

AGED 222: An Introduction to Agritourism

Instructor:

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Course Materials

- Stephens, Matt. (2023). Adventures in Agritourism: A Manual for Diversifying your Farm Income. Order the book on Amazon or using this link (\$18): [Adventures In Agritourism – Mother Earth News](#)
- Website: [Montana Agritourism](#)
- Additional resources, selected articles, case studies, and videos will be provided throughout the course.

Course Description

This course explores the intersection of agriculture and tourism, focusing on the development and management of agritourism enterprises. We will explore the role of agricultural operations in tourism and how they contribute to rural economies and sustainable agriculture practices. Content will emphasize the economic, environmental, and social impacts of agritourism, as well as best practices for creating successful agritourism businesses. Students will learn about various agritourism practices, trends, and challenges while gaining insights into how agritourism promotes agricultural education, hospitality management, and community development.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define agritourism and its connections to the agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries.
2. Identify and evaluate different agritourism enterprises and their components.
3. Analyze the economic, social, and environmental impacts of agritourism.
4. Describe the roles of marketing, communication, and education on the visitor experience in agritourism.
5. Recognize policy, regulatory, and safety considerations in agritourism enterprises.
6. Identify trends, challenges, and opportunities for agritourism.
7. Develop an action plan for establishing an agritourism enterprise.

Course Assignments:

Attendance and In-Class Assignments: 100 points

Attendance and participation are both vitally important to this class. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and field experiences. Assigned readings from the textbook and supplemental materials will guide class activities and discussions. If you are not in-class, you will not receive attendance points.

Assignment Policy:

You have 2 FREE Days that you can miss class without an excuse!! Assignments are due on the dates listed in the syllabus, unless *prior* arrangements have been made with the instructor. If you are sick on a day an assignment is due, or are gone for a university-approved activity, **it is your responsibility to contact the instructor *before* lecture/ to set-up an alternative means of submitting your assignment.**

Late assignments will be docked 10% per day (calendar days, not business days), unless prior accommodations have been approved by the instructor. After 4 days, assignments may not be submitted for a grade and the student will receive a zero. Students are expected to complete all assignments within the course during the time frame specified. Basic courtesy is expected from all the members of this course. Cell phones, iPods, and other neat technology toys should be silent and put away before class.

Agritourism Site Assessment at 4 Daughters Farm: 150 points

An agritourism site assessment assignment typically involves analyzing an agritourism destination from a professional perspective, focusing on its design, operations, and impact. Students will critically evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of the existing/potential agritourism site; examine how the site integrates agriculture with tourism; and propose recommendations to enhance the site's success and sustainability. Page length is 3-4 pages with clear headings and can include photos, maps, or charts. Cite sources if you use external data or research.

Key Questions to Address during the Assessment

- How well does the site balance its agricultural and tourism functions?
- What role does the site play in educating or engaging visitors about agriculture?
- What are the major challenges the site faces, and how could they be addressed?
- How does the site impact the local community or environment?

Introduction and Overview of the Site

- Introduce the site being assessed (name, location, type of enterprise).
- Outline the purpose of your assessment.
- Background Information: History, ownership, size, mission, and goals.
- Primary Offerings: Activities and services (e.g., farm stays, U-pick, workshops, markets).

- Target Audience: Customer demographics and marketing strategies.
- Operational Details: Seasonal hours, staffing, and pricing structure.

Assessment of the Site: This section should be the main focus of your report.

1. Agricultural Operations:

- Type of farming or agricultural activities.
- Sustainability practices (e.g., organic farming, water conservation).
- Quality of products or services offered.

2. Tourism Elements:

- Visitor experience and accessibility (e.g., transportation, signage).
- Engagement activities (e.g., guided tours, interactive workshops).
- Hospitality features (e.g., rest areas, dining, accommodations).

3. Economic, Cultural and Social Impact:

- Contribution to the local economy and community.
- Educational value and cultural significance.

4. Strengths and Weaknesses:

- Analyze what the site does well.
- Identify areas needing improvement (e.g., infrastructure, promotion).

5. Safety and Regulations:

- Adherence to health, safety, and legal standards.
- Visitor risk management strategies.

6. SWOT Analysis

- Strengths: What advantages does the site have?
- Weaknesses: What could be improved or poses challenges?
- Opportunities: What opportunities for growth or expansion exist?
- Threats: What external factors might negatively affect the site?

7. Recommendations

- Propose practical solutions or enhancements such as:
 - New activities or services to attract more visitors.
 - Improvements in sustainability or community engagement.
 - Better marketing strategies or partnerships.

