

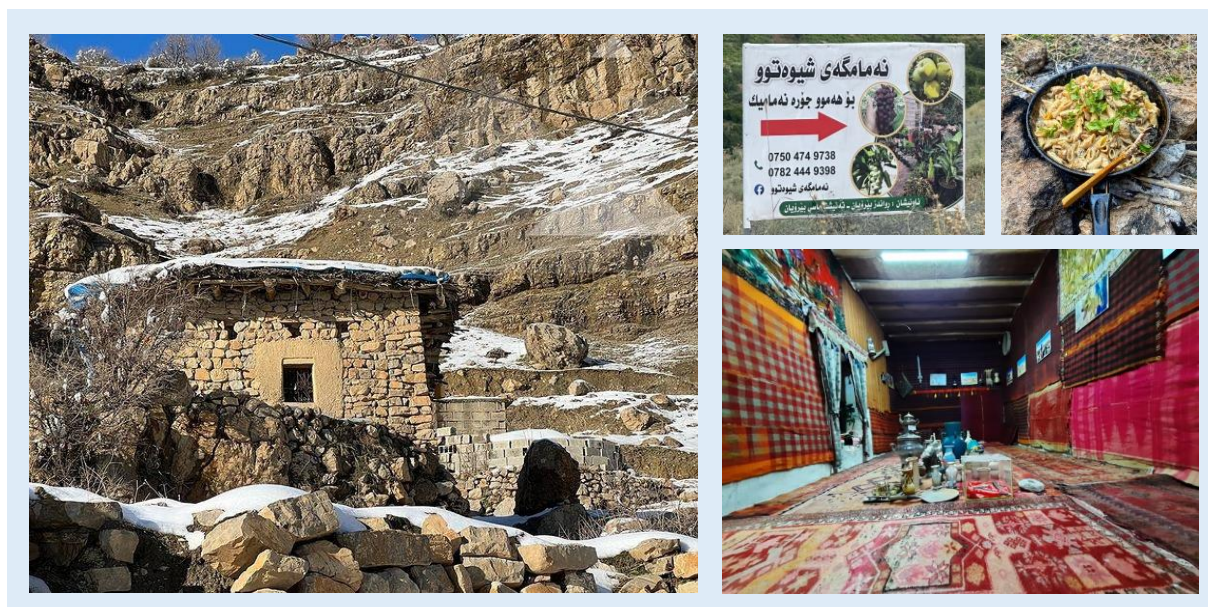


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Agrotourism Training

Module 3: Agrotourism Services



Trainer Manual

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Agrotourism Services Introduction

A farmer who decides to participate in or offer agrotourism to visitors may provide various services to visitors. These services come in different forms and serve different needs. They include:

- **Accommodation** e.g. farm stays, camping, self-catering houses or apartments
- **Catering:** breakfast, picnics, lunches, events such as weddings or parties
- **Communication:** guided experiences such as tours or trails; information boards, brochures, visitor maps
- **Managing safety risks:** identifying hazards and threats and ensuring that guests are kept as safe as possible while on a farm
- **Festivals:** harvesting, music, culinary/food

This module will look at each of these services in more detail and provide guidance for farmers to ensure that they can provide appropriate services to their visitors and guests.

Unit 1: Accommodation

Farm owners must decide if they are willing or able to offer accommodation to visitors in the form of a farmstay. A farmstay is any type of accommodation on a working farm. Some farmstays may be interactive and include farming activities and experiences. Some are family-focused and offer children opportunities to feed animals, collect eggs and learn how a farm functions. Others do not allow children and instead offer a peaceful retreat for adults.

For the accommodation, guests normally pay rates similar to bed & breakfasts or holiday rentals, although prices vary a lot depending on the property and the quality of the accommodation. The term 'farmstay' can also describe a work exchange agreement, where the guest works a certain number of hours per week in exchange for accommodation.

Why do visitors choose farmstays?

Visitors consider farm accommodation a huge part of their experience because they can:

- spend time with a local family
- enjoy an authentic, local experience
- understand daily farm tasks
- enjoy local traditional food
- create income for local people.

Farmstays are often much better priced than hotels, which makes them very attractive to visitors.

Accommodation can be made more luxurious depending on the type of experience that visitors are looking for. Some properties offer very attractive rooms with baths instead of

showers, air-conditioning, etc. In some destinations it is rustic and basic for visitors to have an authentic and more rural experience.

Whatever type or quality of accommodation is offered, it should meet some basic standards such as:

- **Cleanliness:** sleeping quarters and guest bathroom facilities must be very clean – and must be cleaned between guests. If linen is provided, all new guests must get fresh linen.
- **Comfort:** provide sleeping quarters and bedding that are as comfortable as possible. This includes warmth in winter, and cooling in summer if needed.
- **Privacy:** depending on the style of accommodation, provide for privacy of guests, especially if the accommodation is shared such as in a dormitory. Simple curtains, partitions or lockable bathrooms and toilets will suffice.

