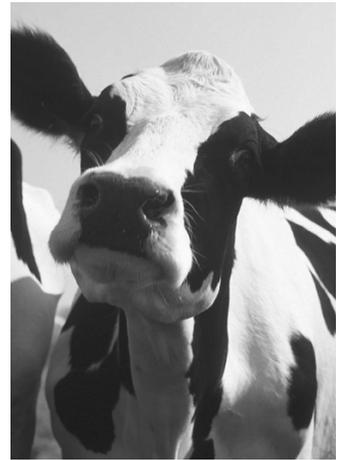


Your Agritourism Business in Pennsylvania: A Resource Handbook

Get started and keep going in agritourism



The Center for
Rural Pennsylvania
A Legislative Agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly

Your Agritourism Business in Pennsylvania: A Resource Handbook

Get started and keep going in agritourism

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July 2009

This handbook was sponsored by a grant from the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It was created in 1987 under Act 16, the Rural Revitalization Act, to promote and sustain the vitality of Pennsylvania's rural and small communities. Information contained in this handbook does not necessarily reflect the views of individual board members or the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. For more information, contact the Center for Rural Pennsylvania at 200 North Third St., Suite 600, Harrisburg, PA 17101, telephone (717) 787-9555, or visit www.ruralpa.org.

Cover photos of corn field and cow courtesy of Ron Nichols and Bob Nichols, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Introduction

Agritourism is a combination of two important Pennsylvania industries, agriculture and tourism. The American Farm Bureau Federation approved a good working definition of agritourism in 2004:

“Agritourism refers to an enterprise at a working farm, ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates income for the owner. Agricultural tourism refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any horticultural or agricultural operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation that also adds to the economic viability of the site.”

The key elements in this definition are the places in the business of agriculture, the people enjoying the place of business, and the fact that agritourism has the ability to generate income and economic viability.

As a reader of this handbook, you already know the business of agriculture. To move toward agritourism, you need to take what you know about agriculture and develop it into something for visitors, or agritourists. This handbook explains what is necessary to create the connection between agriculture and tourism.

Making the tourism connection with your current agricultural business does not require a great leap into the unknown. Many agricultural activities already generate interest that will encourage people to visit farms. It is important to understand that different visitors contribute to agritourism operations in different ways. Not all visitors meet the traditional definition of a tourist. For example, local residents are valued guests who might regularly contribute to your agritourism business. Visitors who travel a great distance to reach your business also contribute a great deal. The type of person you attract will depend on many of the decisions you make as you start or build your agritourism business.

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How to Use this Handbook

You may be new to agritourism or have been in the business for years. Either way, this handbook can be useful to you. The book has four parts. The first two, *Is Agritourism Right for You* and *Getting Started*, help those who are considering agritourism. The last two, *Strategies for Success* and *Help Beyond this Handbook*, serve as resources to start an agritourism business and as handy references for those already in the business.

This handbook shares insights specific to agritourism in Pennsylvania, which is unique in comparison to agritourism in other states. Likewise, every agricultural operation is different. You can make your agritourism business unique from other businesses using your creativity, the character of your property, and the mix of visitors you attract.

Throughout the handbook, examples and worksheets are provided to help you get started in agritourism.

Another publication, *Agritourism in Pennsylvania: An Industry Assessment*, published by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania in 2006 may also be useful, as this handbook refers to the 2006 report frequently. The report is available on the Center’s website at www.ruralpa.org/agritourism2006.pdf.

While this handbook offers ideas and advice on agritourism in Pennsylvania, it is not a substitute for comprehensive legal, insurance, tax or financial counseling. And it does not replace the need to determine and understand rules and regulations for your specific area. Wherever possible, this handbook directs you to those who can answer questions a handbook like this cannot. While the authors have taken every precaution to provide accurate information in this book, please note that the information is subject to change.

Part 1: Is Agritourism Right for You?

Developing an agritourism business takes energy, time and money. Before making the move to start a business, make sure you consider this question, “Is the agritourism field right for me?” This section of the handbook contains a few ideas and tools to help you decide.

Agritourism in Pennsylvania

Before getting started with the specifics, take some time to explore the big picture of agritourism in Pennsylvania. Agritourism is growing in the United States and in Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, agritourism is in every single county, with different concentrations in different regions (See Figure 1).

The geographic concentration of agritourism varies throughout the state, and the range of available activities is quite large. In Pennsylvania, agritourism activities fit into four main categories:

- Farm retail/dining,
- Agricultural education,
- Agricultural entertainment (agri-tainment) and,
- Agricultural lodging.

The farm-retail and dining category has the most activity in Pennsylvania, followed by agri-tainment and agricultural education. Agricultural lodging is the least offered agritourism activity in Pennsylvania.

In general, the most popular agritourism activities in Pennsylvania are school tours, farm markets, roadside stands, agriculture exhibits/tours, and gift shops/agricultural crafts.

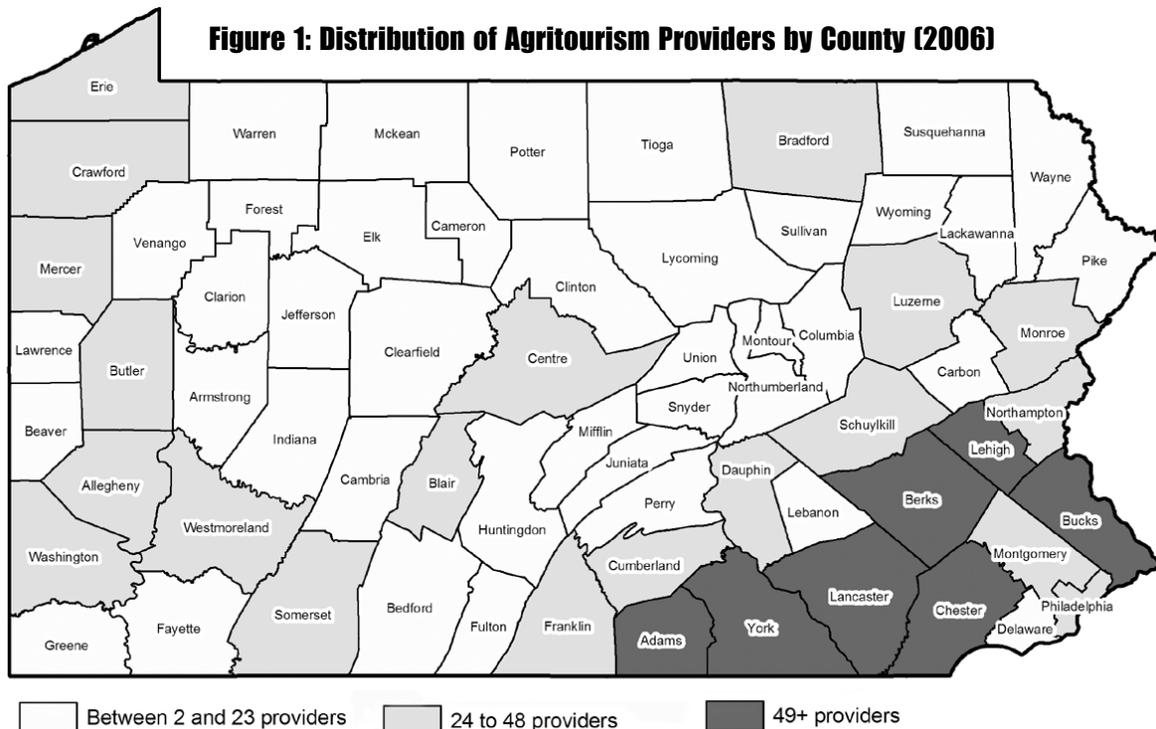
Reasons to Consider Agritourism

Besides the prospect of additional income, there are many reasons to consider agritourism. In Pennsylvania, agricultural operators consider agritourism for several reasons, including the following:

- To develop or enhance a hobby or interest,
- To provide employment for themselves or family,
- To provide a community service,
- To learn new skills or try something different,
- To preserve land,
- To promote or sustain farm heritage, and
- To protect the farm for future generations.

Regardless of the reasons for considering agritourism, many farmers find that agritourism activities fit very well into existing agricultural operations. For example, an orchardist might consider a farm-retail operation or a farm dining activity that features fruit from the farm. In some cases, the quality of life on the farm may be the product that agritourists seek. Some examples of other activities include:

- Roadside stands,
- Farm markets,
- Christmas tree farms/cut your own,
- U-pick operations,
- Gift shops/agricultural crafts,
- Restaurants/food concessions,
- Ice cream shops/bakeries,
- Corporate events/company picnics,



- Weddings/special events,
- Breweries, and
- Wineries.

Agri-education involves bringing people to a farm to learn about farming and farm life and includes activities such as:

- School tours,
- Farm-related museums,
- Garden/nursery tours,
- Winery/brewery tours,
- Agricultural exhibits/tours, and
- Crop identification programs.

Agri-tainment combines an agricultural setting with entertaining activities and may include:

- Rodeos,
- Agricultural fairs/festivals/shows,
- Children’s activities,
- Petting zoos,
- Horseback riding,
- Corn mazes,
- Haunted houses/hayrides,
- Wagon rides,
- Sleigh rides, and
- Outdoor recreation (e.g. fishing/hunting, cross-country skiing, etc.).

Agri-lodging involves guests staying overnight on agricultural property. Currently operating or historic farms can host this type of accommodation. These can be full-

service or limited-service accommodations. Some ideas include:

- Bed and breakfasts,
- Dude/guest ranches,
- Country inns or resorts,
- Hostels,
- Camping/campgrounds, and
- Corporate or religious retreats.

It is always good to know what is happening with agritourism in your state or community. However, do not feel that you have to follow what everyone else is doing. Remember, your imagination is the limit.

Do You Want to Be an Agritourism Operator?

Now that you have a view of the Pennsylvania agritourism picture, it is time to focus on your agritourism opportunities. Think about yourself and about the people you already have or may want to have on your farm for daily operations. It is important to consider the people who will sustain the agricultural part of your business and the people that will operate the agritourism side of the business. These workers may be outside employees, neighbors, family, or community workers. They can work as volunteers, for pay, or sometimes for other incentives, such

as educational experience. Be sure to explore all options when considering staffing needs.

As you think more deeply about specifics, you may focus on a few misconceptions or myths that make it difficult to visualize your business and its success (See Table 1).

Finally, it’s important to “think tourism” when evaluating whether or not agritourism is right for you. Tourism is more than selling a product, as it tends to be both an experience and a good. Agritourism is similar since it involves both goods and services. Often you will have to think more about the “feelings people get” when they are participating in agritourism and less about the actual “things they walk away with” at the end of the day.

Now that you’ve had some time to consider agritourism basics, do you think agritourism is for you? It’s not for everyone since you may not have the time, may have other off-farm employment commitments, may lack the interest, or may not be ready for agritourism.

If, on the other hand, you think agritourism is right for you, continue on to the next section.

Table 1: Myths vs. Realities of Agritourism

Myth	Reality
Agritourism takes a lot of financial investment.	The number of assets you already have may surprise you.
Agritourism means you never get a break.	There are many activities from which to choose. You are your own boss and can choose when you want to operate the agritourism business.
Agritourism requires many big changes.	You can decide what will work best for your location, so the need for changes will depend on your vision of the new business.
Agritourism requires a lot of experience to be successful.	The basics of agritourism success take good planning and management. This requires diligence and not a lot of experience.
Starting an agritourism business requires the hiring of new employees.	You can decide how large your operation is going to be. Many activities require only you.
Agritourism means that a large number of people will be on my land.	You control your comfort level with visitors. You can be active in agritourism even with just one customer at a time.
Agritourists are annoying and will be a nuisance.	You can match agritourism activities to things that interest you. Good matching will mean that you are more likely to attract people to whom you can relate.

Part 2: Getting Started

Agritourism Asset Assessment

The first step in starting your agritourism business is to inventory your agritourism assets. To set up a plan for your agritourism future, you need to know what you already have that is of value. This section uses the term “assets” generically to mean resources that have potential or immediate cash value.

In business, assets may be divided into two primary categories: *financial assets*, which refer to money in the form of cash and savings; and *real assets*, which refer to the value of land, equipment, machinery, and livestock. Among both of these are *liquid assets*, which are those that are likely to sell within a year. Don’t worry if you are short on assets. There are sources that provide grants, loans, loan guarantees, and tax credits or abatements (See The Business and Finance Plan section on Page 9).

Human assets refer to the people who will offer a helping hand as paid or un-paid employees (refer to the Human Resources: Your People section on Page 14).

