YOUR SUCCESS | WELCOMING VISITORS TO THE FARM

Annie Baggett, Agritourism Marketing Specialist
919.707.3120 | annie.baggett@ncagr.gov

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES
Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture

MEET FOXIE!

Foxie Morgan of PHARSALIA from Tyro, Virginia.

Soooo proud of all the beautiful flowers!

www.pharsaliaevents.com

PHARSALIA. Established in 1814

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places & on the Virginia Landmarks Register

AGRITOURISM on working farms

Any activity carried out at a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, ranching, historic, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions. An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA | SESSION 2005

SESSION LAW 2005-236

HOUSE BILL 329

HOW BENEFICIAL IS AGRITOURISM?

BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM

How beneficial is agritourism? North Carolina farmers and residents respond.

Prepared by Tourism Extension, Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism Management College of Natural Resources, North Carolina State University. Published by North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

PROFITABILITY
- Even farm revenue stream
- Meet $ obligations
- Maximize farm resources
- Post harvest revenue
- Diminish catastrophic event impact

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THE BOTTOM LINE
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

FARMER'S PERSONAL GOALS
- Earn money from interest or hobby
- More revenue to continue farming
- Keep active

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THE BOTTOM LINE

THE BIG WHY?

To create revenue-producing opportunities for farms through visitor experiences to ultimately:

Preserve the farmland.
Inspire our children and grandchildren to farm.
Develop community vibrancy.

HOW? USE WHAT YOU HAVE & WHAT YOU KNOW

Barnyard Animals
Fiber Animals
Farm Riding Trails
Walking Trails
Golf
Selling: Grapes, Cheese, Honey, Eggs, Flowers, Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, Produce, Grass Fed Steaks, Home-raised Chicken, Turkey, Lamb, Venison, Farm Vacations, Slow Food Dining, Farm to Table Dining, Vineyards, Wineries
Your Idea!

WHAT?

What exists on your farm today that could grow into a vibrant Agritourism activity that you can translate into a CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME?

What makes your farm special?
Turn farm features into benefits.

WHO?

Is the face of the farm?
Is the audience?
HOW?
Does your farm meet the requirements of a bona fide farm and present use value program for agricultural, horticultural or forest land use under the General Statutes? NCGS 153A-340 b1 & NCGS 105-277.3.
Agritourism is an additional way for working farms to expand operations to even the revenue stream and preserve the farm.
Gather with your farm family, neighbors and your local Agriculture resources and officials to include Planning offices, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development and Tourism contacts to discuss the possibilities and the first steps of your Agritourism plan. Support at the local level is key to success.

AGRITOURISM FARMER
BEST PRACTICES

KEY AGRITOURISM FARMER QUESTIONS:
1) Will opening my farm to the public make money?
2) Are there customers to support my tourism ideas?
3) Is opening my farm to the public really a fit for me?

BEST PRACTICES BASED ON THE TOP NEEDS OF AGRITOURISM FARMERS:
1) THE BOTTOM LINE
2) MARKETING
3) SAFETY & LIABILITY

Will opening my farm to the public make money?
BUSINESS PLANNING
Budget – Sales to Expenses | Cash flow projections
Farm Solvency | Strategic Marketing Plan & Calendar

VISITOR BREAKEVEN Sample Numbers:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable Costs (Per Visitor Cost)</td>
<td>$4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Costs (Cost of Doing Business)</td>
<td>$12,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Costs $12,893 / Attendance Ticket Price $8 + Variable Cost $4.22 ($8 - $4.22 = $3.78)</td>
<td>3,410 Visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Visitors needed to BREAKEVEN</td>
<td>3,410 Visitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Plan for efforts to take longer than expected and to cost more than anticipated.
Saving adds to the bottom line and reduces the number of visitors required to hit breakeven.
It is easier to price high and adjust down than it is to price low and increase the value.
**BEST PRACTICES FOR AGRITOURISM FARMERS**

**MARKETING**
Are there customers to support my tourism ideas?

**BEST PRACTICES FOR AGRITOURISM FARMERS**

- A Low-Cost, High Impact Marketing Philosophy
- Real applications. A farmer since 2000.

Goals & Strategy | Assess & Plan | Outreach & Promote | The "Wow!" Experience & Inspire Customers to Tell Friends

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**BEST PRACTICES MARKETING**

- Brand
- Logo
- Mission Statement
- Call-to-Action

Our farm pledges to employ sustainable agriculture methods, enhance community spirit and help preserve the North Carolina rural landscape as we grow this lovely, soothing and fragrant herb. sunshinelavenderfarm.com

What's your story? BE CONSISTENT & COHESIVE.