Farms may offer different types of accommodation such as rooms in the farmhouse, in chalets, cottages, or renovated farm buildings. The general rule seems to be *‘keep it as authentic as possible without causing discomfort to those who may not be used to the rural lifestyle of a farmer’*. Possible farmstay accommodation types include:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ● Farmhouse guest rooms | ● Converted farm buildings |
| ● Cabins | ● Permanent tents |
| ● Cottages | ● Tent camping |

1. **Cabins** are small houses, usually made of wood. Usually found in forested or rustic locations.
2. **Cottages** are small houses, built of brick or stone. They could be converted from building such as sheds or stables or farm staff accommodation.
3. **Farm buildings** such as barns, sheds, stables, storerooms can be converted for guest accommodation.
4. **Keper sites:** open air, roofed spaces that can be rented by 24-hours.
 - a. Visitors bring own bedding, cookware and food.
 - b. Cheaper to set up than fixed buildings
 - c. Farmer may provide access to an outdoor kitchen
 - d. **They:**
 - i. Should have overhead coverings for sun and rain protection
 - ii. Should have walls (e.g. glass, woven grass material, curtains) for separation from neighbouring units
 - iii. Toilets and running water must be available near the keper sites.
 - iv. Can have facilities e.g. playground for children, BBQ sites
 - e. **Disadvantage** very low rental price can be asked
5. **Platform tents** are permanently erected as visitor accommodation. They:
 - a. may be on fixed bases e.g. wooden decks, with overhead cover e.g. roof or thatch

- b. may have electricity, water and even bathrooms attached.
- c. are usually cheaper to construct than fixed buildings
- d. will wear out eventually and need replacing
- e. are not suitable for extreme temperatures of cold and heat

6. Tents:

- a. Visitors usually bring their own tents to camp at a scenic spot on a farm.
- b. They pay the farmer to be able to camp on the farm
- c. There must be ablution facilities: toilet, water, shower
- d. It is quite cheap for visitors – therefore popular
- e. May be a part of other activities such as hiking
- f. Farmers may:
 - i. provide campsites (with ablutions) for visitors to pitch their own tents at the site
 - ii. provide accommodation in tents that are owned by the farmer and permanently pitched at the campsite as visitor accommodation.

Self-catering

When visitors bring and prepare their own food it is called 'self-catering'. This allows visitors to have more control over what and when they eat. It is usually cheaper than buying meals at the farm restaurant/stall, or having meals provided as part of the accommodation package.

In a self-catering unit the farmer must provide a kitchen with cooking facilities (stove), a refrigerator, and basic cooking and eating equipment in the accommodation facility e.g. a chalet or cabin. There is no need for a restaurant and kitchen if the farm accommodation is self-catering.

Guidelines for farmstay accommodation providers

Whoever provides the accommodation needs to be trained and equipped to provide clean, comfortable accommodation to visitors. Guidelines include:

- Provide clean sleeping quarters for guests.
- Prepare clean and welcoming public areas for guests.
- Clean guest bathroom facilities daily; empty waste bins
- Follow good practices for laundry of guest bedding; provide clean linen and towels for all incoming/new guests.
- Anyone who does cleaning should be trained on housekeeping procedures, equipment and standards, including:
 - simple housekeeping procedures for guest rooms, public areas and bathroom cleaning;
 - recognising and cleaning dirt;



- basic amenities to provide in a guest room: e.g. linen, towel, soap, rubbish bin, toilet paper;
- detergents, cleaning agents, equipment, and cleaning methods
- insect control (cockroaches, flies, mosquitos, wasps, ants).

Premises

Tips for the chalets/dormitories/cabins and surrounding areas:

- The building and surrounds are clean and tidy.
- Buildings must be solid and strong, not damaged or dangerous (no broken stairs or rotten floorboards).
- The roof must not leak.
- The building is airy and comfortable with no stale smells or mould.
- There is no risk that animals may carry diseases into the building.
- The area around the building is kept clean, pleasant, free of litter, free of weeds and thorns, and should be planted with trees and flowers.
- Outdoor areas must not create conditions to harbour pests (rodents) or snakes (e.g. wood piles). Check also for wasp nests.
- If tents are provided, they need to be waterproof, free of any tears or holes, sealable and have mosquito netting if needed.
- Campsites must be in areas where the ground is level and not sloped.
- Campsites need to have clean and functioning bathrooms (showers) and toilets nearby.
- Campsites need to be in an area away from any animals.
- If there are fire pits or areas where bonfires and events may be held these areas need to be kept free of ash and any fuel needs to be kept away from visitors.
- General building security: locking of doors and houses.
- Safety of gas, fires and electrical items.
- The host must restrain pets before the arrival of visitors.

Tips for living areas:

- There should be an area / corner to relax – this should include comfortable, warm seating.
- The number of visitors is set (e.g. maximum 6 guests per unit), with consideration to the size of the house, the number of toilets and the ability of the hosts to provide good service.

