

# Agritourism Safety in Virginia

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# Introductions

-  Your name
-  Farm name & location
-  Ever had a safety issue?



# Objectives

## Virginia Agritourism:

- Importance, impact, and opportunities

## Agritourism Safety in Virginia:

- Review the survey
- Research
- Recommendations
- Questions



# Agriculture + Tourism

**“Any activity carried out on 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, wineries, ranching, historical, 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.”** (Code of Virginia § 3.2-6400).

Virginia Decoded. (2008). Definitions. Retrieved January 16, 2017, from <https://vacode.org/2016/3.2/V/64/3.2-6400/>.



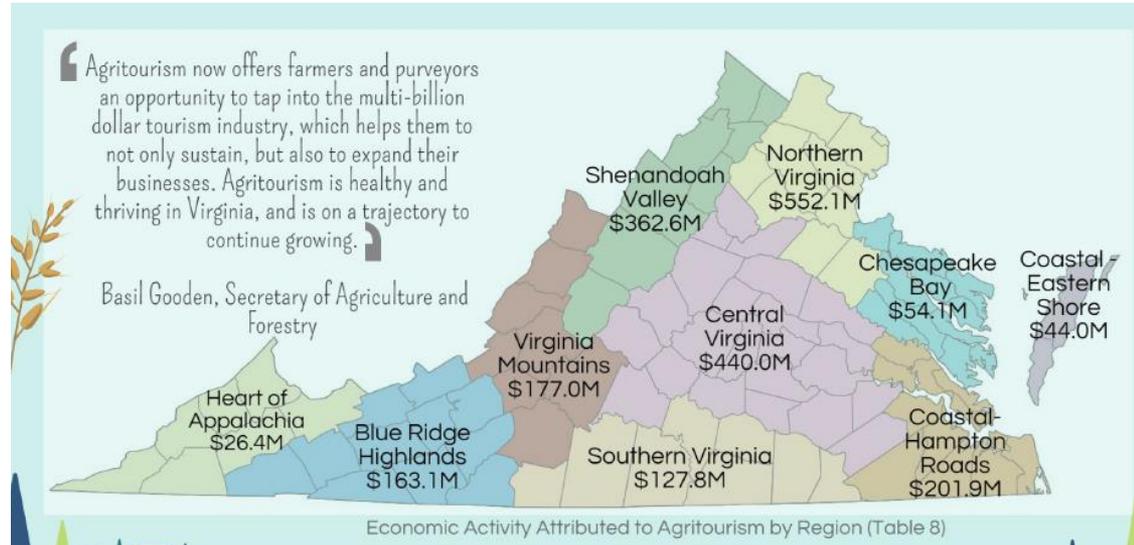
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# Agritourism

