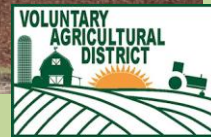


Opportunities for District Profitability

Melinda Roberts
Buncombe County
Agriculture Extension Agent





The Current State of Agritourism

Tourism & Agritourism are big business... 2007 Ag Census

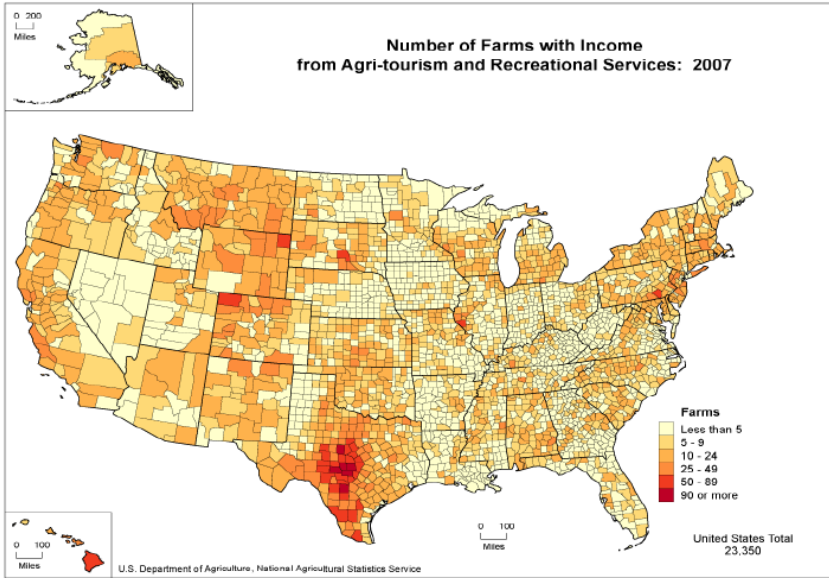
- 2,204,799 total US farms
- 160,000 farms participate in direct sales/agritourism
- 136,817 sell fresh products
 - directly to individual consumers by road side stands, farmers markets, PYO, etc
 - = \$1.2B in sales
- 23,350 agritourism farms have recreation income from non-ag products (tours, hunting, fishing, etc.)
 - 602 NC



Source: www.agcensus.usda.gov

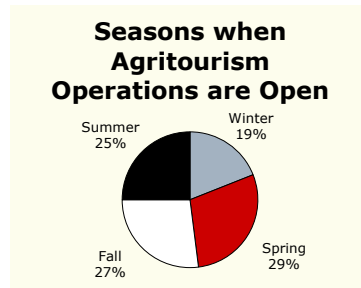
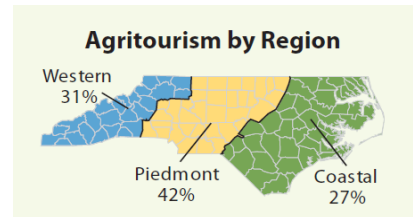
These stats only tell part of the story!

23,350 farms w/ Agri-tourism income



Tourism & Agritourism are big business for NC

- NC = 6th most visited state
- Domestic visitors spent \$15.6B
- Sustains 362,052 jobs



NC Division of Commerce – 2009 statistics
 2005 Agritourism Survey – NC Dept. of Ag & Consumer Services – Agritourism Office

From 2000 to 2001,
62 million adults visited farms and ranches across
America

United States Department of
Agriculture

Current State of Agritourism Research

- A total of 13 survey instruments and various findings related to the surveys were reviewed for overall content
- Implementation dates for the 13 surveys ranged from 1999-2009
- All 13 studies conducted on a state-wide level, representing nine different states
- To date, an agritourism-focused study has not been conducted at the national level

Agritourism Provider Perspective (mostly collected via mailed surveys)

- The median number of years in business was 10
- Most common types of attractions = on-farm retail, on-farm tours, and/or pick-your-own
- Majority offered 1-2 attractions
- Spring, summer and fall, were seasons noted by a majority of operations; peak months included May through November*
- Many farms reported an increase in visitation
- Majority utilized part-time employees
- Most farms reported income of \$15,000 or less from agritourism
- The most common-effective types of advertising-promo = WOM, state assoc. – Ag. Dept. brochures, business signs, & websites

*except for cut-your-own Christmas tree farms & wineries operations

Visitor Perspective (Most data collected on-site)

- Women shown to visit more
- While visitors' ages and income varied in reporting, average age in the 40's and income \$75,000+
- Majority of visitors were identified as being from the same state, county, and/or neighboring counties as the agritourism operations; distance traveled ranged from 22 – 129 miles
- Majority of visitors traveled in small groups of 2-4 members, mostly composed by family members and/or children
- WOM most cited resource used by visitors to plan their agritourism trip
 - Reaching agritourism operation "by chance" while en route to other destinations was also cited =need for good signage

Why Agritourism?

Producer Perspective



- Economic diversification - Additional income – Replace income
- Keep land in the family
- Employment for family members
- Interest/hobby
- Diversification of product lines and markets
- Education of users/consumers
- Tax incentives
- Companionship with guests/users



Visitor Perspective



- Increasing urbanization
 - Looking for a tie to the land, experience, meaning, involvement, authenticity
 - Less opportunity to enjoy the outdoors
 - Farms = direct connection to culture, heritage & where food comes from
 - Access to fresh, locally-produced products
- Family friendly - Generational ties
- Increase in weekend/local travel



Economic Perspective



- Income - Jobs
- Encourages visitation
- \$\$\$ generated from outside visitors often stays within the local economy
- Visitors can influence quality of life – helping to finance community facilities
- Community events & attractions intended for tourists also benefit & attract local residents



Agritourism is Growing in Popularity! 2010 Travel Trend:



*You've heard of staycations; what do you think of **haycations**?
These are interactive farm stays where city-dwellers gather their
own eggs, make cheese and even learn to butcher an animal.*

- From Brooklyn – drove to upstate NY – Stoney Creek Farm
- \$300/night - Unlimited eggs (if available)
- Food and activities extra:
 - Veggie farm basket = \$20
 - 1 hr in the garden harvesting own veggies with farmer = \$35
 - Keep some veggies – farmer sells some at market
 - Cook over open fire = \$35

New York Times – 8/25/09 – Kim Severson
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9aSdufl8rc>