Tips for sleeping areas:

- Sheets, pillowcases and towels should be washed between guests.
- Bedrooms and sleeping areas should be airy, with no stale smells.
- Provide a waste basket and clothes hangers, hooks or rail.
- Drinking water should be available.
- Offer twin / separate beds if travellers travel together, but do not wish to share a bed.

Tips for the bathroom and toilet:

- The toilet is clean, hygienic, and regularly cleaned, with no bad smells.
- The toilet should be private, preferably with a lockable door; provide toilet paper.
- The toilet should have a seat in good condition.
- There must be a basin to wash hands, with soap and towels for drying hands.
- The shower floor is not slippery, water can run off easily, and there is sufficient light.
- Shower heads must be tested to make sure they are free flowing, and the drain must clear easily and not block up.
- Provide a waste basket for rubbish and rails or hooks for towels.
- Provide a plug for the basin and bath.
- Provide a mirror near the basin.
- Outdoor bathrooms in campsites or along hiking routes should be well maintained, clean and stocked with the necessary amenities such as soap and toilet paper. Check them regularly for pests, rodents, spiders, wasp nests and snakes.

Unit 2: Catering

Farms that engage in agrotourism activities may offer catering on site for various guests for different reasons. Some farms may only have a shop or stall where they sell their finished products for visitors take home. Other farms may be able to host large events such as weddings and may also offer accommodation for these kinds of events.

Various types of catering that may be offered to visitors include:

- **Breakfast** for overnight guests
- **Dinner** for overnight guests
- **Lunches** for day visitors or those doing farm work experiences, or providing a farm lunch for tour groups
- **Picnics** or packed meals: for hikes, trails, horse rides, etc.
- **Events:** weddings or special events offered on the farm

On some properties, visitors are involved from harvesting to eating: picking, cooking, dining. Other properties provide for visitors to eat meals in their restaurants, buy goods from the farm store, or provide meals as part of an accommodation package.

Catering requires a lot of organisation. The facility needs to be planned and prepared, stocked with the equipment needed, designed to suit the needs of visitors and the atmosphere of the property. Staff working to make food need to be trained, especially on food hygiene. Suppliers for certain ingredients or products must be found, and the property would need to pass certain health and safety checks if these are legally required.

Resources

Offering catering requires the following resources:

- **Kitchen:** this is a food preparation area with the appropriate equipment for safe food preparation, including:
 - A stove and oven; gas, electric or wood fired
 - Fridges
 - Cooking utensils, cutting boards, dish cloths
 - Pots and pans
- **Food preparation/cooks:** who are trained to prepare tasty, safe, hygienic meals and to use the equipment safely and correctly.
- **A dining space** for visitors to relax and enjoy meals and drinks can take many forms such as a restaurant, outdoor picnic area, or event area.

All properties with kitchens, providing food to the public, should be certified for health and safety practices, staff may need to learn or be trained on food hygiene, food allergies, fire safety, and First Aid etc..

Menus

Using the ‘farm to fork’ principle, it is recommended to use as much own-grown produce in the making of meals as possible. If the farmer cannot grow or produce all the meal ingredients, then the rest should be sourced locally if possible.

Menus should:

- use and promote local ingredients
- reflect local culture – traditional recipes and dishes should be offered
- be presented using authentic and traditional serveware where possible
- offer dishes within the skills of the local people

Providing Meals

Overnight guests usually need one or two meals as part of their experience. These meals are usually dinner and breakfast. In some cases, lunch may also be provided. To provide this the farm would need a building or space where visitors can sit down to eat. This space needs to be kept clean and tidy.

Some properties choose to offer one meal, usually breakfast, and require their visitors to self-cater for other meals.

Breakfast

A traditional breakfast may be served and could include a range of items such as the following:

- **Hot drinks:** tea and coffee with milk and sugar
- **Hot protein item:** e.g. omelette, eggs, sausage



- **Accompaniments:** grilled tomato with eggs, baked beans, fried potato , honey, cream; local and organic dairy products (yoghurt, cheese)
- **Bread:** different types of traditional flatbreads; bread for toasting, with jam or fruit preserves;
- **Fruit:** fresh fruit and/or juice

Breakfast presentation:

Present breakfast attractively in the dining area. You may place all the breakfast items on a table or counter for guests to help themselves to drinks, bread, jam, etc. You may serve hot dishes as they are made. Some guidelines include:

- Serve food in attractive containers or dishes
- Do not put boxes e.g. boxes of teabags on the table; put teabags into a small bowl or basket
- Provide serving utensils that are clean and in good condition
- Present everything attractively: drinks elements together; breads, jam and butter together, etc.
- Regularly check the table to ensure there are enough plates, cutlery, drinks, food, etc.