Now, it’s time to search for assets that you may not realize are important. In taking this beginning inventory, try to see your property with fresh eyes. Features on your property that seem common may actually hold a great deal of potential.

Think of the features of your agricultural enterprise and ways they can be used for agritourism. These can be classified as natural, physical, heritage, or a combination of the three.

Natural assets are features on your property that occur naturally. Physical assets are tangible features or materials. Many times these assets have multiple uses. For example, your operating silo may function as part of your daily farming activities and serve as a beautiful background for photographers. Heritage assets have some type of historical, cultural, artistic or educational significance.

Table 2 offers examples of all of these assets.

Putting it together

Remember the importance of location. Once you have a better idea

of what is available on your property, think about your surroundings. How far away is/are:

- The marketing area – the source of potential visitors;
- Similar enterprises – being close to like enterprises does not always mean competition, as it can be a benefit to you, too; and,
- Facilities and services necessary for visitors – like shopping, food/beverage facilities, accommodations, transportation, and other attractions.

Worksheet 1 on Page 8 provides a checklist of potential activities for your agritourism business. Go through the list to explore your options, based on the assets you have.

Now that you are better acquainted with your agritourism assets and options, it is time to plan.

Table 2: Natural, Physical and Heritage Assets of Your Agritourism Business

Asset Type	Assets Classification	Examples	Agritourism Activity Examples
Natural	Scenery and atmosphere	Views, quiet areas	Hiking, meditation
	Wildlife and insects	Big game, small game, waterfowl, butterflies	Fee-based hunting, bird watching
	Livestock	Horses, sheep, goats, cows	Trail rides, sheep shearing, petting zoo, milking demonstration
	Hydrology	Lake, stream, creek, pond, waterfall	Kayaking, fishing, or related activities
	Topography	Elevated area, cave, rock formation, lookouts	Rock climbing, rappelling, photography
	Vegetation	Forest, grassland, crops	Corn mazes, crop identification, u-pick
	Climate and Seasons	Precipitation, weather patterns, growing season, planting season, harvest season	Star gazing, pumpkin walk
Physical	Residential	Main house, bunk house, cabin	Guest rooms, bed and breakfast
	Non-residential	Pen, paddock, barn, out building, machine shop	Rodeo, cider mill, gift shop
	Other function	Pavilion, play area, shooting range, trails	Corporate cook outs, family reunion, geo-caching course
	Transportation	Wagon, tractor	Haunted hayride, tractor pull, farm tour
	Space	Parking area, camping area, seating area	Corn maze, u-pick, concert location
	Decorative	Silo, bridge, windmill, gazebo, greenhouse, garden, water tower	Practically any activity involving scenery.
Heritage	Built heritage	Historic barn, civil war site, mine shaft, dam	Architectural tour, photography safari, reenactment, sightseeing
	Cultural heritage	Food, crafts, music, cemetery, petroglyph	Bakery, candle making, quilting, art gallery, music festival, ghost walk or escorted walking tour
	Natural heritage	Scenic gorges, rolling hills, lakeside views	Interpretive trail, nature photography, hosting art classes

WORKSHEET 1: Agritourism Activity Exercise

The possibilities for agritourism attractions and services are virtually limitless. They can include almost any activity from hayrides to rodeos. When surveying your land for resources, it is helpful to make a list of all possible activities for your future business. The following checklist will help you explore activity options.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Activity Demonstration (milk processing, grain threshing, cattle branding, spinning wool, sheep shearing) | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational or Technical Tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Music Concerts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Races | <input type="checkbox"/> Event Hosting (birthday parties, car shows, corporate retreats, family reunions, receptions, weddings) | <input type="checkbox"/> Off-Road Vehicle Driving Areas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apple Picking | <input type="checkbox"/> Face Painting | <input type="checkbox"/> On-Farm Retailing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art Shows | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm or Ranch Work Experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Pack Trips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auctioneering | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Stays | <input type="checkbox"/> Paint Ball |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Batting Cages | <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Petting Zoo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bed and Breakfast | <input type="checkbox"/> Fee Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography/Painting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle Trails and Rentals | <input type="checkbox"/> Festivals (seasonal, harvest, food, holiday, or cultural events) | <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic Area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Flea Market | <input type="checkbox"/> Playground |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating, Canoeing, Kayaking, Tubing or Rafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Fudge Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Pony Rides |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabin Lodging | <input type="checkbox"/> Game Preserve or Guided Hunts | <input type="checkbox"/> Pumpkin Painting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Goat Walk (climbing playground for goats: people watch) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pumpkin Picking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carnival or Circus | <input type="checkbox"/> Go-Carting | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshment Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Catering Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Driving Range or Mini Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Rent a Cow or Tree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cave Tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Crop Tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Roadside Markets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Camps | <input type="checkbox"/> Guiding and Outfitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing or Rappelling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Tree Lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Improvement Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Rodeos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clambakes | <input type="checkbox"/> Hay Bale Maze | <input type="checkbox"/> Scavenger Hunts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classes, Clinics, or Demonstrations (farming, ranch skills, cooking, planting, harvesting, fishing, hunting, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hay Rides | <input type="checkbox"/> School Tours or Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Supported Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Guided Driving Tours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contests (eating, baking, chili cook off) | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Museums and Displays | <input type="checkbox"/> Shooting Range (firearm or moving-target skeet) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corn Cannon (air cannon that shoots corn at targets) | <input type="checkbox"/> Haunted Barn or House | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleigh Rides |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corn Maze (educational, haunted) | <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback Trail Riding | <input type="checkbox"/> Sorghum Maze |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Craft Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting Sports and Tournaments | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialty Food Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Your Own Christmas Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot Air Balloon Rides | <input type="checkbox"/> Square Dancing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy Shares | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting Dog Training and Competitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Stage Shows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Display Gardens (flowers, greenery, herbs) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice Skating | <input type="checkbox"/> Story Telling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Parks | <input type="checkbox"/> Kettle Corn Shop | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming Area |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Vintage or Yard Sales |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Tag | <input type="checkbox"/> Wagon Trains |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Living History Events/Reenactments | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Experiences or Wildlife Viewing |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Maple Tree Tapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Winery Tour or Wine Tasting |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Biking | <input type="checkbox"/> Working Farm Stays |

The Business and Finance Plan

As with other parts of your agricultural business, you need to anticipate the future of your agritourism business. Anticipating the future is exactly what planning is all about.

The first and most essential step is a business and finance plan. You should already have a plan in place for your agricultural operation. Once you have evaluated your assets and have a better idea of possible agritourism activities, you will need to determine where agritourism will fit into your overall farm plan.

Agritourism can be an additional part of the overall production, or it can comprise the main functions of your business. Deciding the role agritourism will play in your operation will help you to begin structuring your business plan.

If the plan involves agritourism as a minor addition, then you may consider it as supplementary. For example, you may want to have people on your farm for an annual festival but keep it closed to the public for most of the year. In this instance, agritourism would not be a major part of the overall farm plan.

You may want to incorporate agritourism activities as a part of other farm-based activities. For example, you may continue regular crop production, but also offer agritourism activities, such as a u-pick operation. Agritourism activities should then comprise a portion of the overall farm plan.

You may want to make agritourism the main form of agricultural production. For example, you might decide that the main source of income from your farm will be a farm stay or farm bed and breakfast. If agritourism is your sole source of agricultural production, then your agritourism business plan is also the farm plan.

Introduction to the Business Plan

A business plan is a document that outlines the future of a business over a specific interval of time. A business plan must contain the following basic elements:

- Definition of the business,
- Outline of the financial plan for the business,
- Outline of the marketing plan for the product or products, and,
- Outline of the management plan for after the initial start-up process.

As you begin the business planning process, ask yourself the following fundamental questions:

- What service or product does my business provide and what needs does it fill?
- Who are the potential customers for my product or service and why will they purchase it from me?
- How will I reach my potential customers?
- Where will I get the financial resources to start my business?

This handbook outlines many of the aspects of business planning that pertain to agritourism operations, such as finance and marketing, but it is not comprehensive. Business planning considerations can be very complicated and technical, depending on the type of agricultural operation that is the basis of the agritourism business and specifics are generally beyond the scope of this book. Fortunately, you do not have to weather the business planning process alone or with much expense as Pennsylvania is equipped with free technical support through the Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).

SBDCs assist Pennsylvania entrepreneurs through consulting, education, and small business information. A list of the Small Business Development Centers in Pennsylvania is available in the final section of this handbook. The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers main

web address is www.pasbdc.org.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) offers many options for business start-up assistance, such as *The Entrepreneur's Guide: Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania*. This publication and other resources are available at www.newpa.com/build-your-business/start/before-you-begin/index.aspx.

Additional Business Start-Up Tasks

Which Type of Business?

When starting a business there are several decisions you must make concerning the type of business you intend to form. Business types include sole proprietorships, partnerships, cooperatives, and corporations, to name a few. The simplest type of business is a sole proprietorship, which is the main focus of this handbook.

The difference between business types involves the degree of personal liability owners have for company operations. Corporations and limited liability companies protect owners more than sole proprietorships or partnerships.

Sole Proprietorships

According to the Center for Entrepreneurial Assistance (2006), most small businesses are sole proprietorships. Sole proprietorships have the advantage of sole control of the company by one single owner. Other advantages include less paperwork, minimum legal restrictions, owner retention of profits, and easier discontinuation of the business. A major disadvantage is unlimited personal liability for all debts and liabilities of the business. Other disadvantages include limited ability to raise capital and termination of the business upon the owner's death. If you choose to start as a sole proprietor, you can always form a

partnership or corporation as the business grows.

Partnerships

Partnerships resemble sole proprietorships, but include two or more owners. The Center for Entrepreneurial Assistance (2006) identifies several advantages of partnerships including financial and managerial strength of all the partners and indirect taxation of profits. Some disadvantages include personal liability for business debts, termination of the business with the death of a partner, and the fact that any one of the partners can commit the firm to obligations.

Corporations

Corporations are the most complex form of business organization. They are more expensive and difficult to start because of paperwork requirements. Business activities are restricted to the rules established when the corporation is formed, which is documented in a charter. One advantage of a corporation is limited liability. Liability is limited to the amount owners have paid in to their share of stock. Death of owners or transfers of shares do not affect the continuity of a corporation. Some disadvantages are extensive record keeping, close regulation, and double taxation. Taxes are assessed on profits and dividends paid to the owners (Center for Entrepreneurial Assistance, 2006).

Cooperatives

Cooperatives bear some resemblance to corporations in that they involve a number of members. According to the National Cooperative Business Association (2008), a cooperative is an association of people who voluntarily unite to meet common economic or other goals through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. In a cooperative, membership is open and

voluntary with all members making fair economic contributions to the business. All members of the cooperative have equal voting rights for electing representatives and may individually vote on decisions concerning the cooperative. Cooperatives can be good for a community by providing opportunities for training, education, and information. More information on cooperatives is available at the National Cooperative Business Association website at www.ncba.coop/abcoop.cfm or from the Keystone Development Center website at www.kdc.coop.

Finance and the Business Plan Overview

Why is Financial Planning Important?

Professional and well-organized financial planning will present a positive image of the business you intend to grow. For a new business venture to be successful, it must have community and local government support. A professional business plan will improve the chance of achieving this support.

Securing financial assistance is one form of support that may be necessary to establish a new business. A strong business plan is critical to securing financing. Loan officers prefer to approve potential applicants with a financial plan that anticipates possible liabilities. Lenders are more likely to trust applicants who plan carefully and responsibly.

If you are not seeking financial assistance, then the financial plan will act as another safeguard for your investment. By planning for potential costs, you will be more prepared to avoid financial losses.

What Should the Financial Plan Include?

The financial plan should include accurate expectations of cost for every step toward establishing the

new business. *The Entrepreneur's Guide: Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania* (2006) suggests that financial planning should include:

- Start-up costs (one-time expenses),
- Monthly expenses (repetitive costs),
- Sources and uses of funding,
- Balance sheets (initial and projected up to three years),
- Projected cash flow (monthly for the first year, and quarterly for years two and three),
- Profit and cost forecasts (annually for three years),
- Break-even analysis (when do you expect profit?),
- Three prior years of statements for your current business, if applicable,
- Personal financial statement of the owner or owners, and
- Assumptions used in financial projections.

Lenders will consider several factors to determine the risk involved in financing a new business. They will consider the applicant's management background and the ways that the applicant's experience will affect the business. Lenders will consider an applicant's ability to repay the loan based on a realistic projection of income. Credit history also contributes to the loan application process. A history of timely payments will obviously benefit a loan applicant. Adequate collateral may also contribute to the loan application process. One theme that is apparent in financial planning is organization. Even if you are not seeking a loan, good organization practices will benefit your business.

