

Risk Management of Your Agritourism Enterprise

Presented by the Iowa State University

Value Added Agriculture Program

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NORTH CENTRAL
RISK MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION CENTER



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What do
visitors
want
from
Iowa
Farms?

What are travelers seeking?

- Outdoor recreation
- Educational experiences
- Entertainment
- Hospitality services
- Sales
- Authenticity!!!



Agritourism

- Iowa is **THE** Agriculture state
 - Requests for tours (Nationally and Internationally)
 - Respected around the world for what we do
- Agritourism gaining in popularity
 - Local foods, experience something “real”, environmental concerns and awareness, changing travel patterns, family-oriented travel and activities, desire to step back in time.
 - Wineries great example – from 13 a few years ago and now 70 in the state.



U.S. Farms in Agritourism

- Based on USDA estimates, about 52,000 U.S. farms or 2.5 percent of total farms earned income from agritourism in 2004. Southern United States accounts for +50% of farms receiving recreational income.
- Midwest accounts for one quarter of all farms in agritourism.



Categories of Agritourism



Agri-tourism enterprises might include:

- Outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife photography, horseback riding).
- Educational experiences (farm and cannery tours, cooking classes, wine tasting, cattle drives, or help work the ranch).
- Entertainment (harvest festivals or corn mazes).



Categories of Agritourism, cont.

- Hospitality services (farm and ranch stays, guided tours or outfitter services).
- On-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).
- Off-farm direct sales (farmers' markets, county and state fairs, special events).



Visitors Bring Revenue.....

- They spend a lot of money.
- During 2006, travelers spent \$5.6 billion.
- Tourism is 3rd largest industry in Iowa.
- Tourism generates \$262 million in tax revenue annually.



But, they also bring **Risks!**

Most visitors to the farm are unfamiliar with farming and the inherent hazards...

Liability, exposure to risk and legal considerations are a top concern voiced by most agritourism enterprise operators.



Protection is NOT just insurance!!



- Protection is included in:
 - Business Structure
 - Disclaimers & Waivers
 - On-farm safety signs/warnings
 - First aid kits, CPR Training
 - Written, used and updated & rehearsed Emergency Plans (posted numbers, etc.)
 - Providing a safe environment and activities
- Learn and follow good management rules about hiring, training & developing employees



Agritourism

Best Management Practices

- Authentic Farm or Ranch Experience
- Educational Experience
- Customer Service
- Adequate Public Facilities
- Community Relations
- Safe & Accessible Environment
- Planning for your Financial Future
- Legal & Regulatory Considerations
- Liability & Risk Management



Let's focus on the following ...

1. Safe & Accessible Environment
2. Liability & Risk Management



Liability & Risk Management

How do you protect yourself AND your visitors from harm?

- **Safe & Accessible Environment**
 - Make your operation as safe as possible!
 - Avoid certain activities
- **Planning Ahead** Consult with your attorney and your insurance provider first!
 - Get legal advice so that you completely and wholly understand what your legal liabilities are
 - Work with your insurance provider to know what can be covered and to see where their largest concerns are. They will tell you what is considered high risk and how you can help protect yourself from risk.
- **Develop a Risk Management Plan**
 - Know and plan for risks --- **Have it in writing!**
 - Several examples and samples available



Planning for Visitors

Is your farm ***suitable*** or ***adaptable*** for

1. Adequate parking & traffic controls
2. Transportation of employees or customers
3. Access to your operation
4. Walkways
5. Buildings and Fencing
6. Attractive Nuisances
7. Recreational Activities
8. Restrooms & Hand washing
9. Storm or Emergency Situations



Getting to the Front Door



Traffic Flow

- Plan circulation patterns of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic
 - How will they find the entrance, parking, the front door, the exit?
- Signage must be clear & consistent
 - Easy to read, clear directions, attractive, informative & posting hazards or off-limit areas.



Directional Signage is a Must



About Vehicular Traffic

- Vehicles might include passenger cars, motor coaches, school buses, trucks.....
- Can they find you (road signs)?
- Is the entry drive easily identified & is it adequate for the types of traffic?
 - School buses, tour buses, fire trucks, etc.
 - Can you get in and get out, even in the peak of the season?
 - Is someone had a heart attack at the back of your farm, could you easily get to them, have you planned for access?



Signage helps vehicular flow...



Parking Details

- Is parking sufficient, amount, quality of base, does it include handicapped parking spaces?
- **DO NOT RELY ON PUBLIC ROAD** for parking, keep people out of the road
- Is parking away from pedestrian traffic flow (do they have to use the parking lot to cross to other attractions)?
- Is it well maintained, well graded & well lit? (no standing water, drainage problems or pot holes)



Parking, cont.

- Post a speed limit on-site as a reminder
- If grassy lots used, have an alternative during wet conditions, keep mowed, keep tripping hazards to minimum
- Use one-way directional patterns, use separate entrances & exits
- Post signage so visitors know where to walk in parking area
- Fenced off/easily identifiable area



Scenic, but is it safe?



- Is that a walkway?
- Is it fenced off?
- Are there signs?



Walkways, paths, sidewalks, flow
of pedestrian traffic....

(*wherever* visitors' have to walk)



Walking surfaces.....

