

Agrotourism Training

Module 4: Develop an Agrotourism Product



Worksheets | Handouts

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Unit 1: Worksheet 1: Quiz: Is Agrotourism for me?

Questions	Yes	Note
1. Are you comfortable talking with people you don't know?		
2. Can you share your experience of what it's like to be a farmer?		
3. Can you see yourself as a host, an educator, a tour guide, taking bookings, cooking, or cleaning? If not, do you know someone who can do some or all of these things for you?		
4. Do you have any idea about serving visitors or tourists? If not, have you travelled to other places to understand what is and is not acceptable for travellers?		
5. Have you included your spouse/partner and family members still living on the farm in this discussion about going into agrotourism?		
6. Is there a clear understanding of the commitment this will take in terms of time, energy and your relationships?		
7. Do you and your family have any special or interesting knowledge, skills or history around which to build an agrotourism experience?		
8. Are there other local people who could add to the experience?		
9. Do you know whether you are allowed to build any tourism infrastructure on your (agricultural) property? Have you spoken with your municipality regarding zoning and building?		
10. What features does the land have (forests, river, stream, etc.)? What features can be used and how?		
11. Are there any historical or other attractions on or nearby to the property? Caves, ruins, etc.		
12. Can you identify and offer any activities that may appeal to the public?		
13. Are there any bodies of water on the property that could be sites for activities such as fishing, swimming, picnics, water sports or bird watching?		
14. Have you thought about your legal structure and what you might need to know about insurance necessary to cover your family, your business, and your visitors?		
15. Do you have adequate financial resources to start the business?		
16. Do you have the money to invest in agrotourism facilities? If not, can you raise the cash?		
17. Do you have access to sources of capital?		
18. Have you researched the local competition: what they charge, what they offer, how often they are booked?		
19. Do you have an idea of how many visitors you will need to break even on your investment and ultimately to make a profit?		
20. Even if you don't have a website or social media of your own, do you understand how the Internet works and how to use it as a tool for marketing?		
Total:	/20	

If you can answer mostly 'yes' to these questions, then you may think about starting the careful planning process to develop an agrotourism product. You will diversify your farm activities and open a new income stream. Be fully aware that there will be costs and an ongoing investment in time for running the agrotourism business.

Unit 1: Worksheet 2: Assessing Farm Resources

Refer to Handout 2 for ideas, then complete the following table:

General questions
1. What does your farm have that other farms don't? What is special about it?
2. What capacity do you and your family/staff have to run agrotourism activities?
Physical resources
3. What features does your land have that could be used for agrotourism?
4. What buildings could be used for agrotourism and how?
Farm activities
5. What farming activities do you do on the farm that may be interesting to the public and can be used to create an agrotourism product?
6. For horticultural farms, do you have crops all year round? If crops are seasonal, will you have enough other interesting activities to offer off season?

People and staff

7. What special skills and knowledge do you (the family and farm workers) have that could be used to contribute to an agrotourism product?

8. Who could get involved in delivering agrotourism on the farm? The family, existing staff, new staff?

Stories and interpretation

9. What interesting information or stories could we tell about the farm, its history, what we do or how we do it?

Finances and money

10. Why do you want to do agrotourism: as an additional income? Eventually as the main income of the farm? To generate funds where you are old? To provide jobs and income for family members?

11. Do you have savings, or can you borrow money to invest in starting up agrotourism products (e.g. for buying equipment, converting buildings, making the buildings safe, creating hiking trails, etc)

Community resources

12. What other resources are found in your area that could support your business and attract visitors to your area?

Unit 1: Worksheet 3: Agrotourism Product Options

In the table below, write up what is special about your farm, and what ideas you have for agrotourism products or activities:

1. Your Farm: USP

List the special features or activities on your farm that could be a basis for agrotourism.

2. Your product idea

What kinds of agrotourism activities could you develop with the items you have listed in the table above? List them, then number them in order of importance and potential.