8. Conclusion

- Summarize the findings of your assessment.
- Highlight the site's potential and overall impact on agritourism.

Personal Agritourism Experience Report (On your own): 200 points

The report should include reflection on your personal experience at an agritourism site and an analysis of the operations, activities, and connections between agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries. You may also include cultural, social, environmental, and economic perceptions of the agritourism operation. Think about the following: Describe sounds, smells, sights, and tastes; understand the site's mission or history to add depth; and analyze the broader impact of the agritourism operation. Page limit is 2-3 double spaced pages.

Please include the following components in your report:

a. Introduction

- Provide background on agritourism (what it is and its significance).
- Briefly introduce the site you visited (name, location, type of farm).
- State the purpose of your visit and the report.

b. Description of the Agritourism Site

- Detailed description of the site (e.g., its size, focus, layout).
- Activities offered (e.g., farm tours, picking fruits, wine tasting, animal interactions).
- Key features of the location (e.g., sustainability practices, cultural relevance).

c. Personal Experience

- Narrate your experience, including what you did, saw, and learned.
- Highlight memorable moments or unique aspects of the site.
- Discuss interactions with staff or other visitors.

d. Analysis and Reflection

- Assess how the site blends agriculture, hospitality and tourism effectively.
- Discuss its contribution to local culture, economy, or sustainability.
- Reflect on what you gained from the experience and how it met or exceeded your expectations.

e. Conclusion

- Summarize key insights or takeaways.
- Offer suggestions for improving the agritourism experience if relevant.
- Conclude with how the visit impacted your view of agriculture or tourism.

Outdoor Recreation Knowledge Exchange Webinar Series Discussion: October 2nd-Participation and Answers: 50 points

As a class, we will engage in a discussion with industry representatives to explore your perspectives on the future of agritourism in outdoor recreation, particularly within the context of Montana. This discussion will center around how you think the industry could better connect with students and what expectations you have as you prepare to enter the industry. Reflect on any barriers you've encountered as a student working or observed that make understanding or accessing agritourism and outdoor recreation opportunities challenging. We'll also discuss your ideas on current trends and issues specific to Montana as you see them, such as sustainable tourism, land use, and cultural heritage preservation. We would also like to you to share ideas and resources on how to find internships or experiential learning opportunities that can help you build practical skills and meaningful connections in this field.

Purpose:

This structured discussion is aimed at engaging college students with industry to explore your perspectives on the future of agritourism within the broader field of outdoor recreation, with a focus on Montana.

Objectives:

The discussion will ask students to:

- Share their expectations for entering the agritourism and outdoor recreation industries.
- Identify current trends and pressing topics in agritourism specific to Montana, such as sustainability, land access, cultural, food, nature tourism, and rural economic development.
- Examine barriers that hinder students' understanding and engagement with the industry.
- Explore effective ways to connect with potential employers and industry professionals.
- Discuss strategies for locating internships and experiential learning opportunities that align with their career goals.

Participation and Answers to Questions: 50 pts

Group Project Action Plan Draft: 100 points

Students will complete the action plan packet (7 sections) that outlines the goals, strategies, and operational framework of a potential agritourism business. The following outline will be used: [Action Plan Combined PDF fillable.pdf](#). It serves as a roadmap for writing the final agritourism project. This draft should include an executive summary at the beginning between 200-300 words outlining the business name and potential location; business goals; activities, products and services to be offered; how legal and safety considerations will be considered; marketing techniques; visitor management; and communication strategies.

Group Project: Final Agritourism Action Plan Project (150 pts) and Presentations (50 pts): 200 points total

- **Action Plan Project:** In teams of 2, students will create a written action plan proposal that includes a proposed structure for launching a potential agritourism business. This should be based on the Action Plan Draft that was completed. **150 points**
- **Presentation of Project:** This project will be presented at the end of the semester and submitted as an expanded narrative proposal. Be creative in the preparation of this plan proposal!!! Your presentation should be 15-20 minutes offering an overview of your proposed agritourism plan. **50 points**

Montana Agritourism Association Conference Assignment: 200 points total

The Montana Agritourism Association Conference will be held in the SUB on November 20-21st. For this assignment, you will work gain hands-on experience by assisting at the Montana Agritourism Association Conference. This unique opportunity will allow you to engage directly with agricultural professionals, community leaders, and industry stakeholders. You will also attend the conference to learn about current industry issues and trends.