- Examine your farm through the eyes of child!
- Keep risk of falls, trips and potential injury to a minimum.
- Surfaces: **“Wide & Smooth”**
- Minimize use of steps & stairs
- Adhere to ADA requirements
- Barriers and signage a must!
- Level, without holes or standing water



Pathway Signage

- Direct pedestrian traffic with arrows and “off limits” signage.
- Provide the rules and inform of potential problem areas (if hazard exists, get rid of them, don’t just warn them about it).
Should you say, “Beware, horse kicks!” or just get rid of the horse?



Pathway signage, cont.

- Is it easily seen and easy to read?
- Use graphics (arrows, etc.) not just words.
- Signage helps avoid problems and helps the owner in case of an accident.
- Use sufficient care to inform visitors
- “Stay on the path” “Keep off of fences”





Practicing Safety

- Verbal instructions
- Written instructions (signs, hand-outs)
- Your actions speak loudest
- Healthy environment & practices
- Food safety
- Animal & livestock rules & practices (hand washing stations, rules posted, fences in place.)



ISU Extension Activities

- Educational resources and programming
- Promotions
 - www.VisitIowaFarms.org
 - Over 200 farms registered
 - Information for producers; promotion to consumers in one stop
 - Advertising at Iowa rest stops of the site and farms by region



search

Show Farm Grouped by:

Type of Services

Regions

Amenities

Add My Farm

Producer Information

Visit Iowa Farms



Welcome to the site where tourism and agriculture meet! Agritourism is a growing segment of the rural economy in many areas of Iowa. This website is your guide to rich and educational agricultural experiences in Iowa.

Examples of Iowa agritourism include bed and breakfasts, Christmas tree farms, farmers' markets, fruit and vegetable u-picks, hiking for a fee, hunting/fishing for a fee, mazes for a fee, retail stores, trail riding and wineries. These diverse businesses market a wide variety of produce, products and services to a wide variety of consumers that often value the experience of visiting a farm or rural area as much as the merchandise they purchase along the way.

Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference Welcomes Beginning Farmers, Agritourism Interests

The past decade has delivered some changes in Iowa agriculture, including more farmers being involved in fruit and vegetable production. That's why the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association will include a distinct track for beginning farmers during its 2010 annual meeting and conference, Jan. 29-30 at the Holiday Inn - Des Moines Airport/ Conference Center.

The conference is being organized jointly by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and Iowa State University Value Added Agriculture Program's Visit Iowa Farms project. Both are providing funds and staff to help educate beginning farmers about the opportunities in fruit and vegetable

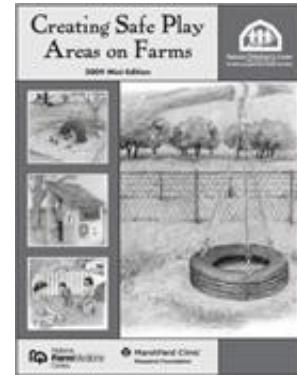
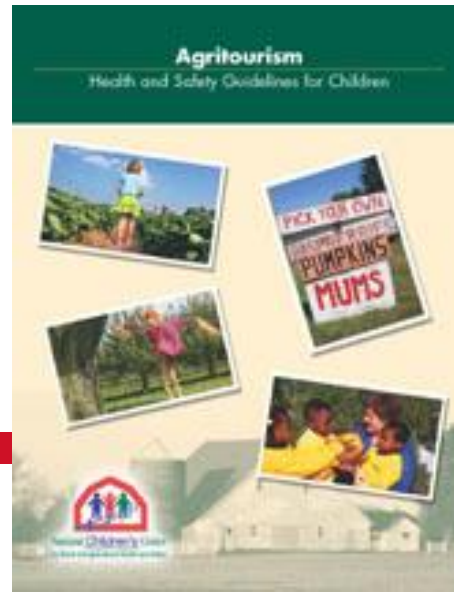
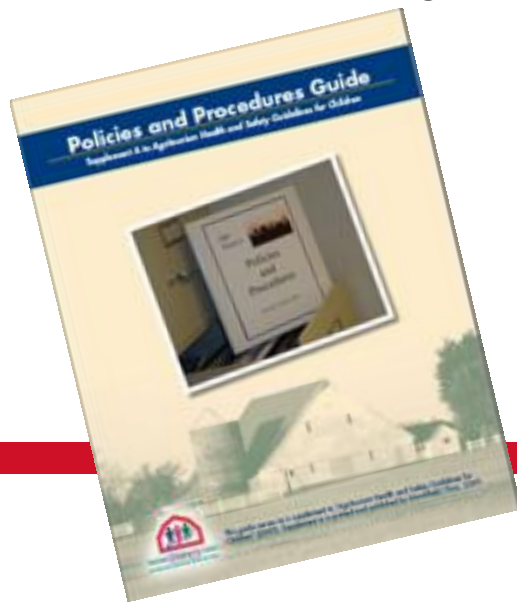
www.VisitIowaFarms.org

Resources:

www.marshfieldclinic.org/agritourism

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, National Farm Medicine Center, Marshfield, WI
(4 booklets downloadable online)

1. Agritourism Policies & Procedures Checklist Guide
2. Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children
3. Agritourism Worksite Walkthrough Checklist Guide
4. Creating a Safe Play Area – Mini Edition



Contact Us

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