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FARM DIVERSIFICATION THROUGH AGRI-TOURISM

A Manual to Guide Agri-tourism Development in British Columbia:
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Farm Diversification through Agri-tourism: Guidebook

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Introduction

British Columbia's agricultural landscape is undergoing many significant changes due to globalization, advancements in technology and a shift in consumer demands. These changes are forcing farmers to adapt to new realities and contemplate strategies to keep their farms viable.

At the same time, exciting opportunities have emerged for farmers. For example, consumer demand for access to locally grown food is increasingⁱ. Over the last decade, the number of BC farmers' markets has grown from nineteen to over a hundred and twenty fiveⁱⁱ. Similarly, challenges associated to mass urbanization are becoming more recognized by people living in cities. Many find themselves disconnected from the natural world, their food supply and local businesses. This is resulting in people seeking refuge in rural areas for recreation experiences and overnight getaways. This trend, if recognized by farmers, could be used to create new revenue for agriculture through agri-tourism.

In BC, agri-tourism is defined as¹: a tourist activity, service or facility accessory to land that is classified as a farm under the Assessment Act. These activities may include:

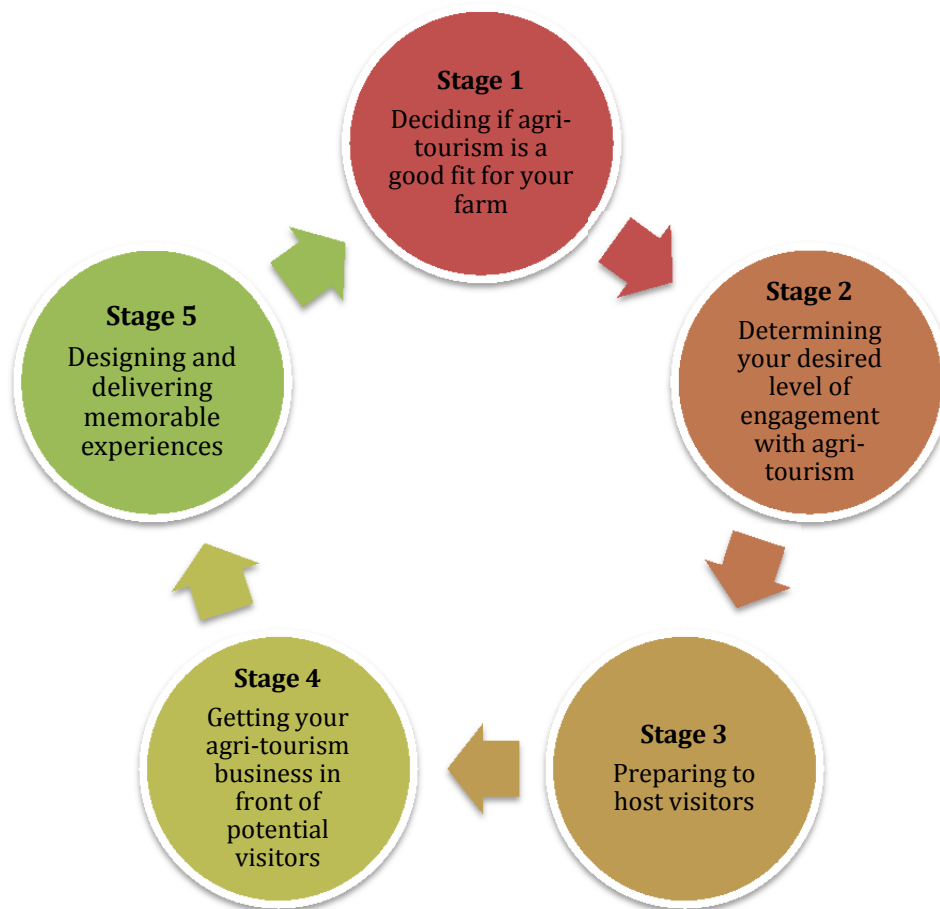
- (a) an agricultural heritage exhibit displayed on the farm;
- (b) a tour of the farm, an educational activity or demonstration in respect of all or part of the farming operations that take place on the farm, and activities ancillary to any of these;
- (c) cart, sleigh and tractor rides on the land comprising the farm;
- (d) activities that promote or market livestock from the farm, whether or not the activity also involves livestock from other farms, including shows, cattle driving and petting zoos;
- (e) dog trials held at the farm;
- (f) harvest festivals and other seasonal events held at the farm for the purpose of promoting or marketing farm products produced on the farm;
- (g) Corn mazes prepared using corn planted on the farm.

Simply put, agri-tourism is tourism that supports agricultural production. It has been shown to be one of the most effective diversification options for farmersⁱⁱⁱ. Integrating agri-tourism successfully into a farm requires farmers to rethink their product offerings and interact more directly with their customers.

The purpose of this manual is to provide step-by-step guidance for farmers who are interested in engaging in agri-tourism. It presents a number of tools and strategies to design and create memorable farm-based experiences that can attract and satisfy visitors. The guide also profiles numerous examples of agri-tourism ventures to encourage innovation within the industry. The guide is organized into various chapters that explain the five main steps involved in designing and providing a high quality visitor experience. Figure 1 highlights the five stages that farmers need to consider when engaging in agri-tourism.

¹ Agricultural Land Commission Act, Policy L-04, October 2016. Activities Designated as Farm Use: Agri-tourism activities in the Agricultural land reserve (ALR).

Figure 1: The five stages of providing high quality agri-tourism experiences



The remainder of this section provides a brief overview of the chapters that navigate farmers through the five-stage process of providing high quality agri-tourism experiences.

Chapter 1: What is agri-tourism?

The focus of this chapter is to provide readers with an idea about what agri-tourism is and is not. Here, agri-tourism will be defined and described in detail by identifying the types of activities that are included in agri-tourism and encouraging farmers to think about which of these activities may be possible for their farm. This chapter also highlights the potential benefits and costs can be involved when engaging with agri-tourism.

Chapter 2: Who are agri-tourists?

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasize that tourism is a consumer driven industry. It encourages farmers to recognize and understand trends that drive people to visit farms. This chapter further breaks down the concept of agri-tourism and identifies different types of agri-tourists. It encourages farms to match the activities and experiences they offer with their desired type of visitor(s). The need to monitor visitors including where are they from, what their experience was like and how to incorporate their feedback into future development decisions is also covered by this chapter.

Chapter 3: What is the product that is purchased in agri-tourism?

This chapter describes how, unlike many farm products which are tangible, visitor experiences are intangible and as such require a different frame of reference for farmers to develop high quality experiences on an ongoing basis.

Chapter 4: Would agri-tourism work for your farm?

This chapter begins to walk farms through a series of considerations that they need to make to determine if agri-tourism is a good fit for them. It encourages farms to identify the resources and amenities available on the farm that could be used to create experiences. It also presents some factors that have been shown to increase success in agri-tourism in other parts of the province. By the end of this chapter, farmers will understand what it takes to diversify through tourism and have a good indication about whether or not it is a good fit for their farm.

Chapter 5: Evaluating resources and assets

This chapter will allow farmers to learn about the resources and assets that go into agri-tourism and to think about important considerations such as land use regulations, financial resources and human resources. This will help farms to determine their overall fit with agri-tourism and to consider what level of investment they want to make.

Chapter 6: Determine level of investment in agri-tourism

This chapter will encourage farmers to give longer term thought about how much they want to invest in agri-tourism. It describes different levels of engagement in agri-tourism ranging from placing products in areas where visitors will purchase them, to hosting visitors on the farm either for a day or overnight. Each level of engagement produces a range of potential benefits and costs or changes to the farm, all of which must be considered carefully by farms in their diversification strategy.

Chapter 7: Ensuring the safety of visitors: Risk management

With the decision to move forward in agri-tourism, farms must then focus on preparing to host visitors. This requires recognition of the potential risks and land use regulations that need to be adhered to. The purpose of chapter 7 is to help farmers focus on ensuring the safety of their visitors through effective risk management and by addressing risks to both visitors and to the farm. Insurance considerations are discussed along with liability and biosecurity challenges as well as potential visitor management strategies to help ensure visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience while onsite.

Chapter 8: Getting in front of visitors

This chapter will educate farmers on how to market agri-tourism so that visitors know about the experiences, where the farm is located and how to navigate to it. The chapter starts by providing an overview of marketing and describes the importance of marketing collaboratively with others to share costs and create greater awareness among visiting markets. The chapter also covers critical promotional tools that farmers should be using to get the word out as well as how to take advantage of collaborative events such as circle routes and farm festivals. The chapter spends time covering how to price experiences in a way that brings in sufficient revenue for the farm.

Chapter 9: Designing and delivering memorable experiences

The final chapter focuses on delivering high quality visitor experiences. The chapter walks farmers through the process of what to do when visitors show up to their farm. To do this, this chapter is broken down into describing the three phases involved with designing and delivering memorable experiences: 1.) Pre planning: Staging the

experience; 2.) Delivering the experience; and 3.) Evaluating the experience. The chapter covers considerations and questions that farms need to attend to in order to ensure high quality visitor experiences happen and that visitor feedback is both solicited and acted upon in future development decisions.

Resources

The final chapter in the guidebook provides a summary of various resources that can assist farmers working to utilize agri-tourism as a diversification option and aid in in development an agri-tourism experience.





Chapter 1: What is agri-tourism?

Agri-tourism definition

The changing market demands in agriculture have required today's farmers to adapt to new realities and embrace alternate strategies to keep their farms viable. Farm diversification has become a popular strategy for farms to pursue. Diversification can be described as pursuing alternative ways to use farm resources to generate extra income and employment. There are three types of farm diversification including: structural, agricultural, and passive^{iv}. Structural diversification shifts farm assets away from food production towards options such as tourism or by adding value to farm operations. Agricultural diversification refers to farms producing uncommon agricultural produce, developing unconventional enterprises, creating farm woodlands, or developing agriculture contracts. Passive diversification includes practices such as leasing agricultural land or farm buildings to other businesses.

Tourism is a common example of structural diversification for farms. The expansion of tourism activities on farms has been shown to be one of the most successful diversification options generating new revenues and creating new employment opportunities for a variety of types of farm operations^v. This has enabled farms to enhance their economic viability and resilience^{vi}.

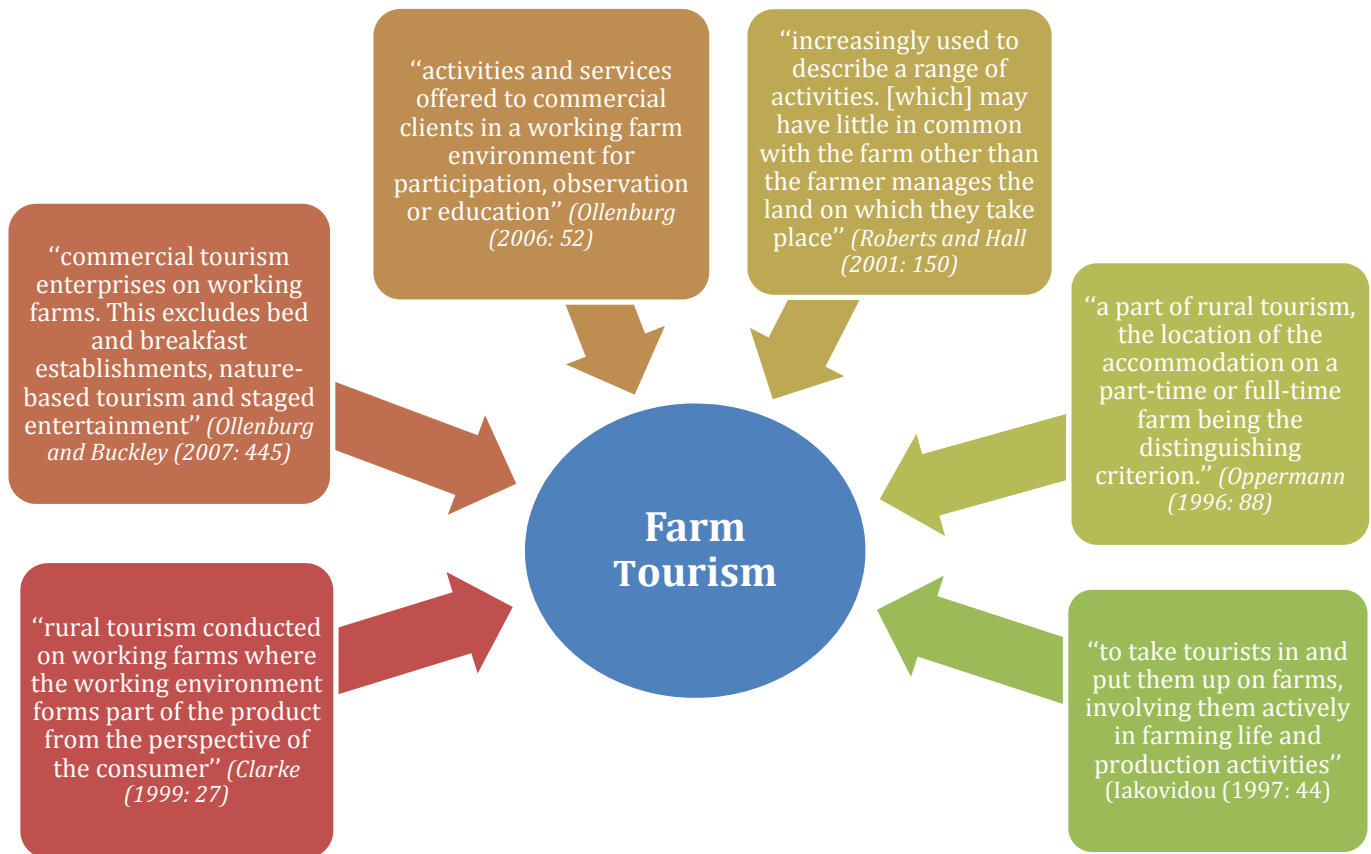
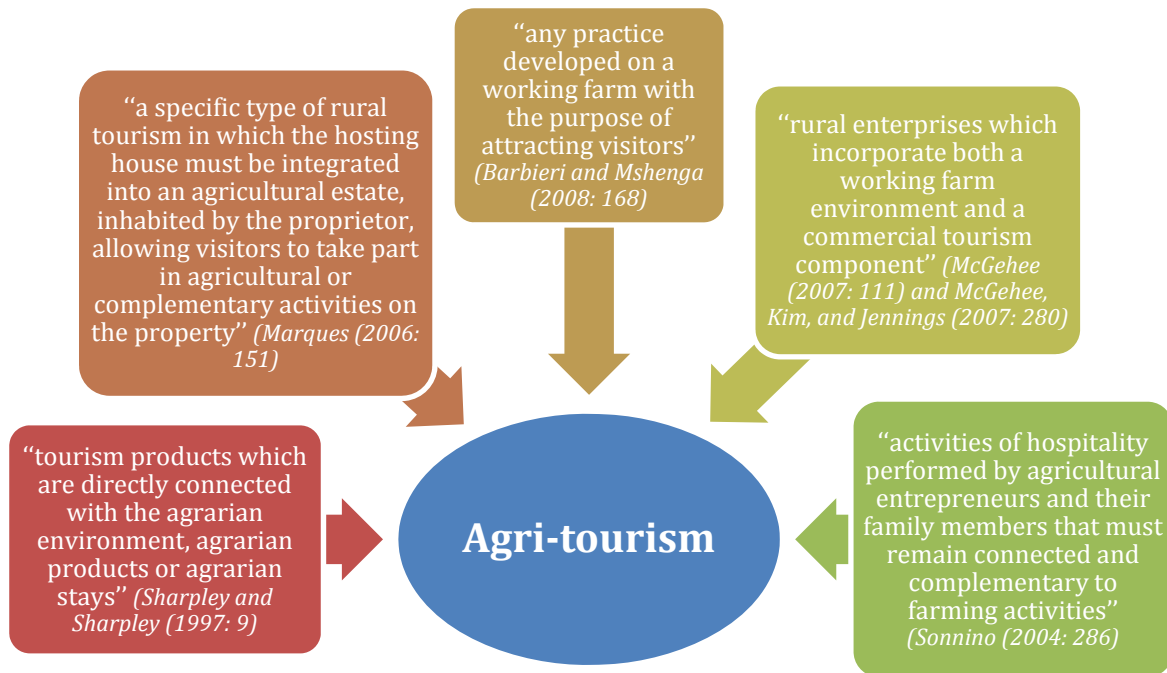
What is agri-tourism?