If developing the financial section of the business plan seems too overwhelming, find a method of assistance that is most beneficial to your situation. Possible options include computer programs, books, and financial professionals.

Examples of computer programs include:

- *Palo Alto Business Plan Pro* by Palo Alto Software,
- *Business Plan Writer Deluxe Edition* by Nova Development Corp, and
- *Small Business Pro 2006* by Avanquest.

Examples of books are:

- *The Art of the Start* (2004) by Guy Kawasaki,
- *Business Plans Kit for Dummies* (2005) by Steven D. Peterson, Ph.D., Peter E. Jaret, and Barbara F. Schenck, and
- *Writing a Convincing Business Plan* (2001) by Arthur R. DeThomas, Ph.D. and Lin Grensing-Pophal.

Finance and Business Terms and Concepts

Business Concepts: Competition and Marketing

Before new entrepreneurs invest in a new business, they should have a thorough knowledge of competition in the market. Competition refers to a rivalry between businesses seeking to secure the patronage of customers in a particular market. For agritourism, identifying competitors will depend on the products and services offered by a business. Agritourism competitors could be any business that draws customers away from the agritourism operation by offering the same or similar products or services. These competitors are not necessarily agritourism operations. A new department store that offers very low prices on some of the products offered at an agritourism business could potentially draw many customers as a competitor. The importance of the business plan re-emerges in this instance. Effectively managing your business will require a full and extensive knowledge of the available products. Further, new entrepreneurs must find new and innovative ways

to reduce costs so that they can compete with businesses that may be more financially established.

It is important to note from the example above that competing businesses can draw customers away from your current or potential business. This is also the case when additional businesses emerge in your area of operation.

A layered approach to assessing the market may help you develop a competitive strategy. The new entrepreneur will face competition at the local, regional, and global levels.

It may seem intimidating to imagine yourself as a global competitor, but in the technological age, all businesses can compete in the global market. The original study source for this resource handbook (Ryan, et. al, 2006) found that most agritourism visitors (61 percent) use the Internet as a planning resource. In the same study, agritourism operators indicated that the Internet was their fifth choice for marketing their agritourism businesses. This showed a clear difference between provider actions and consumer demands and indicated that agritourism operators can more effectively market by advertising on the Internet where most potential visitors seek information about agritourism activities.

Internet marketing achieves the global aspect of a layered marketing approach. Internet marketing can also promote a business at the regional and local levels where it is even more likely to secure agritourism visitors.

Business Growth

If you are considering business growth, then start-up and establishment of the business was a success. Congratulations on your achievements so far! *The Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania* (2006) offers a financial checklist for

business growth, which recommends:

- Establishing a good relationship with your bank by meeting with a loan officer to get a full understanding of expectations (this should also help to develop the business plan),
- Understanding how to read a financial statement,
- Understanding how to establish prices properly,
- Understanding how to assess your financial needs,
- Understanding debt, and
- Understanding cost containment.

Even if you are not necessarily considering business expansion, a thorough understanding of business growth concepts will help to prepare you for common business tasks and possible future growth.

Which Price is Right?

Establishing appropriate prices for a new business can be confusing at times. Paul DeCeglie, in the January 1998 issue of *Business Start-ups Magazine*, identifies several important points with reference to price setting. Setting prices too high is likely to encourage customers to visit competing businesses. Setting prices too low could hurt profits and repel customers seeking quality. If initial prices are set too low, customers who were initially visiting your business are likely to seek lower prices at other businesses as your prices adjust to market levels. A good pricing strategy includes researching prices of the product at competing businesses and then setting a price for the product that falls somewhere in the middle of the price range. Market prices change periodically, so it may be beneficial to assess pricing on a routine basis.

Understanding Debt

Understanding debt will help you avoid financial problems while also taking advantage of different borrowing options. Debt is an extensive

topic that should be discussed with a professional. Several websites, such as www.debtshelp.com, cover the concept of business debt. Discuss debt with a business consultant to clarify any confusion and answer any questions you may have.

Cost Containment

Accomplishing cost containment might involve many different management strategies. One way to manage cost is to start the business at home (Zahn, 2007). Some agritourism operations will remain “at home” enterprises, while others may require their own location. Starting the initial business at home will effectively reduce rental or mortgage costs. With this method, a new business owner can take a slow, systematic approach to developing the business.

Another way to reduce cost is by judging the output of a resource instead of its condition. This is particularly true when considering technology. New computers are being developed all of the time. Buying a new computer for the business should not occur until you are certain that older computer equipment cannot effectively achieve the necessary output your business requires. Resist the temptation to purchase new items that you do not really need. If upgrading equipment will not produce a benefit that exceeds its cost, then seriously consider the practical approach; judge equipment by its ability to perform a function for the business.

Manage cost by adhering to an established budget. Do not compete with other businesses dollar-for-dollar. Spend efficiently by selecting the best prices for advertising, packaging, or other items (Zahn, 2007). Successful spending will produce an increase in sales. Too much spending on advertising that does not help attract customers or

respect the budget is a poor practice for cost containment.

Additionally, it may be beneficial to purchase items as needed. This is not to suggest exhausting your inventory. The point is to purchase assets at appropriate intervals. Start-up may not be a good time to purchase a large item that will not be used until much later in the life of the business (Zahn, 2007). Consider the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing assets in this category at start-up.

Cost management can include bartering services with other business owners (Zahn, 2007). This can be advantageous because it does not require cash and it accomplishes a goal. While these opportunities may be uncommon, understand that this method of business has advantages as a business tactic, under certain circumstances.

A valuable tip for approaching all purchasing decisions is to label each potential purchase as a “want” or a “need” (Zahn, 2007). “Wants” that do not benefit your operation will inflate your operational costs. “Needs” directly benefit a business operation in either the short-term or the long-term. Avoid unnecessary costs by adhering to a need-based cost containment policy.

Finance and Taxes: The Basics

This section provides a general description of the tax responsibilities for a new business. The tax information in this section does not cover all available tax literature, by any means.

Tax liabilities vary for different types of business organizations. Business taxes for a corporation are considerably more complex than taxes for a sole proprietorship. Thus, the form of business you operate will determine which taxes you must submit. Due to the potential complexity of business taxes, you should seek professional counsel from a tax

advisor concerning the business start-up process.

Federal business taxes take four different forms: income tax, self-employment tax, employment tax, and excise tax (Internal Revenue Service [IRS], 2008a). While there are various state business taxes, this section will only cover Pennsylvania sales tax.

Income Tax

Income tax is the yearly tax familiar to most workers in the United States. Taxes are usually collected, or withheld, from income throughout the year and any remaining obligation is paid at the end of the tax year. If withholding results in an overpayment then the taxpayer will receive a tax refund. Withholding is not always a requirement, as individuals may sometimes choose to pay all taxes at the end of the tax year instead of having income withheld. Withholding may be required for your business. Seek the advice of a professional for more information.

Self-Employment Tax

Self-employment tax is the combination of social security and Medicare taxes (IRS, 2008a). Self-employment tax payments contribute to your coverage under the Social Security system. Social Security is intended to provide you with retirement benefits, disability benefits, survivor benefits, and hospital Medicare benefits.

Employment Tax and the Employer Identification Number

If you have employees in your business, then you will be required to pay Social Security, Medicare, and federal unemployment taxes (FUTA) for each employee (IRS, 2008a). You will also be required to perform federal income tax withholding for each employee. For additional infor-

mation, refer to *Employment Taxes for Small Businesses* on the IRS website at www.revenue.state.pa.us/revenue/lib/revenue/rev-588.pdf.

If you are required to pay the employment tax, you must have an Employer Identification Number (EIN). Some businesses, such as corporations, partnerships, and enterprises that have a qualified retirement plan (such as Keogh) or pay federal excise taxes, are required to have an EIN even if they do not have any employees. You can apply to the IRS for an EIN by telephone, fax, or mail, depending on how soon you need to use the EIN. The Form SS-4 "Application for Employer Identification Number" and accompanying instructions may be downloaded from the IRS website at www.irs.gov or by calling the Forms Hotline at 1-800-TAX-FORM. (CEA, 2006)

Sales Tax

Sales tax guidelines vary by state. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue (2007), the sales and use tax is imposed on the retail sale, consumption, rental or use of tangible personal property in Pennsylvania. The tax is also imposed on certain services relating to such property and on the charge for specific business services. Major items exempt from the tax include food (not ready-to-eat), candy and gum, most wearing apparel, textbooks, computer services, drugs, sales for resale, and residential heating fuels such as oil, electricity, gas, coal and firewood (Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, 2007, p. 30). So, agritourism businesses may be required to charge sales tax for non-exempt items.

For more information on Pennsylvania taxes and to learn about taxes your business may be required to pay, refer to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue or associated sources (www.revenue.state.pa.us).

Tax Advice

Unless you have experience with business taxes, it is highly recommended that you seek the consultation of a business professional. Tax procedures can be complex and can potentially result in unnecessary costs in fees. You can avoid mistakes and fees by getting the right information from professionals with business tax experience.

Additional Recommended Tax and Finance Resources

The IRS website has information specific to agricultural operations at www.irs.gov/businesses/small/farmers/. Non-agricultural tax information is also available at the IRS website.

A guide offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue entitled, *Starting a Business in Pennsylvania: A Beginner's Guide*, provides tax information available at www.revenue.state.pa.us/revenue/lib/revenue/rev-588.pdf.

Small Business Development Centers offer free consultation for new business entrepreneurs. For more information, refer to the main website at www.pasbdc.org.

Pennsylvania currently provides several programs and agencies that can be of assistance to new or expanding agritourism operations. These can be found by searching www.newpa.com.

Area Loan Organizations (ALOs)

ALOs are non-profit economic development agencies certified by DCED. ALOs assist clients in preparing a loan application and also review and evaluate loan applications to determine whether to approve the loan. ALOs are available in various areas throughout Pennsylvania. An updated list of contact information for these organizations is available by searching for ALOs at www.newpa.com/index.aspx.

Small Business First (SBF)

SBF is a business assistance program that offers low-interest loans to promote growth of small manufacturing, industrial, agriculture and mining enterprises, export-related business, advanced technology and computer-related services, hotels, motels or restaurants, environmental compliance/pollution prevention enterprises, municipal or commercial recyclers, and defense-related companies. SBF loans can be used for building, machine and equipment purchases and upgrades, and working capital. To apply for a Small Business First loan, contact your local Area Loan Organization.

First Industries Fund

The First Industries Fund provides funding to promote the for-profit agriculture and tourism industries (DCED, 2005). First Industries Fund loan applications are available through Area Loan Organizations.

The Governor's Resource Guide to Community and Economic Development

The Governor's Resource Guide is a tool that can identify state, federal, and private sector programs that may offer funding and services to assist with your agritourism operation. This guide can be downloaded from www.ruralpa.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt.

The Maryland Resource and Conservation Development Board publishes a guide specific to the first steps in getting started in agritourism called, *Taking the First Step: Farm and Ranch Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism Resource Evaluation Guide* (2004) (www.somdrdc.org/articles/uploads/1/Taking_the_First_Step.pdf).

Human Resources: Your People

Unlike traditional products, tourism consists mainly of services and experiences. Therefore, people power, or human resources or capital, is especially important to the success of an agritourism operation. As with any resource, successful management of employees requires careful planning.

Human resources may consist of just you and your family, as either paid or unpaid labor. As you develop and grow, you may need to add employees from outside of the family. You will need to decide what structure of human resources (unpaid or paid) will be cost competitive for your business. Nonetheless, human resources management requires the consideration of the following activities, with regard to your potential employees or personnel:

- Recruitment and selection,
- Retention,
- Training and development, and
- Evaluation and performance management or discipline.

Remember, when first starting, it may be necessary to operate without employees. However, remember that your primary function must be directing the business. Do not make the mistake of trying to do everything yourself when there are employees available to help you.

Recruitment and Selection

As noted, the unique nature of the tourism industry makes human resources especially vital and makes human resource management especially challenging. Tourism has traditionally struggled with perceptions about employment opportunities in the industry. Tourism is generally known for low wages, unskilled labor-intensive work, seasonal and other variations in work and work hours, poor career structures, and high labor turnover (the

rate at which employees come and go) (UNEP, 2002).

These difficulties can make recruitment a challenge. In addition, some recruitment resources can be costly. One of the best ways to recruit employees is through referrals. Referrals are effective because friends and family trust the source of the information.

