

# Building Agritourism in Lac La Biche County

*A practical toolkit for farm operators*



*From readiness and planning  
to experience design, delivery, and learning*



**Lac La Biche County**  
welcoming by nature.

An agritourism development  
initiative sponsored and hosted by  
**Lac La Biche County**

Program development  
and delivery by  
**ClearThink™ Group**

## About This Toolkit

This toolkit was created to support **farm-led agritourism development** in Lac La Biche County.

It is designed for farm operators who are:

- Exploring agritourism for the first time
- Testing small, seasonal, or pilot experiences
- Looking to improve visitor readiness, clarity, and confidence
- Balancing agritourism with ongoing farming operations

The tools focus on **practical decision-making**, realistic pacing, and thoughtful experience design — without requiring marketing expertise or large investments.

## What Makes This Toolkit Different

This toolkit:

- Is grounded in **real on-farm experiences**, not theory alone
- Reflects the realities of **small and mid-scale farm operations**
- Emphasizes **clarity and fit** over growth for growth's sake
- Supports **learning-by-doing and phased development**

Rather than prescribing a single path, it offers tools that can be adapted to different goals, capacities, and timelines.

## How This Toolkit Was Developed

This toolkit was developed through the **Lac La Biche County Agritourism Development Initiative**, which included:

- In-person agritourism workshops
- On-farm walk-throughs and site visits
- One-on-one coaching
- Peer discussion and shared learning
- Ongoing reflection and feedback

The content reflects what was learned directly from participating operators and facilitators throughout the program.

## How to Use This Toolkit

You are encouraged to:

- Start with the sections most relevant to your current situation
- Use the worksheets as thinking tools, not compliance checklists
- Revisit tools over time as your experience evolves
- Focus on progress, not perfection



## Acknowledgements

We respectfully acknowledge the traditional, ancestral lands of the First Nations peoples of Treaty 6, Treaty 8 and Treaty 10 territories, and the homeland of the Métis people. Lac La Biche County continues to be home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial, and we recognize the vital contributions of Indigenous culture, history and perspectives in our shared past, present and future.

We gratefully acknowledge the farm and food operators who participated in this initiative. Their openness, experimentation, and hard work shaped the tools, examples, and insights shared throughout this toolkit.





# Contents

- 1. Introduction & How to Use This Toolkit..... 6**
  - 1.1 Purpose of This Toolkit ..... 6
  - 1.2 Guiding Principles for Agritourism Development ..... 6
  - 1.3 Who This Toolkit Is For ..... 6
  - 1.4 How the Toolkit Is Organized ..... 7
  - 1.5 Using the Toolkit Over Time ..... 8
  - 1.6 Acknowledgements & Project Leadership ..... 8
  
- 2. What Is Agritourism?..... 9**
  - 2.1 Why a Clear Definition Matters..... 9
  - 2.2 A Research-Informed Understanding of Agritourism..... 9
  - 2.3 Global Agritourism Network (GAN) Definition & Values ..... 10
  - 2.4 Core and Peripheral Agritourism Activities..... 10
  - 2.5 Five Categories of Agritourism Activities..... 11
  
- 3. Working with Government Policies..... 12**
  - 3.1 Why Government Policy Matters in Agritourism ..... 12
  - 3.2 A Practical Approach to Working with Policy ..... 12
  - 3.3 Policy Is Evolving – and You Can Influence It..... 13
  - 3.4 Key Takeaway ..... 13
  
- 4. Planning & Readiness Tools..... 14**
  - 4.1 Agritourism Road Map ..... 14
  - 4.2 Agritourism Action Plan - From Readiness to Implementation ..... 18
  - 4.3 Sample Agritourism Action Plan..... 20
  
- 5. Experience Design & Messaging Tools..... 21**
  - 5.1 Agritourism Experience & Messaging Worksheet ..... 21
  - 5.2 Sample Agritourism Experience & Messaging Worksheet..... 22
  - 5.3 Call-to-Action (CTA) Language Examples ..... 23
  
