

Agritourism Across the United States:

Findings from a National Study of Agritourism Operators

August 2026

Authors

Claire Whitehouse

Research Specialist
Center for Rural Studies
University of Vermont

Kacey LaBonte

Graduate Research Assistant
Food Systems Graduate Program
University of Vermont

Annelise Straw

Agricultural Marketing Specialist
Local and Regional Foods Division
USDA Agricultural Marketing
Service

Gianni Solorzano

Post Doctoral Associate
University of Vermont Extension

Americo Vega-Labiosa

Agricultural Marketing Specialist
Local and Regional Foods Division
USDA Agricultural Marketing
Service

Lisa Chase

Extension Professor
University of Vermont Extension

For more information about this study, visit <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/national-agritourism-study>

Suggested Citation for this Report

Whitehouse, C., LaBonte, K., Straw, A., Solorzano, G., Vega-Labiosa, A., & Chase, L. 2026. Agritourism Across the United States: Findings from a National Study of Agritourism Operators. University of Vermont.
<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/national-agritourism-study>

Contents

Acknowledgments	3
About this Report	3
Introduction	4
Background	4
Defining Agritourism	4
National Agritourism Metrics	5
Project Approach and Methodology	6
Interviews	7
Short Survey	7
Long Survey	8
Statistical Analysis	9
Results & Discussion	9
Interviewee Profiles	9
Long Survey Respondent Typology	9
Mixed Methods Findings by Subject	23
State-Level Analysis	37
Conclusion	48
Proposed Actions & Considerations	48
Further Analysis	49
Future Research	49
Limitations	50
Appendix	51
Interview Guide	51
Short Survey Instrument	53
Short Survey Responses	56
Long Survey Instrument	60
References	76

Acknowledgments

This report presents results from Cooperative Agreement AM230300WAMSC005, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).

The study was conducted by Lisa Chase, Claire Whitehouse, and Kacey LaBonte, with assistance from Shiva Soroushnia and Gianni Solorzano, all at the University of Vermont. Contents do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA. For more information, contact Claire Whitehouse at claire.whitehouse@uvm.edu.

We would like to thank the many farmers who shared their experiences with agritourism through interviews and/or took the time to complete the survey. We are especially grateful to the collaborators on the project including the American Indigenous Tourism Association (AITA), Farmstay, the National Agricultural Law Center (NALC), and NAFDMA International Agritourism Association.

About this Report

This final report compiles findings of a national study of agritourism, an umbrella term for activities that welcome visitors onto a working farm, ranch, or other agricultural operation (Chase et al., 2018; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013).

This project, entitled “Agritourism: Understanding Producer Benefits, Challenges and Needs throughout the US,” began in 2023 as a cooperative agreement between University of Vermont Extension and the Local and Regional Foods Division of the USDA AMS Transportation and Marketing Program, in collaboration with project advisors American Indigenous Tourism Association, Farmstay, NAFDMA International Agritourism Association, and the National Agricultural Law Center. This study builds on two prior national studies of agritourism operators: a 2019 study led by the University of Vermont, and a 2024 study led by Penn State University (Chase et al., 2021a; Schmidt et al., 2025).

This final report describes all project findings to date for an academic and regulatory audience. The report includes descriptive statistics for all closed-response questions in both surveys distributed for this study. We delve deeper into the data through bivariate analysis of multiple survey questions, including an examination of agritourism issues by state. The report also includes qualitative analysis of interviews with ten agritourism farms and of write-in survey responses. The report is organized by topic, with qualitative and quantitative findings summarized alongside each other for the purposes of mixed-methods analysis.

In addition to this academic report, the project team compiled multiple outputs for a mixed audience of farmers, tourism professionals, outreach providers, policy makers, scholars, and others.

- **Project Briefs:** This compilation of topic-based briefs summarizes key project findings for a general audience. The report can be accessed and read as a contiguous report or as individual briefs.
- **Story Map:** Check out this online story map to hear directly from farmers interviewed for this project and learn about their agritourism offerings and advice.
- **USDA Local Food Directories:** To see the directory built for this project, go to the USDA Local Food Directories site and select “Agritourism.”

UVM Extension helps individuals and communities put research-based knowledge to work. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Vermont Extension, Burlington, Vermont. University of Vermont Extension, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating, offer education and employment to everyone without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Introduction

Background

Farms and ranches have long been places for communal harvest, celebration, education, and hospitality. These traditions were first codified using the word “agriturismo” under Italian law in 1985, and the translated term agritourism has since spread across the globe to describe activities that welcome visitors onto farms and other agricultural businesses (Lamie et al., 2021). Studies based in the US demonstrate that agritourism has become a popular strategy for diversifying farm offerings, growing farm income, and promoting farm products (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009; Hollas et al., 2021; Quella et al., 2023; Tew & Barbieri, 2012) attract new entrants to agriculture and promote regional development. Entrepreneurship and farming are known to be driven by a complex set of goals including those which are economic and intrinsic in nature. However, little information is available regarding the set of goals that drive agriculture entrepreneurship, preventing state agencies to adequately target potential diversifiers. This paper provides a better understanding of the range of goals, both financial and nonfinancial, that are important in farmers’ decisions to diversify their operations. The generation of additional income, the continuance of farming and ranching, and the enhancement of quality of life are among the most important diversification goals in Texas. A principal component factor analysis performed on the importance ratings of diversification goals resulted in six dimensions: (F1. Farmers also engage in agritourism for non-economic reasons, including educating the public about agriculture and engaging with their community (Quella et al., 2021; Tew & Barbieri, 2012).

This study builds on past research to improve our understanding of agritourism in the United States. As more farmers turn to agritourism as an income diversification strategy, it is essential to provide updated national benchmarks on agritourism, along with continuing deep regional research on issues faced by particular farmer constituencies. In addition to our research aims, this project also served to populate the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service’s Local Food Directory for agritourism, the first national publicly-held marketing outlet for farms that welcome visitors in the United States. This is an important step in the maturation of US agritourism as a viable industry with national recognition.

Defining Agritourism

The US has no official definition of agritourism, and there is disagreement domestically and internationally about what activities qualify as agritourism (Lamie et al., 2021). A 2013 study that surveyed Missouri and North Carolina farmers, residents, and Extension faculty about their perceptions of agritourism proposed a broadly acceptable definition, being: “farming-related activities carried out on a working farm or other agricultural settings for entertainment or education purposes” (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013). Five years later, this project’s director led a paper developing a conceptual framework for agritourism that distinguished between core activities widely agreed to be agritourism (on-farm direct sales and on-farm education, entertainment, hospitality, and recreation directly related to agriculture) and peripheral activities about which there is disagreement (off-farm direct sales and on-farm education, entertainment, hospitality, and recreation activities that are not focused on agriculture) (Chase et al., 2018b). This paper also divided agritourism into five categories: direct sales, hospitality, education, entertainment, and outdoor recreation, illustrated in Figure 1 (Chase et al., 2018b).

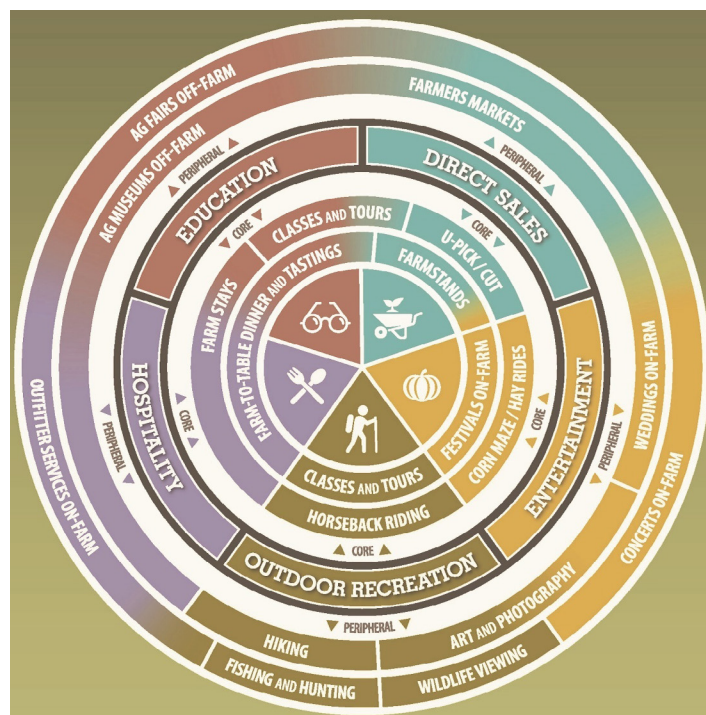


Figure 1. Five Categories of Agritourism: The Intersection of Activities

Note. Figure is from Chase et al. (2018b).

Our study uses the AMS Local Food Directory definition of agritourism: commercial enterprises that combine agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a working farm, ranch, agroforestry, or aquaculture operation and produces supplemental income for the farm operator. Our interview and survey instruments divided agritourism activities into the five categories proposed by Chase et al. (2018b). We did not consider any off-farm activities to be agritourism, nor did we include operations other than working farms, like animal rescues or food processors not engaged in agricultural production.

National Agritourism Metrics

NASS Census of Agriculture

Because there is no official definition of agritourism in the US, the definition we used for this project is not universal across agritourism research. The standard-bearer for agricultural data on domestic producers is the Census of Agriculture conducted every five years by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), yet Census questions on agritourism and direct sales are out of alignment with the common definitions of agritourism used by farmers, scholars, and outreach professionals, described in Gil Arroyo et al. (2013), Chase et al. (2018b), and Lamie et al. (2021).

A recent paper by Hollas et al. (2024) and consumer demand for agricultural experiences is on the rise. Understanding this sector is important for policymakers, researchers, agricultural service providers, and others seeking to support farm viability and rural entrepreneurship. However, in the U.S., this support is hampered by the lack of a clear definition and consistent, comprehensive means for measuring the agritourism sector. The best available data for the U.S. are from the quinquennial U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA NASS explores this disconnect in depth. The most consequential misalignment is that the Census question on income from direct sales does not distinguish between direct sales that occur on-farm, which do qualify as agritourism, and sales that take place off-farm at places like farmers’ markets, which do not (USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022). Secondary issues include the limited description of “agritourism and recreational services,” which only includes activities in the entertainment and outdoor recreation categories outlined by Chase et al.

(2018b), and the omission of non-edible products like flowers and Christmas trees from the question on direct sales (USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022).

NASS Census of Agriculture data on agritourism and direct sales from 2017 and 2022 are summarized in Table 1 below. The total number of farms reporting income from agritourism other than direct sales in 2022 was 28,617; as noted above, this number may omit farms that offer activities not named in the question text. The total number of farms reporting income from direct sales in 2022 was 116,617; however, this number is of limited utility for this project since it includes off-farm sales and excludes sales of non-edible products.

Table 1. Agritourism and Direct Sales Data from NASS Census of Agriculture, 2017 and 2022

Category	2017	2022
Agritourism and recreational services: Number of farms	28,575	28,617
Agritourism and recreational services: Average income per farm	\$33,222	\$44,004
Food sold directly to consumers: Number of farms	130,056	116,617
Food sold directly to consumers: Average income per farm	\$21,570	\$27,981

Note. Data are sourced from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (2022).

The misalignment of the NASS Census of Agriculture questions with the definition used by the AMS Local Food Directory and prior literature limits the rigor of this project and other national agritourism research efforts (Chase et al., 2018b; Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Lamie et al., 2021). In order to compute a representative sample that would allow us to extrapolate findings to the population, we would need a Census count of farms with income from agritourism that follows the common US scholar and practitioner definition as laid out in Gil Arroyo et al. (2013), Chase et al. (2018b). This project was designed with these limitations in mind and aimed to incrementally improve data collection methods over past studies.

Prior National Surveys: 2019 & 2024

This study follows two previous national surveys on agritourism. In 2019, project director Lisa Chase led a national survey of agritourism operators as part of a multistate project sponsored by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and featuring collaborators from the University of Vermont, Oregon State University, the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, and West Virginia University (Chase et al., n.d.). The survey asked about farm products and visitor activities; goals, successes, and challenges to agritourism; and firmographic and demographic information (Chase et al., 2021a). This survey was distributed through collaboration with Extension offices, state departments of agriculture and tourism, and agritourism associations: the project team shared an email text including an open link to the survey with these partners, who then shared it with their constituencies (Hollas et al., 2021). Respondents were then asked to recruit their peers to take the survey (Hollas et al., 2021). This approach yielded 1,834 complete responses (Hollas et al., 2021). A complete list of project reports and scholarly outputs is available on the Vermont Tourism Research Center website (Chase et al., n.d.).

Five years later, in 2024, a team led by Claudia Schmidt at the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development and Penn State University launched a second national survey as part of a USDA NIFA project aimed at creating an effective support system for small and mid-sized agritourism operators (Schmidt et al., n.d.). This survey included many of the same questions as the 2019 survey for comparability purposes, and asked additional questions about the agritourism support environment (Schmidt et al., 2025). This survey was also distributed by state-level collaborators using an open link, and received 2,139 responses (Schmidt et al., 2025).

One of our primary goals for this project was to build on these two prior surveys and make incremental movements toward a more rigorous sampling strategy. Though it is not yet possible to conduct a representative sample survey for US agritourism, we were able to move toward a list-based (as opposed to open link-based) distribution strategy that allowed us to calculate a response rate. As the US agritourism movement matures and farmers, researchers, and policymakers get closer to a mutual definition of agritourism, the rigor and utility of agritourism research will likewise improve.

Project Approach and Methodology

Our project, entitled “Agritourism: Understanding Producer Benefits, Challenges, and Needs throughout the US,” aimed to improve understanding of the scale and scope of agritourism across US states and territories. We set out with four main objectives:

1. Identify national and regional patterns contributing to successes and challenges for producers
2. Explore motivations of producers, benefits and challenges of agritourism, and barriers to entry and expansion
3. Populate a national directory of farms and ranches engaging in agritourism
4. Communicate research findings to be translated into technical assistance products and practical applications

We planned to address these objectives through three data collection activities:

1. Interviews with 10 case study farms across the US, representing different regions, agricultural products, agritourism activities, and farmer experiences.
2. Short national survey of agritourism operators, with the primary goal of populating the agritourism directory.
3. Long national survey of agritourism operators, with the primary goal of addressing our research questions.

This study utilized a mixed-methods research approach that combined quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide comprehensive insights into the complex world of agritourism in the US. This integrated approach is particularly useful for agritourism research, an industry and sector operating at the intersection of agriculture, tourism, land use, and economic development – domains which require both an understanding of statistical trends as well as a deep understanding of local context.

The quantitative component of this study provides baseline data through a survey that reveals patterns of successes and challenges to inform policy recommendations, develop practical technical assistance resources, and establish industry benchmarking. Simultaneously, qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews with ten agritourism operators, help uncover the nuanced realities of balancing agricultural de-

mands with hospitality services, and managing family dynamics within business decisions and day to day operations.

Together the quantitative breadth and qualitative depth generate actionable insights that neither approach could achieve alone. A more comprehensive understanding enables researchers to develop recommendations that are both statistically grounded, as well as responsive and nuanced to the contexts and cultures of communities served.

Interviews

To begin this project, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 farms around the United States. We used purposeful sampling to ensure a varied selection of farms representing different US regions, agricultural products, agritourism activities, and farmer experiences. We identified interview farms through recommendations from our project advisors and professional networks. Our list of interviewed farms is summarized in Table 2 (Results section).

Interviews took approximately an hour and a half and followed a semi-structured interview guide. We began by asking general overview questions about their farm and agritourism activities, and went on to ask about visitor profiles, data collection, motivations for agritourism, challenges to agritourism, experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic and weather events, agritourism profitability, marketing, and suggestions for support and technical assistance. Per semi-structured interview methodology, we followed up with additional questions and probes as topics arose in the interviews.

We conducted all interviews in Zoom and used its native audio recording and transcription tools. We checked the Zoom-generated transcription against the recording and edited for accuracy and formatting. Three members of our team analyzed the interviews using a two-stage inductive coding process. Prior to each meeting, we coded the same 2-3 interviews and met to discuss and decide on open (stage 1) codes. As we read and coded additional interviews, we iterated on the codebook until we had read all interviews and decided on a uniform set of codes. After we had developed our open codes, we then met and sorted those open codes into a mutually-agreed-upon set of axial codes (stage 2).

Short Survey

The next stage of this project was a short survey designed to collect basic information about a wide range of agritourism farms to build our distribution list and the AMS Local Food Directory. The survey began with three required screening questions: describe your agricultural operation (farm, ranch, vineyard, etc.); verify that you welcome visitors onsite; and verify that you are located in the United States. After these questions, we asked for contact information and basic details on agricultural products and visitor experiences. We closed by asking respondents if they wanted to be included in the USDA AMS Local Food Directory.

We distributed this survey through several avenues. Our primary contact list was generated by Michigan State University (MSU) as part of a separate AMS cooperative agreement. The MSU project team developed code to scrape data from multiple agricultural listing sites. These efforts generated approximately 90,000 entries, though not all were agritourism operations and many did not contain contact information. We combined the webscraping lists with contact lists from project advisors NAFDMA and Farmstay, contact lists from Extension offices in several states, and our own list of Vermont farms open to visitors. We narrowed the list to only those entries with email addresses and used the Qualtrics email distribution tool to send individual survey links to the full list. After combining all lists, removing entries without emails, and accounting for duplicates and bounces, we sent survey invitations to 21,871 email addresses.

We also distributed the short survey through an open link. Two of our project advisors (AITA and NALC), as well as many of our Extension colleagues across the country, were not able to share their contact lists with us directly for Qualtrics distribution due to institutional policy. Instead, they sent emails to their agritourism contact lists directly and/or shared the open link via QR code during constituent presentations.

The survey was open for approximately one month, from mid-November to mid-December 2024. We sent between 1 and 3 email reminders to non-respondents via Qualtrics and asked those sending open links to proprietary contact lists to follow up at least once with a reminder to take the survey.

We received 2,521 total responses to the short survey. Of these, 2,271 passed the three required screening questions.

Because we distributed the survey via both direct email and open link, and because we asked respondents to provide farm name and contact information, we carefully combed through the data to eliminate duplicates. We also searched through the write-in Operation Types for those that did not select one of the closed responses and removed those that did not describe themselves as working agricultural operations. This effort left us with 2,147 valid responses, 1,815 of whom answered questions beyond the 3 required screening questions. Out of all 2,147 valid respondents, 1,620 responded to direct email outreach, and 527 responded by clicking on the open link.

We conducted all data analysis in RStudio. Because the main purpose of the short survey was to populate the AMS Local Food Directory and prepare our contact list for the longform survey distribution, we limited analysis to descriptive statistics, which are summarized in the Appendix to this report.

Long Survey

The long survey was designed to follow up on two prior national surveys of agritourism operators: one conducted by a UVM-led research team in 2019, and a second led by Penn State University in 2024. The 2024 Penn State survey was designed to be comparable to the 2019 UVM survey and contained many of the same questions, with an additional focus on technical assistance and support. Most questions in the long survey were drawn from one or both of these prior surveys. We added a few new questions based on findings from the interview stage of this project, covering marketing strategies, marketing challenges, and visitor data collection. We redesigned the demographic section of the survey to capture data on all farm owners and decision makers, not just the survey respondent. We tested the survey instrument with our project advisors and underwent a review process with USDA AMS leadership. The text of the survey instrument is available in the appendix of this report.

Our primary mode of data collection for the long survey was individual links sent using the Qualtrics email tool. We built our list from the following sources:

- Email distribution list from short survey (see section above for details on how this list was constructed). We removed all duplicate, failed, and bounced addresses from this list. We also removed addresses of several individuals who replied to the short survey solicitation

stating that they were not farms, were not open to visitors, or did not want to be contacted. This left 22,874 email addresses.

- Between fielding the short survey and the long survey, UVM Extension updated our internal list of Vermont farms that are open to visitors. This led to the addition of 19 new email addresses.
- New email addresses identified by the short survey (both farms that responded to the open link and farms that responded via the email distribution but provided a new email address): 1,297 new email addresses.
- One of our project partners, AITA, received permission from their leadership to provide us with their contact list directly. An additional state Extension office also provided us with their contact list. We added these two lists totaling 277 additional addresses to our list.

This resulted in a total distribution list of 24,372 email addresses. Of these, 1,728 were duplicates, failed, or bounced, meaning we succeeded in outreach to 22,644 addresses.

We sent the first email distribution in late February 2025. One month into data collection, we reviewed responses by US state and territory. We decided to supplement the email distribution with targeted distribution via open link to states and territories with few or no respondents. We reached out to contacts in agricultural extension and state departments of agriculture and asked them to distribute the survey via open link to their constituents. For all distribution modes, respondents were invited to provide their name, address, and email address to be entered into a prize drawing for twenty gift certificates valued at \$75 each.

In total, we received 1,250 responses, 1,065 of which were valid. We determined validity by:

- Removing those that did not pass screening questions.
- Removing duplicates based on the names, business names, and email addresses provided for the prize drawing and AMS Local Food Directory
- Examining all respondents who selected *only* the “Other” option in the screening question about operation type to confirm that they were a working farm engaged in agricultural production.

Of the 1,065 valid responses, 1,014 (95%) responded via an individual link sent through the Qualtrics email tool, and 51 (5%) responded via open link.

Statistical Analysis

All data cleaning, descriptive statistics, and statistical tests were conducted in Rstudio by the lead author of this report. We employed a variety of statistical tests for this analysis, depending on the nature of the independent and dependent variable(s), including Chi-squared tests and Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests (using the R base package), and Ordinal Logistic Regression (using the MASS package). Specific statistical methods are detailed in the relevant portions of the Results section below.

Results & Discussion

Interviewee Profiles

We interviewed ten producers across the US engaged in a wide variety of agricultural production and agritourism activities. Farm typology is summarized in Table 2. We report on interview findings by subject in the latter half of this results section.

Table 2. Summary of Farm Interviewees

Alias	USDA region	Products	Agritourism
Farm 1	Southern	fruit, honey, value-added products	sales, pick-your-own, tours
Farm 2	Southern	fruit, value-added products	tours
Farm 3	Southern	meat, dairy, eggs, value-added products	sales, education, overnight stays
Farm 4	Northeast	aquaculture	tours
Farm 5	Northeast	dairy	overnight stays
Farm 6	North Central	vegetables & fruit	education, tours
Farm 7	North Central	fruit, flowers, value-added products	sales, pick-your-own, entertainment
Farm 8	North Central	vegetables, meat, honey	sales, education, tours, overnight stays
Farm 9	Western	feed grain, horses	sales, education, overnight stays, outdoor recreation
Farm 10	Western	wine	sales, tastings, tours, events

Note. USDA regions refer to the four regions set out by the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education program (USDA, n.d.).

Long Survey Respondent Typology

As described in the Methods section, we sent the long survey to 22,644 emails using the Qualtrics email distribution tool and asked colleagues in states/territories with few or no responses to share an anonymous link to the survey to agritourism contacts. We received 1,065 valid responses: 1,104 (95%) from the email distribution and 51 (5%) from the open link. Our overall response rate from the email distribution (counting all 1,250 responses, which included individuals whom we deemed ineligible) was six percent.

Respondents by State and Territory

We received valid responses from all US states and territories except for Delaware and Puerto Rico (while we did receive one response each from DE and PR, both were eliminated from the survey as the operation did not meet the definition of working farm).

Vermont received by far the greatest number of responses (n = 103, 10%). Maine took second place with 68 (6%), followed by California (n = 56, 5%), New York (n = 55, 5%), and Oregon (n = 51, 5%). In total, 32 states received 10 or more responses. The full breakdown of responses by state is below in Table 3.

Table 3. Long Survey Responses by State and Territory

State/Territory	Count	Percent
Alabama	7	1%
Alaska	2	0%
American Samoa	1	0%
Arizona	9	1%
Arkansas	9	1%
California	56	5%
Colorado	16	2%
Connecticut	26	2%
Delaware	0	0%
Florida	30	3%
Georgia	25	2%
Guam	2	0%
Hawaii	6	1%
Idaho	9	1%
Illinois	23	2%
Indiana	16	2%
Iowa	21	2%
Kansas	14	1%
Kentucky	12	1%
Louisiana	6	1%
Maine	68	6%
Maryland	17	2%
Massachusetts	35	3%
Michigan	33	3%
Minnesota	15	1%
Mississippi	4	0%
Missouri	15	1%
Montana	7	1%
Nebraska	9	1%
Nevada	4	0%
New Hampshire	14	1%
New Jersey	17	2%
New Mexico	4	0%
New York	55	5%
North Carolina	32	3%
North Dakota	2	0%
Northern Mariana Islands	1	0%
Ohio	28	3%
Oklahoma	9	1%
Oregon	51	5%
Other	1	0%
Pennsylvania	46	4%
Puerto Rico	0	0%
Rhode Island	2	0%
South Carolina	12	1%
South Dakota	12	1%
Tennessee	22	2%
Texas	10	1%
U.S. Virgin Islands	8	1%
Utah	13	1%
Vermont	103	10%
Virginia	47	4%
Washington	41	4%
West Virginia	5	0%
Wisconsin	25	2%
Wyoming	6	1%

Note. n = 1063. 2 respondents did not answer the question

Respondent Typology

In the long survey, we asked an expanding series of questions about agricultural products and agritourism activities. We also asked about off-farm sales outlets to get a broader picture of farms’ market activities.

Operation Type

The first question in the survey asked respondents to describe their operation (Table 4). This was one of three required questions used to establish eligibility for the study. Respondents could select multiple options and write in additional options under “Other.” We reviewed the responses and recoded any that fit existing closed categories. The overwhelming majority of respondents (n = 953, 89%) identified their operation as a farm.

Table 4. Long Survey Responses by Operation Type

Operation Type	Count	Percent
Farm	953	89%
Ranch	99	9%
Vineyard	62	6%
Agroforestry Operation	48	5%
Aquaculture Operation	11	1%
Other	37	3%

Note. n = 1065. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in “Other” write-in responses include: alcoholic beverage processor (wine, beer, cider, mead); other processing activities; non-profit with additional mission beyond agriculture (education, preservation). All respondents included in the sample selected at least one option related to production agriculture.

