

Survey of Agritourism including On-Farm Direct Sales in Vermont

Overview

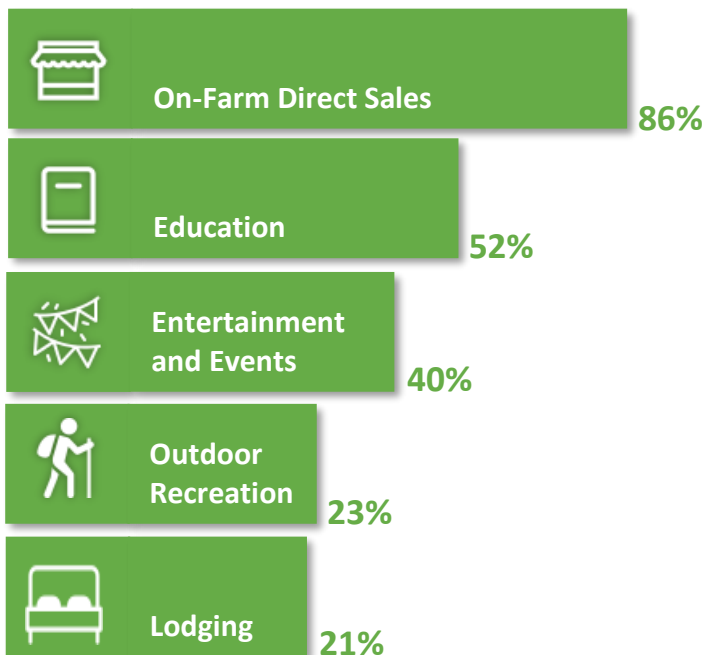
Online Survey

Between November 2019 and February 2020, farmers and vineyard operators throughout Vermont completed an online survey about agritourism including on-farm sales. The goal of the survey was to better understand the types of experiences and products offered, the economic viability of agritourism enterprises, and ways to support a healthy future for producers and their communities. Responses were received from each county.

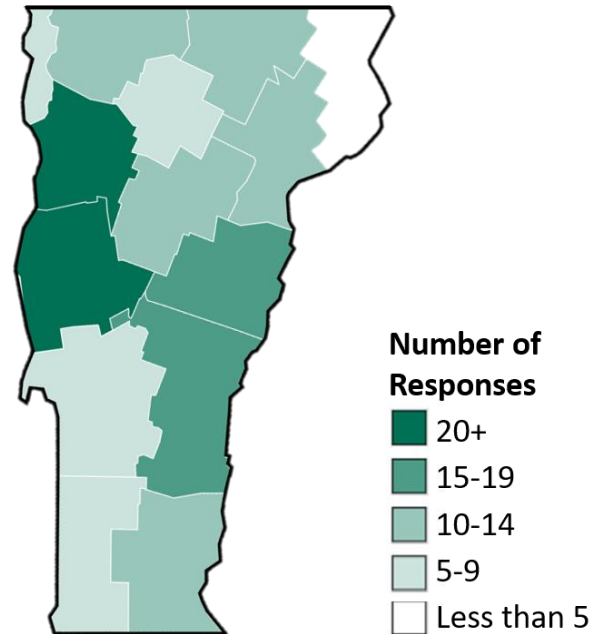
What is Agritourism?

For the purpose of this survey, agritourism was defined as experiences and product sales taking place on farms, ranches, or vineyards. Examples include farm stands, u-pick, overnight farm stays, tastings, events, tours, horseback riding, farm walks, and hunting.

Types of Farm Experiences Offered



Number of Respondents by County



Who answered the survey?

Responses were received from 222 farms, ranches, and vineyards in Vermont. The top responding counties were Chittenden, Addison, Windsor, and Orange (shown above). Agritourism activities were classified using a conceptual framework¹ focused on five types of agritourism (shown on the left). The most commonly offered experience was on-farm direct sales (86%).

On average, survey respondents:

were 57 years old

(average age)

had 10+ years

experience in agritourism
(62%)

were female

(56% of respondents)

farmed 82 acres

(median farm size)

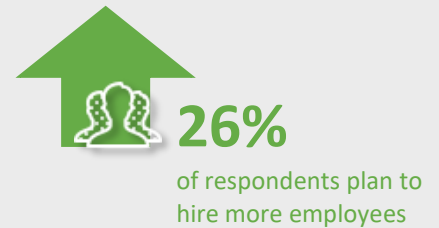
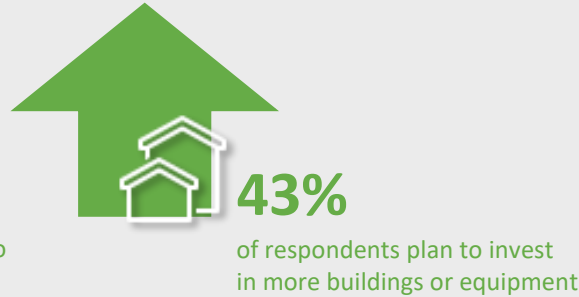
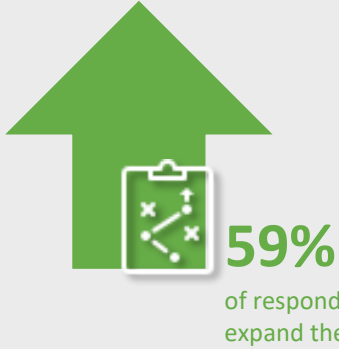
had a college degree

(72% of respondents)

¹Chase, Lisa C., Mary Stewart, Brian Schilling, Becky Smith, and Michelle Walk. 2018. "Agritourism: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Industry Analysis". *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 8 (1), 13-19. Online publication <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2018.081.016>.

Findings: The Future of Agritourism is Bright

When asked about plans over the next five years, farmers across Vermont expressed optimism about the potential for agritourism. Over half of farms surveyed planned to expand their services (59%), while almost half (43%) intended to invest in more buildings or equipment for their agritourism enterprises. Over one quarter (26%) planned to hire more employees in the next five years. Only 4% of those surveyed intended to decrease the number of services offered over the next five years.



Although just over 20% of respondents reported no profit from their agritourism enterprises, many of them were motivated by non-monetary values such as building community and educating the public about agriculture.

“[Lack of] public education and disconnect [from farmers] creates a big barrier for all of us in the industry. We are always working hard to help folks understand what we do. It all starts with education.”

- Vermont farmer

While this survey showed optimism, it also highlighted the challenges of being a farmer. The most common challenges noted by respondents are:

Time Management
(90%)

Labor (Including family)
(87%)

Marketing
(82%)

Liability and Insurance
(75%)

For more information, visit <https://www.uvm.edu/vtrc/agritourism-research>



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