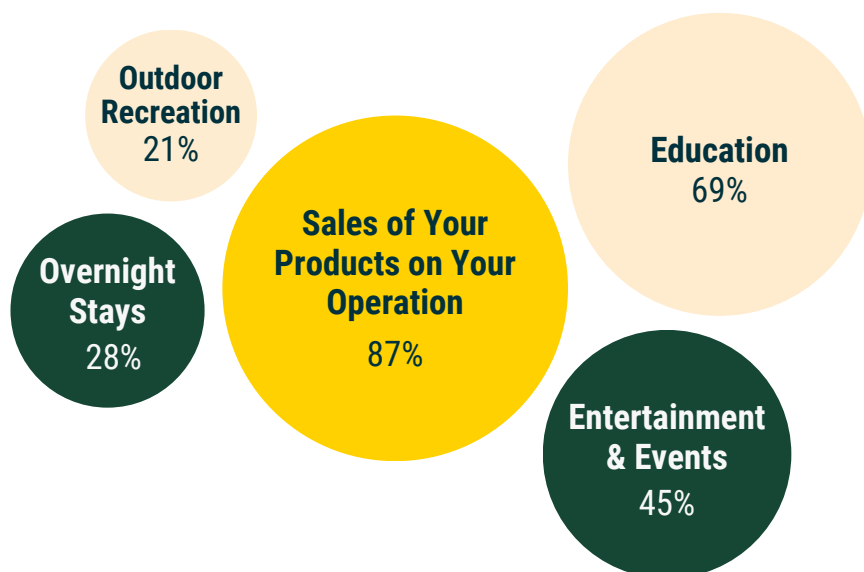
44%

Value-Added Products

Agritourism Activities

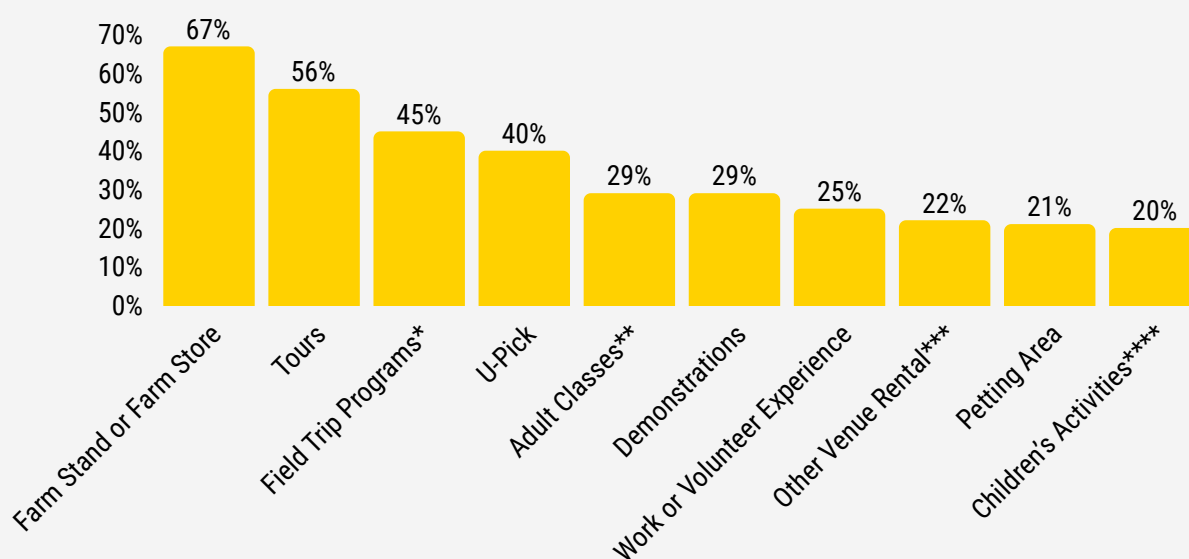
Like with agricultural products, farmers began the inquiry into agritourism by selecting from five overarching categories of visitor experiences, drawn from Chase et al. (2018). Findings are summarized in Figure 2. The majority had on-farm direct sales (87%) and educational activities (69%). Just under half (45%) had entertainment and events, and around a quarter hosted overnight stays (28%) and outdoor recreation opportunities (21%).

Figure 2. General Overview of Agritourism Activities



Farmers then answered follow-up questions about what specific activities they hosted in 2024 for each category they selected above. We combined all responses in a single ranked list, the top ten of which are shown in Figure 3. The majority of respondents had a farm stand or farm store (67%) and hosted tours (56%).

Figure 3. Top Ten Agritourism Activities



*And Student Groups

**And Workshops

***Family Reunions, Retreats, etc.

****Playground, Rides, etc.



Photo Courtesy of Liberty Hill Farm

Farm Profile

Survey respondents answered a series of questions to paint a picture of their farm business. A brief summary is provided below. For a full breakout, see the project final report [here](#).



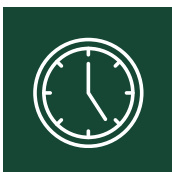
Acreage

Median farm size was 66 acres. Responses ranged from 0.12 acres to 150,000 acres, though 91% of respondents had between 1 and 500 acres.



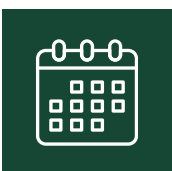
Rurality

Respondents answered how far they were from a city with a population of at least 50k. As expected, farms were mostly rural: 27% were 50 miles or more from a city, and another 48% were between 10 and 50 miles from a city.



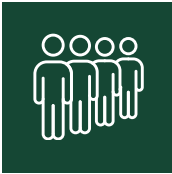
Years of Experience with Agritourism

When asked what year they began offering agritourism, the median answer was 2011, or 14 years of experience at the time of the survey.



Days Per Year Open to Visitors

Farmers estimated how many days per year they were open to visitors across 5 categories (1-30 days; 31-90 days; 91-150 days; 151-270 days; 271-365 days). Answers were fairly spread out across all five categories, though the greatest proportion of respondents (28%) were open year-round.



Number of Visits Per Year

Farmers estimated the number of visits they received per year (a repeat visitor counted as multiple visits). Responses were fairly evenly spread across the bottom four categories, which ranged from under 100 visits to 25k visits. Just 14% reported more than 25k visits.



Visitor Travel Distance

The survey asked what percentage of these visits were from people who traveled 50 miles or more from their homes. Visitors trended local: 68% of respondents reported that fewer than half of their visits were from people who traveled 50 miles or more.



Farm Revenue and Profit

71% of respondents had farm revenue ranging from \$5k to \$500k. Nearly a quarter (24%) of respondents reported less than \$1k in net profits, including farms with negative profit. Another 61% earned net profits between \$1k and \$99k.



Agritourism Revenue and Profit

Nearly half of respondents reported gross revenues from agritourism activities under \$25k (45%), and another 24% reported gross agritourism revenue between \$25k - \$99k. About a quarter (27%) reported net profits from agritourism under \$1k, including those with negative profits. Another 61% reported net agritourism profits between \$1k and \$99k.

Farmer Profile

Respondents provided basic demographic info for all farm owners and decision-makers.



Number of Decision Makers

To get a more complete picture of farm operations, the survey asked how many people were involved in management or decision making for their farm. Responses ranged from 1-200, though 50% had between 2 and 4 decision-makers and the median response was 2.



Primary Work Location

When asked where each decision-maker spent the majority of their work time in 2024, 15% of respondents reported that no one spent the majority of their time on farm; 31% had one person who worked majority-time for the farm; 29% had two people; 11% had three people, and 14% had 4 or more people.



Education

Farm decision-makers in the sample were highly educated. Eighty-four percent of surveyed farms had at least one decision-maker who had completed a bachelor's degree.



Age

Like the US farmer population as a whole, the age of decision makers trended older. One third of farms only had decision-makers over 55 years of age; 24% only had decision-makers under 55; and 43% had decision-makers both over and under 55.



Gender

Gender of farm operators was fairly evenly split between men and women. On a given farm, 47% of operators on average were men, and 49% were women. Nine percent of farms only had male decision-makers, and 9% only had female decision-makers. The remaining 82% had decision-makers of both genders.



Race and Ethnicity

The large majority of decision-makers were White and non-Hispanic/Latino. Just 1% of respondents reported that all of their decision-makers were Hispanic or Latino, and another 6% had both Hispanic and non-Hispanic decision-makers. The remaining 93% had only non-Hispanic decision makers. Similarly, 3% of respondents had only non-White decision-makers, 5% had both White and non-White decision-makers, and 92% had only White decision-makers.



Veteran Status

Thirteen percent of farms had at least one decision-maker who was a veteran of the U.S. military.

Limitations

It is not currently possible to conduct a representative survey of US farms that welcome visitors due to a mismatch between the NASS Census of Agriculture questions on agritourism and direct sales and the common understanding of agritourism among farmers and researchers. This challenge is discussed further in **Brief #5 on Profitability in Agritourism**, and explored at length in Hollas et al. (2024). Because this survey is not representative, the statistics summarized above cannot be extrapolated to US farms at large.



Photo Courtesy of Amasar



Brief Three.

Why Agritourism?

3. Why Agritourism?

The project team asked interviewees and survey respondents why they had agritourism on their farms. One interviewee put it best when she said:

The dual importance of educating the public about agriculture and growing and diversifying farm revenue came up throughout the interviews and the survey. This is consistent with past studies that also found

that farmers were motivated to practice agritourism both to expand farm business opportunities and to share their knowledge and appreciation for agriculture (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009; Quella et al., 2021, 2023; Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

“The education is key. The income is needed.”

