



IMAGE DESTINATION NSW

AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

How to develop an agritourism experience
and business case

Table of Contents

HOW TO DEVELOP AN AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCE	3
Understanding your customers	3
Mapping out your experience.....	4
Trends in agritourism	5
Competitor analysis – what is your point of difference?	6
Accessibility.....	7
Sustainability	8
Test and trial	9
HOW TO DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE.....	9

Disclaimer

Any representation, statement, opinion or advice, expressed or implied in this document is made in good faith but on the basis that neither Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council nor Tilma Group Pty Ltd are liable (whether by reason of negligence, lack of care or otherwise) to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking (as the case may be) action in respect of any representation, statement or advice referred to in this document.

HOW TO DEVELOP AN AGRITOURISM EXPERIENCE

Now that you've identified what kinds of agritourism experiences are permissible on your property, you probably already have an idea in mind of what kind of agritourism experience you'd like to develop.

Webinar recording: [Creating world-class agritourism experiences](#) by Destination NSW.

Guide: [Creating bookable agritourism experiences](#) by Destination NSW.

Understanding your customers

It's critical to step into the shoes of your guests to consider their needs as you design, develop and deliver your agritourism experience.

There's no value in trying to be everything to everyone. It is far easier to be clear about the kinds of people you want to host on your farm, then craft an agritourism experience that will appeal to them.

For example, if you want to offer camping, would you prefer to attract

- multigenerational families with children
- groups of young men friends who like to drink until late at night around a fire, or
- self-sufficient older couples with caravans?

The needs of each group are very different, and therefore how you would craft your offering (and also your marketing) would differ. It's much easier to meet the needs of a clear target market (group of similar types of people).

Tourism Australia provides [detailed information](#) on the types of people who enjoy

- Farm experiences
- Visits to agricultural and wine regions
- Meet the maker food tours
- Up close animal encounters
- Viewing wildlife in nature
- Camping
- Many other kinds of experiences, such as cooking classes, photography, homestays with local families, hiking in nature, birdwatching and more

Understanding your customers, and meeting (and exceeding) their needs and expectations is a really important part of designing an agritourism experience.

Tourism Research Australia provides [detailed information](#) on

- Target markets e.g. Short stay visitors, Older visitors, Family visitors, and Campers and caravanners
- Popular visitor activities or types of destinations e.g. Wineries, Cycling destinations, and National Parks

Guide: [How to identify your target market.](#)

Mapping out your experience

Now that you know what you will offer, such as farm stay accommodation or farm tours, at this point you should map out exactly what you will offer, and what your guests will do and experience from the moment they enter your gate to the moment they leave. Examples include

- Where will they enter, drive and park?
- What will be the sequence of their experience, whether that is staying overnight or just for a few hours?
- What will be the route they take across your property during their stay?
- What interactions will they have with you?
- What supplies will they use? (e.g. handwashing stations with soap, equipment to cook with or build a campfire with, any safety equipment they may need)
- What pain points might they experience, such as finding your farm when driving, or finding their designated campsite on your farm?



Trends in agritourism

Demand is higher for agritourism experiences that are aligned with these trends, so wherever possible, incorporate them into your agritourism experience.

First class hospitality	Exceeding expectations will drive repeat visitation and recommendations to others. Hospitality, generosity and friendliness go a long way!
Authenticity	What is life like on a farm and in the country? Share what it's really like, rather than something contrived.
Connection	<p>At its heart, travel is about creating memories and making emotional connections. If your guests feel they have made a personal connection, this will lead to positive reviews, repeat business and organic growth through word-of-mouth.</p> <p>Some visitors are looking for a connection with their host, and some want to be left alone to connect with each other.</p> <p>Visitors often want to get to know your region, its people, nature, geography, history and food.</p>
Engaging	<p>Travellers don't want to have passive experiences that they watch someone else do – they want hands on, participatory, immersive experiences.</p> <p>Research reveals that what makes experiences memorable are these, so combine as many as possible in the experiences you offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory: immersive activities involving all of the senses • Emotional: pleasure, imagination, positive behaviour • Social: shared experiences, cultural interaction with hosts • Cognitive: new knowledge gained, transformed opinions • Recollection: actions taken to reflect on the experience.
Local produce	<p>Insights into what your guests are eating at home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How produce is grown, stored and processed • How meat and dairy are ethically produced, animal welfare • What represents quality and sustainable produce
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How guests can make better choices around food and fibre to meet their needs and avoid what they don't like • Useful information, demonstrations, and guidance
Accessible	One in five Australians live with a disability – that's a big market, and it's a legal requirement to make your experiences accessible.
Sustainable	Today $\frac{3}{4}$ of travellers want to buy sustainable accommodation and experiences.

Guide: [Develop Your Tourism Business](#) by Destination NSW.