Off-Farm Sales Outlets

We asked if respondents sold any products at off-farm locations. This was a closed-response binary question. Of the 1061 respondents who answered this question, 634, or 60%, replied yes. We then asked these people to check off which off-farm sales outlets they sold to. Responses are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Off-farm Sales Outlets Used

Sales Outlet	Count	Percent
Farmers’ markets	350	56%
Retail stores	319	51%
Restaurants	246	39%
Off-farm CSA pickup or delivery	132	21%
Local/regional distributors	111	18%
Food hubs	89	14%
Cooperatives	80	13%
Processors	56	9%
Broadline/national distributors	13	2%
Other	124	20%

Note. n = 626. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in “Other” included: auctions; fairs & festivals; food assistance providers; institutions; online sales; and sales to other farmers’ farm stands and stores.

Agricultural Products

We began by asking the same broad overview question about agricultural products as in the short survey (Table 6). We followed with more detailed questions about agricultural products depending on answers to the first question. These categories were drawn from the NASS Census of Agriculture, with some adjustments recommended by farmer-advisors who tested the survey. We decided to show respondents who selected “Other” products in the general question all of the specific questions, as in the short survey many write-in answers fit existing closed categories.

Table 6. Agricultural Products in 2024, General Overview

Product Type	Count	Percent
Crops and forest products	849	80%
Animals and animal-related products	517	49%
Value-added products	471	44%
Other	4	0%

Note. n = 1065. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Write-in responses that could not be coded into other categories were: mushrooms (n = 2); firewood; compost; and woodchips. Though these products do not neatly fit any of the closed categories, they are included under the write-in category in “crops and forest products” for the specific breakouts below.

Table 7. Animal and Animal-Related Products in 2024

Animals and Animal Products	Count	Percent
Poultry and eggs	273	54%
Sheep and goats	224	45%
Beef cattle, including feedlots	198	39%
Hogs and pigs	136	27%
Dairy cattle and milk production	58	12%
Animal aquaculture	12	2%
Other animal production	141	28%

Note. n = 503. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: alpacas; llamas; bees/honey; equines; and rabbits.

Table 8. Crops and Forest Products in 2024.

Crops and Forest Products	Count	Percent
Fruit	468	61%
Vegetables and melons	450	59%
Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production (including Christmas trees)	268	35%
Forage/silage	113	15%
Maple syrup	81	11%
Oilseed and grains	66	9%
Tree nuts	53	7%
Other	31	4%

Note. n = 762. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: firewood & timber; seed; medicinal herbs; and mushrooms.

Table 9. Value-added Products in 2024

Value-added Products	Count	Percent
Salsas, pickles, jams, jellies, preserves	184	41%
Baked goods	178	40%
Soaps, lotions, other health and beauty products	117	26%
Cut-and-wrapped meat and processed meat products	100	22%
Wine, beer, cider, or distilled beverages	83	19%
Animal pelts and fiber products	73	16%
Cheese and dairy products	60	13%
Olive oil, nut or seed oils or butters	16	4%
Other	69	15%

Note. n = 446. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: juice (apple cider, grape juice); candles; dried herbs, dried mushrooms, and herbal teas; candies (maple candies, chocolate bars); prepared meals (frozen & fresh); decorative items (wreaths, dried flowers); and essential oils.

We combined the responses to all breakout questions into one table to understand which products were most common across all respondents (Table 10). No product was reported by a majority of respondents. The most common product category was fruit (n = 468, 44%), followed by vegetables and melons (n = 450, 42%); poultry and eggs (n = 273, 26%); greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production (n = 268, 25%), and sheep and goats (n = 224, 21%).

Table 10. Top Ten Agricultural Products Across All Categories

Category	Product	Count	Percent of total
Crops	Fruit	468	44%
Crops	Vegetables and melons	450	42%
Animals	Poultry and eggs	273	26%
Crops	Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production (including Christmas trees)	268	25%
Animals	Sheep and goats	224	21%
Animals	Beef cattle, including feedlots	198	19%
Value Added	Salsas, pickles, jams, jellies, preserves	184	17%
Value Added	Baked goods	178	17%
Animals	Other animal production	141	13%
Animals	Hogs and pigs	136	13%

Note. Percentage values are calculated as a portion of total respondents, being n = 1,065.

Agritourism Activities

Like with agricultural products, we began our investigation into agritourism activities by asking a general question about visitor experiences and onsite sales (Table 11). We then asked more detailed questions based on their responses to the general question. All who selected “Other” in the general question were shown all of the specific questions.

Table 11. Visitor Experiences and Onsite Sales in 2024, General Overview

Visitor Activities	Count	Percent
Sales of your products on your operation	925	87%
Education	733	69%
Entertainment/events	478	45%
Overnight stays	298	28%
Outdoor recreation	219	21%
Other	3	0%

Note. n = 1064. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

One respondent did not answer the question. Three write-in responses did not fit closed categories: community hub; worship; and therapy sessions.

Table 12. On-farm Direct Sales in 2024

Direct Sales Type	Count	Percent
Farm stand or farm store	717	79%
U-pick	430	48%
CSA on-farm pickup	179	20%
Other	56	6%

Note. n = 904. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: onsite tasting room or tap room; onsite restaurant or café; pickup of online/phone orders; and sales to tour attendees or overnight guests.

Table 13. Overnight Stays in 2024.

Accommodation Type	Count	Percent
Camping	136	47%
Entire home	124	43%
Cabins or yurts	92	32%
Single rooms	75	26%
Other	2	1%

Note. n = 290. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Two write-in responses did not fit existing categories: “retreat center lodges, group booking” and “bespoke.”

Table 14. Educational Experiences in 2024

Educational Experiences	Count	Percent
Tours	597	83%
Student group and field trip programs	482	67%
Adult classes and/or workshops	314	44%
Demonstrations	304	42%
Work or volunteer experience	268	37%
Petting area	228	32%
Tastings	205	29%
Youth classes and/or workshops	159	22%
Summer camps	106	15%
Other	14	2%

Note. n = 717. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Write-in responses that did not fit existing categories did not have common themes; a list is available upon request.

Table 15. Entertainment and Events in 2024

Entertainment and Events	Count	Percent
Other venue rental (family reunions, retreats, etc.)	231	51%
Children’s activities (playground, rides, etc.)	210	46%
Festivals	207	46%
Farm dinners/meals	199	44%
Hayrides	194	43%
Weddings	160	35%
Corn/other crop mazes	152	34%
Concerts	120	26%
Barn dances	40	9%
Sporting events/other games	17	4%
Other	31	7%

Note. n = 453. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: arts & craft events; yoga; and goat yoga.

Table 16. Outdoor Recreation in 2024

Recreation Activities	Count	Percent
Hiking/walking trails	152	75%
Photography	86	43%
Bird watching	80	40%
Hunting	56	28%
Fishing	45	22%
Horseback riding	39	19%
Skiing/snowshoeing	30	15%
Biking	29	14%
Snowmobiling	10	5%
Other	14	7%

Note. n = 202. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses covered water activities like boating, swimming, and tubing.

Like with products, we combined all breakout answers into a single table to understand which activities were most common across all respondents (Table 17). The majority of respondents reported having a farm stand or farm store (n = 717, 67%) and tours (n = 597, 56%). The next three most common activities were student group and field trip programs (n = 482, 45%), u-pick (n = 430, 40%); and adult classes and/or workshops (n = 314, 29%).

Table 17. Top Ten Agritourism Experiences Across All Categories

Category	Activity	Count	Percent of total
Direct sales	Farm stand or farm store	717	67%
Education	Tours	597	56%
Education	Student group and field trip programs	482	45%
Direct sales	U-pick	430	40%
Education	Adult classes and/or workshops	314	29%
Education	Demonstrations	304	29%
Education	Work or volunteer experience	268	25%
Entertainment & events	Other venue rental (family reunions, retreats, etc.)	231	22%
Education	Petting area	228	21%
Entertainment & events	Children's activities (playground, rides, etc.)	210	20%

Note. Percentage values are calculated as a portion of total respondents, being n = 1,065.

Respondent Firmographics

We asked respondents several general overview questions about their farm, including farm acreage, rurality, length of time in agritourism, and how often they are open to visitors. We also asked about revenue and net profit of both their overall business and their agritourism activities. Responses are summarized in the tables below.

Acreage

We asked respondents about the total acres of their agricultural operation (not just those acres devoted to visitor experiences). The question was an open-response field accepting only numeric answers.

We received a wide array of responses, ranging from 0.12 acres to 150,000 acres. The majority of responses were from small farms, with half of respondents reporting 60 acres or less and 75% of respondents reporting 180 acres or less. We sorted open responses into categories, summarized in Table 18.

Table 18. Farm Acreage, Categorical

Category	Count	Percent
Less than 1 acre	5	1%
1-10 acres	176	19%
11-20 acres	98	10%
21-50 acres	163	17%
51-100 acres	171	18%
101-200 acres	138	15%
201-500 acres	116	12%
501-1000 acres	45	5%
More than 1000 acres	32	3%

Note. n = 944. 121 respondents did not answer the question.

Rurality

We asked how far respondent operations were from a city of at least 50,000 people. This question was categorical, with distances going up to 50 miles or more. Response are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Distance from a City of 50,000 or More

Category	Count	Percent
We are located in a city with a population of 50,000 or more	52	5%
Less than 5 miles	82	9%
5-9 miles	99	10%
10-29 miles	292	30%
30-49 miles	177	18%
50 miles or more	260	27%

Note. n = 962. 103 respondents did not answer the question.

Length of Experience with Agritourism

We asked respondents what year they began offering agritourism. This was an open response question that only accepted numeric entries. Responses (n = 1,001) ranged from 1882 at the earliest to 2025 at the latest. The median year was 2011, meaning that the majority of respondents have over a decade of experience welcoming visitors to their operation.

Agritourism Season Length

We asked respondents about how many days of the year they were open to visitors. This was a categorical question where categories included both a number and a description (Table 20). Responses were fairly evenly split between categories, though slightly left-skewed; the most popular response was 271-365 days, or year-round with few exceptions.

Table 20. Days Open to Visitors Each Year

Category	Count	Percent
1-30 days (Occasionally/Specific events only)	167	16%
31-90 days (Weekends only/Seasonally for a short window)	180	17%
91 - 150 days (Several days a week/Seasonally for a longer window)	200	19%
151-270 days (Most of the year with some closed periods)	198	19%
271 - 365 days (Year-round/Every day with minimal exceptions)	292	28%

Note. n = 1,037. 28 respondents did not answer the question.

Farm Revenue and Profit

We asked respondents categorical questions about their 2024 gross revenue from all farm sources (Table 21), as well as their net revenue (profit) in 2024 (Table 22). An oversight in the survey design was that we neglected to include a category in the two profit questions for those who had no profit or net losses in 2024. For the purposes of this analysis, we understand the “Less than \$1,000” category to include farms that had zero or negative profits.

Table 21. Farm/Ranch Gross Revenue from All Sources, 2024

Revenue	Count	Percent
Less than \$1,000	21	2%
\$1,000 – \$4,999	37	4%
\$5,000 – \$24,999	115	12%
\$25,000 – \$99,999	272	29%
\$100,000 – \$249,999	169	18%
\$250,000 – \$499,999	108	12%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	84	9%
\$1 million - \$4.99 million	102	11%
\$5 million - \$9.99 million	16	2%
Greater than \$10 million	8	1%

Note. n = 932. 133 respondents did not answer the question

Table 22. Farm/Ranch Profit from All Sources, 2024

Profit	Count	Percent
Less than \$1,000	220	24%
\$1,000 – \$4,999	112	12%
\$5,000 – \$24,999	228	25%
\$25,000 – \$99,999	210	23%
\$100,000 – \$249,999	71	8%
\$250,000 – \$499,999	36	4%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	18	2%
\$1 million - \$4.99 million	12	1%
\$5 million - \$9.99 million	0	0%
Greater than \$10 million	2	0%

Note. n = 909. 156 Respondents did not answer the questions

Agritourism Revenue and Profit

We followed by asking the same categorical questions, but this time about revenue and profit from agritourism-related sales and services in 2024. Responses are in Table 23 and Table 24 below. Like with the question on farm-level profits, we understand the “Less than \$1,000” response in Table 24 to include operations that had zero or negative profits from agritourism in 2024.

Table 23. Gross Revenue from Agritourism-Related Sales and Services, 2024

Revenue	Count	Percent
Less than \$1,000	104	11%
\$1,000 – \$4,999	116	13%
\$5,000 – \$24,999	191	21%
\$25,000 – \$99,999	221	24%
\$100,000 – \$249,999	109	12%
\$250,000 – \$499,999	75	8%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	48	5%
\$1 million - \$4.99 million	41	5%
\$5 million - \$9.99 million	4	0%
Greater than \$10 million	2	0%

Note. n = 911. 154 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 24. Profit from Agritourism-Related Sales and Services, 2024

Profit	Count	Percent
Less than \$1,000	244	27%
\$1,000 – \$4,999	156	17%
\$5,000 – \$24,999	242	27%
\$25,000 – \$99,999	160	18%
\$100,000 – \$249,999	56	6%
\$250,000 – \$499,999	29	3%
\$500,000 – \$999,999	12	1%
\$1 million - \$4.99 million	9	1%
\$5 million - \$9.99 million	0	0%
Greater than \$10 million	0	0%

Note. n = 909. 156 respondents did not answer the question.

Revenue and Profit Comparisons

To understand the relationships between farm revenue, farm profit, agritourism revenue, and agritourism profit required some data manipulation. We created interval versions of the categorical questions in Tables 21-24 by assigning respondents the mid-point value of the category they selected (Less than \$1,000 = \$500; \$1k - \$4.9k = \$3k; \$5k - \$24.9k = \$15k, and so on). We used this interval variable to compute four ratios:

- 1. Farm net profit / Farm gross revenue
- 2. Agritourism net profit / Agritourism gross revenue
- 3. Agritourism gross revenue / Farm gross revenue
- 4. Agritourism net profit / Farm net profit

For ratios 1-3, the denominator should always be larger than the numerator, so we marked all values greater than one as NA to remove them from the analysis. Ratio 4 could be greater than one if profit from agritourism is helping to absorb losses from other farm activities; however, we elected to likewise mark values greater than one as NA as it was not possible to distinguish between possible errors and true reports. All these ratios are rough estimates, being based on self-reported categorical data transformed into interval variables. Yet viewing the results as a whole shows interesting trends using these broad strokes.

Figure 2 below compares the profit ratios (net profit / gross revenue) for the whole farm and for agritourism activities. While the medians are close (17% for the farm and 24% for agritourism), the mean agritourism profit ratio (48%) exceeds the mean farm profit ratio (28%) by 20 percentage points. This comparison suggests that agritourism is across the board more profitable than the full farm business, and that some farms are doing especially well in agritourism and pulling that mean profit ratio far over the median (this latter dynamic exists for the full farm as well, though to a lesser extent).

Figure 2. Comparison: Farm Profit Ratio vs. Agritourism Profit Ratio

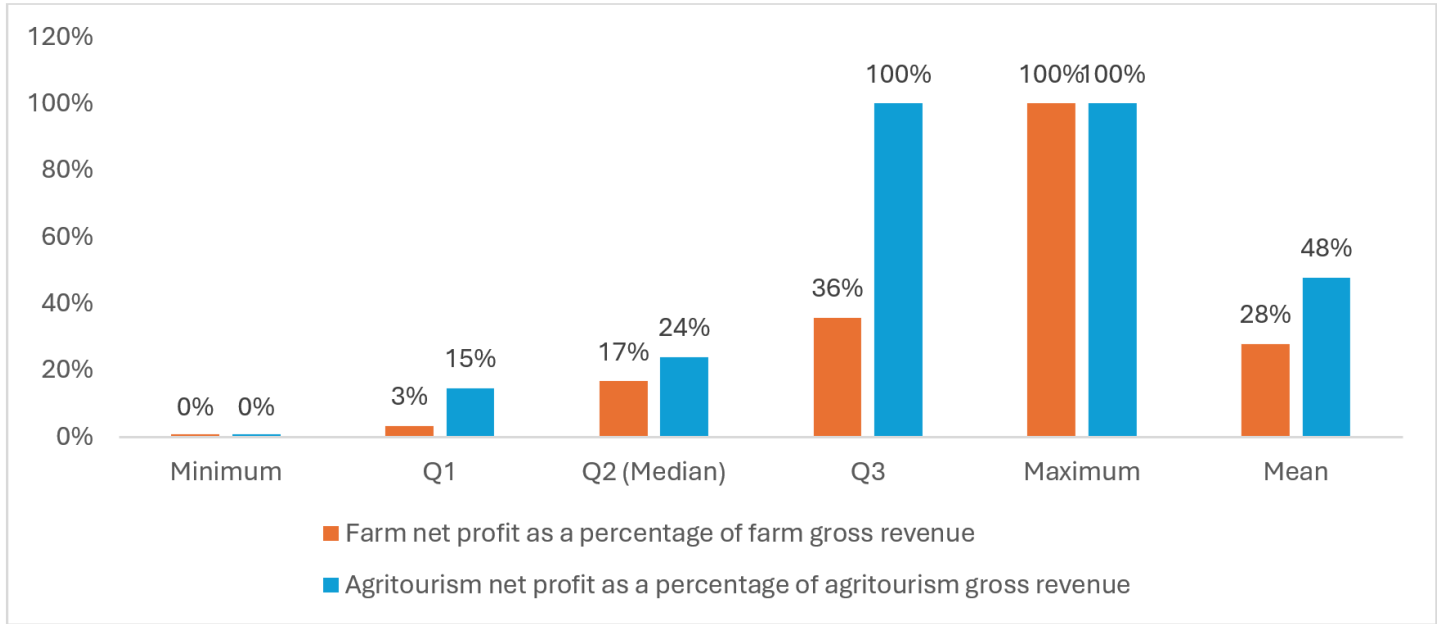
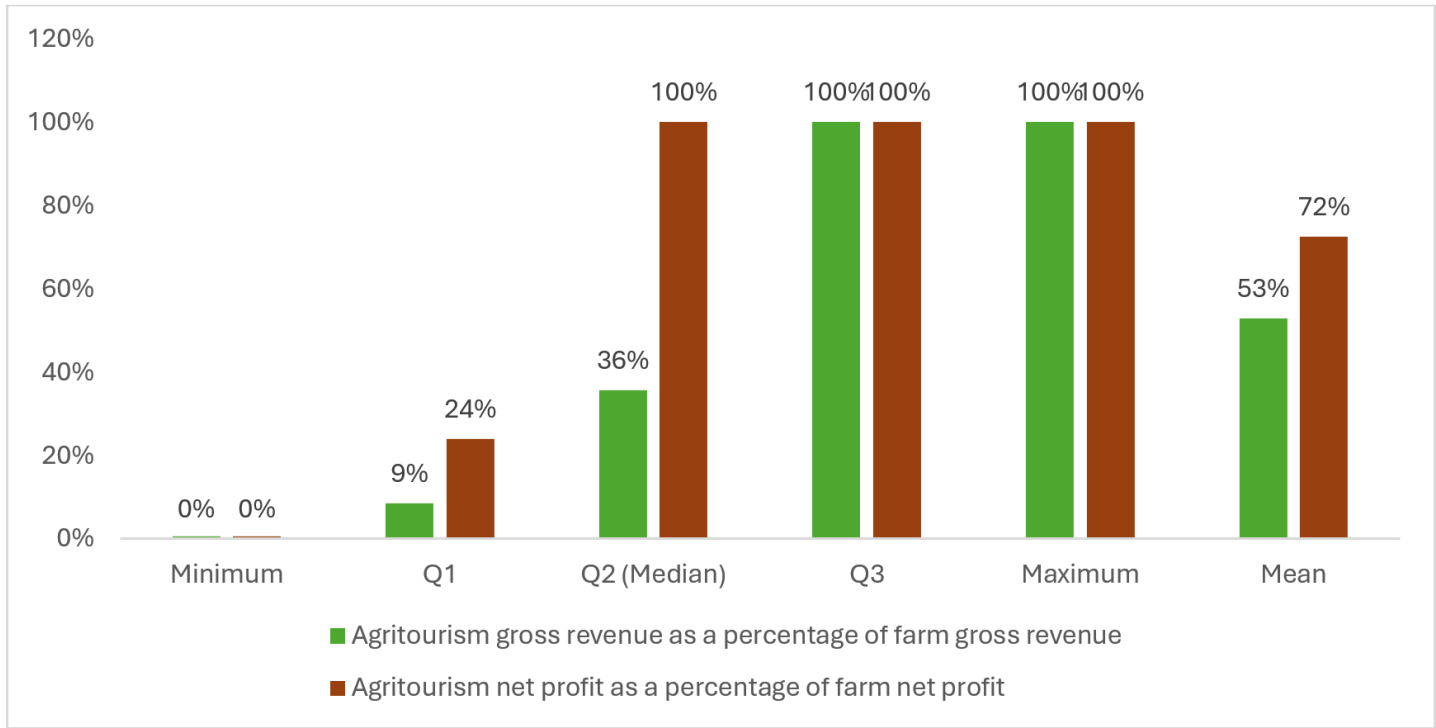


Figure 3 compares the portion of farm gross revenue from agritourism (Ratio 3) with the portion of farm net profit from agritourism (Ratio 4). As noted above, the values in Ratio 4 are likely suppressed because we removed all values greater than one, but in this case alone the numerator could exceed the denominator. Still, the chart demonstrates that, while agritourism is a significant contributor to farm gross revenue (with a median of 36% and a mean of 53%), it is even more important to farm net profit, accounting for an average of 72% of farm profit and with a median value of 100%.

Figure 3. Comparison: Portion of Farm Revenue from Agritourism vs. Portion of Farm Profit from Agritourism



These comparisons illustrate the economic motivations for agritourism as a revenue diversification strategy. Figure 2 suggests that agritourism activities are more profitable than the farm business as a whole. Farmers are able to set their own prices for agritourism activities, whereas farmers typically accept market prices for wholesale sales of agricultural products. And while certain kinds of agritourism can require significant upfront investment to adapt farm infrastructure for visitors, agritourism generally has fewer annual inputs than farming.

Figure 3 demonstrates this same dynamic in a different light: while agritourism gross revenue does make up a significant portion of farm gross revenue for our respondents, it accounts for an even greater proportion of farm net profit. Though our data on revenue and profit is limited, it is consistent in showing that agritourism can be an important ingredient in farm profitability by adding a business with different fiscal dynamics than the production and sale of agricultural products.

Respondent Demographics

In past surveys, we only asked the demographic information of the person completing the survey. As most farms in the US are owned and operated by families, this gave us an incomplete picture of farm owner and operator demographics. For this survey, we tested a new approach and asked for the demographic information of all farm decision makers.

We began by asking about the respondent’s own role in the business; they could select all that applied (Table 25). Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that they were the business owner.

Table 25. Role in Farm Business

Role	Count	Percent
Owner	811	85%
Business manager	397	42%
Contact person/public liaison for business	321	34%
Business employee	128	13%
Volunteer	40	4%
Other	0	0%

Note. n = 950. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

We then asked how many people were involved in farm management or decision making in 2024, asking respondents to include themselves, family members, and owners engaged in managing operations, regardless of time spent working on the farm, and to exclude anyone not involved in decision making. Respondents wrote in an exact number; we have sorted it into categories in Table 26. Half of farms were operated by either one (n = 84, 9%) or two people (n = 390, 43%). Another third had between three and five decision makers, and just 13% had more than five decision makers.

Table 26. Number of People Involved in Farm Management or Decision Making

Number of decision makers	Count	Percent
1	84	9%
2	390	43%
3	148	16%
4	107	12%
5	63	7%
6-10	85	9%
11-20	26	3%
More than 20	4	0%

Note. n = 907.

For each of the succeeding demographic questions, respondents filled out the information for all farm decision makers. We provided up to five individual fields. Farms with more than five decision makers then received an open text box to provide demographic information for the remaining decision makers in each category. We cleaned the data in R to produce summary statistics demonstrating the demographic makeup of the farms in our sample.

Occupation

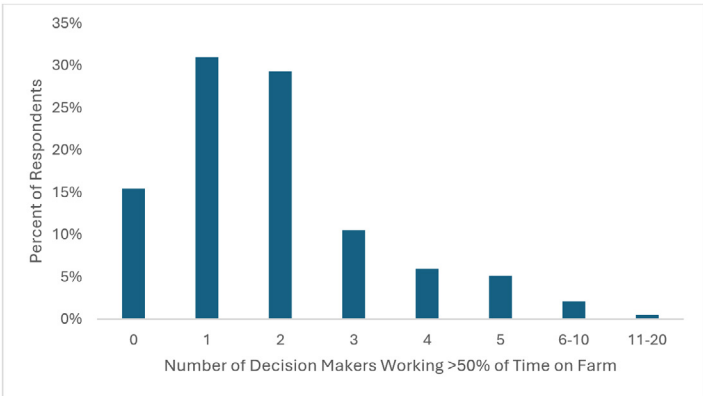
We began by asking at which occupation each farm decision maker spent the majority of their worktime in 2024. We provided three options:

- Work for this farm, ranch, vineyard, or agroforestry or aquaculture operation
- Other employment
- Retired, homemaking, or non-work due to disability

Eighty-five percent of respondents had at least one person who spent the majority of their work time at the farm. Conversely, 44% had at least one person who spent the majority of their time at other employment, and 19% had decision-makers who were retired, homemaking, or non-working due to disability.

Figure 4 below shows the number of decision makers spending the majority of their work time on the farm by percentage of respondents. As noted above, 15% of respondents had no decision makers who spent the majority of their time on farmwork, and 85% had at least one. Just under a third (n = 291, 31%) had one decision maker working on farm, and another 29% (n = 275) had 2 decision makers who spent the majority of their time on farm work. Less than a quarter had three or more decision makers who worked 50% FTE or more on farm.