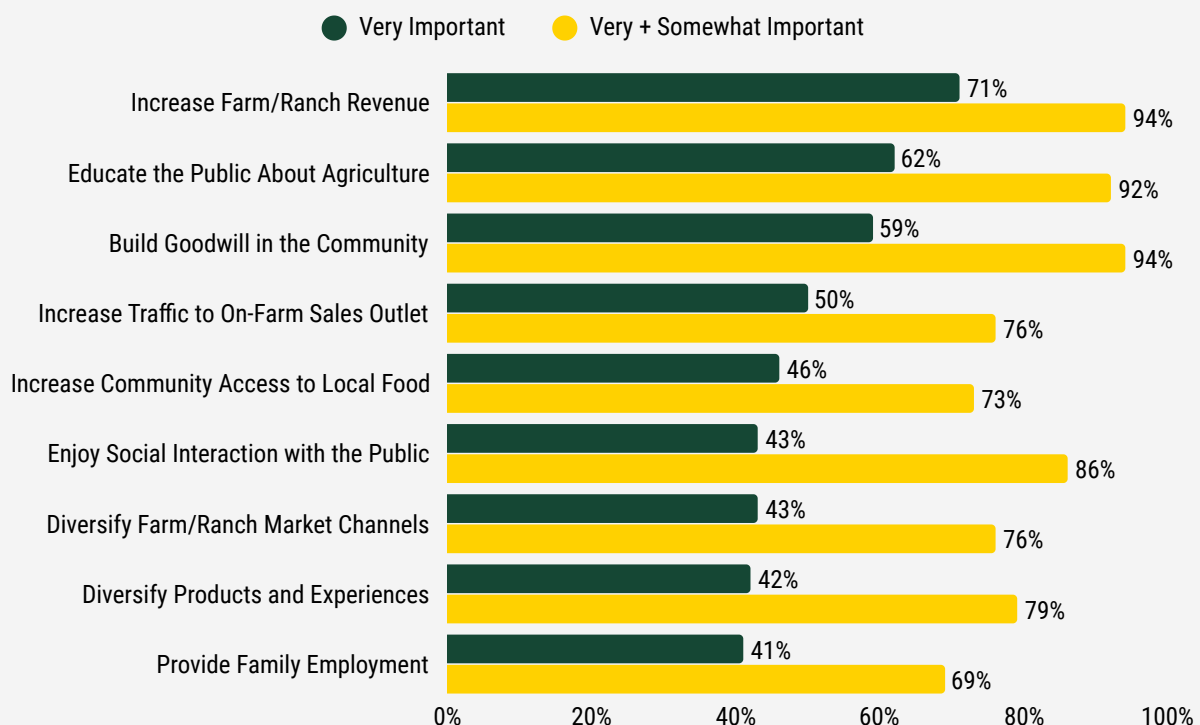
Interviewee



Survey Findings

Farmers rated 9 different goal statements for developing agritourism as either “very important,” “somewhat important” or “not at all important.” Results are shown in Figure 4, ranked from most to least “very important.” The top goal for surveyed farmers was to increase farm or ranch revenue, followed by educating the public about agriculture and building goodwill in the community.

Figure 4. Importance of Goals for Developing Agritourism



Interview Findings

When we asked the ten farms we interviewed why they had agritourism, their responses also balanced social and fiscal motivations. Some farmers were driven to agritourism to provide agricultural education:

“When I started the organization, I made the choice that I would accept my calling for what it was, and my calling was to teach and feed children.”

Interviewee



Others emphasized agritourism’s importance to the farm bottom line:

“[Agritourism is] a way to promote what we're doing... it's a way for us to find donors, to find supplemental income for our programming.... to help keep the lights on, to help pay the livestock bills, and those kinds of things that just aren't covered anywhere else.”

Interviewee



Several farmers expressed that social and economic motivations went hand-in-hand:

“The first one would be that I do enjoy sharing with people... and then, secondly, it really is the link that lets the farm be sustainable.”

Interviewee



“The primary reason to start was economics. It was an opportunity for me to diversify our income, to keep the farm going, and still be able to work on the farm and take care of my family. And so that was the initial push, and that really has not changed... But creating the relationships within, that is number one. So the economics falls below relationships.”

Interviewee



“One is that [it's] something that [my spouse] and I really enjoyed doing and the other was because there was this just dawning realization that we were never going to actually break even if we were reliant on the product alone... and so it was a way of actually trying to break even, rather than scaling with the production.”

Interviewee



Farmer-to-Farmer Agritourism Advice

The farmers we interviewed had the following advice for others looking to get into agritourism.

Agritourism is a People Business

Farmers emphasized that agritourism requires dealing with people: visitors, neighbors, other farmers, and family. They advised farmers to think carefully about these intersecting personal dynamics before adopting agritourism.

“You have to have a skill in working with people. If you don't have those kinds of outgoing people that can talk to groups, that can talk to people... It's another endeavor that you're taking on. It's not just some extra money. That will come, you know, but it's something that you have to grow, like anything else.”

Interviewee



“The first thing I would say to people is go and talk to other farmers that are doing it... then it's really important in aquaculture to do a lot of social license to operate work, you know, make sure that you're not treading on somebody's toes.”

Interviewee



“[Do] as much community engagement as you can before you actually start inviting folks out. Let your community know that that's your plan and let your community know when you'll be doing that so you all can be on the same page. I would always invite community out to your space prior to agritourism.”

Interviewee



“Make sure that your family is on board and that you have really strong relationships within your family that can endure the scrutiny of the public... of not only your farming methods and agricultural practices, but the rationale behind it and behind your family.”

Interviewee



“I think, one, they've got to do a real gut check. Do they like people, and are they willing to accommodate people?”

Interviewee



Safety First!

Several interviewees advised new farmers to think through potential safety and liability issues before welcoming visitors.

“Look around your farm and see if you can make it safe.”

Interviewee



Move Slowly and Play to Your Strengths

When choosing what agritourism activities to offer, farmers should consider what makes their farms special as well as what they personally enjoy, and invest slowly as the agritourism part of the business grows.

Read on to **Brief #4: Agritourism Activities Across the United States** for more.

“Spend your money wisely in terms of what you do, and then gradually work into it.”

Interviewee



“If you're not enjoying yourself, everyone else is going to be miserable, too. So don't do something unless it's something that you really enjoy.”

Interviewee



“Before you invite folks to your farm, make sure you have a couple things set up. One thing, your insurance is first, right? Make sure you have some type of insurance so you aren't liable... Get your documentation together. Two, make people sign a waiver, or whatever it is, whatever that looks like, when they register to come on your farm, make sure that you're covered, right? Number three is make sure you have a tracking system set up already... Do not invite people on your farm willy-nilly because you will lose track.”

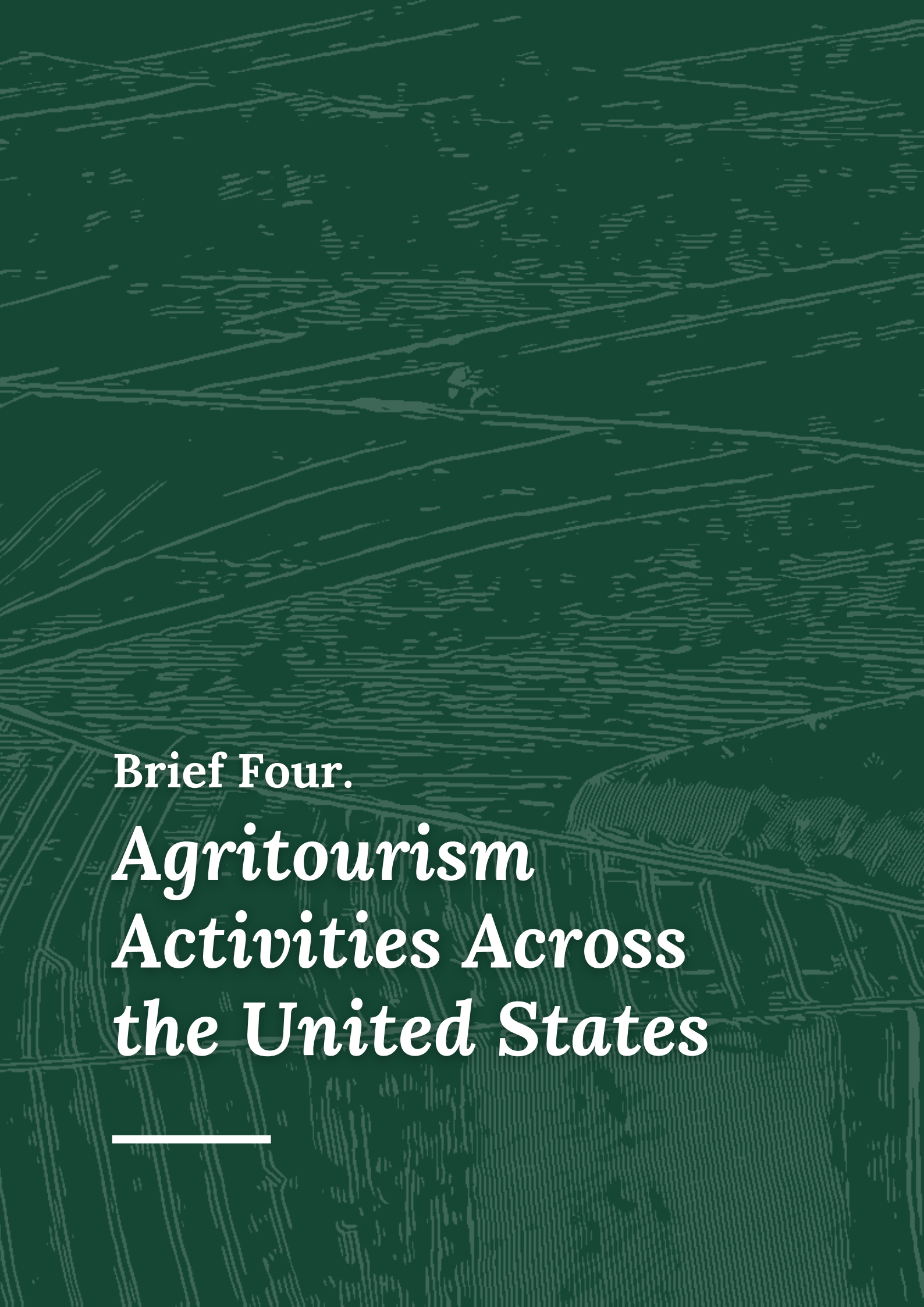
Interviewee



“What you should do is what you're good at. So if you look around, what do you love about your place? And when you even have relatives come there, what do they enjoy doing on your place? And then how can you expand that to be something that you still love doing, that you can share with other people, because your story has to be your story.”

Interviewee



An aerial photograph of a lush green agricultural landscape. A winding road or path cuts through the fields, and a small, light-colored building is visible in the lower right quadrant. The overall scene is rural and verdant.

Brief Four.