Dinner meals

Serving traditional local meals, using local ingredients, especially those grown on the farm, adds a lot of value to the farmstay experience. Guests may also like to participate in meal preparation to learn the recipes and about the ingredients. This is an additional interesting experience for them.

Provide at least a hearty main meal, with meat, starch, vegetables or salad and a dessert.

Guidelines for the kitchen and meal preparation

- Cooking equipment must be clean and washed after use.
- Kitchens must be clean, with enough light, and equipment is stored neatly.
- Food is clean and safe, cooked with a serving spoon, and cooks wash their hands before preparing and cooking food.
- Food is made from mostly local ingredients.
- Guests have the chance of cooking with homestay families if possible.
- The quantity and quality of food represents good value for money and is sufficient for the number of visitors.
- There are enough plates, cutlery, etc. for the number of visitors;
- Crockery is in good condition and not chipped or cracked.
- Drinking water is clean, safe, kept in clean and sealable containers.
- Food is served on time.
- For self-catering accommodation – provide a good range of kitchen equipment for guests to prepare and cook with.

Events

Some farms that have the facilities may offer events such as weddings, family parties, festivals (music festivals, harvest festivals) and so on. Not all farms can offer all events, it depends on the facilities and services the property has to offer. For instance, farms hosting events and providing catering may or may not have accommodation included. Farms that provide for event catering and accommodation may offer breakfast for the following morning in which case a kitchen, restaurant and staff would be a necessity.

Some properties without accommodation will likely not have catering beyond the event itself and while a kitchen and staff (often family and existing farm staff) will be required, they will usually only be used when there is an event, and will not be fully employed or used regularly. These staff members are involved in the usual farm work but may be trained to prepare the meals and called on when needed.

Some facilities such as barns can be used as venues, other such as cleared and unsown fields can be used for various outdoor activities

Examples of farm events:

- Agricultural festivals
- Outdoor activity festivals
- Markets

Ideas for activities during events like festivals include:

- Demonstrations on how to make food products
- Tastings
- Fishing competitions
- Outdoor activities: fun runs, mountain biking, canoeing
- Competitions e.g. who can eat the most (something e.g. apples)

If the owner is thinking about offering events, they need to consider the following:

1. How suitable is the property for events?
2. What kinds of events could be hosted?
3. When to host: which season is best?
4. The duration of events – half day, full day, overnight, weekend, etc.
5. Should other businesses be invited to participate? E.g. a local music or dancing group.
6. What facilities and expertise can be used to add value?
7. Costs and pricing for venue and services

Before planning events or deciding to host events, the farmer must consider that there are benefits and concerns to the service. These need to be carefully weighed and the owner must decide if the benefits are worth the risks. Some examples include:

Benefits
Additional income
A marketing opportunity for the farm and the venue – visitors get to experience the property.
A chance to educate guests and entertain them simultaneously, e.g. foraging in a forest on the property.
Spread the benefits into the local community by buying products locally.
Job creation for local people – even if it is temporary over a weekend.
Development of new skills for staff and family.
Creating recurring events gives locals and tourists anticipation and something to look forward to – over time this can create a tourism hotspot, like Mardi Gras for example.
Concerns
Possibly the need to create new infrastructures to accommodate the expected number of guests, e.g. toilets
Possible damage to land, e.g. littering or damage of crops by intoxicated or rowdy guests
Security for certain events and activities may be needed
Budget could be inadequate for the size of the event
Safety hazards might not be identified beforehand

Suitability of the property

Determining how suitable the property is includes:

1. Are there enough facilities? For example, parking, toilets, disabled access, etc.
2. What is the capacity of the property and buildings?
3. Are there businesses in the area to cover any services the farm cannot offer? e.g. live music; additional accommodation.
4. Is there enough suitably skilled staff available – not only on the farm, but close by?
5. Can accommodation be offered to large groups if the farm is far from a town? Or is there other suitable accommodation nearby e.g. hotel/guesthouse/farmstay?
6. Are there enough health and safety protocols and precautions on the property?

Types of events:

Events may be **public events** initiated by the farmer (such as a fruit festival or farmer's market) or **private events** booked by a client (such as a wedding or special party).

If the farmer is planning their own event, they can choose any date that suits them or the reason for the event – e.g. a harvest festival may take place in autumn.

If an event is for a client, they will book the venue for a date that suits the client, based on the availability of the venue. The farmer may advise the best timing depending on what is required for the event. For example, if the event is to be outdoors in the middle of October

the farmer may advise that the event could be rained out. In this case an alternative may be offered, for example a barn or similar building may be used, or the date may be changed.

The kinds of private events the property offers depend on the capacity of the venue or facility in terms of space and the ability to handle groups of different sizes.

Small properties may best aim for class field trips, or small weddings or family gatherings. For larger properties it may be possible to host large weddings, end of year functions, school parties or events like harvest festivals (e.g. Pomegranate festival) if the property has the space.

