

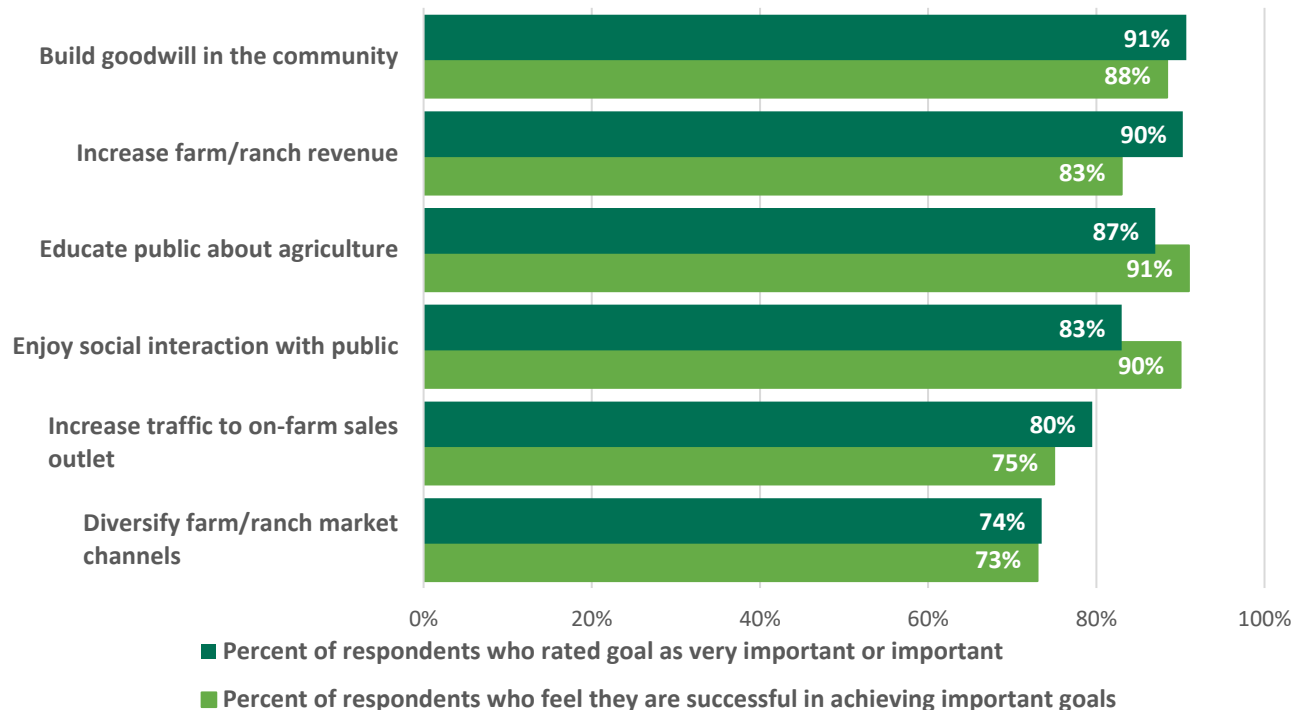
# Survey of Agritourism including On-Farm Direct Sales in Vermont

## Motivations and Goals

Between November 2019 and February 2020, 222 farmers and vineyard operators representing all 14 counties in Vermont completed an online survey about agritourism including on-farm sales. For more information and additional summaries, visit <https://www.uvm.edu/vtrc/agritourism-research>.

This summary highlights themes related to goals and motivations for engaging in agritourism as reported by operators. Survey results were combined with 6 semi-structured interviews of farmers in Vermont.

### Agritourism Operator Goals



### How Successful are Agritourism Operators in Meeting Their Goals?

Most agritourism operators are successful in achieving their goals, though the levels of success achieved in meeting various goals did not always mirror the relative importance of their goals. Operators are finding great success with important community goals, such as enjoying social interaction with the public, educating public about agriculture, and building goodwill in the community.

### Financial Goals



Financial goals vary widely among agritourism operators. For some, agritourism is a main source of income. Most at least want their enterprises to pay for themselves, but some are willing to sacrifice income for other non-economic benefits.

*“But it's just a great feeling when they walk around the corner and be like, ‘We're somewhere special and you worked really hard to make this evening special for us.’”*

*- Diversified veggie grower*



## Personal and Family Goals

Farmers want to minimize burnout, spend time with and find employment for family members, and enjoy what they do. They make strategic decisions about what enterprises to engage in and enter into partnerships wherever possible to share responsibility. For many, having visitors to their farms breaks up rural isolation and provides positive encouragement.

*“It’s rewarding to just have people come and see the farm. And it is both, of course, fiscally rewarding because they give you money for it. But to see the way they interact and hear the positive things that they say about the farm is nice because it just kind of reinvigorates your purpose. It’s affirming, and it’s an ego boost.”*

*- Berry grower*



## Community-related Goals

Many farmers define success via their roles as educators. They see themselves as direct intermediaries between consumers and their food sources.

As public figures, they consider themselves advocates for and teachers of their version agriculture. They also see themselves as community leaders both for the public and for other farmers.

## Conclusions

Our results suggest that agritourism provides a level of transparency that allows operators to better control narratives regarding their businesses and allows community members to participate in the agricultural process. Agritourism also aids in building community culture around food, the natural environment, and cultural heritage.

Support for agritourism operators should be focused on goals that are the most difficult for operators to achieve, such as increasing revenue, increasing traffic to on-farm sales outlets, and diversifying farm/ranch market channels.

*“I always tell people, agritourism is putting a face on agriculture. So, if someone goes to the store and they might see our farm logo on a bag of apples, they remember the experience that they have. You know, they can visualize the trees that those apples came from. They have had cider that was pressed from the apples that we’ve grown or apple pie with the apples that we harvested and then put into pie crust.”*

*- Fruit grower*