Agritourism Activities Across the United States

4. Agritourism Activities Across the United States

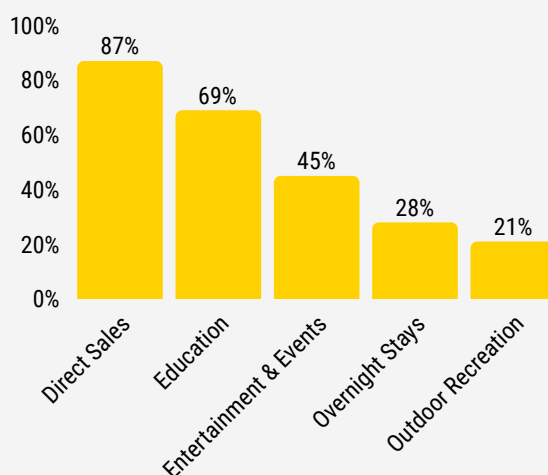
Types of Agritourism Activities

The study divided agritourism into five main categories, following the framework set out by Chase et al. (2018):

- 1 Sales of Your Products on Your Operation:** Farmstands and farm stores, CSA on-farm pickup, pick-your-own
- 2 Overnight Stays:** Bed & breakfasts, inns, home rental, cabins, yurts, camping
- 3 Educational Experiences:** Tours, tastings, demonstrations, workshops, field trips, summer camps
- 4 Entertainment and Events:** Farm dinners, festivals, arts events, sporting events, mazes, weddings, venue rental
- 5 Outdoor Recreation:** Hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, biking, horseback riding

Survey respondents first selected what categories of agritourism they practiced from the list above, then answered a follow-up question about the specific activities they offered for each category they selected. The majority of respondents had on-site direct sales (87%) and educational activities (69%). The top ten specific activities are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Agritourism Activity Types Reported by Survey Respondents



N = 1,064

Table 2. Top Ten Agritourism Experiences Across All Categories

Activity	% of Total
Farm Stand or Farm Store	67%
Tours	56%
Student Group & Field Trip Programs	45%
U-Pick	40%
Adult Classes and/or Workshops	29%
Demonstrations	29%
Work or Volunteer Experience	25%
Other Venue Rental	22%

N = 1,065

Figure 6. Experience Type by State

Figure 6.1. Direct Sales

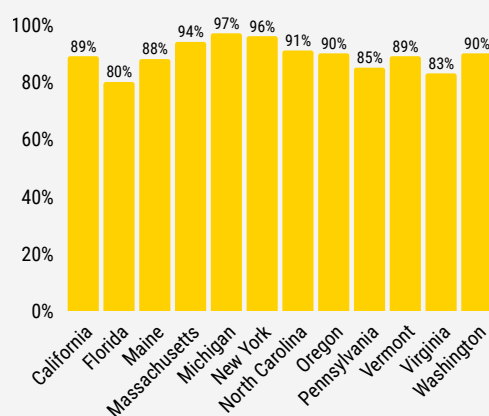


Figure 6.2. Overnight Stays

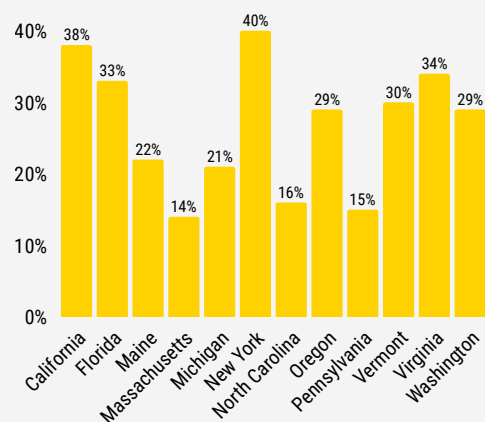


Figure 6.3. Education

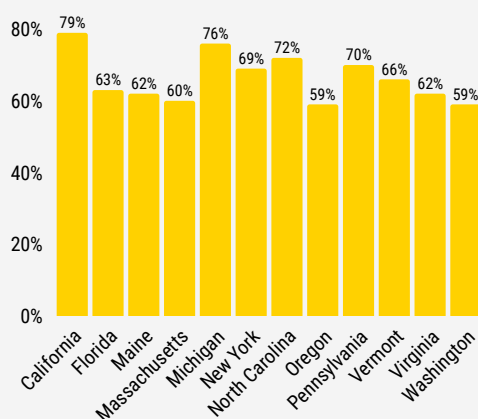


Figure 6.4. Entertainment & Events

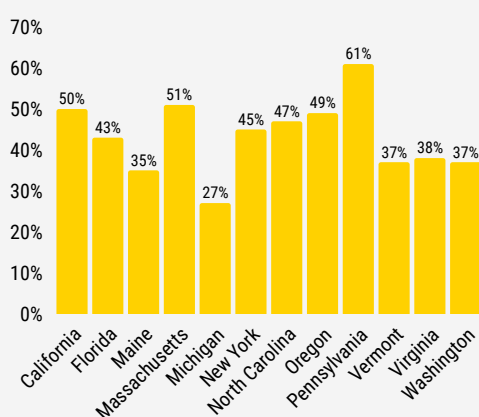
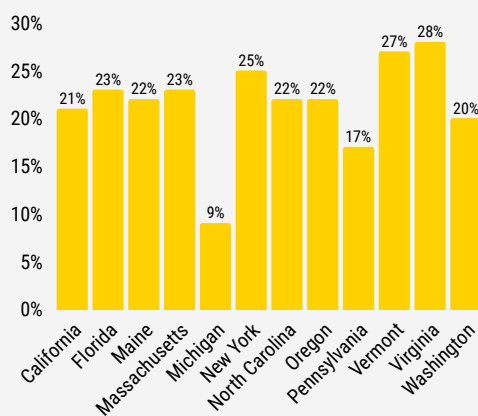


Figure 6.5. Outdoor Recreation



N =

56 = California

30 = Florida

68 = Maine

35 = Massachusetts

33 = Michigan

55 = New York

32 = North Carolina

51 = Oregon

46 = Pennsylvania

103 = Vermont

47 = Virginia

41 = Washington

Direct Sales: $\chi^2 = 11.828$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.377$

Overnight Stays: $\chi^2 = 19.459$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.053$

Education: $\chi^2 = 10.123$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.519$

Entertainment & Events: $\chi^2 = 16.879$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.112$

Outdoor Recreation: $\chi^2 = 6.692$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.823$

Agritourism and Geography

Agritourism activities of all types are happening across the United States. We tested survey responses from the 12 states with at least 30 responses and did not find any significant relationship between respondent state and the 5 categories of agritourism described in the previous page (Figure 6). Further analysis is necessary to see if there is a relationship between state and specific agritourism activities, and future data collection is needed to expand this analysis to more states.

There was a significant relationship between types of agritourism and how far visitors traveled to get to the farm. Farms with onsite direct sales were a little less likely to have more out-of-town visitors, farms with outdoor recreation were a little more likely to have more out-of-town visitors, and farms that hosted overnight stays were five times more likely to have a greater proportion of out-of-town visitors. This makes sense: direct sales attract local community members looking for groceries and other farm products, and overnight stays attract people who don't live nearby. Out-of-town visitors may also be more likely to seek out recreation activities. Education, entertainment, and events had no relationship with visitor distance, suggesting that these offerings are attractive to both groups.

What Kinds of Agritourism Activities Are Right for Me?

Remember this farmer's advice: "Don't do something unless it's something that you really enjoy." There is no one answer to what kinds of agritourism activities are right for your farm. Based on advice from participating farmers, you should consider the following:



What do you enjoy doing?

There are many ways to diversify your farm revenue. Choose the adventure you're excited to go on!



What makes your farm special?

Think about what you can offer that's unique for your local area or might make you the special destination on a visitor's vacation.



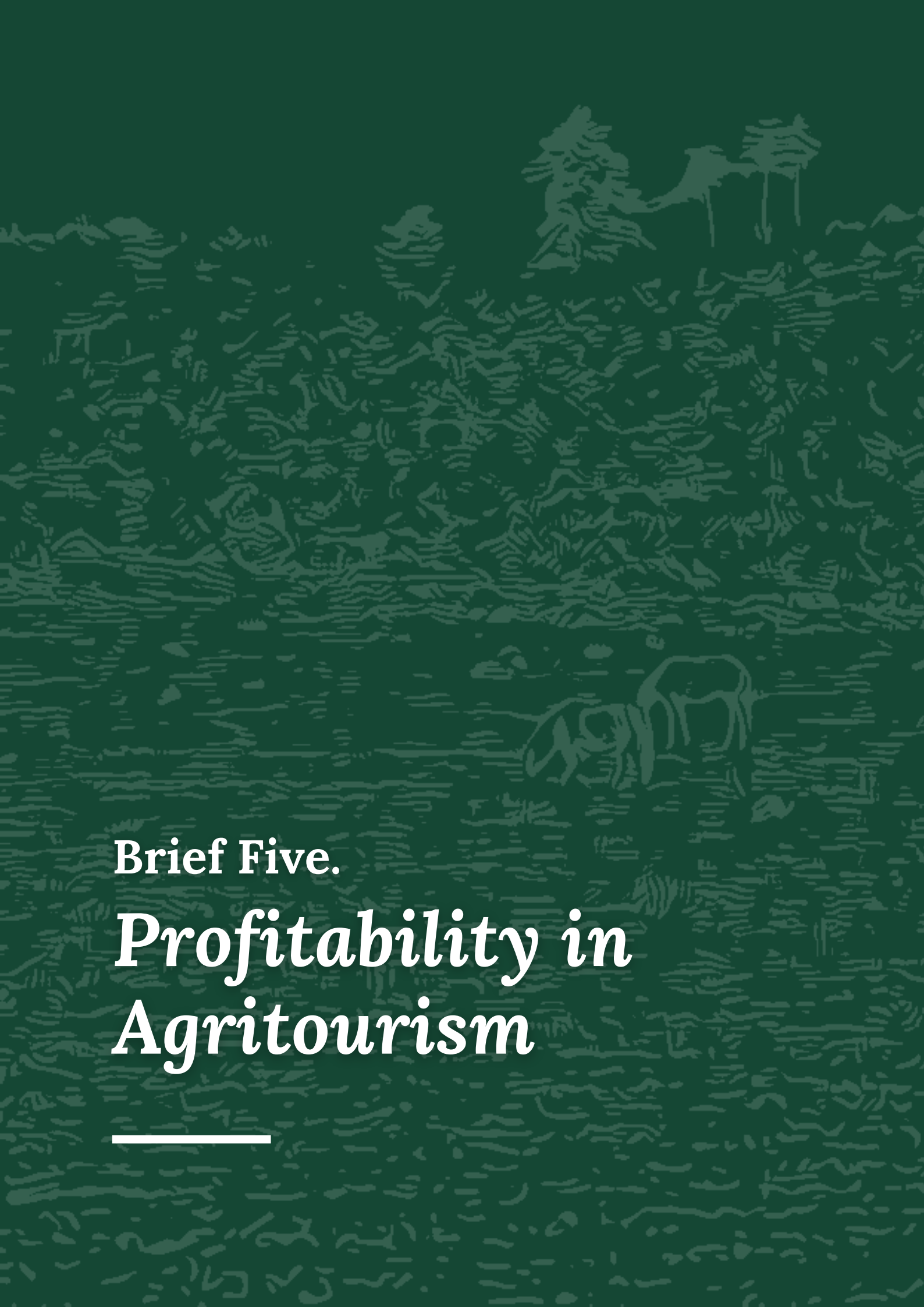
What kinds of visitors do you want to attract?

