UNDERSTANDING AGRITOURISM VISITORS TO STRENGTHEN MARKET DEMAND

Agritourism can assist farmers and ranchers in achieving financial viability by reducing risk, increasing income, or offsetting competitive pressures. However, agritourists (visitors to agritourism) are a diverse set of individuals with different motivations for participating in agritourism. Successful agritourism enterprises understand their customers and tailor experiences and promotion to their unique customers which, in turn, will strengthen the demand for your agritourism activities.

Your new or established agritourism operation will benefit from an understanding of where its customer base looks for information as well as its motivation for travel. Factors you should consider when looking at your customer base are as follows:

AGRITOURISTS ARE A DIVERSE SET OF PEOPLE

UNDERSTAND your communities and demographics.

- Align your offerings to the appropriate customer base.
  - Older agritourists report more interest in on-farm sales than their younger counterparts.
  - Younger agritourists report greater participation in entertainment and outdoor recreation activities.

RECRUIT agritourists based on their motivations for participating in agritourism.

- Some of your visitors planned their trip with agritourism in mind; we call these visitors Primary Visitors.
  - In general, primary visitors are willing to pay more for their activities than other travelers.
  - These primary visitors commonly seek out entertainment, outdoor recreation and educational opportunities.
- Multi-destination travelers may not have agritourism as their focus, but are a large potential market to target.
  - These travelers place the highest values on outdoor recreation and direct to consumer sales activities.
  - Given their travels are not focused on agritourism, being in a strategic location (along a scenic byway) or partnering with a larger tourism asset (National Park) may be effective.
LEVERAGING YOUR OUTREACH MATERIALS

PROMOTE your activities where agritourists are looking.
- Agritourists state that word of mouth recommendations from friends and family are the most effective form of promotion.
  » Consider making it easy for happy visitors to share their pictures, visit or experiences with others.
- Agritourists tend to put less emphasis on featured news stories and more emphasis on Trip Advisor and Yelp reviews.
  » Provide incentives encouraging your visitors to share their experience on social media.

UNDERSTAND different agritourists look to different places for travel planning.
- Higher income households are more likely to use Trip Advisor or Yelp reviews.
- Younger visitors are more likely to look to websites and social media, while older visitors are more likely to use word of mouth.

RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING TRAVELER DEMAND AND MARKETING:

Who Are Agritourists?
1. The Future of Colorado Agritourism: A Look at Current and Future Participation Decisions
2. Colorado Agritourists: Who are the Adventurers, the Seekers, and the Explorers?
3. Quick Facts
4. Why People Vacation

Using Different Forms of Outreach
1. Developing your Farm Experience-Farm Stays US Business Guide (only accessible to Farm Stay USA members)
   a. Feasibility Worksheet- Market and Internet Savvy Worksheet

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