

Monday Marketing Message

N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Helping farmers achieve results through proven promotional tools to gain new visitors, enhance farm experiences, increase sales and overall farm value.

What are the financial impacts of COVID-19 to your agritourism operation?

[Complete the N.C. Agritourism COVID-19 Economic Impact & Farm Outlook Survey TODAY](#)

Farmers are some of the most creative entrepreneurs and continue to pivot to address shifts in consumer demand as a result of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 economic impact survey is to include all agribusinesses that offer agritourism activities and guest experiences.

The data will be compiled for policymakers and other authorities that may be considering disaster relief funds to support recovery efforts for North Carolina's agritourism industry as a whole. Results will be aggregated together to protect your farm's identity. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. [Complete the survey TODAY.](#)

Good news. Consumers seek local food sources now more than ever. Agribusinesses with on farm markets or who participate in farmers markets have made changes to offer preorders, drive-through markets or curbside pick up while employing additional measures to protect the health of their consumers, employees and families.

Bad news. Agritourism operators who typically offer springtime activities on the farm have taken a huge revenue stream hit due to cancellations of Easter activities, school field trips, and events such as weddings and birthday parties. Farms that welcome the public are looking toward what also may be a temporary shift in consumer needs and expectations for summer and fall activities such as camps, field trips, family fun activities and haunted attractions due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Next step. Agritourism includes an array of on-farm experiences like those listed above and includes wine and distillery tours, festivals, u-pick operations, and more, so if your farm has been impacted, please participate in the survey. **Share in your networks.**

[Click here. Agritourism Industry Economic Impacts COVID-19 Survey](#)

What can you control? Consider shifting focus to what you can control during these unsettling times with regard to your agritourism business and marketing plans. There is no better time than now to enhance your relationship with your farm patrons. How will you stay engaged with your customers once we are on the other side of this health crisis? How will you stay connected with farm patrons so that they will choose your farm stay or pre-purchase tickets to your next event once it is safe for the tourism industry to reopen?

Actions you can take right now:

- Review your website and update content on every page. If you don't have a website, begin creating that online user experience content. There are many [free website platforms](#).
- Do you have an email customer list? If no, now is the time to begin accumulating contact information. Directly contacting your customers is your best tool in the marketing tool box.
- Considering new activities for your farm. Consider surveying your top customers to get their input and help you shape plans. [Check out this list of free survey tools](#).
- Write that newsletter that you have always dreamed about to add value to your customer's experience. If you're just starting a customer database of email addresses, ask them to sign up. Share recipes. Fun photos. Let them know all that they have to look forward to when the farm reopens. [Here's a list of resources to get you started](#).
- Set goals with your farm's social media presence. Stay top of mind by entertaining and educating followers about what is happening on your farm and how you are preparing for when COVID-19 is behind us.
- Call up your farm neighbors, nonprofit or other organizations and discuss potential partnerships for future events.
- Develop your public relations contact list from your local newspaper to regional publications, bloggers, and beyond. Set a goal to see your farm spotlighted in regional, statewide or national media. [Practice crafting media releases for your farm's next event](#). Develop that PR plan to include follow up calls with media contacts.
- Like other small businesses offering gift cards for patrons to use once they reopen, consider offering advance tickets to your farm's future events.

[Click here. How the Visit NC Farms APP can help your local agriculture-based economy right now.](#)

Our state farmers markets are open for business. Shoppers can find fresh produce and other products at the

- [State Farmers Market](#)
- [Charlotte Regional Farmers Market](#)
- [WNC Farmers Market](#)
- [Piedmont Triad Farmers Market](#)

[Click here. North Carolina Agriculture Industry Resources and Updates](#)

Your success as you welcome visitors to your farm is our job.
Thank you for all that you are doing.

Invite others with an interest in agritourism to receive the [Monday Marketing Messages](#) with an easy sign-up using this link: www.ncagr.gov/markets/agritourism

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This Monday Marketing Message is brought to you by the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services in order to enhance our state's top industry, preserve our farmland and inspire future generations to farm.

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