Do you want to attract local community members or out-of-town tourists? Families with children, older adults, groups of young people, or school groups? Different kinds of visitors have distinct interests and needs. Think about what kinds of activities you can offer to attract the visitors you want, and how you can make their experience joyful and easy.



What's the start up cost?

Start small and build out infrastructure slowly as your agritourism business grows.

A person wearing a hat and a light-colored shirt is standing in a field of tall grass. A small dog is sitting on the grass in the foreground. In the background, there are trees and a fence.

Brief Five.

Profitability in Agritourism

5. Profitability in Agritourism

When asked what motivations were important to their decision to develop agritourism, almost all surveyed farmers shared a common goal: increasing farm revenue. Ninety-four percent of respondents stated that increasing revenue was important to their decision to develop agritourism, and 71% said it was very important. Fortunately, respondents did not feel this goal was misplaced: 75% stated that they had been successful at increasing farm revenue through agritourism.

Survey respondents also drew a high-level picture of their 2024 farm finances through four categorical questions:

- 1 Farm/ranch gross revenue from all sources
- 2 Farm/ranch net profit from all sources (revenue less expenses)
- 3 Gross revenue from agritourism-related sales and services
- 4 Net profit from agritourism-related sales and services

For each question, respondents checked a box to show what range their farm fit into (i.e., \$5k - \$25k or \$25k to \$100k, etc.). Responding farms ranged from less than \$1k in gross revenue up to greater than \$10M in gross revenue, with the largest number (29%) reporting revenues between \$25k and \$100k.

We compared the ratio between farm revenue and profit with the ratio between agritourism revenue and profit and found that the mean agritourism profit ratio (48%) exceeded the mean farm profit ratio (28%) by 20 percentage points. While

What Range Does Your Farm Fit Into?

- ☐ \$5k - \$25k
- ☒ \$25k - \$100k
- ☐ \$100k +



Photo Courtesy of Lakota Youth Development

findings are limited due to the categorical nature of the questions, they suggest that agritourism activities are generally more profitable than the farm business as a whole.

We also compared the ratio between agritourism gross revenue and farm gross revenue with the ratio between agritourism net profit and farm net profit. This comparison showed that reported agritourism revenue accounted for 53% of reported farm revenue, and agritourism profit accounted for 72% of farm profit. While these numbers should also be taken with caution, they suggest that agritourism plays an important role in farm profit and may help absorb losses from agricultural production.

Interviewed farmers agreed that profitability was a central motivator for adopting agritourism, and many were successful. Two farmers with decades of agritourism experience expressed how essential agritourism was to their farm bottom line:

“The farm would not survive without [agritourism]. It's really, really important. And on a very regular basis, the [agritourism] has to subsidize the farming operation.”

Interviewee



“If I [only counted agritourism activities other than direct sales], about 20% of the revenue is from agritourism. But if I would throw in the you-pick pumpkins and the apples, all of a sudden that goes up to, my goodness, 60, 70%... Financially, it would be a much thinner margin for us if we did not have agritourism.”

Interviewee



Two farmers newer to agritourism hoped to grow their income over time to improve the economic situation of the overall farm business. While neither were there yet, both remarked that agritourism income was already helpful and intended to expand their offerings for visitors. (See quotes on the next page.)

A Note of Caution

Beware of anybody who promises a silver bullet to solve the problem of farm profitability! Agritourism can be a useful farm income diversification strategy, and the farmer has much more control over what they spend and what they charge for agritourism than is typical in agricultural product sales. But agritourism is a business like any other and can require a whole lot of work. Hear more from farmers about why they have agritourism and their advice for new operators in **[Brief #3: Why Agritourism?](#)**



"I've yet to be convinced that we are profitable. So, [tours are] a significant portion of our income, our revenue. So, this is the first year where we've really pivoted hard to move away from pushing hard on the sales to doing more of this agritourism. And so this is the year I'm hoping that we actually start to see a difference in... [the] profit and loss statement at the end of the financial year."

Interviewee



"Our primary goal with having the agritourism is to make the land payments. It doesn't make the land payments, obviously, but it helps toward it. And I do hope that every year we can increase that exponentially so that it can actually make the land payments."

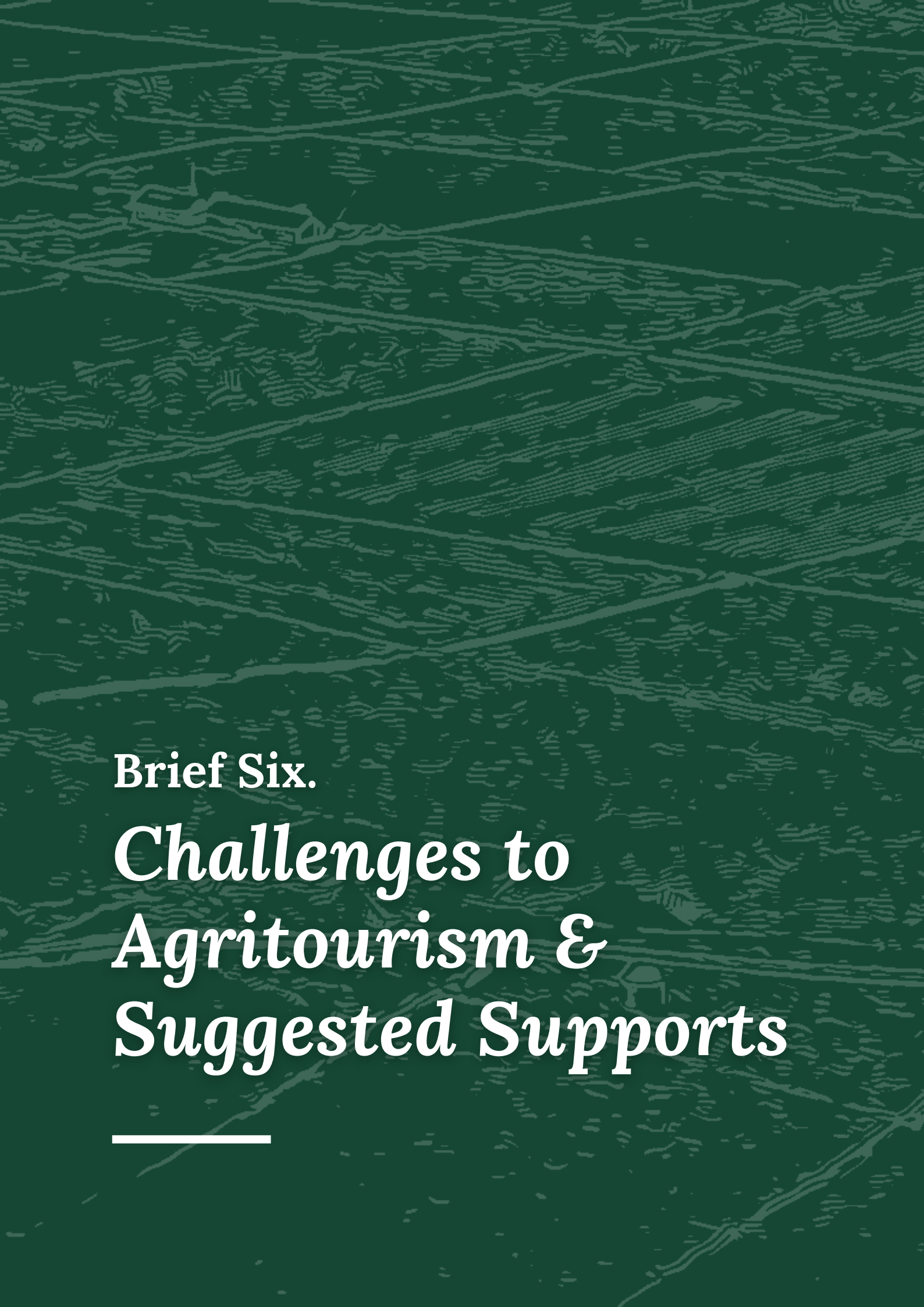
Interviewee



Limitations

Categorical questions about farm finances are easier and less sensitive for farmers to answer in a short online survey, but they are limited in scope and based on self-reported data. We recommend two complementary strategies to collect better data on agritourism farm revenue and profit:

- 1 Deep dives into agritourism finances with smaller groups of farms:** Many farms need assistance with agritourism business activities from financial planning to marketing. Projects that build deep partnerships with smaller cohorts of farmers can provide necessary assistance while analyzing the dynamics behind agritourism profitability.
- 2 Consider rewording NASS Census of Agriculture questions on agritourism and direct sales to match industry practice:** The USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, distributed every five years, is the standard-bearer for US farm financial data. Yet the Census questions on agritourism and direct sales do not capture the full picture of agritourism as it is commonly understood by farmers and researchers, as explored in Hollas et al. (2024). Revising the Census questions on agritourism and direct sales will improve applicability of NASS farm financial data for agritourism research.

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, showing a small farmstead with several buildings and a large field. The image is in a dark, monochromatic green color scheme.

Brief Six.

Challenges to Agritourism & Suggested Supports

6. Challenges to Agritourism & Suggested Supports

A primary goal of this project was to identify the top challenges for agritourism operators nationwide, as well as their suggestions for how governments, Extension offices, and others can support agritourism farmers. This brief offers a summary of the most common challenges and supports named by research participants. The following briefs dive deeper into several issues raised by farmers.

Challenges

Interviewees and survey respondents described the challenges they experienced integrating agritourism into their farm. Interviewees spoke to challenges in their own words. Survey respondents rated 28 proposed challenges as “very challenging,” “somewhat challenging,” and “not at all challenging,” and were invited to elaborate on challenges in an open response question. Across all modes of data collection, one overarching theme rose to the top: the twin restrictions of time and money.

Survey Findings

Figure 4 shows the top 10 issues rated “very challenging” by survey respondents, along with the percentage of respondents who rated these either very or somewhat challenging. The top

Figure 7. Top 10 Issues Rated “Very Challenging”



N = 994

*Including Family Labor

**Including Accessibility of Grants

three challenges rated at least somewhat challenging were all about available person-time: labor (including family labor); time management; and adequate time to work on marketing. Of the top three issues rated “very challenging”, two address money directly—the cost and availability of insurance and the monetary cost of marketing—with the third being labor (Figure 7).

