THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCATION TO YOUR MARKET PLAN

Agritourism can assist farmers and ranchers in achieving financial viability by reducing risk, increasing income, or offsetting competitive pressures, however, the types of farms and ranches that offer agritourism activities vary significantly across the U.S. As a rule, agritourism operations with unique agricultural products that allow for interactive experiences tend to be in highest demand, have the fewest competing alternatives within the recreation market, and thus, may earn higher agritourism revenues.

Assessing your business-specific market opportunities require you to consider a diverse range of factors that may influence the demand for your farm’s offerings. *Factors that you should consider and evaluate include:*

YOUR FARM AND RANCH OFFERINGS

**REVIEW** any market research, travel publications or emerging trends that may influence interest in your agritourism site. See resources at the end of this document for a great place to start.

- In general consumers are drawn more toward agritourism activities that involve fruit and nuts, grapes, or specialty livestock, whereas agritourism operations with sheep and goats, Christmas trees, or bees, on average, provided less of a draw for agritourists compared to other agricultural production types.

**ASSESS** the full array of features your farm and ranch can offer, including types of crops, livestock, learning opportunities and access to natural resources and heritage sites.

- **USE** the strengths and opportunities that you have. It may seem more difficult to integrate agritourism into traditional agricultural farms, but be creative, just like early agritourism innovators who developed the first corn mazes or petting zoos.
- Even if you are a small farm that may earn less than established agritourism sites, you can be nimble and leverage other diversification strategies, such as selling value added products, demonstrating organic practices, or integrating a small number of livestock to **CREATE** a youth farm experience.

**UNDERSTAND** and **PROMOTE** the activities, amenities and authenticity of the experience desired by tourists so you can maximize the number and share of visitors you capture that already visit or are considering a visit to your area.

- Regardless of scale, agritourism businesses benefit from having more agritourism enterprises nearby. So, collaboration is key, and there should be little worry about competition from neighboring sites, they actually may draw or refer more traffic to your farm or ranch.
• Make sure your community understands that developing an agritourism cluster creates a larger draw for tourists looking for destinations with multiple recreation opportunities and leads to greater visitation. This may help you to gain broader support from your surrounding government and industry partners.

LEVERAGING YOUR LOCATION

PROMOTE to the visitors already frequenting your area.

• Research shows that if you are near other recreational attractions and transportation corridors, you are the most likely to benefit from the flow of nearby travelers.

• Agritourism operations near National Parks Service lands tend to earn higher agritourism revenue due to the ability to attract multi-destination visitors (visitors whose primary destination is not agritourism).

UNDERSTAND how local visitors, businesses and networks are part of your marketing plan.

• Most agritourism farms and ranches are located in more rural areas. If you are in a rural area, create a competitive edge by taking advantage of their surrounding natural amenities (i.e. lakes, mountains, forests, etc.) and community assets (i.e. historical main street, tourism industry, etc.).

• For example, farms and ranches in natural amenity rich areas may be relatively more successful at offering agritourism activities that complement the landscape and scenic beauty of the area, such as hunting, horseback riding, and other outdoor recreation activities.

• Agritourism activities located near population centers with higher incomes per capita are more likely to earn more agritourism revenue from their activities.

• If you lack these natural assets, could you tap into cultural or historical aspects of the surrounding community and offer educational activities?

PROJECT the potential visitor numbers including what mix of international, out of state and local visitors you might expect.

• Recognizing the types of potential travelers that may be attracted to a specific agritourism experience and leveraging the existing natural and community assets and incorporating them into agritourism activities, may assist the agritourism business in terms of increasing visitor ship and agritourism revenue.

RESOURCES FOR EVALUATING DEMAND AND MARKET PLANNING FOR AGRITOURISM

Creating an Agritourism Site or Experience Suited to your Location

1. Conducting Farm and Ranch Tours - UC Small Farms Program:
   a. Conducting Farm and Ranch Tours
   b. On-Farm Customer Relations
Understanding How your Market is Defined by your Region and Location

Regional Differences:
1. How to Cater your Agritourism Enterprise to Travelers: Exploring Differences in Traveler Demand in the Western U.S.
2. Mapping the Western U.S. Agritourism Industry: How do Travel Patterns Vary by Location?
3. Agritourism in Colorado: A Closer Look at Regional Trends

Worksheets
1. Worksheet 1 – Potential Agritourism Enterprises
2. Worksheet 2 – Family Business Partner Assessment
3. Worksheet 3 – Community Resource Worksheet
4. Worksheet 4 – Farm Ranch Work Calendar
5. Worksheet 5 – Example Task Analysis
6. Worksheet 6 – Risk Identification Exercise
7. Worksheet 7 – Risk Assessment and Management
8. Worksheet 8 – Sample Inspection and Repair Checklists
9. Worksheet 9 – The Servicescape
10. Worksheet 10 – Strategic Marketing Plan