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By Glenn Rogers, Regional Farm Management Specialist

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(B) Author's Note: These fact sheets are a result of questions posed to me and answered in a national publication over the years.

## Fun and Sun on the Farm

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**My neighbor and I (both in mid-40s) maybe snowmobile rides during the winter. We would be trail bosses on all rides, probably just weekends. Between us, our fathers have enough timberland for several scenic trails. We already get a lot of city traffic through our area. What is the best way to kick off a venture like this?**

**FIRST, CHECK YOUR INSURANCE POLICIES AND CHECK TO SEE WHAT THE RULES ARE WITH THE TOWN, COUNTY AND STATE.** Vermont has been going thru quite a discussion about ATV's and access to state lands. While the enterprise sounds like a great part-time fun job but, is it really? The pitfalls are high with liability insurance costs, neighborhood complaints will surface about zoning, permits, potential environmental impact issues, noise, impact on wildlife habitats, safety, and more. ATV injuries are high and we see a snowmobile death or two every year. We also see illegal ATV and snowmobile use today even after years of educational and enforcement efforts by Snow Travelers, ATV groups, civic and school groups, and industry and law enforcement agencies.

It's a great way to see the "backcountry" providing it's done with care, with respect to the environment, the wildlife, and to the landowner and within all laws. These are questions that have plagued the industries for decades and until we master these issues, with everyone complying, they will continue to be an issue.

To kick off a venture such as this, talk with the ATV and Snow Travelers associations and show them what you have to offer. High quality, low impact, scenic ventures that are fun for the family are great ways to get started. Show them that you've done your homework, you have the permits in place, you've mapped out all the trails, have the support of neighbors, the community, and the families. In addition, offer packages for groups, weekend getaways for couples and families and be sure to add in some fun and safe times for all. Be sure to listen to your clients needs and wants and try to incorporate those items into the program.

Finally, but somewhere near the front of the process, do a business plan. The business plan will allow you to focus on the important items, the timing, the permits needed and the impacts with some sensitivity testing. Sensitivity testing includes such things as increasing expenses by 10%, decreasing income by 10-20% and changing the interest rate on loans by 3%. Include some long term, and short term goals, as well as incorporating alternative uses in that business plan.

Advertising can take place in the statewide Snow Travelers and ATV newsletters but that can begin in the second year after you get a "feel for the landscape".