Figure 4. Number of Decision Makers Spending the Majority of Worktime on Farm



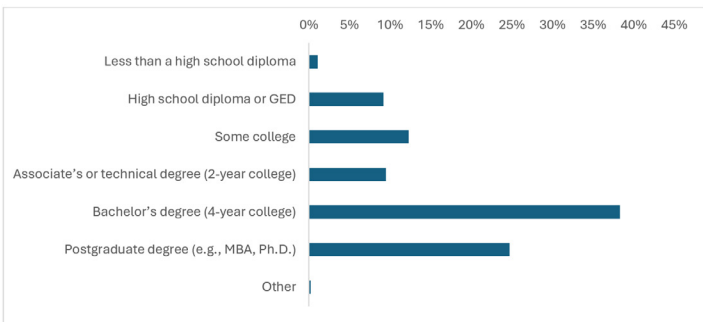
Note. n = 939.

Education

We asked respondents to provide the highest level of educational attainment for each farm decision maker. In total, 84% of responding farms (n = 782) had at least one decision maker who had attained a bachelor’s or postgraduate degree.

We divided the number of decision makers with each level of educational attainment by the total number of decision makers for each farm (Figure 5). On average, 32% of farm decision makers had less than a bachelor’s degree, 38% of farm decision makers had a bachelor’s degree, and 25% had a postgraduate degree.

Figure 5. Mean Percentage of Total Farm Operators with Each Level of Educational Attainment



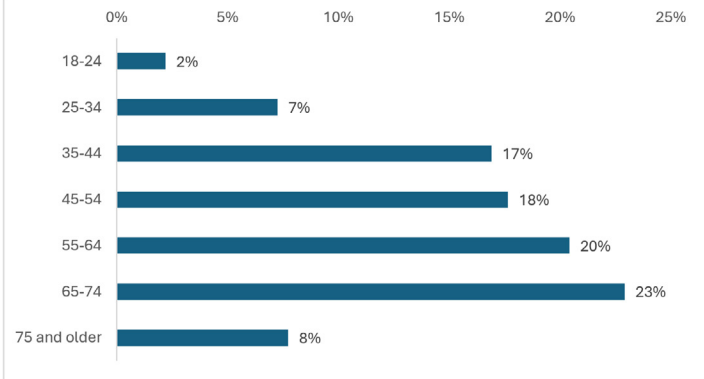
Note. n = 889.

Age

We asked a categorical question on operator age for each decision maker on the farm. Our findings highlight the aging population of US farmers. On average, 31% of decision makers on a given farm were over the age of 65, whereas just

9% were under the age of 35. Full results are broken out by category in Figure 6.

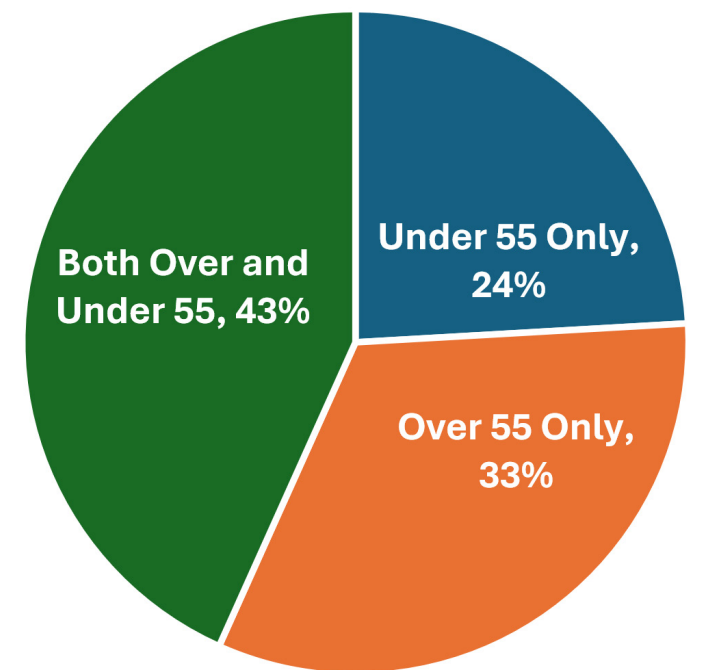
Figure 6. Age: Mean Percent of Farm Decision Makers in Each Age Category



Note. n = 888.

We also examined which farms have a wide spread of decision maker ages, compared to those with just younger or older decision makers. We chose 55 as the cutoff age since, on average, about half the decision makers on a given farm were under this age and half were over. As shown in Figure 7, about a quarter of farms only had decision makers under the age of 55, and one third only had decision makers over the age of 55. The remaining 43% had decision makers both over and under 55 years old.

Figure 7. Ages of Farm Decision Makers

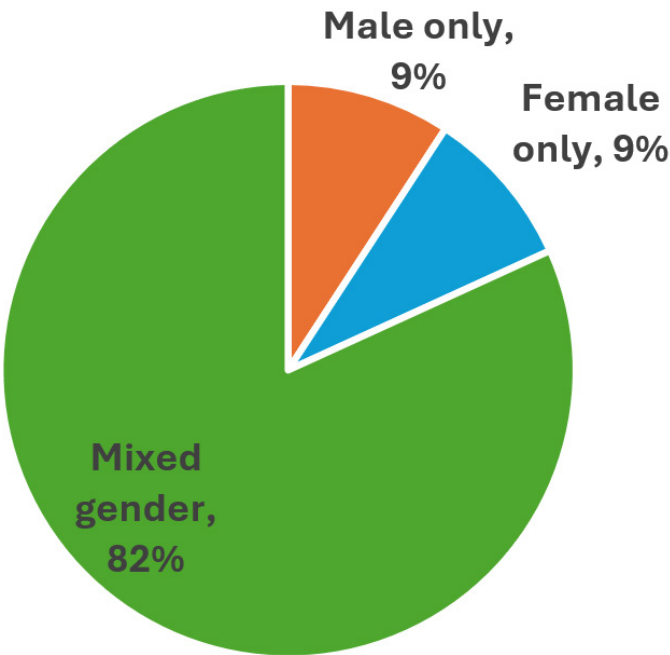


Note. n = 938.

Gender

Farm decision makers were fairly evenly split in terms of gender. On a given farm, an average of 47% of operators were identified as male, and 49% as female; the median value for both was 50%. We also created a categorical variable to understand which farms had only male decision makers, which had only female decision makers, and which had decision makers of both genders (Figure 8). Here, too, there was a fairly even split: 9% of farms had only male decision makers (n = 85), and 9% likewise had only female decision makers (n = 83). The remaining 82% had decision makers of both genders.

Figure 8. Genders of Farm Decision Makers



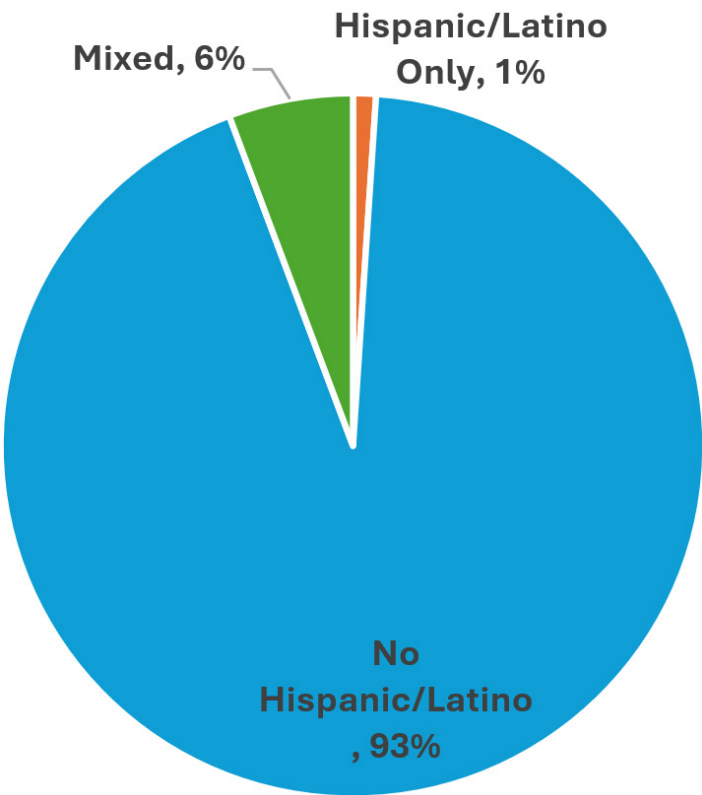
Note. n = 923.

Ethnicity

We asked the standard two-category ethnicity question from the U.S. Census Bureau; the options were “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino.” Across all farms, just 79 decision makers were identified as Hispanic or Latino. Out of the 857 farms that provided data on ethnicity, just 9 (1%) had only Hispanic or Latino decision makers. Another 49 (6%) had both decision makers who were Hispanic or

Latino and operators who were not Hispanic nor Latino. The remaining 799 (93%) had no Hispanic or Latino decision makers.

Figure 9. Ethnicities of Farm Decision Makers

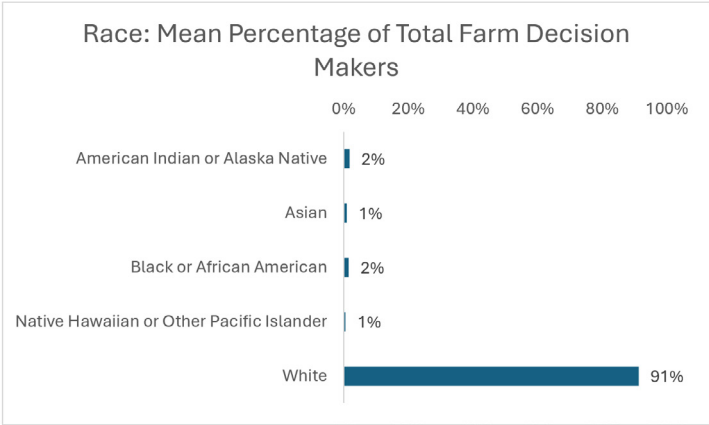


Note. n = 857.

Race

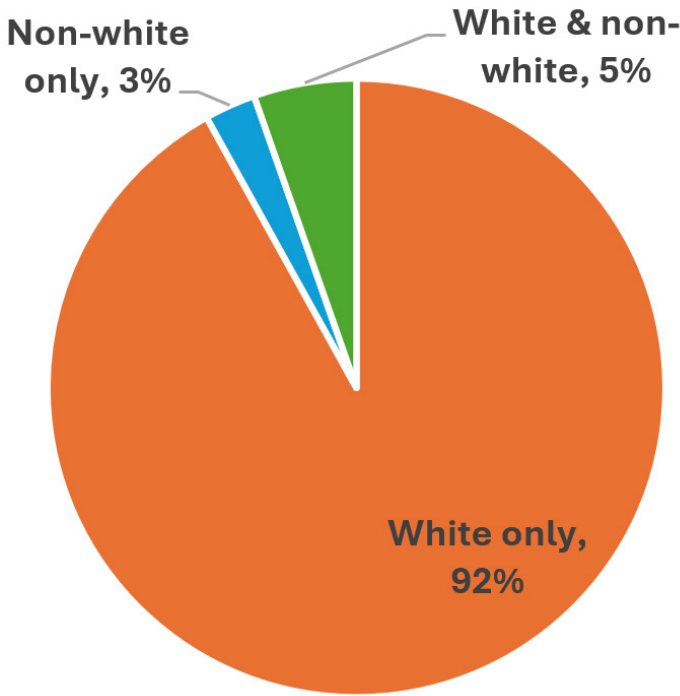
We asked respondents to report the race of farm decision-makers using the five categories from the U.S. Census: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and White. On average, 91% of decision makers at a given farm were White (Figure 10). Because there were few non-white individuals in the sample, we only used three levels for our categorical variable: farms with all white decision makers (92%, n = 787); farms with all non-white decision makers (3%, n = 23); and farms with both white and non-white decision makers (5%, n = 46) (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Race: Mean Percentage of Total Farm Decision Makers



Note. n = 818.

Figure 11. Races of Farm Decision Makers

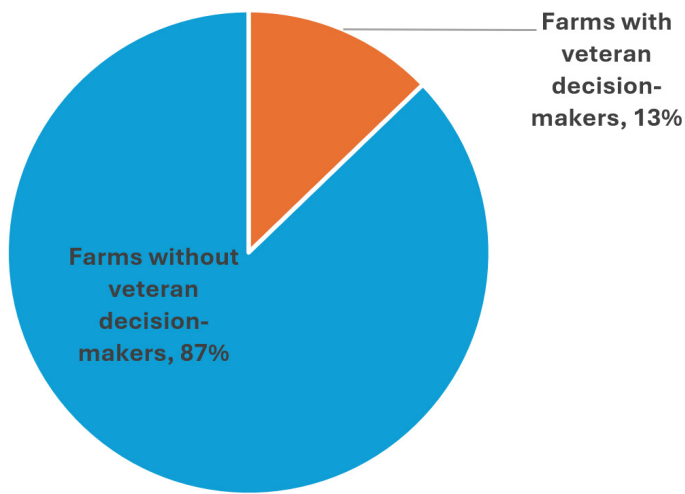


Note. n = 856.

Veteran Status

We closed the demographics section by asking respondents if any of their farm decision-makers were veterans of the U.S. military. Thirteen percent of farms had decision makers who were veterans; the remaining 87% did not (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Veteran Status of Farm Decision Makers



Note. n = 921.

Mixed Methods Findings by Subject

Visitor Profiles & Visitor Data Collection

Visitor Profiles: Long Survey

We asked survey respondents how many visits they received in 2024 (Table 27), as well as what percentage of these visits were from people who traveled 50 miles or more from their homes (Table 28).

We asked respondents to count the number of visits, not visitors, “so that one person who visited 10 times in 2024” would count as 10 visits. We clarified that “a tour bus of 50 people would be 50 visits” and “a family of 4 staying overnight for 2 nights would be 4 visits.” The question was categorical and the answers approximations.

Table 27. Approximate Number of Visits, 2024

Number of Visits	Count	Percent
Under 100 visits	191	19%
101 - 500 visits	244	24%
501 - 5,000 visits	281	27%
5,001 - 25,000 visits	153	15%
25,001 - 100,000 visits	91	9%
100,001 - 500,000 visits	48	5%
500,001 - 1 million visits	0	0%
Over 1 million visits	2	0%
Unsure	19	2%

Note. n = 1029. 36 respondents did not answer the question.

Table 28. Percentage of Visits from People Who Traveled 50 Miles or More from Home

Percentage	Count	Percent
None	51	5%
1% - 10%	280	27%
11% - 25%	220	21%
26% - 50%	159	15%
51% - 75%	125	12%
76% - 100%	110	11%
Unsure	95	9%

Note. n = 1040. 25 respondents did not answer the question

We ran a statistical analysis to examine the relationship between the percentage of visitors who traveled 50+ miles and the types of agritourism activities offered. Because the question on types of visitor experiences allowed respondents to select all that apply (Table 11), we conducted an ordinal logistic regression using the following formula:

$$\text{logit}(P(\text{fifty miles} \leq j)) = \beta_{j0} - \eta_1 \text{direct sales} - \eta_2 \text{overnight stays} - \eta_3 \text{education} - \eta_4 \text{entertainment events} - \eta_5 \text{outdoor recreation}$$

Table 29. Ordinal Logistic Regression Results: Percent of Visitors From 50+ Miles Away by Types of Visitor Experience

Experience Type	Coefficient	Odds Ratio
Sales of your products on your operation	-0.493**	0.611
Overnight stays	1.665***	5.289
Education	0.131	1.140
Entertainment/events	0.125	1.134
Outdoor recreation	0.365*	1.441

Note. n = 945. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Results are summarized in Table 29. We found that direct sales, overnight stays, and outdoor recreation were all significantly related with the percentage of visitors who traveled 50 miles or more. Farms with onsite direct sales had 38.9% lower odds of having a higher proportion of out of town visitors compared with farms without direct sales. On the other hand,

farms that offered overnight stays had five times higher odds of having more out of town visitors than those without, and farms with outdoor recreation activities had a 1.4 times higher odds of having more out of town visitors than those without. These odds are approximations: the parallel slopes assumption did not hold for either direct sales or overnight stays, suggesting that the odds ratios for these variables are different when advancing between the categories for percentages of out of town visitors listed in Table 28.

These results make logical sense: direct sales attract local community members looking for groceries and other farm products, and overnight stays attract people who don't live nearby. Out of town visitors may also be more likely to seek out recreation activities. Education, entertainment, and events had no relationship with visitor distance, suggesting that these offerings are attractive to both groups. Though self-explanatory, these statistical findings contextualize the interview results below about attracting local and non-local visitors. Agritourism operators looking to attract local community members and/or tourists should think about tailoring their offerings to their intended audience.

Interview Findings: Visitor Demographics and Engagement in Agritourism Operations

Analysis of interview data revealed some of the deeper dynamics of farmer thinking around attracting local and out of town visitors. While survey results suggested a higher proportion of local visitors compared to those that traveled 50 miles to their destination (Table 28), five of our ten interviewees reported that their primary clientele originated from outside their immediate geographic areas, and that they struggled to attract local visitors. The analysis below examines interviewed operator perspectives on visitor demographics, identifies emerging consumer trends, and explores the relational dynamics that shape successful agritourism engagement.

The Local Visitor Paradox: For half of the farms we interviewed, local residents represented a significantly underutilized visitor segment. While one of these farms (Farm #10 in Table 2) focused primarily on overnight stays, the other four held educational and entertainment activities to which they hoped to attract members of their local community.

The data suggests two primary explanations for local non-participation:

Familiarity as a Barrier. One operator articulated how personal familiarity may create psychological distance from the agritourism experience, noting that local residents may question the value of visiting an operation of a neighbor whom they already know personally. This suggests that proximity reduces perceived novelty and educational value.

Local Marketing Gap. Operators also identified potential marketing failures, with one respondent stating, “maybe it’s a marketing issue.” This finding dovetails with responses to the survey question on challenges to marketing, where 79% of respondents reported challenges with reaching their target audience (Table 36). Many farmers may need assistance with designing offerings specifically for local community members, or with marketing efforts to attract local populations to existing offerings that may be of interest to residents.

The transparency-seeking consumer. Operators also identified an emerging visitor demographic motivated by food quality concerns and distrust of industrial food systems, and attracted to agritourism’s values of education and transparency. Interview data associates this transparency-seeking visitor with the following characteristics: skepticism of the conventional food systems, with operators observing visitors who are “untrusting of what is happening in food;” desire for direct connection, with consumers actively seeking to “see where their food’s coming from;” and conversion potential, with agritourism visitors becoming loyal customers through knowledge-exchange and relationship-building during their agritourism visits. This trajectory illustrates how experiential knowledge translates into purchasing loyalty, with the farm visit serving as both an educational intervention and a relationship-building mechanism.

Operator perspectives reveal agritourism visitor demographics characterized by geographic distance, food consciousness, and receptivity to relational engagement. The paradoxical absence of local participation, combined with the presence of transparency-seeking consumers, suggests both challenges and opportunities in visitor cultivation. Success appears contingent on operator hospitality competencies as well as strategic commitment to visitor relationship development, positioning agritourism as distinct from traditional agricultural production in its interpersonal and service-oriented demands.

Visitor Data Collection

We asked both interviewees and survey respondents if and how they collected data about their visitors. The survey question was based on interview findings and included several closed categories as well as a write-in field (Table 30).

Table 30. How Do You Collect Information about Your Visitors?

Data Collection Type	Count	Percent
We do not collect information about our visitors	456	43%
We ask visitors to sign up for a mailing list	368	35%
We look at our website analytics and social media followers	362	34%
We know from experience who our visitors are	306	29%
We collect visitor information using our point-of-sale or online registration system	292	28%
We ask visitors to complete a survey	58	6%
Other	11	1%

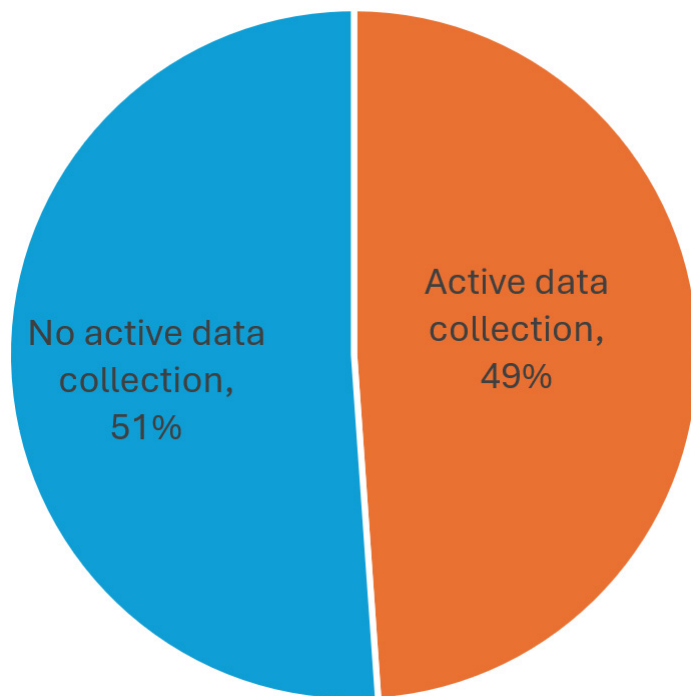
Note. n = 1031. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Other responses included: guest books or other physical records; online reviews; and other tech analytics (“wifi;” “geofencing”).

We broke responses into two exclusive categories to better understand the picture of visitor data collection: active data collection and no active data collection. Respondents who reported that they asked visitors to complete a survey, asked visitors to sign up for a mailing list, and/or recorded visitor information in their point-of-sale or registration system were coded as engaging in active data collection. We also reviewed write-in responses and coded active data collection activities manually. Respondents who stated that they did not collect

visitor data or only engaged in passive data collection (knowing from experience who their visitors are or looking at website analytics and social media followers) were coded as not engaging in active data collection. Results were fairly evenly split between the two categories (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Visitor Data Collection Typology



Note. n = 1,031. Active data collection activities include: “we ask visitors to complete a survey,” “we ask visitors to sign up for a mailing list,” “we collect visitor information using our point-of-sale or online registration system” and selected write-in responses: “our app;” “guest book;” “sign our registry;” and “personal email after visit.”

Yet just because farms are engaging in some variety of active data collection does not mean they are able to use that data to further their work. When we delved deeper into the question of visitor data collection in our interviews, we found that just one out of ten farms was engaged in purposeful visitor data tracking and analysis. The majority of the operators we spoke with recognized the value of visitor data for improving marketing efforts, but identified time, skill, and resource barriers preventing implementation.

It is noteworthy that the single farmer we interviewed who tracked visitor numbers and demographics operated a non-profit farm with an educational mission and collected data primarily for external accountability purposes rather than internal operational improvement. He stated: “how many kids

came to the farm...how many tours I had, all that info is vital for us to get more funding and grant info.” This suggests that when external pressures or incentives exist, data collection becomes more feasible, but absent of such drivers, operators lack capacity to implement these tracking systems.

Capacity Constraints. Many operators named capacity constraints as the primary barrier to data collection and utilization. Operators highlighted that they “really don’t have time to collect [visitor data],” and expressed interest in university partnerships that could help them establish data systems. One operator collected visitor information through a web-based advanced registration portal and had the skills to conduct data analysis, but due to time constraints stated that “we’re not really evaluating the data.” This case represents a missed opportunity: while many farms are engaged in some sort of active data collection (Figure 13), this visitor information may sit unused due to lack of operator capacity while operational decisions proceed without engaging with these operational assets. This case suggests that even when the technical infrastructure for data collection exists, such as a website registration system, time constraints and expertise prevent translation of raw data into usable insights.

Anecdotal Data. Some operators, especially those who hosted overnight guests, described relying on informal and interpersonal knowledge rather than systematic data collection. Their approaches for this anecdotal data acquisition ranged from dining table conversations to observation-based understandings. Operators following this approach surface several notable characteristics. The extended contact time operators have with overnight guests supports operators in gaining qualitative depth through personal interactions that would not be possible in shorter visits for sales, events, and educational programming. This approach functions effectively on a small scale where operators can personally interact with all visitors but becomes difficult as visitor volume increases. However, without systemic documentation, operators are unable to operationalize data to enable trend analysis or quantitative assessment. Importantly, the operators we spoke to recognized the potential value of data documentation even while continuing to operate without such systems.

Scale and Aspirational Data Practices. Operators consistently recognized the perceived value of visitor data even when they did not collect it themselves. Statements including “I wish we did [collect data]” and “that’s something that could be really

helpful for us” suggest that operators understand that visitor data, including email addresses, are business assets that enable ongoing communication and marketing. The desire to have “numbers that we can share and measure how well our agritourism is doing” indicates how a strong grasp of data can be valuable in quantifying success and identifying improvement areas, particularly as operations grow.

Data Barriers. Several obstacles emerged preventing operators from widespread data adaptation. For many, the intensive labor demands of running a farm and a tourism operation (along with off-farm jobs in some cases) left limited capacity for the administrative system adaptation of data management. Beyond “I really don’t have time,” operators also referenced needing external expertise to develop and implement technical systems for data collection and analysis. Finally, walk-up and/or high-volume visitor activities like direct sales, u-pick, and harvest festivals face further challenges to collecting visitor data as they do not require advanced registration. Purposeful data collection for these agritourism activities would require intercept surveys or customization of the point-of-sale system to enable collection of basic visitor data.

Data Collection Implications. Without visitor data, many operations lacked an empirical foundation for making marketing decisions, capacity planning, or program development. The absence of this data infrastructure may constrain operation expansion by limiting ability to understand and respond to visitor patterns. Operators’ expressed interest in university

collaboration on data collection points to a mutually beneficial research partnership potential where researchers gain data access while operators receive analytical expertise.