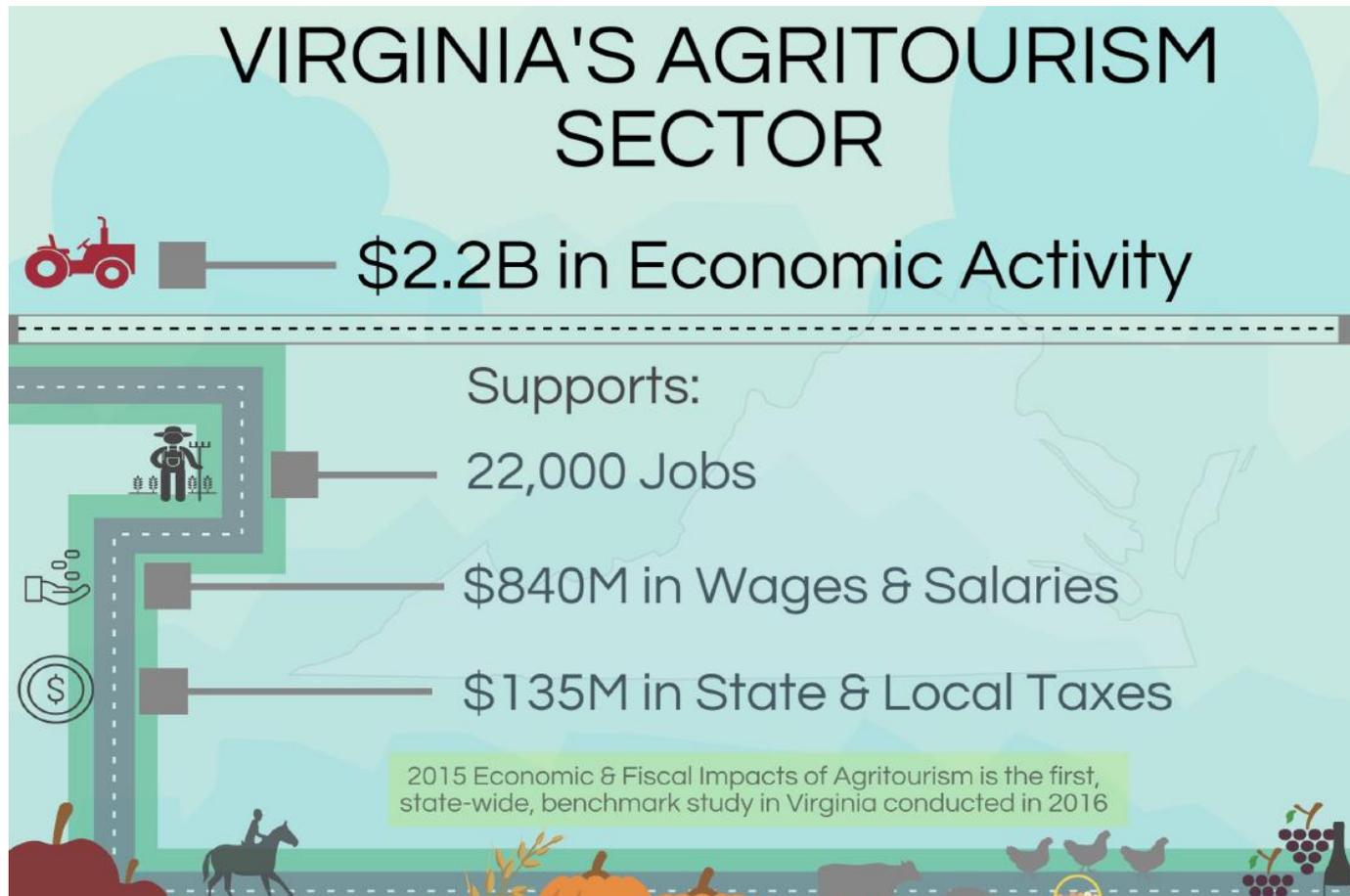
- 📖 Bed & breakfast
- 📖 Trail rides
- 📖 Breweries & wineries
- 📖 Fall festivals
- 📖 Corn mazes
- 📖 Hay rides
- 📖 U-picks or cut your own
- 📖 Farm stores & markets
- 📖 Weddings



Walker, M. (2009). Agritourism: Ideas and Resources. Retrieved January 16, 2017, from <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/310/310-004/310-004.html>.

Magnini, V., Calvert, E., & Walker, M. (2017). The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism in Virginia. Retrieved on March 4, 2017, from <https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/TheEconomicAndFiscalImpactsOfAgritourismInVirginia.pdf>.

# Impact



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# Why agritourism?

- 🌱 Additional income
- 🌱 Market farm products
- 🌱 To share a lifestyle
- 🌱 Provide service/opportunity to the community
- 🌱 Availability of good food, fiber, and/or wine
- 🌱 Bonding with family and friends
- 🌱 Educational/experiencing something new
- 🌱 Enjoying the outdoors
- 🌱 Fun/entertainment
- 🌱 Live close by/passing through/visiting friends or family in the area

Magnini, V., Calvert, E., & Walker, M. (2017). The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism in Virginia. Retrieved on March 4, 2017, from <https://www.vatc.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/06/TheEconomicAndFiscalImpactsOfAgritourismInVirginia.pdf>.