Agri-tourism is a world-wide activity. Simply put, agri-tourism is tourism that supports agriculture. The concept of agri-tourism is often described using other related terms such as farm tourism, rural tourism, agro tourism, vacation farms, farm stay, and farm-based tourism. These terms are used to define agriculture related activities with educational or leisure purposes for travelers. Figure 2 provides a range of definitions of agri-tourism and farm tourism from the global tourism literature^{vii}.

In BC, agri-tourism is defined as: a tourist activity, service or facility accessory to land that is classified as a farm under the Assessment Act.

Agri-tourism creates an authentic experience of rural areas for visitors with an opportunity to generate extra income for farmers and hosting communities. Visitors are attracted to experiences including a variety of activities within farm settings.

Figure 2: Definitions of agri-tourism & farm tourism in tourism literature



Types of Agri-tourism Activities

Farms considering agri-tourism are able to choose from a wide variety of activities to create memorable experiences for their guests. Some of the common agri-tourism activities that visitors enjoy include farm tours, education activities and demonstrations, harvest festivals and seasonal events. Table 1 provides examples of agri-tourism activities taking place on farms across North America.



While the activities listed are considered agri-tourism activities by the standards of the tourism industry, Farms located in the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) need to ensure their agri-tourism experiences comply with the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) Act and other ALC policies and regulations (denoted with an * in the table). Farms not zoned as ALR also need to ensure their agri-tourism experiences comply with their municipal and regional bylaws.

Table 1: Types of agri-tourism activities

Types of activities	Examples
Recreation activities	Any recreation activities that take place in rural and farm settings such as: farm tours*, hunting, fishing, cattle driving*, petting zoo*, horseback riding, dog trials*,harvesting, bird watching, hiking, visiting wineries, cycling, all-terrain vehicle tours, photography and videography, painting and sketching, animal husbandry, gardening, corn mazes*, egg hunt, barn dancing, boating, floral arrangements, hay or sleigh rides*, off-roading, etc.
Events/festivals	Any events or festivals that celebrate within rural and farm settings such as: harvest festivals*, heritage celebrations, seasonal events* that promote and market farm products.
Educational services ^{viii}	Any delivery of an educational* or learning experience on the farm such as: tours of farm operations*, workshops to learn new skills, lessons and courses, heritage tours to learn about the history and evolution of farm practices, demonstrations on making goods or animal care, farm work experience, craft shows, dog training, etc.
Direct marketing	Activities where farms are directly marketing their products* in a way that enables contact with visitors such as: farmers' market, farm stands, u-pick operations, meals prepared and served on site, picnics, cutting Christmas trees, etc.
Overnight visits	Agri-tourism accommodation for temporary use by tourists in conjunction with agricultural uses and farm activities or experiences ² .

Benefits of agri-tourism

Agri-tourism has been shown to bring numerous benefits to farms, host communities and tourism operators^{ix}. Naturally, the types of benefits resulting from agri-tourism operations will depend on the types of activities or

² As per policy L-05, agri-tourism accommodation in the ALR is designated as a permitted non-farm use unless otherwise prohibited by a local government or bylaw or, for lands located in an agricultural land reserve that are treaty settlement lands, by a law of the applicable treaty first nation government. The accommodation is permitted if, a) all or part of the parcel on which the accommodation is located is classified as a farm under the Assessment Act, b) the accommodation is limited to 10 sleeping units in total of seasonal campsites, seasonal cabins or short term use of bedrooms including bed and breakfast bedrooms, and c) the total developed area for buildings, landscaping and access for the accommodation is less than 5% of the parcel.

experiences farms choose to deliver. Some of the benefits that can result include the diversification of farm revenues streams, the creation of employment opportunities for younger generations looking to remain on the farm, and the increased flow of tourists to the region. Figure 3 further highlights the benefits of agri-tourism and showcases how agri-tourism can create benefits beyond the farm that is delivering the experience.

Figure 3: Benefits of agri-tourism for farms, host communities and tourism operators



Benefits of agri-tourism for farms

- Generates additional income
- Creates additional job opportunities
- Improves living and working conditions on the farm
- Develops skills in managing, entrepreneurship and communications
- Spreads awareness about local agriculture venues and products
- Educates visitors about food security
- Increases farm resilience and prosperity
- Creates opportunities that keep family members on the farm
- Can generate off-season revenue



Benefits of agri-tourism for host communities

- Generates supplement revenue for local business community
- Builds support for farming and agriculture in the region
- Preserves rural land, building and heritage
- Revitalizes local traditions and history
- Contributes to rural development
- Provides opportunities for cultural exchange
- Promotes rural tourism experiences



Benefits of agri-tourism for tourism operators

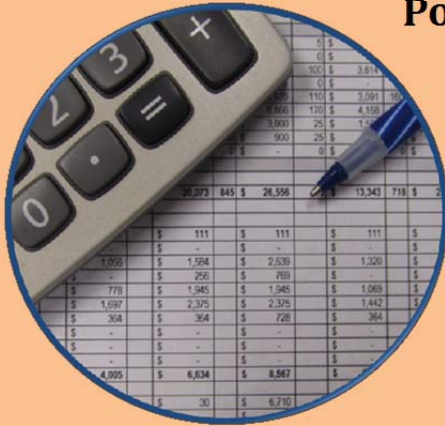
- Expands the length of the tourism season
- Diversifies tourism services for visitors
- Integrates new market niches
- Increases the flow of tourists into the region
- Attracts new consumer markets
- Increases opportunities for partnerships with other operators

Potential costs of agri-tourism

Agri-tourism can also introduce changes to farms and communities, which are not as beneficial or positive. While rezoning and development changes may impact host communities, farms are primarily at risk of enduring the potential costs of engaging with agri-tourism. For this reason, the financial and non-financial costs of agri-tourism must also be factored in when determining if agri-tourism is a desirable option for your farm. Figure 4 examines the potential costs farms make incur when engaging in agri-tourism.

Figure 4: Potential costs of engaging in agri-tourism for Farms

Potential costs of engaging in agri-tourism for farms



- Rezoning or development application fees if current local government regulations do not permit the intended uses
- Additional investments in the farm to host visitors
- Interference with other farming activities
- Financial risk, increased liability and extra taxation
- Understanding and adhering to additional policies
- Requires developing new marketing strategies to reach visitors
- Recruitment and training of employees
- Neighbour and nuisance complaints

Tulips of the Valley Festival, Chilliwack

The Tulips of the Valley Festival is an annual event that takes place on a working farm in Chilliwack, BC. Tulips of the Valley started the Tulip Festival in 2006 in partnership with Onos Greenhouses Ltd who owns and grows the tulips on the fields. Since its inception, the festival has grown from a couple hundred visitors to nearly 30,000. Visitors are welcome to take pictures, buy fresh cut tulips as well as purchase locally grown products.



Reflection questions:

1. What types of activities could potentially be offered on your farm?
2. What are the benefits you are seeking from agri-tourism?
3. What costs might be incurred to you and your neighboring farms if you engage in agri-tourism?

D Dutchmen Dairy, Sicamous

Located in beautiful Sicamous BC, D Dutchmen Dairy sells world class ice cream and dairy products that are all produced onsite. The D Dutchmen Dairy farm engages with visitors by providing a day experience that visitors can enjoy. Touring the farm store, interacting with farms animals and of course enjoying old fashion ice cream are all part of the D Dutch Dairy agri-tourism experience.





Stage 1

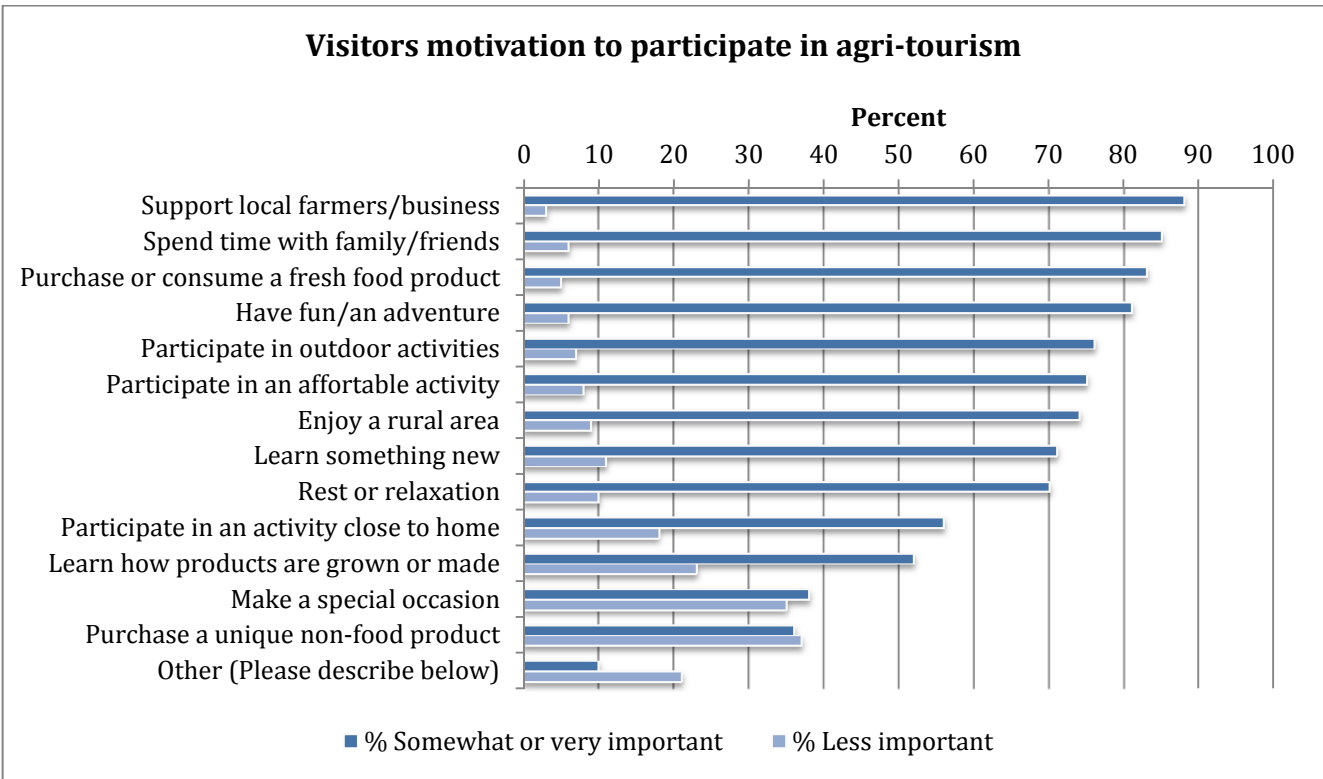
Deciding if agri-tourism is a good fit for your farm

Chapter 2: Who are agri-tourists?

Agri-tourists can vary widely in terms of where they come from, what their interests are, and in their behaviour. In a general sense, agri-tourists are individuals who seek out experiences connected to agriculture while traveling. It may range from a local family visiting a farmers’ market, to a group visiting a farm for a wedding, or to a couple coming to stay on a farm for an overnight getaway.

Farms that pursue agri-tourism must expand their knowledge of potential visitors so that they can reach them with their marketing efforts and provide high quality experiences that meet visitors’ expectations. Based on the results of the Wisconsin Agri-tourism Survey, Figure 5 highlights the reasons visitors participated in agri-tourism^x. The major reasons were to support local farmers and businesses, to spend time with family and friends and to purchase and consumer fresh food products.

Figure 5: The reasons and their importance for participation in agri-tourism



Wisconsin Agri-tourism survey

Types of Agri-tourists

An important step in deciding if agri-tourism is right for your farm is learning about who your potential visitors could be. Agri-tourists are categorized and further described based on three key characteristics: 1.) Origin: where they come from; 2.) Demographics: age, gender, income; and 3.) Interests: why are they seeking an agri-tourism experience and what activities are they interested in.

Origin

Understanding the origin of your potential visitors involves knowing the location where guests are coming from. Are your visitors just a short car trip away or would you like to attract visitors from different provinces or countries? In the broadest sense, tourists are divided between domestic and international visitors.

- **Domestic tourists**

Domestic tourists are people from Canada who stay within the country for their travel experience. They can range from visitors from other provinces to people within your local region. In general terms, the closer a market is to you, the more likely it will make up a larger percent of your visiting market. The closer they are to your farm, generally, the more likely they will be day visitors (or excursionists) as opposed to overnight visitors. And, the closer the market is to your farm, the less difficult it will be to attract them to your farm as they have less distance to travel to experience that you are offering.

- **International tourists**

International tourists are people from countries outside of Canada ranging from nearby markets such as the US to longer haul travelers from Europe or Asia. Typically, the further one travels, the longer they stay at a destination and the more likely they require overnight accommodations. Some studies also suggest that international tourists often spend more when they travel. Targeting international tourists is a great way to provide supplemental revenue during low season because vacation patterns are different in other countries due vacation times and climate.

Demographics

The choices that you make about your visitors age, gender, education level, religion, occupation, family status will determine activities that you will set up on your farm. Children from elementary school will not be interested in the same activities as retirees, and families with kids will likely pursue different leisure time than married couples.

Interests

Understanding what motivates people to want to travel and experience agri-tourism is key to your ability to satisfy them. Some visitors may be interested in learning about food security and supporting local farms while others may be looking to escape the city and people. Think about the benefits that your farm could provide to potential agri-tourist visitors and then make sure those benefits are clearly displayed in your marketing and promotions. Table 2 identifies some common needs and motivations that tourists have that they are looking to satisfy when they travel. Which ones can you provide?

Stowel Lake Farm, Salt Spring Island

Located on Salt Spring Island, Stowel Lake Farm is an organic farm, community and wellness centre. The farm offers both day and overnight experiences for visitors. The farm sells organic produce, provides catering, offers yoga classes, retreats, and workshops as well as hosts a variety of special events such as a Fall Farmer's Fest.



Table 2: Tourist interests^{xi}

Visitors are seeking:
Beautiful scenic settings and clean environments
Opportunities to purchase and consume locally grown/produced food and beverages
Safe and secure places
Opportunities to get outdoors and engage in recreation activities
Opportunities to learn and experience new things
Refuge from urban environment
Relaxation and stress reduction
To disconnect with digital media (digital detox)
Opportunities to spend time with family and friends
Celebrations in unique settings
Health and wellness
Chances to meet new and interesting people
Experiences to share on social media

Example of a market trend: Visitors and food

Farms can find success in delivering an agri-tourism experience if the experience aligns with the motivations of the visitors the farm is working to attract. When visitors travel, their experiences usually involve the appreciation of regional foods^{xii}. Gastronomy, or the selecting, preparing, serving, and enjoying food has become an important component of tourism. Farmers engaging in agri-tourism who produce food products can capitalize on the increased opportunities gastronomic tourism presents. Finding ways to link food products to visitor experiences can increase the consumption of farm food products as well.



Finding out about your visitors' interests and monitoring their experience

It is critical to remember that agri-tourism is a consumer-driven industry. As consumers' preferences change, so do their behaviors. This means that agri-tourism providers must remain flexible and ready to adapt to consumer trends. When starting an agri-tourism venture, it is important to find out what types of visitors are already coming to your area, as these are likely going to be the market you will be able to tap into. Ask your local tourism marketing body for profiles of visiting markets. Find out who they are promoting to already and which people are most likely interested in agri-tourism. Find out if there are other agri-tourism operations nearby and consider connecting with those farms to raise awareness of your plans and to potentially collaborate on marketing.

Beyond marketing, farms should always be seeking visitor feedback to keep their tourism products current and attractive. To adapt successfully to consumer trends, it is important to provide visitors opportunities to provide comments and feedback on their visit. Consider creating comment cards for them at your farm and when filled out, make sure to read them and respond to the suggestions made! When they depart, ask them how their experience was and what you could do to improve it. Or, request a review from your visitors on your website in a comments section or through a consumer website. When visitors feel that you are open to feedback and are listening to their suggestions, they are more likely to provide helpful feedback. This feedback, if acted upon, helps you refine the experience for future visitors and ensure that your reputation for excellent service is shared.

