



Agritourism Development Business Case Template

Use the following template to map out and plan your new agritourism offering. Having a business case will help you

- identify any challenges you might face
- support any grant applications you write
- secure a loan
- secure affordable insurance

The following is a guide that you can adapt for your own needs.

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[Your business name and project name]

Business Case

[Month and year]

[Contact details]

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Background

Here you might describe your farm, such as location, type of farming (e.g. sheep, crops), its business history and business goals, business structure, size, topography, built and natural infrastructure, land zoning and permissible activities, etc. Remember to include the 'why' behind the business.



Include a site plan and consider including photos:

Project objectives

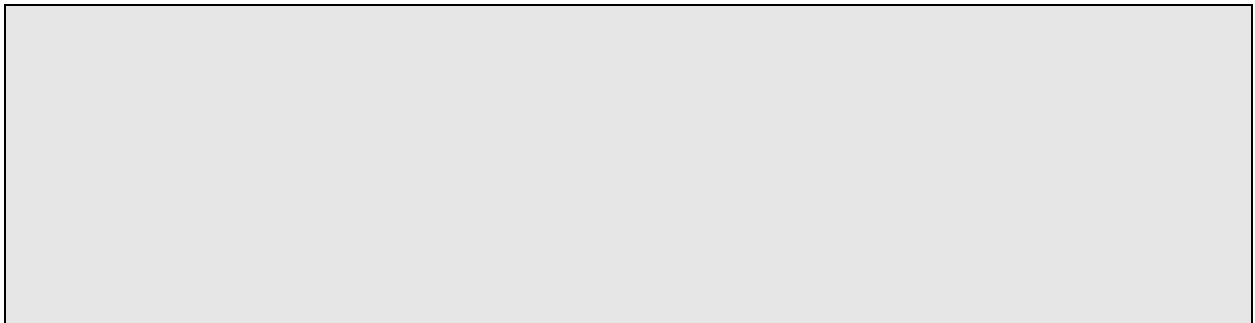
What's your reason behind wanting to enter into agritourism? Why does your family want to do agritourism?

What do you aim to achieve with your project, such as

- revenue outcomes
- social outcomes (such as social contact with guests, or sharing the highlights of your farming practices with guests)
- environmental outcomes (such as connecting guests with your sustainable farming and revegetation practices)?

What business or personal problems will the project help overcome?

What risks exist or might emerge in the future if the project does not proceed or is deferred?



Target markets

Who would you like to attract to your agritourism experience? Who are you designing your experience for? Don't choose to be something for everyone unless you have unlimited marketing budget. Choose very specific types of people and aim to meet their needs when you design your experience, and reach them with your marketing once your experience has been launched.

Describe your market, or markets if you have 2 or 3 distinct markets you are trying to reach, such as families with children under 13 years old who travel on school holidays, and couples looking for a short break.

Details	[Name of 1 st Target Market]	[Name of 2 nd Target Market]
What are their ages?		
Where do they live?		
Where are they in their lifecycle? (e.g. raising young children, empty nesters, retired, etc)		
What type of work do they do and how much do they earn?		
What are their interests?		
What sources of information (media) do they use/read/listen to/watch?		
Who influences their travel decisions?		
What are their needs and wants (e.g. affordability, reconnection as a family, physical activity, connect with locals while on holiday, want to take their pet with them on holiday)		
What motivates them to travel?		
What are their frustrations around holidays?		
How do they plan holidays?		
What kind/s of accommodation do they prefer?		

What kinds of activities do they like to do on holiday?		
What problem/s do they face that your experience can solve for them?		

The more you know about your target markets, the better. You can

- use the target market identified for agritourism visitation to Cootamundra-Gundagai in Council’s [Agritourism Development Plan](#) (page 15)
- use the target markets identified in Destination Riverina Murray’s [Riverina Murray Agritourism Strategy](#) or its [Destination Management Plan](#)
- use visitation statistics in the [Cootamundra-Gundagai Local Government Area Profile](#) at Tourism Research Australia
- ask Council’s Tourism Officer for help.

Once you have a clear idea of your target markets, you should consider their needs and interests as you design your agritourism experience.

Project description

Note: There are gaps in the following types of agritourism experiences being offered locally, so offering such experiences could give your business a competitive advantage:

- Demonstrations of innovation in farm practices, particularly linked to provenance, and contemporary values including sustainability, productivity and quality.
- An Indigenous perspective on agriculture that addresses sustainable and traditional approaches as well as contemporary approaches, such as how Indigenous knowledge is used to enhance modern agricultural practices and production
- Interpreting the challenges of growing food, especially the challenges of being productive and sustainable
- Conservation that addresses the challenges of being productive and sustainable
- Demonstrating agriculture in action (processes and outcomes)
- Showcasing large-scale and broadacre farming.

