

Evaluating your resources

Is agricultural tourism for you?



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Agritourism is:

- Any income-generating activity conducted on a **working** farm or ranch for the enjoyment and education of visitors.



Agritourism activities include...

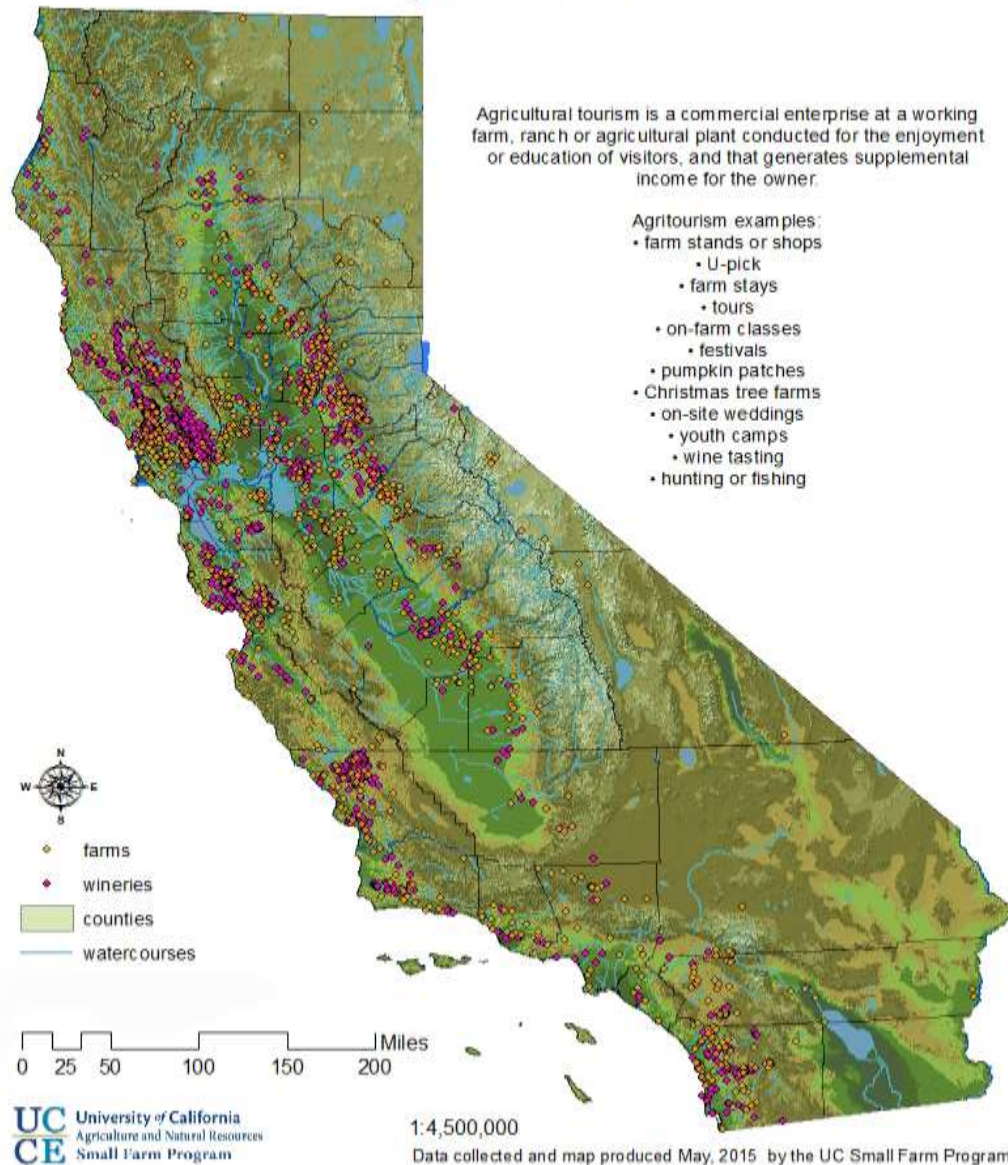
- **On-farm Direct Sales** (U-pick, farm stands, dairy, wine, beer, farm products, etc.).
- **Accommodations/Lodging** (farm stays, guest ranch, B&Bs, camping, cabins, etc.).
- **Entertainment/Special Events** (harvest festivals, corn mazes, farm dinners, weddings, parties, etc.).
- **Outdoor Recreation** (picnicking, swimming, hunting, fishing, photography, horseback riding, snowmobiling, biking, etc.)
- **Educational Activities** (farm or ranch work experience, camps, classes, tours, tastings, demonstrations, petting zoos, etc).