Reflection questions:

1. What types of visitors would be interested in your agri-tourism activities?
2. Where might they be located?
3. Who is already coming to the area?
4. What tourism marketing organizations exist and do they have accurate visitor statistics to share?
5. Are there other farms in the area engaged in agri-tourism? What do they offer and might there be room to collaborate?

Bird's Eye Cove Farm, Cowichan Valley

Stretching over 300 acres, Bird's Eye Cove Farm calls the beautiful Cowichan Valley home. The farm raises naturally grown beef, pork and chicken and grows a large assortment of produce. Through farm gate sales, fresh produce and take away meals are available to visitors on a daily basis. As a well-known wedding location, Bird's Eye Farm offers farm to fork inspired weddings where guests can enjoy the pristine views the farm has to offer while also enjoying a delicious meal produced and grown on site. The farm offers a variety of wedding packages, allowing visitors to design the wedding of their dreams while staying true to the farm's vision of being a working farm first.





Chapter 3: What is the product that is purchased in agri-tourism?

This chapter will emphasize that unlike many farm products which are tangible, agri-tourism products are intangible and require farmers to develop high quality experiences for visitors on an ongoing basis.

Experiences vs. products

Farms that venture into tourism must recognize the difference between tangible products and intangible products. Tangible and intangible products differ in three distinct ways: 1) how they are evaluated by the consumer considering a purchase, 2) the role of the producer and consumer, and 3) the perishability of the product.

Most farms produce tangible products that customers can see, touch, feel, or taste prior to purchase. Garden produce, meats, preserves and other food products all fall into this category. When customers are considering a purchase of these tangible products, they will make their decision based on a judgment about the quality of the product which they make based on their ability to come into contact with it. The role of producer and consumer are separate and distinct with tangible products - producers grow and sell tangible products to people who either consume them or to intermediaries that transform them into new products. This allows producers to be in control of the quality of their products and to ensure a level of consistency. Tangible products also have a shelf life of some capacity. For example, produce may last a few days until sold or unsold meats can be frozen and sold at a later date.

Unlike these tangible products, tourism experiences – or the product sold in tourism – are intangible. Customers cannot see, touch, feel or taste the experience prior to purchase. They have to make a decision to purchase a tourism experience based on their assessment about what benefits the experience will provide to them. For example, a visitor that is considering purchasing a family visit to a corn maze would think about the benefits that may result for their family such as spending quality time together, creating a memorable experience, or spending time in the outdoors. With tangible experiences, consumers are also producers of their experience and numerous factors that are outside of the control of the provider can influence the quality of the experience. For example, one family could participate in an experience on a farm and have a wonderful experience, while another family may have a poor experience. This could be the result of numerous things such as the weather, the interest level or mood of the participants, or even the past experiences of the group. Finally, intangible experiences are perishable. What is not sold today is lost in terms of future revenue. A day or night of no visitors cannot be

Farms engaging in agri-tourism have been shown to increase their revenues due to new revenue streams from hosting visitors but also from increased sales of their tangible farm products.

recuperated or stored for the future.

It is also important to note that agri-tourists consume both tangible and intangible products during their experience. While visiting a farm they may gain benefits such as learning about food, enjoyment of the outdoors, connection to local producers, and exploring the rural countryside. However, these experiences also result in visitors being exposed directly to the products grown or created by the farm which increases sales. Visitors consume farm products during culinary experiences at restaurants or other food establishments. Agri-tourists who have positive experiences in a place want to take a part of that experience home with them which is why souvenirs are so popular. The souvenirs valued by agri-tourists are often the products of the farms that they came into contact with and developed a positive association to on their experience. Farms engaging in agri-tourism have been shown to increase their revenues due to new revenue streams from hosting visitors but also from increased sales of their tangible farm products. Figure 6 further explains the tangible and intangible products of agri-tourism experiences.

Figure 6: Tangible & intangible products of agri-tourism



Designing and delivering consistent, high quality visitor experiences

So what does this knowledge mean for farms engaging in agri-tourism?

1. Understand the types of benefits that agri-tourists are interested in obtaining

Farms involved in agri-tourism need to understand what is driving consumer purchase decisions and how agri-tourists make their purchase decisions. These topics are covered in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this manual.

2. Identify and portray the benefits of your agri-tourism activities in marketing

In order for a farm to sell visitors on a tourism experience, they need to understand the benefits that the experience may provide to people and then ensure that they communicate those benefits to potential visitors in the language and imagery they use in their marketing. This will allow visitors to visualize themselves receiving those benefits when they purchase the tourism experience. More detail on marketing is covered in Chapter 8 of this manual.

3. Do your best to ensure high quality experiences for visitors

Even if farms cannot control all of the components of the visitor experience, they can control many. Ensuring that staff engaging with visitors have strong customer service skills will help visitors feel welcome and positive about the people they interact with. This will also allow any issues in the experience to be dealt with in a way that results in a positive outcome for visitors. Clarifying how you want visitors to engage with the farm through effective navigational and interpretive signage is also important to make people feel welcome. Thinking about your farm through a visitors lens will also allow you to find ways to engage and educate them through interaction with displays, exhibits, staff, places or animals. And, ensuring visitors have ways to evaluate their experience will provide you with ways to enhance future experiences. Chapter 9 provides more insight on how to deliver high quality visitor experiences.

4. Consider pricing strategies to maximize revenue

In order to mitigate the perishability of tourism experiences, farms should develop pricing strategies that maximize revenue during peak and slow seasons. It is common in tourism to price experiences higher in peak seasons when visitor volume is high, and then to drop them in off season periods. This allows the farm to capture the maximum yield from visitors and address the perishability of experiences.



The Agri-tourist Loves

- Discovering new recipes and cultures
- Discovering jams, wines, oils, herbs
- Discovering beauty and spa items
- Discovering wild and farm raised animals
- Visiting road stands and farmers' markets
- Picking and growing agricultural products
- Going to food, wine and agricultural festivals
- Visiting arboretums, parks and gardens
- Visiting museums and factories
- Visiting and staying on farms
- Staying at a bed and breakfast
- Photography, painting and media production

Focus on the intangible visitor experience



Chapter 4: Would agri-tourism work for your farm?

Factors for success in agri-tourism

When thinking about agri-tourism, farms need to consider the benefits and potential costs or changes to their farm. This chapter examines if agri-tourism would work for your farm by identifying various factors needed for the delivery of a successful agri-tourism experience. These factors focus on the things that farms can control to create experiences visitors can enjoy.

When considering if agri-tourism is a good fit, farms must first consider the zoning of their farmland. Zoning regulations and local bylaws will indicate the types agri-tourism activities permitted to take place on the farm. Farms must ensure that the activities comply with the zoning of their farm and the bylaws enforced by their local municipality or regional district. The zoning regulations, policies and bylaws in place will differ based on the location of ones farms and whether or not it is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Farms that are in the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) must look into the ALR regulations by contacting the Provincial Agriculture Land Commission as these regulations may restrict a farms ability to deliver certain agri-tourism experiences. Farms that are not within the ALR may find more flexibility with providing agri-tourism services that are considered non-farm use however they still need to be knowledgeable of and abide by local bylaws and regulations. The rules and regulations for farms not in the ALR can be determined by contacting the local municipality or regional district office.

Once this is completed, it is important to integrate agri-tourism in a way where the benefits outweigh the costs to the farm. In order to design an agri-tourism experience in a way where the benefits outweigh the costs a number of key success factors should also be considered. While specific steps need to be taken to design and deliver high quality visitor experiences, the farm is in the driver seat in terms of deciding on how success is measured based on the goals and investments made to engage in agri-tourism. For example, a farm may decide that the success of the agri-tourism operation is measured in many ways which include but are not limited to: (a) if the operation can provide employment opportunities for family members; (b) if the financial goals are reached; and/or (c) if there is an increased demand for the agriculture products being sold.



A successful agri-tourism experience can take shape in many ways. To showcase the wide range of farms in BC providing successful agri-tourism experiences, three success stories are profiled to illustrate some of the key factors that can play a role in providing a successful visitor experience.

Figure 7 highlights the key success factors required to provide a successful agri-tourism visitor experience. Be sure to look for these within the three success stories described and consider how these factors helped the farms to provide a high quality visitor experience. As well, notice how each of these experiences consists of tangible and intangible products.

Figure 7. Key factors that contribute to a successful agri-tourism experience

Key Success Factors:

1. Creating a visitor experience consisting of tangible and intangible products
2. Access to land and space
3. Farm is in an accessible location for visitors
4. Agri-tourism operation is marketed as a destination
5. Activities provided through experience match the visitors' expectations
6. Access to financial resources to cover start-up costs and invest in future activities
7. Access to human resources
8. Activities adhere and comply with local government regulations
9. Presence of other agri-tourism operators

In a broad sense, farms can engage with agri-tourism in three ways: 1.) by placing farm products in front of visitors for purchase such as at a farmers' market, supply products to a restaurant or selling in a store setting; 2.) by inviting visitors to the farm for a day experience; and 3.) by inviting visitors to stay for an overnight experience. Figure 8 highlights how the chosen level of engagement with agri-tourism can influence the farm's bottom line.

Figure 8. The three levels of engagement in agri-tourism



Agri-tourism Success Stories

Success Story #1: The Bence farm at the Ladner Village Market

Located in East Delta, the Bence Farm is a third generation lamb farm undergoing changes to update and expand the farming business. The farms main revenue stream is attained through the sales of whole lambs to customers from the Lower Mainland. Knowing that the farming operation was expanding, the Bence Farm considered various ways to expand their customer base. After careful consideration, due to security and biosecurity reasons as well as space limitations, the Bence Farm decided not to invite visitors on to the farm to purchase lamb onsite. The farm tried to sell to local restaurants but decided logistics around seasonality and timing created too much of a hassle to move forward. Wanting to keep their existing customer base yet gain additional customers, the Bence Farm decided to sell their lamb by the piece at a farmers market, while also looking for new whole lamb customers. With a number of potential markets to sell at in close proximity to the farm, the Bence Farm carefully considered the options when deciding which market was the best fit for their product and farm. the Bence Farm decided to sell their lamb at the Ladner Village Market. This market was decided upon due of the high number of visitors that the market attracts as the market has over 100 farm and non-farm vendors.

With over a 100 tents for visitors to stop, the Bence Farm knew they had to make their tent unique. To do this, the farm ensured that their tent was well decorated with fresh flowers and creative signs to make the tent feel inviting for visitors and potential customers. The Bence Farm decorated their tent to have a homemade vintage farm atmosphere as they felt that this would create a friendly and inviting experience for their customers. Creating this type of experience and atmosphere, helped to draw visitors to the tent. Many of the visitors who stopped at the tent to look at the table clothes, smell the fresh cut flowers or compliment the creative signs advertising that local lamb was for sale.

Participating in agri-tourism by placing their product in front of visitors proved to be a beneficial strategy for the Bence Farm. Decorating the tent to have an inviting atmosphere worked to increase the demand for the product being sold. As well, because the Bence Farm had access to various resources such as family members to staff the tent and an accessible location for visitors to get to, the Bence Farm was successful in engaging with agri-tourism.



Success Story #2: Laity Pumpkin Patch

Instead of placing their products in front of visitor's offsite, Laity Pumpkin Patch invites visitors to enjoy an agri-tourism experience at the farm. The Laity Pumpkin Patch is a family run operation that has been in business for over 25 years. The success of the operation is supported by the farms central location in Maple Ridge where visitors from the Lower Mainland can reach the farm in just under an hour. The pumpkin patch is advertised as a daytrip destination for families and school groups from the surrounding areas to enjoy.

With 18 acres of farmland, there is ample space for visitors to enjoy the activities that make up the Laity Pumpkin Patch agri-tourism experience. In addition to the pumpkin patch, families and school groups can enjoy a wide range of attractions and activities on the farm. Either before or after picking out a pumpkin, families and schools groups can enjoy getting lost in the corn maze, farm animal viewings, touring play areas such a frontier town where children can pan for gold, fairy tale trails featuring a range of Disney characters, dinosaur decorated pathways, a pumpkin zoo, a mushroom forest and tractor-wagon rides. Visitors are encouraged to take photos throughout their experience while enjoying the activities strategically placed throughout the farm scape.

The Laity Pumpkin Patch is a successful agri-tourism operation as the farm has used agri-tourism to increases the demand for the tangible agricultural product of pumpkins by providing a high quality visitor experience that consists of intangible products experienced by visitors through the diverse range of activities provided on the farm.



Success Story #3: Pen-Y-Bryn Farm

Located in the rural community of Quesnel, yet just off the main highway, the Pen-Y-Bryn farm is operated by the Nicholas Family and offers a 'Bed, Bales and Breakfast' experience for guests, visitors, students and vacationers and those traveling with horses. Becoming a Tourism British Columbia's Approved Accommodation Bed and Breakfast has allowed the Nicholas Family to share their piece of the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast with visitors from across Canada and from around the world. The farm is truly a family affair. Whether it is planting and harvesting the organic grain for the bread on the breakfast table, feeding livestock or treating a rescued mare, the Pen-Y-Bryn work together to provide a high quality agri-tourism experience to visitors.

Pen-Y-Bryn farm specializes in attracting those travelling with horses or other visitors and families that are looking to 'get-away' from the business of daily life. The farm offers an abundance of activities that help visitors reconnect with each other, the outdoors and food grown on the farm. The family maintains gardens and fruit trees and raises laying hens and meat birds to keep the freezers and pantry full, all of which visitors can experience at breakfast or dinner. When visiting the Pen-Y-Bryn farm, visitors can expect to experience a downhome country type farm experience.

Being a bed and breakfast, visitors purchase breakfast and accommodation, and those travelling with horses can choose the Bed, Bales and Breakfast, where their horse has a stable and feed for the night. The farm also hosts children's riding camps, special events, and weddings. Pen-Y-Bryn farm offers a great balance between tangible and nontangible products to visitors, ultimately creating a high quality agri-tourism experience for visitors. The Pen-Y-Bryn farm offers many intangible products that really achieve to create a high quality agri-tourism experience for visitors. Visitors can enjoy nightly campfires, garden tours, horseback riding lessons, horse and rider clinics, trail riding, hiking and fishing.

Diversifying into agri-tourism has helped the farm to diversify farm revenue streams by offering a wide range of experiences visitors can enjoy when they are staying at the farm. Tapping into the agri-tourism market has also helped Pen-Y-Farm to expand its visitor base as the farm attract visitors travelling with horses and families wanted to reconnect with each other and the outdoors.



Key Factors of Success

As highlighted throughout the success stories, a number of important factors influenced the success that The Bence Farm, Laity Pumpkin Patch and Pen-Y-Bryn farms had when delivering an agri-tourism experience to their visitors. Figure 9 highlights some of the main key factors that enabled the three farms to be successful at delivering their agri-tourism experience. While each of the three farms provided a very different visitor experience, all three were able to offer an experience that benefited visitors. As well, in their own unique way, each farm delivered an experience that consisted of both tangible farms products and intangible farm based experiences. Each of the three farms were successful at delivering agri-tourism because they made specific decisions based on their farm layout, resources and assets available on how to deliver an agri-tourism experience that worked best for their farm.

Figure 9: Key success factors involved in delivering a successful agri-tourism experience



Reflection questions:

1. How will you define success for your agri-tourism venture? Or what are your goals?
2. What level of engagement do you want to have in agri-tourism? Placing your product in front of visitors, daytrip experience or overnight stays?
3. Does the experience you want to deliver consist of tangible and intangible products?



Stage 1

Deciding if agri-tourism is a good fit for your farm

Chapter 5: Evaluating your Resources & Assets

The focus of this chapter is to help farms evaluate their resources and identify their assets in order to achieve success in agri-tourism.

Regulations & Logistics

Becoming familiar with the zoning bylaws and regulations in place will be beneficial for farmers looking to establish agri-tourism services as learning about these prior to the investing can save farms financial resources as well as time. The links highlighted to the right provide a starting point for farms to successfully navigate through the rules, regulations and bylaws that govern the tourism and agricultural industries.