Make sure to circulate employment opportunity information that includes a clear job description, application requirements, and contact information. Be very clear on requirements for work hours, skills, and the anticipated pay rate. In addition, it is important to clarify job benefits and length of employment (part time, full time, or seasonal). Make sure that the job announcement talks about the things that make you a great employer.

Some ways to recruit potential employees include:

- Referrals through your personal network of contacts (family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues),
- A community bulletin board, local market, or other agribusiness,
- Local job fairs, and
- A local college, university, or high school.

You also may want to contact Pennsylvania Careerlink at www.cwds.state.pa.us for free resources to recruit potential employees.

After advertising the available positions, think about how you will select the best employees for the job. An application is a necessary part of your recruitment process. At the point of application, the applicant should give basic information like personal contacts, work history, education, and references. Make sure that the application process is the same for every applicant so that it is easier to compare prospective employees.

Next is meeting the applicants face-to-face in an interview. This will give you a sense of the applicant's people skills and will help to determine if they are right for your business.

There are some questions that are illegal to ask, such as those related to race, religion, age, disability, family, or marital status. Remember to follow-up on references to gain a better understanding of the applicant.

Whether you hire or not, keep a file of each applicant. You may need to hire in the future. You can also share information with other business managers who might be hiring. This is a good way to network with other employers. Other business owners will be much more likely to help you if you help them when they are in need. Developing good business relationships should always be a top priority.

Retention

After hiring an employee, it is important to keep that employee functioning at his or her best. Agritourism businesses rely on management staff to develop enjoyable locations for both employees and visitors. Employees want to work for employers who value good morale, motivation, and interest in improving the quality of the workplace. A good starting point is fair employee salaries and job benefits. Other good management practices include:

- Consistent performance feedback and praise,
- Recognition of excellence,
- Employee involvement in business decisions, and,
- Good communication – be an employer who delegates, motivates, and listens.

You can further enhance your business by providing a workplace that is healthy and safe. Healthy human capital makes for a healthy business.

Other areas where employees need protection include: illegal discrimination and violations of privacy, disability, or other legal rights.

Additional legal considerations may apply to hiring workers under the age of 18 and immigrant workers. You can get more information on these issues by contacting the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry at (717) 787-5279 or visiting www.dli.state.pa.us.

Management and Training

Another way to support employees is through training and development. Employees need more than initial training only. When employers provide development training, they communicate that employees are worth the investment of training time and money. The new skills acquired from the training are also a benefit. You can provide the training or you might choose to collaborate with other businesses for training.

If possible, it is a good idea to rotate employees between different workplace tasks. Employees appreciate work that is not the same mechanical process every single day. This can benefit the business by allowing different employees to gain experience in different areas of the operation. As employees gain operational knowledge, they will gain the power to make a business operate better. If employees have the opportunity to grow and develop while working, they will remain positive, reflecting a good image for you and your business.

Management of your business will determine the quality of the work environment. Workplace quality is important to businesses because the environment will influence the attitudes that employees have while working. When employees are happy they are better at making customers happy. There are a few things that you can do to make sure that the work environment is a positive one.

Consider the following:

Workplace safety – Workplace safety is more than a recommendation, it is required. Check the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (also known as OSHA) website for more information on workplace safety practices.

Develop a strong sense of trust with your employees – Employers expect their workers to be honest and loyal. It is even more important for management to be trustworthy because employees look to management as the model for appropriate work behavior. If you must violate the trust of an employee, it is your responsibility to explain that you had to change your plan and the reasons for it. There is no asset more important than your employees, and there is no better way to gain their respect than by being a trustworthy, honest, and respectable manager.

Know your people, and try to help them become successful – If you support the well-being of your workers, they will be much more willing to go the extra mile for you.

Include your workers in meetings – By having closed meetings and keeping management separate from workers, companies sometimes create an atmosphere that can divide a business. Treat all of your workers as members of your business team. Remove the mutual ignorance and the resulting distrust by including workers in meetings that involve work practices. You might be surprised to find that your workers know a great deal about your business and have ideas that you had not thought to consider.

Remember that your actions represent you – That is, your actions convey a message to your workers just as much as your words do. Providing good training can communicate a strong message

to your workers. Your consistency in enforcing policies will definitely communicate with your employees.

Lead by example – If workers see you perform a task incorrectly, they will assume it is an acceptable way to conduct business. Set strong positive examples for your employees in everything that you do.

Long hours reduce employee performance – If employees become fatigued from working, their ability to perform well at work decreases. This is important to note, because it is easier for workers to make mistakes with customers and work tasks when they are tired. Be vigilant when monitoring the number of hours your employees have been working. Rested workers are better able to achieve positive interactions with customers. Toward the end of a 10-hour shift, it may be difficult for workers to help customers with the same enthusiasm they had at the beginning of the day.

Performance Evaluations and Disciplinary Action

Performance evaluation includes six main components:

1. The employee must understand what is required of them when they start the job.
2. The employee must have the necessary training required to perform the job correctly.
3. A qualified person must critically evaluate and document the performance of the employee. These evaluations should occur at regular intervals (every month, 6 months, annually, etc.).
4. The employee must receive a counseling session that explains what they need to improve and how they can improve.
5. Allow sufficient time for the employee to improve before re-evaluation.

6. Re-evaluation must occur as scheduled.

A disciplinary evaluation should follow the same format as a general evaluation with the addition of explaining consequences for repeated inappropriate conduct.

Disciplining an employee should always take place in a private setting where only the employee and disciplining manager are able to hear the conversation. In some cases, it may be good to have another member of the management team present for support. The point of a disciplinary counseling is to correct the employee and return them to work as a functional team member. By disciplining an employee in front of other team members, you will make it more difficult for them to return to the job with a positive attitude. It is much more professional to discipline employees in a private setting.

A disciplinary meeting should include the following components:

1. Document the entire disciplinary process, for future reference. Sometimes remembering events from a few months ago can be a challenge. Keep disciplinary documents in the employee's personnel file or another organized and secure location.
2. Explain what happened. Make sure the facts are clear.
3. Explain why the employee's part in the event was not acceptable.
4. Explain what would have been acceptable, and what you expect of the employee in the future. It is helpful to provide the employee with suggestions for improvement.
5. Explain what will happen if the infraction occurs again.

It is important to follow through with stated consequences for future infractions. If you promise that a repeat infraction will result in the employee leaving work early, you must require them to leave early for

a repeat infraction. Remember, empty promises encourage workers to break the rules because there are no consequences to discourage breaking them.

If a performance deficiency is skills-oriented, it may be more appropriate to move the employee to another task, as opposed to sending them home. Choose consequences that fit the infraction and benefit the functioning of your business. Consequences can range from a verbal warning to terminating employment. Fairness matters if you intend to safeguard the integrity of the team.

Reward Exceptional Performance

If you are going to correct poor performance then you should reward exceptional performance. Rewards are another way that you communicate with your employees. Rewarding exceptional performance is a much more positive management practice than one that only corrects deficiencies. Rewards show that you value your employees and provide incentives for workers, encouraging them to become better at their jobs.

There are many ways to reward employees. Verbal recognition is a simple way to reward your workers for good performance. The value of verbal appreciation is often underestimated. Most employees want to be good at what they do. If you are an honest and respectable manager, employees will respect you. Appreciation from a respected leader can be a great reward.

Zoning: Understanding Regulations and Your Land

Introduction to Zoning

Land development policies can be a key determinant in the business start-up process. The presence of such policies is therefore a definite concern for the aspiring agritourism operator. In fact, land use regulations are the most limiting factor in the develop-

ment or maintenance of agritourism, according to Pennsylvania agritourism operators.

This section will help the potential agritourism operator:

- Understand zoning and related concepts,
- Understand the relationship between zoning and starting a business,
- Develop strategies for approaching zoning problems, and
- Identify additional sources of zoning information.

It is sometimes difficult to determine whether a certain activity is a permissible agricultural zoning activity. Defining activities as agricultural is often a matter of interpretation. According to Attorney Shannon Mirus of the National Agritourism Law Center (2008), Pennsylvania does not currently have any statutes that directly address agritourism zoning. Several other states have enacted agritourism-zoning statutes. As an example of how zoning can affect your agritourism enterprise, consider the following zoning conflict involving agritourism:

A Pennsylvania court held that haunted hayrides were permissible when the complaining township zoning board failed to show that the hayrides were detrimental to the health, safety, or general welfare of the community. It is interesting to note that the court gave weight to the fact that the hayrides allowed the farmland owner to pay his taxes, thus "enabl[ing] him to keep the farm rather than be forced to sell the land to developers." Because several members of the community testified to this concern, that seemed enough to suppress any inference that the hayrides were harming the community (Branan, 2004, p. 27).

In this court case concerning hayrides, it is important to note that several members of the community supported the farmer with their

testimony. This case demonstrates the value of gaining the approval of community members concerning your new agritourism enterprise.

The sections that follow provide some of the fundamentally important concepts and definitions concerning the topic of zoning.

What is Zoning?

Zoning is a system that regulates land development within a community (Kruft, 2001). Zoning is a product of land development law. Its policies describe how land can and cannot be used. Zoning policies also provide guidelines for enforcing violations of zoning regulations and assist officials in defining terms specific to land development issues.

Responsibility for zoning occurs at the municipal level. The local zoning office is likely to be located in a municipal building or planning commission office. These locations are a good source of information and a good place to start when considering zoning for a new agritourism business. Not all municipalities in Pennsylvania have zoning. Check with your municipality to see whether yours does.

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development maintains state zoning regulations (The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania [GACP], 1968). The state provides guidelines for the development of zoning ordinances to mandate appropriate zoning practices for county and local governments.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (1968) cites “protecting agricultural operations without impeding the need for future growth” among the reasons for zoning. It specifically addresses the need for growth in agricultural operations stating as a purpose:

“To ensure that municipalities enact zoning ordinances that facilitate the present and future

economic viability of existing agricultural operations in this Commonwealth and do not prevent or impede the owner or operator’s need to change or expand their operations in the future in order to remain viable.” (GACP, 1968, p.1)

The Municipalities Planning Code is a standard for local and county level zoning. Although state guidelines give direct advice concerning the development of zoning code, local governments have the power to establish codes specific to the needs of their communities.

Why is Zoning Important to My Business Plan?

Article VI Section 617.2 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code covers zoning enforcement remedies (GACP, 1968). It states: Any person, partnership or corporation who or which has violated or permitted the violation of the provisions of any zoning ordinance enacted under this act or prior enabling laws shall, upon being found liable therefore in a civil enforcement proceeding commenced by a municipality, pay a judgment of not more than \$500 plus all court costs, including reasonable attorney fees incurred by a municipality as a result thereof. (GACP, 1968, p.54)

It goes on to state that fees may be imposed for each day that the offense continues (GACP, 1968). The \$500 estimate does not include court costs for the municipality or personal attorney fees.

Problems with zoning can cost both time and money. Prevention is the key to success when addressing the zoning issue. Understanding the potential for problems in this area of business development can help make the process more manageable.

Respect for Zoning Keeps Peace within the Community

One of the purposes for zoning is to protect other landowners in the

community. Herein is an opportunity to gain support for your business. If your proposed business could affect neighboring landowners, it might be a good idea to discuss your plans with them to gain their support (Weltman, 2000). If any zoning issues do arise, then you will have one more person to speak on your behalf at a zoning board hearing.

Prevent Unexpected Problems

An important strategy in business planning is crisis prevention. When starting out, resources are limited and it is best to run the most efficient operation possible. A part of this is anticipating any problems that might damage the integrity of the new operation. Time is a key factor that relates to zoning and general business practices. When a zoning board takes action, it is important to respond immediately to avoid multiple fines.

Understand How Your Business Uses the Land

Essentially this means that you need a full understanding of how your operation will work. A zoning officer could have questions concerning the ways that your new operation will use the land. Presenting a strong concept of the new business will strengthen your position.

Contact Your Local Zoning Office for Additional Information

The zoning office is the authority on any zoning concerns within your municipality. If zoning issues arise with your new business, the zoning office will be responsible for initiating corrective action. Contact the zoning office for advice concerning the implementation of your agritourism business plan.

Consult an attorney

A step toward success in business is access to the right information. Attorneys have years of training in

various fields of law. They can help you to understand the extremely complex issues associated with zoning. An attorney with experience in real estate law or tax law is likely to have a strong understanding of zoning issues. Some lawyers deal specifically with zoning. Investing time to find the right attorney is a good strategy that can potentially save your business from financially devastating mistakes.