# Opportunities

⚠ Liability

⚠ Insurance

⚠ Safety



## **WARNING**



Under Virginia law, there is no liability for an injury to or death of a participant in an agritourism activity conducted at this agritourism location if such injury or death results from the inherent risks of the agritourism activity. Inherent risks of agritourism activities include, among others, risks of injury inherent to land, equipment, and animals, as well as the potential for you to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to your injury or death. You are assuming the risk of participating in this agritourism activity.



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# Farm Safety

- ◆ 23,883,000 youth visited farms in 2014
- ◆ 3,735 visiting youth were injured on farms in 2014
- ◆ Every day about 33 children are injured in ag incidents

NIOSH (2016). Analyses of the 2014 Childhood Agricultural Injury Survey (CAIS).

Morgantown WV: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Safety Research. Retrieved on March 4, 2017, from <https://www.marshfieldresearch.org/Media/Default/NFMC/PDFs/2016-Child-Ag-Injury-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

# Why are visitors a safety issue?

- Unfamiliar with agriculture
- Looking for a babysitter
- Easily distracted
- The rules “don’t apply to me”
- Common sense is “dead”

National Children's Center

# Agritourism Safety

*What types of safety protocols are in place for visitors, how are they managed on Virginia agritourism operations, and how could they be improved for future operations?*



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# Research

## Look at current safety protocols:

 Farm Employees

 Farm Visitors

 Insurance

 Signage

# Survey

## Dillman Method:

- 🐄 VA Agritourism List Serv
- 🐄 VA ANR List Serv
- 🐄 21 day interval
- 🐄 Sent three times
- 🐄 789 people reached & 88 total responses



# Farm Employees

## Training:

-  25% Verbal with manager
-  22% Train with a staff member
-  5% Training modules
-  15% Safety training
-  9% Tractor driving lessons
-  15% Customer relations

## Communication:

-  35% Cell phone
-  32% Start & end of the day
-  21% Hand held talkies
-  9% No communication



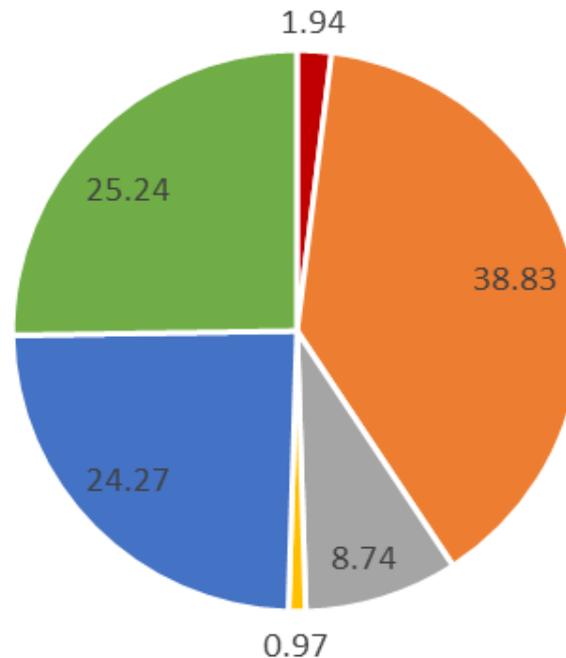
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# Farm Employees

Figure 1: Pre-Employment Screening for Farm Employees



- Drug Test
- Interview
- Background Check
- Driving Record Check
- Reference Check
- We don't use these



# Farm Visitors

## Sanitary Stations:

- 👤 43% permanent bathrooms
- 👤 30% utilize hand sanitizer
- 👤 26% offer porta johns
- 👤 2% do not offer bathrooms

