Agritourism: How To Keep Visitors Safe on the Farm

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Objectives

• Explore visitors as a “safety issue”
• Discuss types of activities & “worries”
• Discuss injury incidents and hazards
• Familiarize participants with resources for identifying and addressing safety issues
• Discussion and time for feedback
Why are visitors a safety issue?

- Unfamiliar with agriculture
- Looking for a babysitter
- Easily distracted
- Rules “don’t apply to me”
- Common sense is “dead”
Children injured on farms

- @ 14,000 children are injured each year on farms and ranches
- 40% of injured children are visiting
- An injury can, and often does, result in “damages” to farm & impacts insurance
- Owners/operators must ensure the safety of guests
Question:

What types of agritourism activities do you have or work with?

Source: Preliminary results from the Agritourism Resources Survey (conducted by NCCRAHS, 2014)
Accident at Corn Maze

- Haunted corn maze
- Visitor paid enhanced admission fee to enter “scarier half” of maze
- Employee dressed as “Jason” with chainsaw
- Woman spooked by “Jason” broke her leg when she attempted to run & slipped in the mud
What questions do you have?

• 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?
What were the consequences?

• Woman sued
• Lost the lawsuit
  – She had paid to enter “scarier” part of maze
  – It was obvious the ground was muddy
• Insurance
  – Owner informed insurance of activity prior to incident
  – Would have been covered if lost the lawsuit
• Family Lost in Corn Maze Calls 911

• Corn Maze Burns

• Visitor Injured in Corn Maze

• Four Injured Walking to Corn Maze
Wedding Barn

- Steps to upstairs balcony area.
- Venue holds 150-200 people
What questions do you have?

- Is this barn open for use?
- Is this area accessible to guests?
- Are there any warning signs posted?

What would you do if you saw this?
1 Killed, 21 Injured on Hayride

- Jeep towing a wagon
- Jeep “careened” down a hill, the trailer jack-knifed and crashed into a tree
- Every person on ride was injured
- 17 year old girl killed
What questions do you have?

• How steep was the hill?
• Why did the jeep “careen” down the hill?
• How much driving experience does the driver have?
• Had the driver been drinking?
Other Questions...

• Was the jeep properly maintained?
• What type of wagon was used?
• Was the wagon overloaded?

Note: it was determined in follow up that there was a mechanical malfunction in the jeep.
Could this have been prevented?

- Hayride routes should avoid steep grades
- Tractor should be powerful enough to easily pull loaded wagon
- Experienced drivers only
- Regular maintenance of all equipment
- Tractors and wagons checked before every hayride
- Wagon should have railings and seating
Maine farm indicted in fatal hayride accident; owner files for bankruptcy

Harvest Hill Farms is charged with manslaughter, aggravated assault, driving to endanger and reckless conduct. Driver and mechanic face misdemeanor charges.

Source: The Portland Press Herald / Maine Sunday Telegram
• Woman Killed in Hayride Accident
• Hayride Crash Injures Youth Group, Leaders
• 7-year-old Boy Crushed in Hayride Accident
• 44 Injured in “Hayride Gone Wrong”
• Man Killed in Hayride Fall
• Woman Paralyzed in Hayride Accident
• Hayride Accident Injures 27 People
• Hayride Accident Dumps People on Road, Injures Several
Woman tripped on a rope anchoring an open-sided tent covering a table

She fell and broke her wrist
What questions do you have?

• Was she on a trail or walkway?
• Was she approaching the front of the stand?
• Was the “front” or area for visitors to approach clearly marked?
• Was the rope “tagged” to make it more visible?
• Was she “paying attention” to where she was walking?
What were the consequences?

• She sued the agritourism operation
• She “settled” the case for $40,000
Could this have been prevented?

- Have visitor “walkway” areas clearly marked
- Have the front of stand clearly marked
- Make anchor ropes visible (e.g. colored ties)
- Indicate areas not intended for visitor use
Headlines for farm markets

- Truck Crashes into Fruit Stand
- Runaway Tractor Kills Woman at Fruit Stand
- Infant Dies from Injuries Suffered at Farmer’s Market Crash
- Child, 2, Dies after Being Struck at Produce Stand
- Three Hurt as Woman Drives into Fruit Stand
10 Visitors Sickened at Petting Zoo

- Petting zoo and pumpkin patch
- Illness traced back to the farm
- Lab tests confirmed 5 cases of E. coli
- 5 others (mostly children) also suffered gastrointestinal symptoms after visiting
- Hand sanitizers were present next to animal area, but no handwashing facilities
What questions do you have?