Additional Recommended Zoning Resources and Reading

Following are additional resources on zoning:

- The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) (<http://mpc.landuselawinpa.com/1.html>) – This is the state law established in 1968 that outlines the process of community planning in detail.
- Agricultural Zoning - Penn State Dickinson School of Law (www.dsl.psu.edu/centers/aglawpubs/zoning.cfm) – This is an article on the Penn State Dickinson School of Law website. The article outlines many of the concepts related to zoning, covers some of the legal terms associated with zoning law, and suggests courses of action for landowners with zoning challenges (Kruft, 2001).
- Public Law 454, No. 133 (www.agriculture.state.pa.us) – This law was enacted to protect agricultural operations from nuisance suits and ordinances under certain circumstance.
- DCED (www.newpa.com/get-local-gov-support/publications/index.aspx) – This website lists documents from the Governor's Center for Local Government Services. The documents in the planning series comprise a massive collection of knowledge on issues related to zoning. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code is also posted here.

Safety and Health

Safety is important for your workforce and for your visitors. Part 4 includes resources for safety and health issues.

Liability and Insurance

An agritourism business must have adequate liability insurance coverage in case of an accident on the farm. The farm can choose to use its own

insurance company or it can opt for an insurance agent that specializes in agritourism and farm coverage. Check with your insurance agency for more information.

Regulations, Licenses, and Permits

Part 4 provides a list of agencies that regulate common agritourism activities.

Part 3: Strategies for Success

Marketing: Letting Them Know You Are Here!

Marketing an agricultural tourism product is different from marketing other products. Agri-tourism, like any tourism, requires a special type of marketing called service marketing, which has four main characteristics.

1. *A service product, such as tourism, cannot be seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted before it is purchased.* Customers can evaluate non-service products before purchasing them by using the five senses. The only way for a customer to know if they like a tourism product is to experience it. Once the tourism experience has ended, the customer can judge the experience and form an opinion about the tourism product and service.
2. *A service product cannot be separated from the customer.* The customer is a part of the product in tourism. Suppose that you go to a movie theatre and the theatre is very quiet and enjoyable when you first arrive. As the movie starts, a loud and distracting group of people decides to sit right in front of you. Clearly, these loud customers will impact your movie experience. The same is true for tourism. Customers influence the experiences of other customers. It is important to have a plan that minimizes the negative effects that customers can have on your agritourism business, while also respecting the rights of all visitors.
3. *Service products face the constant challenge of remaining consistent.* For example, suppose you go to a local restaurant with your family. At the restaurant, everything is perfect. The servers are very attentive, the food is great, and the experience is generally positive and happy. Now, suppose you visit the same restaurant a few months later, remembering the wonderful experience from the last visit. This time, the restaurant is poorly staffed, you are forced to wait an extended time for your meals, and the servers seem very tired and stressed. The second experience is likely to change your opinion of the restaurant. The main point of this example is that you expected a high quality of service, based on your first experience, but received a lower quality of service because of a change in the service product. In this example, changes in staff or restaurant volume led to an experience that was different each time. In service-oriented organizations, it is important to work toward keeping your services as consistent as possible. You want the guests that visit your agritourism site today, to have the same quality experience when they return next time.
4. *Finally, a service product like tourism is a perishable product.* An example of this, in tourism, is that of hotels. Once a hotel room remains empty for a night, it is impossible to regain that product. Services take place over time, so they also expire with time, never to be regained. It is

very important to realize that your agritourism service is perishable, so it must be used, or it will expire, which is a lost opportunity to make a sale.

The Marketing Concept

Many different marketing concepts have evolved over the years with the goal of giving one company an edge over competitors. One popular marketing concept focuses on mutual benefit to all groups. The tourism industry calls this a “societal marketing concept” because it seeks to benefit the individual business and society at the same time (Kotler et al., 2006). You may be thinking, “How can I have an effect on society?” One way is through natural resource conservation strategies. Many agricultural laws currently enforce responsible farming because many believe that conservation practices offer the greatest benefit to society.

To achieve a societal marketing concept you have to decide how your business might be a positive influence for society. One way to accomplish societal marketing is to educate your visitors. The greater population of Pennsylvania and surrounding states might not even realize all of the activities and benefits that agritourism can offer them. By educating the public about agritourism, you can help American agriculture, agritourism, and the general economy.

Agricultural lands offer scenery that is both beautiful and unique. Preserving the qualities that have encouraged you to share your farm with others is the right thing to do. It preserves the land for you and for the enjoyment of future visitors.

The main idea of a societal marketing concept is to explore all options to decide which option benefits all groups the most. Using your own creativity to formulate ideas for a societal marketing

concept may be the best way to work community action into the plan of your established business. The other essential part of a societal marketing concept is a commitment to selecting options that benefit everyone involved, even if another option advances your individual position more. Exercising good will toward others creates relationships that enhance business interactions and prosperity within the community.

The Traditional Four “Ps” of Marketing

The following marketing terms are important because their application to tourism is different from common product marketing practices. Since tourism is an experience-based product, success in tourism will be dependent, in part, on your comprehension of marketing terms and the different ways that the terms apply to agritourism. This section begins with an explanation of product, place, promotion, and pricing as traditional marketing considerations.

Product – This handbook focuses on the agritourism product.

Agritourism is a service product, which consists of:

- *A range of goods and services* – You must specifically define your product.
- *Quality and warranty* – To achieve good quality, your product must be “free from defects” (Kotler et al., 2006, p. 407). Your policies should seek to correct any quality failures.
- *After-sales service* – This means that you maintain the product after the sale. For tourism, a positive practice involves gathering feedback from your customers on the quality of their experience and asking them to suggest improvements to make your business better.

Place – This is your location or the location of many potential customers, also called a target market.

- *Relative locations* – How far are the customers from your business?
- *Coverage* – Other places identified as target markets (for example, the state of Florida might choose to market real estate in northern states to attract people with the financial means and desire to spend cold winters in a warmer climate).
- *Sense of place* – This is the overall image of a regional area: for example, the Amish Country-side of Lancaster County or the Napa Valley of California (Weaver, 2006). It is important to preserve the sense of place when integrating your business into the community. Business conflicts with sense of place are more of a concern for mainstream tourism, but should not be disregarded in any tourism operation.

Promotion – People have to know about your business to become customers. Promotion involves:

- *Personal selling* – Persuading people to buy your product in a small interactive group.
- *Sales promotion* – Using coupons, contests, and other incentives to attract customers.
- *Publicity* – Generating news about your business. This might involve hosting events that attract media coverage. For a concert, inviting a local radio station that plays the same type of music as the performers might significantly improve publicity for your location.
- *Advertising* – Telling people about the services available at your business to increase public interest.
- *Merchandising* – Selling items with your business name or label. This might include T-shirts, baseball caps, or other items available for sale at your business. People who wear these items will help to promote your business in the future.

Pricing – Deciding how to adjust prices can be a challenge at times. The section below describes several pricing methods. Your business may use a combination of these.

- *Profit-oriented pricing* – Adjusting prices to match demand for your product, while exceeding the cost of producing the product. The result is profit maximization.
- *Sales-oriented pricing* – Raising prices as sales increase to maximize profits without significantly reducing your sales. One problem with this method is that it can reduce the trust of customers who purchase your products because of the low prices. They might choose to find another provider if prices rise too much.
- *Cost-oriented pricing* – Raising prices as your costs for producing the products rise. For example, if you are selling corn and the cost of fertilizer rises then you might have to raise the price of corn to compensate for a rise in production cost.
- *Competition-oriented pricing* – Adjusting prices as other businesses offering the same services adjust their prices (usually lowering prices for a competitive edge).

Other Considerations for Tourism Marketing

In addition to the first four “Ps,” you should consider these marketing tools as well:

People – Business is about people, but different groups of people are involved in business in different ways. Business operations involve three groups of people in particular.

- *Service personnel* – You must not forget the importance of your workers, who directly interact with your customers and have a serious impact on the image of your business. Happy employees

are more likely to interact well with customers. This cannot be overstated.

- *Tourists* – These are your customers. Many of them will not be from the local area, so it is important to be respectful toward other cultures while also securing the quality of your tourism product.
- *Local residents* – These are your neighbors and other members of the community. The effects of tourism on local communities have been extensively studied, but with varying results. To gain the approval of your community, it is a good idea to be involved with local organizations that relate to your business. Good relationships with the local community can strengthen a business significantly.

Packaging – In tourism, this refers to combining several services into one price. For example, you might have a two-night farm stay that also includes horseback riding as a part of the package. Many different elements of the tourism experience can be included in one package.

Programming – The addition of special events, activities, or programs to a product will result in greater appeal.

Partnerships – Partnerships form between organizations to take advantage of potential mutual benefits. For example, a hotel might recommend a specific local restaurant to customers in exchange for a reduction in catering costs. Another way that companies can work together is by sharing marketing or other information.

To summarize the underlying theme of this section, people need a way to learn about the products available to them. When you are happy with your product design, you will be ready to focus on marketing. Often potential customers turn to local media as an easy source of

information. As a result, local radio and television stations, newspapers, and billboards can be powerful tools in providing information to the surrounding community and your target markets. If there is a special event at your location, you might benefit by contacting local media. Larger communities create a more competitive atmosphere with respect to gaining local media attention, but do not let this intimidate you. Exploring all possibilities will increase your opportunities for marketing success.

Local newspapers are a good starting point, because newspapers sometimes need material to print right away. At right is a sample press release, which can be used for newspapers, television stations, or radio stations. You can also pay to advertise your business in newspapers, but you should explore many different options before deciding what will work best in your community.

Understanding Your Market

To effectively market your agritourism business, you need to understand your existing and potential audience.

As a general overview, Pennsylvania agritourists:

- Are mainly from the United States within a two to three hour drive of Pennsylvania,
- Range in age from 18 to 89,
- Are 49 years of age on average,
- Travel in average groups of two or three people,
- Tend to have two or three children under 18 traveling with them,
- Tend to stay overnight for about five nights on average, and,
- Tend to be motivated by pleasure and not business.

When planning to market your agritourism business, it is important to consider how agritourists use marketing resources. The Internet is

the most common information resource for agritourists in Pennsylvania. Information centers and state welcome centers rank second, followed by informational brochures (Ryan, 2006). Also, do not neglect the importance of cost effective marketing resources that are directly linked to customer satisfaction. Word of mouth or referrals and repeat customers, which are those customers who want to come back and see you again, can be very helpful in marketing your business.

While these general characteristics may help you develop your marketing plan, you will need to seek ongoing information and assistance. One of your most critical sources of information and assistance is your local Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) or Tourism Promotion Agency (TPA), which are also known as Destination Management or Marketing Organizations (DMOs).

The Pennsylvania Tourism Office, under DCED, divides the state into seven tourism regions. Within each region, there are local and regional CVBs or TPAs. You can use the listing in Part 4 to locate the CVB or TPA nearest to you. You can also visit the Pennsylvania Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus website, which represents designated destination management organizations in Pennsylvania (www.pacvb.org).

The structure and resources of each bureau or agency may vary. However, by becoming a member of your CVB or TPA, you will be able to benefit from resources, such as:

- Marketing and other business development training,
- Marketing and promotion opportunities through destination marketing activities, such as the destination website, destination or state visitor guides, online listings, familiarization tours, tourism signage, and other resources,

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2009

CONTACT: John Smith, Smith's Farm
442 Agricultural Rd., Anytown, PA 55555
(555) 555-5555

SMITH'S FARM OPENS CORN MAZE

(SEPTEMBER 1, 2009, ANYTOWN, PA) Smith's Farm on Agricultural Road in Anytown is opening its new corn maze this Saturday. Visitors to Smith's Farm can run the maze and take advantage of other farm activities, such as cider making, hayrides and pumpkin carving. Smith's Farm also includes a farming operation that produces tomatoes, corn, pumpkins, and various spices and herbs.

Visitors of all ages are welcome to visit the maze, which covers four acres and includes farming education stations throughout.

Janet Smith, owner of Smith's Farm, says, "Working on the farm is a lot of fun. My family has worked this farm for more than 60 years and the reason for opening the farm to the public is to share the experience with people who don't know much about what we do here."

The corn maze is open every weekend through November from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$5.00 per person; children under 5 are free. For more information, visit www.smithfarm.com or call (555)555-5555.

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- Networking with other tourism businesses,
 - Referral and recommendations of your business from CVB/TPA welcome or information centers,
 - Access to marketing or other development grants and other funding, and
 - Access to visitation, economic impact, and other destination research and statistics to help you make informed strategic decisions.
- Your CVB/TPA will also be able to provide you valuable direction on how the area tourism industry is structured and networked so that you can understand how other organizations, such as a chamber of commerce, economic or business development organization, or historical, artisan or other special interest group

may be a benefit to your business. Part 4 provides a detailed listing of the other national, state, and regional organizations that may be of assistance to you.