- 6. Photo & Video Assets for Agritourism.....24**
  - 6.1 Lac La Biche County Agritourism Photo & Video Library..... 24
  - 6.2 Ongoing Photo & Video Capture Guide (For Operators)..... 25
  - 6.3 Consent & Respectful Use ..... 25
  
- 7. Risk, Safety & Compliance .....26**
  - 7.1 Agritourism Risk Awareness Overview ..... 26
  - 7.2 Agritourism Insurance Application (Educational Use)..... 27
  - 7.3 Setting Clear Visitor Expectations..... 29



# 1 Introduction & How to Use This Toolkit

## 1.1 Purpose of This Toolkit

The Cultivating Growth Program – Agritourism Development Toolkit was created as a practical resource to support **farm operators and Lac La Biche County staff** in planning, launching, and strengthening agritourism experiences.

The toolkit reflects insights gathered through the **Cultivating Growth Program**, including workshops, on-farm experiences, pilot tours, and one-on-one coaching hosted and sponsored by Lac La Biche County. It is intentionally designed to emphasize **practical, experience-based learning, risk awareness, and continuous improvement**, recognizing that no two farms – or farm families – are the same.

## 1.2 Guiding Principles for Agritourism Development

This toolkit is built on the following principles, confirmed through program delivery:

- **Experience first:** Agritourism is about people, place, and story – not just activities or infrastructure.

- **Farm-led and farmer-informed:** Operators are the experts on their land, capacity, and limits.
- **Right-sized growth:** Not every farm needs (or wants) high volume; success looks different for each operation.
- **Safety and responsibility:** Visitor safety, risk awareness, and insurance readiness are foundational.
- **Learning by doing:** Hands-on experiences, peer learning, and mentorship accelerate confidence and competence.
- **Community connection:** Strong agritourism ecosystems are built through collaboration between producers, the County, and regional partners.

## 1.3 Who This Toolkit Is For

This toolkit is intended to be used by:

- **Farm and ranch operators** exploring or expanding agritourism
- **Lac La Biche County staff** supporting rural economic development



## 1.4 How the Toolkit Is Organized

This toolkit is organized into practical sections that support agritourism development **from understanding and readiness, through planning and delivery, to reflection and improvement.**

Rather than a rigid, step-by-step manual, the toolkit is designed to be **modular and flexible**, recognizing that farms are at different stages and have different goals, capacities, and timelines.

***The toolkit is organized into the following sections:***

### **SECTION 2 – What Is Agritourism?**

Establishes a shared understanding of agritourism using both research-based and globally recognized definitions and values. This section helps align operators, County staff, and partners around what agritourism is — and what it is not.

### **SECTION 3 – Working with Government Policies**

Provides practical guidance on navigating policy, zoning and regulatory considerations. The focus is on understanding intent, engaging early, and working constructively with evolving frameworks.

### **SECTION 4 – Planning & Readiness Tools**

Offers hands-on tools to assess readiness, think like a visitor, and translate observations into realistic, phased actions. This section includes the Agritourism Road Map, Action Plan, and sample examples.

### **SECTION 5 – Experience Design & Messaging Tools**

Helps farm operators clearly describe their agritourism experiences, set expectations, and communicate confidently across platforms — without requiring marketing expertise. The emphasis is on clarity, authenticity, and fit.

### **SECTION 6 – Photo & Video Assets for Agritourism**

Includes shared photo and video assets captured during the Cultivating Growth Program, along with simple guidance to help farm operators continue capturing usable content over time.

### **SECTION 7 – Risk, Safety & Compliance**

Supports risk awareness, insurance readiness, and clear visitor expectations. This section emphasizes thoughtful design, communication, and responsibility rather than avoidance or over-regulation.



## 1.5 Using the Toolkit Over Time

This toolkit is **not meant to be completed all at once**.

**Users are encouraged to:**

- Start where they are
- Select tools that align with their current goals and capacity
- Revisit tools as their agritourism offerings evolve

**County staff can use the toolkit to:**

- Guide one-on-one conversations
- Structure pilot projects and events
- Inform future program design
- Inform future policy, zoning, and risk discussions

### Looking Ahead

This toolkit represents a **living resource**, as agritourism continues to evolve in Lac La Biche County. The goal is not replication, but **adaptation** — ensuring agritourism development remains grounded, resilient, and reflective of local values.