Visitor data collection in agritourism operations remains underdeveloped, with systematic practices nearly absent across interviewed farms. In our interviews, data collection activities ranged from purposeful collection, recording and analysis (at just one out of ten farms) to passive data accumulation without analysis, to rich anecdotal knowledge without documentation. Barriers to collection included time constraints, expertise gaps, infrastructure limitations, and operational model challenges. Despite recognizing data’s value for planning and decision making, most operations had not translated this awareness into action. This data void represents an opportunity where relatively simple interventions could significantly enhance business knowledge across the agritourism sector. The expressed interest in external partnerships suggests potential for collaborative solutions that build data capacity while advancing research knowledge about the agritourism sector.

Agritourism Goals and Successes

We asked two companion questions in the survey: one about what motivated respondents to develop agritourism, and a follow-up question asking them to rate their success at each of these goals. Both questions were categorical with answers on a three-point Likert scale.

Table 31. Motivations and Goals for Developing Agritourism

Goal	Percent		
	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Increase farm/ranch revenue	71%	23%	4%
Educate the public about agriculture	62%	30%	6%
Build goodwill in the community	59%	35%	4%
Increase traffic to on-farm sales outlet	50%	26%	12%
Increase community access to local food	46%	27%	10%
Diversify farm/ranch market channels	43%	33%	13%
Enjoy social interaction with the public	43%	44%	11%
Diversify products and experiences	42%	37%	12%
Provide family employment	41%	28%	17%
Other	5%	0%	0%

Note. n = 1020. Themes in write-in responses include: build a strong customer base; generate income to cover expenses; educate about environmental issues; create opportunities for fun, family, and joy; provide connection to the outdoors.

Table 32. Success in Achieving Agritourism Goals

Goal	Percent		
	Successful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Unsuccessful
Enjoy social interaction with the public	82%	14%	1%
Build goodwill in the community	81%	15%	1%
Educate the public about agriculture	78%	19%	1%
Increase farm/ranch revenue	75%	18%	3%
Increase traffic to on-farm sales outlet	61%	23%	1%
Diversify products and experiences	60%	25%	1%
Provide family employment	59%	20%	3%
Increase community access to local food	58%	22%	1%
Diversify farm/ranch market channels	57%	27%	1%
Other	4%	0%	0%

Note. n = 1019. Themes in write-in responses same as goals above: build a strong customer base; generate income to cover expenses; educate about environmental issues; create opportunities for fun, family, and joy; provide connection to the outdoors.

We also asked our interviewees why they had agritourism activities on their farm. Their responses revealed that they saw their work as mission-driven enterprises that transcended conventional business objectives. Even when discussing economic viability, operators spoke to how this could serve broader social purposes including food systems education, environmental stewardship, and community food sovereignty. The farmers we talked with framed agritourism's primary value as pedagogical rather than transactional, positioning farm visits as interventions for food systems literacy. This educational mission emerged as a central reason for opening their operations to visitors, with revenue generation functioning as a secondary, albeit necessary, motivation.

One operator captured this orientation powerfully, "That's why I have the tourism. Because the more folks, the more kids that come, the more babies that come, they see me pull a carrot out of the ground...they can never unsee that." This language highlights the dimensions of agritourism's educational mission that includes knowledge creation, an intergenerational focus with long-term investment in food literacy, and agricultural demystification. Through education and farm visits, operators aim to address the fundamental disconnection between food consumption and agricultural production by reconnecting consumers to material experiences obscured by industrial food systems.

Operators also emphasized land care and environmental responsibility as central to both their agricultural practices and agritourism messaging. This stewardship ethic serves as both an operational philosophy as well as a public education strategy. Operators embraced this ethic to include land, water, and animals, demonstrating a comprehensive environmental consciousness that extends beyond just their immediate soil needs. Agritourism, then, becomes a platform for environmental education and values transmission. In other words, agritourism becomes a mechanism for making invisible stewardship practices visible and comprehensible for a non-farming public.

The operators we interviewed envisioned a future where agritourism could generate a sustainable income while also advancing food systems literacy and environmental stewardship. Participants emphasized the educational mission driving their operations, and many viewed agritourism as a vehicle for building consumer awareness about sustainable farming practices and care for the land more broadly. Simultaneously, operators identified the infrastructure needs necessary to achieve agritourism stability, including targeted marketing strategies. Operators named the importance of and challenges around systematic business development planning.

Challenges to Agritourism

We asked a series of questions about challenges to agritourism, separated into categories: business and financial challenges; regulatory, liability, security, and accessibility challenges; marketing challenges; and a final general category. All four questions asked people to rate the degree of challenge on a three-point Likert scale: very challenging, somewhat challenging, and not at all challenging.

Business and Financial Challenges

The majority of respondents found all business and financial aspects of agritourism at least somewhat challenging. “Labor” and “time management” took first and second place respectively when looking at “very challenging” responses alone as well as when looking at combined “very” and “somewhat” challenging ratings.

Table 33. Business and Financial Challenges to Agritourism

Issue	Percent		
	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging
Labor (including family labor)	40%	47%	10%
Time management	38%	47%	13%
Availability and/or accessibility of USDA grants and other financial support	35%	36%	9%
Availability of operating capital	28%	43%	24%
Cash flow management	26%	48%	24%
Marketing your operation	18%	54%	26%
Developing and implementing a business plan	10%	46%	35%
Other	1%	0%	0%

Note. n = 984. Write in responses rated “very challenging” included: the economy; electrical costs; offering competitive benefits; and certifying organic.

In the interviews, operators articulated a tension in deciding how to price products and activities: visitors underestimate operational costs, while operators struggle to price services profitably without deterring customers. One operator explained: “making things affordable and in line with spending expectations, while also making a profit is a challenge. People don’t realize how much it costs to operate a high amount of acreage and complain even about a \$5-\$10 entry fee.” Visitor resistance to entry fees suggests a lack of public education about the operational realities and costs of agritourism. While operators face rising costs of insurance, infrastructure maintenance, and regulatory compliance, they are further taxed with the psychological costs of having to deal with demanding visitors. One operator notes how “dealing with the public is too exhausting on top of running the farm and having full time jobs. One bad guest ruins it for weeks.” These psychological and emotional costs, rarely calculated into business planning, lead operators to make business decisions in order to maintain balance. One operator shares they are “downsizing to have more time with our teens and remove some stress/pressure.” This financial and quality of life tradeoff indicates that economic pressures alone do not sustain business operations when psychological costs and stress become unbearable.

Regulatory, Liability, Security, and Accessibility Challenges

Liability concerns and the cost and availability of insurance were the two most challenging, with liability taking first place across both “very” and “somewhat” challenging categories, and insurance receiving the greatest number of “very challenging” ratings.

Table 34. Regulatory, Liability, Security, and Accessibility Challenges to Agritourism

Issue	Percent		
	Very challeng- ing	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging
Cost/availability of insurance	43%	38%	18%
Liability concerns	34%	48%	17%
State/local regulations (including zoning and permitting)	25%	40%	31%
Local/state taxes	19%	43%	34%
Visitor accessibility (ADA compliance)	16%	45%	30%
Lack of a uniform definition of agritourism	13%	28%	48%
Concerns with neighbors	11%	26%	59%
Biosecurity	7%	34%	38%
Food safety/proper food handling	6%	33%	43%
Other	1%	0%	0%

Note. n = 988. Write-in responses rated “very challenging” included: issues with conservation easement; pest management; parking; bathrooms; and e-commerce security.

Multiple operators we interviewed identified regulatory burdens as a significant operational obstacle, with many sharing particular frustrations with contradictory and burdensome requirements. For operators, administrative and regulatory demands pile up, forcing them to navigate a regulatory environment where the rules do not seem to account for operational and livelihood implications. Operators emphasized that policymakers “don’t have a great understanding” of agritourism and create regulations that, though well-meaning, impose disproportionate burdens on small operations.

One operator highlighted how dealing with “agritourism licensing, marketing, food safety, insurance, zoning and sales laws”, each of which requires specialized knowledge, documentation, and compliance costs, takes away from their primary job of producing food. Operators characterized regulatory demands as “contradicting and confusing,” and shared that the burden of “government taxes, permits, and insurance make us wonder if it’s worth staying in business.” These findings reveal that regulatory burdens threaten operational viability, causing operators to question whether agritourism’s burdens justify continuing their operation.

Marketing Challenges

Earlier in the survey, we asked how respondents marketed their agritourism operation to potential visitors. The most commonly selected answer was social media (n = 908, 87%), followed by word of mouth (n = 878, 85%). No other strategy was employed by the majority of respondents. The next most common categories were print advertisements (n = 393, 38%) followed closely by press coverage (n = 386, 37%) and collaboration with other local businesses (n = 372, 36%).

Table 35. How Do You Market Your Agritourism Experiences to Potential Visitors?

Marketing Outlet	Count	Percent
Social media pages	908	87%
Word of mouth	878	85%
Print advertisements	393	38%
Press coverage	386	37%
Collaboration with other local businesses	372	36%
Paid social media advertisements	305	29%
Centralized listing sites (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, Farmstay, Hipcamp)	271	26%
Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and/or Chamber of Commerce	247	24%
USDA Local Food Directory	134	13%
Radio or television advertisements	130	13%
Tour operators or travel agents	72	7%
Other	93	9%

Note. n = 1038. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in the write-in responses included: website and searchability of website on Google; email lists & email newsletters; and events.

Marketing was a major challenge for operators, with over 70% of respondents rating all categories at least somewhat challenging, except for “access to technology or digital tools,” which 58% of respondents found challenging. Time and money were neck-in-neck for most challenging, with 84% of respondents reporting challenges with finding time to work on marketing and 83% reporting challenges with its monetary cost.

Table 36. Marketing Challenges to Agritourism

Issue	Percent		
	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging
Monetary cost of marketing	40%	43%	14%
Adequate time to work on marketing	35%	49%	15%
Access to marketing expertise	28%	45%	24%
Ability to reach your target audience	23%	56%	20%
Access to technology or digital tools for marketing	15%	43%	40%
Other	1%	0%	0%

Note. n = 972. Write-in responses rated “very challenging” included: knowledge of and facility with digital tools; a shifting marketing landscape; and knowing what strategies successfully attract guests.

We ran statistical tests to understand what relationship, if any, there was between marketing strategies used by farms and their self-reported marketing challenges. These were bivariate tests in theory (challenge x marketing strategy) and multivariate tests in

practice, since the question on marketing strategies allowed respondents to check all that applied and had to be broken out into multiple variables. For each marketing challenge as well as the overall challenge to “marketing your operation” (in the business and financial challenges question), we ran an ordinal logistic regression in R to ask: is there a relationship between marketing strategy and whether respondents found the challenge very challenging, somewhat challenging, or not at all challenging? The ordinal logistic regressions followed the following formula:

$$\text{logit}(P(\text{marketingchallenge} \leq j)) = \beta_{j0} - \eta_1 \text{printads} - \eta_2 \text{radiotvads} - \eta_3 \text{socialmedia} - \eta_4 \text{socialads} - \eta_5 \text{press} - \eta_6 \text{listingsites} - \eta_7 \text{usdadirectory} - \eta_8 \text{tourops} - \eta_9 \text{dmochamber} - \eta_{10} \text{collaboration} - \eta_{11} \text{wordofmouth}$$

Our findings are summarized in Table 37. Because “very challenging” was set as the first option in the Likert scale, negative coefficients signify a greater likelihood of finding the topic more challenging, and positive coefficients signify a greater likelihood of finding the topic less challenging. At least one strategy was significant for every marketing challenge, save for the “monetary cost of marketing.” Yet across the board, marketing strategies used was a poor predictor of marketing challenges; the McFadden Pseudo R² values are all under 0.02, meaning that less than 2% of the variation in challengingness was explained by strategies used. These findings imply that the degree of challengingness to different aspects of marketing are not explained by the marketing strategies or outlets used by respondents, and that future multivariate tests are necessary to understand the dynamics underlying marketing challenges.

Table 37: Relationships between Marketing Challenges and Marketing Strategies using Ordinal Logistic Regression

Marketing Strategy	Challenge					
	Marketing your operation	Time for marketing	Access to expertise	Monetary cost	Reaching target audience	Access to tech
Print ads	-0.481**	-0.215	-0.195	-0.254	-0.145	-0.228
Radio or tv ads	-0.180	0.024	0.137	-0.070	-0.024	0.310
Social media pages	-0.364	-0.339	-0.222	-0.300	-0.344	-0.027
Paid social media ads	-0.079	-0.186	-0.156	-0.115	-0.153	0.188
Press coverage	0.247	0.325*	0.291*	0.112	0.222	0.238
Centralized listing sites	-0.200	-0.238	-0.280*	-0.208	-0.214	-0.064
USDA Local Food Directory	-0.118	-0.083	-0.033	-0.043	-0.138	-0.054
Tour operators or travel agents	0.032	-0.440	-0.172	-0.347	-0.605*	-0.607*
DMO or Chamber	0.054	0.152	0.263	-0.075	0.044	0.180
Collaboration with other local businesses	0.219	-0.422**	-0.114	-0.265	-0.145	0.014
Word of mouth	-0.080	-0.189	-0.306	-0.263	-0.173	-0.143
n	958	961	942	946	960	950
McFadden Pseudo R ²	0.012	0.016	0.008	0.014	0.010	0.009

Note. Negative coefficient = more likely to find more challenging; positive coefficient = more likely to find less challenging.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

The challenges posed by marketing were also highlighted by the farmers we interviewed and in the open responses to the survey. Multiple survey responses identified a critical need for marketing support but noted that they needed guidance from professionals with “ag-centered marketing” expertise (as opposed to general marketing guidance from someone without knowledge of agriculture). Operators needed support with websites, online sales, as well as with increasing public awareness of the importance of buying locally. These findings suggest support is needed to fill the digital capacity gaps that operators currently face. Operators emphasized that agritourism requires specialized marketing approaches to meet the labor and infrastructure realities of their operations, including the time required to develop and maintain these systems. One operator we interviewed highlighted that they “have access to lots of information, but don’t have time or brain power at the end of the day to really make use of it,” underscoring that information provision alone is insufficient.

Other Challenges

We closed the section on challenges with a catch-all category for remaining issues. The majority of respondents found extreme weather events, visitor behavior, and visitor expectations at least somewhat challenging. Fewer respondents were challenged by internet access or cell service, local infrastructure, family dynamics, or competition from other agritourism operations. Of these final issues, by far the most challenging was extreme weather events, rated at least somewhat challenging by 77% of respondents, and very challenging by 25% of respondents.

Table 38. Other Challenges to Agritourism

Issue	Percent		
	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging
Extreme weather events	25%	52%	21%
Family dynamics (decision making, succession, etc.)	12%	34%	44%
Internet access and/or cell service	11%	32%	56%
Concerns about visitor behavior	10%	47%	41%
Meeting visitor expectations	7%	48%	44%
Local infrastructure (roads, transportation, electricity, etc.)	6%	27%	64%
Competition from other agritourism options in your area	6%	32%	58%
Other	1%	0%	0%

Note. n = 987. Write-in responses rated “very challenging” included: family needs; work/life balance; aging; parking; and distance from visitors.

In addition to the challenges discussed in previous sections, the operators we interviewed mentioned challenges pertaining to hospitality demands, visitor management, and work-life sustainability. While agritourism was an important income diversification stream for the farmers we interviewed, they noted that it also blurred the boundaries between work and home and required emotional labor and regulatory burdens that threatened both profitability and quality of life.

Operators described persistent challenges managing visitor conduct and expectations, with several operators noting disrespectful or intrusive behaviors from visitors. Difficult behaviors included littering, disobeying posted signs about how to properly interact with farmland and animals, and disregarding you-pick directions. These violations suggest that visitors arrive with an inadequate understanding of agricultural environments and proceed to treat farms as entertainment venues rather than as working landscapes with ecological constraints.

Multiple operators also spoke to how opening the farm to visitors resulted in violations of their privacy, remarking that visitors regularly showed up outside of business hours and expected to be welcomed. One operator lamented that “loss of privacy is a cost of agritourism.” These violations reveal that agritourism operations blur the boundaries of private and public space, with many visitors feeling entitled to access regardless of posted hours and operator privacy needs.

Top Challenges Overall

We combined challenges from all categories into a single table to understand what issues were most pressing across the board. For this combined list, we calculated percentage values out of the total number of respondents who answered at least one challenge question (n = 994). Table 39 shows the top ten challenges when combining the counts of those who rated each issue “very challenging” with those who rated it “somewhat challenging.” This is a compressed list: percentage values for the top ten cover just a 15% range, from 86% in the number one spot to 71% in the number ten spot. The top three issues are all related to time and labor capacity: labor (n = 859, 86%) is followed closely by time management (n = 834, 84%) and adequate time to work on marketing (n = 817, 82%).

Table 39. Top Ten Challenges Rated “Somewhat” or “Very” Challenging

Category	Challenge	Count	Percent
Business and financial	Labor (including family labor)	859	86%
Business and financial	Time management	834	84%
Marketing	Adequate time to work on marketing	817	82%
Regulatory, liability, security, accessibility	Liability concerns	810	81%
Marketing	Monetary cost of marketing	806	81%
Regulatory, liability, security, accessibility	Cost/availability of insurance	793	80%
Marketing	Ability to reach your target audience	766	77%
Other	Extreme weather events	763	77%
Business and financial	Cash flow management	727	73%
Marketing	Access to marketing expertise	705	71%

Note. Count combines all respondents who marked the challenge as “very” or “somewhat” challenging. Percentage values are calculated out of the total number of respondents who answered at least one challenge question across all categories, being n = 994.

Table 40 below shows the top ten issues rated “very challenging” by respondents. This table is likewise tight, with a 17% percent range between the top spot (n = 421, 42%) and the tenth spot (n = 251, 25%). The cost and availability of insurance, which ranks #6 in the overall table, here moves up to the top spot, followed by labor (n = 397, 40%, ranked #1 in the overall table), and then the monetary cost of marketing (n = 388, 39%).

Table 40. Top Ten Challenges Rated “Very Challenging”

Category	Challenge	Count	Percent
Regulatory, liability, security, accessibility	Cost/availability of insurance	421	42%
Business and financial	Labor (including family labor)	397	40%
Marketing	Monetary cost of marketing	388	39%
Business and financial	Time management	371	37%
Business and financial	Availability and/or accessibility of USDA grants and other financial support	344	35%
Marketing	Adequate time to work on marketing	342	34%
Regulatory, liability, security, accessibility	Liability concerns	335	34%
Business and financial	Availability of operating capital	276	28%
Marketing	Access to marketing expertise	268	27%
Business and financial	Cash flow management	251	25%

Note. Percentage values are calculated out of the total number of respondents who answered at least one challenge question across all categories, being n = 994.

Supports Needed for Agritourism

In the longform survey, we asked one closed response question about what types of supports would be helpful (Table 41) along with an open response question that asked operators to elaborate on what had been helpful or unhelpful.

Only two options in the closed-response question were selected by the majority of respondents. Grant programs and other financial resources for agritourism held a strong lead with 70% of respondents (n = 662) choosing this option. Social media marketing and management held a slighter majority at 54% (n = 510). The other topics in the top five were: legal/liability information (n = 437, 46%); marketing plan development (n = 414, 44%); and information about product and consumer trends (n = 377, 40%).

Table 41. What Type of Support Would Help You Be More Successful with Agritourism?

Support	Count	Percent
Grant programs and other financial resources for agritourism	662	70%
Social media marketing & management	510	54%
Legal/liability information	437	46%
Marketing plan development	414	44%
Information about product and consumer trends	377	40%
Website management	375	40%
Resource materials for the public on where to find agritourism experiences	359	38%
Safety information for welcoming visitors	344	37%
Information on types of agritourism offerings	342	36%
Business plan development	269	29%
Human resources/labor management	236	25%
Managing customer relations and customer service	214	23%
Zoning regulations	200	21%
Managing local community relationships	198	21%
Disaster planning and recovery resources	191	20%
Other	19	2%

Note. n = 941. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Write-in responses included: funds for facilities upgrades and maintenance, including ADA compliance; consumer education; consumer spending capacity; tax breaks; networking with other operators.

Operators' open-ended responses about supportive resources revealed a range of needs spanning regulatory navigation, marketing, and business development. Notably, operators articulated frustration with existing support structures, suggesting that support effectiveness depends not merely on availability but on accessibility and alignment with operational realities.

Operators indicated that knowledge exchange with other agritourism operators was a valuable support. This emphasis on peer learning suggests that experiential knowledge from fellow operators holds a unique value in comparison to institutional training. This finding suggests that facilitating agritourism operator networks, through conferences, online communities, or regional associations, may represent a high-impact support intervention.

Operators also expressed ambivalence around financial assistance, with many highlighting how cash-flow constraints prevent participation in reimbursement-based grants and funding. Operators working with tight margins cannot front the costs for projects, making reimbursement grants functionally unavailable even when their farms are technically eligible for funding. This can create a dynamic where financial support reaches only those with sufficient capital reserves, potentially excluding smaller or newer operations. Other operators mentioned seeking grant support but expressed doubts on how to access these opportunities, noting that they "don't even know where to look for these," as one operator summarized. Even when appropriate funding does exist, navigating grant landscapes is complex and requires expertise and time many operators lack.

Future Plans for Agritourism

We asked survey respondents what plans they had for their agritourism operation across the next five years (Table 37). The large majority of respondents were planning for growth, with 67% stating they intended to expand the type of experiences and/or products offered, and 53% planning to invest in physical infrastructure. Just 4% planned to make a reduction in experiences or products, and 2% planned to close their operation.

Table 42. Plans for Agritourism Operation in the Next Five Years

Category	Count	Percent
Expand the type of experiences and/or products offered	690	68%
Invest in more buildings or equipment for my agritourism operation	540	53%
Hire more employees	335	33%
Make no changes (maintain my current level of operations)	248	24%
Reduce the types of experiences and/or products offered	43	4%
Close my agritourism operation	25	2%
Other	22	2%

Note. n = 1021. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Themes in write-in responses included: nearing retirement and seeking succession plan; and lack of certainty regarding plan.

State-Level Analysis

For 2019 National Survey on Agritourism, our team compared a selection of survey findings across the top 6 responding states (Chase et al., 2021b). For this survey, we decided to expand the selection and compare results across all states with 30 respondents or more, totaling 12 states. These are: Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont for the Northeast region; Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia for the South; Michigan for the North Central region; and California, Oregon, and Washington for the West (Table 43). Together, these states comprised 56% of all survey responses.

Table 43. States with 30 or More Responses

State/Territory	USDA region	Count	Percent of Total
California	West	56	5%
Florida	South	30	3%
Maine	Northeast	68	6%
Massachusetts	Northeast	35	3%
Michigan	North Central	33	3%
New York	Northeast	55	5%
North Carolina	South	32	3%
Oregon	West	51	5%
Pennsylvania	Northeast	46	4%
Vermont	Northeast	103	10%
Virginia	South	47	4%
Washington	West	41	4%

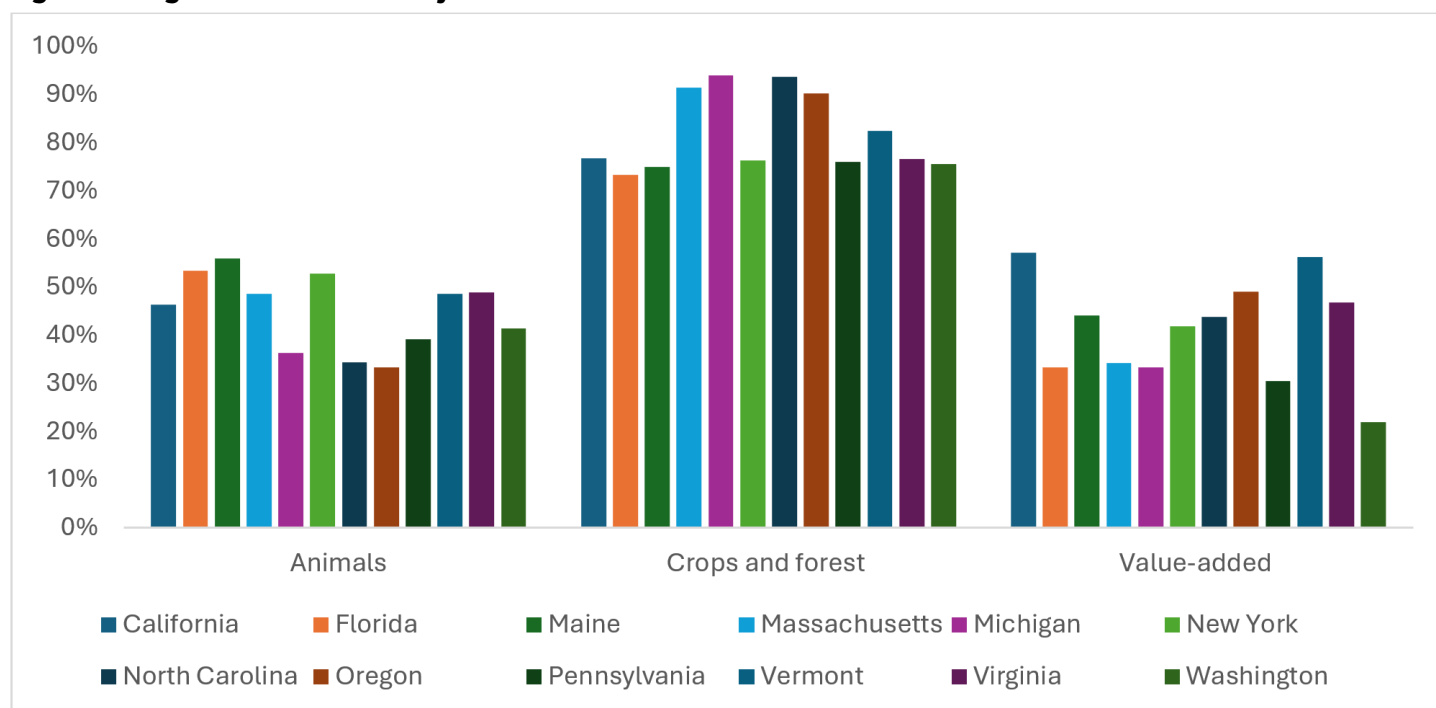
Note. Percentage of total is based on n = 1063. Two respondents did not provide their state.