Ensuring agri-tourism activities align with regulatory environment

Although many farms are engaging in agri-tourism initiatives to help diversify revenue or to help increase the demand for farm products, the policies and regulations of farm and non-farm activities on land in the ALR can limit a farms ability to provide certain agri-tourism experiences. It is important for farmers to have a solid understanding of the zoning and building code requirements in place in their local municipalities or regional district as these will not only depict the types of activities permitted on the farm but also control or influence the scale, type or size of operation that can take place. As the farming landscape in BC is diverse, it is important that farms seek direction from local bylaws and regulations as these can differ from one municipality or regional district to another.

Useful Links:

The links below highlight a number of important websites and documents for farms to review. The Agricultural Land Commission website provides valuable resources for Farms to become well versed about the regulations permitting agri-tourism activities on farmland within the ALR. Farms that are not in the ALR looking to engage in agri-tourism should check with their municipality or regional district to ensure the planned agri-tourism activities comply within the existing regulations.

Agricultural Land Commission

- <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/>

Agricultural Land Commission Act

- http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/02036_01

Agricultural Land Commission Policies

- Activities Designated as Farm Use: Agri-tourism Activities in the ALR
 - <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/assets/alc/>
- Permitted Uses in the ALR: Agri-tourism Accommodation:
 - <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alc/>

AgriService BC

- Phone: 1-888-221-7141
- AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca

Agricultural Land Reserve:

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a BC provincial land use zone created in 1973 that places agricultural activities above all other land uses within ALR zoned areas. The ALR has acted as a boundary protecting farmland from urban sprawl since 1973. Although the ALR is a well-established provincial regulation and Act, the ALR continues to be threatened by urbanization, the changes in the ALR legislation and the development of non-farm use activities on land zoned strictly for agricultural use. The strict zoning of the ALR prevents or limits the development of the ALR for non-farm use activities but for those looking to engage in agri-tourism, this can also pose a number of challenges.

While becoming familiar with the rules and regulations in your municipality or regional district can be a timely and/or frustrating process, taking a proactive approach by learning about what can or cannot be done in your municipality or regional district can save both time and financial resources. As well, farms may be required to adjust their agri-tourism plans based on the regulations or bylaws in place as many activities require the use of designated farmland in unfamiliar ways. It is important for farms to work together to build awareness and support for agri-tourism as it may require bylaw amendments or policy adaptations in some areas. Doing so may be a slow route, but some have managed to be successful in this process.

Food safety regulations

When providing an agri-tourism experience that involves food, farms are required to abide by the regulations set by The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The CFIA has developed regulations for the production, processing, and labeling of foods in Canada. For more information on food safety regulations visit the CFIA website at www.inspection.gc.ca.

The delivery of various agri-tourism experiences such as those involving a restaurant, a concession, a BBQ, etc. must ensure that the provision of these types of services are supported by the regulations put in place by the provincial government or the municipality of where the farm is located. Local health authorities also play a role in mitigating the health and safety concerns involved with agri-tourism experiences involving the purchase of food. Farms are recommended to check with their local municipalities and health authorities to receive further direction on the documentation required to deliver an agri-tourism experience involving the sale of food.

Worksafe BC regulations

WorkSafeBC is dedicated in promoting workplace health and safety for the workers and employers in BC. In the event of work-related injuries or diseases, WorkSafeBC works with the affected parties to provide return-to-work rehabilitation, compensation, health care benefits, and a range of other services. Understanding WorkSafe BC's regulations is a key factor to success when implementing agri-tourism activities as the regulations are in place to keep staff and worker safe. Farms that have hired help or are considering hiring family members or external staff are strongly recommended to ensure the logistics around employment and workplace safety compile with the WorkSafe BC standards. WorkSafe professionals can guide farms through the processes of developing an agri-tourism operation that aligns with the regulator standards of WorkSafe and to ensure that the farm has sufficient insurance and liability coverage for the agri-tourism operation at play.

Land & space

When considering bringing visitors on to your farm it is important to evaluate the layout of your land and the amount of space you can dedicate towards providing visitor experiences.

Bringing visitors into a farm environment requires a number of careful considerations about land use. If you are considering to have visitors on your farm they will likely drive, meaning you need to provide adequate space for parking. On top of the space needed for agricultural production, you will need to consider how much space you can dedicate to create a visitor experience.

If you are selling the tangible product of pumpkins you may want to provide an experience that include a wagon-ride like Laity Pumpkin Patch, however you will then need to consider where you can store the machinery and wagon when it is not in use.

When deciding on if agri-tourism is the right fit for your farm you should also consider: (1) neighboring properties and the level of noise your experience may create; (2) the zoning bylaws and setback requirements for buildings, structures and parking; (3) the dangerous aspects of your property that could be a threat to visitor safety; or (4) the areas that you don't want visitors to go such as in your working fields, livestock pens and/or vegetable gardens.

When evaluating your land and space, you should also consider the safety and integrity of the buildings, shelters, fences, corrals, working facilities, equipment, roads and trails located on or near your property. As described in the examples, considering the accessibility of your farm is also important.

When evaluating your land and space resources & assets you should ask yourself:

- Will the distance that visitors have to travel be worth it for the agri-tourism experience that you are offering?
- Is your land accessible for everyone? For example...children, seniors, people with special needs?
- Does your land or space present any risks to the visitors that come to the farm? Are the locations of your pastures, livestock and any other risk factors situated a safe distance away from where you plan to host visitors?

Surrounding amenities

What surrounding your farm makes it attractive to visitors? Surrounding amenities both on and off your farm can help contribute to the overall agri-tourism experience. While your surrounding amenities may be taken for granted by you, visitors may find these unique and interesting. Make a list of amenities that can enhance the experience of your visitors such as wildlife, lakes, rivers, fishing opportunities, hiking trails and proximity to natural or man-made points of interest and promote them as the surroundings to your farm.

Factor in space requirements...

If you have a ten acre parcel where five of those acres are used to grow hay and another three are dedicated to your barn and the field that houses your livestock, you are left with two acres to create a visitor experience which involves selling tangible and nontangible products. While many experiences can be created on two acres you will need to take into consideration room for parking and space for additional activities. Maybe you want to invite visitors into the barn for livestock viewings or for biosecurity reasons you may want to create an additional livestock viewing area in your 2 free acres to keep visitors out of the barn yet still enjoy interactions with livestock.

Presence of other agri-tourism operators

The presence of other agri-tourism operators can be a great tool to help draw in agri-tourists. As describe in the case study of Saltwest operators involved in agri-tourism who are in close proximity can cross-promote their products to help increase visitor numbers. The presence of other agri-tourism operators can provide complimentary experiences which creates a stronger draw to the area. See the example of the Pemberton Slow Food Cycle to see how the presence of other agri-tourism operators can help to increase the demand for products.

The Slow Food Cycle, Pemberton

Pemberton residents who were concerned about the pressures endangering local farmland, started the Slow Food Cycle Sunday to inform residents and visitors about the importance of farmland and to provide a space for farmers and consumers to connect. Inspired by the principles of Slow Food, the cycle has changed over the years to accommodate increased visitor traffic and changing visitor motivations. Collaborations with various farms, partners, and tourism Pemberton has made the event one of BC's many unique agri-tourism experiences.



Human resources

Careful consideration for who is going to staff the creation and delivery of agri-tourism is needed. Tourism is a labour intensive industry like farming. Make sure that you have adequate, well-trained staff available during the hours that you expect visitors to arrive.

When thinking about staffing, consider the following questions:

- Does your current staff complement have the skills to design and deliver high quality visitor experiences? (i.e. marketing, program and event planning, customer service, research, pricing)
- How many employees will you need to run the agri-tourism activities and what months?
- What types of positions will need to be filled ex.) Tour guide, activity leader, tractor driver, front desk receptionist, gardener?
- What are the job responsibilities and required experience for the positions identified?
- Once you get started and find you need additional employees, where and how will you find them?
- What process will you use to screen and hire employees (job- skill testing, job interviews, etc.).
- What training needs will you face & how much will this cost?
- How will you set salaries and wages?
- What benefits will you provide?

Financial resources

Investing in agri-tourism requires you to be mindful of the financial resources at your disposal. Chapter 6 goes into detail on the types of investments farmers can expect to make and the returns they can expect to receive in agri-tourism. The reflection questions at the end of this section as well as those at the end of Chapter 8 will help guide you through the process of creating a financial plan based on the experience you want to deliver.



Reflection questions:

1. Is your farm located within the ALR? If so, do you need to apply for rezoning if the activities involved with your agri-tourism experience are considered non-farm use?
2. If your farm is not in the ALR but has farm status what local bylaws and regulations are in place that may limit your ability to move forward with the delivering the agri-tourism experience that are planned?
3. What constraints do the zoning regulations and local bylaws in place present when trying to deliver your chosen agri-tourism activities? Can you alter these activities or change the experience you are delivering to align with the zoning regulations or local bylaws?
4. Does your farm setup provide access to land and space needed to deliver the intended experience?
5. Is the location of your farm accessible for visitors? If not could signage or specific marketing help?
6. Do you have access to the financial resources required to cover start-up costs and invest in future activities?
7. Do you have access to human resources to help lead the activities and deliver the experiences?

Blue Moon Farm & Estate Winery, Comox Valley

Blue Moon Farm (also known as Nature Way Farm), is an organic farm located in the Comox Valley. Blue Moon Farm works in partnership with Blue Moon Estate Winery. The farm is focused on growing blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. In 2012 they planted 150 trees including plum, pear and apple. The farm invites visitors to enjoy a day experience where they can tour the winery, enjoy wine tasting and participate in any of the special events taking place at the winery. Blue Moon Farm sells their fruit at local farmers' markets in the summer months.



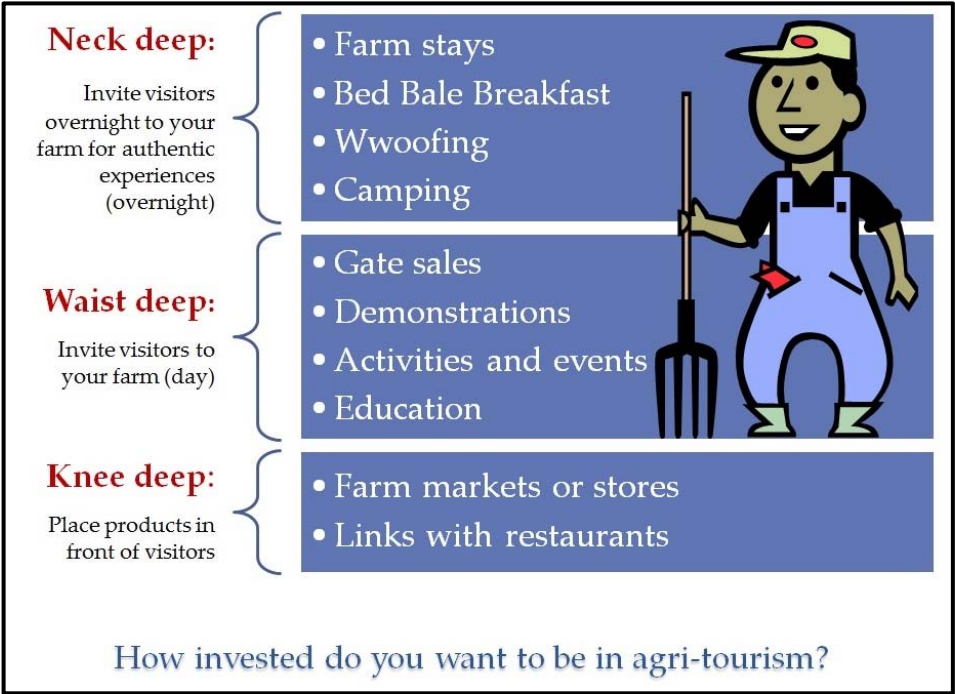


Chapter 6: Determining the level of investment in agri-tourism

Participating in agri-tourism requires investment of farm resources. This chapter will walk through and explain the levels of investment that can be made to deliver different types of agri-tourism experiences.

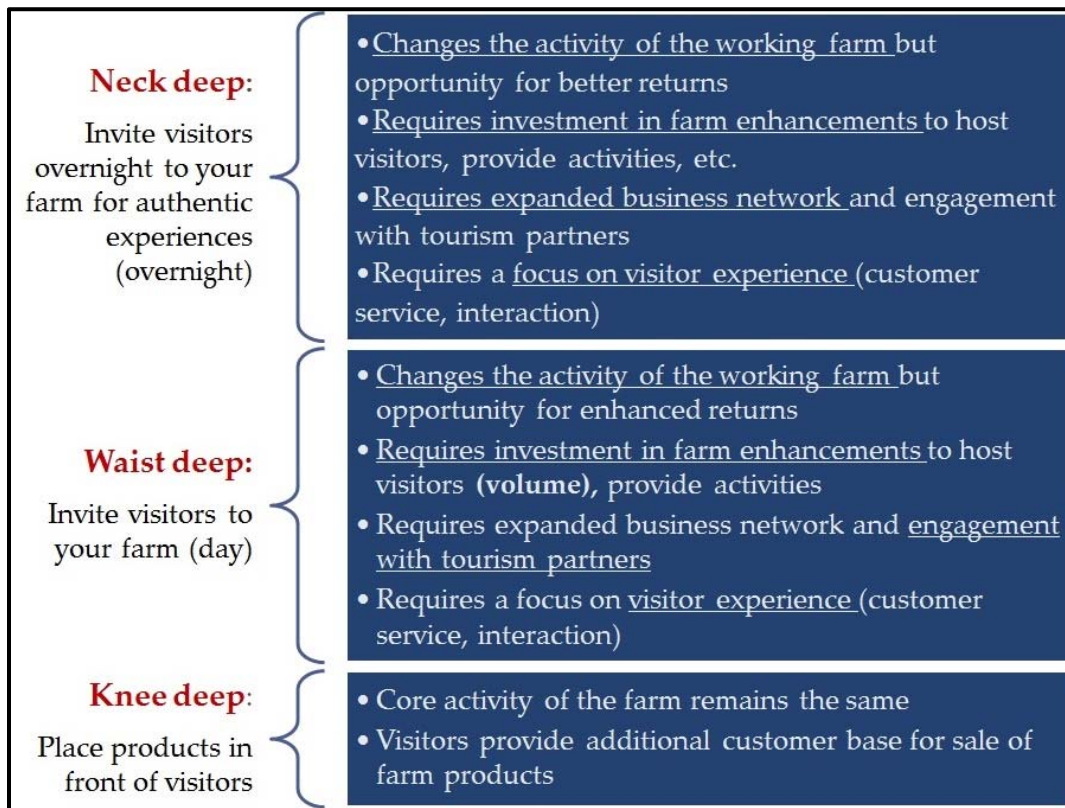
Farms can choose how integrated they want their farm to become with tourism. They can choose to have low level engagement (or get knee deep); medium level of engagement (or waste deep); or high level engagement (neck deep). At each level, the types of activities, the exposure of the farm to visitors, and the investments/returns differ. Figure 10 illustrates these levels.

Figure 10: Determining your level of investment in agri-tourism



Farms that engage at knee deep levels by placing their products in front of visitors will experience less changes to their working farm however, they will not benefit from direct spending of visitors for farm based activities which can be significant at the waist deep and especially, the neck deep levels of engagement. Investments are not solely financial investments as illustrated in the case studies where farmers had to consider how much time they wanted to spend on agri-tourism, the land dedicated to creating visitor experiences and also how much personal privacy was given up. Figure 11 showcases some of the potential changes a farm may experience when engaging with agri-tourism at the different levels.

Figure 11: Potential changes to farm based on level of investment in agri-tourism



Knee deep: Placing products in front of visitors

Most farms are already benefitting in some way from visitors when their products are placed in venues where visitors can purchase them. This placement can occur in a number of ways. To engage in this type of agri-tourism farms can sell their products at farmers' markets, to restaurants, through farm gate sales and at stores. The pros to engaging in this level of agri-tourism can include not having to invite visitors on site resulting in the avoidance of the additional costs around liability, insurance and vanity. This also maintains a higher level of personal privacy of farms and the families that run them, as visitors are not visiting the farm. Placing products in front of visitors can also benefit the farm as this type of agri-tourism allows the farm to advertise the sale of their products and increase their current customer base when they gain exposure to visitors.