## Emergency/911:

- 👤 43% would call 911
- 👤 30% would call the manager
- 👤 17% meet at central location
- 👤 10% no emergency plan



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# Farm Visitors

## Layout of the farm:

- ▲ 17% Local fire
- ▲ 11% Local EMT
- ▲ 12% Local police
- ▲ 60% No layout to emergency personnel



# Insurance

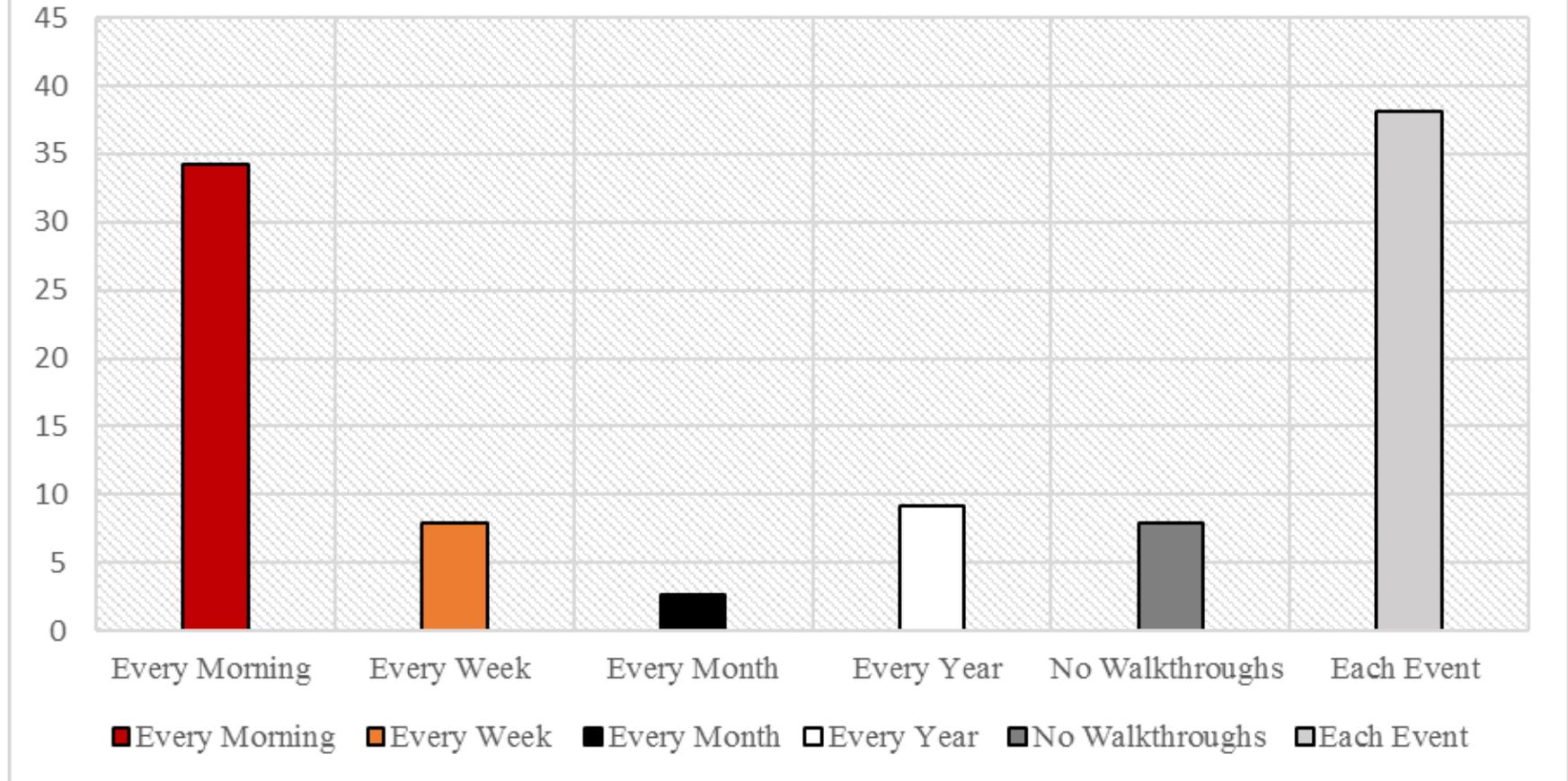
## Coverage:

- 🍓 83% have coverage
- 🍓 13% have insurance without agritourism coverage
- 🍓 4% no insurance



# Insurance

Figure 2: Walkthroughs on the farm



# Insurance

## During a walkthrough- when is the issue addressed?

📅 98% if an issue was found, it was addressed as soon as possible

📅 32% said insurance agents participate in walkthroughs



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# Signage

## Liability Sign:

- ◆ 78% posted in 1-5 areas
- ◆ 6% posted in 5-10 areas
- ◆ 14% do not have the sign

## Location:

- ◆ 48% @ entrance
- ◆ 20% in parking area
- ◆ 28% @ activity area
- ◆ Different languages
  - ◆ Pictures & words



# Recommendations

- ✿ Continued education
- ✿ Insurance
  - ✿ Walkthroughs
- ✿ Employee screening
- ✿ Signage (words & pictures)
- ✿ Local emergency plans

# Future

- 🐣 Regional workshop presentations
- 🐣 VA State Agritourism Conference
- 🐣 VCE Winter conference poster
- 🐣 VCE Fact Sheet or possible publication



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# Examples

## Accident at a corn maze:

- 🌽 Haunted corn maze
- 🌽 Visitor paid enhanced admission fee to enter the “scarier half of the maze”
- 🌽 Employee dressed as “Jason” with chainsaw
- 🌽 Woman fell and broke her leg



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# Questions?

- 🍗 Was there a sign posted with “rules” or any other signage?
- 🍗 Was information provided that indicated what the “scarier half” of the maze entailed?
- 🍗 Was the woman drinking or under the influence of drugs?



# Consequences

## Woman sued & lost the lawsuit:



She had paid to enter the “scarier” part



It was obvious the ground was muddy

## Insurance:



Owner informed insurance of activity prior to the incident



Would have been covered if lost the lawsuit



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# 10 visitors Sickened at Petting Zoo

-  Petting zoo & pumpkin patch
-  Illness traced back to the farm
-  Lab test confirmed 5 cases of E.coli
-  5 others suffered stomach issues
-  Hand sanitizers were present next to the animals, but no handwashing stations



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# Questions?

- ⚠ Were there signs posted warning visitors of the illness hazards?
- ⚠ Was the petting zoo set up so traffic is “one way”
- ⚠ Were the buildings and stalls cleaned regularly?
- ⚠ Were the animals kept clean?



# Could this have been prevented?

- 🐾 Petting zoo traffic flows in a one way pattern
- 🐾 Handwashing stations with soap and warm running water are available at the exit
- 🐾 Handwashing signs posted by the station
- 🐾 Buildings and stalls regularly cleaned and sanitized
- 🐾 Animals are clean, healthy, and UTD on vaccinations



# Prevented...

-  Signs at the entrance should warn visitors that there is not eating or drinking allowed
-  A trash can is available to discard food and drink
-  Cups, bottles, pacifiers, and toys should not be allowed in the animal areas



# Resources

 <https://ext.vt.edu/agriculture/agritourism.htm>!

 <https://safeagritourism.org/>



# Thank you!

“Virginia is a top ten destination for travelers, largely due to the diversity of product and the authenticity of offered experiences and agriculture is a key part of that variety. From aquaculture operations along our coastlines to wineries along the slopes of our mountains, travelers in Virginia can truly immerse themselves through sight, touch, and taste of all that Virginia agriculture has to offer. These authentic, experiential moments make it easy for travelers to discover why Virginia is for Lovers.”

-Todd Haymore, Secretary of Commerce and Trade

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