You may want to simply be a venue for partners, such as touring companies, who then take care of the offering to the visitors.

What agritourism experience/s do you intend to offer?

Add details such as of any construction/infrastructure (if relevant), or what the visitor will experience (and what they won’t experience, such as heavy machinery). You may want to include images such as architectural plans, or a ‘mood board’ of inspiration from other projects you’ve seen.

How was this option selected?

Is the project related to another project or dependent on another project proceeding?

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How does this experience meet the needs and interests of your target market/s? How does it solve their problem/s?	
How will your experience connect your guest with farming practices on your property?	
How will your experience connect guests with local produce and/or Wiradjuri culture?	
What will be unique about this experience in the region? (Its Unique Selling Point or USP)	
What will be the experience/s on offer, and how will it be hands on and participatory for guests? How will all five senses be engaged, and also guests' emotions and sense of connection to place?	
What's the one thing your visitors will share with others?	
How will the experience be accessible for people with disability (which goes beyond people in wheelchairs or with mobility issues, to include those with vision, hearing, and neurological disability).	Note: Ensuring people with disability can access your activities means more potential customers, and can also make your offering stand out from the crowd. Commonwealth legislation requires every business owner to provide equal access for everyone where it is safe to do so. This may require you to provide features such as disability parking, entry ramps or accessible toilets, and wide doorways.

How will the project be sustainably constructed and operated?	
Would your project start small and develop in stages? If so, how?	
What impact will the project have on your current agricultural business and farming practices?	
What impact might the project have on neighbours, such as noise or traffic or even trespassing?	

Include a site plan (remember to consider parking, evacuation, toilets, safety, and the constraints imposed by planning legislation), and consider including a customer experience plan (what guests will experience on the farm and in what order):

Customer journey

Consider the whole customer journey when thinking about your project – holiday makers first dream about a trip, open to ideas of where to go, then they choose a destination, and plan a visit there. They then book their stay and activities, the visit the region and experience their holiday. All along the way they share about their trip on social media – their plan to go, and while they are on holiday.

How will guests discover your offering exists?	
How will they find out the details of your experience?	
How will they book?	
What communication/s will they receive between booking and arriving?	

How will they find your property? (Are Google's direction's accurate? Is signage needed?)	
What will their first impressions be?	
Is it obvious where to go on your property? Are there unsafe areas of the farm to keep them away from?	
Do you have sanitation needs covered (e.g. for biosecurity)?	
How will you deliver great customer service?	
What communication/s will they receive after leaving?	

Strategic alignment

If you will seek government grant funding for your project, be sure to include this section.

Describe how your project aligns with local, regional, and state government plans, such as

Council's

- [Agritourism Development Strategy](#)
- [Tourism & Economic Development Strategy](#)

Destination Riverina Murray's

- [Riverina Murray Agritourism Strategy](#)
- [Destination Management Plan](#)

Destination NSW's

- [Visitor Economy Strategy](#)

Your project might align with other government plans related to agriculture, sustainability, accessibility, education, or other topics.

For example, a description of your project's alignment to Council's [Agritourism Development Strategy](#) might include how

- Your project will fill a gap in the region's agritourism offering (page 12)
- Your project will meet the needs of the identified target markets for agritourism (page 15)
- Your project is one of the recommended agritourism product and experience developments (from page 18), such as a farm stay (page 21) or a tour (page 24)
- Your project supports Action 13.9 (page 45) of attracting private investment to fill gaps in agritourism experiences

Expected outcomes

Outline the outcomes you expect from the project. Include measurable outcomes wherever possible. For example, instead of “More social contact”, a measurable outcome might be, “Having a monthly evening campfire that overnight guests are invited to join us at for conversations about life on the farm.”

To help you think of desired outcomes, it can help to think of who might benefit from the project – it may be yourselves as farm owners, but it also might be your guests, your farm workers, your community, other local businesses, and other organisations. What benefits might each of these groups receive from your project?

How will success be measured, and when?

SWOT analysis

For your proposed agritourism project, answer the following questions.

Strengths What's good about your business and the new project?	
Weaknesses What's not so good about your business and the new project?	
Opportunities What external factors we could take advantage of?	
Threats What external factors could cause problems for us?	

How will you address each weakness and threat?

Competitor analysis

What businesses will you be competing against, and what they do well and not so well? What will you do differently to succeed?