What agrotourism product ideas could I offer:

Unit 1: Worksheet 4: The Elements of my Agrotourism Product

Take number 1 on your list from the previous activity. What elements will be part of my agrotourism product? What resources will I need to deliver or offer each element?

Product name:	
Element	Resource

Unit 2: Worksheet 5: Activity Planning

Plan your agrotourism activity. What steps and components will you need?

Step	Components
e.g. Arrival	Parking, a sign to the house, a clear path to the house.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Unit 2: Worksheet 6: Information Planning

What information can I present for my agrotourism product?

Safety:
History/background stories:
Farming processes:
Product information:
Demonstration:
Information boards or signs:

Unit 2: Worksheet 7: Staff & Facilities

What staff and visitor facilities will you need to run this agrotourism activity?

Staff: e.g. people to guide, drive, cook

Facilities:

Unit 1: Handout 1: Farm Resources for Agrotourism

Assess resources on the farm

An assessment will help to answer question such as: What does your farm have that other farms don't? How available are your resources? Do you have crops all year round? If crops are seasonal, will you have enough of other activities to run off season? Do you have the time or capacity to run tours or leisure activities? What resources do you need? What other farming activities can be used to create an agrotourism product?

Your farm, and everything on it is potentially an agrotourism asset. Thinking about the different elements on your farm can guide you to realise what could be used to base an agrotourism business on. Assets can include any of the following:

- **Physical resources:**
 - Land use, soil type
 - Land features, water bodies
 - Buildings or structures
- **Farm activities:** What current farm activities may appeal to the public? Things that farmers may think are routine or boring might be unusual or interesting to people who are not farmers. Examples:
 - Planting trees.
 - Picking, checking quality, packing fresh produce.
 - Viewing baby animals.
 - Pastured poultry operations.
 - Sheep shearing.
 - Fruit tree pruning.
 - Bee-keeping.
 - On-site food processing.
 - Roadside produce stands.
 - Harvesting; U-Pick.
- **Special skills and knowledge:** Knowledge and skills are intangible assets that can help create a farm tourism operation. Some examples:
 - Livestock management: all about how to raise your sheep or chickens, etc.
 - Growing food crops: vegetables, fruit, wheat.
 - Local history, natural history.
 - Cooking, food preservation.
 - Horseback riding.
 - Music, arts and crafts.
 - Brewing or winemaking.

- Photography.
- Outdoors: birding, hiking, mountain climbing.
- **People and staff:** See what skills, knowledge and support services are available to support an agrotourism business:
 - Staff: family and/or hired staff.
 - Management team: who will be responsible for and run the activity?
 - Neighbours.
 - Government staff and officials.
 - Business and tourism associations.
 - Other local businesses.
- **Stories/interpretation:**
 - Agriculture has unique features and elements that may be turned into special stories to share with visitors. Example: a traditional way of planting / harvesting / processing an agriproduct like cheese or wine, etc.
- **Financial resources:**
 - What are your financial resources? Do you have savings you can invest?
 - Do you have access to capital? Can you borrow money?
 - What are your start-up costs?
 - What can you realistically afford to spend?
 - How much money are you willing and able to risk?
 - Do you have the skills to manage the financial side of the business?
- **Community resources:** what other resources are found in the local area:
 - Natural beauty and attractions e.g. caves, mountains, streams.
 - Cultural and recreational offerings.
 - Food, lodging, shopping and entertainment.
 - Public infrastructure.
 - Accessibility – e.g. roads, transport (busses, trains, taxis).
 - Attitudes toward tourists.
 - Existing and complementary tourism activity.

Once you have a clear idea of the assets and resources that can be used as the basis of an agrotourism offering, next you have to identify and evaluate the tourism potential of these assets and resources.

