



**"MOST AMERICANS ARE
TWO TO FOUR GENERATIONS REMOVED
FROM THE FARM.
THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS VERY LITTLE IDEA OF WHAT
AGRICULTURE IS ABOUT. FOOD IS CHEAP AND PLENTIFUL.
EVERYONE TAKES IT FOR GRANTED."**

- SHAWN S. STEVENSON

CREATED BY: AGRICULTUREIMPRESSTIONS

AGRITOURISM IN VIRGINIA

What is Agritourism?

“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).

Agritourism Activity Liability

WARNING OR ATTENTION

"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."(Code of Virginia§ 3.2-6402)

What is agritourism?

- Agriculture merges with Tourism
- Provide an education or recreational activity to visitors
- With the goal to provide a *unique farm experience* for the visitors



What does Agritourism look like?

Educational Agritourism

- Most frequently offered on-farm agritourism activity in Virginia (52.7%)*
- Showcase modern and historic farming methods
- Demonstrate where food comes from
- Partner with other farms to form a Farm Crawl
- Contact local schools, churches, civic organizations



* According to the Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism In Virginia Study - April 2017

What does Agritourism look like?

Farm Festivals

- The second most frequently offered on-farm agritourism activity in Virginia (38.2%)*
- Design around the season, a holiday or a crop being harvested
- Need to know your farm's capacity for number of visitors



* According to the Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism In Virginia Study - April 2017

What does Agritourism look like?

Event Venue

- The third most frequently offered on-farm agritourism activity in Virginia (34.5%)*
- Weddings, Concerts, Reunions, Social Gatherings



* According to the Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism In Virginia Study - April 2017

What does Agritourism look like?

On Farm Dining / Cooking Classes

- Partner with local chefs
- Highlight your farm products
 - “What’s in Season”



What does Agritourism look like?

Animals in Agritourism

- Ensure guest and animal safety
- Biosecurity concerns



Petting Zoo



Trail Riding



Goat Yoga



Cattle Drive



What does Agritourism look like?

On Farm Lodging

- Tent Camping
- Tiny Houses
- Bed & Breakfast
- RV Camping



What does Agritourism look like?

Recreational Purposes

- Use the natural features of the land



Bird Watching



Fishing



Walking Trails

Why Agritourism?

For the Farmer / Farm Owner

1. Generate Additional Income
 - Diversify income, products and service lines
 - Cash flow during the off season
 - Increase revenue without increasing land size
2. Market farm products
3. Share a lifestyle or way of living with others
 - Sell the “experience”
4. To fully utilize farm resources
 - Build new business with resources that already exist
5. Provide service/opportunity to the community
6. Educate/teach people about farming
 - How their food is grown
 - Methods of farming
 - How farmers protect and care for land and natural resources



**According to Virginia's Agritourism Industry – 2015 Economic Impact Report*

- Preserve the heritage of the land/Keep the farmland in the family

Why Agritourism?

For the Visitor

1. Unique and authentic experiences
 - To experience the culture and heritage
 - Most people are generations removed from the farm and don't have a family farm to visit
2. Fun/Entertainment
3. Educational/Experiencing something new
4. Availability of good food, beer, and/or wine
 - Consumers are increasingly more interested in buying fresh, locally produced products
5. Live close by/passing through/visiting friends or family in the area
 - Increase in weekend and local travel
 - Increase in travel to rural areas to visit local attractions
6. Bonding with family and friends
 - Visiting the farm is an educational, interactive experience that everyone can enjoy



**According to Virginia's Agritourism Industry – 2015 Economic Impact Report*

Economic Impact of Agritourism In Virginia

- Approximately 1,400 agritourism operations in Virginia
 - 56% open year round
 - 35% have been opened five years or less
- In 2015, visitors to agritourism operations spent an estimated \$1.5 billion throughout the state
 - 17% of this total was spent at the agritourism venue
 - An average of 5,356 visitors patronage each establishment per year

Agritourism Venue Inventory in the Coastal – Hampton Roads Region

- **19** Farm Based Wineries, Vineyards, Breweries, and Distilleries
- **113** *Other* Agritourism Venues (other than WVBD)

Visitor spending in the Coastal – Hampton Roads Region

- **350,978** local visitors
- **254,250** non-local visitors
- ***\$142.4M*** in total visitor spending

Is Agritourism for me?

- Assess your personality
 - Do you enjoy interacting with all types of people?
This is a “People Business”
 - Are you a good communicator?
 - Are you organized?
 - Can you adapt to change?
- Identify your goals
 - Will be a supplementary, complementary or primary enterprise?
 - What is your timeline?
 - Put it in writing.

Is Agritourism for me?

- Evaluate your resources – you will need to look at your resources in a very creative and different way
 - Land
 - Is it suited to the activity?
 - How close is it to population centers?
 - What types of buildings do you have?
 - Human
 - Labor force, creative skills, talents, social skills, etc.
 - Will you need additional employees?
 - Financial
 - How much to invest?
 - Cost of operation?

Is Agritourism for me?

- Hosting visitors on your farm
 - Are you comfortable putting your farm, family and yourself on display?
 - Do you mind giving up some of your privacy?
 - Can lead to an increase exposure to risk.
 - Pros and cons of visitors to the farm



How to make it work for you

- Chose something you love to do – what are you good at, what are your farms best features?
- Get to know what your customers want
- Create a high quality product – make your product or service unique
- Keep informed and educated about the industry
 - Attend conferences, workshops, trade shows
 - Network
- Start small and grow naturally
- Form partnerships

Before you Begin

- Visit your County Offices
 - Land Use – Check with your Zoning and Planning Department to ensure this new use is permitted
- Assess your resources
- Research the market – what services are needed or wanted
- What are other agritourism operators doing?
- Consult potential customers
- Get help
 - Virginia Department of Agriculture
 - Virginia Small Business Development Centers
 - Virginia Cooperative Extension Service
 - Virginia and Local Tourism directors and staff
 - Economic Development and Zoning/Planning Offices

Every Agritourism business is unique. You make your business different by using your creativity, the character of your farm and the activities you offer.



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