Competitor	Strengths	Weaknesses	What we'll do differently

Risks

Outline the key risks that the project will face, how the risk will be mitigated (reduced in likelihood or intensity of impact), and how serious each risk is (how likely it is, and how impactful it would be).

Remember to consider all kinds of risks such as

- staff recruitment and retention, key staff being ill
- the national economy (interest rates, recession, cost of living, etc)
- extreme weather events (short and long term effects on the business of various kinds of disasters)
- risk on guests e.g. bushfire, flood, livestock
- physical safety, food handling and medical emergencies, and risks posed by the terrain, such as bodies of water
- biosecurity
- financial risks (selling enough to break even, costs increasing)
- access by emergency services
- risks specific to children
- reputation, e.g. negative reviews
- alcohol, drugs and aggression
- competitors
- chemicals, such as chemical storage, and contamination from sheep and cattle dips
- construction risks
- how internet or phone connectivity might impact business processes (e.g. bookings)
- hazards such as asbestos, old electrical wiring, lead paint or other contaminants that might impact contractors working on the property

Outline how the project's risks will be monitored, managed, mitigated and avoided.

- What activities have been undertaken during the planning stage to identify and reduce the proposal's risks?
- What activities are proposed during the delivery stage to identify, monitor and mitigate the proposal's risks?

To ensure the safety of guests, you should do the following.

- Locate agritourism activities away from high-risk areas and prevent unauthorised access.
- Do a risk assessment and establish safety measures – such as delineated pathways, adequate fencing and ‘no-go zones’ – to protect vulnerable visitors, such as children, from parts of the farm such as dams.
- Give your visitors information such as an induction on farm rules to ensure they are aware of their surroundings and can safely navigate areas of the farm.
- Prepare bushfire and flood safety plans
- Prepare an emergency management plan that details risks, what happens if an emergency happens, when the property needs to be evacuated, and safe routes to the nearest highway or town
- Close the premises if any bushfire or flood warnings are in place, including if the warning applies to evacuation routes
- Plan how you will manage agritourism activities during drought

Resources such as these can help you plan how you’ll lessen risks.

- NSW Rural Fire Service: [Bushfire Survival Plan](#)
- NSW State Emergency Service: [Rural Properties FloodSafe Guide](#)
- SafeWork NSW: [Safety must haves, agriculture safety information and resources, farm safety assessment tool](#) to guide farmers through their safety obligations, and the toolkit for small business [Easy to Do Work Health and Safety](#)

Risk	Proposed mitigation	Risk rating after mitigation		
		Consequence	Likelihood	Rating

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Biosecurity

Agritourism businesses can be high biosecurity risks if visitors unknowingly carry infectious agents on clothes, shoes or their pets. The same applies to organisms that can spread when visitors pat, feed and handle animals.

A biosecurity management plan will identify the risks on the farm and prioritise the relevant biosecurity practices to protect you, your produce, and the natural environment.

Learn how to develop a [biosecurity management plan](#).

Governance

How are my family, my farm team, and I suited to agritourism?

Outline the team that will oversee the project's planning, delivery, and operations, including:

- Key decision makers (outline their qualifications or experience, key responsibilities and roles)
- Family (outline their key responsibilities and roles, if any)
- Staff (outline their key responsibilities and roles)
- Service providers, including planning consultants, builders, insurance providers, bankers, business and legal advisors, cleaning, etc (outline their key responsibilities and roles)
- Product suppliers for ongoing supplies, such as food, and cleaning supplies
- Key stakeholders (e.g. Council's tourism officers, neighbours, potential tourism operator collaborators)
- Interfaces with Government agencies (e.g. NSW Planning)

Who will be responsible for the maintenance, operation and ownership of any new assets created?

If you have to or want to step back from the business, who will take it over?

Stakeholder support

Outline what stakeholder and community support there is for the proposal. For example, will Council, and local tourism and agritourism businesses promote your agritourism offering to their guests?

Have stakeholders or the community raised any issues or concerns? For example, are your neighbours concerned about traffic impacts on your road? If so, how has the project responded or adapted to those concerns?

Inputs

What supplies and suppliers will you use, including for construction and operations?

What technology will you use, such as accounting software, customer and stock information management software, online bookings, customer emails (a group email software), etc?

What insurances will you need?

Need	Supplier	Cost

Costs and revenue

Provide costs from the start of the proposal (planning) through to when the project reaches a steady state, such as costs related to research, design, approval (Council fees and a planning consultant), construction, services such as accounting, and so on.

Where information is commercial in confidence, it can be provided as an attachment to your business case.