This guide is all about developing a tourism business from the ground up. It covers

- Which organisations can help you and how
- Understanding your customers so your agritourism experience will meet their needs
- How to provide great customer service and exceed the expectations of your guests (the cheapest marketing is when your guests recommend you to others!)
- How to price your offering

Worksheets: [How to develop extraordinary tourism experiences](#) (these are by Queensland's state tourism organisation, but are excellent).

Competitor analysis – what is your point of difference?

It will help with attracting customers if you have a point of difference from other nearby similar agritourism offerings. You should use your point of difference when promoting your agritourism offering. In the long run, it's better for your business to offer value through a point of difference rather than try to be the cheapest offering.

A competitor analysis will help you identify what that difference is.

- Which businesses nearby offer a similar kind of experience?
- What standard is their offering, and the level of service they offer? (e.g. luxury, rustic, hands on high quality service, the basics, or leave guests to themselves)
- What type of customer are they trying to attract?
- When are they open? (time of year, days of the week, time of day)
- What are their strengths?
- What are their weaknesses?
- How do they sell their product? (e.g. online bookings through a third party website such as Booking.com)
- What are the aspects of your experience that your competitors cannot imitate?
- How do you answer your customer's primary question: "What's in it for me?"?

Working with Wiradjuri

If you want to provide a different experience than most agritourism offerings, collaborating with local Wiradjuri people to showcase Wiradjuri agricultural knowledge would make your offering stand out. A better understanding of Aboriginal knowledge and culture is a tourism trend that is increasing, and in recent years there have been an increase in Government grants to support the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences.

Local Wiradjuri people are already planning agritourism experiences through The Wired Lab in Muttama and Highfield Farm & Woodland at Mount Adrah. They are interested in collaborating with other local farmers on agritourism experiences.

Contact: Peter Beath at peter.beath2@tafensw.edu.au

Accessibility

The more accessible your business is, the more potential guests there are who can buy your products (and their friends and families who travel with them!).

Guide: [Quick tips for creating accessible experiences](#) by Destination NSW.

This toolkit helps businesses welcome people of all abilities and with a range of needs to enjoy their tourism experiences. It includes

- Short video learning modules covering practical examples of what businesses can do to make their experience more accessible, the language of disability, how to have an inclusive mindset, and misconceptions and unconscious bias.
- Easy-to-use checklists for your venue and activities.
- Accessibility content to consider including on your website and how to communicate accessibility features.



IMAGE CHRIS ELFES

Sustainability

No longer an optional extra, your business doing its fair share to protect the environment is now expected by guests (and grant providers) – and being sustainable can save your business money!

Now is right time to leverage the competitive advantages of being sustainable.

Make sustainability options guests might have at home available, such as the following.

- Invest in solar power and batteries (a powerful cost saving initiative for your business), or buy 100% renewable energy.
- Buy (very) energy efficient electric appliances rather than gas appliances, such as heat pump reverse cycle air conditioners/heaters, heat pump hot water heaters, fridges, washing machines, and LED lighting.
- Install timers to turn off appliances
- Use low-flow taps and showerheads.
- Use drought-hardy natives in your landscaping to reduce watering.
- Use greywater on your landscaping (via a hose).
- Provide recycling options including composting for paper and food waste.
- Purchase supplies that are sustainable and eco-friendly, such as local produce, laundry detergent, and bedding.
- Purchase and provide compostable alternatives to single use plastic, such as paper straws, paper bags, and containers for food storage (to replace plastic wrap).
- Provide a plug for charging electric vehicles (a regular electrical outlet is sufficient).

It is also worth engaging your guests in thinking about sustainability by

- helping them connect with the natural environment on your farm, such as by providing a walking trail, seating in nature, and a bird identification book.
- sharing what you are doing to be sustainable, such as using greywater on native gardens.

Guide: [Sustainable tourism](#) Learn how to leverage sustainability to benefit your business (environmental, social, and cultural sustainability). A sustainable action plan template is provided.

Test and trial

Plan to implement and test your concept in a phased development. What are the ways you could start small and build over time to reduce risk and get familiar with working in tourism, or how could you test your idea to identify areas to improve?

- Before investing in infrastructure, is there a low start-up cost version to trial first such as self-sufficient camping (where campers provide their own water, energy and wastewater management)?
- Can you test the experience on family and friends who are similar to your target markets, and ask for their critical feedback?
- Could you do a trial run for a weekend during an 'agritourism' event, such as when the Gundagai Producers Market is on, or for two weeks during the upcoming school holidays, and chat with guests to ask for their feedback?



IMAGE DESTINATION NSW

HOW TO DEVELOP A BUSINESS CASE

How can you tell if your idea would be viable and is worth the risk? By developing a business case to research, and think through every aspect of the offering, including financial analysis.

Template: New agritourism experience [business case template](#) (Word document)

Support: [AgPlan](#) supports the development of a business plan