Duration

Some farms may need to have an event spanning a few days, possibly over a weekend, to suit as many potential visitors as possible. This is for public events and has a few benefits:

- It spreads out the traffic through the property (less cars in one day)
- It gives guests a chance for visitors to visit more than once
- It allows guests to plan the event into their existing plans

Involving other businesses

Other local businesses may be included in an event. For example, a local band playing traditional music, a caterer or nearby hotel/guesthouse/farmstay. Other farms could also offer produce at farm stalls. This could add more interest and diversity to events like festivals. These other businesses will also be able to attract more visitors by advertising the event to their own customers.

Costs and pricing

Costs may include paying for the services of other businesses, additional utility costs (e.g. fuel, electricity, wood) decorations, signage, marketing, etc. These need to be worked into the pricing, to be discussed in the last module.

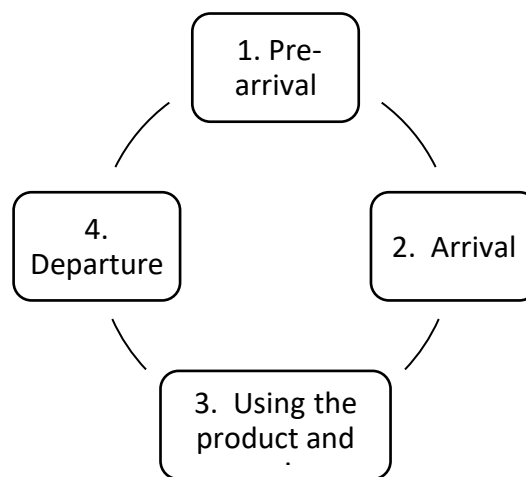
Reviewing the success of the event

After any event the success should be analysed to identify any issues that should be address for any future events of the same or similar nature. Speaking to visitors about how they experience the event, or reading comments on a Facebook or Instagram page can get good feedback on what worked, and what needed attention.

The number of guests, which days had the highest traffic, who the guests were, what they purchased/did, etc. are all important factors for farm owners to look into in preparation for future events.

Unit 3: Communication and Service

Communication in the agrotourism sector focuses mainly on guest communication. This includes communicating with visitors and guests at different touchpoints of the guest service cycle.



Each of these points gives us an opportunity to provide excellent service.

Stage	Service quality
1. Pre-arrival	<p>What quality of service is delivered in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media accounts: up to date images, correct contact details, a simple description of the venue or product, location on Google maps, interesting posts showing products and people, good quality pictures, link to website if there is one. • Website: easy to navigate, accurate information, up-to-date content, all links working correctly, correct contact details. Some agrotourism farms may have a joint website such as http://bookagri.com . Such a joint website would ideally be managed by an expert so the farmers themselves may not have the skills for website maintenance and updating. • Reservations / bookings: speed and professionalism of responding to enquiries and reservations via email, face to face, telephonic • Telephone communication: prompt and clear answering of phone, taking messages, forwarding calls, quick and accurate handling of enquiries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email communication: accurate, professional, correct, fast responses.
2. Arrival	<p>What quality of service is delivered in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage: clear signage of the property and good directions to get there; signage in good condition and easy to see and read. • Parking: safe, well-lit parking with clearly marked spaces. • Arrival: cleanliness and maintenance of the entrance and reception area, help with luggage for staying guests, warm welcome, ready for the guest if they have a reservation, room allocations done and keys and paperwork ready for the guest. • Warmth of welcome: friendliness of staff, help with luggage. • Reception: cleanliness, maintenance, hospitality. • Welcome and check-in: welcome on arrival, speed of assistance. • Information: providing information about product and services: Wi-Fi, etc.
3. Using services	<p>Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed: how quickly guest requests are dealt with • Quality: how well guests are served, other services like children's activity programme, diversity of activities, etc. • Warmth: friendliness and helpfulness of the staff <p>Product:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality: e.g. meal, room, tour • Variety: good range of products available e.g. accommodation options, food, activities • Presentation: cleanliness, maintenance of property, menu, food, staff dress. • Delivery: tour content is well researched and presented both in written and verbal form.
4. Departure	<p>Billing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed: is the bill prepared and waiting for departing guests? • Quality: print quality, neat handwriting • Accuracy: is the bill accurate and complete, and ready for the guest? <p>Departure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting: warm farewell greeting • Escort to door/car: help with luggage, umbrellas if raining

Tip: Think about the quality of all aspects of service in each of these four basic steps and view this through the eyes of the visitor. What are they seeing and experiencing? What can be improved?

Guest satisfaction

Tracking visitor satisfaction levels and complaints is a way to manage the quality of the service or products. Feedback can be used to identify any issues and strengths of the service or product. It is important for farmers to respond to feedback, either by communicating with the reviewer or by making necessary changes to their product or service.

Collecting and reading guest feedback should be the responsibility of one person who then addresses any serious issues themselves or reports the issues to the farmer. Farmers have to take responsibility for initiating or implementing visitor feedback and must action any issues raised from visitor feedback.