<p>What are the projected capital costs of the project, including contingency? Provide a breakdown by financial year if these costs will span multiple financial years.</p>	
<p>How will the project's capital costs be funded? (How much is needed, how will that be secured, and what will it be used for?)</p>	
<p>What are the projected ongoing costs of running the project, such as operating, maintenance, and renewal costs?</p>	
<p>How will you set the prices for your experience/s?</p>	
<p>What will be the prices of the experiences?</p>	
<p>What is the projected revenue/s of the project?</p>	
<p>What is the break even point for the project?</p> <p>For accommodations, this is often expressed as occupancy rate (e.g. the room is rented out for 40% of the nights of the year).</p>	

What is your farm business' financial performance i.e. profitability	
What is your farm business' financial position i.e. level of assets and liabilities	
What is your farm business' cash flow position i.e. level of cash inflows and outflows.	

Profit and loss forecast

You can use this [profit and loss template](#), your own accounting tools, or ask your accountant for help.

Our forecast profit/loss for the next 3 years:

	[Year 1]	[Year 2]	[Year 3]
Gross profit/net sales	\$	\$	\$
Total expenses	\$	\$	\$
Net profit/loss	\$	\$	\$

Cash flow forecast

You can use this [cash flow statement template](#), your own accounting tools, or ask your accountant for help.

Our forecast cash flow for the next year:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly cash balance	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Closing balance	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Implementation

What are your milestone dates and time periods for the project, such as for research, planning and detailed design, approvals, procurement, development or construction, launch and marketing, etc?

Activity	Start	Finish

Regulatory issues and approvals

Outline any regulatory issues that the proposal needs to adhere to, manage, or resolve as well as the approvals that will be required. Examples include fair trading/consumer laws, employment laws, and food licences.

Tax implications

Outline any tax implications of the proposal (seek advice from a tax professional).

Goals

How do you know if you got there if you don't set where you're going?

What are your (measurable) goals for the coming year for your business, and for the couple of years after that? Look back at your desired outcomes when setting your goals.

Measurable and achievable goal	Responsible person	Due date	How outcomes will be measured

Marketing

Your story

What is the story of your experience or offering? It can be worth hiring a marketing / copywriting professional to write this for you (it is usually called your brand story). You will use it in all of your marketing.

Tourism businesses use stories or engaging narratives to create emotional connections with their target markets, and express their personality.

What marketing channels will you use to reach your target market/s, considering what sources of information they use, who influences their decision making, and which media they consume?

Marketing channel	How will you use it?
Your website, with great SEO (Search Engine Optimisation so your website comes up in search engine results)	
The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (essential)	
A Google Business Profile (essential)	
Review websites (the best form of marketing, by far, is word of mouth recommendations), especially Google reviews	
Visit Cootamundra or Visit Gundagai tourism website, as relevant (ask Council's Tourism Officer for a listing)	
Online booking websites (such as Booking.com for accommodations)	
Social media that your target market/s use	
Regular (e.g. seasonal) emails to a database of your past guests, subscribers from your website, and influencers that your target market/s listen to	

Collaboration with other agritourism and tourism businesses, such as by cross promoting and recommending each other	
Digital advertising (on search engines and on social media)	
Signage in high-traffic locations used by your target market/s	
Nearby visitor information centres (if your target markets use them)	
Media releases to relevant media (especially for your launch or any news, such as events you run)	
Other	

Campaigns

Although some of your marketing will be ongoing and always active, sometimes you will plan and implement a marketing campaign, such as to launch your new experience, or to secure bookings at a key time, such as during school holidays, or during the quiet season for tourism.

For a marketing campaign, you plan a short burst of marketing activities on multiple channels at the same time, all with the same message and the same 'look'.

For example, for a launch campaign, the marketing activities you do might be

- Develop marketing materials, such as a media release, capture quality photos, the landing page on your website, social media graphics (tiles), and a video
- Share your marketing materials with your marketing partners, such as the local, regional and state tourism organisations, so they can help promote it: Council (Visit Cootamundra or Visit Gundagai and your local visitor information centre), Destination Riverina Murray and Visit NSW/Destination NSW – and anyone else who might share it with their networks
- Develop a media database of local media and media that your target market/s engage with, and send your media release to them, inviting them to contact you for interviews. You might like to do a creative and unique PR (public relations) activation related to your new experience to promote it, such as a cooking demonstration using local produce at a market where your target market/s live, and invite journalists to attend and report on it
- Run a competition with a desirable prize (e.g. for a family or group of four friends to experience your offering) to raise awareness and also capture email addresses for your database
- Advertise on Google and on social media and post on social media as well, of course. Remember to post as your page in relevant Facebook groups as well.

How will you launch your new experience?