Ongoing Monitoring and Feedback

Once a business is in place and operating, it is important to ensure that the business operates as efficiently as possible. Measuring efficiency requires some form of tool that can measure how the business is operating from the perspective of your visitors. One such tool is a visitor survey. (See Worksheet 2 on Page 22) While survey design can be a thorough and intricate process, a short and simple survey can be quite

WORKSHEET 2: SAMPLE VISITOR SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are important to us and will help us to improve future guest services. Please answer by checking the box or writing in the spaces provided. When finished, please place your survey form <designate location>. Thank you!

1. What is the date of your visit? _____
2. Are you (please check all that apply): male female unemployed employed outside the home
 homemaker/volunteer retired student
3. How many members (including you) are in your traveling party? _____
4. Your traveling party is: all adults (18 and over) adults and children
5. Where do you live? Country: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip code: _____
6. What is the primary reason for your visit? Business Vacation Visiting friends or family
 Other: _____
7. About how often do you visit/stay/eat in this area?
 Three or more times a year Once a year Less than once a year This is my first time
8. What was the main method of transportation you used to get to the area? Car Train Plane
 Bus Other
9. When did you decide to come here?
 Decided during your trip Stopped when you saw us Before leaving home
10. Which of the following do you use as a source of information for planning a trip/vacation? (Please select the three sources most often used) TV ad newspaper ad magazine ad radio ad friend/relative
 travel/visitor guide/brochure business colleague happened to stop by Internet
 Other _____
11. Have you found things to do and see during your overall trip?
 plenty, some left for next time enough for a good vacation sometimes not enough in bad weather
 sometimes short of evening activities not really enough overall
12. What else did you do while you were in the area (check all that apply)?
 ate at a restaurant bought fuel shopped attended an event/festival: which one? _____
 went sightseeing hiked skied/snowmobiled fished swam golfed
 other activity: please specify? _____
13. What were the highlights of your visit to the area?
1) _____ 2) _____
14. Please describe anything we could do to improve your visit.

15. How does this <area/hotel/attraction, etc.> compare with others you have visited?
 This <your agritourism business category> has many more things to do
 This <your agritourism business category> has somewhat more things to do
 This <your agritourism business category> is about the same as other places
 This <your agritourism business category> has somewhat fewer things to do
 This <your agritourism business category> has very few things to do

Thank you for your help. We hope you enjoy your trip and will come back again!

effective in evaluating your new business.

Surveys are good for answering questions about the people who choose to visit your agritourism site. Some questions that you might have include:

- In general, who are my visitors?
- Where do my visitors come from?
- Why are they visiting this area?
- What other activities are my visitors interested in?
- How often do they visit?
- What are their favorite activities at my site?
- How did they find out about my business?

You can ask almost anything that is relevant to improving the services offered at your operation. When you develop a survey, make sure to have several people read it to make sure that it is easy to understand. Each question should have a specific purpose and the structure of the question should directly achieve that purpose. For example, “What was the main method of transportation you used to get here?” is a direct question. Providing response choices gives a list of categories that are of interest to your business. If most visitors travel by car, then advertising on billboards or through brochures at hotels and visitor centers might be a good method of promotion.

Marketing questions provide information beneficial to promotional practices. For example, you can ask how customers find out about your business or you might ask where they find information for planning trips. Question number 10 in the sample survey demonstrates this type of question. The most popular answer to this question is likely to be your best advertising opportunity.

Often survey questions are multiple-choice, but questions can also be open-ended. An open-ended question is one that provides a blank

space for visitors to write an answer. Use open-ended questions cautiously since they have the potential to draw a wide variety of responses. Surveys should seek to discover what is common among most of the people who visit your business. Open-ended questions work well when there are too many possible answers to provide in multiple-choice format. Sometimes open-ended questions are useful when you do not know how your visitors feel about something. An example of this type of question is in the sample survey, “What were the highlights of your visit?”

The Research Process and Interpretation

As visitors return surveys, you can begin to analyze the information they provide. A simple method for compiling results is to tally the number of times a response is selected and then compare this total to the number of submitted surveys. For example, suppose that 40 surveys are returned in a study. You might summarize the information from question 2 in the sample survey as follows:

Question 2. Are you (please check all that apply):

- male female unemployed
- employed outside the home
- homemaker/volunteer retired
- student

Out of the 40 surveys:

Male visitors:	18 out of 40
Female visitors:	22 out of 40
Employed outside the home:	28 out of 40
Retired:	7 out of 40
Student:	3 out of 40
Unemployed:	2 out of 40
Homemaker/Volunteer:	0 out of 40

From the example above, notice that 18 of 40 or 45 percent of your visitors were male and 22 of 40 or 55 percent were female.

Suppose that you suddenly receive five additional surveys, in which all respondents are female. The new percentage of female respondents would be 60 percent, or a little more than half.

This information can be useful in identifying opportunities to attract new visitors. Suppose that your survey shows that only 15 percent of visitors are male. This could mean that you might want to work toward finding activities that will attract male customers, since a male visitation rate of 15 percent seems very low.

Survey information can be particularly useful for marketing. Assuming a survey return of 40 respondents, consider question 10 from the example survey.

Question 10. Which of the following do you use as a source of information for planning a trip/vacation (select all that apply)?

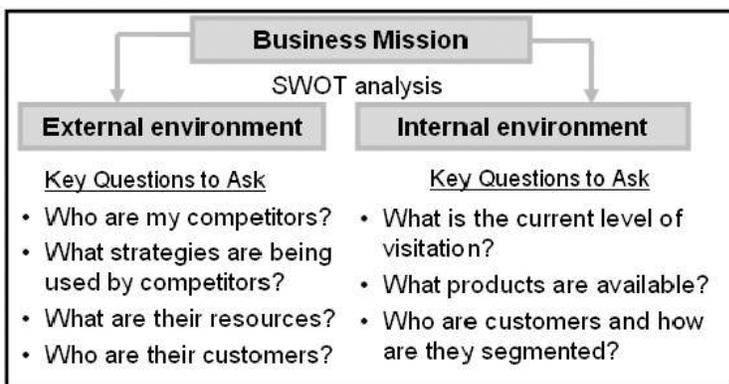
- TV ad newspaper ad
- magazine ad radio ad
- friend/relative
- business colleague
- travel/visitor guide/brochure
- happened to stop by Internet
- Other

Out of the 40 surveys:

Internet:	24 out of 40
Travel/Visitor	
Guide/Brochure:	13 out of 40
Friend/Relative:	10 out of 40
Other:	4 out of 40
Newspaper ad:	2 out of 40
Happened to stop by:	1 out of 40
Magazine ad:	1 out of 40
Radio ad:	1 out of 40
Business colleague:	0 out of 40
TV ad:	0 out of 40

The example above reveals that most of the survey respondents use the Internet, visitor guides, and advice of friends or relatives as a source of information for planning vacations. From this information, it

Figure 2: External and Internal Environments that May Affect Your Agritourism Business



Source: Weaver and Lawton, 2006

seems clear that you should advertise primarily with the Internet and visitor guides. Increasing promotion through the advice of friends and relatives will depend on the quality of service you provide to customers.

Analyzing data can be a very complex topic. This section has only covered a simple method of analysis in an attempt to provide practical advice. If you need help with more advanced research methods, contact the Small Business Development Center nearest you (See Part 4 for contact information).

Assessing Your Business from a Mission-Oriented Perspective

Figure 2 visually demonstrates business assessment from a mission-oriented perspective. The figure demonstrates the business mission as

a top priority, which means that each organization should have its own mission statement. A mission statement must be clear and specific. It is a condensed statement of the mission for your business. A sample mission statement for our earlier example of Smith's Farm is: To provide exceptional on-farm educational and entertaining experiences for children and adults living in or visiting Anytown, Pennsylvania.

The internal and external environment must properly support the business mission. Figure 2 provides some examples of important questions that can help you to understand the internal and external environments that pertain to your business.

Local competition may be a challenge to your business. This is a valid concern. If a well-established

business is operating in your area, you will have to be creative when designing your business strategy to ensure that you offer something the competition does not. Questions concerning competition are external concerns.

Internal concerns are questions about your visitors. Surveys can help you to gather information about the internal operating environment of your business.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is simply a list of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Figure 3 contains an example of a SWOT analysis for our Smith's Farm example. When you conduct this analysis for your business, you should try to be as thorough as possible. After completing the analysis, your goal will be to eliminate or manage items in the Weaknesses and Threats categories. Additionally, you should try to develop Opportunities into Strengths.

Make sure that the items of focus in your analysis are consistent with your mission statement. Items that do not pertain to the mission of your business may not be a good use of time or resources. The goal is to identify those items that can be the greatest benefit to your operation and the community. SWOT analyses can focus on specific topics that need improvement or on the entire business.

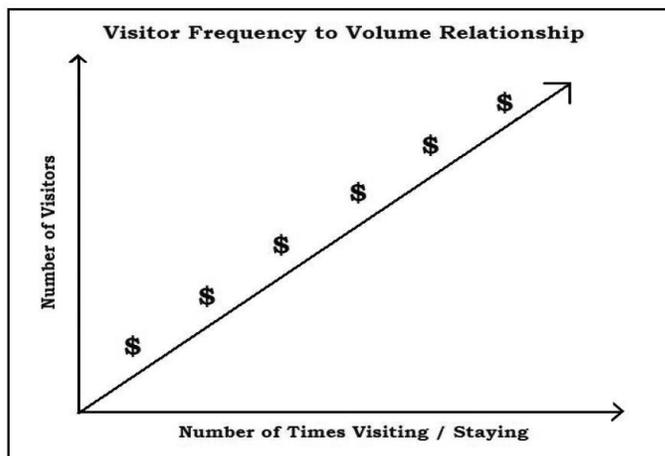
Figure 3: Example of SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popularity of farm market • Steady visitor volume • Little competition in the area 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance costs • No off-season revenue • Small local population
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other farmers may have an interest in a cooperative • Schools interested in visiting • 3 nearby cities for promotion 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising fuel costs • Future over-development • Changes in zoning

Increasing Revenue

Figure 4 demonstrates a common sense business relationship. Under normal conditions, more people visiting your location will lead to an increase in levels of revenue. To increase revenue, focus on maximizing visitor volume to a number that your business can handle. Ensure that the practices of your business encourage customers to return in the future. Some businesses reward repeat customers with discounts.

Figure 4: Visitor Frequency to volume Relationship



Incentives to encourage repeat business may help to increase revenue particularly if your business sells items on site in gift shops or concessions. Repeat business can be a powerful revenue builder that you can use to stimulate growth.

The Importance of Customer Service

The two most important groups of people associated with operating a new business are employees and customers. Employees and customers are important because the interaction between these two groups is a key factor in the exchange between supply and demand, where monetary transactions take place. The Human Resources section in Part 2 covers the employee side of this relationship.

Worksheet 3 on Page 26 provides a few points on employee/customer interaction. When associating with customers, good communication is important to ensuring successful interaction. With respect to customer service, make sure employees who directly interact with visitors meet the qualifications listed in Worksheet 3.

Thinking Sustainably

Sustainability means planning with the intention of preserving the resources of a business. With tour-

ism, image is very important to the tourism product. Suppose that a farm business provides haunted hayrides during the month of October. To prepare for this event, employees have been distributing flyers and telling all of their friends about the haunted hayrides. The farm has enough parking spaces for 40 cars, but on the opening day of the hayrides, too many visitors arrive at the farm. As a result, 30 additional parking spaces are improvised resulting in limited space available for the hayrides. The additional volume of customers also makes visitors wait a very long time for hayrides, causing some customers to leave early. Once the event is over, the owner of the farm notices that the additional traffic has caused a lot of damage to the landscape. Issues such as these are issues of sustainability.

In the example above, several problems led to a situation that was not sustainable for the business. The first problem was too much advertising for the available capacity of the business. Farm parking was nearly half of that required for visitor volume. Too many visitors led to a reduction in service quality (long waiting time) and damage to the farmland.