State-Level Profiles: Firmographics

We began by examining the differences between states in terms of product types, types of agritourism experiences, and other firmographic questions. We ran cross-tabulations for each of the categories below, as well as the appropriate bivariate statistical tests (Chi-square tests for categorical dependent variables, and Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests for ordinal dependent variables).

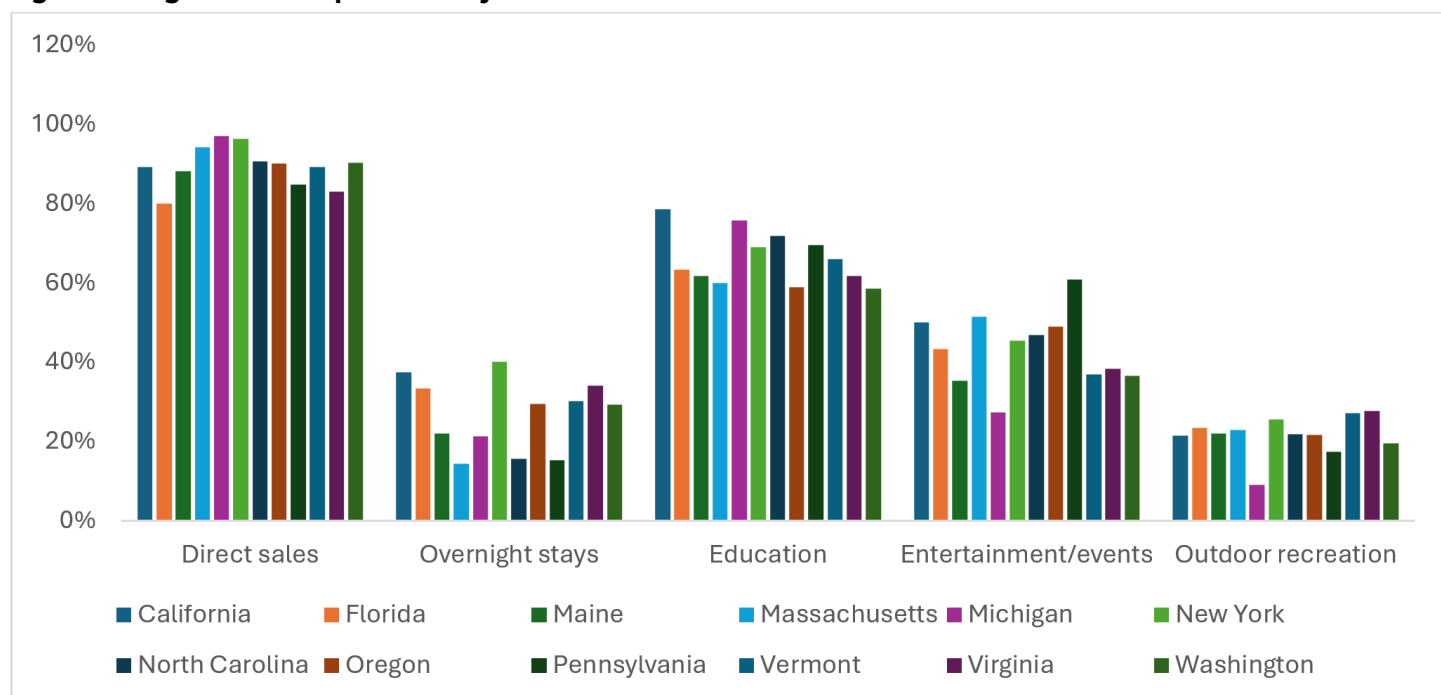
The general overview categories for agricultural products and agritourism experiences are broken out by state in Figure 14 and Figure 15 respectively. We ran chi-squared tests for each product and experience type to assess any differences by state. Of the three general categories for agricultural products, only value-added products showed a significant difference by state ($p = 0.005$). Figure 14 below depicts a 35% gap between the number of respondents in each state reporting value-added products, with 57% of California respondents and 56% of Vermont respondents reporting value-added sales, compared to just 22% of Washington respondents. There was no significant difference for any of the agritourism experience categories shown in Figure 15.

Figure 14. Agricultural Products by State.



Note. Animals: $\chi^2 = 12.338$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.339$; Crops & forest: $\chi^2 = 18.692$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.067$; Value-added: $\chi^2 = 26.827$, $df = 11$, $p = 0.005$.

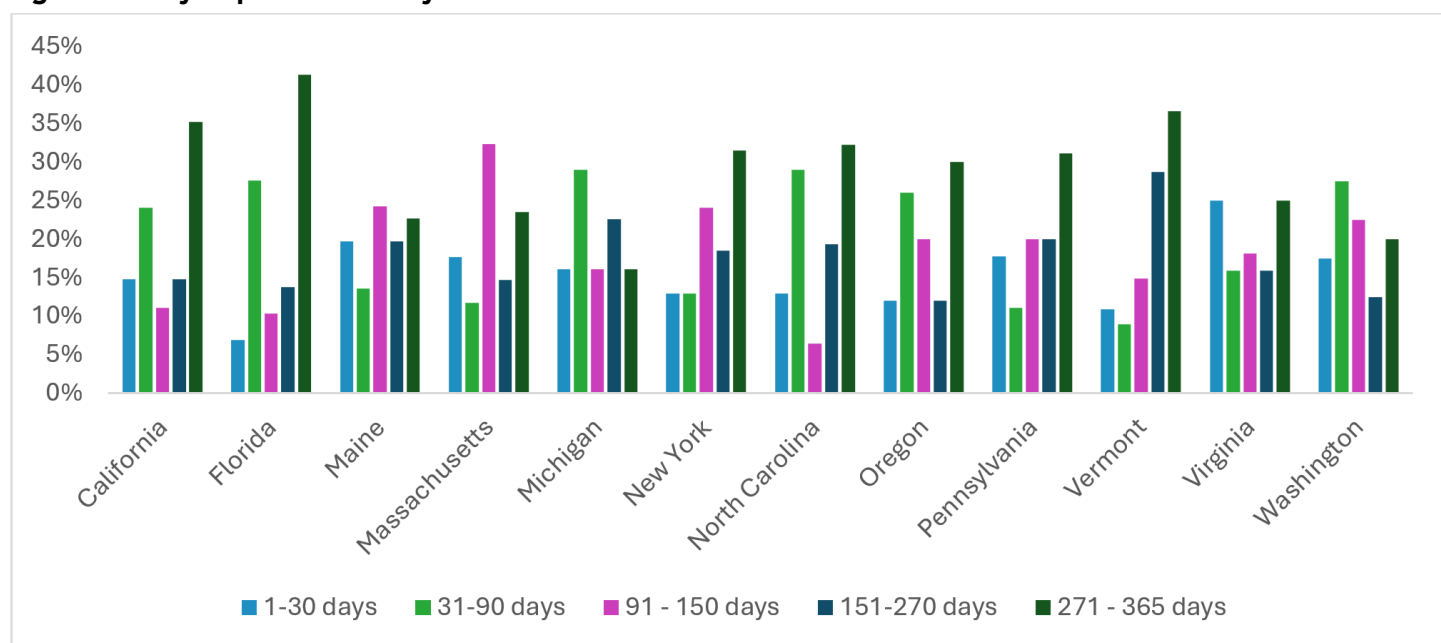
Figure 15. Agritourism Experiences by State



Note. Direct sales: χ -squared = 11.828, df = 11, p = 0.377; Overnight stays: χ -squared = 19.459, df = 11, p = 0.053; Education: χ -squared = 10.123, df = 11, p = 0.519; Entertainment/events: χ -squared = 16.879, df = 11, p = 0.112; Outdoor recreation: χ -squared = 6.692, df = 11, p = 0.823.

We examined the days open per year by state in Figure 16. While we expected that farms in colder climates would have shorter seasonal windows for visitation, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed no significant relationship between state and days open annually (p = 0.077). While California and Florida, which both have year-round growing seasons, showed a strong plurality of farms open year-round, so did Vermont and, to a lesser extent, New York.

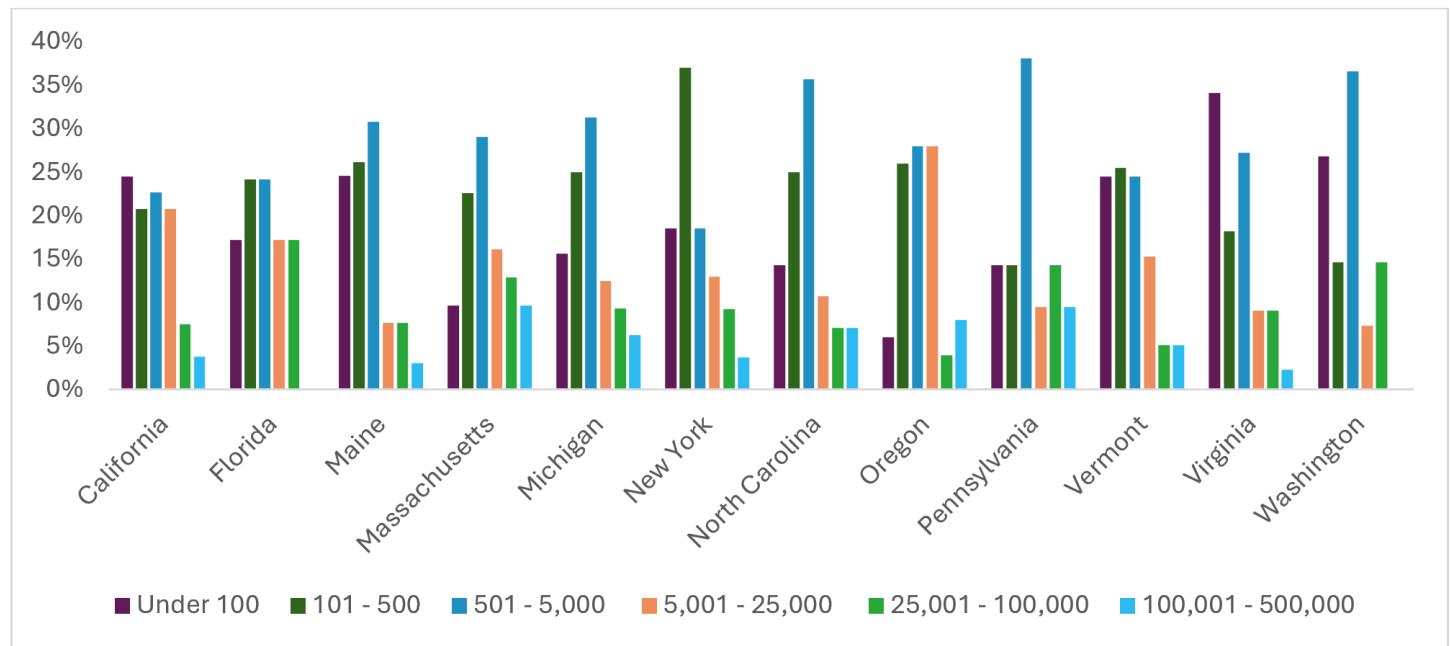
Figure 16. Days Open Per Year by State.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 18.193, df = 11, p = 0.077.

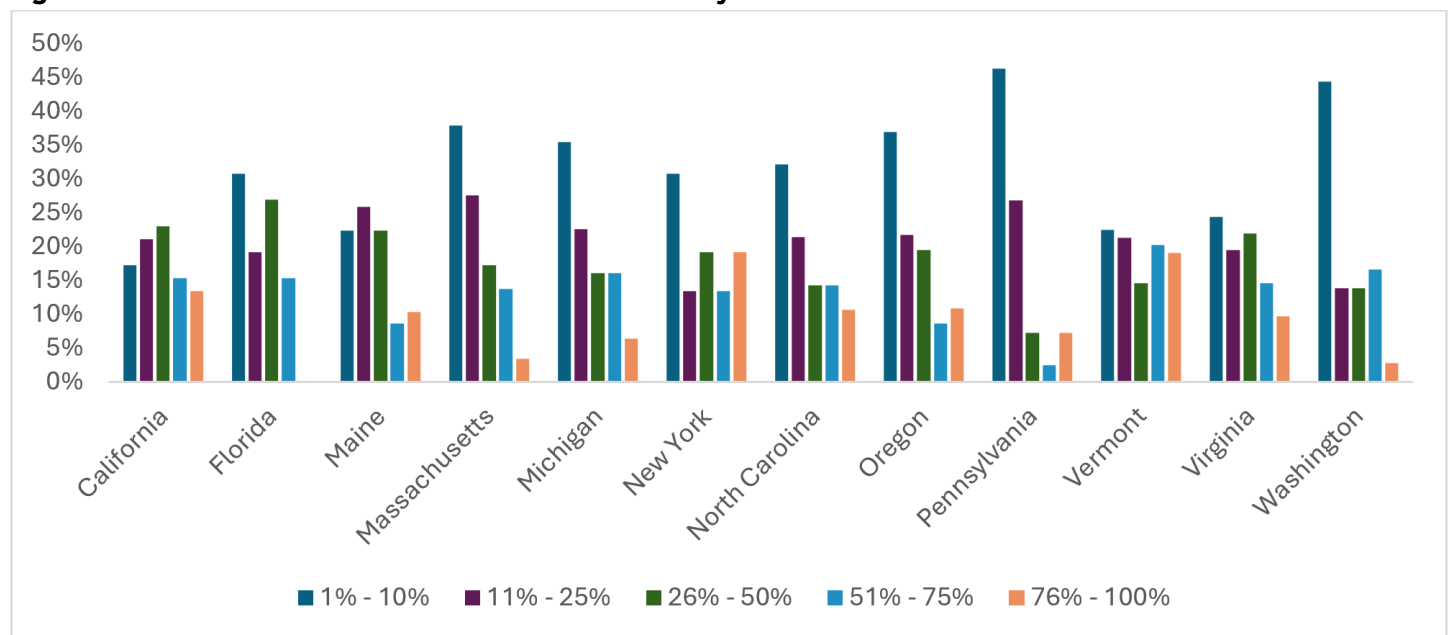
On the other hand, we did see a significant difference in visitor numbers and makeup by state. The total number of annual visitors by state is broken out in Figure 17 below. The Kruskal-Wallis test suggested a significant relationship between annual visitors by state ($p = 0.033$). The biggest disparities in answers are in the bottom two categories: 34% of Virginia respondents reported having under 100 visitors per year, compared to just 6% of Oregon respondents, and 37% of New York respondents reported having 101-500 visitors per year, compared to 14% of Pennsylvania respondents. There was likewise a significant relationship between state and the percentage of visitors who traveled 50 miles or more from their homes ($p = 0.037$), shown in Figure 18. Here, the biggest difference was in the 1% - 10% category, with 46% of Pennsylvania respondents selecting this category compared to 17% of California respondents. New York and Vermont were tied for having the greatest proportion of out-of-town visitors, with 19% of respondents in both states reporting that 76% - 100% of their visitors came from out of town (compared to Florida at 0%).

Figure 17. Annual Visitors by State.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 21.027, df = 11, $p = 0.033$.

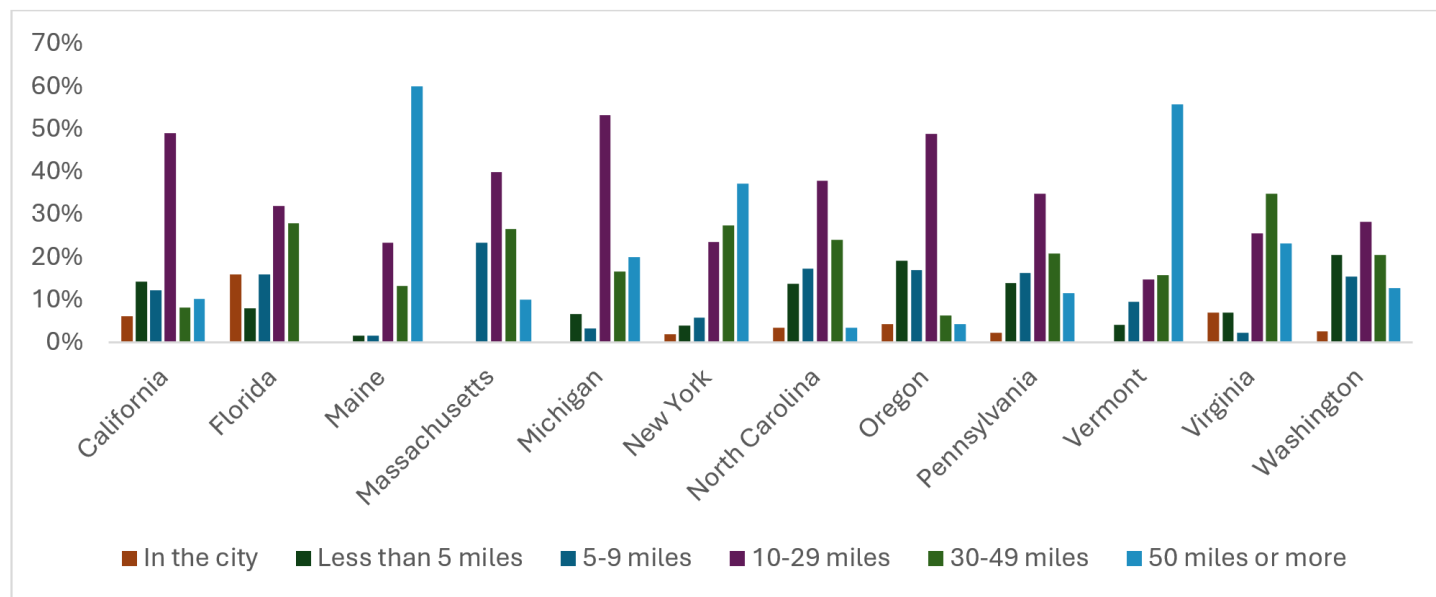
Figure 18. Percent of Visitors Who Traveled 50+ Miles by State.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 20.63, df = 11, $p = 0.037$.

Unsurprisingly, there was a significant relationship ($p < 0.001$) between state and the farm's distance from a city with a population of 50,000 or more (Figure 19). The two states with the greatest proportion of respondents reporting that they were 50 miles or more away were Maine (60%) and Vermont (56%): the two most rural states in the country according to the 2020 Decennial Census (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Of the 12 states in our sample, Florida was the least rural, with no respondents reporting a distance of 50 miles or more and 16% of respondents reporting that they were located within a city.

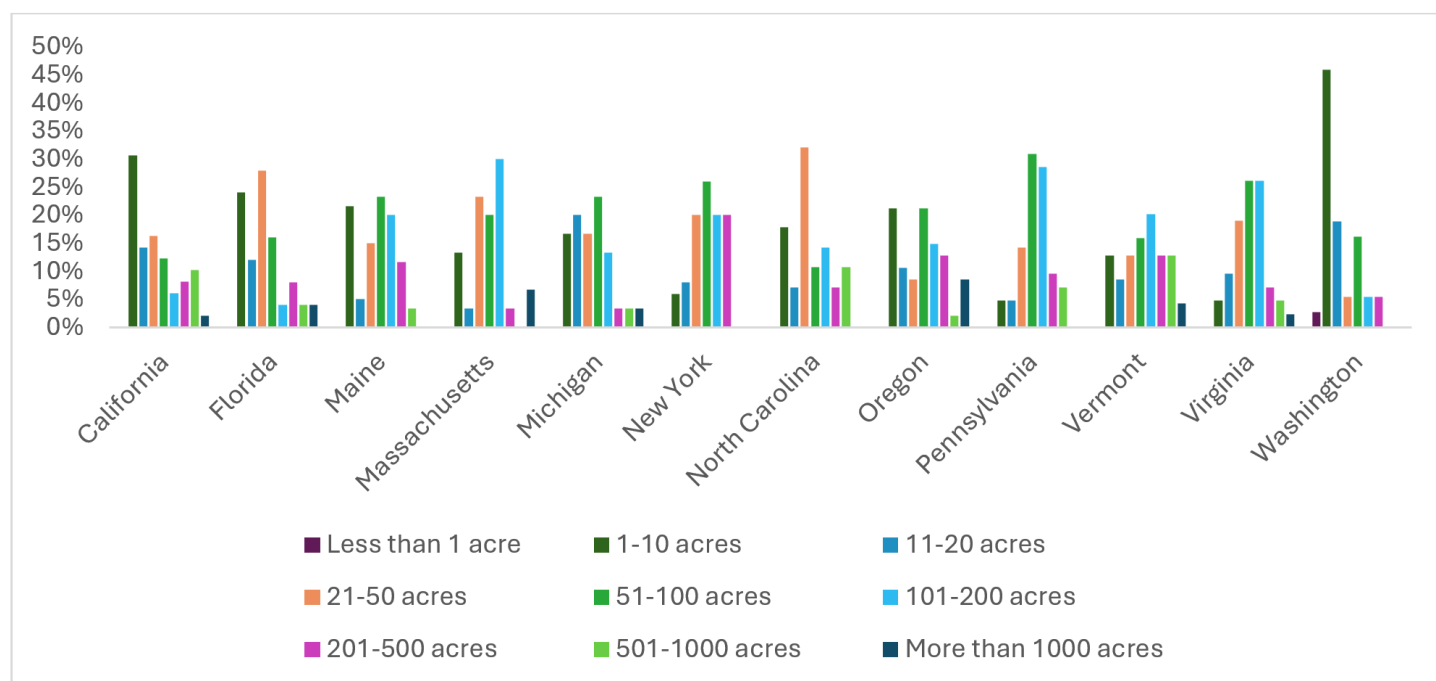
Figure 19. Distance from City with Population >50,000 by State.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 128.250, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

There was likewise a significant difference between total farm acreage and state ($p < 0.001$), shown in Figure 20. Only Washington had respondents with farms less than 1 acre (3%), and Washington also had the greatest percentage of farms between 1-10 acres (46%). Their neighbor to the south, Oregon, reported the greatest proportion of farms over 1,000 acres (9%). Pennsylvania and Virginia had the most normally distributed farm acreage, with peaks in the 51-200 acre range.

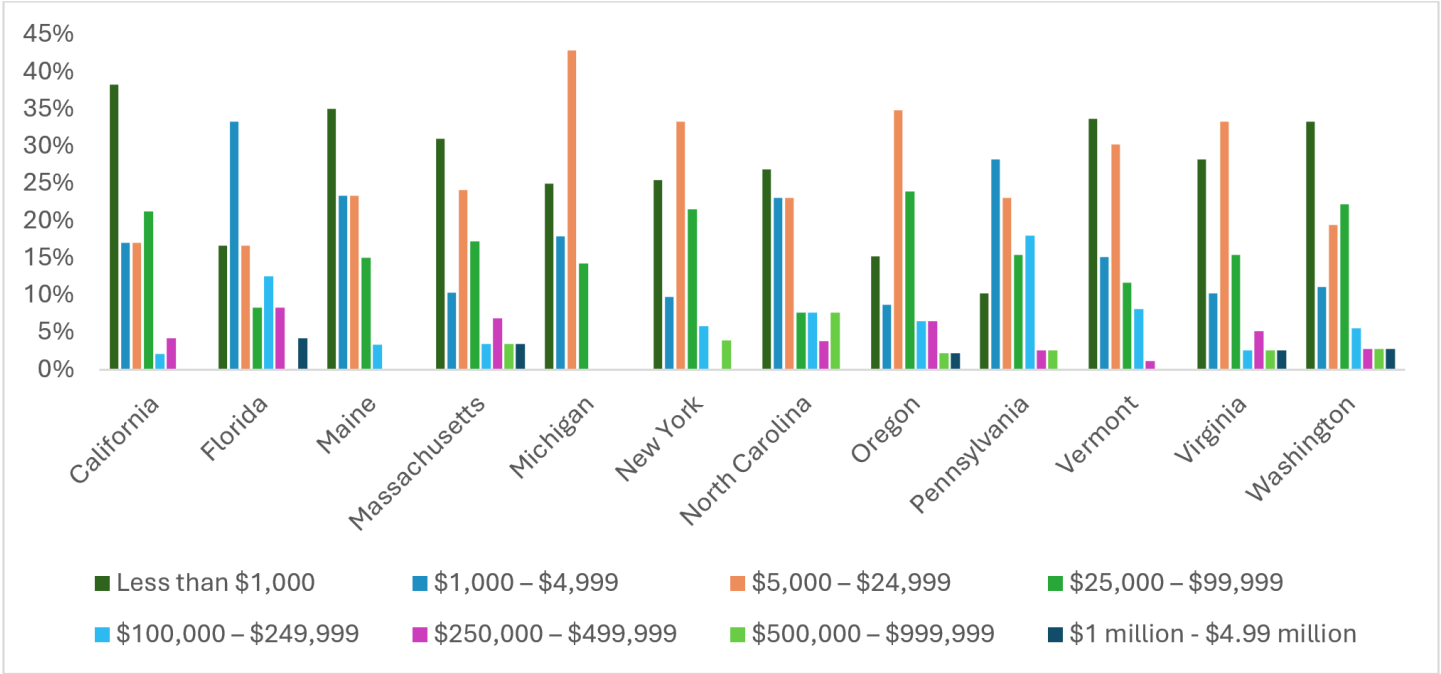
Figure 20. Farm Acreage by State



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 47.128, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

We also tested the relationship between farm size and state by looking at the four firmographic questions we asked about 2024 revenue and profit: farm gross revenue; farm net profit; agritourism gross revenue; and agritourism net profit. Only this final category showed a significant relationship with farm state ($p = 0.026$, Figure 21). California had the greatest percentage of farms reporting net profits of less than \$1k at 38%, compared to Pennsylvania at 10%. Florida had the greatest proportion of respondents in the \$1k - \$5k category (33%), and Michigan led the pack for the \$5k - \$25k category at 43%. Only Florida (4%), Massachusetts (3%), Oregon (2%), Virginia (3%), and Washington (3%) had any farms reporting net profits greater than \$1M from agritourism activities in 2024.