**BEST PRACTICES MARKETING**

**BUILDING A CUSTOMER BASE**

- ONE farm customer at a time.
- CUSTOMER SERVICE/HOSPITALITY
- OUTREACH: How to find like-minded farm patrons?
- What is your farm ALREADY DOING? Farmers markets? CSA's? Special events, both on and off of the farm?
- Start with a sign-up sheet with your brand and logo. Place sign-up opportunities EVERYWHERE and EVERY TIME! (Be consistent and cohesive.)

**BEST PRACTICES MARKETING**

**ASSESS & PLAN**

- What are your goals?
- Use customer survey tools to establish your strategic guidelines FOR DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING AND RESULTS.

**BEST PRACTICES MARKETING**

**ASK KEY QUESTIONS:**

- Would you recommend our farm events or products to friends & family?
- Look how many customers plan to attend the next event.
- Do you think existing patrons will tell friends?
BEST PRACTICES
MARKETING

PLAN & PROMOTE

- DATA: On average, 50% of visitors are NEW to each event.
- TO OBTAIN RESULTS: Save the date magnets were shared during Holiday Celebration ~ 6 months prior.

BEST PRACTICES
MARKETING

EARNING PUBLICITY

- Three media outlets and several bloggers and social media savvy friends of the farm showed up at the December event.
- The Raleigh News & Observer came unannounced. FREE!!

BEST PRACTICES
MARKETING

MARKETING YOUR FARM GOALS & STRATEGY

Be proactive. Have a consistent look and feel to your messages. Develop a cohesive brand appeal over time. Keep the cycle going!

BEST PRACTICES
SAFETY & LIABILITY

- Collective voice & energy.
- 200+ members and growing!
- www.ncana.com

BEST PRACTICES
SAFETY & LIABILITY

AGRITOURISM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:

- Regulations
- Taxes
- Insurance
- Labor
- Safety & Liability
- Financial Responsibility
- Data-Driven Marketing & Public Relations
LET’S TOUR PHARSALIA!

Pharsalia’s Story
Nelson County, VA
www.pharsaliaevents.com

FOLK LIFE FESTIVAL
Pharsalia celebrates history every day. 200th Anniversary in 2014.

EDUCATION-BASED WORKSHOPS AT PHARSALIA
Flower class.

EDUCATION-BASED WORKSHOPS AT PHARSALIA
Horticulture class.

LEARN, CUT & CREATE A FLOWER ARRANGEMENT AT PHARSALIA
Ladies having fun!
INDOOR CLASS for all ages at Pharsalia!

APPLE DAY
Orchards surround Pharsalia. Celebrating, cooking, and teaching all about apples!

FARM TO TABLE
Fresh produce from the fields, orchards and gardens at Pharsalia.
Partners, like area farms for protein and expertise from restaurants and chefs, result in fresh and local meals for guests from Pharsalia’s catering kitchen.

CAR SHOW
A full day is planned to include a tour, croquet, lunch and a lot of bragging about cars.

WEDDINGS AT PHARSALIA
A one-of-a-kind venue offering experiences that are truly beyond expectations.

HAPPY BRIDE at PHARSALIA
A stunning historic treasure and farm venue. Expertise, abundant flowers and fresh food, a farm stay and so much more; the bride and her family invest in memories to last a lifetime.
SANTA AT PHARSALIA
Children enjoy this special place where memories are made during the holidays and all year long.

Pharsalia fills the calendar with educational and private events through every season on the farm.

200 YEAR OLD BARN
Beautifully restored buildings at Pharsalia transform into unique backdrops based on a client’s needs or a special event.

BEAUTIFUL FACILITIES. BAR & RESTROOMS at Pharsalia.

THE VIEW
Pharsalia turns the rural landscape into benefits.
• Natural beauty
• Peace & quiet
• A working farm

THE FLOWER GARDEN at Pharsalia.

Wagon ride through the farm for a family reunion held at Pharsalia.
WHY DO SOME AGRITOURISM FARMS FAIL?
The top Marketing 101 reasons:

1. Lack of commitment or passion for welcoming visitors.
2. No clear benefit perceived by the potential guests.
3. Poor positioning in the marketplace. (Carve out your niche.)
4. Although copying is the highest form of flattery, resist the urge to mimic a fellow farmer: Be real. Be authentic. Let your compelling farm story shine.

SUCCESS IN AGRITOURISM REQUIRES:
Your farm’s unique story.
• Value of your farm as destination (vs. location)
• worthwhile visitor activities
• Follow regulations and focus locally to boost community
• Provide experiences of a lifetime to visitors
• Excellent staff
• Consistent, cohesive brand while getting the word out.
• Profit for farm

LET’S CLUCK ... CHAT!
Q & A

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Thank you!