• 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 up to date on all vaccinations.
Prevented...

• Signs at the entrance should warn visitors that there is no eating or drinking allowed.

• A garbage can is available to discard food and drink.

• Cups, bottles, pacifiers or toys should not be allowed in animal areas.
• Toddler Dies from Playground Incident
• 12 Hurt in Miniature Train Incident
• Pumpkin Patch Petting Zoo Infects 3 Kids
• Student Falls in Bonfire at Barn Dance
• 9-year-old Boy Injured at Pumpkin Patch
• Swimming Hole is Deadly Trap
• Visitor Injured in Zip Line Incident at Farm
How do you “inspect” for safety on farms?

“Has actual knowledge or should have known of a dangerous condition”

Quote from a farmer:

“I walk my farm every day, and I don’t notice the things you see”
Agritourism Health & Safety

- Website: www.safeagritourism.com
- Assist with identifying health & safety hazards on farms
- Provide resources to “fix” issues
## Topics Checklist

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<th>All farms do these:</th>
<th>Walkthrough</th>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<td>2 Traffic and Parking</td>
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<td>3 Handwashing and Restrooms</td>
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<td>4 Barriers and Fences</td>
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<td>5 Walkways, Surfaces and Structures</td>
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<tr>
<td>All farms do these:</td>
<td>Information Pages</td>
<td>Checklist</td>
<td>Resources</td>
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<td>6 Communicating with Guests</td>
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<td>7 Insurance Information (Discussion sheet replaces checklist)</td>
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<th>Do these if you have this activity:</th>
<th>Walkthrough</th>
<th>Checklist</th>
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<td>8 Farmers’ Market</td>
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<td>16 Water and Attractive Nuisances</td>
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<td>17 Machine Safety</td>
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### Notes:

Resources that can be used to address these checklist items are available at [www.safeapftourism.com/Resources](http://www.safeapftourism.com/Resources). These resources include signs, policies, forms, logs, and other items.
Resources

RESOURCES

These resources are available for your use, free of charge. Please feel free to download them and use them on your farm or ranch. These resources are "general fit" resources, and may need to be changed or tailored to fit your farm or ranch.

You can access these resources by either scrolling down the page until you find the resource you are looking for, or you can click on the category below to take you to the topic that contains the resource you are looking for. Once you have found the title of the resource you are looking for, simply click on the title to access the resource.

All Farms Should review these topics
Barriers and Fencing
Communicating with Guests
Emergency Preparation and Planning
Handwashing and Restrooms
Insurance
Traffic and Parking
Walkways, Surfaces and Structures

Choose topics that pertain to activities on your farm
Animal Safety - Large Animal and Petting Zoo
Corn Maze Safety
Farmers' Markets
Food Safety
Hayride Safety
Health, Safety, and Security
Machine Safety
Water Safety & Attractive Nuisances

How to use this website
Agritourism Checklists Booklet
Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines
Agritourism Topic Checklist
Integrating Safety into Agritourism Promotions

ANIMAL SAFETY

- Animal Handling Safety – Cornell Animal Handling Program
- Basic Horse Safety Manual – University of Kentucky
- CDC "Healthy Pets Healthy People"
- Emergency Preparedness and Response: A Guide for Farming Communities

For your EYES only! Please don't touch the animals!

Source: http://www.ncap.gov/matters/forfarmanimals.htm
Document Everything!

Document

• Inspections (checklists)
• Policies & Procedures
  • Need to be written, dated, and reviewed
  • Need to have employees educated/trained
• Safety Strategies
  • Document all strategies put in place (e.g. signs)
  • Document all “fixes” that you corrected

If it’s not documented, it’s not done!
Conclusion

Educate yourself on what to look for

Inspect to identify hazards and safety issues

Address any hazards or safety issues found
Thank You!

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