Feedback methods

You will want to know **from your visitors** whether they were satisfied with the quality of your product and services. A good way to do this is to ask them to fill in a simple guest feedback form after they have experienced your product or service. From this you can see how they rated you, and where you can possibly improve your service.

It never feels good to receive negative feedback, however, it can be very useful as it shows what needs to be improved, fixed or changed.

Methods to gather guest satisfaction information:

There are various methods of gathering visitor satisfaction feedback. These include the following:




- **Feedback forms:** on paper, online
- **Visitor's book:** to be filled in on departure
- **Online reviews** e.g. TripAdvisor, Facebook, online booking platforms e.g. Hotels.com, Bookings.com, etc.
- **Direct feedback:** face-to-face conversations

Feedback Methods	
Direct feedback: Asking "How was your stay?"	Most guests expect this question during check-out and will let you know of their good and bad experiences during their stay. Make notes of this feedback, in some form of register or feedback book that can later be reviewed and acted on.
Visitor's book	This Visitor's Comment book can be left at the property. Visitors can write either positive or negative comments into the book. This is a good option if you do not want to use feedback forms. Be sure to check the book often, you should remove negative comments from it before other guests see them (remove and learn from them, don't throw them away).
Feedback forms	Feedback forms can be left in the rooms, given at the tables after meals, or to visitors after a tourism experience. These forms let the visitor evaluate and rate their experience. Feedback forms should be collected and analysed by a designated person who can provide a summary of issues or feedback

Feedback Methods	
	and will relay any issues to the farmer.
TripAdvisor	Many people choose their accommodation or experience based on the TripAdvisor rating and reviews from previous guests. Create a TripAdvisor account and check the feedback regularly. You will also have to reply to guest complaints quickly and positively. Pass this on to the team so that they are recognised for good performance, and can work to correct anything that was complained about.

If you want to develop your own feedback form, the following may be a useful guideline to use as a starting point. You can simplify it as much as necessary based on your facilities, services and visitors:

Sample feedback form for guests or visitors:

<name of attraction/agrotourism product>		
Rate your Activity/M meal/Accommodation/Experience		
		
8 – 10	5 – 7	0 - 4
Date:		Name/room/table no:
Your comments to us:		

Guiding and interpretation

Part of communication and service on a farm may include providing visitor information on the farm activities or products. This can be done in two main ways: verbal and written.

Guidelines for Verbal communication

- Train any people who engage with visitors on what to say, and how to say it.
- This includes simple things like smiling, being friendly and maintaining eye contact.
- Develop a script of the content/information that farm staff will tell to visitors, especially if there are guided tours.
- Research any content or information carefully and check that the staff know and understand it and are able to present it accurately.

- Ask a few questions of the staff – e.g. why do you do something like this, or what is that implement, what happens after this, etc to give them some practice to answer questions confidently and accurately.
- Provide for a welcome, introduction, body of information, conclusion and farewell in information that is delivered by guides.
- Train any sales staff to be friendly and helpful to customers in farm stalls or little shops.

Guidelines for Written communication

- Information must be well presented, accurate/correct, and not reflect any spelling or grammatical errors.
- Handwritten signs are quite acceptable provided that they are neat and legible.
- Provide pictures to illustrate what you want to tell the visitors, and provide some captions or writing to explain the pictures. Photos will do.
- Make sure images or photos are good quality and in focus, with good lighting so that the image is understood by the visitors.
- Place written communications in places and at heights that are easy to see and read.
- Make the text large enough to read from a distance – this allows for a few people to be able to read it at one time, and for them not to stand too close together.
- If providing information in another language, get it properly checked for correct use of language.

Unit 4: Managing Safety Risks

One of the first things that farmers can do to prepare their farm to welcome visitors is to review hazards on the farm. To keep visitors, staff, land and animals safe it is important to identify and manage any risks that may endanger them in any way. In this section we will cover how to prevent visitors being exposed to farm risks, and how to respond to incidents that may occur.

Safety Planning and Management

A safety plan for an agrotourism operation should:

1. assess risks and define guidelines for maintaining a safe environment
2. establish safety plans for visitor activities on the farm
3. train staff in safety measures
4. facilitate emergency response if an accident occurs

Assess risks

Maintaining a safe environment starts with assessing a farm for risks. Every farm that offers agrotourism activities has unique safety risks. These can be managed and reduced, but never fully eliminated. The safety of visitors is non-negotiable and should be a priority.

Areas and activities to consider include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ● Safety with visitor parking | ● Employee hygiene |
| ● Safety with visitor traffic | ● Fire prevention |
| ● Buildings and bathrooms | ● Farm equipment and machinery |
| ● Animal and visitor interactions | ● Water safety |
| ● Food safety | |

➔ Safety with Visitor Parking

- Ensure that the driveway/entrance is visible from either direction on the entry road.
- Parking spaces should be adequate for your peak number of visitors
- Overflow parking areas are available.
- Areas for drop-off/pick-up for buses are available (if needed).
- Guests must not park on public roads.
- There must be alternatives in the event of rain/ mud/snow, and handrails should be placed along walkways where needed to prevent people from falling.
- Salt, sand or sawdust should be applied to icy walkways in winter.