Another way of describing a larger volume of visitors is to say that there

was a significant increase in demand for the product. In such a situation, many customers are demanding the product. The supply of the product is less than that required to serve all of the demanding customers. As a result, the product increases in value. One way to control over capacity visitation is to slowly raise prices until visitor volume reaches the maximum sustainable level. In the hayride example, suppose that the owner decides to start charging \$5 a day for parking. This might reduce the visitor volume by 10 percent while also increasing revenue. Even a 10 percent decrease in volume would result in a parking volume of 63 cars. So, the next day suppose the farmer raises the cost for hayrides by a dollar. This results in a volume of 45 cars on the third day. The owner decides that adding five additional parking spaces is a sustainable option. In business terms, the supply of haunted hayride capacity is able to meet the demand for hayride services because of price adjustments. Two weeks later, visitor volume might begin to decline and the owner might decide to promote the business by advertising \$2 off coupons in the local newspaper or placing an ad with a local radio station. This might help to secure a few more visitors when volume is low.

Sustainability is about preserving resources. Resources can include those needed for business operations or resources of the natural environment. Both should be considered as a part of a sustainability strategy. Tourism that is not sustainable will eventually degrade to the point that people do not care to visit anymore. The natural environment must be protected in a quality state to ensure the future of the business.

Now that we have covered some of the basic strategies for success, it is time to move onto Part 4, which will provide you with resources beyond this handbook.

WORKSHEET 3: Employee – Customer Interaction Checklist

- The employee presents a generally friendly and welcoming attitude toward visitors.
- The employee is confident when communicating with visitors (good eye contact, smiles, appropriate greeting, etc.). Good communicators can be a powerful force in the growth of your business.
- The employee exhibits strong listening skills. Sometimes listening is what the customer needs the most.
- The employee treats the visitor as a valuable person, and not just another customer.
- The employee is willing to make every attempt to meet reasonable customer requests.
- The employee is adequately trained and competent at performing his or her position.
- The employee understands the proper way to receive telephone calls, if this task is a part of the job. Speaking on the telephone is not the same as face-to-face communication. The same is true for email communications. To safeguard the image of your business, you must ensure that your personnel can perform these tasks to the standard you desire. You might have them send you a formal email to assess their performance in this area. Perhaps this is a good topic for training.
- The employee understands that it is inappropriate to argue with another employee or to behave unprofessionally at work, especially in front of customers.

Does your business meet the expectations of the way most customers expect to be treated? If not, then you must determine what is missing from your customer service strategy, and make necessary corrections.

Part 4: Help Beyond this Handbook

Following are lists of organizations, separated into six categories, that can significantly help you in your search for the most relevant and up-to-date information. These organizations are helpful for maintaining a current establishment or starting a new agritourism business. To properly plan and manage your new business, it is essential that you seek the aid of professionals in fields specific to your needs and interests.

The six categories of organizations listed in this section are: Agricultural Organizations; Environmental, Health, and Safety Organizations; General Business Organizations; Taxes, Laws, and Regulations; Tourism and Agritourism Organizations; and Other Related Organizations.

The last section includes a list of all the materials referenced in this handbook. The list consists of titles that can help you further your understanding of agritourism.

Agricultural Organizations

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

The center provides research and information on business principles and legal, financial and logistical issues for the benefit of agricultural enterprises. Web: www.agmrc.org, Phone: (866) 277-5567

Agriculture Research Service (USDA Agency)

This is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's official research agency. It aims to solve problems that relate to agriculture. Web: www.ars.usda.gov, Phone: (202) 720-3656

Agritourism World

This website offers a free listing of agritourism businesses and offers a consultation service for creating a professional agritourism business website. The site's search option leads to examples of professional Internet marketing websites. Web: www.agritourismworld.com, Phone: (607) 280-2010

American Farm Bureau Federation

The bureau analyzes issues and formulates actions to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity, and social advancement in rural areas. Web: www.fb.org, Phone: (202) 406-3600

Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration (USDA Agency)

The agency facilitates marketing of agricultural products, and promotes fair and competitive trading to benefit those consuming agriculture. Web: www.gipsa.usda.gov, Phone: (202) 720-0219

*National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
(USDA Agency)*

NASS provides agricultural statistics for use by U.S. agricultural enterprises and organizations. Web: www.nass.usda.gov, Phone: (800) 727-9540

Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA Agency)

This agency helps land users to maintain natural resource conservation standards by offering technical expertise and advice. It also offers assistance to farmers and ranchers in need of financial aid for implementing conservation systems. Web: www.nrcs.usda.gov, Phone: (717) 237-2100

Pennsylvania AgMap

AgMap is a directory of Pennsylvania's agricultural businesses. It provides free advertising to Pennsylvania farmers and allows consumers to find products and services associated with agriculture in Pennsylvania. Web: <http://agmap.psu.edu/>, Phone: (814) 863-3500

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)

PASA's mission is to transform agriculture and food systems in Pennsylvania and beyond in a way that makes farmers more viable, improves the land and restores the health and wellbeing of all citizens. Web: www.pasafarming.org, Phone: (814) 349-9856

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

The department protects, promotes, and encourages agriculture and related industries. Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-4737

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Regional Offices:

Altoona - (814) 946-7315, (Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Somerset); *Creamery* - (610) 489-1003, (Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill); *Gibsonia* - (724) 443-1585, (Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland); *Harrisburg* - (717) 346-3223, (Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, York); *Meadville* - (814) 332-6890, (Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Mercer, Venango, Warren); *Montoursville* - (570) 433-2640, (Cameron, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Tioga, Union); *Tunkhannock* - (570) 836-2181, (Bradford, Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming)

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Center for Farm Transitions

The center assists new farmers looking to get started, existing farmers who wish to make changes to their operations, and farmers transitioning their assets for new careers or retirement. Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us/farmtransitions, Phone: (877) 475-2686

*Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Pennsylvania Preferred Program*

This program was created to identify locally grown Pennsylvania products and help consumers find their way to such places. Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-4737

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

The bureau provides services, information, and legislative support to the state's farmers. Web: www.pfb.com, Phone: (717) 761-2740

*Pennsylvania Office of National Agricultural
Statistics Service (NASS-PA)*

NASS-PA is a joint federal/state office of USDA's NASS and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. It provides timely, accurate and useful statistics relating to agriculture in Pennsylvania. Web: www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Pennsylvania, Phone: (717) 787-3904

Pennsylvania Retail Farm Market Association, Inc.

The association benefits members through education, promotion, cooperation, and representation of Pennsylvania Direct to Consumer Agricultural Marketing. Web: www.pafarm.com, Phone: (610) 767-5026

Pennsylvania State Grange

The grange is a family, fraternal organization dedicated to the betterment of rural America through community service, education, legislation, and fellowship. Web: www.pagrang.org, Phone: (717) 737-8855 or (800) 552-3865

Pennsylvania State University Extension Research and Outreach

Extension provides outreach and educational opportunities to individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout the state. Web: <http://extension.aers.psu.edu>, Phone: (814) 865-1688

*Pennsylvania State University Sustaining
Pennsylvania Agriculture Website*

This website, developed through Penn State's Cooperative Extension, is an information center on sustainable agriculture for producers and consumers. Web: <http://susag.cas.psu.edu/default.html>, Phone: (814) 865-6541

Pennsylvania Wine Association

The association is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and provides information on more than 90 wineries statewide. Web: www.pennsylvaniaiwine.com, Phone: (717) 234-1844 or (877) 4PA-WINE

Risk Management Agency (USDA Agency)

The agency helps producers manage risks associated with businesses through risk management solutions. Web: www.rma.usda.gov, Phone: (202) 690-2803

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA provides leadership on rural development, natural resources, food, agriculture, and other related issues. Web: www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome, Phone: (800) 336-3747

**Environmental, Health, and Safety
Organizations**

*Occupational Safety and Environmental
Association, Inc. (OSEA)*

OSEA is a consulting firm that provides consultation on environmental, health, and safety issues. Staff consists of Certified Safety Professionals, Certified Industrial Hygienists, and a variety of Engineers, Board Certified Occupational Physicians, and Licensed Asbestos Inspectors. Web: www.osea.com, Phone: (716) 821-0091 or (800) 867-OSEA (6732)

*Occupational Safety and Health Administration
(OSHA)*

OSHA offers many resources designed specifically for smaller employers including free onsite consultation and interactive computer software. It also offers technical information in easy-to-follow guides for specific OSHA standards. Web: www.osha.gov, Phone: (800) 321-6742

OSHA Area Offices for Pennsylvania:

Allentown - (610) 776-0592; *Erie* - (814) 461-1492;
Harrisburg - (717) 782-3902; *Philadelphia* - (215)
597-4955; *Pittsburgh* - (412) 395-4903; *Wilkes-Barre* -
(570) 826-6538

*Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources (DCNR)*

DCNR administers grant and technical assistance programs that benefit rivers conservation, trails and greenways, local recreation, regional heritage conservation and environmental education programs across Pennsylvania. Web: www.dcnr.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-2869

*Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
Protection (DEP)*

DEP is responsible for administering Pennsylvania's environmental laws and regulations. Contact DEP for questions concerning air pollution, water contamination, mishandling of waste, land management, and recycling programs. Web: www.depweb.state.pa.us

DEP Individual Office Contact Information:

Northwest Region - (814) 332-6945; *Southwest Region*
- (412) 442-4000; *North Central Region* - (570) 327-
3636; *South Central Region* - (717) 705-4700; *North-
east Region* - (570) 826-2511

Pennsylvania Department of Health

The department issues permits for public swimming facilities. Web: www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health, Public Bathing Place Permit Phone: (717) 787-4366; General information: (877) PA-HEALTH.

*Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry
Bureau of Occupational & Industrial Safety*

The bureau enforces the provisions of many acts and supports enforcement through the distribution of regulations, field inspections, issuance of licenses/certificates and complaints management for reported violations. Web: www.dli.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-3323

*Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn
DOT)*

PennDOT has information regarding roadways, signage, and regulations within Pennsylvania. Web: www.dot.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-2838

General Business Organizations

*The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and
Industry*

The chamber promotes business growth in Pennsylvania by offering business conferences and publications to business entrepreneurs. Web: www.pachamber.org, Phone: (800) 225-7224

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED)

DCED fosters opportunities for businesses and communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy. Web: www.newpa.com, Pennsylvania Tourism and Marketing Office - (717) 787-5453

Pennsylvania DCED Center for Entrepreneurial Assistance

The center provides information to help businesses to succeed and thrive in our developing global community. Web: www.newpa.com/default.aspx?id=34, Phone: (800) 280-3801

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry

The department provides assistance for small business start-ups. Its website does not provide all-inclusive guidance concerning required business practices but is a good starting point. Web: www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/site/default.asp. Pennsylvania employers are required to report all new hires. Visit www.panewhires.com or phone (717) 787-5279

Pennsylvania Department of State

The department oversees the integrity of the electoral process, and provides the initial infrastructure for economic development through corporate organizations and transactions. Web: www.dos.state.pa.us/dos/site/, Corporation Bureau - (717) 787-1057; Charitable Organization Registration - (717) 783-1720 or (800) 732-0999 (in PA); Fictitious Name Search Office - (717) 787-1057; Professional and Occupational Affairs - (717) 787-8503; Licensing Boards (General Information) - (717) 787-8503

Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension County Offices

Provides outreach education to individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout Pennsylvania. Find your county extension office at: <http://extension.psu.edu/extmap.html>, Phone: (814)-865-4028

Small Business Development Centers in Pennsylvania (SBDC)

SBDCs assist Pennsylvania entrepreneurs through consulting, education, and small business information. Web: www.pasbdc.org

Regional SBDC offices:

Bucknell University SBDC (www.bucknell.edu/sbdc) - (570) 577-1249; *Clarion University SBDC* (www.clarion.edu/sbdc) - (814) 393-2060; *Duquesne University SBDC* (www.duq.edu/sbdc) - (412) 396-6233; *Gannon University SBDC* (www.sbdcgannon.org) - (814) 871-7232; *Indiana University SBDC* (www.eberly.iup.edu/sbdc/index.shtml) - (724) 357-7915; *Kutztown University SBDC* (www.kutztownsbdc.org/) - (610) 683-4725; *Lehigh University SBDC* (www.lehigh.edu/sbdc/) - (610) 758-3980; *Lock Haven University SBDC* (www.lhup.edu/sbdc/) - (570) 484-2589; *Penn State SBDC* (www.sbdc.psu.edu) - (814) 863-4293; *Saint Francis University SBDC* (www.francis.edu/sbdc/) - (814) 472-3200; *Saint Vincent College SBDC* (www.stvincent.edu/sbdc/) - (724) 537-4572; *Shippensburg University SBDC* (www.pasbdc.org/shippensburg) - (717) 477-1935; *Temple University SBDC* (www.sbm.temple.edu/sbdc/) - (215) 204-7282; *University of Pittsburgh SBDC* (www.sbdc.pitt.edu) - (412) 648-1542; *University of Scranton SBDC* (<http://academic.scranton.edu/departmentsbdc/>) - (800) 829-7232; *Wharton School SBDC* (www.whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu) - (215) 898-4861; *Widener University SBDC* (www.pasbdc.org/widener) - (610) 619-8490; *Wilkes University SBDC* (www.wilkes.edu/sbdc/) - (570) 408-4340

U.S. Department of Labor

Web: www.dol.gov/, Phone: (866) 4USADOL

U.S. Small Business Administration

Web: www.sba.gov/, Phone: Harrisburg (717) 782-3840; Philadelphia (215) 580-2722; Pittsburgh (412) 395-6560; Charlotte, NC (Answer Desk) (800) 827-5722.

