



North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

YOUR SUCCESS | WELCOMING VISITORS TO THE FARM

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



MEET FOXIE!

Foxie Morgan of PHARSALIA
from Tyro, Virginia.

Sooooo 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 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, 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)



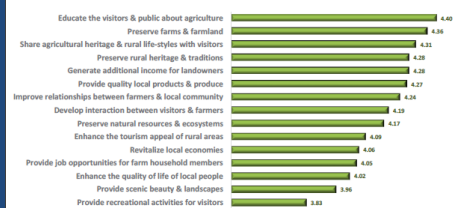
SESSION LAW 2005-236
HOUSE BILL 329



HOW BENEFICIAL IS AGRITOURISM?

BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM

Figure 3. Importance of Benefits Agritourism Produces



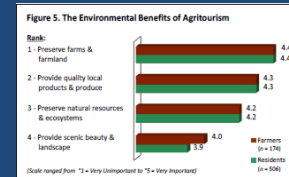
(Scale ranged from "1 = Very Unimportant" to "5 = Very Important"; Farmers' responses were weighted)

(n = 680)

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.

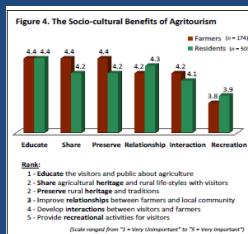
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM



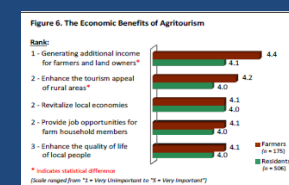
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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

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?

THE FAMILY FARM & YOUR WAY OF LIFE

- Employ family members
- Keep the family farm
- Enhance family quality of life

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THE BOTTOM LINE

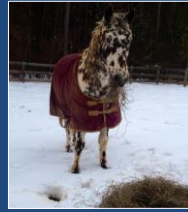


WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

FARMER'S PERSONAL GOALS

- Earn money from interest or hobby
- More revenue to continue farming
- Keep active

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THE BOTTOM LINE



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF AGRITOURISM?

MARKETING is education. Sharing your farm's compelling story.

- Increase sales of farm products directly to the consumer, maximizing profitability (value-added too)
- Enhance service to current customers (80/20 rule)
- Gain new customers (43% word-of-mouth)
- Educate the public about the benefits of agriculture

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, Crafts, Camping, Bird Watching, Fishing, Hunting, Farm Stays or Bed & Breakfast, Country Cabins, Retreats, Hay Rides, Crop Mazes, Pumpkin Patches, Historic Farms, Quilt Barns & Trails, Reunions, Museums, Workshops, Festivals, Holiday Events, Christmas Trees, Pick Your Own Produce, Roadside Stands, Nurseries, Flowers, Picnics, Parties, Weddings & Receptions, School Field Trips, Summer Camps, Farm Vacations, Slow Food Dining or Farm to Table Dining, Vineyards, Wineries

Your idea!



WHO?

Is the face of the farm?

Is the audience?



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.



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

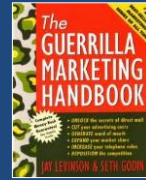
Budget - Sales to Expenses | Cash flow projections
Farm Solvency | Strategic Marketing Plan & Calendar

VISITOR BREAKEVEN Sample Numbers:	
Variable Costs (Per Visitor Cost)	\$4.22
Fixed Costs (Cost of Doing Business)	\$12,893
Fixed Costs \$12,893 / Attendance Ticket Price \$8 - Variable Cost \$4.22 (\$8 - \$4.22 = \$3.78)	
# of Visitors needed to BREAKEVEN	\$12,893 / \$3.78 = 3,410 Visitors
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

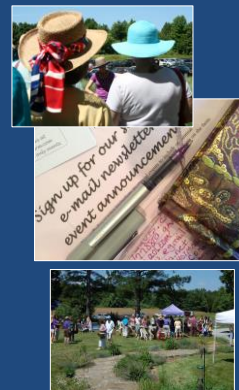


Farm fresh lavender for body, garden, gifts, home & weddings.

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

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

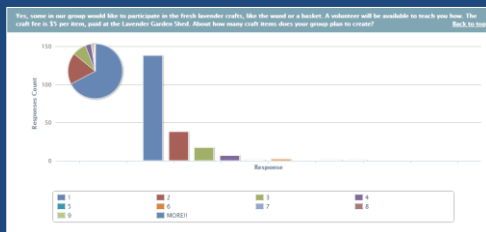


BEST PRACTICES MARKETING

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? CSAs? 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?

RESULTS:

- 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

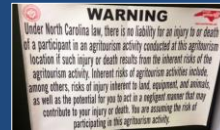
EARNING PUBLICITY

- 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



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



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA | SESSION 2005
SESSION LAW 2005-236
HOUSE BILL 329
NGS 99C-32(b) WARNING

BEST PRACTICES SAFETY & LIABILITY

Keep farm visitors safe.

- Proactivity
- Signage
- Education

Protecting your farm.

- Insurance coverage



BEST PRACTICES SAFETY & LIABILITY

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



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 invests 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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