



Assessment: Is Your Property Suitable for Agritourism?

Your land and what's on it are the foundation of your agritourism venture. You'll want to systematically take stock of what you have, so that your agritourism activities can both draw visitors and co-exist with your primary agricultural activity. You'll also need to pay careful attention to Oregon land-use law, state and local regulations, and risk management; see Sections III and IV of the handbook for more information.

This assessment will help you think about how you want to use your land — especially those features that don't require much additional investment to be suitable for agritourism.

For example:

- Access to a roadside may enhance your ability to sell produce directly from the farm.
- Farms or ranches with wooded areas can be ideal for mushroom production, hunting or trails.
- Open areas might be good sites for fairs, festivals, plays, events and demonstrations.
- Fallow fields might provide hunting areas.
- Pastures could be used for alternative livestock.
- Scenic areas and outlooks lend themselves to outdoor recreation and other activities such as photography.
- Water can support hunting and water sports.
- Outbuildings can be converted to lodging and value-added product processing.
- Structures and sites with heritage can anchor guided tours and storytelling.

INSTRUCTIONS

This is another exercise that benefits from involving your family and, if applicable, your key employees. On the following pages you'll find a blank assessment form for evaluating the agritourism potential of your property's natural and physical assets. There is also a simple example of how you might fill it in. Here are the steps.

- Complete columns 1-3 based on what already exists on your property and how well it works for your current

agricultural activities. You may want to draw a map showing the location of key assets, current activities and potential hazards.

- For column 4, note if there is anything of historical, cultural, artistic or educational significance (for example, an old barn or orchard).
- Next, keeping in mind your self-assessment as well as the checklist of potential agritourism activities in Section I, put some preliminary ideas in column 5 about what could work on your property. You may want to ask friends, family or potential partners to walk your property with you and get their "fresh eyes" on the possibilities.
- Finally, use column 6 to note the pros and cons of your ideas. Will you need to invest in property improvements in order to implement the ideas?

If possible, visit with other agritourism businesses and learn from their experiences as you mull over the possibilities. Feel free to keep updating and modifying your ideas as you begin the business planning. Sections V and VI of the handbook offer more specifics on how to move forward with your new business enterprise.



This document has been compiled from Oregon's experience and several other agritourism development manuals, including: [Agritourism and Nature Tourism in California, 2nd Edition](#) - University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources; [Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide](#) - Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Board; [Your Agritourism Business in Pennsylvania: A Resource Handbook](#) - The Center for Rural Pennsylvania.

Sample:

Building	Current use	Benefits/limitations	Heritage element?	Potential uses	Benefits/limitations
Barn	Empty	Esthetic value Requires repair		Office Store Product processing Historic Barn Cattle Feeding	Centennial Barn Visitor Attraction Education Center
House	Family Home	Living		Historic Attraction	Visitor Attraction
Farm worker's cabins	Disrepair	Being Preserved		Historic Attraction	Education Farm History
Granary	Storage	Esthetic Value Leaky Roof		Haunted House Education Center Chicken House	Cash Income Education Farm History

Assets	Current use	Benefits/limitations of current use	Heritage element?	Potential agritourism uses	Benefits/limitations of potential new uses
Natural assets: Features that occur naturally					
High-value agricultural soil					
Lower-value agricultural soil					
Water features and resources (river access, farm pond, stream, etc.)					
Scenery (vantage points, atmosphere)					
Topography (landscape features; e.g., flat area, dry lake, butte, mesa, etc.)					
Wildlife and insects, including special habitat areas					
Vegetation (plant life, crops, special crops)					
Other natural assets from adjacent neighbors or surrounding community (e.g., woodlot next door, river nearby, etc.). These are assets to which you could connect your own agritourism activities					

Assets	Current use	Benefits/limitations of current use	Heritage element?	Potential agritourism uses	Benefits/limitations of potential new uses
Physical assets: Constructed features					
Residential buildings					
Non-residential buildings					
Structures with other functions (e.g., wind towers, open-air pavilion, etc.)					
Transportation routes on the property					
Other improved spaces (e.g., campsites, trails)					
Decorative elements					
Other physical assets from adjacent neighbors or surrounding community (e.g., a trail system, a mountain, a woodlot next door, a river nearby, etc.). These are assets to which you could connect your own agritourism activities					