From: Multi-institutional interdisciplinary research project – survey of 288 western agritourism operators as part of 3 year USDA grant: “Place-Based Innovation: An Integrated Look at Agritourism in the Western US”

California Agritourism and Winery Operations

Agritourism in California



Agritourism Enterprise Types

- **Supplementary enterprise**
 - A minor activity supporting other products on the farm
 - Example: occasional school or group tours for a fee
- **Complementary enterprise**
 - Agritourism shares equal footing in farm's product mix
 - Example: apple orchard with half U-Pick, half wholesale
- **Primary enterprise**
 - Agritourism is the dominant/primary activity
 - Example: Winery tasting room with lodging facility

Why Agritourism?

For Visitors

- Relaxation
- Authentic Experience
- Participation
- Time with family & friends
- Weekend/local travel experience
- Connection with farmers & ranchers & the natural world



Why Agritourism?



For Farmers and Ranchers

- Additional income
 - Jobs for family
- Educate about agriculture
- Promotion of agricultural products
- Companionship with guests/visitors

Why Agritourism?

For Communities

- Jobs, personal income, tax revenue
- Preservation of farm-based rural amenities
- Encourages visitation
 - Revenue generated from outside visitors often stays within the local economy (economic multiplier effects)
 - Visitors can influence quality of life (e.g. finance community facilities)
- Community events & attractions intended for tourists also benefit & attract local residents
- Defined sense of place/local identity

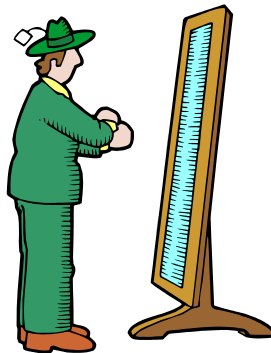
Agritourism is NOT FOR EVERYONE!

Help farmers and ranchers determine if agritourism is right for them and their operation.



What are YOUR Personal Skills?

- Do you like to entertain & serve strangers?
- Are you patient and sensitive to the needs of visitors?
- Do you have the physical stamina and vigor to maintain your operation while properly serving customers?
- **BE HONEST!**



Your special skills and knowledge

Knowledge and skills are intangible assets that can help create a farm or ranch tourism operation

Some examples:

- Livestock management
- Gardening
- Local history, natural history
- Cooking, food preservation
- Horseback riding
- Music, arts and crafts
- Brewing or winemaking



Overall business goals

Some examples:

- Support family
- Maintain rural lifestyle
- Provide employment for family members
- Provide for retirement on farm or ranch
- Help support sustainable community
- Get rich



Operation's current capabilities and situation

- How well is current operation meeting your business goals?
- What changes are planned for your current operation?



How could a tourism venture contribute to your business goals?



- What goals do you have for an agritourism or nature tourism enterprise?

Review your physical resources

- Land ownership or access
- Land Use, soil type
- Land Features, Water Bodies
- Farmstead Features
- Additional Attractions



Assessing what you have

- Agriculture has Unique Features and Benefits and **YOU** have Very Special Stories to Share



Farm and ranch activities

- What current farm or ranch activities might appeal to the public? What you consider routine might be unusual and interesting to the non-farming public.

Examples:

- Cattle drives
- Viewing baby animals
- Pastured poultry operations
- Sheep sheering
- Fruit tree pruning
- On-site food processing
- Roadside produce stands
- Harvesting, U-Pick



Rate your Human Resources



- Staff: Family & Hired
- Management Team
- Neighbors
- Government Staff & Officials
- Business & Tourism Associations
- Other Local Businesses

Assess your Financial Resources

- What are your financial resources?
- Do you have access to capital?
- What are your start-up costs?
- What can you realistically afford to spend?
- How much money are you willing and able to risk?



Assess your Community Resources



- Natural Beauty
- Cultural & Social Characteristics
- Cultural and Recreation Offerings
- Food, Lodging, Shopping & Entertainment
- Public Infrastructure
- Attitudes Toward Tourists
- Accessibility
- Existing Tourism Activity

Identify your competition & potential collaborators

- With your family & other business partners:
 - Find out what agritourism and nature tourism exists in your community
 - Visit if you can
 - Talk with successful operators
 - Book a room or a tour
 - Observe & ask questions



Begin to identify your ideal customers

- “Shotgun” approach is expensive and rarely effective
- Choose and target a customer sector within the agritourism and nature tourism industry