Figure 21. Net Profit of Agritourism Activities by State, 2024



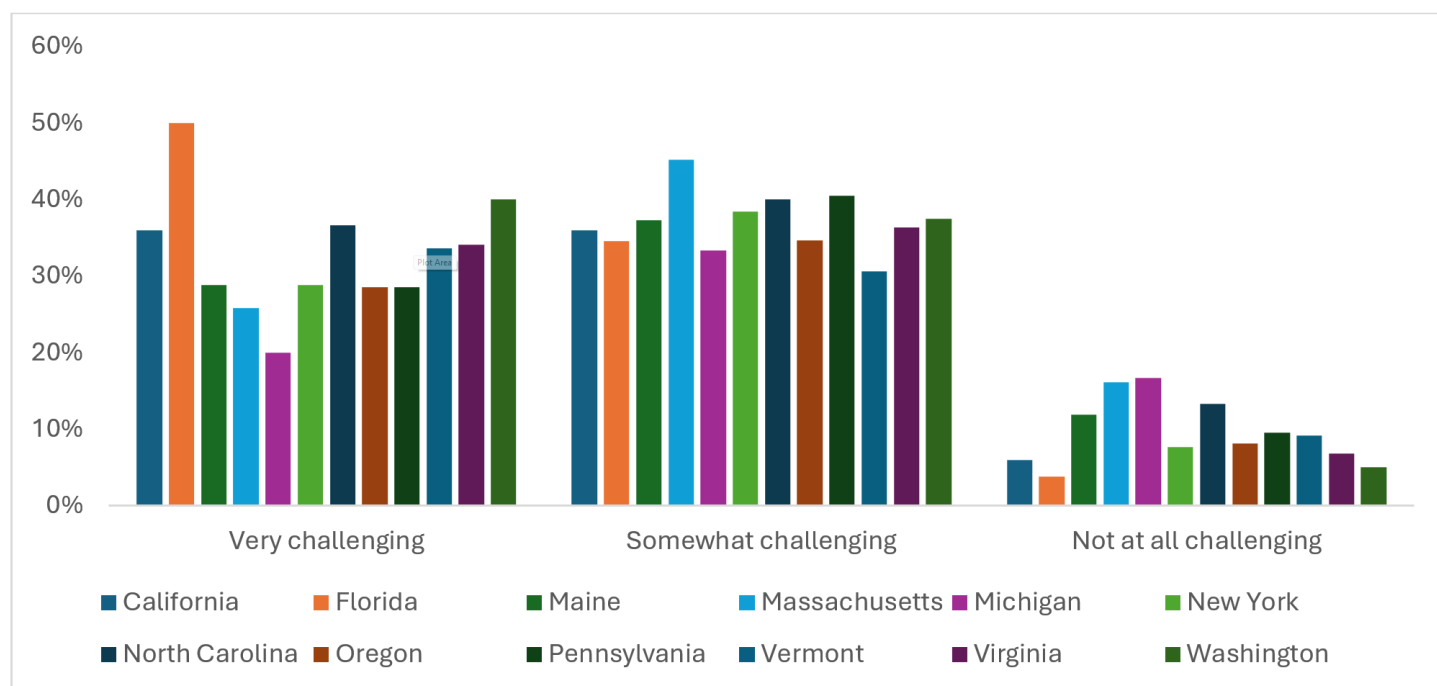
Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 21.771, df = 11, $p = 0.026$.

Challenges to Agritourism by State

We analyzed a selection of reported challenges to assess their relationship to farm state. We chose challenges that we hypothesized might vary based on geography (extreme weather events), state government or Extension support (availability and accessibility of grants; state and local regulations; liability concerns; local/state taxes; internet access and/or cell service; local infrastructure), or localized economic conditions (labor). Each challenge question asked respondents to rate the degree of challenge on a 3-point Likert scale: “very challenging,” “somewhat challenging,” and “not at all challenging.” The total count per state for each response was drawn from the respondents in each state who responded to at least one challenge per section. We used Kruskal-Wallis rank sum tests to analyze the relationship between the ordinal ranking scale and state.

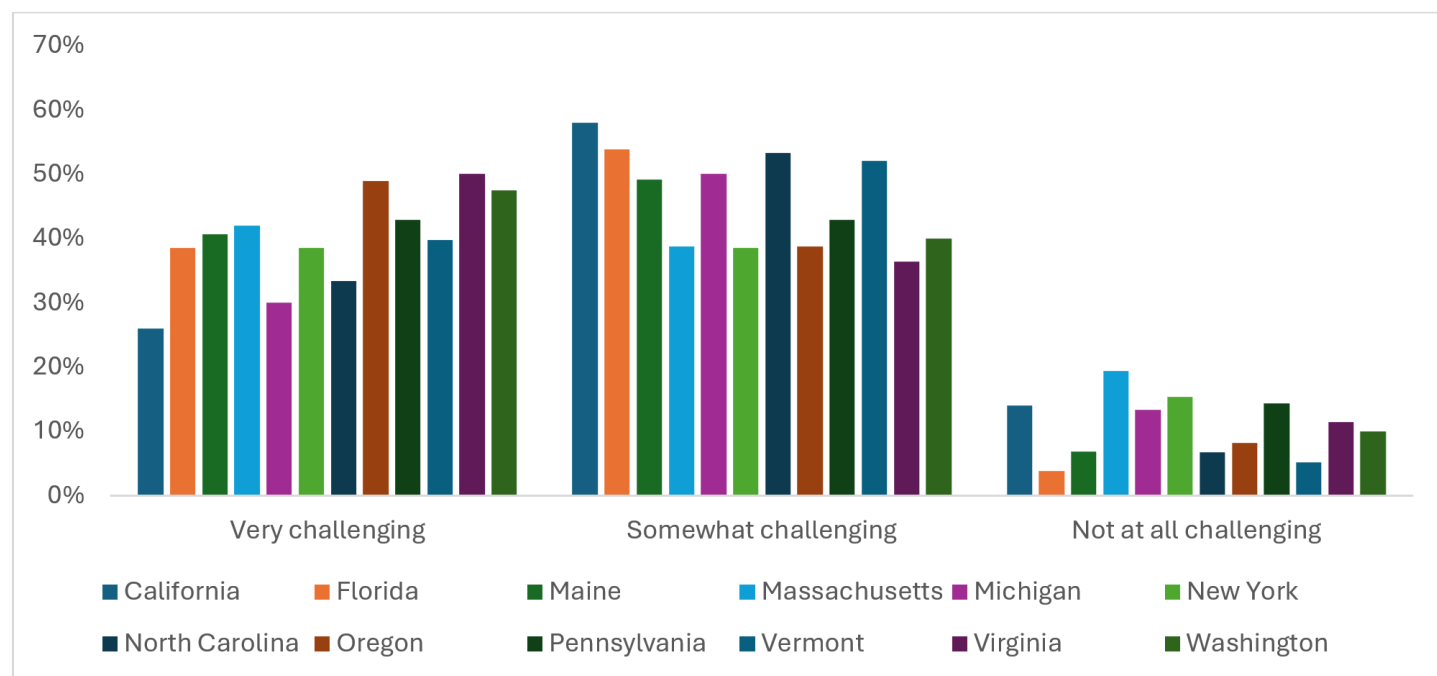
There was no relationship between farm state and either of the business challenges we tested: availability and/or accessibility of USDA grants and other financial support ($p = 0.498$, Figure 22) and labor, including family labor ($p = 0.547$, Figure 23). The majority of respondents in all 12 states rated both topics at least somewhat challenging, suggesting that access to grant funding and farm labor are reliably difficult regardless of geography.

Figure 22. Challenge Rating by State: Availability and/or accessibility of USDA grants and other financial support.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 10.361, df = 11, p = 0.498.

Figure 23. Challenge Rating by State: Labor (including family labor).

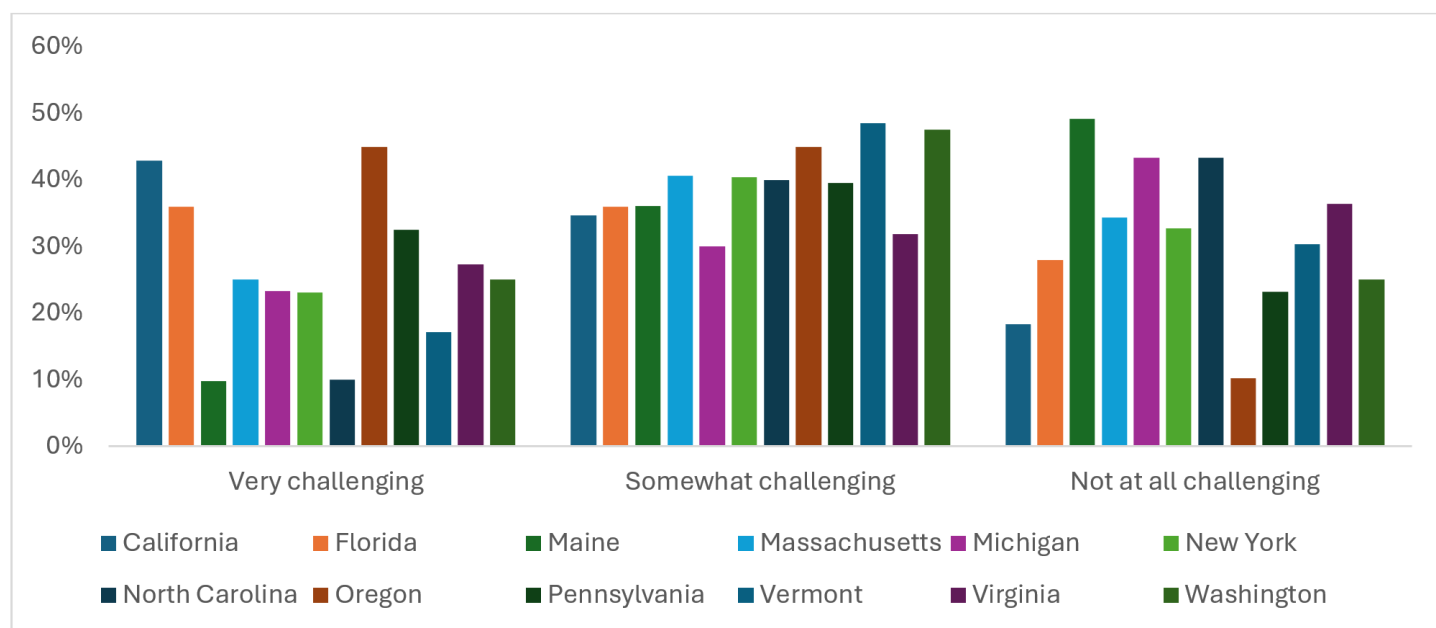


Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 9.812, df = 11, p = 0.547.

Conversely, all three challenges we tested in the regulatory category showed a significant relationship to state. State and local regulations unsurprisingly showed a strong relationship to farm state ($p < 0.001$, Figure 24). Forty-five percent of Oregon respondents and 43% of California respondents found state or local regulations “very challenging,” compared to just 10% of Maine respondents. We computed combined results for “very” and “somewhat” challenging, and Oregon took a stronger lead: 90% of Oregon respondents reported challenges with regulations, with California in a distant second at 78%. Maine

continued to hold down the bottom of the scale, with just 46% of respondents reporting regulation challenges – the only state coming in under 50%.

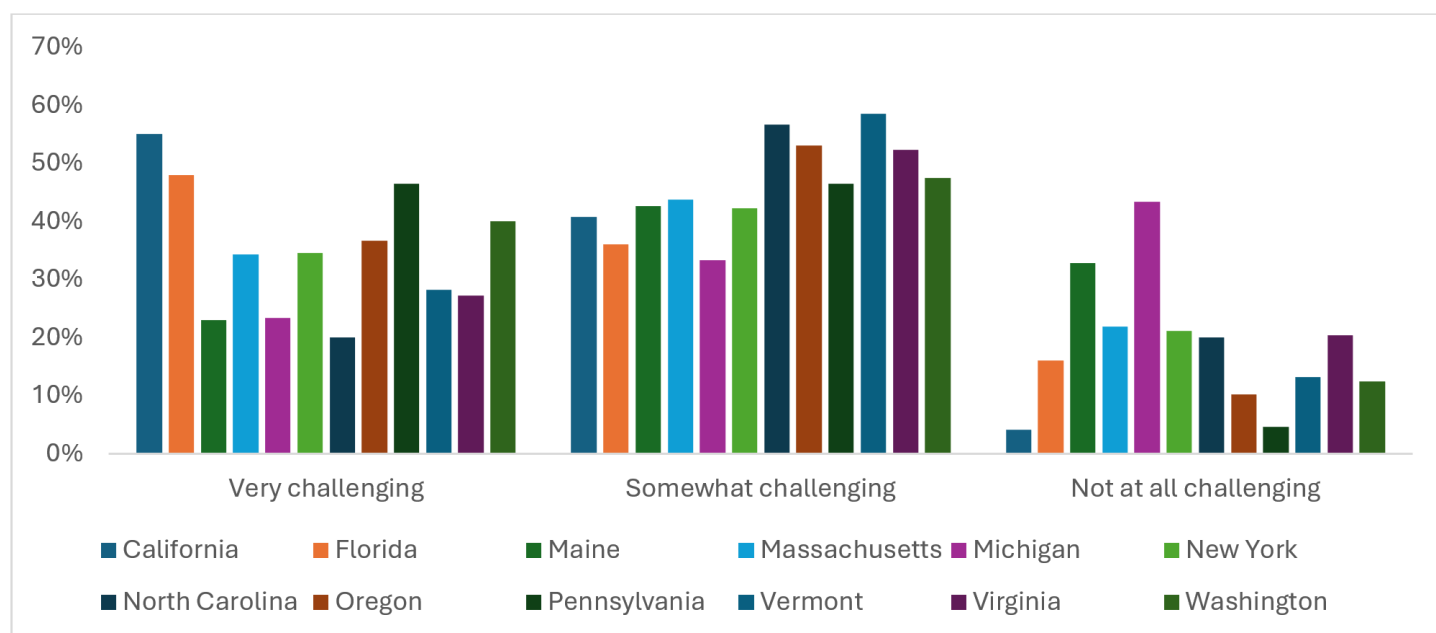
Figure 24. Challenge Rating by State: State & Local Regulations



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 43.795, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

There was likewise a strong relationship ($p < 0.001$) between state and challenges to liability (Figure 25). California held the top slot for “very challenging” responses (55%) and also came in first when looking at combined responses for “very” and “somewhat” challenging, with 96% of California respondents reporting some degree of challenge related to liability concerns. Michigan respondents reported the fewest challenges overall, with 43% of Michigan respondents saying that liability concerns were “not at all challenging.” Liability and regulatory issues are related, as many states have passed laws to help lessen the liability burden for farms that welcome visitors (National Agricultural Law Center Research Staff, n.d.). It therefore makes sense that the top 4 states reporting challenges to regulations and liability are the same: California, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington. This demonstrates policy potential for reducing regulatory and liability burden on farms that welcome visitors, especially on the West Coast

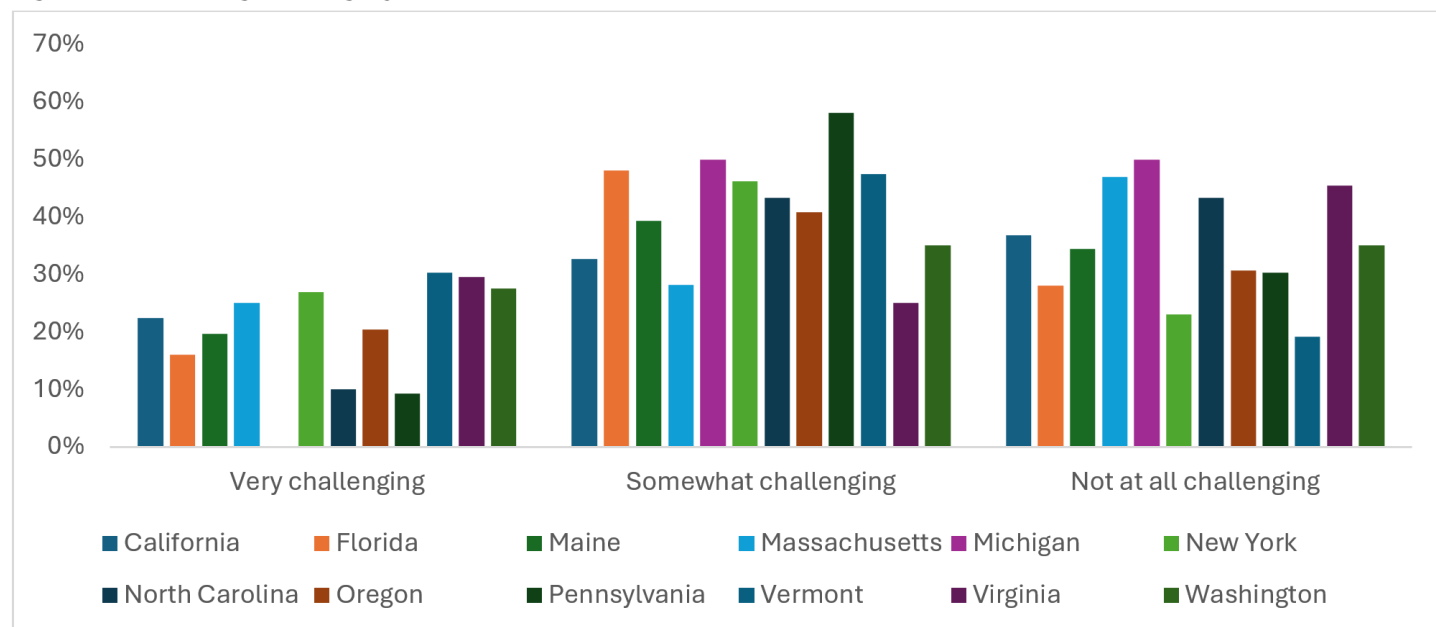
Figure 25. Challenge Rating by State: Liability Concerns.



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 38.618, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

The final regulatory challenge we tested, state and local taxes, tells a slightly different story (Figure 26). This challenge was significantly related to state at the $p = 0.013$ level. Like with liability, Michigan held down the bottom spot: it was the only state in our sample where no respondents reported that taxes were “very challenging,” and where half of respondents found taxes “not at all challenging.” Yet here the East Coast states led the pack: Vermont and Virginia tied for the greatest percentage of “very challenging” ratings at 30%, and Vermont took the overall lead for combined challenge reports at 78%, with New York in second place with 73% of respondents reporting that taxes were “very” or “somewhat” challenging.

Figure 26. Challenge Rating by State: State/Local Taxes.

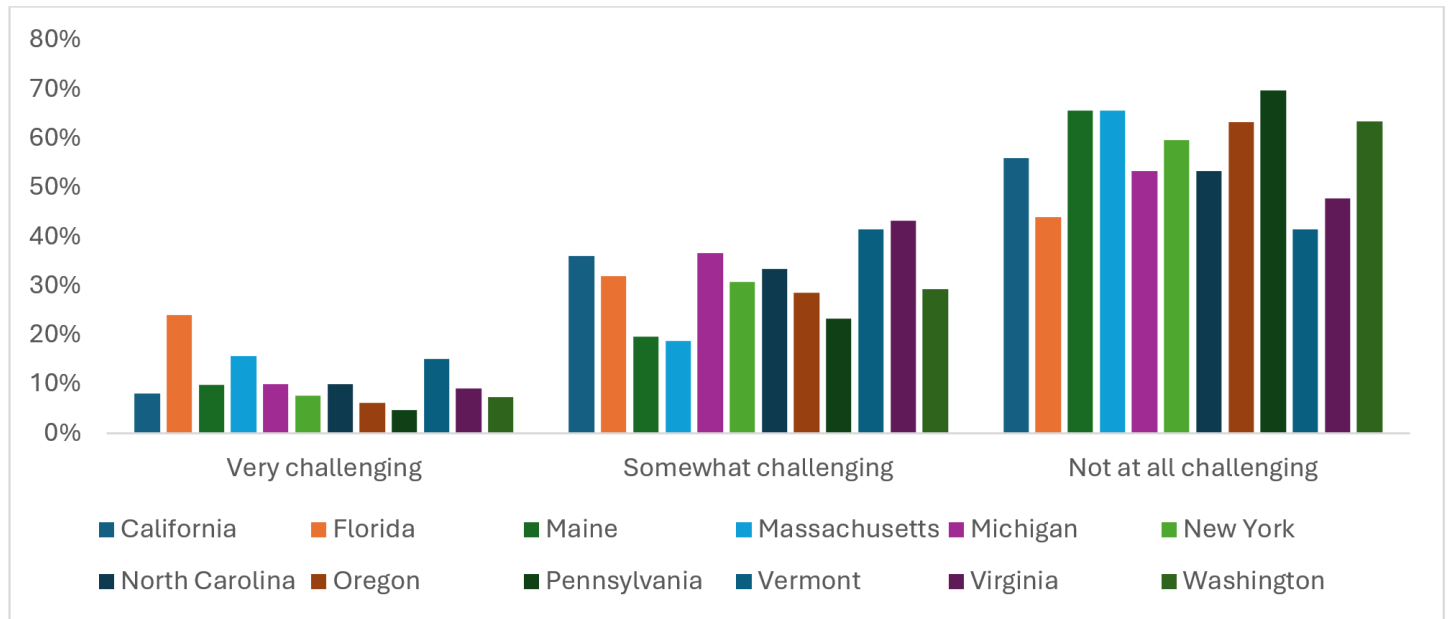


Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 23.910, $df = 11$, $p = 0.013$.

We concluded the state-level analysis by testing three challenges in the final catch-all category: internet access and/or cell service, local infrastructure, and extreme weather events. All three showed a significant relationship to farm state.

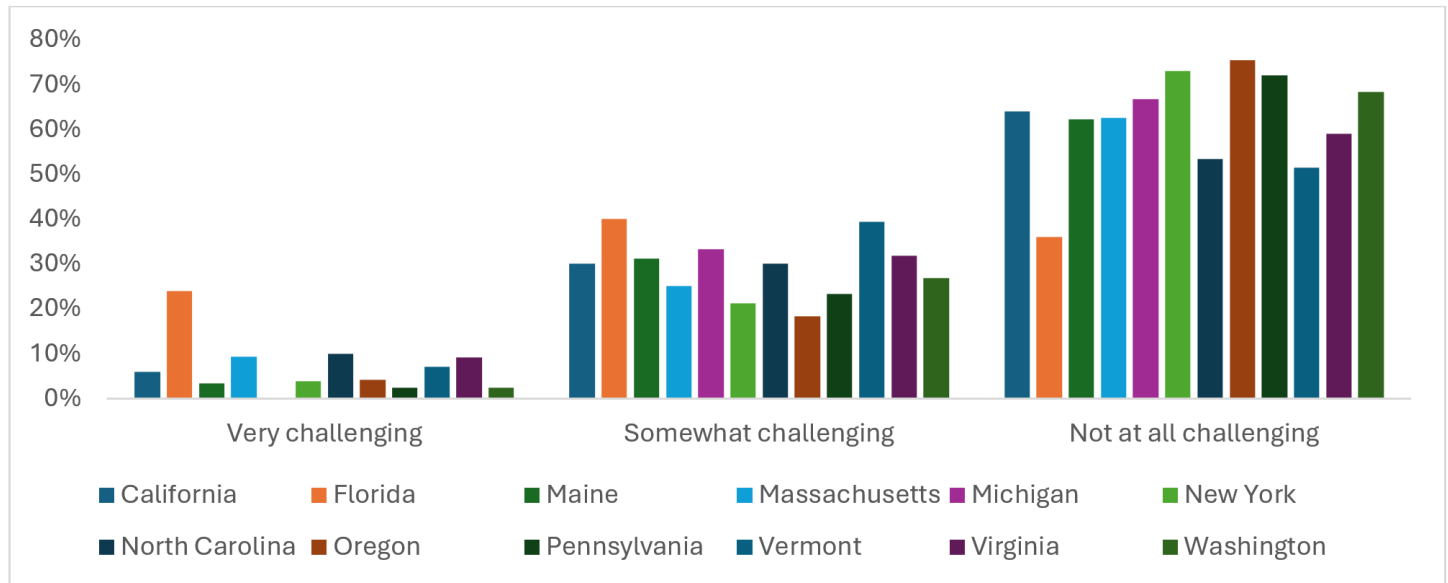
The questions on internet access and/or cell service ($p = 0.024$, Figure 27) and local infrastructure ($p = 0.006$, Figure 28) told an overall positive story. The majority of respondents in 9 out of 12 states reported no challenges to internet access and/or cell service. The three states where most respondents did report challenges were Florida, Vermont, and Virginia. The majority of respondents in 11 out of 12 states reported no challenges to local infrastructure, with the one exception being Florida. Oregon, which reported the most challenges to state and local regulations, reported the fewest challenges to local infrastructure, suggesting that Oregon local and state governments both serve and frustrate farmers who welcome visitors.

Figure 27. Challenge Rating by State: Internet Access and/or Cell Service



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 22.103, df = 11, p = 0.024.