Interview Findings

Time and money were also top themes in interviews with farmers. Farmers expressed that they were spread thin in terms of their own labor and hired labor, and also named high costs for insurance and agricultural inputs.

“We're really exhausted. And part of it is because while we're integrating the agritourism, we're struggling to get done all the other ag work that we have done. We need to reduce that workload somehow.”



Interviewee

“Honestly, we need more staff. You know, we're a small operation. We're a nonprofit organization, and we do youth work at the core. And all of [the agritourism] is extra stuff that don't quite pay a person to do it.”



Interviewee

“Agritourism requires a lot of people...on a weekend we've got to have about 18 to 20 of us to pull off a day, you know, because we'll have several in the play area, several in the pumpkin patch, some people in the orchard, then in our retail, our concessions, our kitchen, our bakery... labor is probably our biggest challenge.”



Interviewee

“Because of the insurance and having to calculate that into the expense, we are not making money.”



Interviewee

“It's just fertilizer, labor, insurance, metal, steel, you know, everything is just is so high, you know, pump repairs have escalated.”



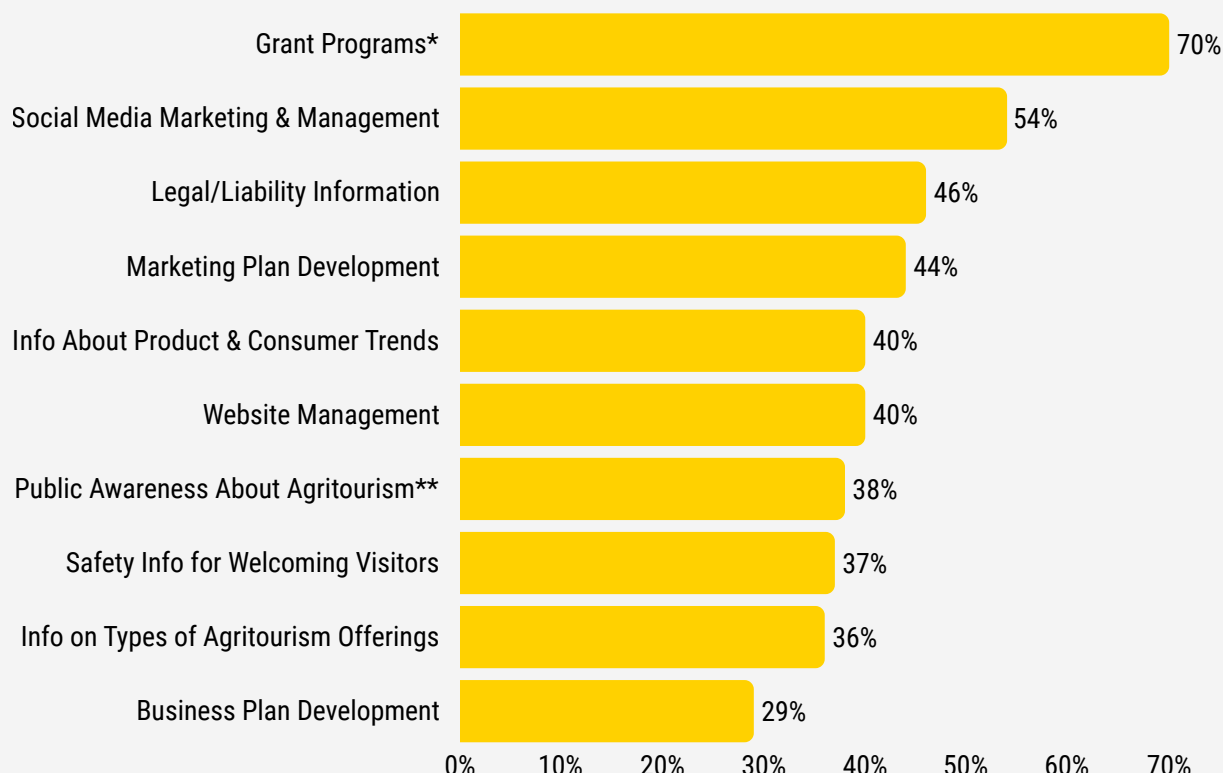
Interviewee

Supports

Survey Findings

Survey respondents selected the kinds of support they believed would help them be more successful with agritourism (Figure 8). Grant programs and other financial support were by far the most popular (70%), and a slight majority (54%) also requested support with social media marketing and management.

Figure 8. Top Ten Requested Supports



N = 941

*And Other Financial Resources for Agritourism
**Resource Materials for the Public on Where to Find Agritourism Experiences

Interview Findings

In interviews and in open responses to the survey, farmers named support needs for marketing, regulations, and grant support. You can explore all three of these themes in the briefs that follow:



Brief #7
Regulatory
Barriers



Brief #8
Marketing
Agritourism



Brief #10
Financial
Support for
Agritourism

The need for support that catered specifically to agritourism operations wove throughout requests for funding and technical assistance. Traditional sources of farmer support, like USDA, state departments of agriculture, and Extension, may not address challenges created by tourism. Several farmers described success stories of working with Extension offices that had adapted to address agritourism concerns, and of working with tourism departments or destination marketing organizations.

“I started working with... a community development specialist [in Extension]... [in] maybe 1990, something like that, and [he] said, ‘you’re doing something that has real importance for agriculture and for community development. We need to put... a framework around this.’ And he then connected with [an Extension agent in another state] and the, the three of us communicated... to kind of put a definition and a framework around this concept of agritourism.”

Interviewee



“The biggest thing is the partnerships that we’ve had with tourism in general. You know, I’ve learned more in the tourism area from, for example, during the pandemic I took [a tourism certification course through a university]. I didn’t know anything about tourism, and when I got done I thought, wow, these are all the things that are possibilities for us.”

Interviewee

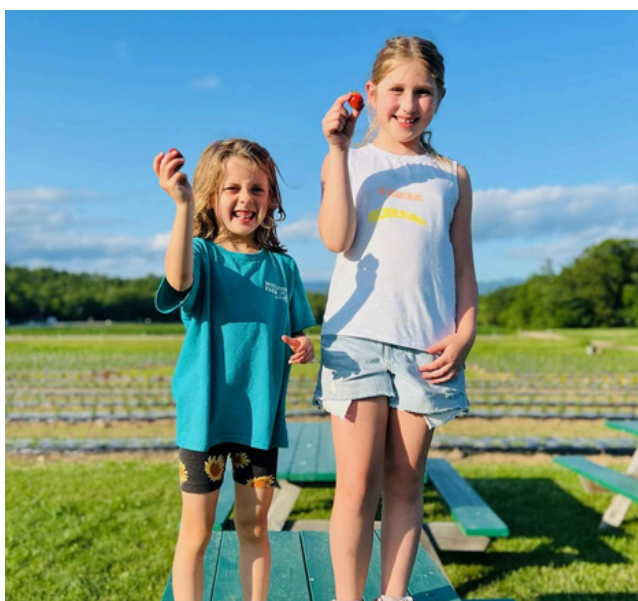


Photo Courtesy of Moulton Farms

“At the beginning, the [destination marketing organization] helped me a lot... they highlighted, hey you can do this, you can do that, and maybe you can include the brunch. That was an idea that we shared with them. And how much to charge, that was something we also discussed with them.”

Interviewee





Brief Seven.

Regulatory Barriers

7. Regulatory Barriers

Agritourism is regulated at the state and local level through policies like zoning regulations, laws governing food and alcohol service, and limited liability laws for farms that welcome visitors. It's therefore unsurprising that analysis of survey results found that the degree to which respondents found regulatory issues challenging differed significantly by state.

Across all respondents, 64% found regulations at least somewhat challenging and 25% reported that regulations were very challenging. But these nationwide numbers obscure the extent to which regulatory issues vary by geography. We examined data from the twelve states with 30 or more responses and ran a statistical test to see if and how challenges to regulation related to respondent state (Figure 9). Forty-five percent of respondents in Oregon and 43% of respondents in California found state or local regulations “very challenging,” compared to just 10% of respondents in Maine. Maine was the only state where less than half of respondents reported that regulations were at least somewhat challenging, and Oregon continued to hold the top spot with 90% of respondents reporting at least some challenges from regulations.

Percentage of Respondents Who Found Regulations Challenging

64%

Found Regulations at Least Somewhat Challenging

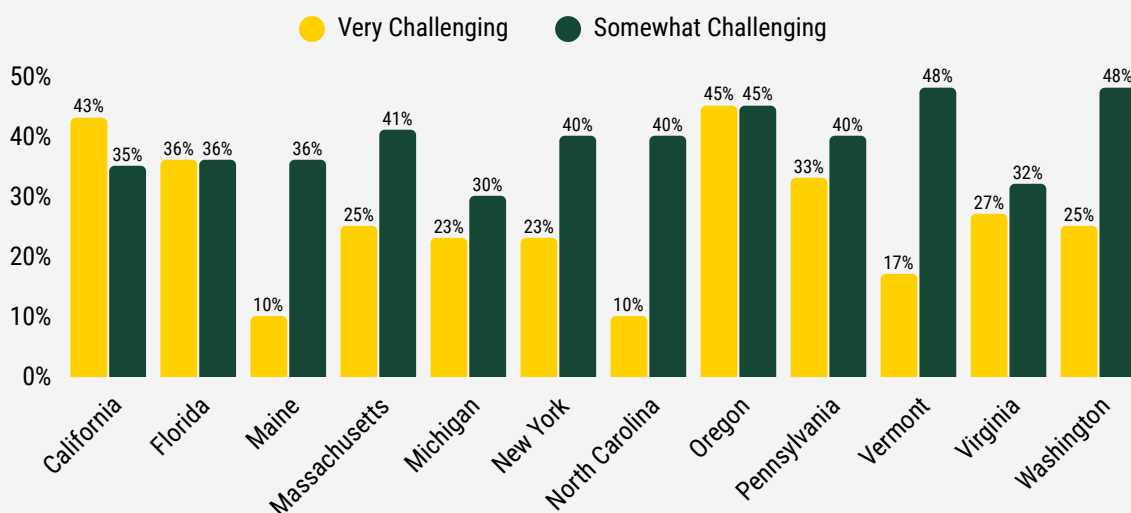
25%

Found Regulations Very Challenging

90%

of Respondents from Oregon Reported Challenges

Figure 9. Reported At Least Some Challenges with Regulations by State



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 43.795, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.