## 1.6 Acknowledgements & Project Leadership

This toolkit was developed as part of the **Lac La Biche County Agritourism Development Initiative** and represents the **first comprehensive agritourism development toolkit created in Alberta**.

The initiative was made possible through the leadership and support of **Lac La Biche County**, who sponsored and hosted the project and demonstrated a strong commitment to rural economic development by investing in hands-on agritourism training, including the delivery of **in-person workshops**, on-farm activities, and facilitated learning exchanges.

The project was **developed and delivered by ClearThink™ Group**, who designed and facilitated the agritourism workshops, provided one-on-one coaching and site visits, and led the development of this toolkit based on real-world experience, applied research, and participant feedback.

We also extend sincere recognition to the **participating farm and food operators**, whose time, openness, and hard work shaped this initiative. Their willingness to test ideas, share insights, and learn together is reflected throughout the tools, examples, and practical guidance included in this toolkit.

# 2 What Is Agritourism?

## 2.1 Why a Clear Definition Matters

Agritourism is widely practiced but **not always consistently understood**. Different interpretations can create challenges for:

- Program design and eligibility
- Measurement and reporting
- Insurance, risk, and liability conversations
- Zoning and policy discussions

A shared understanding supports **clear communication, realistic expectations, and effective agritourism development**.

This toolkit intentionally draws on **both academic research and globally recognized practitioner-led definitions**.

## 2.2 A Research-Informed Understanding of Agritourism

Academic research describes agritourism as:

**Farming-related activities that invite the public onto a working farm or ranch to experience, learn about, and connect with agriculture.\***

This understanding emphasizes the importance of:

- A **working agricultural setting**
- A **meaningful connection** to agricultural production
- Visitor engagement that goes beyond passive observation

\*Source: Chase, L. C., Stewart, M., Schilling, B., Smith, B., & Walk, M. (2018). Agritourism: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Industry Analysis. <https://www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/view/572/553>

### *Agritourism Definition*

Agritourism is an agricultural diversification activity that results from the synergistic intersection of tourism and agriculture. Agritourism offers authentic experiences related to agricultural production that showcase the tangible and intangible resources of the region or locality.

~ *GAN Definitions and Standards Committee, 2024\**

This definition complements academic research while offering clear, practice-oriented language that resonates with operators, policymakers, and communities.

\*Source: <https://globalagritourismnetwork.org/definition-and-values/>



## 2.3 Global Agritourism Network (GAN) Definition & Values

Recognizing the global diversity of agritourism practices — and the need for shared values and language — the **Global Agritourism Network** adopted the following high-level definition through a signatory process in Bolzano, Italy (2024):

### Core Values of Agritourism (GAN 2024)

The following values were progressively adopted by the GAN Definitions and Standards Committee through monthly discussions in 2023–2024:

- Agritourism emerges from the synergistic intersection of tourism and agriculture.
- Agritourism is an agricultural diversification activity, not a replacement for farming.
- Agricultural production (e.g., crops, trees, livestock, fish) is the primary function of the agritourism setting. Products and services are supporting functions, not the core purpose.
- Agritourism provides authentic experiences by:
  - Reflecting local and regional culture, traditions, innovations, and ways of life
  - Delivering meaningful activities, products, and services
  - Sharing unique stories, knowledge, and practices rooted in place

## 2.4 Core and Peripheral Agritourism Activities

Research highlights that agritourism activities exist along a spectrum of connection to agriculture, rather than a simple yes/no distinction.