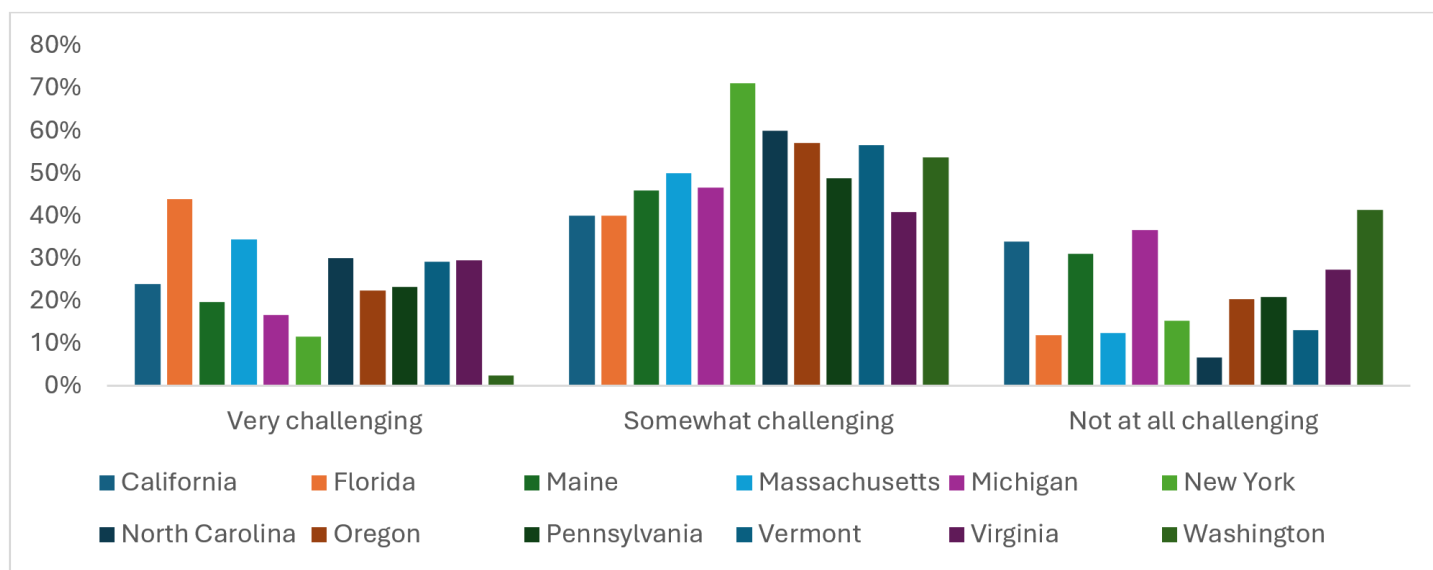
Figure 28. Challenge Rating by State: Local Infrastructure



Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 26.450, df = 11, p = 0.006.

The majority of respondents in all states reported at least some challenges due to extreme weather events, with Washington reporting the lowest combined challenges (56% “very” or “somewhat” challenging) and North Carolina coming in highest at 90%. There was significant variation by state at the $p < 0.001$ level, with East Coast states leading the pack. The top four states in aggregate challenge ratings were North Carolina (90%, recent history of natural disasters including Hurricane Helene), Vermont (86%, recent extreme flooding and frost), Massachusetts (84%, affected by the same flooding and frost events as Vermont), and Florida (84%, a hurricane hotspot). Florida had the greatest proportion of respondents who rated extreme weather events as “very challenging” at 44%, perhaps because of the routine consequences of hurricane season.

Figure 29. Challenge Rating by State: Extreme Weather Events.



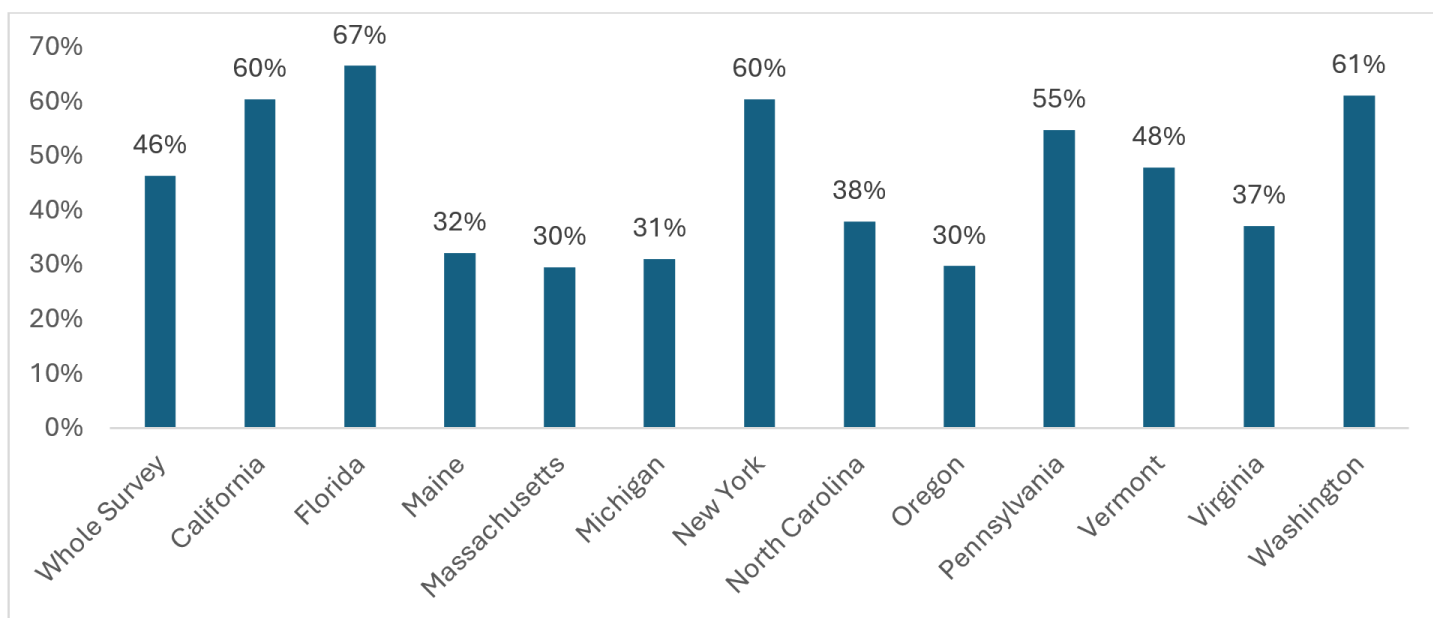
Note. Kruskal Wallis χ -squared = 37.369, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

Support Resources by State

We closed the state-level analysis by examining the relationship between state and the supportive resources respondents thought would be helpful for agritourism using chi-squared tests. Of the fifteen total supports offered as closed responses, just two were significantly different by state: legal/liability information and zoning regulations. Both were significantly related to state at the $p < 0.001$ level.

The state-level breakout of those who requested legal and liability information by state is charted in Figure 30. Though across the whole survey 46% of total respondents requested legal and liability information, the state level analysis shows stratified responses. Of the twelve states in our analysis, four had 60% or more respondents request legal/liability information: Florida, Washington, California, and New York. Six states had fewer than 40% select this option: North Carolina, Virginia, Maine, Michigan, Oregon, and Massachusetts. The remaining two, Vermont and Pennsylvania, fell in between.

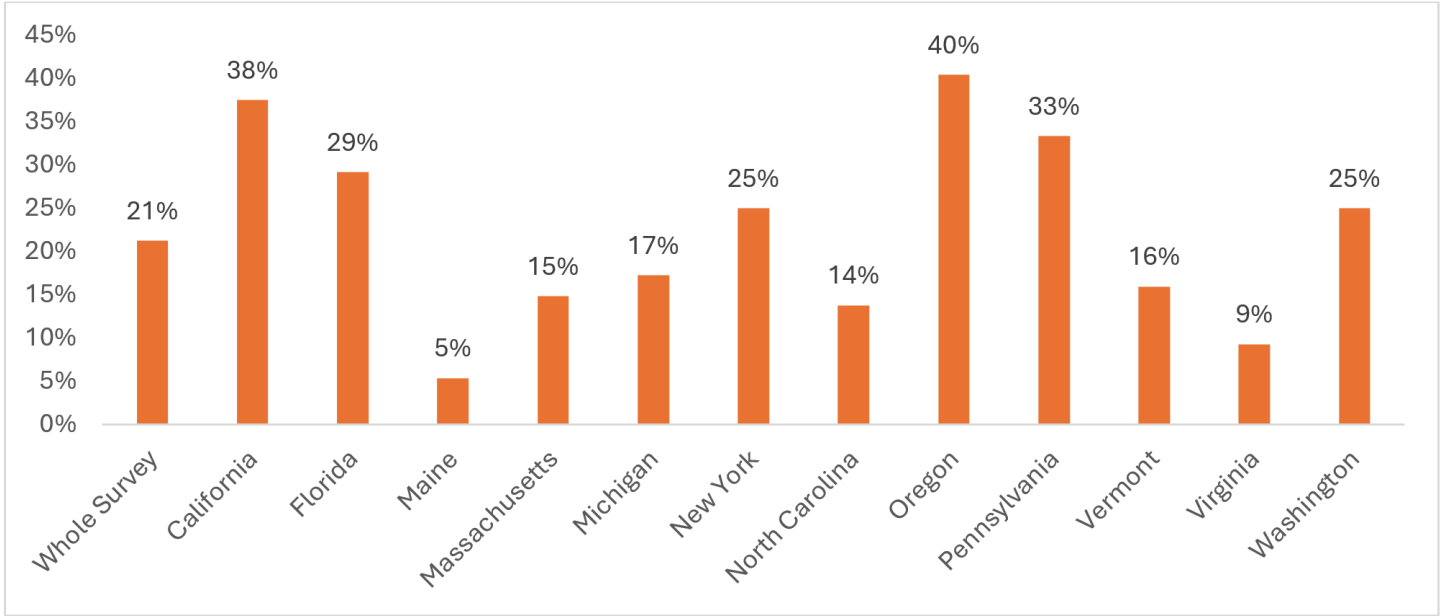
Figure 30. Percent of Respondents Requesting Legal and Liability Information by State.



Note. χ -squared = 33.837, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

The dynamic was different but equally significant for the relationship between state and requested support with zoning regulations (Figure 31). The overall interest in zoning regulation support was much lower (21% for all survey respondents), and in no state in our analysis did the majority of respondents select zoning. Yet the spread was still wide, with 40% of Oregon respondents and 38% of California respondents requesting zoning support, compared to just 5% of Maine respondents and 9% of Virginia respondents.

Figure 31. Percent of Respondents Requesting Support with Zoning Regulations by State.



Note. χ -squared = 37.974, df = 11, $p < 0.001$.

Conclusion

This national study has a wide range of findings, with multiple opportunities for future research. Our initial exploration of the data suggests that, as in past studies, agritourism is a significant contributor to farm finances (Bhandari et al., 2024; Hollas et al., 2021; Schilling et al., 2014; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Rough calculations using the categorical variables for farm and agritourism revenue and profit found that agritourism activities had a mean profit ratio of 48%, compared to the farm-level profit ratio of 28%. Agritourism accounted for an average of 53% of reported farm revenue and 72% of reported farm profit, and 75% of respondents reported that they were successful at increasing revenue through agritourism. This initial finding points to agritourism as a successful revenue diversification strategy with higher revenue relative to expenses compared with agricultural production.

Yet, as in past studies, we likewise found that profit generation was not the only motivator for practicing agritourism (Quella et al., 2021). While the top “very important” goal

selected by respondents was to increase farm/ranch revenue ($n = 726$, 71%), educating the public about agriculture took second place ($n = 632$, 62%). Qualitative findings from our interviews and write-in responses to the long survey clarified this dynamic: operators emphasized that farmers interested in agritourism must be driven by a desire to engage with the public, and that other farm diversification strategies may be more appropriate for those for whom privacy is paramount. Agritourism is no panacea: it is an additional business venture that brings additional work and requires distinct skills, tasks, and boundaries.

Proposed Actions & Considerations

Farmer Time is Limited

Time is a major limitation for agritourism operators. Out of all 28 challenges we included in the survey, the top three rated very or somewhat challenging were all related to time capacity: labor (including family labor), time management, and adequate time to work on marketing. Farm families that welcome

visitors are balancing the demands of two different businesses (farming and tourism), often on top of off-farm work and the daily labor of family life. Outreach and policy efforts directed at agritourism operators need to be designed with this limitation in mind and should aim to ameliorate the time demands on agritourism operators. Research efforts must likewise be mindful of time burdens for participants, and projects that require significant time investment will need to provide equivalent benefit to farmer-participants to be successful.

Reduce Regulatory Barriers

For many farmers, navigating state and local regulations is a major challenge. Policy efforts should aim to reduce confusion and the amount of time required for small businesses (like most agritourism farms) to achieve compliance. Particular efforts should be made in states like Oregon and California where farmers report significantly more challenges with regulation than farmers in other states.

Expand Insurance Options

The top issue rated “very challenging” by farmers was the cost and availability of insurance. Farmers across the country have limited options for insurance carriers regardless of whether they welcome visitors, and farms that have onsite guests often find that these options are not designed for their needs. Like with regulation, the time is ripe for designing insurance options with agritourism in mind as the market grows.

Leverage Marketing Expertise

Farmers face significant challenges related to marketing, which goes hand-in-hand with limits on time capacity. Fifty-four percent of operators expressed interest in support with social media, and 44% wanted support with developing a marketing plan. Yet in their write-in comments, farmers clarified that they needed assistance from someone with “ag-centered marketing” expertise. Because these same farmers also experience challenges with the cost of marketing, Cooperative Extension and state government programs that provide free assistance to farmers are best situated to provide this support. We recommend that Extension and state governments work together to increase capacity for agritourism marketing and social media support tailored for the farms in their respective regions.

Identify Funding for Agritourism Infrastructure

Seventy percent of respondents requested support with grants and other financial resources for agritourism. There is therefore a major opportunity for USDA grant programs that address the specific needs of agritourism operators. State and private funders can also make an impact, even with smaller grants. Many challenges named by operators could be addressed with lower-cost grants, such as adding ADA bathrooms and other small but meaningful improvements to visitor-facing infrastructure. Respondents emphasized that reimbursement-based grants are not appropriate, as 73% of operators reported challenges to cash flow.

Further Analysis

The longform survey we conducted for this project offers innumerable opportunities for deeper investigation of the relationships between variables. Specifically, we plan to conduct further analysis on issues related to profitability and marketing for scholarly publication.

Future Research

We recommend two complementary pathways for future agritourism research: first, improve data quality and rigor for broad national research efforts; and second, design state and regional projects that combine research and outreach efforts to yield detailed data while supporting operators.

The initial step towards accomplishing this first goal is to align the NASS Census of Agriculture questions on agritourism and direct sales with practitioner and scholar consensus on the boundaries of agritourism, as described in the introduction. Farmers across the country invest significant time into providing detailed financial data for the Census every five years. To make this investment worthwhile for the agritourism sector requires that we adjust the questions to reflect the reality of agritourism business. A few small tweaks to the Census instrument will result in the first ever complete picture of the US agritourism industry and will open the door to representative-sample studies.

The second pathway will likewise allow for more rigorous research, though on a smaller scale. Our study, like past national surveys as well as the Census of Agriculture, relies on self-reported data. Research efforts that ask farmers to open

their books and provide more rigorous financial data must ensure farmer privacy and pair research efforts with meaningful support. Our findings suggest opportunities for research-outreach efforts focused on succession planning and marketing plan development. One third of the farms in our sample were operated exclusively by farmers 55 years of age or older, suggesting that agritourism farms will face significant succession planning needs over the next several decades. Additionally, the majority of farmers reported challenges with all aspects of marketing, and 44% requested support with marketing plan development.

Agritourism marketing is a fruitful field for future research. Specifically, this study identified a gap in consumer data at the farm level. More than half of surveyed farms did not conduct any active data collection about their visitors. Interviews revealed that even farms that do collect visitor data through their registration systems may lack the time or expertise to analyze those data and use it to inform marketing efforts, and farms with walk-up agritourism activities like u-pick must make special efforts to collect visitor data. Researchers and outreach professionals are well positioned to assist farmers with collecting and analyzing visitor data, and studies that coordinate these efforts across multiple farms stand to fill a significant gap in the agritourism demand literature. Understanding what types of activities attract different types of visitors (like local vs. out of town), what visitors are willing to pay for agritourism activities, and which marketing outlets successfully reach and attract potential visitors will enable farmers to make data-informed decisions about where to invest their time and money.

Limitations

The built-in limitation of this project is the lack of a census number for farms practicing agritourism in the United States using the definition described by Gil Arroyo et al. (2013) and Chase et al. (2018b). Because we do not have an accurate count of farms practicing agritourism including onsite direct sales, it is not currently possible to conduct a representative national survey of agritourism farms. This study has made an initial step toward better agritourism data collection through building a directory and conducting the majority of survey outreach through direct Qualtrics emails (as opposed to an open link). Yet neither our survey nor our interview findings can be interpreted as representative of US agritourism farms at large.

Our data collection methods carry several additional limitations. The interviews and surveys we conducted for this project all relied on self-reported data, and most survey questions were categorical or ordinal. Deeper and more accurate data, particularly on farm finances, can be collected through revising the Census of Agriculture instrument and through state and regional projects focused on deep collaboration with farmers, as suggested above.

Appendix

Interview Guide

The below interview guide was used to conduct ten semi-structured interviews with agritourism farms across the US as part of this grant.

Introductory Text

Thank you for joining us today! [Introduce yourself]

I'm collaborating with Professor Lisa Chase on a cooperative agreement with the Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA. The goal of the project is to improve our understanding of the scale and scope of agritourism in the US.

Today I will ask some questions about your experience with agritourism. I will ask about the types of agritourism you have, the benefits and challenges of agritourism, revenue and profitability, marketing, liability and regulatory issues, and the types of supports (e.g., policy, education, grants) that would benefit agritourism operators.

As we talk, remember you can stop at any time or request that we skip a question. Your participation is confidential. We will report our findings in aggregate and no response will be attributable to any respondent in any publications.

I would like to record and transcribe this interview to help me include your exact words in our findings.

Is it okay if I start recording and transcribing this meeting?

Begin question guide

1. We would like to know a little bit about your farm/ranch/vineyard/agricultural operation.

- What do you produce?
- How long has your farm been in operation? How long have you been farming?

2. Our project is focused on 5 categories of agritourism. I'll tell you them all, and then we'll go through them one by one:

- Direct sales (e.g., on-farm sales, CSA, U-pick, etc.)
- Education (e.g., classes, workshops, student visitors)
- Hospitality (e.g., camping, Airbnb/bnb, lodging/other rentals, retreats, farm-stay, or guest ranch)
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., hunting, fishing, horseback riding, biking, hiking, skiing)
- Entertainment (e.g., music, events, weddings).

2a. What types of agritourism do you have on your farm/ranch/vineyard/agricultural operation? Tell us about the ways you bring visitors onto your farm.

- Do you have direct sales on your farm/ranch?
- Do you have education on your farm/ranch?
- Do you have hospitality on your farm/ranch?
- Do you have outdoor recreation on your farm/ranch?
- Do you have entertainment on your farm/ranch?

2b. How long have agritourism activities been happening on your farm?

3. What kinds of visitors come to your farm/ranch/vineyard/agricultural operation? How do you know – do you collect data about your visitors?

- How many of your visitors come from the surrounding area vs. tourists visiting from out of town?
- Do you collaborate with any other farms, local businesses, schools, or community organizations? Can you tell me about one of those collaborations?

4. What are the reasons that you have agritourism?

- Are there any other benefits agritourism brings to your farm?

5. What challenges have you experienced with integrating agritourism into your farm or ranch?

- (specifically ask about liability,
- zoning,
- regulations
- insurance if these are not mentioned)

6. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your farm and agritourism operation? You can reflect on early COVID, through 2021, 2022, 2023, and up until today.

7. How have changing weather patterns influenced your farm and agritourism operation in recent years?

- Have you implemented any adaptation or resilience strategies because of COVID or weather events to help protect your farm and agritourism operation endure crises in the future?

8. How does agritourism contribute to the revenue and profitability of your farm? Which, if any, agritourism activities have been profitable?

9. How do you market your agritourism activities? Have you received any resources, support, or advice that's been helpful for marketing? Are there any resources, support, or advice that you wish you had access to for marketing?

10. What other infrastructure, resources, supports, and guidance have you found helpful for your agritourism enterprises? What else would be helpful?

If they ask for examples: policies, grants, extension support, other technical assistance

11. What advice do you have for producers interested in bringing agritourism to their farm/ranch/vineyard/agricultural operation?

12. Is there anything else you would like to discuss today?

13. Our project partners at USDA AMS are interested in using our interview results to create an online story map of farms open to visitors across the US. Farms on the story map would be listed by name and location and would be able to approve all content before it is published. We are in the beginning stages of planning but will share more as the project moves along. Are you tentatively interested in being included in this story map?

- *If yes:* Great, we will share more soon! As a reminder, we will change your name and other identifying facts about your farm for all other reporting.
- *If no:* No worries! Be assured that we will change your name and identifying facts about your farm in all reporting.

Short Survey Instrument

Below please find the language of the short survey instrument. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics.

Pre-survey language

Be counted! If your farm, ranch, or agricultural business is open to visitors, please take 5 minutes to complete this short survey.

The goal of this survey is to understand how many agricultural operations in the U.S. welcome visitors for direct sales and experiences, including pick-your-own, farm stands, tours, overnight farm stays, recreation, etc. This information will be used to inform future programs and support.

This survey is conducted by researchers at the University of Vermont (UVM). We expect the survey to take you no more than 5 minutes. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you may discontinue it at any time.

All identifying information will be kept confidential by UVM. At the end of the survey, you will have the option to include your business in a national Local Food Directory to help customers find food and farm activities. If you select this option, the Local Food Directory team will follow up to collect more details about your business.

This research study is led by Dr. Lisa Chase, Extension Professor at UVM and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center. If you have questions about the survey, please contact Lisa.Chase@uvm.edu or 802-656-7532. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, please contact the Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont at 802-656-5040.

By clicking the arrow below, you are volunteering to participate.

Which of the following describes your operation? Please select all that apply.

- Farm
- Ranch
- Vineyard
- Agroforestry operation
- Aquaculture operation
- Other (please describe): _____
- None of the above

If they say none of the above, end survey

Do you have visitors to your operation? Examples could include farmstands, u-pick, CSA, tours, overnight stays, events, hunting, and any other experiences that bring visitors to your farm, ranch, vineyard, or agroforestry or aquaculture operation.

- Yes
- No

If they say no, end survey

Is your operation located in the United States or in a U.S. territory?

- Yes
- No

If they say no, end survey

Where are you located in the United States?

(drop-down menu of US states & territories)

If "Other" is selected

Where is your business located? _____

The goal of this research study is to understand the total number of agricultural operations that are open to visitors throughout U.S. states and territories. We will use this information to inform future programs and support.

Please provide your business information below so we can count the total number of unique operations. Please be assured that all information will be kept confidential.

Please enter your name and contact information

- First Name:
- Last Name:
- Business Name:
- Email Address:
- Website:
- Facebook Page (url):
- Instagram Page (url):
- Other Social Media Page(s):
- Mobile Phone Number:

Page break

What did you produce in 2023 and/or 2024? Please check all that apply.

- Animals and animal-related products (livestock, poultry, eggs, dairy products, honey)
- Row/field crops (wheat, soybeans, hay)
- Fruits and vegetables
- Value-added products (jams, pickles, sauces, cheese, wine)
- Nurseries, flowers, and Christmas trees
- Aquaculture (mollusks, farmed fish, etc.)
- Other (please specify): _____

Which of the following visitor experiences did you offer in 2023 and/or 2024? Please check all that apply.

- Pick-your-own/U-pick (U-pick fruit, U-cut Christmas trees and flowers)
- Onsite direct sales (farm stand/store, CSA collection point)
- Accommodations and lodging (Bed and breakfasts, farm stays, camp sites, glamping)
- Education (Farm tours, workshops, classes)
- Entertainment (mazes, hayrides, petting areas)
- Events (Farm-to-table dinners, weddings, event venue rentals, festivals)
- Outdoor recreation (Horseback riding, hunting, fishing, trails, photography)
- Sales of prepared food (snack bar, restaurant, café)
- Other (please describe): _____

What is your role in this business? Select all that apply.

- Owner
- Business manager
- Contact person/public liaison
- Employee
- Volunteer
- Other, please specify: _____

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is creating a free nationwide directory to help visitors find agritourism activities. If you choose to be listed, we will share information about your products, activities, and public contact information, website, and social media pages with the Local Food Directory team. The team will reach out via email to give you access to edit your listing.

Otherwise, your data will be kept confidential by UVM.

Would you like to list your business in the USDA Local Food Directory?

- Yes
- No

If “No” is selected: Thank you for completing the survey! Be assured that all information will be kept confidential.

Only show the below questions if they select “Yes” in Question 6

Thank you for choosing to list your business in the USDA Local Food Directory. Please provide your public contact email and physical address below. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service will follow up with more information about how to populate your listing.

- Public contact email:
- Address Lines:
- City:
- State/Territory:
- Zip code:

Thank you for choosing to be listed on the USDA Local Food Directory for agritourism! The team at USDA Agricultural Marketing Service will upload your information and share instructions for how to further customize and update your listing. Be assured that there is no charge to be listed.

Short Survey Responses

The primary purpose of the short survey was to validate and populate our contact list for the long survey. As described in the methods section, we received 2,147 valid responses, 1,815 of whom answered questions beyond the initial 3 screening questions. Of the total valid responses, 1,620 replied to the Qualtrics email distribution, which was successfully sent to 21,871 addresses – a 7.4% response rate. It is not possible to calculate a response rate for the open link distribution, which yielded 527 responses. Some of the people who responded to the open link distribution may also have been included in the Qualtrics email distribution.

The secondary purpose of the short survey was to populate the USDA AMS Local Food Directory. This goal was successfully achieved, with 1,353 respondents opting into the directory listing.

Short Survey Responses by State/Territory

Responses to the short survey are summarized by state/territory alphabetically in Table 44 below. We have included numbers on all valid responses (n = 2,147) and all responses that answered beyond the screening questions (n = 1,815).

Maine had the most overall responses (n = 175), followed by Vermont (n = 173), New York (n = 117), California (n = 109), and Tennessee (n = 106). The same states held the top 5 for complete responses, with Vermont taking the number one spot (n = 155), followed by Maine (n = 151), Tennessee (n = 96), and a tie between New York (n = 95) and California (n = 95). We credit these response rates to the quality of the agritourism contact lists in these states, along with the built trust between these state Extension offices and their agritourism farms.