➔ Safety with roads

Internal (farm) roads need to be wide enough, and it is advisable to have a separate entrance and exit to ease traffic flow. The entrance must be free of rocks, puddles and deep mud. There must be adequate lighting between dusk and dawn (if needed). The farmer should ensure parking is easily identifiable and safe for pedestrians.

➔ Buildings and bathrooms

Farmers must be aware of and in compliance with all building codes that apply to the property. Examples include:

- Public areas are lighted if customers are present at night.
- In humid areas the buildings and bathrooms need to be well ventilated to prevent mould.
- There are clean, well-stocked bathrooms or regularly maintained Port-O-Lets, and properly functioning handwashing stations.
- Fire extinguishers and water for fire trucks are located somewhere visible.
- Smoke alarms require annual testing.
- 'In Case of Emergency' signs should be posted, with easy-to-read instructions.

➔ Animal and visitor interactions

Some properties allow visitors to interact with farm animals. Risks include health and safety of visitors and animals. If animals and visitors will come into contact, make sure the animals are clean, monitor them for health problems, have them up to date on their vaccinations, and keep good health records.

Decide on the level of contact and reinforce guidelines with appropriate signage. Install appropriate signage and provide verbal reminders about how to act around animals. Ask visitors to inform the guide if they are injured by an animal.

➔ Food safety

Food safety requires that all food service establishments should pass health inspections by the local health authorities who will issue a health certificate if standards are met. This includes food storage, preparation, labelling and handling, serving, and sale of food and beverages.

➔ Employee hygiene

Employees should be trained about personal health and hygiene, of potential contamination from visitors.

Cooks and food handlers should wash hands:

- Before handling food
- After going to the toilet
- After smoking
- After handling rubbish
- After touching animals
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing nose

Provide appropriate restrooms and hand-washing stations, including signs on how to wash hands properly (find these on the Internet).

➔ Fire prevention

Fire prevention involves regularly inspecting and maintaining smoke detectors and fire extinguishers strategically placed throughout farm and visitor buildings. Properly storing flammable and combustible materials makes it easy to prevent fires. These things should be kept away from visitors at all times. Staff must be trained to use a fire extinguisher and other firefighting equipment.

➔ Farm equipment and machinery

Farm machinery can cause bodily harm to inexperienced users. Ensure all farm staff who operate farm machinery have been properly trained and licensed. Instruct staff to shut down equipment after use. Store keys in a spot only employees can access to prevent visitors from climbing on, walking into, or otherwise accessing farm equipment.

➔ Water safety

Bodies of water on the property become an immediate risk to those who cannot swim, especially small children. Guides must advise visitors that all water features are off-limits (unless these are part of the attraction) and ask parents to keep a close eye on their

children. Install barriers to block access and post warning signs at water sites that are off limits to visitors.

Ensure that rescue equipment (buoy, rope, and pole) is readily available and train staff in water rescue techniques, first aid and CPR.

→ Signage

Signs help to advise and inform visitors of where to do and what to do to keep them safe. They reinforce verbal explanations from staff, with regards to safety. If visitors are repeatedly reminded of safety rules the farmer/owner can be exempt from any legal actions if visitors are injured as they were aware of the risks.

→ Plan for emergencies

Farmers must keep a well-stocked first aid kit handy and ensure that staff are trained in CPR and first aid. An emergency plan must be in place to deal with natural disasters such as floods, fires or other inclement weather. Suggest that visitors wear appropriate clothing such as closed-toed shoes or long pants. Provide personal protective equipment (gloves, etc.) or note safe standing areas when watching certain demonstrations.

Safety plans

Identify risks in each activity and then develop strategies to address them. While this is some work to do, these plans will provide evidence of the farm's commitment to safety if ever there is an accident and insurance claim. The safety plan for each activity should describe the activity, identify potential risks, outline strategies for minimizing risks to visitors and identify the location(s) for posting rules or warnings related to the activity.

Example of a safety plan:

Activity one per page	Risk	Suggestions to Minimise Risk	Placement of Warning Signs
Example: Hiking trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encountering dangerous wildlife ● Slippery trails ● Difficult terrain ● Inaccessible to emergency vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guides should be trained to handle dangerous wildlife ● Trails should have sufficient drainage and not be slippery when wet ● Loose rocks should be stabilised ● Paths should be easy to navigate and climb ● Paths should not be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Place a warning at the entrance to the path about wildlife in the area

		too remote for emergency vehicles to attend injured visitors	
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Staff Training

Employees must be trained in identifying and managing risks, and in safety procedures. They must also know how to respond in case of an emergency, accident or incident. They must know how to guide and instruct visitors on using equipment, on how to do activities safely, and practice activities before actually doing them if feasible.