In terms of cons, engaging at the knee deep level can limit the revenue that many farms are looking as an outcome of their diversification strategy. Operators who are involved in this level of engagement may experience a smaller return on their investment than other engagement levels. With that being said, engaging at this level first can help farms see if agri-tourism is the right fit for their farm without a significant initial investment. If farms participating in this level of agri-tourism find that it is a fit, they can expand by inviting visitors to their farm in future years. Saltwest Naturals case study depicts this level of adaption nicely. The case study below, describes how the Stony Mountain Farm located in Upper Squamish Valley is successfully engaging in agri-tourism in three different ways.

Case Study: Stony Mountain Farm

Stony Mountain Farm is a small-scale farm located in the Upper Squamish Valley. The farm started in the fall of 2008 with 50 laying hens. Overtime, the farm has increased the number of laying hens and has now grown to encompass turkeys, chickens, large black heritage pigs and Saanen goats. Stony Mountain Farm is passionate about raising animals in a respected and natural way to provide customers with healthy and delicious food that has been raised humanly. The farm prides itself on being a very hands on farm by doing everything the old fashioned way' by hand. Stony Mountain Farm sells their products at the Squamish Farmers Market and at other Markets in the Sea to Sky Corridor. The Farm also sells their products with the Good Time Farming's seasonal Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) harvest box and through the best breakfast in town program where the eggs from Stony Mountain Farm are sold to Fergie's a café located within a nearby resort. Visitors and local residents can purchase products from Stony Mountain Farm at farmers' markets, through online orders or when enjoying breakfast at Fergie's.

Interpretation:

Stony Mountain Farm is involved in agri-tourism in a number of ways. As described, Stony Mountain Farm is placing their products in front of visitors by participating in local farmers' markets, contributing to a local CSA program as well as by supplying a local café with their farm fresh eggs.

Farmers' markets are an off farm activity that provides an opportunity for farmers to sell their products by strategically placing their products in front of large groups of visitors. While markets provide an opportunity for Farmers to sell to the local residents, markets are often advertised as a tourism activity through local tourism marketing associations to encourage visitors from instead and outside the community to enjoy and support local farmers. Like many markets, the Squamish Farmers Market works in partnership with Tourism Squamish to advertise the market to visitors from outside of the region to enjoy and experience the Squamish Market and surrounding area. This type of collaborative advertising allows farmers the opportunity to sell their products both to visitors living within the region and those who as passing through who many buy farm products while on their trip or as post experience souvenir. Farmers' markets can have a positive impact for both the local community and for the farmer.

In 2012 the Squamish Farmers Market injected over \$1.8 million annually into the local economy and a study conducted by Farmers' Markets Canada found that on average farms that participate in markets sell about one third of their products on an annual basis in a market setting. The findings from both studies showcase the positive impact farmers' markets can have on the local community and on the farms selling at the market. The results also highlight the benefits of agri-tourism as these can help increase the demand for farmer's products or provide the creation of alternative streams of revenue, such as in the example of Stony Mountain Farm selling their eggs to the café located at a nearby resort.



Low Level of Agri-tourism Engagement: *Placing products in front of visitors*

Activities Include:

- Farmers' markets
- Farm stands
- Selling to restaurants
- Stores

Markets are a great example of how farmers can be focused on selling to their local community yet benefit from the crossover with agri-tourism. Markets are also a beneficial first step for farms interested in engaging in agri-tourism but do not want to engage in a high level of investment right away. Participation in a market also allows farmers to practice their customer services skills and to test out their resource pool to see if they has access to additional family members/staff, financial resources and time.

See the questions below to identify if you are participating in the low level of engagement of agri-tourism or if activities such as farmers' markets may be a good fit to sell your products:

Questions to consider for your farm:

1. Do you need to find new ways to market existing products?
2. Are you looking to strengthen demand and increase your customer base?
3. Is there an existing farmers market in your local area and if so would the pros of participating in the farmers market outweigh the cons?
4. Do you have the resources available to participate in this level of agri-tourism?

Waist deep: Inviting people to your farm for a day experience

The next level of engagement with agri-tourism provides an opportunity for farms to go “waist deep” by inviting visitors to their farm for intangible experiences. Engaging in this level of agri-tourism, farms also have a greater possibility at generating new sources of revenue. Inviting visitors to the farm for a day experience requires farms to identify activities that would be appealing to visitors. If your farm is interested in engaging in this level of agri-tourism be sure to review the previous section that emphasizes the importance of selling products linked to experiences.

There are many pros of inviting visitors to your farm for a day experience. Beyond the potential of revenue diversification, hosting visitors for a day may provide an employment position for a family member keen to be involved in the farming business. As well, generating a high level of visitor traffic to your farm can increase the demand for the agriculture products being sold ultimately creating a demand for increased production. Hosting day events such as festivals can be a beneficial way to build connections with other agri-tourism operators, with your customers and with your greater community.



Medium Level of Engagement with Agri-tourism:
Inviting visitors to your farm for a day experience

Activities Include:

- U-pick operations
- Picnics
- Corn maze
- Pumpkin patch
- Egg hunting
- Harvest festivals
- Holiday celebration
- Weddings
- Music and art festivals
- Cutting Christmas trees
- Meals prepared and served on site
- Hunting
- Fishing
- Petting zoo
- Horseback riding
- Harvesting
- Bird watching
- Nature walks
- Hiking
- Tours
- Workshops
- Lessons

Some of the cons of engaging with this level of agri-tourism can include greater time commitments required to design, market and deliver visitor experiences. This increase in time commitment can stem from the need to spend extra time on non-farm production activities such as customer service or administrative tasks such as booking tours. Each of these requires skill sets that may or may not be present in the current farm operation. A high number of visitors coming to the farm can also pose challenges with managing biosecurity, visitor safety and providing adequate facilities such as parking, public washrooms and an undercover area if it starts to rain.

The case study sharing the story of Saltwest Naturals does a great job at depicting the importance of being attentive and aware of visitors changing demands and desires and how to have the appropriate tools in place to be able to make these adjustments quickly. Pay close attention to how Saltwest Naturals and Tugwell Creek Farm and Meadery work together to in terms of cross-promotion.

If your farm is interested in engaging in a medium or high level of agri-tourism be sure to review the previous section that emphasizes the importance of selling products linked to experiences.

Case Study: Saltwest Naturals

Saltwest Naturals was founded in March 2011 by Jessica & Jeff Abel. After a long journey of trying to find an ideal location for their salt harvestry, Jessica & Jeff found the perfect parcel tucked off Hwy 14, nestled between French Beach and Sooke in Otter Point. To sell their product – West Coast sea salt and spice rubs, Jessica and Jeff focused on placing their products in front of visitors by participating in numerous farmers’ markets. Recently, Jessica & Jeff noticed that an increasing number of visitors started to stop by the harvestry interested and wanting more information about the harvestry and the process of how the salt was harvested. Jessica and Jeff soon found themselves offering many improv tours, educating visitors and sharing the story of Saltwest Naturals. The challenge was that most visitors were requesting tours onsite on the weekends, but this was the time when Jessica & Jeff were off site placing their products in front of visitors by selling at markets. As the demand for tours continued to increase, Jessica and Jess started to think about the new business opportunities associated with inviting visitors to the harvestry for a day experience. Jessica and Jeff have moved away from participating in markets and towards a medium investment in agri-tourism by preparing an onsite day experience for visitors to enjoy.



Interpretation:

Making the business decision to move away from the lower level of engagement activities in agri-tourism such as farmers’ markets and instead choosing to adapt to consumer demands by providing an onsite day experience has resulted in diversified revenues steams and positive growth for the Saltwest Naturals Company.

The visitor demand for this type of experience has resulted in Jessica & Jeff continuing to sell their Saltwest products at various retail outlets and at their newly established onsite store. While this decision has brought about change to the farm, it has resulted in the creation of a number of new revenue streams including (1) onsite tours of the harvestry; (2) the opening of the new onsite store where all existing and new Saltwest products can be purchased; (3) the expansion of onsite organic herb production to supply all of Saltwest’s rubs and spice mixes; and (4) the bottling and selling of Coast Salish bottled water, as this fresh water is the by-product of the sea salt harvesting process.

Deciding where to create the Saltwest Harvestry was an important decision that depended on the process of harvesting sea salt. As the location of the Harvestry is tucked off Highway 14, strategic marketing is a key success factor when working to attract visitors. Signage was an important consideration as the Saltwest Harvestry is located well off the main highway. To mitigate this issue, Saltwest worked with the Ministry of Highways to enable Saltwest signage to be placed along Highway 14, providing valuable exposure to tourists looking for the Harvestry and to those on route to another destination in the surrounding area. As previously mentioned, another key success factor in agri-tourism is marketing; however, rural farms working in isolation may find it challenging to attract in visitors as visitors tend travel to destinations for more than one experience or activity. Knowing that cross-promotion can aid in the attraction of visitors, Saltwest and Tugwell Creek Farm and Meadery, a local farm involved in the creation of honey, honey wine, and jam, uses cross-promotion to support each other's agri-tourism ventures. As the two agri-tourism products are different yet complimentary, Tugwell and Saltwest experience a higher yield of tourists via cross-promotion as visitors receive a more well-rounded experience than if the two operators were to work individually and did not cross-promote their experiences.



By increasing their level of engagement in agri-tourism, Jessica & Jeff can expect to have a greater return on investment in agri-tourism. Recognizing and adapting to visitors' demands have proven successful in Saltwest Naturals overall growth and in increasing the demand for their agricultural product.

Neck deep: Inviting people to your farm for an overnight experience

Farms can also invest further in agri-tourism by going “neck deep” and inviting visitors for overnight stays. This can include bed and breakfast operations, camping or RV opportunities, farm stays or cabin rentals or other options. Engaging in this level of agri-tourism provides farms with an opportunity to diversify their revenue streams by creating additional activities and experiences for visitors to enjoy while on site and provides an opportunity to increase the demand for the agricultural products grown.

There are many benefits to engaging in this level of agri-tourism. When participating in agri-tourism, up to 60% or more of visitors' daily spending is on their accommodation costs. In this sense, having visitors stay overnight enables farms to diversify and increase their revenue stream without necessarily having a lot of visitors on their farm. While similar to going waist deep, these visitors are considered higher yield but lower in volume. For example, a waist deep farm may need to bring in hundreds of day visitors who spend less on their visit to equal the same revenue as fewer visitors staying overnight. When visitors have more time to spend participating in activities, farms engaged in this type of agri-tourism can provide additional services such as horseback riding, guided hikes or fishing trips, for an additional charge on top of the accommodation fee.

To engage in this level of agri-tourism, farms need to ensure the zoning of their farm permits the use of overnight stays. Zoning may present limitations or flexibility to provide a high level of engagement with agri-tourism depending on if the farm is located within the ALR. The Agricultural Land Commission can be contacted to provide assistance with the review of the farm and non-farm use activities outlined within Agricultural Land Commission Act.



High Level of Engagement with Agri-tourism:

*Inviting visitors to your farm for
an overnight experience*

Activities Include:

- Bed and breakfast
- Camping
- Farm stays
- RV sites
- Cabin & vacation rentals

If zoning permits, engaging in this level can also present a number of challenges. Often times this type of engagement requires farms to have access to additional resources such as funds to build accommodations, time, staff and adequate space and land use challenges. At this level, farms may experience greater financial investments and expenses, a loss of personal privacy, and increased time dedicated towards ensuring visitors are enjoying the experience.

The case study below highlights Aveley Ranch Lamb Farm where owners Joseph and Ian provide a unique overnight experience for interested guests. The case study describes the level of commitment needed to provide an excellent and memorable visitor experience for those who spend a night or two at Aveley Ranch Lamb Farm.

Case Study: Aveley Heritage Sheep Ranch:

The Aveley Heritage Sheep Ranch is located within the Northern Thompson region of the Upper Okanagan and calls the rural community of Vavenby, BC home. The Aveley Heritage Sheep Ranch has been in the family for over a century and has been run by four generations of family members.

The ranch is passionate about not using pesticides or unnatural fertilizer to grow their animals and crops and provides a grazing environment for their heritage sheep from spring to fall. The Aveley Ranch provides an agri-tourism experience that encompasses both tangible and intangible products. Visitors can purchase accommodations for a one night or can enjoy a multi-night stay allowing visitors more time to participate in a number of tours offered at the Aveley Ranch. Self-guided lambing tours are always a popular among visitors. This experience allows visitors to explore the farm and to enjoy watching new born lambs. Visitors can also enjoy a hayride around the ranch. The main focus of Aveley Ranch is to sell their lamb; however, the ranch also sells hay, ewes and rams to neighbors in the surrounding area. In terms of tourism, the Aveley Ranch encourages visitors to enjoy the lambing tours; alpine sheep guided tour, or the family holiday tour and accommodation package.



Interpretation:

The Aveley Heritage Sheep Ranch is located in a rural location. While this rural location could be seen as a constraint, the Aveley Heritage Sheep Ranch has done an excellent job at communicating the type of experience visitors can expect to receive while on the ranch. This is done through the Ranch's website. The Aveley family is passionate about keeping the farm in the family and has adapted to visitors requests overtime to ensure their operation stays current and caters to the demands of visitors. For instance, many agri-tourists enjoy learning about the heritage associated with place, whether that is through a heritage building, a rural landscape or a century farm. A detailed story of the Aveley Ranch can be found on the Ranch's website; the story explains how the farm was founded, by whom, and how the farm eventually work its way into its current family. The website story is a great example of how to communicate an experience to entice visitors travel to your farm or ranch.

Reflection questions:

1. How invested do you want to become in agri-tourism?
2. What are the benefits that you are seeking from that level of engagement?
3. What are the potential costs that may be incurred?
4. Do you have plans to increase your level of engagement if agri-tourism works for your farm?
5. What types of investments will be required to engage in this level of agri-tourism?
 - a. Financial
 - b. Time
 - c. Skills
 - d. Land
 - e. Interaction with visitors
 - f. Other?

Rocky Mountain Buffalo Ranch, Blaeberry Valley

This buffalo ranch occupies up to 80 acres of land with access to forests, meadows, pastures, and wetlands, as well as a pond, creek and river. The farm invites visitors to enjoy a day or overnight experience. It offers accommodation rentals, buffalo tours, nature retreats, hiking, skiing, rafting, fishing, biking, kayaking, horseback riding and other seasonal activities. Since the time of opening, Rocky Mountain Buffalo Ranch has hosted visitors from all over the world.



Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm, Kelowna

The Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm started operating as an agri-tourism destination in the 90s. Today, the farm offers guided and self-guided tours for visitors to enjoy. Visitors can also purchase a selection of products from the farm's onsite boutique and enjoy café style goods including lavender lemonade and lavender gelato at the farm's onsite store. In addition to offering workshops, the Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm also provides venue rentals for wedding photography sessions.





Chapter 7: Ensuring the safety of your visitors: Risk management

Risk management

Establishing agri-tourism on your farm will involve extra risk for you as well as for your visitors. Depending on your level on investment, you will need to identify and manage risks effectively. The first step of managing risk on your farm is *to be aware* of its existence after which time you have options to avoid, reduce, accept or transfer the risks. Figure 12 showcases the process farms can use to help manage the potential risks involved with the agri-tourism experiences they may be offering.

Figure 12: Managing potential risks on a farm



Risks to visitors

You should be aware of possible risks to visitors due to injury or safety issues **BEFORE** you establish agri-tourism on your farm. Think about how visitors will move through your property and become exposed to your tangible products as well as to the farm setting. What will they come into contact with that may expose a risk to them? Identify all possible risks to visitors, particular for on farm activities. Then consider some of the following:

1. Work with your legal team to develop a good quality waiver for activities that present risks.
2. Have a plan for emergencies that is known to your employees and communicated to visitors.
3. Obtain and keep a good first aid kit present and have someone trained in First Aid.
4. Suggest for your visitors to wear appropriate shoes and clothes.
5. Explain to your guests that farm operations have certain dangers (insects, uneven ground, farm odours).

Risks to the farm

Think of potential risks for your property as well.

- a. Park all your agricultural machinery away from the visitor's area. People might be interested and ask you questions about your equipment, but you do not want children using them as climbing objects.
- b. All pesticides and other agricultural products should be stored away from the visitors. Repair facilities should be locked while you have tourists on your farm.
- c. If there are any areas or facilities on your farm where you do not want anybody to go to for personal or safety concerns put the sign "Do Not Enter" across the entrance.