Table 44. Short Survey Responses by State/Territory

State/Territory	Valid (n = 2147)	Valid %	Complete (n = 1815)	Complete %
Alabama	23	1%	22	1%
Alaska	3	0%	3	0%
American Samoa	0	0%	0	0%
Arizona	8	0%	4	0%
Arkansas	17	1%	16	1%
California	109	5%	95	5%
Colorado	41	2%	38	2%
Connecticut	34	2%	27	1%
Delaware	2	0%	2	0%
Florida	64	3%	53	3%
Georgia	52	2%	42	2%
Guam	7	0%	6	0%
Hawaii	10	0%	8	0%
Idaho	16	1%	15	1%
Illinois	41	2%	38	2%

Indiana	27	1%	22	1%
Iowa	43	2%	39	2%
Kansas	24	1%	16	1%
Kentucky	41	2%	31	2%
Louisiana	12	1%	11	1%
Maine	175	8%	151	8%
Maryland	37	2%	27	1%
Massachusetts	49	2%	47	3%
Michigan	55	3%	45	2%
Minnesota	33	2%	28	2%
Mississippi	24	1%	20	1%
Missouri	25	1%	23	1%
Montana	17	1%	13	1%
Nebraska	15	1%	14	1%
Nevada	6	0%	6	0%
New Hampshire	29	1%	22	1%
New Jersey	44	2%	31	2%
New Mexico	11	1%	10	1%
New York	117	5%	95	5%
North Carolina	50	2%	44	2%
North Dakota	5	0%	5	0%
Northern Mariana Islands	0	0%	0	0%
Ohio	73	3%	62	3%
Oklahoma	11	1%	9	0%
Oregon	94	4%	81	4%
Pennsylvania	81	4%	64	4%
Puerto Rico	1	0%	1	0%
Rhode Island	8	0%	6	0%
South Carolina	16	1%	13	1%
South Dakota	1	0%	1	0%
Tennessee	106	5%	96	5%
Texas	27	1%	22	1%
US Virgin Islands	0	0%	0	0%
Utah	26	1%	22	1%

Vermont	173	8%	155	9%
Virginia	91	4%	76	4%
Washington	98	5%	85	5%
West Virginia	14	1%	12	1%
Wisconsin	45	2%	34	2%
Wyoming	6	0%	6	0%
Other (no write-in provided)	1	0%	1	0%
NA	9	0%	0	0%

Short Survey: Types of Operation

The large majority of short survey respondents identified their operation as a farm. We also heard from over 100 ranches and vineyards, nearly 100 agroforestry operations, and over 35 aquaculture operations. The full breakdown for both valid and complete responses is in Table 45. Many respondents added more specific characterizations in the “Other” open response field.

Table 45. Type of Operation, Short Survey

Operation Type	Valid (n = 2147)	Valid %	Complete (n = 1815)	Complete %
Farm	1937	90%	1638	90%
Ranch	197	9%	169	9%
Vineyard	137	6%	117	6%
Agroforestry Operation	96	4%	85	5%
Aquaculture Operation	32	1%	27	1%
Other	382	18%	339	19%

Note. Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Short Survey: Agricultural Products

In the short survey, we asked just one broad question about types of agricultural products produced in 2023 or 2024. Responses are summarized in Table 46. The majority of respondents produced fruits and vegetables (n = 1103, 62%) and animals and animal-related products (n = 912, 51%). Nearly a quarter of respondents (n = 382, 22%) wrote in something under “Other.” The majority of write-in answers either fit into existing closed categories or referred to their agritourism activities. We assigned answers to existing closed categories where applicable, and that is reflected in the totals below.

Table 46. Agricultural Products, Short Survey

Category	Count	Percent
Fruits and vegetables	1103	62%
Animals and animal-related products (livestock, poultry, eggs, dairy products, honey)	912	51%
Value-added products (jams, pickles, sauces, cheese, wine)	731	41%
Nurseries, flowers, and Christmas trees	600	34%
Row/field crops (wheat, soybeans, hay)	318	18%
Aquaculture (mollusks, farmed fish, etc.)	20	1%
Other	382	22%

Note. n = 1774. 41 respondents did not answer the question.

Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Short Survey: Agritourism Experiences

We also asked a single broad question about types of visitor experiences offered in 2023 or 2024. As with the prior question, we recoded all write-in responses that fit existing categories. The most common types of visitor experiences were onsite direct sales (n = 1320, 74%), followed by education (n = 1132, 64%). Full results are summarized in Table 47.

Table 47. Visitor Experiences, Short Survey

Experience	Count	Percent
Onsite direct sales (farm stand/store, CSA collection point)	1320	74%
Education (Farm tours, workshops, classes)	1132	64%
Pick-your-own/U-pick (U-pick fruit, U-cut Christmas trees and flowers)	787	44%
Events (Farm-to-table dinners, weddings, event venue rentals, festivals)	737	41%
Entertainment (mazes, hayrides, petting areas)	556	31%
Accommodations and lodging (Bed and breakfasts, farm stays, camp sites, glamping)	411	23%
Sales of prepared food (snack bar, restaurant, café)	363	20%
Outdoor recreation (Horseback riding, hunting, fishing, trails, photography)	359	20%
Other	171	10%

Note. n = 1777. 38 respondents did not answer the question.

Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Short Survey: Role in Business

In addition to asking short survey respondents to provide basic contact information, we also asked a closed-response question about their role in the business (Table 48). The “Other” write-in responses are sorted into existing categories where applicable.

Table 48. Role in Business, Short Survey

Role	Count	Percent
Owner	1527	86%
Manager	700	39%
Contact person/public liaison	570	32%
Employee	156	9%
Volunteer	47	3%
Other	73	4%
No response	37	2%

Note. n = 1778. 37 respondents did not answer the question.

Question allowed respondents to select all applicable categories.

Long Survey Instrument

Below please find the text of the long survey instrument used to collect data for research purposes. This survey was distributed in Qualtrics.

Block 0: Introduction and Screening

Help us help your agritourism operation be more successful and complete this survey today!

Please complete this survey if you have visitors to your agricultural operation, whether it is a farm, ranch, vineyard, agroforestry, or aquaculture. If you have a farmstand, u-pick, tours, overnight stays, tastings, events, community supported agriculture (CSA), hunting, or open your business to visitors in any other way, we would like to hear from you!

Survey respondents can choose to enter into a random prize drawing for one of twenty \$75 gift cards. We expect the survey to take no more than 25 minutes. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. All identifying information will be kept confidential.

This national research study is led by Dr. Lisa Chase, Extension Professor at the University of Vermont. The results of this survey will be used to develop tools and resources to increase the success of agricultural operations that offer on-site direct sales, education, recreation, entertainment, hospitality, and other types of agritourism. If you have questions about the survey, please contact Lisa.Chase@uvm.edu or 802-656-7532. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, please contact the Research Protections Office at the University of Vermont at 802-656-5040.

By clicking the arrow below, you are volunteering to participate.

Block 0 Page 2: Initial screening questions

Which of the following describes your operation? Please select all that apply. (required question)

- Farm
- Ranch
- Vineyard
- Agroforestry operation
- Aquaculture operation
- Other (please describe): oboth
- None of the above

If they say none of the above, end survey

Did you have visitors to your operation in 2024? Examples could include farmstands, u-pick, CSA, tours, overnight stays, events, hunting, and any other experiences that bring visitors to your farm, ranch, vineyard, or agroforestry or aquaculture operation. (required question)

- Yes
- No

If they say no, end survey

Is your operation located in the United States? This study includes all U.S. states and territories. (required question)

- Yes
- No

If they say no, end survey

Block 1: Secondary screening questions

Where in the United States is your operation located?

(drop-down menu of US states & territories)

What did you produce in 2024? Please check all that apply.

- Animals and animal-related products (all livestock, aquaculture, bees, etc.)
- Crops and forest products (oilseed, silage, forage, grains, fruit, vegetable, nuts, maple, etc.)
- Value-added products (dairy, prepared food, fiber, etc.)
- Other (please specify): _____

Which of the following visitor experiences and/or sales did you offer on your farm or operation in 2024? Please check all that apply.

- Sales of your products on your operation (farm stands/stores, CSA pickup, u-pick, etc.)
- Overnight stays (bed & breakfast, farmstays, camping, etc.)
- Education (tours, tastings, classes, workshops, camps, etc.)
- Entertainment/events (meals, mazes, playgrounds, concerts, weddings, etc.)
- Outdoor recreation (trails, hunting, horseback riding, etc.)
- Other (please describe): _____

Do you sell any products at off-farm locations (farmers' markets, wholesale, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

(If yes)

Where do you sell your products, other than direct sales on your farm or operation? Select all that apply.

- Farmers' markets
- Off-farm CSA pickup or delivery
- Restaurants
- Retail stores
- Processors
- Cooperatives
- Food hubs
- Local/regional distributors
- Broadline/national distributors
- Other: _____

Block 2: Products and activities specifics

All of these will use display logic based on the previous questions

Block 2 page 1: Products

What animals and/or animal-related products did your operation produce in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Beef cattle, including feedlots
- Dairy cattle and milk production
- Hogs and pigs
- Poultry and eggs
- Sheep and goats
- Animal aquaculture
- Other animal production (including bees/honey, equines, fur-bearing animals): _____

What crops did your operation produce in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Oilseed and grains
- Forage/Silage
- Vegetables and melons
- Fruit
- Tree nuts
- Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production (including Christmas trees)
- Maple syrup
- Other: _____

What value-added products did your operation produce in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Cheese and dairy products
- Wine, beer, cider, or distilled beverages
- Salsas, pickles, jams, jellies, preserves
- Olive oil, nut or seed oils or butters
- Baked goods
- Cut-and-wrapped meat and processed meat products
- Animal pelts and fiber products
- Soaps, lotions, other health and beauty products
- Other: _____

Block 2 page 2: Activities

What types of on-farm direct sales did you offer in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- U-pick
- Farm stand or farm store
- CSA on-farm pickup
- Other: _____

What types of overnight stays did you offer in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Single rooms
- Entire home
- Cabins or yurts
- Camping
- Other: _____

What types of educational experiences did you offer in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Tours
- Tastings
- Demonstrations
- Petting area
- Student group and field trip programs
- Summer camps
- Youth classes and/or workshops
- Adult classes and/or workshops
- Work or volunteer experience
- Other: _____

What types of entertainment did you offer in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Farm dinners/meals
- Festivals
- Concerts
- Barn dances
- Sporting events/other games
- Corn/other crop mazes
- Hayrides
- Children's activities (playground, rides, etc.)
- Weddings
- Other venue rental (family reunions, retreats, etc.)
- Other: _____

What types of outdoor recreation did you offer in 2024? Please select all that apply.

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Bird watching
- Hiking/walking trails
- Skiing/snowshoeing
- Biking
- Photography
- Snowmobiling
- Horseback riding
- Other: _____

Block 3: Agritourism Overview

From here on out this survey will use the term “agritourism” as shorthand for the various ways agricultural operations welcome visitors. The U.S. has no standard definition of agritourism. For the purposes of this survey, “agritourism” describes all on-site visitor experiences, including direct sales.

We will also use farm/ranch as shorthand to describe the many types of agricultural operations we study, including vineyards, agroforestry, and aquaculture operations.

What year did you begin offering agritourism?

Open response field

About how many days per year is your operation open to visitors?

- 1-30 days (Occasionally/Specific events only)
- 31-90 days (Weekends only/Seasonally for a short window)
- 91-150 days (Several days a week/Seasonally for a longer window)
- 151-270 days (Most of the year with some closed periods)
- 271-365 days (Year-round/Every day with minimal exceptions)

How do you market your agritourism experiences to potential visitors? Please select all that apply.

- Print advertisements
- Radio or television advertisements
- Social media pages
- Paid social media advertisements
- Press coverage
- Centralized listing sites (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, Farmstay, Hipcamp)
- USDA Local Food Directory
- Tour operators or travel agents
- Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) and/or Chamber of Commerce
- Collaboration with other local businesses
- Word of mouth
- Other: _____

How do you collect information about your visitors? Please select all that apply.

- We do not collect information about our visitors
- We ask visitors to complete a survey
- We ask visitors to sign up for a mailing list
- We collect visitor information using our point-of-sale or online registration system
- We look at our website analytics and social media followers
- We know from experience who our visitors are
- Other: _____

Approximately how many visits (paid and unpaid) took place on your operation in 2024? Please select the range that best represents this number.

Count the number of visits, not visitors, so that one person who visited 10 times in 2024 would be 10. A tour bus of 50 people would be 50 visits. A family of 4 staying overnight for 2 consecutive nights would be 4 visits.

- Under 100 visits
- 101 – 500 visits
- 501 – 5,000 visits
- 5,001 – 25,000 visits
- 25,001 – 100,000 visits
- 100,001 – 500,000 visits
- 500,001 – 1 million visits
- Over 1 million visits
- Unsure

Approximately what percentage of these visits were from people who traveled 50 miles or more (one-way) from their homes?

- None
- 1% - 10%
- 11% - 25%
- 26% - 50%
- 51% - 75%
- 75% - 100%
- Unsure

Block 4: Success in Agritourism

Block 4 page 1: Goals

How important were the following motivations and goals to your decision to develop agritourism (including onsite direct sales)?

	Very important	Somewhat im- portant	Not important	Not applicable
Provide family employment				
Increase farm/ranch revenue				
Enjoy social interaction with the public				
Increase community access to local food				
Educate the public about agriculture				
Build goodwill in the community				
Diversify farm/ranch market channels				
Diversify products and experiences				
Increase traffic to on-farm sales outlet				
Other: gothtext				

How successful have you been in achieving these goals?

	Successful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Not applicable
Provide family employment				
Increase farm/ranch revenue				
Enjoy social interaction with the public				
Increase community access to local food				
Educate the public about agriculture				
Build goodwill in the community				
Diversify farm/ranch market channels				
Diversify products and experiences				
Increase traffic to on-farm sales outlet				
Other: _____				

What plans do you have for agritourism (including onsite direct sales) over the next 5 years? Please select all that apply.

- Expand the type of experiences and/or products offered
- Invest in more buildings or equipment for my agritourism operation
- Hire more employees
- Make no changes (maintain my current level of operations)
- Reduce the types of experiences and/or products offered
- Close my agritourism operation
- Other: _____

Block 4 page 2: Challenges

How challenging are the following business and financial aspects to your agritourism operation (including onsite direct sales)?

	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Not applicable
Cash flow management				
Availability of operating capital				
Availability and/or accessibility of USDA grants and other financial support				
Developing and implementing a business plan				
Marketing your operation				
Time management				
Labor (including family labor)				
Other: _____				

How challenging are the following regulatory, liability, security and accessibility issues to your agritourism operation (including onsite direct sales)?

	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Not applicable
State/local regulations (including zoning and permitting)				
Liability concerns				
Cost/availability of insurance				
Local/state taxes				
Concerns with neighbors				
Lack of a uniform definition of agritourism				
Food safety/proper food handling				
Biosecurity				
Visitor accessibility (ADA compliance)				
Other: crothtext				

How challenging are the following issues to marketing your agritourism operation (including onsite direct sales)?

	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Not applicable
Adequate time to work on marketing				
Access to marketing expertise				
Monetary cost of marketing				
Ability to reach your target audience				
Access to technology or digital tools for marketing				
Other (please specify): _____				

How challenging are the following other issues to your agritourism operation (including onsite direct sales)?

	Very challenging	Somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Not applicable
Internet access and/or cell service				
Local infrastructure (roads, transportation, electricity, etc.)				
Competition from other agritourism options in your area				
Extreme weather events				
Concerns about visitor behavior				
Meeting visitor expectations				
Family dynamics (decision making, succession, etc.)				
Other: _____				

Please comment on these or other challenges to agritourism, including onsite direct sales.

Open comment field

Block 4 page 3: Supports

The following two questions are about support needs for agritourism, including direct sales. Support can mean assistance or guidance from government, Extension, nonprofits, business groups, networks, or your own relationships.

What type of support would help you be more successful with agritourism, including on-site direct sales?

- Information about product and consumer trends
- Information on types of agritourism offerings
- Marketing plan development
- Business plan development
- Website management
- Social media marketing & management
- Managing customer relations and customer service
- Managing local community relationships
- Human resources/labor management
- Legal/liability information
- Zoning regulations
- Resource materials for the public on where to find agritourism experiences
- Safety information for welcoming visitors
- Disaster planning and recovery resources
- Grant programs and other financial resources for agritourism
- Other: _____

Please comment on these or other factors that have been helpful or unhelpful for agritourism, including onsite direct sales.

Open response

Block 5: Firmographics

Please name the county and zipcode in which your business is located. (Form fields)

County: *Open response*

Zipcode: *Open response*

How many acres is your farm, ranch, vineyard, or agroforestry or aquaculture operation? Please include total acres, not just the acres devoted to visitor experiences.

Open response

How far is your operation from a city of at least 50,000 people?

- We are located in a city with a population of 50,000 or more
- Less than 5 miles
- 5-9 miles
- 10-29 miles
- 30-49 miles
- 50 miles or more

What was your farm/ranch's gross revenue (income before taxes and expenses), in US dollars, from all sources in 2024?

- Less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 – \$4,999
- \$5,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$249,999
- \$250,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1 million - \$4.99 million
- \$5 million - \$9.99 million
- Greater than \$10 million

What was your farm/ranch's profit (net income after taxes and expenses) from all sources in 2024?

- Less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 – \$4,999
- \$5,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$249,999
- \$250,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1 million - \$4.99 million
- \$5 million - \$9.99 million
- Greater than \$10 million

What was your gross revenue, in US dollars, from agritourism-related sales and services in 2024, including onsite direct sales?

- Less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 – \$4,999
- \$5,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$249,999
- \$250,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1 million - \$4.99 million
- \$5 million - \$9.99 million
- Greater than \$10 million

How much profit (net income) do you estimate that your agritourism enterprise(s) generated in 2024?

- Less than \$1,000
- \$1,000 – \$4,999
- \$5,000 – \$24,999
- \$25,000 – \$99,999
- \$100,000 – \$249,999
- \$250,000 – \$499,999
- \$500,000 – \$999,999
- \$1 million - \$4.99 million
- \$5 million - \$9.99 million
- Greater than \$10 million

Block 6: Demographics

Questions in this section will be phrased differently for those who list 1 owner/operator above and those who list more than one

What is your role in this business? (Select all that apply)

- Owner
- Business manager
- Contact person/public liaison for business
- Business employee
- Volunteer
- Other: _____

In 2024, how many people were involved in management and/or decision making for this operation?

Include yourself, family members, and owners engaged in managing operations. Please include the total number of people, regardless of the amount of time each person spends working for the farm/ranch. Exclude anyone not involved in decision making.

Open response – numbers.

The following questions will all use display logic to ask the demographic questions about the right number of people. For those that enter a number greater than 5, we will have an open response box after Operator 5. “Don’t know” option only appears for those who enter more than 1 operator.

Multiple operators: Please answer the following questions for each of the managers and/or decision makers for your operation.

Single operator: At which occupation did you spend the majority (50% or more) of your worktime in 2024?

Multiple operators: At which occupation did each of your owners/operators spend the majority (50% or more) of their worktime in 2024?

- Work for this farm, ranch, vineyard, or agroforestry or aquaculture operation
- Other employment
- Retired, homemaking, or non-work due to disability
- Prefer not to answer

Single operator: What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

Multiple operators: What is the highest level of formal education completed by each of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch?

- Less than a high school diploma
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college
- Associate's or technical degree (2-year college)
- Bachelor's degree (4-year college)
- Postgraduate degree (e.g., MBA, Ph.D.)
- Other: _____
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Single operator: What is your age?

Multiple operators: What age is each of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 and older
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Single operators: What is your gender?

Multiple operators: What gender is each of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch?

- Male
- Female
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Single operators: What is your ethnicity?

Multiple operators: What ethnicity is each of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch?

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Single operators: What is your race? Select multiple if applicable.

Multiple operators: What race is each of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch? Select multiple if applicable.

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Single operator: Are you a veteran of the U.S. military?

Multiple operators: Are any of the owners/operators of your farm/ranch veterans of the U.S. military?

- Yes
- No

Block 7: Final questions

You are almost at the end of the survey! Please utilize the comment section below if you would like to provide further insights on the issues faced by your agritourism business.

Open response

After we close the survey, we will conduct a random prize drawing with twenty winners for \$75 Visa gift cards. If you would like to be entered into the prize drawing, please provide your name, mailing address, and email address below. Please be assured that your information will be kept confidential.

- Name:
- Address Lines:
- City:
- State/Territory:
- Zipcode:
- Email Address:

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is creating a free nationwide Agritourism Directory to help visitors find agritourism activities. If you would like to be listed, we will share the contact information you provide below with USDA AMS and they will follow up with a link to complete your listing. Please be assured that your survey responses will be kept confidential by UVM.

Would you like to list your business in the [USDA Agritourism Directory](#)?

- Yes
- No
- I am already listed

If “No,” add the statement: Thank you for completing the survey! Be assured that all information will be kept confidential.

If “Yes,” show the statement:

Thank you for choosing to be listed on the USDA Local Food Directory for agritourism! The UVM research team will share your contact information with USDA AMS. All other information you provided in this survey will be kept confidential. The team at USDA Agricultural Marketing Service will contact you directly with instructions for how to populate your listing. Be assured that there is no charge to be listed.

Please provide your name, business name, and email and we will follow up to create your directory listing.

- Name:
- Business Name:
- Email Address:

References

- Barbieri, C., & Mahoney, E. (2009). Why is diversification an attractive farm adjustment strategy? Insights from Texas farmers and ranchers. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25(1), 58–66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2008.06.001>
- Bhandari, P. B., Ejiogu, K., Karki, L. B., Escobar, E. N., Arbab, N. N., & Kairo, M. T. (2024). Factors associated with the profitability of agritourism operations in Maryland, USA. *Sustainability*, 16(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16031025>
- Chase, L., Stewart, M., Schilling, B., Smith, B., & Walk, M. (2018). Agritourism: Toward a conceptual framework for industry analysis. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 8(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2018.081.016>
- Chase, L., Wang, W., Bartlett, R., Conner, D., Hollas, C. R., Quella, L., Leff, P., Feenstra, G., Singh-Knights, D., & Stewart, M. (n.d.). *Agritourism Survey Results*. The Vermont Tourism Research Center, University of Vermont. Retrieved October 27, 2025, from <https://www.uvm.edu/vtrc/agritourism-survey-results>
- Chase, L., Wang, W., Bartlett, R., Conner, D., Hollas, C. R., Quella, L., Leff, P., Feenstra, G., Singh-Knights, D., & Stewart, M. (2021a). *Agritourism and on-farm direct sales survey: Results for the U.S.* University of Vermont. https://www.uvm.edu/d10-files/documents/2024-12/US_Survey_Report.pdf
- Chase, L., Wang, W., Bartlett, R., Conner, D., Hollas, C. R., Quella, L., Leff, P., Feenstra, G., Singh-Knights, D., & Stewart, M. (2021b). *Survey of agritourism including on-farm direct sales in the United States: Comparison of selected states*. University of Vermont. https://www.uvm.edu/d10-files/documents/2024-12/US_StateComparison.pdf
- Gil Arroyo, C., Barbieri, C., & Rozier Rich, S. (2013). Defining agritourism: A comparative study of stakeholders' perceptions in Missouri and North Carolina. *Tourism Management*, 37, 39–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.12.007>
- Hollas, C. R., Chase, L., Conner, D., Dickes, L., Lamie, R. D., Schmidt, C., Singh-Knights, D., & Quella, L. (2021). Factors related to profitability of agritourism in the United States: Results from a national survey of operators. *Sustainability*, 13(23), 13334. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313334>
- Hollas, C. R., Schmidt, C., Tian, Z., Goetz, S., & Chase, L. (2024). Insights and oversights: Behind the data on agritourism and direct sales in the United States. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 13(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2024.134.005>
- Lamie, R. D., Chase, L., Chiodo, E., Dickes, L., Flanigan, S., Schmidt, C., & Streifeneder, T. (2021). Agritourism around the globe: Definitions, authenticity, and potential controversy. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 10(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2021.102.002>
- National Agricultural Law Center Research Staff. (n.d.). *States' Agritourism Statutes*. University of Arkansas. The National Agricultural Law Center. Retrieved March 19, 2026, from <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/state-compilations/agritourism/>
- Quella, L., Chase, L., Conner, D., Reynolds, T., & Schmidt, C. (2023). Perceived success in agritourism: Results from a study of US agritourism operators. *Journal of Rural and Community Development / Revue Du Développement Rural et Communautaire*, 18(1). <https://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/2115>

- Quella, L., Chase, L., Conner, D., Reynolds, T., Wang, W., & Singh-Knights, D. (2021). Visitors and values: A qualitative analysis of agritourism operator motivations across the U.S. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 10(3), 287–301. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2021.103.010>
- Schilling, B. J., Attavanich, W., & Jin, Y. (2014). Does agritourism enhance farm profitability? *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 39(1), 69–87.
- Schmidt, C., Chase, L., Entsminger, J., Goetz, S. J., Zheng, T., Cornelisse, S., Schweichler, J., Windon, S., & Tomas, S. (n.d.). *Creating an effective support system for small and medium-sized farm operators to succeed in agritourism*. Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. Retrieved <https://nercrd.psu.edu/projects/agritourism-success-project/>
- Schmidt, C., Entsminger, J., Cornelisse, S., & Schweichler, J. (2025). *Insights on agritourism among US producers: Evidence from the 2024 national agritourism producer survey* (Data Brief 2025-1). Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. <https://nercrd.psu.edu/pubs/findings-from-the-2024-national-agritourism-producer-survey/>
- Tew, C., & Barbieri, C. (2012). The perceived benefits of agritourism: The provider's perspective. *Tourism Management*, 33(1), 215–224. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2011.02.005>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *URBAN AND RURAL* [Dataset]. Decennial Census, DEC 118th Congressional District Summary File, Table H2. Retrieved September 10, 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALCD1182020.H2?q=rural>
- USDA. (n.d.). *SARE's Four Regions*. Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education. Retrieved March 18, 2026, from <https://www.sare.org/about/sares-four-regions/>
- USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. (2022). *2022 Census of Agriculture—Volume 1, Chapter 1: U.S. National Level Data* [Dataset]. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/