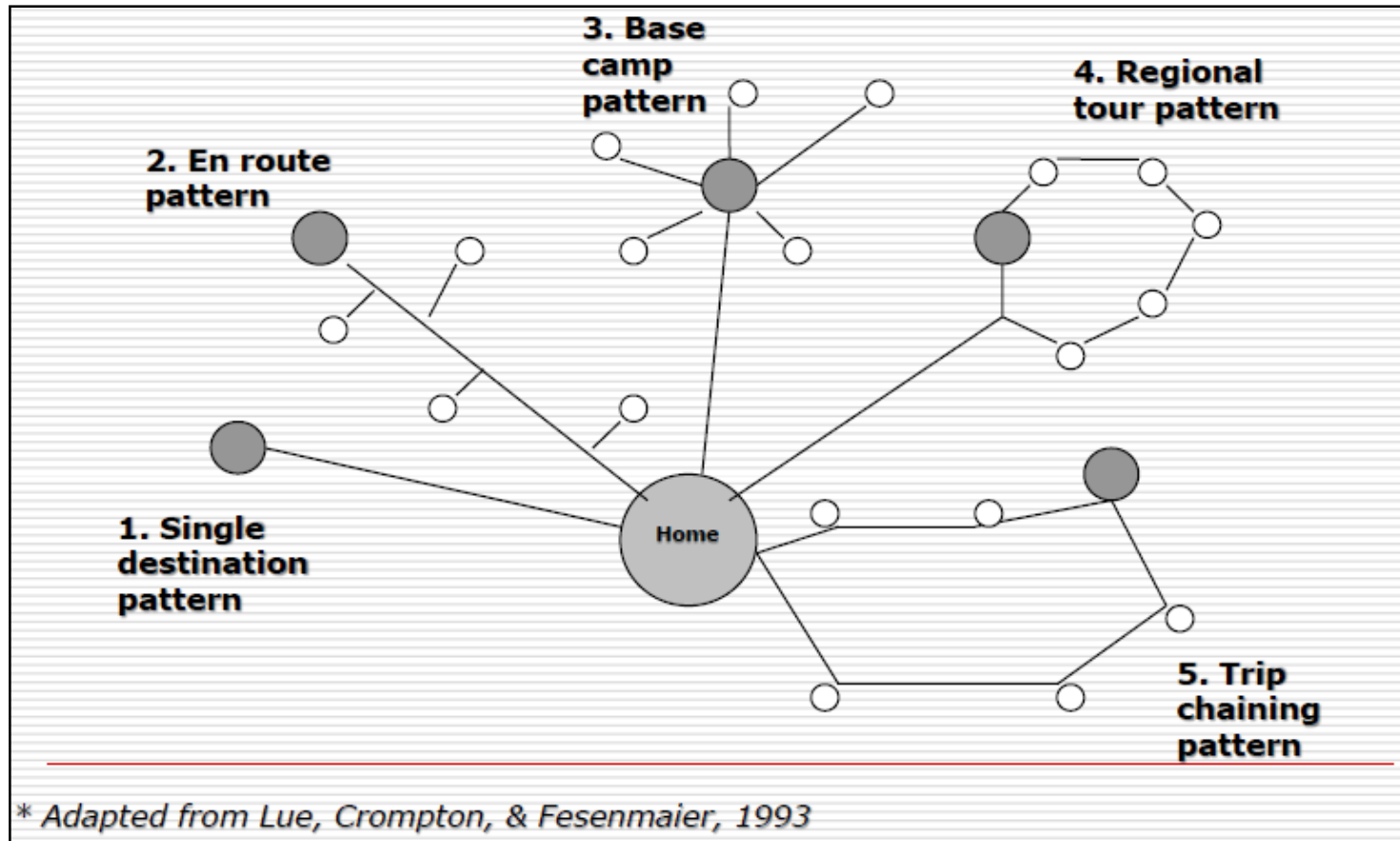


Study YOUR Target Tourists

- Where are they coming from?
- Where else are they going?
- What is their age range?
- Families, individuals or groups?
- Income range?
- What do they want?
- When do they want it?
- Who else offers what they want?
- What do you offer that is competitive or complimentary?
- What will keep them coming back for more?



Where Else are they Going? (Who are your partners?)



Side-note: Your neighbors' land use

- As you inventory your own properties, you also have to think about the broader picture.
- How are your neighbors using their land?
- How do you affect your neighbors?
- How do your neighbors affect you?



What you can do - Defining limitations

- Good neighbor limitations
- Natural resource limitations
- Human Resource limitations
- Legal limitations



Legal limitations

- Zoning, permitting
- Easements
- Building codes
- Septic requirements
- Labor laws
- Food safety
- Direct marketing – reselling regulation
- Liability



Have your goals changed?



Remember to consider:

- Are the goals realistic and achievable?
- Will your acreage support what you want to do?
- Do you have enough money?
- Who is going to do the work?
- How long will it take?

Now... Evaluate some Possibilities

- Consider different potential agritourism activities
- With family or management team, ask evaluation questions for each activity
- List pros and cons for each of the possible activities
- Think about where, sketch a map