Now that you have identified the risks, you have to decide how you will manage each of them. One option is to *avoid* them. This simply means that some risks are too much of a threat to the farm operation or visitors, so these activities can be crossed off or not offered as potential options for agri-tourism.

Another option is to *reduce* the risks. This means that you offer the activity, but you thoroughly review each component and take action to reduce potential risks. For example, you might add important signage to educate visitors about dangers on the farm, or you might train them prior to an activity, or you might provide first aid materials on site should an accident occur. It is valuable to discuss activities with your insurance agency as they might have ideas to minimize the inherent risks and ensure adequate coverage.

Another option is to simply *accept* the risks. Many risks are highly unlikely and you may feel that you can simply accept that they may happen and in such a case, you prepare for them should they occur. This might involve you spelling out risks to your guests and educating them on emergency procedures on the farm. It would also be good to ensure your staff is trained to manage these. Make sure that you are adequately protected by an insurance policy and consider having an emergency fund that can cover the deductibles.

The last option to manage risks is to *transfer* them. Risks can be transferred and shared with visitors using waiver forms (for appropriate activities). Farms also transfer risk to a third party to reimburse you in the occasion of a financial loss through an insurance plan. Make sure that you maintain a truthful relationship with your insurance agent and you are aware of all the details of your insurance plan.

Insurance considerations

Adequate insurance coverage is imperative for agri-tourism operations. Most agencies will cover general agricultural activities, but you should not assume that they will cover agri-tourism activities. You will need either to add an extension to your existing insurance policy or buy a new policy with a different company.

Consider discussing the following questions with your insurance agent before committing to a plan:

1. Does the policy cover my direct farm sales (roadside stand) or do I have to buy a separate commercial policy for it?
2. Is there a limit to the amount or type of direct farm sales I can make and still have them considered as secondary to my farming operation?
3. Does my policy cover any sales made off the farm (farmers' markets, delivery to store or restaurants)? If not, what type of policy should I obtain?
4. Does my policy cover visitors participating in certain farm activities (provide examples)?
5. As a part of my sales sometimes family members or employees make deliveries of produce to customers using farm vehicles. Does my automobile insurance cover such trips? If not what will?
6. Can I make changes to my insurance plan at any given point of time? If not what are the conditions?
7. How does my insurance policy work for the employees that work on my farm?
8. Does my policy cover possible injuries (either personal or visitors)?
9. Does the insurance agent understand that you are a proposed fee-recreation business?

Liability

Liability simply means legal responsibility when you may be responsible for a personal injury or property damage to a third party. Even though you cannot prevent someone from filing a law suit against you, you can make sure that your agri-tourism operation is as safe as possible and you have taken care to develop a risk management plan that shows due diligence in your operations. There are a few types of liability that you need to consult about before diversifying into agri-tourism.

- An example of general liability is a financial loss because of a physical injury or property damage to employees or visitors caused by inattention;
- An example of a personal injury is when one of your visitors slips on a wet trail and breaks an arm;
- An example of property damage is when a visitor unintentionally backs into your barn with their vehicle;
- An example of product liability occurs when a product results in unintended harm to a visitor;
- An example of professional liability is if you provide service such as B&B or a restaurant and your waitress spills hot soup on a customer.

Considering all the above you have the legal obligation to create a safe environment for your visitors.

Biosecurity

Your top priority is to take care of your visitors and employees, but the wellbeing of your animals is critical as well. Livestock and crops can be damaged with diseases carried on the shoes and car tires of tourists. At the same time farm property can have some infections that can be harmful for visitors. To minimize your biosecurity risk follow

common sanitary procedures by having washing stations, make sure visitors wash their hands after contact with animals, and secure your unfriendly animals away from the public. Make sure that your animals get necessary vaccines and keep these records in case someone is bitten. Avoid using animals that are sick, vulnerable, pregnant or nursing, underweight, or in need of vaccines. If you are thinking of having a petting zoo on your property make sure that all the visitors are supervised while they are in contact with animals. Never leave visitors unattended with your livestock.

It is a great opportunity to teach tourists about animals through interactions with them. However, you need to make sure that your animals are friendly and healthy and they will not be harmed by your visitors.

Eagle Acres Dairy, Fort Langley

Eagle Acres Dairy (formerly known as Aldor Acres) has been welcoming visitors since 1999. The Dairy specializes in giving group tours to families, school and senior groups, as well as provide an option for families to host their birthday party celebrations at the farm. Eagle Acres provides visitors the opportunity to see a real working dairy farm in action where visitors can learn about and/or help with the daily chores. Visitors can also enjoy the farm's pumpkin patch and agri-tourism inspired activities.



Reflective questions:

1. Thinking about the areas on your farm that tourists will have access to,
 - a. What activities they will participate in?
 - b. Who will supervise them?
 - c. What safety precautions will you need to take?
2. What types of risks to visitors are present on your farm?
3. How could you manage these risks?



Chapter 8: Getting your agri-tourism business in front of potential visitors

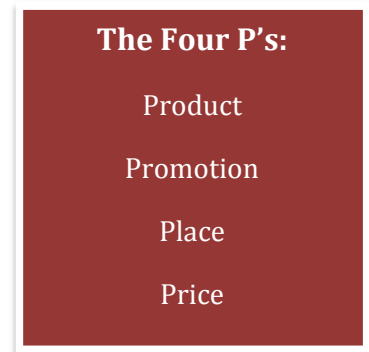
This chapter will now educate the farmer on how to market the experiences that they want to provide to visitors so that they know they exist, as well as where and how to navigate to them. It will start with an overview of marketing and it will stress the importance of marketing collaboratively with others to share costs and to create greater awareness among visiting markets. It will go over critical promotional tools that farms should be using to get the word out as well as collaborative events like circle routes and tours. It also spends some time covering how to price experiences in a way that brings in sufficient revenue for the farm.

Understanding the tourism marketing world

The Four P's

Effective marketing is an essential part of determining the success of any operation. When unfamiliar with marketing, it can be easy to overlook its importance. Marketing includes understanding what visitors want, designing and providing products and services to meet those desires, and choosing the most effective way to reach people. Without proper marketing, even the most well managed agri-tourism businesses may never reach their desired success.

While everybody has a different approach to marketing, it is important to address the Four P's of marketing: product, promotion, place, and price.



Product

Product refers to a product, service or experience that you provide on your farm. There are two important things about your product. First, make sure that your product is unique. What is going to help you stand out among all the others agri-tourism operators in the area? Ask yourself, why would someone come and visit your farm? As a provider you need to view the customers' experiences on your farm from their perspective.

Try to answer the following questions:

- Is your property clean and visually attractive?
- Will visitors be greeted by friendly employees?
- Do you have products for sale?
- Are you willing to talk to visitors and share stories about farming life?
- Do you have clean and accessible restrooms and cleaning facilities?
- Are you prepared to accommodate tourists who have special needs (seniors, people with disabilities, families with baby strollers)?

Promotion

When you are involved in agri-tourism, you need to think about creative ideas to attract tourists to your farm and then ensure their safe return. The challenge lies in finding the most effective and low cost advertising strategies. Make sure that your promotional tools will help you to catch tourists' attention, get their interest, create desire, and get them to come to your farm. You can read more about promotional tools later in this chapter.

Place

Place refers to where the product being sold will be distributed to consumers. In agri-tourism, place is the site where the products, experiences and/or activities are provided. Farms that are bringing visitor's onsite need to ensure visitors experience a safe, clean, and welcoming environment. To be successful in attracting visitors to your farm, be sure that:

- The information about directions, hours of operation, and availability of products is clear and always up-to-date;
- The paths on your property lead visitors where you want them to go, avoiding any unsafe or non-public areas;
- You create a sense of place attachment among visitors by sharing the story of your farm, such as its history, evolution and/or its current or future goals.

Pricing

Setting a price for your products and services can be challenging in agri-tourism. You want to ensure, just like your other farm products, that you price them in a way that you recuperate your expenses and that you make a profit. The prices have to be high enough to cover the cost of operating agribusiness, but at the same time not so high to discourage potential tourists from visiting. You also need to take into account where products and services you sell stand in comparison to your competition. Determining the price level is based on the three main points:

- What is the value or worth of your product/service to a customer)
- What does it cost to you to provide this product/service?
- What is the price that your competitors charge?

Understanding the difference between cost and value is essential part for increasing profitability: the **cost** is the amount you spend to produce it; the **price** is your financial reward for being a provider; the **value** is what your customer believes it is worth to them.

You will need to cover your costs to make a profit, which can be divided in two parts. First off, there are fixed costs. Fixed costs are permanent regardless how much or how little you sell, they are always there, for instance, marketing costs, staff wages, insurance, and power are all examples of fixed costs. Secondly, there are variable costs. Variable costs are those that rise as your sales increase, for instance, meals, materials, transportation, or extra labour are examples of variable costs. Conducting a break-even analysis will help you identify a price that would cover all the fixed and variable costs of your experience. A break-even analysis will help you to price your experience appropriately. A break-even analysis can include both calculating the break-even point for your experience and/or the break-even price point, which identifies where you can price your experience at based on the number of experiences you are keen to deliver. For farms keen to conduct a break-even analysis, use the formulas highlighted in Figure 13 and follow through with the example to help you price your agri-tourism experience.

Figure 13. Example of how to complete a break-even analysis

How many farm tours do I need to offer in order to break-even on the investments in farm infrastructure?

Break-even point formula:	Break-even point=Total Fixed Costs/(Price-Variable Cost per unit)
Break-even price formula:	Break-even Price=(Total Fixed Costs/Number of Units to be Sold)+Variable Costs

Example: Based on the information below, if group tours costs \$300 per group, how many group tours do I need to offer in order to break-even on the investments in farm infrastructure?

Total Fixed Costs	
Additional Insurance per season	\$5,000
Improvements to parking area	\$3,000
Children playground	\$4,000
Improvements to restrooms (\$20,000 depreciated over 5 years)	\$4,000
Additional salaries for 12-week summer season (2 workers @ \$15/hr x 40hrs/wk x 12 weeks)	\$14,400
Additional annual marketing (fliers, ads, etc)	\$1,500
Total Fixed Costs	\$31,900
Variable Cost per Group Tour	
Giveaway branded souvenir hats (20 per tour @ \$5 per hat)	\$100
Wage for Tour guide (1 guide @ \$15per hr x 3 hr tour)	\$45
Variable Costs per Group Tour	\$145

Plugging in the numbers...	
Calculating the break-even point	Break-even point=31,900/(300-145)
Answer	The Farm would have to conduct 206 group tours to break-even
Calculating the break-even price point if the farm would rather offer only 150 group tours	Break-even Price=(31,900/150)+145
Answer	The Farm would have to charge \$358 per group tour to reach their break-even point if they would only like to offer 150 group tours.

Reflecting on the example displayed in Figure 13, when Farms are at this point when completing a break-even analysis, the following questions should be considered:

- Is offering farm tours is feasible?
- What if the price per tour was raised? Does offering 120 group tours for the higher price of \$450 seem reasonable? $120 \text{ tours} \times (\$450 \text{ revenue per tour} - \$145 \text{ variable cost per tour}) = \$36,600 - \$31,900 \text{ fixed costs} = \text{annual profit of } \$4,700$
- Would consumers pay either of these prices?
- Would this agri-tourism experience be competitive with other farm tours in the area?

This analysis should help you look at other alternatives to decide the price range that you would like to charge as well as the number of products you are able to provide, and the time that you are ready to commit. Your total financial return can be achieved from providing different activities/services at attractive prices and then adding up all the profits.

When thinking about putting pricing into practice try to answer the following questions:

- How much should we charge?
- What is the basis for the pricing? (*completing a task, admission to a performance, time-based, service delivery – commission, consumption of physical resources like food and beverages*)
- Who should collect the payment? (*service provider, direct or non-direct channels*)
- Where payment should be made? (*conveniently located facilities, mail/bank transfers*)
- When should payment be made? (*in advance or once service delivery has been completed*)
- How the payment be made? (*cash, electronic fund transfer, charge card, vouchers, stored value card*)
- How do we communicate our prices? (*ensure price is accurate, consistently displayed and intelligible*)

Collaborative Marketing

Collaborative marketing can be a useful strategy to make your limited marketing dollars go further and to show visitors that there are numerous other reasons to visit your farm – they can visit others on route! By working together with other farmers you can gain benefits that would be harder to get on your own.

Tourism relies heavily on collaborative marketing efforts^{xiii}. Tourism Marketing Agencies, sometimes referred to as destination marketing organizations (DMO's), are responsible for putting experiences in front of visitors to entice them to visit a place, or to help them plan once they arrive at a destination. Most of them are keen to know about and communicate with all the stakeholders in their area that are providing tourism products. Get in touch with your local destination marketing organization to get on their communication list. Then, watch for opportunities to participate in marketing programs that align with your business strategy. These are often offered at significantly reduced rates and allow you to gain exposure to key markets much more effectively than you trying to do it on your own.

Promotional tools

Web-based marketing

A growing number of visitors rely on the internet to make their travel decisions^{xiv}. Tourists are looking for easy and fast ways to obtain information^{xv}. It is essential to have a website as a part of your marketing strategy to promote your agri-tourism operation. It will give you a great opportunity to inform customers about all the products and activities you provide, your hours of operation, directions to your farm and any updates they should know about. If you are not familiar with developing a website yourself you may want to contact a web developer or consider

contacting your local College or University to see if students in a business or tourism program may want to help you out. It should have nice graphic images, easy navigation, clear information, and opportunity to provide feedback. Additionally to having a website, it is a good idea to link your website to other travel websites. In this case people will be able to get indirect access to your website. Another great web-based tool is to use social networks like Facebook. Having a profile page there does not cost anything.

Social media

The advent of social media has enabled farms to get their messages in front of millions of potential visitors^{xvi}. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Trip Advisor, YouTube, farm blogs etc. are all useful platforms that farms should be aware of. It does not cost anything to be registered on these websites, but they require frequent updates; typically the rule of thumb is to update or 'post' at least one message or update a daily basis. Social media sites provide farms with numerous avenues to continually connect with past and potential visitors, enabling farms to establish on going relations with past and potential visitors.

Facebook is the most descriptive form of a web-based social media. Here, the history of a farm, a list of products, directions, hours of operation, links to website, photos, videos, updates, and description of activities can appear on your Facebook profile. Visitors of your page have an opportunity to ask questions, comment on your posts, leave reviews, and share your posts with their friends. After posting news or providing information on a profile 'wall', visitors can engage quickly with new information. It is a fast way to reach out to a lot of potential visitors, including both of those who are looking for your farm type experience as well as those who are just browsing through Facebook pages and found your profile by accident.

Harker's Organics, Similkameen Valley

Harker's Organics is a 5th generation family farm located in Cawston found in the Similkameen Valley. Harker's Organics grows some of BC's finest organic fruits and produce. The farm consists of 18 acres of fruit trees and 12 acres of ground crops. To engage with agri-tourism, visitors are invited to visit the onsite retail market, where local organic produce is sold and organic bistro style food is available.