Taxes, Laws, and Regulations

Federal law requirements vary depending on the form and activities of the business. New agritourism operators need to be aware of the following federal regulations and agencies that may influence business practices:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Fair Labor Standards Act
- Fair Employment Laws
- Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA)
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
- Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA)
- Immigration Laws and Regulations
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Wage and Hour Laws and Regulations.

The following agencies provide information concerning important federal regulations.

Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC)

FCIC provides the answers to questions about the federal government and everyday consumer issues. Web: www.pueblo.gsa.gov/aboutus.htm, Phone: (888) 878-3256

Pennsylvania Department of Revenue: General Tax Information

For information concerning business taxes, please refer to the appropriate references as follows: Web: www.revenue.state.pa.us, General Tax Information or anything not listed below - (717) 787-1064; Account Specific Payment and Credit Information - (717) 705-6225; Estimated Payments on Account (Fact & Information Line) - (888) PA-TAXES; Transportation Tax & Motor Carrier Road Tax - (717) 705-5460; Liquid Fuels and Fuel Tax - (717) 783-9367; International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) Inquiries - (800) 482-4382. Also, refer to the blue pages in your local telephone directory for your regional or district office of the state Department of Revenue.

U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services National Service Center

This agency is responsible for immigration and naturalization adjudication functions and establishing immigration service policies and priorities. Web: www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis, Phone: (800) 375-5283

U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Business Tax Information

For comprehensive tax information, refer to the IRS small business website. Web: www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html, Employer Identification Number (EIN) Information - (800) 829-1040; IRS Harrisburg Office - (717) 777-9650; IRS Philadelphia Office - (215) 861-1225; IRS Pittsburgh Office - (412) 395-5667

Tourism and Agritourism Organizations

U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Travel and Tourism

The department is responsible for expanding travel and tourism businesses for both employment and economic growth, and manages statistical information on tourism in the U.S. Web: <http://tinet.ita.doc.gov>, Phone: (202) 482-0140

Pennsylvania Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (PACVB)

PACVB promotes professionalism within the tourism community and acts as an intermediary between its members and governmental agencies. Web: www.pacvb.org, Phone: (717) 901-0220

Pennsylvania Farm Vacation Association, Inc.

This is a membership organization for farm vacation businesses. Web: www.pafarmstay.com, Phone: (888) 856-6622, Email: info@PAfarmstay.com

Pennsylvania Tourism and Lodging Association (PTLA)

PTLA promotes and protects the interests of the hospitality and tourism industries in Pennsylvania and serves as the state association for the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA). Web: www.patourism.org, Phone: (717) 232-8880.

Regional and county tourism organizations:

Allegheny Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau - www.alleghenymountains.com, Phone: (800) 84-ALTOONA or (814) 943-4183; *Allegheny National Forest Vacation Bureau* - www.visitANF.com, Phone: (800) 473-9370 or (814) 368-9370; *Armstrong County Tourist Bureau* - www.armstrongcounty.com, Phone: (724) 545-3119 or (888) 265-9984; *Beaver County Recreation and Tourism* - www.visitbeavercounty.com, Phone: (724) 891-7030; *Bedford County Conference and Visitors Bureau* - www.bedfordcounty.net, Phone: (814) 623-1771; *Brandywine Conference and Visitors Bureau* (Delaware County) - www.brandywinecountry.org, Phone: (610) 565-3679; *Bucks County Conference and Visitors Bureau* - www.buckscounty.travel, Phone: (215) 639-0300 or (800) 836-2825; *Butler County Tourism & Convention Bureau* - www.visitbutlercounty.com, Phone: (866) 856-8444 or (724) 234-4619; *Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.centralpacvb.org, Phone: (800) 358-5466 or (814) 231-1400; *Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau* - www.brandywinevalley.com, Phone: (610) 719-1730; *Clearfield County Recreation & Tourism Authority* - www.visitclearfieldcounty.org, Phone: (814) 765-4130; *Clinton County Economic Partnership* - www.clintoncountyinfo.com, Phone: (570) 748-5782; *Columbia-Montour Visitors Bureau* - www.itourcolumbiamountour.com, Phone: (570) 785-8279; *Crawford County Convention & Visitors Bureau* - www.visitcrawford.org, Phone: (814) 333-1258; *Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau* - www.visitcumberlandvalley.com, Phone: (717) 240-5417; *Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau* -

www.endlessmountains.org, Phone: (570) 836-3927; *Franklin County Visitors Bureau* - www.explorefranklincountypa.com, Phone: (717) 709-7204; *Fulton County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism* - www.fultoncountypa.com, Phone: (717) 485-4064; *Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.gettysburg.travel, Phone: (717) 334-6274; *Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.visitjohnstownpa.com, Phone: (814) 536-7993; *Greater Reading Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.readingberkspa.com, Phone: (800) 443-6610 or (610) 375-4085; *Greene County Tourist Promotion Agency* - www.greenecountytourism.org, Phone: (724) 627-8687; *Hershey-Harrisburg Regional Visitors Bureau* - www.hersheyharrisburg.org, Phone: (877) PA- PULSE or (717) 231-7788; *Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau* - www.raystown.org, Phone: (888) RAYSTOWN or (814) 658-0060; *Indiana County Tourist Bureau, Inc.* - www.visitindianacountypa.org, Phone: (877) 746-3426 or (724) 463-7505; *Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau* - www.juniatarivervalley.org, Phone: (877) 568-9739 or (717) 248-6713; *Lackawanna County Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.visitnepa.org, Phone: (800) 229-3526 or (570) 963-6363; *Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau* - www.laurelhighlands.org, Phone: (800) 333-5661 or (724) 238-5661; *Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency* - www.visitlawrencecounty.com, Phone: (888) 284-7599 or (724) 654-8408; *Lebanon Valley Exposition Corporation* - www.visitlebanoncounty.com, Phone: (717) 273-3670; *Lehigh Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau* - www.lehighvalleypa.org, Phone: (800) 747-0561 or (610) 882-9200; *Luzerne County Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.tournepa.com, Phone: (888) 905-2872 or (570) 819-1882; *Lycoming County Visitors Bureau* - www.vacationpa.com, Phone: (800) 358-9900 or (570) 326-1971; *Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.mercercountypa.org, Phone: (800) 637-2370 or (724) 346-3771; *Northwest Pennsylvania's Great Outdoors* - www.pagreatoutdoors.com, Phone: (800) 348-9393 or (814) 849-5197; *Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism* - www.oilregion.org, Phone: (800) 483-6264 or (814) 677-3152; *Pennsylvania Dutch Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.padutchcountry.com, Phone: (800) 723-8824 or (717) 299-8901; *Philadelphia Convention & Visitors Bureau* - www.philadelphiausa.travel, Phone: (800) 225-5745 or (215) 636-3300; *Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau* - www.800poconos.com, Phone: (800) 762-6667 or (570) 424-6050; *Potter County Visitors*

Bureau - www.visitpottercounty.com, Phone: (888) POTTER2 or (814) 274-3365; *Schuylkill County Visitors Bureau* - www.schuylkill.org, Phone: (800) 765-7282 or (507) 622-7700; *Susquehanna Valley Visitors Bureau* - www.visitcentralpa.org, Phone: (800) 525-7320 or (570) 524-9714; *Tioga County Visitors Bureau* - www.visittiogapa.com, Phone: (888) 846-4228 or (570) 724-0635; *Valley Forge Convention & Visitors Bureau* - www.valleyforge.org, Phone: (888) 847-4883 or (610) 834-1550; *VisitErie* - www.VisitErie.com, Phone: (800) 524-3743 or (814) 454-1000; *VisitPittsburgh* - www.visitpittsburgh.com, Phone: (800) 366-0093 or (412) 281-7711; *Warren County Visitors Bureau* - www.wcvb.net, Phone: (800) 624-7802 or (814) 726-1222; *Washington County Tourism Promotion Agency* - www.washwow.com, Phone: (866) 927-4969 or (724) 228-5520; *York County Convention and Visitors Bureau* - www.yorkpa.org, Phone: (888) 858-9675 or (717) 852-9675; *Travel Industry Association (TIA)* - www.tia.org/, Phone: (202) 408-8422; *VisitPA.com* - www.visitpa.com, Phone: (800) VISIT-PA; *World Tourism Organization* - www.unwto.org, Phone:+34 91 567 81 00.

Other Related Organizations

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania

The center is a bipartisan, bicameral legislative agency that serves as a resource for rural policy within the Pennsylvania General Assembly. It works with the legislature, educators, state and federal agencies, and national, statewide, regional and local organizations to maximize resources and strategies that can better serve Pennsylvania's rural residents. Web: www.ruralpa.org, Phone: (717) 787-9555

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Bureau of Animal Health & Diagnostic Services

Provides information on Cattle Branding, Garbage License (feeding garbage to swine), Live Fish, Live Bait Fish and Live Fish Bait Dealers Registration, Meat Establishment, Poultry Technician, and Rendering Plants. Phone: (717) 772-2852, Ext. 209

Pennsylvania Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement

Provides information on Dog Licenses, Kennel Licensing, and Rabies Certification. Phone: (717) 787-4833

Pennsylvania Bureau of Food Safety & Laboratory Services

Provides information on Eating and Drinking Place License, Egg Inspector License, Egg Opening License, Food Establishment Registration (to include bakeries, non-alcoholic drinks & cold storage warehouses), Frozen Dessert License, Maple Products License, Permit to Sell Milk and Dairy Products, Seasonal Farm Labor Camp Permits, and Shellfish Permits. Phone: (717) 787-4315

Pennsylvania Bureau of Plant Industry

Provides information on Agricultural Liming Materials License, Beekeeping License, Feed License, Fertilizer License, Nursery Dealer License, Nursery/Greenhouse License, Nutrient Management Specialist License, Pesticide Applicator Business License, Pesticide Dealers License, Pesticide Products Registration, Soil Conditioners and Plant Growth Substances License. Phone: (717) 787-4843

Pennsylvania Bureau of Ride & Measurement Standards

Provides information on Amusement Ride Inspector Certification, On-Farm Ethyl Alcohol Production, and Public Weigh-Master License. Phone: (717) 787-9089

Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission

Provides information on Off-Track Wagering Parlors (licensed through individual racing tracks), Owners, Trainers, Drivers, and Occupational Licenses. Phone: (717) 787-5196 or (866) PA-Trots, Licensing (717) 783-6320

Pennsylvania Horse Racing Commission

For information on Off-Track Wagering Parlors (licensed through individual racing tracks), Owners, Trainers, Jockeys, and Occupational Licenses. Phone: (717) 783-2320

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

The commission sets rules and regulations governing fishing and boating in the commonwealth. Web: www.fish.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 705-7800

Pennsylvania Game Commission

The commission manages all of Pennsylvania’s wild birds and mammals by monitoring wildlife populations; establishing laws and regulations; setting seasons and bag limits; making habitat improvements; providing outright protection; informing and educating the public; and

assessing public expectations and satisfaction. Web: www.pgc.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 787-4250
Wildlife Permits (Including Exotic Wildlife Dealer, Fur Dealer, Regulated Hunting Grounds, Taxidermy, Wildlife Menagerie, Wildlife Pest Control, and Wildlife Propagation) Phone: (717) 783-8164

Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board

The Pennsylvania Liquor Code serves as the basis for all operations of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board. The board oversees the issuing of licenses and permits and the buying and selling of distilled spirits and wines. Web: www.lcb.state.pa.us, Phone: (717) 783-7637
Brand Registration - (717) 787-5776
Liquor License, Malt Beverage License, Wholesale License (production and sale) - (717) 783-8250

Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs

The association promotes the growth and improvement of agricultural fairs, associations, and societies within the state and it educates and provides information for members, the public, and other agencies for the improvement of the fair industry. Web: www.pafairs.org, Phone: (866) 814-6985

Pennsylvania State Showmen’s Association (PSSA)

PSSA promotes the outdoor amusement industry. Web: www.pashowmen.com, Email: info@pashowmen.com

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