
Building safety into your working farm or ranch

Agritourism best practices: Visiting working farms gives people the chance to have a real, authentic agricultural experience. It can also expose them to the risks inherent to your operations. If your farm offers agritourism activities — such as farm tours, corn mazes, hayrides, on-farm stores or petting zoos — it's important to manage them safely using best practices that help minimize these risks.



General practices

Barriers and fencing

- Maintain at least a four-foot high fence or other effective barrier between hazards and visitors
- Require adult supervision or add wire weave fencing if children can climb under, over or through fence
- Turn off all electrical fences when visitors are present
- Fence off and mark areas where guests are not permitted
- Inspect fences, gates and latches regularly and repair as needed
- Post signs near pools, ponds and other open waters warning of the potential drowning hazard
- Enclose pools in a perimeter fence at least six feet high
- Never allow children in or near areas with water without adult supervision

Emergency planning and procedures

- Develop plans and train employees for emergency responses
- Post emergency information—emergency contact phone numbers, inclement weather safety plans and locations of first aid kits—where employees can see it
- Post sign(s) warning visitors of possible hazards
- Inspect and regularly restock first aid kits and place them in visible and accessible locations
- Use incident reports to record all injuries and damages
- Make fire extinguishers available and easy to retrieve
- Train workers how to use fire extinguishers
- Ensure buildings have working smoke detectors and clearly marked exits
- Ensure smoking and non-smoking areas are clearly marked

Food safety

- Keep food storage, handling and serving facilities sanitary
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all utensils and preparation surfaces before and after serving food
- Require food service personnel to wear hats or hairnets and disposable gloves
- Provide hand-washing stations in food service areas

- Require food service personnel to thoroughly wash hands before preparing and handling food
- Post sign(s) reminding employees to wash hands before they start work and any time they return to work after using a restroom or taking a break
- Use thermometers to check the temperatures of prepared foods and monitor temperatures of refrigerators and freezers

Hand washing and restrooms

- Ensure visitors and staff have easy access to clearly marked and clean hand-washing stations and restrooms
- Provide clean flowing water, soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer
- Inspect handwashing stations and restrooms for cleanliness regularly
- Instruct visitors and staff to wash hands before eating or drinking, after petting or touching animals, after using the restroom and before departure
- Make hand-washing station available when leaving animal area

Traffic, parking and walkways

- Install large, easy to read signs to help make your operation easy and safe to navigate
- Ensure entrances, driveways and parking lots are graded and free of holes, dips and other hazards
- Require parking attendants to wear reflective or brightly-colored vests or jackets
- Never allow parking attendants to stand in front of vehicles while directing traffic
- Make parking lots easily identifiable
- Make separate entrances and exits to parking lots
- Do not allow visitors to park on public roads
- Ensure handicapped parking is clearly marked
- Post speed limit signs
- Ensure walkways are easy and safe to walk on
- Ensure your operation complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



Industry specific practices

Corn mazes

- Post safety rules at maze entrances
- Children under 12 years of age should be accompanied by an adult, unless maze is specifically designed for young children
- Do not allow smoking or open flame of any kind in maze
- Monitor your maze from an elevated platform
- Use a public address system—bull horn or loud speaker—to communicate with visitors
- Provide employees a way to contact emergency personnel from maze site
- Ensure visitors have a method to communicate with maze workers in case of emergency
- Check maze at the close of each day to ensure all visitors have exited

Hayrides

- Inspect tractors, horses, hay wagons, harnesses, hitches and safety chains for safe operation prior to each use
- Sign and retain inspection documents
- Use only hay wagons having railings on all sides and sturdy steps
- Hitch tractors or horses prior to loading wagons
- Pull no more than one wagon
- Do not exceed maximum occupancy limits
- Require children to be accompanied by an adult
- Stay on property and don't cross public roads or highways
- Select routes free of steep grades or other hazards
- Restrict visitors from areas where hayrides are moving

On-farm stores

- Require certificates of insurance from food and beverage suppliers
- Implement food safety program
- Ensure product labels display expiration dates and ingredients
- Rotate product regularly
- Periodically review personal hygiene practices with employees
- Enforce no-smoking policy
- Limit the amount of cash on premises
- Use proven security devices (cameras, alarms, locks, lighting) to help reduce the chance of theft

Pick/cut your own

- Post visitor conduct and safety rules at check-in station
- Make check-in person or field supervisor responsible for providing designated picking areas and keeping visitors away from recently sprayed/treated produce
- Designate 'toddler rows' for smaller children
- Ensure containers are sturdy, but not too large, so consumers can easily carry them
- Provide restroom facilities, play areas, picnic tables, water coolers and shaded areas
- Prohibit visitor use of power saws and tree wrap machines
- Routinely inspect and maintain equipment, such as handsaws and buckets, for safe operation
- Establish controls to minimize the infestation of bugs and rodents

Playgrounds

- Designate safe play areas in locations far away from any hazards or restricted areas
- Use and routinely maintain protective groundcover, such as sand or shredded rubber, to help prevent injuries
- Routinely inspect and maintain equipment for safe operation, and replace when worn out or damaged beyond repair
- Maintain clearance of at least eight feet between each piece of equipment
- Separate equipment intended for younger children from equipment intended for older children
- Require adult supervision

Waiver of Liability

Before a person participates in an activity on your property, you may want to ask the person to sign a liability waiver to acknowledge the risks involved in the person's participation. A sample waiver is provided for your information. Before it can be used, it must be modified for your particular circumstances, activities and state. We recommend you consult with counsel in your state for legal advice as to the appropriate wording.

Refer to the next page for a sample.



— SAMPLE —

FARMS WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I acknowledge that participating in _____ at _____ involves some inherent risk of physical injury or death. Inherent risks of agritourism activities include risks of injury inherent to land, equipment, and animals as well as the potential for myself to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to my injury or death, or for other participants to act in a manner that may cause injury or death. I am assuming all risks of any kind in connection with activities on the premises of, or arising from, or participating in this agritourism activity. All minors that are in my care or custody while at the farm are my responsibility. I am solely responsible for any physical injury, loss or death to myself during my participation in these activities and while on the property of _____. I hereby waive any and all claims, actions, or demands that may arise in favor of myself, or any of my heirs, successors, executors, or other including administrators, or assigns against _____ its employees, managers and agents. This release shall be binding upon the heirs, successors, executors, administrators, or assigns of applicant or applicants.

PLEASE PRINT:

Name of participant: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Emergency Phone: _____

Signature of participant or legal custodian of a minor participant: _____

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