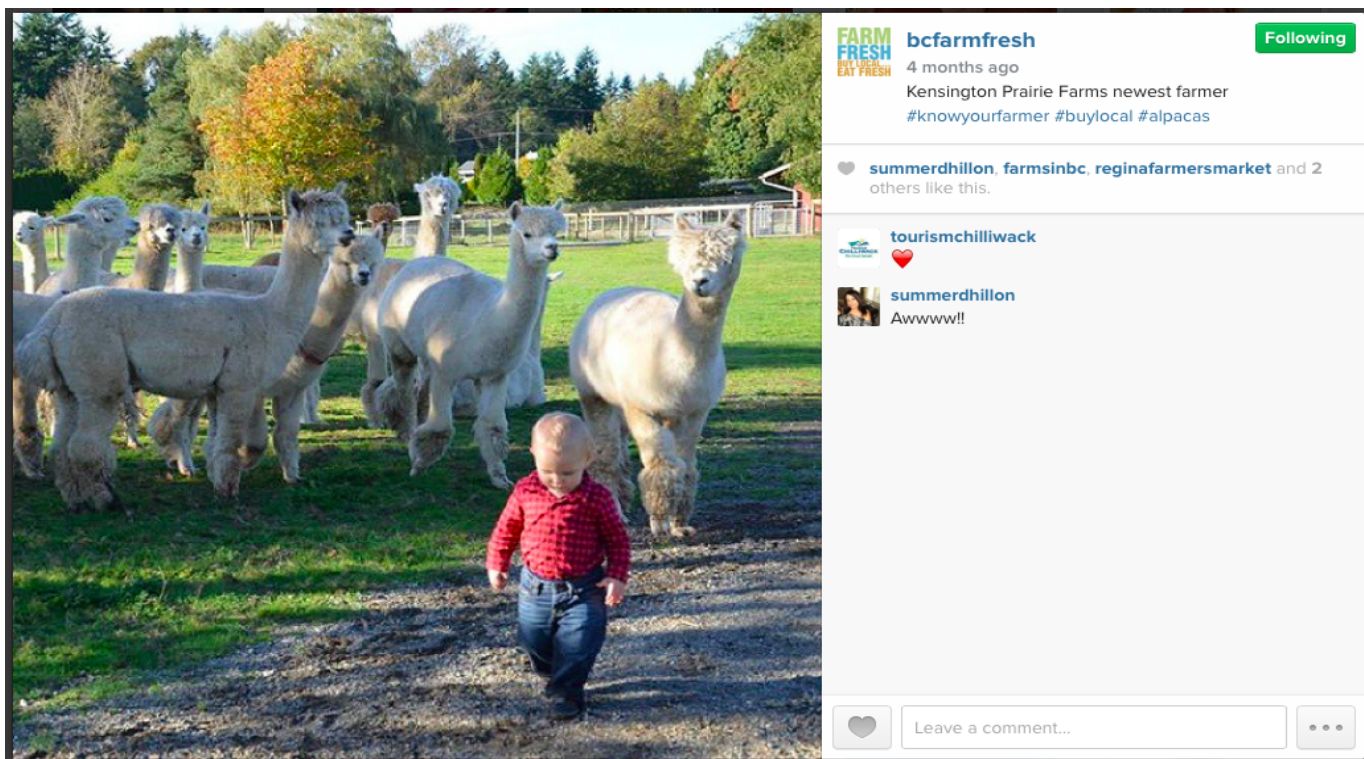


The screenshot shows the Facebook profile for Harker's Organics. The cover photo displays a basket of fresh produce with a sign that reads "Harker's Organics FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOUR FAMILY". The main post is a photo of several jars of jam on a wooden stand, with the text "Harker's Organics shared BC VQA Wine Information Centre's photo. December 14, 2016 at 10:54pm". The right sidebar shows the location "Grocery Store in Keremeos, British Columbia", a 4.9 star rating, and 881 likes.

Twitter is a form of a social network that gives an opportunity to post and read short messages ('tweets'), which are 140 characters long. Tweets can be shared ('retweeted') by other registered users, images can be added to enhance a message, and other people can be tagged in your posts. Twitter is way to let the world know what is going on a farm in a short and concise form and in a way that can be "re-shared" quickly. Consider it for promoting exciting news on the farm, specials, events or discounts that can spread quickly to your followers.

Instagram is a chance to share photos and videos with a few words of description. Sometimes visual images can say more than any words, posts, or reviews. Same as Twitter your profile on Instagram can be followed by other users. Hashtag is a word or unspaced phrase with the hash character (#) in front of it, which is widely used on Instagram. When posting a photo add as many hashtags as you can, so if users look for the hashtag you mentioned your image will appear in the search. Figure 14 provides an example of how BC Farm Fresh used hashtags when posting their photo to their Instagram account. The following are some other examples of hashtags you can use for your images: #visitingfarm, #agri-tourism, #freshproduce, #locallygrownbc, #familyfun, #buylocal etc.

Figure 14: Instagram example: BC Farm Fresh



Trip Advisor is a website providing reviews on a travel-based content populated by visitors based on their experiences. With this website users can plan their trips from scratch using the feedback from other visitors as their reference. Trip Advisor can help visitors make decisions about what to see and where to go, places to stay, eat, and to find things to do. After tourists visit your farm they can leave their reviews on Trip Advisor. It is word of mouth sharing, but in an online format. The disadvantage of this tool is that you have no control of what people might say in their comments, but at the same time it is a chance to find out how well you are meeting tourists' expectations and what needs to be improved. If you receive a poor review, respond politely as others will read it and judge for themselves. So acknowledge what your reality was and offer, publicly, to reconcile the issue with the visitor if they contact you directly.

YouTube is a video-sharing website. It gives an opportunity to share videos from your farm as well as watch videos uploaded by others. Consider having a couple of videos from your farm uploaded and linked off your website. It helps visitors to see and experience the farm before they arrive. You can also link your YouTube videos to the other social media platforms you may be using, such as sharing a YouTube video on your Farms Facebook page.

Farm blogs are another great way to share and promote your agri-tourism venture. Blogs can be used in a number of ways; for instance, they can be set-up as part of your Farm's website or they can be a standalone site. Blogs can be interactive if users ask questions and leave comments. Blogs can be done for free on most web platforms and are usually free. Check out WordPress for ready to go themes, as well as blogger.

The biggest advantage of all these web based social networks is that they can be connected with each other. Once you organize settings the right way your tweets can appear on Facebook, images from Instagram on the Twitter profile, videos from YouTube can be connected to your Facebook posts and Facebook profile can correlate with Trip Advisor. Once you register and become a user, you will see how easy it is to navigate through these and how fast you can get attention of a large audience. They can take considerable time and talent, but once established, the integrated presence will give your farm a competitive advantage in reaching and communicating with your visitors.

Print publications:

Types of print publication described in this section are part of collaborative marketing. This means that your farm is being promoted alongside with other farm and tourist destinations.

Guides

Guides are available for tourists in visitor centres, airports, ferries, hotels, and beyond. This is often the first source of information that tourists refer to when they visit new destinations. Concise information and highlights of your farm should be descriptive enough to interest visitors and entice them to stop by your farm. Find out what guidebooks are being used in your area and connect with your local tourism marketing body to learn more about publishing details and logistics.

Maps

Maps are a key navigational tool to create awareness of and show visitors how to access your farm. Maps are worth including in your promotional tools especially if your farm located away from the main highways or other tourist destinations. You can get on collaborative maps or you can create a useful map as part of your website that people can print off to locate your property.

If you are considering putting your agri-tourism operation on a map you should also try to identify: Are there any bike trails available to your farm? Does public transportation routes go close to the farm? How far is the farm from other tourist attractions as well as to the closest town? Does the map show river/ocean/forest that is close to your farm? Does the map show optional routes to get to the farm? Find out if maps are developed in your area for visitors and find out how you can get your property located on them.

Signage

Good visible road signage is key create awareness of your farm and to help visitors locate you. Think about how a visitor will travel to your farm and drive it yourself noting key landmarks that you can identify on your map. The better your map is and the more consistent it is with the landmarks, the less likely people will get lost on route.

Erecting signage on the roads requires you to work with your local or regional district and the Ministry of Transportation to ensure that they are legal and don't create safety hazards for drivers. Before committing to putting a sign up, find out about regulations and fees pertaining to signage on your property or along dedicated roadsides.

Make sure that your signs are visible from both sides of the road. Road signs should be consistent in colouring and branding (use consistent images and colours as your website) and be simple directional signage on route. At your farm gate, signage should indicate your hours and an open or closed sign. The letters and



visuals should be large enough to be visible from a distance catching the attention of drivers. Make sure that the placement of the sign gives enough time for a driver to slow down especially before the turns.

Brochures

Brochures are a great way to provide visitors with a small document highlighting your farm activities and a map with all other contact information they need to locate you. These are often “racked” at local visitor centers or hotels and can also entice visitors to come out and visit. When customers leave your property giving them a brochure is a great way to finish off their visit. It will remind them about your farm later when they will plan next vacation or it will make evidence when they share their experience with friends.

Circle routes

Circle tours have become a popular way for farms in the same area to work together to attract visitors to their region. Working together allows farms to gain collective exposure to visitors interested in agri-tourism. If your farm is interested in attracting visitors in this way, find out if there is a circle route in your region and how you can become involved. If there is no circle route, consider meeting with other agri-tourism operators in the region and see if you can work with your tourism marketing association to creating one. The effort is well worth the effort as circle routes can expose your farm to visitors who may already be visiting one of the established farms in the area. This new exposure can help to entice more visitors to drive out to the country. Becoming a part of a circle route can attract a significant number of visitors over a short period of time.

Special events

Creating special events on your farm can be a useful way to promote your farm to visitors. Special events are short term ways to provide activities that are not always present on your farm. A four day circle route event with other farms, a week long corn maze, a day long country BBQ, or a three week berry picking event are all examples of special events. These create extra excitement among visitors to journey out of the city. It is important to start advertising for special events a few months before the actual event to give enough notice for visitors to plan ahead.

Circle Farm Tour: Choose your own adventure, Lower Mainland

A Circle Farm Tour is a road map that allows visitors to stop and visit a variety of specialty farm-gate, vendors, open air markets, charming eateries, heritage sties, fairs and other special events. Visitors can do this by downloading the brochure and map for each participating community: Abbotsford; Agassiz and Harrison Mills; Chilliwack; Langley; and Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. Each circle route takes visitors on a driving adventure where they can visit 10-20 farms that all offer a range of agri-tourism experiences. Engaging in a circle farm tour is an incredible adventure for the whole family.



While considering advantages and disadvantages of certain promotional tools ask your visitors how they found out about you. This will help you to enhance some form of advertising while minimizing your effort towards others. Table 3 describes the advantages and disadvantages of possible promotional tools Farms could use to market their experiences.

Table 3: Advantages and disadvantages of promotional tools

Type of media	Advantages	Disadvantages
Newspaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially large coverage area • Low cost relatively to other media • Immediate/timely (daily or weekly) • Access to many socioeconomic groups • Flexibility in ad size and cost • Short lead time • Visibility of the product (pictures) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent reproduction • Typically one day exposure • Clutter (can be lost among other ads) • Lack of movement and sound • May be limited to text or black/white
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific audience (demographics) • Immediate/timely/multiply exposures • Possible high entertainment value of ad • Time and content flexible • Use of a human voice • Sound reinforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time limitations restrict message • Need for repetition • Clutter (can be lost among other ads) • Ad recall is low • Short ad exposure
Web based and social media tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available 24/7 • Customers access in their environment and at their convenience • Relatively cost effective • Can target large types of viewers • Messages can be timely • Ads can be interactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance necessary • Not effective as a stand-alone strategy • Difficult to gauge impact • Cost of development and maintenance • Time needed to engage in updates can be challenging
Road signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large audience exposure depending on placement • Can provide information and directions • Continuous exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited message length • Initial production and preparation costs • Ideal sites are difficult to access
Print publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially large coverage area • Visibility of the product (pictures) • Others are taking care of spreading publications (maps and guides) • Can be cost effective • Can provide information and directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for updates • Lack of movement and sound • Potential clutter among other brochures • Inconsistent reproduction

Reflective questions:

1. Who is your local Destination Marketing Organization?
2. What promotional tools would you like to incorporate into your agri-tourism operation?
3. Do any of the listed tools require additional information or investment?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen tools?
5. Do you have the time or expertise on the farm to manage promotions?
6. Are there circle routes near you or are there enough farms to potentially create a new one?





Chapter 9: Designing and delivering memorable experiences

When moving forward to design and deliver a memorable experience to your visitors, it is important to consider the three main phases involved with delivering a visitor experience: (1) Preplanning: Staging the experience; (2) Delivering the experience; and (3) Evaluating the experience.

The focus of this chapter is to explain each of the phases in detail to equip farms with the tools needed to deliver a successful visitor experience. The considerations and questions that farms need to attend to in order to ensure the delivery of a high quality visitor experience will be covered as well as how to receive and interpret visitor feedback to help inform future development decisions.

Preplanning: Staging the experience

The purpose of this phase is to have farms consider the staging of your agri-tourism experience so when visitors arrive at your venture (farm, tent, store, booth, etc.) you can successfully deliver a valuable experience.

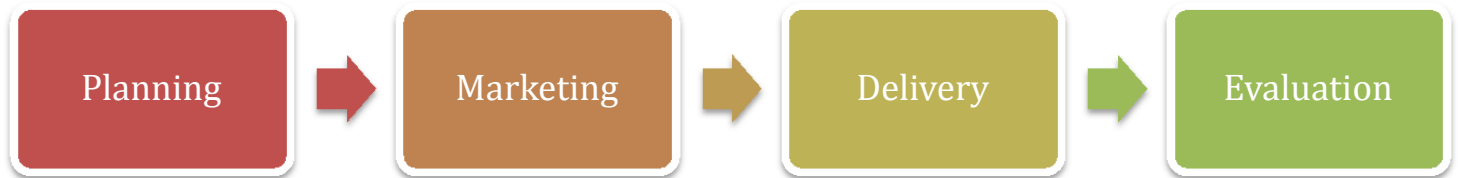
Designing a quality experience requires farms to gain a keen understanding of the visitor’s perspective and how they move through an agri-tourism experience. The first step therefore is recalling the motivations of the agri-tourists you are trying to attract. Designing an experience that meets your customers’ expectations will help you provide a high quality visitor experience. Figure 15 highlights the five-stage process that visitors move through when participating in an experience. After making a decision to travel, visitors begin to anticipate what they will experience based on the images and descriptions or reviews they heard about prior to. They then travel to the venue, participate in the activity, travel back and later, reflect on their experience. It is important to understand that you can positively influence a visitor’s experience at EACH step of this process. For example, giving good descriptions, maps and details on the farm prior to a visit will enhance the anticipation and travel stage. Or, letting people buy souvenirs and take photos allows them to reflect and remember the experience after they leave.

Figure 15: Participating in an agri-tourism experience from the visitor’s perspective



When designing a visitor experience, an operator will move through similar yet different stages than visitors, Figure 16 showcases this process. Knowing what the visitor experience looks like, you can now design and deliver an experience by planning, marketing, delivery and evaluation. Previous sections discussed planning and marketing so this final section will focus on the delivery and evaluation of the experiences once visitors make it to your venue.

Figure 16: Delivering an agri-tourism experience from the operator's perspective



Question: What do I expect visitors to do when they show up on my farm?

To prepare for this stage, you must consider how you will move your visitors through your experience. Oftentimes, staging is used in tourism to create experiences. Staging allows the operator to set up the experience before it occurs, so when visitors show up, the experience feels authentic for the visitors but it is clear, organized and easy for the operator to deliver as it has been preplanned and set up in advanced.

Visitors' first impressions of the farm and agri-tourism operation are important to control and manage. To do this, in the preplanning stage farms should think about how to control what the visitors see first and do first when they show up at the farm. Physically walking through the designed agri-tourism experience step-by-step may help to identify the successful areas of the experience and the areas in that may need improvement.

Staging experiences in tourism indicates that operators in a destination “intentionally use services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.”

(Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 11)

Consider...

If you are engaging with agri-tourists at a farmers' market, your signage will be important to indicate what products you are selling and how your products are unique. Key words such as organic, local, sustainable, fresh (if relevant) etc. are often used to attract visitors' attention. Does your booth reflect a professional, safe, and welcoming environment for guests? Taking time to present an attractive image of the products and the farm can create a desire for people to visit the farm at a later date.

To identify what first impressions visitors might have of your farm and agri-tourism experience consider the following questions:

- When your visitors first arrive, do they know where they should park?
- As visitors are pulling up to your location and parking, what do they see?
- Once your visitors have parked, do they know where to go to participate in your agri-tourism experience?
- As visitors are walking towards the location to participate in your experience, what do they see? Is your environment clean and inviting?
- Are visitors are required to pay admission fees before entering the property? If so do they know where to pay?
- Have you made visitors aware of your payments options? Ex.) Is your operation cash only? Are debit/credit cards accepted? And is there an ATM on site?
- If there is any safety concerns, how are visitors made aware of these immediately?

After the preplanning phase, the next phase involved with delivering a visitor experience is phase two, the action of actually delivering the experience itself. The following subsection will guide you through the various considerations needed to provide a successful agri-tourism experience.