Unit 1: Handout 2: Elements of Agrotourism Products

1. Farm work experiences

A farm work experience would include some or all the following processes or elements:

1. **Orientation:** A tour of the farm and work areas by staff who can explain what happens where using a prescribed script.
2. **Training and coaching:** Trained staff show the visitors what needs to be done and how; allowing them to practice using resources provided for the activity and helping them.
3. **Tools and equipment:** Staff showing visitors tools or equipment that they will work with, and how to handle, clean, store and maintain these. This may also include specific things like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks, overalls.
4. **Team:** Introducing the visitors to the staff they will be working with.
5. **Schedule:** What needs to be done, and when it must be done in the daily farm schedule or calendar.
6. **Oversight:** Supervising the visitors and working alongside them to ensure that they are doing the work according to the procedures and standards the farmer expects.

2. Education and Learning experiences

A farm education and learning experience would include some or all of the following processes or elements:

1. **Welcoming:** A trained guide welcomes visitors and explains the programme and duration of the tour or activity. This may include indicating where restrooms, refreshments or shopping opportunities are available.
2. **Guiding:** Staff provide the content and explanation of the farming practices. This would have to be researched, scripted and practiced by the guides. This may include opportunities for visitors to get involved and use their senses:
 - **Try a skill:** milking a cow or goat, churn butter, dye some fabric, make bread.
 - **Taste:** a product in various stages of production – e.g. raw, unprocessed, then the final product.
 - **Smell:** what a product smells like at different stages of ripeness or preparation: fresh fruit – nana quasi mixture – dried nana quasi.
 - **Feel:** different textures such as uncombed and combed wool, raw honey, untanned leather, etc.

3. **Interpretation and visitor information:** Information boards may be made to provide key points for guides to explain or for visitors to read. These must support the rest of the information provided in the script.
4. **Closure:** A conclusion and some form of call to action – e.g. eat in our little restaurant, browse the gift shop or buy produce from the farm stall. This can be verbal and written, with signs posted in relevant areas.

3. Leisure and Recreation experiences

1. **Welcoming:** Staff meet and welcome visitors to the activity or experience.
2. **Orientation** Staff explain the activity: how it is done, demonstrations by trained staff, risks, safety measures, general fitness assessment of participants.
3. **Safety:** Many activities are adventure-based and may pose degrees of risk to the participants. The owner must always ensure safety by providing well-maintained adventure equipment, trained guides, emergency plans, and careful monitoring of visitors and adventure activity participants. Risks and threats must be clearly explained to the visitors, and they should sign indemnities. Farmers offering agrotourism activities should have insurance coverage in case of any accidents or injuries occurring.

A farmer wishing to offer a U-Pick experience to visitors should plan to have the following in place:

1. **Signage and parking:** So, visitors can easily find the farm and park their cars.
2. **Welcoming:** Staff to meet and welcome visitors to the U-Pick experience; explain how it works and the pricing structure.
3. **Collection containers:** Provide punnets or baskets for the pickers to use to collect what they pick. Environmentally friendly containers such as baskets are recommended.
4. **Weighing station:** A scale to weigh what they have picked, a calculator to calculate the price of that weight, cash point and change for handling payments.
5. **Restroom:** Clean, simple toilet facilities for visitors who need them.

4. Gastronomy and Food experiences

A food or gastronomy experience would include some or all of the following processes or elements:

1. **Welcoming:** Staff meet and welcome visitors to the food product experience.
2. **Interpretation:** Staff and information boards explain the product, how it is made, what makes it special, what it can be eaten or served with.

3. **Demonstration / Participation:** Visitors may watch and participate in the preparation of different products using resources specially set aside for this purpose. This can be very fun and some farms may offer a certificate or other reward to participants.
4. **Tasting:** Allowing visitors to taste the range of products on offer. This could be in simple tastings, or could be pairings of different foods and drinks – e.g. wine and cheese.
5. **Dining:** This could include a meal in an informal dining setting such as a garden, on a veranda, or in an old building.
6. **Purchasing:** This requires a retail outlet of some sort – with sales facilities (usually cash but credit card facilities may be useful for more expensive products).
7. **Packaging:** Products should be packaged in environmentally friendly packaging like biodegradable or reusable materials such as paper or glass. Plastics should be limited as much as possible. Rustic packaging such as paper, glass, string, etc. also lend themselves well to farm products, and enhance the product presentation.