

Qualifying and Quantifying Your Personal Agritourism Potential

Part of a How-To Guide for Successful Agritourism Enterprises

Prepared for The University of Georgia's Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development and North Carolina State Cooperative Extension Service's Business Side of Agritourism Program Series. The Primary Investigators on this project were Kent Wolfe, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development and Gary Bullen, North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service.



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Introduction

There are a number of questions that must be asked and honestly answered when considering whether to start and operate an Agritourism operation. For example, you should evaluate factors such as personal characteristics and skills, target markets, market potential, land and property resources and characteristics, individual and family goals, time and labor considerations, and financial needs and resources. An honest evaluation of these factors will help you understand your potential for success.

One of the keys to a successful agritourism enterprise is your ability to manage the multiple components of your business. These include financial management, accounting, personnel management, operations, marketing, safety, customer service and legal considerations. Several personality traits are common among successful entrepreneurs. Successful entrepreneurs tend to be risk takers, lifetime learners, independent, responsible, patient, efficient, resourceful, determined, goal-oriented, self-confident, creative, perseverant, objective, proactive, strong leaders and effective communicators. Before making the decision to go into the Agritourism business, you must:

- Evaluate your personality traits compare to traits of typical entrepreneurs.
- Identify and analyze your goals.
- Evaluate the characteristics of your land and property.
- Evaluate time considerations and labor needs.
- Assess preliminary market information.
- Evaluate time considerations and labor needs.
- Develop ideas for Agritourism activities.
- Identify financial needs and resources.

Are you ready to go into the Agritourism business?

You must critically evaluate your personality traits. Several personality traits are common among successful entrepreneurs. Successful entrepreneurs tend to be risk takers, lifetime learners, independent, responsible, patient, efficient, resourceful, determined, self-confident, creative, perseverant, objective, proactive, strong leaders and effective goal-oriented communicators.

The following series of questions will help evaluate personal traits:

1. Am I a self-starter?
2. Do I relate well with others?
3. Will I enjoy being around and responsible for a large number of people, including children?
4. Will I look forward to meeting people and opening my farm up to the public?
5. Am I an effective leader?
6. Am I a responsible person?
7. Do I have effective organizational skills and abilities?
8. Do I have a strong work ethic?
9. Am I comfortable making important decisions?
10. Am I honest even when the truth is not what people want to hear?
11. When I make up my mind to do something, do I follow through?
12. Am I healthy and do I have sufficient energy to manage an Agritourism venue?
13. Am I patient?
14. Do I have the support of my family in starting an Agritourism venue?
15. Am I courteous and understanding?
16. Do I have a strong desire to succeed?
17. Am I experienced in managing and operating a business?
18. Am I an effective communicator?
19. Do I enjoy learning new things?
20. Do I have a competitive nature?
21. Am I effective in setting and meeting deadlines to accomplish tasks?
22. Do I adapt well to change?
23. Am I willing to risk losing an investment?
24. Will I be able to survive financially if a new enterprise doesn't generate a profit?
25. Am I prepared to invest a substantial amount of time in planning and operating a new enterprise?

After answering these questions, how do you feel about your overall potential to operate and manage an Agritourism venue?

When reviewing an evaluation of personal traits, some may decide that Agritourism isn't a good personal choice. However, if you believe Agritourism is still a possibility, the next step entails developing thorough business and marketing plans to evaluate your potential for success in greater detail.

“If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?”

This is the essence of goal setting, and it has a direct relationship to evaluating a new Agritourism venture. Starting and operating a successful enterprise is often only a means to a much larger end. Identifying your ultimate ambition is critical to properly assessing the true merit of the Agritourism enterprise idea.

A key to a successful Agritourism operation is the ability to manage the various components of the business. To be successful, business components such as financial management, accounting, personnel management, operations, marketing, safety, customer service and legal considerations must be well managed. Identifying your goals focuses your attention and provides a basis for making decisions. Setting and achieving goals keeps an enterprise going in the right direction. Without goals, an idea's ultimate feasibility cannot be evaluated.

Goals, personal and business, change over time. Goals should be developed early in the life of a business and then evaluated and adjusted to address changing times and changing desires.

Your Agritourism enterprise goals should meet the S.M.A.R.T. criteria. Each goal should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Rewarding, and Timed in order to be effective. Make sure that each of your goals is S.M.A.R.T.

Summary

This resource document is designed to give insight on personal traits that must be considered in order to determine whether agritourism might be right for you and your family. Here are some key points to remember.

-Everyone in your family should be involved in evaluating their personal traits.

-Factors that should be considered in a preliminary evaluation include

- Personal skills and traits

- Goals
- Land and property characteristics
- Time considerations and labor resources
- Potential target market and competition information
- Financial needs and resources

If you are still interested in pursuing an agritourism enterprise, you should complete thorough business and marketing plans including a complete consideration of risk and government regulations. You should also visit several agritourism operations as a customer and observe the enterprise in action. Talk with the owners and employees to get a feel for how the business works and how you would feel about being responsible for a similar operation.

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Additional Resources:

Agritourism in Focus

A Guide for Tennessee Farmers

The New Farmers' Market

Corum, Rosenzweig & Gibson
New World Publishing

Worksheets and Analysis Aids

Various worksheets and analysis tools to assist the decision making process when investigating the variables involved when considering a new Agritourism enterprise can be found in *Agritourism in Focus, A Guide for Tennessee Farmers*, UT Extension PB 1764.