Delivering the experience

The second phase is actually delivering the experience that has been planned. As experiences and farms are so unique, the focus of explaining this phase will be on the elements needed to deliver the experience.

Customer Service

As tourism is a consumer driven service industry, sublime customer service is a key factor involved with providing a successful visitor experience. Customer service can make a first and lasting impression on visitors so it is important to ensure the visitors are being guided through the experience smoothly and receive prompt attention if needed. One way to ensure that quality customer service is being provided, is to arrange customer service training for family members, staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteer management

As staff and volunteers interact with visitors on a consistent basis it is extremely important for all team members to be familiarized with the experience being delivered. Staff and volunteers need to understand their role in the provision of the experience as well as what your expectations are of them. Defining the roles and responsibilities for each of the paid staff and volunteer positions can contribute significantly to the delivery of a smooth visitor experience.

Evaluating the Experience

Evaluating your agri-tourism operation is the last phase of delivering a memorable visitor experience. Whether done on an annual basis or in shorter terms, your evaluation should address how agri-tourism met the needs of the farm and also how visitors felt about the experiences provided.

Understanding what aspects of the experience your visitors' value can help to inform future decisions. Although obtaining feedback on the experience you've worked so hard to provide may seem intimidating, is it one of the most valuable tools to grow your operation and enhance the quality of your visitor experience. Positive feedback provided for example through social media or customer comment cards can also be helpful as a marketing tool to advertise your experience to other potential visitors.

There are a number of ways you can evaluate the experience you are delivering.

Surveys can be used to quickly ask visitors to provide feedback on their experience. These can be on your website or emailed to visitors after their visit. Free surveys can be designed online through sites such as Survey Monkey allowing them to complete the survey later at a time that is convenient for them.

Surveys can also be done via quick comment cards on your farm. Consider providing an incentive for these by entering their comment cards into a draw for a prize at the end of the season.

Reflection questions:

1. How can you stage the experience for visitors?
2. What would a glowing review from a visitor about their experience look like?
3. When reflecting on your first year or season of agri-tourism:
 - a. Were your goals for agri-tourism met?
 - b. What benefits did you experience for your farm?
 - c. What costs or changes happened to your farm?
 - d. Were you able to achieve your financial targets?
 - e. Did you create more demand for your agricultural products?
 - f. Did you manage risks well resulting in safe experiences for everyone?
 - g. Were you able to create employment opportunities on the farm?
 - h. Did you attract as many visitors as you were hoping?
 - i. Did you have the resources to deliver your experience well?
 - j. What could you do next year to improve the responses to these questions?
4. And when you think about the experience that visitors had and the feedback received:
 - a. Did visitors seem interested in the products you provided?
 - b. What other experiences do you think they would be interested in?
 - c. Were visitors satisfied with their experience? How do you know?
 - d. Did you experience any repeat customers or receive any positive customer feedback?
 - e. Did you have some visitors with negative experiences? How were they handled and how will you ensure these do not happen again?

Resources

Networking and Partnerships		
Organization	Website	Organization Description
Agriculture Land Commission	http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alc/content.page?id=650C876AD9904910B4807D9DCCB1F067	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established in 1973, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is an independent administrative tribunal comprised of appointed Commissioners that are responsible for administering the ALC Act. The ALC manages and considers the land use applications that are put forward requesting land to be removed from the Agriculture Land Reserve, to subdivide land within the ALR and to use agricultural land for non-farm purposes or to include land into the ALR. As well, the ALC conducts other activities including: policy development, local government land use planning and bylaw reviews, regulation interpretation, ALR boundary reviews and compliance and enforcement activities. The ALC also participates in other government land use initiatives and liaises with stakeholder groups. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ALC website is where Farms can learn about the ALR policies and regulations and the agri-tourism activities that are permitted. Farms within the ALR looking to delivery certain agri-tourism experience may desire to enter the process of rezoning a part of their parcel to enable the provision of certain agri-tourism activities that are considered to be non-farm by the Agricultural Land Commission Act.
BC Agricultural Council	https://www.bcac.bc.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The British Columbia Agriculture Council (BCAC) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that provides leadership in the advocacy and proactive communication of the collective interests of all agricultural producers in BC, and facilitates the delivery of programs and services that benefit BC agriculture. The BCAC represents over 14,000 BC farmers and ranchers and close to 30 farm sector associations from all regions of the province. Their mission is to continually improve the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of BC Agriculture. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects help to improve farmer’s agricultural skills, increase awareness about environment, biodiversity and food safety. Their program ‘We Heart Local’ features farmers who provide agri-tourism services on their farms.
BC Association of Farmers’ markets	http://www.bcfarmermarket.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mission of the BC Association of Farmers’ markets (BCAFM) is to support, develop and promote farmers’ markets in British Columbia. The association is passionate about local food and helping markets in BC thrive. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BCAFM website is an excellent resource for farms looking to engage in farmers’ markets. The resource section of the website provides a diverse range of tools and resources that include manuals and how-to guides that cover an array of topics including the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Regulatory resources ex.) Regulations for BC farmers’ markets, food safety and highways signage (b) Publications ex.) How-to guides, manuals and reports ex.) Manager training, economic benefits of markets, etc.

<p>Canadian Agricultural Safety Association</p>	<p>http://casa-acsa.ca</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families and workers. CASA works collaboratively with agricultural safety and health specialists and producers in all provinces and territories to promote health and safety on Canadian farms and ranches <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This organization provides useful information how make farming safe for yourself and for your employees including animal safety, child safety, crop protection, electrical safety, and first aid. This knowledge will make visiting your farm safe for visitors as well.
<p>Destination British Columbia</p>	<p>http://www.destinationbc.ca/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination British Columbia (Destination BC) is the tourism body for the province. Destination BC is the industry led Crown corporation that works collaboratively with tourism stakeholders across the province to coordinate tourism marketing at the international, provincial, regional and local levels Destination BC has a wealth of resources located on their corporate website to help tourism operators grow and diversify their tourism businesses. These resources include: (a) reports on market demographics and visitor motivations; (b) tourism planning resources; (c) resources to develop a tourism plan; (d) strategies to implement your tourism plan; (e) resources used for monitoring your visitor experience and evaluation tools, as well as guides (f) workshops and webinars. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resources that can be found on the website will help farms gain a strong understanding of tourism in general and how to design and deliver a high quality visitor experience.
<p>Farm Management Canada</p>	<p>http://www.fmc-gac.com/home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Management Canada (FMC) is the only national organization dedicated exclusively to providing leading edge resources to enable Canadian farmers to make sound management decisions. FMC partners with industry stakeholders including governments, public and private sector organizations, and farm and commodity associations to foster the development of excellence in Canada’s agricultural sector. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of support for agri-tourism, the resources that can be found on Farm Management Canada’s website focus on business from the agricultural perspective rather than on the visitor experience like the resources on Destination BC. With that said, a number of beneficial resources are listed on the website, these include: (a) information on strategic and business planning; (b) financial planning; (c) marketing, (d) human resource management; (e) risk management; and (f) succession planning.

<p>Ministry of Agriculture Strengthening Farming Program</p>	<p>http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=0F162AFAFAEC454C9CC89D0D6E39599A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Farming is an initiative of the BC Ministry of Agriculture that is jointly implemented with the Agricultural Land Commission. The Strengthening Farming program promotes strong working relationships between local and provincial governments and the farming community. This initiative works to provide guidance and support for local governments, First Nations and the farming community throughout the province relating to B.C.'s agricultural legislation. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strengthening Farming initiative works to support farms through two main program components: (1) Farm Practices Protection; and (2) Planning for Agriculture. The program supports fair resolution of land use conflicts and effective community planning for a sustainable agriculture in British Columbia. The initiative provides support for Farms in a number of ways; this initiative may be helpful for Farms that are changing their agricultural practices to incorporate agri-tourism, for those who may be experiencing conflicts with neighbors, or for Farms looking to enter the rezoning process.
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Granting Organizations & Financial Resources		
Organization	Website	Organization Description
Farm Credit Canada	https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is Canada's leading agricultural lender. FCC provides financing, insurance, software, learning programs and business services to Canadian producers, agribusiness and agri-food operators. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to helping farmers gain access to financial resources, the FCC website has numerous resources that may be of assistance to farmers engaging with agri-tourism. These resource include: (a) software; (b) calculators for equipment loans; (c) leases or mortgages; (d) market prices for grain, oilseed, livestock and dairy; and (e) research reports such as the Farmland Values report.
Farm to Fork: Zero Interest Micro Loans Program	http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/resources/microloan/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership between FarmFolk CityFolk (FFCF), the Island Chef's Collaborative (ICC), and VanCity offers zero interest micro loans to local food producers. The aim of the fund is to provide capital for farmers, fishers, ranchers, harvesters and processors to invest in equipment and materials that allows them to increase the supply of local food in their region. Loans will be awarded in amounts between \$1000 to \$10,000 for up to a 24 month term for farmers located in or loans in Metro Vancouver, the Sunshine Coast, the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <p>Interested farms are recommended to connect with the appropriate personnel at Farm to Fork to receive further details about agri-tourism initiatives and loan requirements.</p>
Growing Forward 2	http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=EB8322DE53664C7289317829FA25360E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing Forward 2³ is a five-year federal-provincial-territorial policy framework for Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. It is the basis for coordinated, cost-shared programs to help the agriculture sector become more competitive and innovative. The Growing Forward 2 Programs cover the following key areas: 1.) Business risk management; 2.) Innovation; 3.) Competitiveness and Market Development; and 4.) Adaptability and Industry capacity. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within these four key areas, farms interested in developing agri-tourism initiatives may find value in the programs relating to: On farm food safety, biosecurity and surveillance and the development of an environmental farm plan.

³ GF2 will expire March 31, 2018 and will be replaced by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership starting April 1, 2019.

Research Reports, Manuals, and How-to Guides		
Organization	Website	Organization Description
Destination BC's Tourism Essential Guides	http://www.destinationbc.ca/Programs/Guides-Workshops-and-Webinars/Guides/Tourism-Business-Essentials-Guides.aspx#.VQiIB2TF_38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tourism Business Essentials guides are free, practical resources for farms to learn more about the tourism industry and about how to build their tourism-based businesses. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These guides are beneficial when entering the tourism industry for the first time and are just as beneficial to those who are well versed in providing agri-tourism experiences. While these guides are not specifically focused on agri-tourism, they instead cover topics such as the fundamentals of tourism, employee management, designing ads and brochures that sell and online reputation management.
F.A.R.M. (Food Responsibility Members') Community Council.	http://forums.bcac.bc.ca/index.php	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Food and Agriculture Responsibility Members' (FARM) Community Council was formed in 1996 at the request of the B.C. Minister of Agriculture to be a unified voice representing a collective of farmers' institutes in British Columbia. The FARM Community Council is among the seven founding members of the British Columbia Agriculture Council. The FARM Community Council serves its members by remaining abreast of key industry and legislative issues. <p>Relation to agri-tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This organization has forum and allows posting blogs on different topics related to agriculture. Here farmers can share their concerns and successes about agri-tourism.
New Farm Start-Up: A Guide to Starting and Growing a Small or Medium Sized Farm Business in British Columbia.	http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/agriculture-and-seafood/agricultural-land-and-environment/strengthening-farming/800-series/810202-1_new_farm_start-up_guide.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Farm Start Up guide begins with assessing skills and knowledge that the farmer needs to start a farm enterprise; the information within the guide is focused on capital resources as land, equipment and finances. The guide then introduces different marketing channels and evaluates marketing business opportunities. It covers business structure, human resources, risk management, social responsibilities, and support systems. This guide can assist farms through the process of creating the following plans: a.) Enterprise plan; b.) Marketing plan; c.) Production plan; d.) Financial plan; and e.) Exit plan. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing this guide will give farms a better understanding of the business side of developing agri-tourism.
Selling at BC's Farmers' Markets – How-to Guide for New Farmer Vendors	http://www.bcfarmermarket.org/sites/default/files/files/ind/pdf/bcafim-vendor-guide-602.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BC Association of Farmers' Markets developed a series of manuals about selling at BC's farmers' markets. The particular guide catered to the new farm vendors who wants to learn more than the standard sales pitch about how great it is to sell at farmers' markets by gaining more information about who sells at farmers' markets and what farmers' markets had to offer them. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this guide is to help farmers decide whether or not selling at a farmers' market is a good strategy for their business. The goal of the guide is to provide farmers with sufficient information to be able to determine whether selling at a BC farmers' market will match with their business goals. The guide is organized into six parts (1) The business of farmers' Markets; (2) Selling at BC's Farmers' Markets; (3) Market Policies; (4) Your priorities; (5) General Information;

		and (6) Resources.
Tourism British Columbia Research Report: Travel Activities and Motivations of U.S. Residents	http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Travel-Motivations-%28TAMS%29/U-S-Travel-Motivations/U-S-TAMS-Sector-Specific-Reports/Agri-Tourism.pdf.aspx	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2009, Tourism British Columbia, now rebranded as Destination British Columbia conducted a research report examining the travel activities and motivations of US residents while on vacation. This study specifically focused on the agri-tourism activities us residents were enticed to do while on vacation in British Columbia. • Some of the key findings of the study included: agri-tourists where enticed to participate in agri-tourism for the purposes of escaping their day-to-day environment, to relieve stress and to create lasting memories. The study also found that agri-tourists were motivated to travel to specific agri-tourism destinations if the destination seemed safe, if the was lots of things for adults to see and do and if the location could be conveniently accessed by car.

Labour Resources		
Organization	Website	Organization Description
WorkSafe BC	http://www.worksafebc.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WorkSafeBC is dedicated in promoting workplace health and safety for the workers and employers in BC. In the event of work-related injuries or diseases, WorkSafeBC works with the affected parties to provide return-to-work rehabilitation, compensation, health care benefits, and a range of other services. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farms that have hired help or are considering hiring family members or external staff are strongly recommended to ensure the logistics around employment and workplace safety compile with the WorkSafe BC standards. The WorkSafe BC website is a beneficial resource to enable farms to be connected with a WorkSafe professional who can guide them through the processes of developing an agri-tourism operation that aligns with the regulator standards of WorkSafe and to ensure that the farm has sufficient insurance and liability coverage for the agri-tourism operation at play.
Agricultural Labour Pool	http://agri-labourpool.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Agricultural Labour Pool is a recruitment and job seeking assistance service for both employers and those seeking employment. The organization focuses on assisting Canadian agricultural employers with their human resource recruitment needs and helping people secure a career in agriculture. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For farms looking for hired help, the Agricultural Labour Pool provides access to job seeks from entry level to experienced agricultural workers or professionals. The website hosts job opportunities from across Canada. Beyond connecting farms with a labour pool of potential employees, the organizations website provides access to various resources including resources on how to post a job, employer cost and benefits, wage information and industry information.
Young Agrarians	http://youngagrarians.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Young Agrarians is a grassroots initiative made up of agriculturalists and media conspirators' intent on growing food sustainably. The mission of YA is to inspire and connect the next generation of farmers and food lovers across Canada. The Young Agrarians are building an online network to engage young farmers, would be farmers and the public in the reshaping of our food system. Online resources include a young farmer's blog and farmer resource map centralizing information about sustainable agriculture resources to support the next generation of food producers! <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farms that are keen to gain access to labour pools are recommended to visit the young agrarian's website as the organization is dedicated to providing access to farming opportunities to folks who are keen to farm. One of the organizations' focuses is providing 'land linking services' where the organization helps to connect farmers to farmland and vice versa. The website provides more detail on the 'land linking services' provided by the Young Agrarians.

<p>World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms</p>	<p>http://www.wwoof.net/</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, Canada (WWOOF™ Canada) is part of a worldwide movement linking volunteers with organic farmers and growers to promote cultural and educational experiences based on trust and non-monetary exchange thereby helping to build a sustainable global community. <p>Relation to agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organization helps connects volunteers with host farms where volunteers gain access to free room and board for the exchange of education and participating in organic farming. In the case of agri-tourism, hiring a volunteer many help farms increase their access to human resources providing an opportunity for both the agri-tourism services and farm product activities to be focused on. For farms interested in becoming a host farm need to ensure they are set up to do so by having the proper insurance in place, liability coverage and the work environment is certified by WorkSafe BC.
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