Photo Courtesy of Mahlstedt Ranch

In the survey open response question on challenges, multiple Oregon respondents cited difficulties related to Oregon's land use system, which was codified by Senate Bill 100 in 1973 (An Act Relating to Land Use; Creating New Provisions; Amending ORS 215.055, 215.510, 215.515, 215.535 and 453.345; and Appropriating Money, 1973). While this system centralizes land-use regulation, counties interpret the law differently, sometimes resulting in restrictions like prohibitions on short-term rentals (Hunnicut, 2006). California respondents described a fragmented regulatory environment that varied by local jurisdiction.



- "Extremely difficult land use laws here in Oregon."
- "The state of Oregon has banned all short-term rentals on [exclusive] farm use properties."
- "I have a cabin on-site that I was told would not be permissible as a farm stay because of the [exclusive farm use] zoning."



- "Our local tourism authority has been very helpful, but our board of supervisors just cut that entire program, which is a loss for our entire county."
- "There's not a lot of information and often if there is information it's not accurate about what is and is not allowed. We are rule followers so we want to do what's right. But we can't find the rules anywhere."

What Regulations Affect My Farm?

As part of this study, project partners at the National Agricultural Law Center (NALC) updated their agritourism regulation resources. NALC has compiled 3 maps of agritourism-relevant legislation at the state level. Each of the below links leads to a US state map, where states in dark blue have relevant legislation. When you click on a state, a document will open in a new tab that contains the legislation citation and text.



Homepage

This is the landing page for all agritourism resources on the NALC site. Resources are organized by category, beginning with major statutes.



Recreational Use Statutes

Summary of state laws providing liability protection for landowners who allow public use of their land for recreational purposes.



Agritourism Statutes

Summary of state laws that directly address agritourism, covering issues including liability, taxes, and zoning.



Equine Activity Statutes

Summary of state laws that limit liability for equine activities.



Photo Courtesy of Urban Youth Agriculture

Recommendations

The regulations that are appropriate or necessary for agritourism will vary depending on state/local natural resources, population density, agriculture typology, and culture, among other factors. What is consistent is that agritourism operations are predominantly small businesses and experience serious limitations of person-time and available funds, as explored in **Brief #6: Challenges to Agritourism and Suggested Supports**. Confusing regulatory environments, onerous paperwork, and fees can be an obstacle to doing business for these farmers.

We recommend that state and municipal governments examine regulations affecting agritourism businesses with the goal of reducing the administrative and financial burdens of compliance. Special attention should be paid to confusing or contradictory regulations, complicated paperwork, and regulations that disproportionately affect agritourism operators compared to other agriculture or tourism businesses.

An aerial photograph of a lush green agricultural field, showing a series of parallel furrows or rows of crops that create a grid-like pattern across the landscape. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the field.

Brief Eight.

Marketing Agritourism

8. Marketing Agritourism

A key focus of this study was marketing: how farmers across the country market their agritourism activities, what aspects of marketing are the most challenging, and what kinds of marketing assistance farms need. Analysis of survey and interview results found that almost all farmers struggled with marketing, and many expressed that they lacked the expertise, resources, or time to understand what marketing efforts effectively attract potential visitors.

The survey began the inquiry into marketing with a closed question about how farms marketed their agritourism activities to potential visitors. Two strategies were selected by the majority of respondents: social media pages (87%) and word of mouth (85%). The next most popular choices were print advertisements (38%), press coverage (37%), and collaboration with other local businesses (36%).

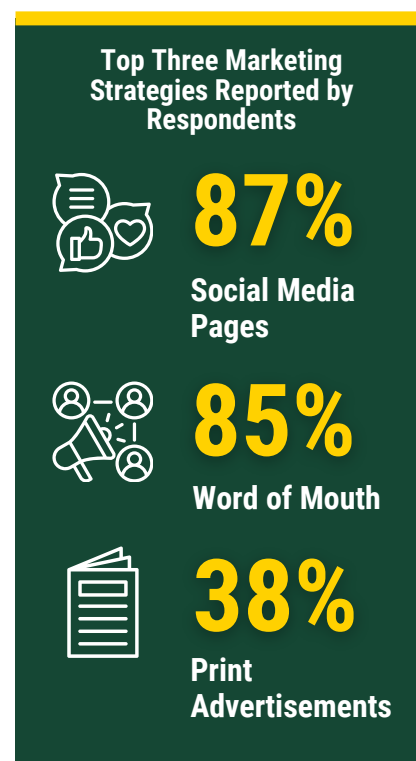
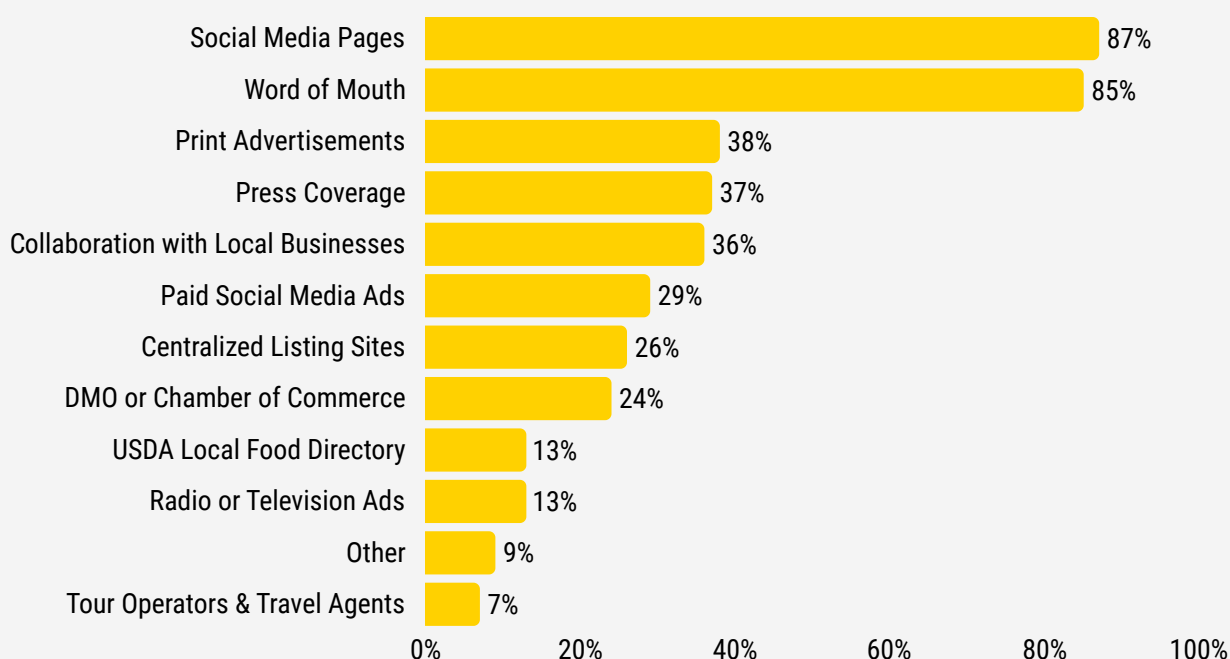


Figure 10. Marketing Outlets Used by Survey Respondents



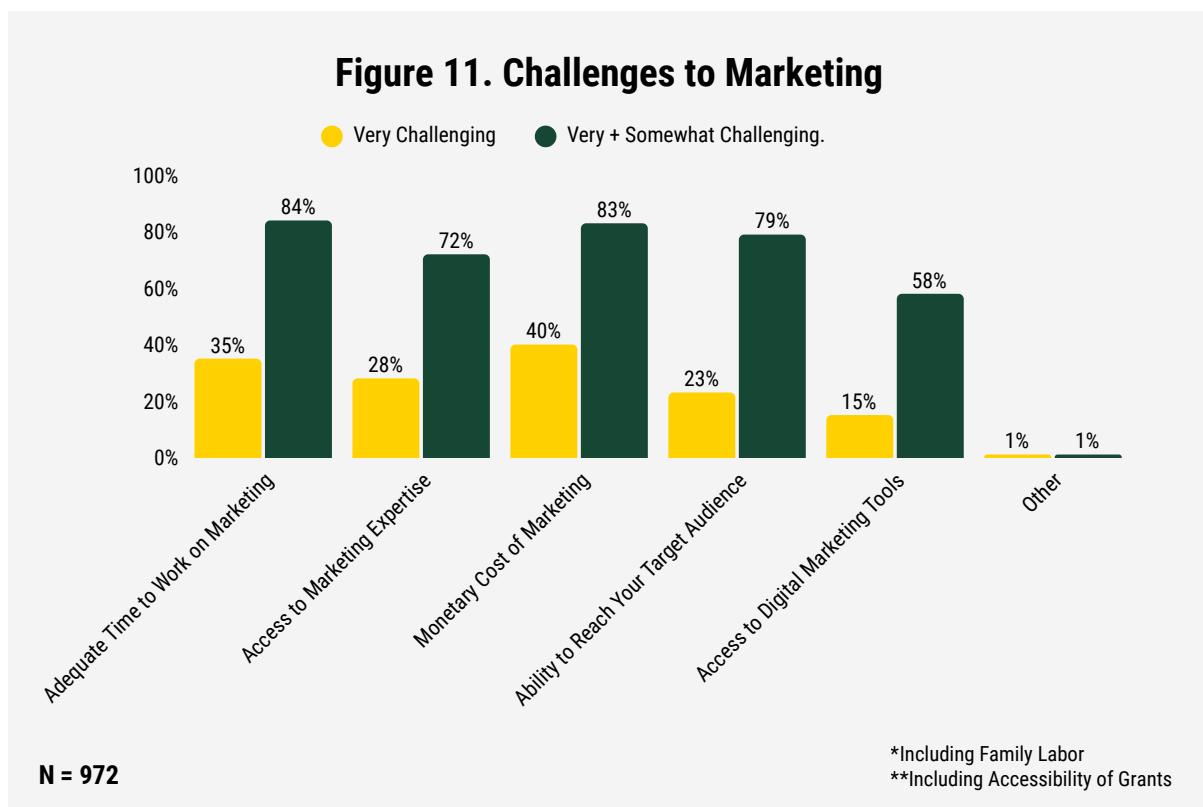
N = 1,038

*And Other Financial Resources for Agritourism
**Resource Materials for the Public on Where to Find Agritourism Experiences

Note. Themes in the write-in responses included: website and searchability of website on Google; email lists & email newsletters; and events.

