



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Marion County

Survey Results Shed Light on Agritourism in Oregon

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*Vegetables displayed for sale at a local farm stand.
Photo by Audrey Comerford*

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, a national team of Extension agents launched a producer survey to try and glean basic numbers centered around agritourism and on-farm direct sales operations. This national survey was part of a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture-funded grant and included a multi-state research and extension team. The goal behind this survey, launched in November 2019 and closed in February 2020, was to obtain some basic producer data surrounding the large and loosely defined category of “agritourism.” The state of

Oregon had the second largest survey response rate, with almost 200 farmers and ranchers participating.

Agritourism and on-farm direct marketing can be a great way for farms and ranches to sell their products, develop an additional revenue stream, interact and educate the public about farming, and employ additional family members. While it is not the right fit for every operation, farmers and ranches in Oregon have reported success in utilizing agritourism. Benefits for each operation may look different, ranging from financial to farm succession. While some of the findings have been pulled from the report below, for an in-depth insight please see the full report at <https://beav.es/3FE>.

The report, *Increasing Farm Viability Through Agritourism and On-Farm Direct Sales: An Oregon Producer Survey*, details the findings of the survey. 69% of the respondents have been in the agritourism business for over five years. 54% of the responding farms/ranches were under 50 acres in size. Because our state is so diverse when it comes to different types of crops, the list of products produced by these farms and ranches was large. It ranged from fruit and vegetables, Christmas trees, nursery stock,

tree nut farming, livestock, grains, and many others. Some of the value-added products these respondents said they produce include wine/beer/cider, jams and other canned goods, baked goods, cheese and dairy products, animal fiber and fiber products, cut-and-wrapped meats, processed meat products, to name a few. It is no surprise after seeing all the products listed that the largest percentage of farms/ranches that responded to the survey have on-farm direct sales as part of their operation's business plan (over 70%). Other categories of agritourism activities include education, entertainment, outdoor recreation, off-farm direct sales, food service, and lodging.

The survey report also showed the median number of visitors to the farms/ranches each year was 875, and that 25% of these visitors traveled 50 miles or more. The report states: "Visitors who travel 50 miles or more to an agritourism destination are more likely to spend money on lodging and restaurants, driving more economic value to a community" (page 15). It is shown these farms and ranches can be economic drivers in their local communities.

On the subject of revenue, of the respondents who answered 22.9% reported a gross revenue of \$25,000-\$99,999 from just the agritourism portion of their business. A full breakdown of profit and revenue data can be found in the report. It is worth noting that these numbers outlined in the report are pre COVID-19 pandemic numbers.

Another interesting section of the report are the goals and motivations for agritourism. Reasons reported for incorporating on-farm direct marketing into their business plan include increasing farm/ranch revenue, building goodwill in community, educating public about agriculture, diversifying farm/ranch market channels, and providing family employment.

Other categories of information included planning for the future and challenges facing agritourism with direct sales. Both categories are very interesting to Extension professionals because they identify where gaps in resources or trainings may be. Moving forward, the OSU Extension Agricultural Tourism working group will take this information into consideration when planning future agritourism programs.

A big thank you goes out to all the farms and ranches who participated as well as other partners who helped disseminate the survey.

The link to the full Oregon agritourism survey report can be found at <https://beav.es/3FE>

Discover OSU Extension Agricultural Tourism resources at <https://beav.es/3Fz>