Staff must also be trained in basic first aid of accidents and injuries most likely to happen on that farm or by the leisure or recreation activity offered on the farm. Someone should be trained and appointed to handle emergency responses.

Emergency Response

An emergency response is any series of actions taken to assist during an emergency. For example, an elderly person has fallen and broken a bone, the EMS must be called, and the patient kept still, and a report is filed after the incident.

Review the emergency response plan regularly and include it in employee training. Important numbers include:

- Contact information for farm owners and employees that are easily accessible – ideally near a telephone
- Emergency contacts – ideally near a telephone: 119
- Contact information of visitors – or ‘In case of emergency’ contacts
- Insurance provider
- Veterinarian

Example of safety management on a Horticultural/crop farm

Horticultural farms are farms that grow grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts etc.

Activities during these tours may be tractor rides through fields, touring silos, allowing visitors to participate in harvests, etc. For each activity offered the farmer must consider what the risks are and how to eliminate or minimise them.

An example of a possible safety risk is the presence of snakes on the property. Although most farms have ways of managing harmful snakes, accidents happen. Advise visitors not to approach snakes, to be aware in long grasses or on paths, and to immediately tell the guide if they see one.

Information signs may not be helpful in these properties because the fields may be large. Guides need to be well versed in the information the visitors expect to get during the tour.

Liability

Liability means that the owner is legally responsible for their actions or inactions that could bring harm to others. If what they did or did not do leads in a predictable manner to harm, then they are negligent. This section outlines types of liability and strategies for reducing risk.

Protecting yourself Legally

There are many ways of reducing exposure to risk. Liability management should be a way to demonstrate a proactive, responsible, and comprehensive approach to farm safety. Talk with an insurance provider to see if the agrotourism activities are or can be covered.

The larger the business the more likely it is to require protection in the event of an accident or incident. There are a few ways to do this:

- **Liability Management**
 - show that you take farm safety seriously
 - this can be in the form of safety plans – identifying and managing risks and hazards
- **Indemnity**
 - a contract removes the responsibility of the owner/staff for any injury or losses
 - signed before visitors engage in an activity
 - makes visitors aware of the risks

Insurance

Insurance is a layer of protection in the case of a visitor being injured on the property. Insurance will cover any legal fees associated with the incident. Without insurance the owners of the property would be liable, responsible, for the financial costs involved. If your agritourism business is growing, and you have a lot of visitors on site, then your risk is grown too. Be wise and get liability insurance.

Indemnity

An indemnity is a contract absolving the owner/employees for responsibility for any injury or losses prior to visitors engaging in an activity, because visitors are aware of the risks, and they are still willing to proceed despite them.



When creating an indemnity, the key element is the ‘indemnity by user’ clause, whereby the user agrees to ‘indemnify and hold harmless the landowner from any claims made by the user or their parties arising from the use of the land or activities.’

Instances where indemnity may be used in an agrotourism business include:

1. Visitors entering areas they were not allowed to be and getting injured
2. Items sold, such as slingshots, which cause harm or damage
3. Visitors encroaching on neighbouring farms and causing damage or disturbance
4. Visitors are engaging in activities with animals such as horse riding or animal petting
5. Visitors are engaging in adventure activities such as trail running, mountain biking, tubing, canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling, hiking, horse riding, swimming/paddling, obstacle courses, high ropes courses.
6. Visitors are attempting to use agricultural instruments
7. Visitors engaging in activities where belongings could be lost or damaged, such as hiking or swimming

Example of a simple indemnity form:

INDEMNITY FORM

I hereby apply / give permission for myself / my child to participate in the <insert activity name>, organised by <insert business name>.

I understand that the <insert activity name> includes adventure-based outdoor activities that can include, but are not limited to: adventure courses, trail running, ATV riding, mountain biking, canoeing, rock climbing, hiking, horse riding, swimming/ paddling, obstacle courses.

I acknowledge that I am aware that these activities are potentially hazardous and the risk of personal injury or accident cannot be excluded. I further confirm that I am aware that some of these activities can be physically challenging.

I confirm that I am/my child is physically well and fit and am/is able to participate in exercise of this nature without undue risk to my/his/her health.

I accordingly hereby undertake and agree to indemnify <business name>, their partners, employees and any individual involved in assisting with the organisation, against any liability and any/all process and proceedings, claims, damages, interest, cost and/or expenses however arising which may result from any accident or injury to myself/my child or to my/his/her possessions, howsoever caused, and whether due to any act or omission by or on behalf of the aforesaid person.

I undertake to ensure that I have enough medical and other insurance in place to meet any such cost, loss or injury. Activities marked with an asterisk (*) are included in this activity.

Name: _____

Participant Full Name: _____

Signature (or parent's signature if under 21): _____

Full Name of parent if child under 21: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 2021