Challenges

Challenges to marketing were near universal: the majority of respondents cited at least some degree of challenge in all of the categories we offered. The most commonly reported challenge overall was having adequate time to work on marketing (84% rated “very” or “somewhat” challenging), and the issue rated “very challenging” by the greatest number of respondents was the monetary cost of marketing (40%), which also came in second overall. This is consistent with our finding that the twin restraints of time and money were the central challenges reported by farmers, as explored in [Brief #6](#).



Note. Write-in responses rated “very challenging” included: knowledge of and facility with digital tools; a shifting marketing landscape; and knowing what strategies successfully attract guests.

In interviews and in open responses to the survey, farmers were unsure about how best to reach visitor segments of interest:

- “Marketing is a big challenge...we are 20 minutes away from a large city and it is hard to know how best to reach that audience and get them to make the drive.” — Survey Respondent
- “The marketing that we’ve been doing doesn’t seem to be working any more. Perhaps post-Covid, people have a greater selection of things to do? Or have the social media outlets changed their algorithms? Or have people already visited once and don’t think they need to go again?” — Survey Respondent

“That’s a real challenge, for me to keep up with where [young people] are looking for information.”

Interviewee



Some interviewees had family members with marketing expertise and felt like they did know where to direct their efforts. Yet, as the second quote indicates, in-house marketing expertise did not insulate operators from the barrier of cost.

"I can dig back into Google, and I can look and see what the searches are for... our daughter knows those tags to put on things, and so she's real good about that."

Survey Respondent



"We both have marketing backgrounds as well, so we really know what to do. We are in the process of trying to find funding for that, because it just gets so expensive."

Survey Respondent



Supports

The top requested supports by survey respondents are summarized in **Brief #6**. Of these, three of the top five were related to marketing: social media marketing & management (54%, second place); marketing plan development (44%, fourth place); and information about product and consumer trends (40%, fifth place).

Farmers elaborated on marketing support needs in open responses to the survey. Several expressed wanting to hire outside help, but did not have the funds.

"Having an online product shop has been helpful but difficult and time consuming to maintain. I feel like marketing/selling is another full time job in addition to the full time job of farming. Hiring someone to farm to allow time to market/sell has cost more than the additional sales revenue generated."

Survey Respondent



"Marketing/advertising is my weakest area. I have done better each year but still need to improve more. There have been people that have helped out and given advice. We are not to the point of being able to hire someone with these skills yet."

Survey Respondent



"We need a website to promote what we do but the cost are hard to justify and to manage a website takes a lot of time. We'd love to hire this out."

Survey Respondent



Photo Courtesy of Lakota Youth Development

But two farmers emphasized that marketing expertise without knowledge of agriculture was unhelpful:

“I’ve had folks offer to help me with [social media marketing], but they want me to ‘send them content,’ well what good is content without context? You don’t know who that ewe is or why this photo is precious or why this moment is special... It’s about sharing that experience with people that makes it special, not just the photo.”

Interviewee

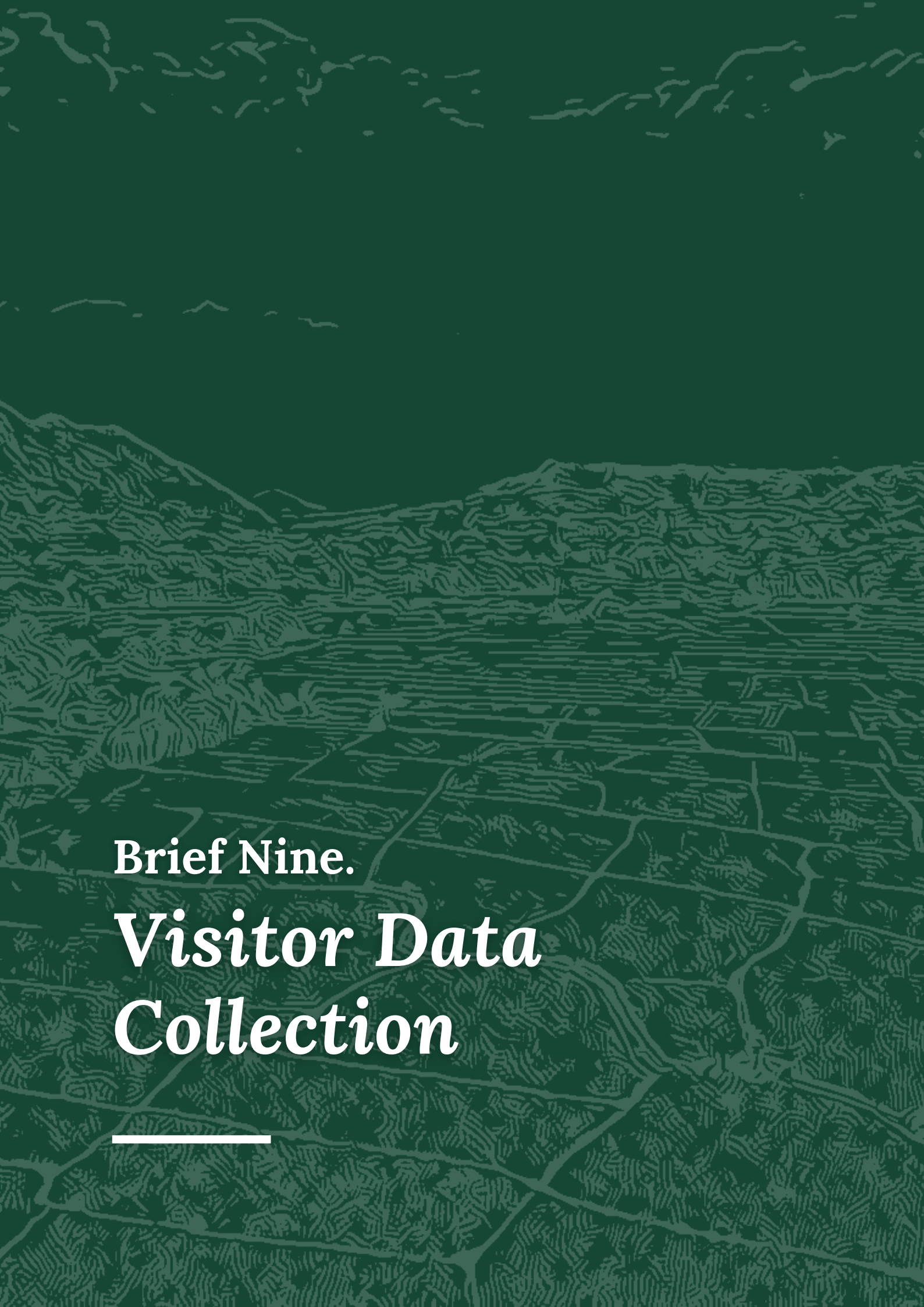


“We have looked into bringing an outside person... to handle the social media and marketing, but it is very difficult to find someone that has enough of a background in agriculture to be able to hand this area over to.”

Interviewee



In summary, farmers need access to free or low-cost marketing advice from experts who understand agriculture to help them direct their limited time and funds where it is most effective. Extension offices, state departments of agriculture, and state departments of tourism are all appropriate homes for this technical assistance, and we encourage states to coordinate internally to ensure that this expertise is available. As one farmer stated, “there seems to be a common thread over the past few years of agritourism operations like ours noting that they desperately need help with marketing, but so far no state organization has offered to provide these services.” Read onto **Brief #9** to learn about how research and outreach professionals can work with farmers to study what marketing methods work best for different activities, locations, and types of visitors.



Brief Nine.

Visitor Data Collection

9. Visitor Data Collection

The previous brief about marketing agritourism discussed the need for agriculture-literate marketing expertise that helps farmers direct their limited resources in the most effective way. The reality is that this expertise may not yet exist: research on US agritourism customers is limited, and farms lack the capacity to collect and analyze their own customer data. This brief summarizes the current picture of farm-based visitor data and recommend first steps for building this necessary expertise.

We began this inquiry by asking the ten farms we interviewed how, if at all, they collected data on their visitors. Just one out of ten was engaged in purposeful visitor data tracking and analysis—a nonprofit educational farm that was driven to collect data about the people they served because it was “vital for us to get more funding.” Many farmers felt they knew their visitors by interacting with them, and one who hosted farmstays remarked, “well, I sit at the dinner table with them.” Some farms did collect data by default because their activities required pre-registration, but they did not have time to analyze the data: “I have people register on the website, so I think there's the address and everything in there....so it's data in in in, but we're not really evaluating the data.”

Though nine out of ten farmers did not collect and analyze visitor data, many saw opportunities for how data could help them target marketing and outreach campaigns and inform business decisions.

“The agritourism is growing. It's slow, and it'll take us a while... before we get to a profitable position. But I believe we can get there if we have tools like data collection to be able to know what areas we need to work on, what populations are coming in, you know, where's our best market, that sort of stuff. And then building marketing materials to be able to reach that. I think those are the kind of things that we really need to be able to get to that level.”

Interviewee



“Data, boy, I wish we [collected it]. We wanted to do, have people sign up, give us their emails and those kinds of things... what I thought we could do is have these young people with clipboards and a questionnaire or survey... get [the pick-your-own customers] when they're kind of just getting ready to leave or something.”

Interviewee



“I would like to have, like, maybe if there's something that's proven, like... if I would like to do the [email] blast... what would be... the best timing.”

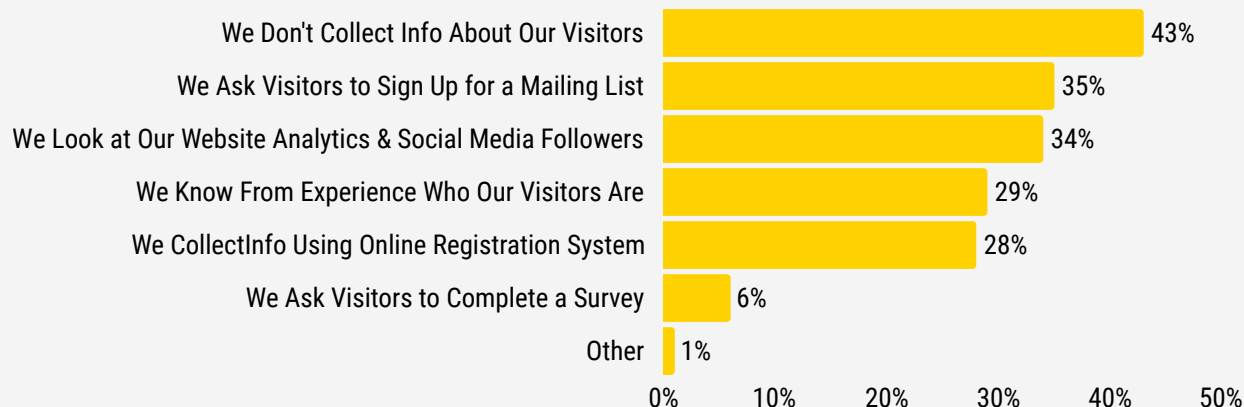
Interviewee



These discussions informed the survey question about visitor data collection (Figure 12). Forty-three percent of respondents stated that they did not collect data about their visitors. Among those who did, the most popular strategy was to ask visitors to sign up for a mailing list (35%), followed by looking at website analytics and social media followers (34%). The next stage of analysis sorted farms into two buckets: those engaged in

some form of active data collection (survey, mailing list, point of sale or registration system, and selected write-in responses) and those who either did not collect data at all or only did so passively (knowing from experience who their visitors are, looking at analytics and followers). We found that 49% of respondents were engaged in some form of active data collection, and the remaining 51% were not. Yet interview findings suggest that even if half of farmers are collecting some kind of data, they may not have the bandwidth to analyze those data and use them to inform marketing decisions.