- **Volunteer Assistant Role: 100 pts:** You will be assigned to work in pairs and will have the ability to choose from a variety of volunteer roles, such as registration assistance, session support, farm tour leader, speaker coordination, or event logistics. Through this experience, you will develop professional communication, organizational, and teamwork skills while gaining a deeper understanding of agritourism in Montana. Your role will be worth 100 points and evaluated by your peers, instructor, and committee leader. **You will be expected to schedule at least 1 contact per month with the leader of your committee via email, phone, video, or other communication method.**
- **Final Conference Reflection Paper: 100 pts**
Following the event, you will complete a 2-3 page double spaced reflection outlining your role, key takeaways, charms, challenges, and changes, and how this experience connects to course themes.

Grading Scale:

A = 900 to 1000 points

B+ = 870 to 899 points

B = 800 to 869 points

C+ = 770 to 799 points

C = 700 to 769 points

D+ = 670 to 699 points

D = 600 to 669 points

E = Below 600 points

<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Agritourism Site Assessment	150	
Outdoor Rec Webinar Participation	50	
Personal Agritourism Experience Report	200	
Draft Agritourism Action Plan	100	
Agritourism Conference Assignment	100	
Final Conference Reflection Paper	100	
Final Agritourism Action Plan & Presentation	200	
Attendance and In-class Assignments	100	
TOTAL	1000 pts	

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings and Assignments Due</u>
1	8/21	Course Overview and Expectations; Introduction to Agritourism	
2	8/26	Definition and Frameworks of Agritourism; Conference and Volunteer Roles Discussion	Pages 8-9; Read "Agritourism: Toward a conceptual framework for Industry Analysis"
	8/28	Guest Speaker: Debbie Queen, Agritourism Specialist; BART Farm Field Day at 5pm	

3	9/2	Considerations for Agritourism; Choose Roles for Conference	Chapters 1-3; Section 1
	9/4	Outdoor Recreation Knowledge Exchange Webinar Series: Public- Private Partnership Zoom Webinar in Class	
4	9/9	Considerations for Agritourism	Chapters 1-3
	9/11	Meet at 4 Daughters Farm: 5180 Stucky Road; Complete Agritourism Site Assessment Assignment during visit 4DF	
5	9/16	Example Agritourism Operation; Work on your Agritourism Site Assessment and in your Agritourism Conference Groups: Facilitated by Sayge (WAAAE)	
	9/18	Areas and Types of Agritourism; Site Assessment Reflection in Class	Agritourism Site Assessment Due Chapters 4-9
6	9/23	Areas and Types of Agritourism	Chapters 4-9; Section 2 and 3
	9/25	Prepare for Outdoor Recreation Panel; Answer the Panel Questions Facilitated by Sayge (Extension Facilitation)	
7	9/30	Areas and Types of Agritourism; Finalize details for Panel and Practice Questions	Chapter 4-9
	10/2	Outdoor Recreation Knowledge Exchange Webinar Series Discussion: Students' Perspectives on the Future of Agritourism in Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Webinar Participation and Answers Due
	Oct. 4- 5	Harvest Festival at 4 Daughters Farm (on your own)	

8	10/7	Legal and Safety Considerations; NET Agritourism Advisory Council Discussion;	Section 4 and 5
	10/9	Guest Speaker: Jesse Rodriguez, Program Director for Sustainable Hospitality Management; Tourism and Hospitality in Agritourism	Chapters 4-9
9	10/14	Tourism and Hospitality in Agritourism	Chapters 4-9 Section 7
	10/16	Marketing Agritourism	Chapter 12
10	10/21	Work on Personal Agritourism Experience Report in Class: Facilitated by Sayge (Extension Conference)	Personal Agritourism Experience Report Due
	10/23	Marketing Agritourism	Chapter 12 Section 6
11	10/28	Debbie Queen, Agritourism Specialist	Chapters 10-14
	10/30	Guest Speaker: Sam Blomquist, Prospera and Food and Ag Development Center	
12	11/4	Business of Agritourism; AgPlan	Chapter 10-14
	11/6	Work on completing Action Plan Draft in Class	Action Plan Draft Due
13	11/11	Agritourism Trends and Innovations	
	11/13	Agritourism Trends and Innovations; Work on Conference	
14	11/18	Final Preparations for Conference!	
	11/20	No Class! Conference Farm Tours and Pre-Conference Session	

Friday	11/21	Agritourism Conference in the SUB	
15	11/25-11/27	No Class this Week! Enjoy your break!	
16	12/2	Conference Reflections; Final Agritourism Action Plan Project and Presentations	Final Agritourism Action Plan Project and Presentations Due
	12/4	Final Agritourism Action Plan Project and Presentations	Final Agritourism Action Plan Project and Presentations Due
17	12/9	All assignments must be received in order to receive a grade.	Conference Reflection Paper Due by Midnight