Figure 12. Visitor Data Collection



N = 1,031

Note. Other responses included: guest books or other physical records; online reviews; and other tech analytics (“wifi,” “geofencing”).

Recommendations

Farmers need actionable information on how to reach and retain agritourism customers. The field of US agritourism research likewise lacks robust data on the demand side of agritourism (Santeramo & Barbieri, 2017). Together, these two gaps offer a ripe opportunity for applied research that fills a gap in the literature and benefits farmers. Like with farm finances (**Brief #5**), we recommend state and regional research projects that partner with

farms engaged in varied agritourism activities to collect and analyze visitor data and produce recommendations for where farmers should focus their marketing efforts.

The appropriate methods will vary depending on the type of agritourism. Some activities, like farmstays, classes, and tours, require advance registration. In these cases, the registration form can be adjusted to ask questions related to marketing (i.e., “how did you hear about us?”) Some farms may have existing registration data ready for analysis, like the interviewee who stated “we’re collecting data but I’m not having the time to put it all together in an Excel and evaluate.” For pick-your-own operations and other agritourism farms with large volumes of walk-up visitors, data collection will be more intensive, requiring “people with clipboards and a questionnaire or survey,” as a farmer suggested above. These efforts are necessary to create the agritourism-focused marketing expertise we called for in **Brief #8: Marketing Agritourism.**



Photo Courtesy of Liberty Hill Farm

An aerial photograph of a lush green agricultural field. A narrow, light-colored path or road winds through the field, starting from the bottom left and curving towards the top right. In the upper right quadrant, there is a small, light-colored building with a dark roof. The field is filled with dense, textured vegetation, likely crops or grass. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, with a high level of detail in the foliage.

Brief Ten.

Financial Support for Agritourism

10. Financial Support for Agritourism

When asked what type of support would help them be more successful with agritourism, surveyed farmers had one clear favorite: grant programs and other financial resources. Seventy percent of respondents selected this option, putting it sixteen points ahead of the number two spot, as explored in [Brief #6](#). This brief will dig into interviews and open responses to the survey to explore what kinds of financial support farmers need and recommend pilot funding opportunities.

USDA Grant Resources

Many USDA grant programs can be used to support agritourism as well as agricultural production. For a current list of active grant programs, check out the Resources section of the Agritourism StoryMap at this [link](#).

Though the idea of agritourism grants is popular among farmers, few exist in reality. At the time of the survey in March 2025, our team was not aware of any federal, state, or private grants intended specifically for agritourism farms. In December 2025, New Jersey announced the New Jersey Agritourism Grant Program, a joint venture of the state's Department of Agriculture and Division of Travel and Tourism that allocates \$5M of total funding for "farms, ranches, on-farm wineries, on-farm breweries and distilleries, and other agricultural businesses offering agritourism activities" (Walz, 2025). Applicants can apply for up to \$100k of funding "to support the promotion, marketing, and execution of agritourism experiences." This funding opportunity is, to our knowledge, the first of its kind, and New Jersey's experience will set important precedent for future funding opportunities.



Photo Courtesy of ABC Acres Farm

Grants for Visitor-Facing Infrastructure

In interviews and in open responses to the survey, many farmers expressed the need for grants to fund visitor-facing infrastructure. Common needs included building or improving farmstands and farm stores, public restrooms, and visitor parking areas.

- “Providing bathroom services [is a challenge]. Currently only have my personal bathroom but looking into a public option that is not a porta-potty or porta-john.” – Survey Respondent
- “[One challenge is] an increasing expectation for private guest bathrooms and bedrooms. We have shared bathrooms and bedrooms. The cost of renovating for this is prohibitive. We do have... [a] permit to serve the public and already made a huge compliance renovation. Further renovations is a big financial challenge.” – Survey Respondent
- “To increase our agritourism, it would be great to invest in a nicer new farmstand building and parking – would be nice to have some funding and business planning support for this.” – Survey Respondent
- “I need an updated farm stand to better protect my vending machine from the elements and it's hard to find grants that allow you to spend money on a farmstand.” – Survey
- “We love hosting visitors. Our kiosk is tiny and we'd love to expand. Cost of infrastructure is always an issue.” – Survey Respondent

Infrastructure grants have a strong track record in agriculture, and several respondents cited success with programs like USDA Value-Added Producer grants for food processing infrastructure and grant programs that expanded broadband access to rural communities. We recommend that federal, state, and private funders build on this success by piloting grants for agritourism infrastructure needs, like the farmstands, farm stores, restrooms, and parking areas referenced by respondents. Even if funders cannot make the same level of commitment as New Jersey, small grants for infrastructure improvements will make a big difference.

“Anytime you apply for a grant, they're not wanting to help with infrastructure... I'm educating people by getting them out there and giving them the experience, but I only have really one house with one bathroom and an outhouse, and I could really benefit in my planning if I could get some grant funding to help with converting our grain bins into off grid housing, showers, different things like that.”

Interviewee



Photo Courtesy of BayBees Honey Farm

Grant Guidelines

Two farmers had further actionable guidance for grant funders.



1. Farmers need up-front cash, not reimbursement.

A farmer who responded to the survey pleaded: “Please hear me: REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS are NOT HELPFUL. If I already had the money for that amazing project, I’d have already implemented it by now.” The seasonality of farming makes cash flow challenging. Grants that require farmers to spend their own cash and then seek reimbursement are less likely to be useful and used than grants that offer advanced payments.



2. New grant applicants need support.

New grant applicants need support. A farmer we interviewed explained “I have no idea about what writing those grants even looks like... I definitely would need support and wish I did have support in that sector.” Writing a grant and navigating funding paperwork are learned skills. If and when funders launch agritourism grants for the first time, many applicants will not have prior experience. We recommend that funders provide educational sessions and assistance along with any new grant programs.



Photo Courtesy of Mahlstedt Ranch

Brief Eleven.

Proposed Actions & Considerations

11. Proposed Actions & Considerations

The project team surveyed and interviewed farmers who welcome visitors across the United States in 2024 and 2025 to better understand the national picture of agritourism, learn about the major challenges farmers face, and hear their suggestions for support and technical assistance. Based on our findings, we have the following suggestions for farmers, policy makers, and researchers.

Recommendations for Farmers

Table 3. Recommendation for Farmers	Read More In...
Agritourism is a people business. Before you start, talk to your family and/or your colleagues about how you will manage visitors on your farm, which may also be your home. You may also want to talk with other farmers who do agritourism in your area, as well as your neighbors and members of your community.	<u>Brief #3</u>
“Don’t do something unless it’s something that you really enjoy.” When deciding what activities to offer, think about what you enjoy doing and what makes your farm special. Consider the interests and needs of different types of visitors, as well as the start-up costs for different activities.	<u>Brief #4</u>
Agritourism can contribute to farm profitability, but making money is not the only motivator. In interviews and the survey, farmers reiterated that the additional income from agritourism was important to their farm business, but that providing agricultural education was almost as important. While 75% of respondents said they were successful at increasing revenues through agritourism, there is no silver bullet for the problem of farm profitability, and you have to be excited to educate and work with people to make the additional income worth the additional work.	<u>Brief #3</u> and <u>Brief #5</u>

Recommendations for Policy

Table 4. Recommendations for Policy	Read More In...
Keep in mind the dual restrictions of time and money. Farmers have limited funds and more work to do than there are hours in the day. Policy and outreach efforts for agritourism must keep these restrictions in mind to be successful.	<u>Brief #6</u>
Reduce the administrative and financial burdens of regulatory compliance. Keeping the above restrictions in mind, state and local governments should ensure that regulations relating to agritourism are proportionate, easy to understand, and uncomplicated to follow. These efforts are especially urgent in states like Oregon and California, where farmers find regulations disproportionately challenging compared to other states.	<u>Brief #7</u>

Farmers need access to free or low-cost marketing expertise literate in both agriculture and tourism. Most farmers find marketing challenging, and the twin restrictions of time and money make it hard to get help and make it more important that farms spend their marketing budgets wisely. We recommend that Extension offices and state departments of tourism and agriculture coordinate to provide this expertise.

[Brief #6](#) and [Brief #8](#)

Pilot grant programs for visitor-facing infrastructure like farmstands, farm stores, bathrooms, and parking areas. As dedicated grants for agritourism are few and far between, any amount funders are able to allocate to these programs will mark a step in the right direction. Grants should provide advanced payments, as opposed to reimbursement, and funders should provide support for farmers looking to apply.

[Brief #10](#)

Recommendations for Research

Table 5. Recommendations for Research

Read More In...

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service should rephrase the agritourism and direct sales questions on the Census of Agriculture to match current practice. Hollas et al. (2024) explore how Census questions on agritourism and direct sales income do not reflect common definitions of agritourism used by farmers, scholars, and outreach professionals. This mismatch means accurate counts of farms that welcome visitors are currently out of reach, and that it is not possible to use Census data to understand the dynamics of agritourism finances. Revising these questions would open many possibilities for improving the national understanding of agritourism.

[Brief #2](#) and [Brief #5](#)

Local and regional research-outreach projects that work closely with farmers to provide business and marketing assistance and collect essential data. Most farmers need marketing assistance, and many also need help with business planning. The field of agritourism research lacks concrete data on agritourism’s role in farm finances as well as on agritourism demand. We recommend smaller-scale research efforts that work closely with a cohort of farms to deliver technical assistance and collect data on financial performance, visitor profiles, and/or marketing efficacy.

[Brief #5](#) and [Brief #9](#)

Brief Twelve.

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