### Core Agritourism

- Takes place on a working farm or ranch
- Has a deep, visible connection to agricultural production

Examples:

- U-pick operations and farm stands
- Guided farm tours and demonstrations
- Farm-to-table meals using on-farm ingredients
- Educational workshops and school visits
- Farm stays and harvest celebrations

### Peripheral Agritourism

- May take place on a farm but have a **weaker connection** to production, **or**
- Be closely linked to agriculture but occur **off-farm**

Examples:

- Weddings or concerts hosted on farms
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., trails, biking)
- Farmers' markets or agricultural fairs

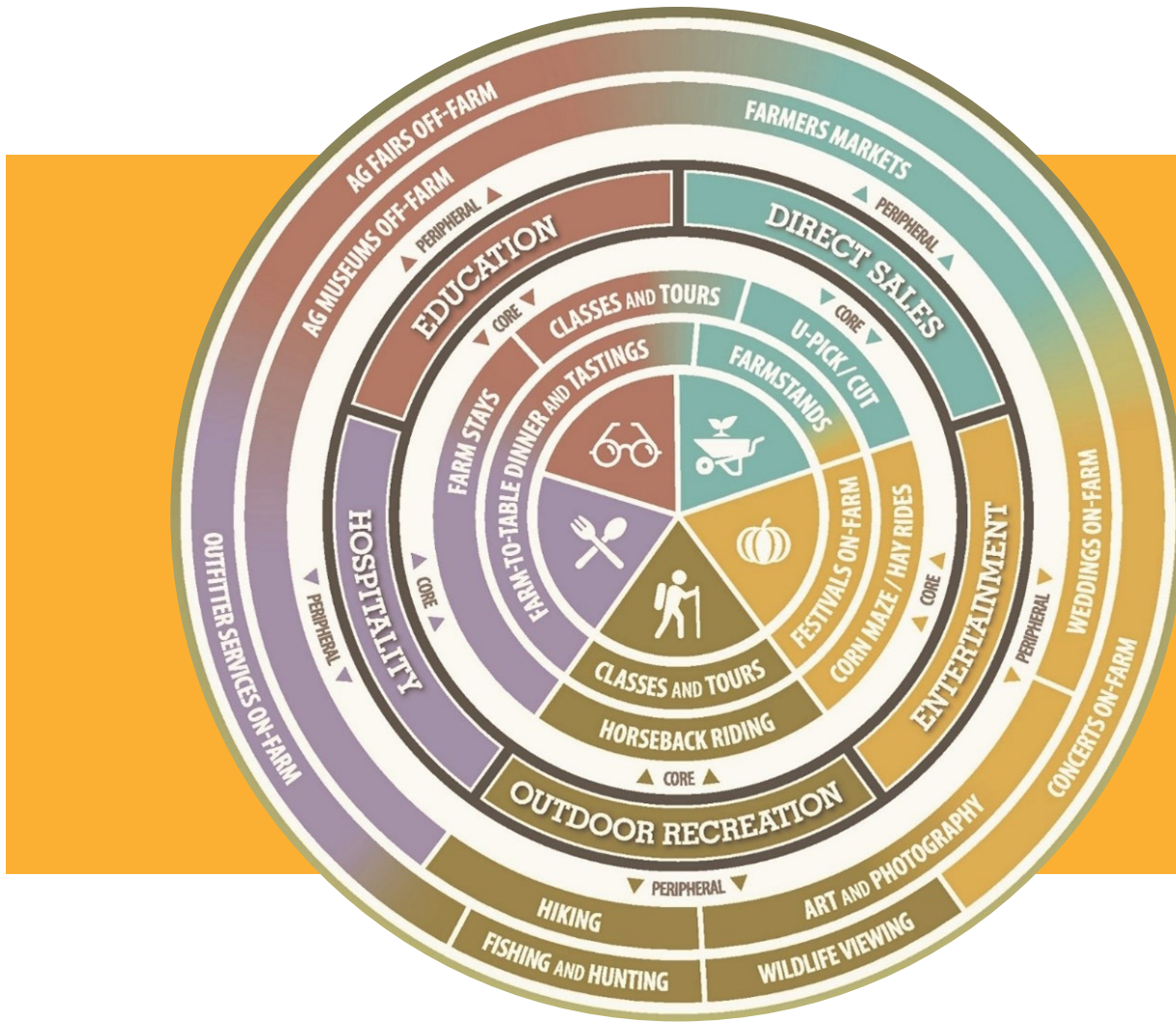
Whether these activities are considered agritourism may depend on program objectives, policy context, and degree of agricultural connection.

### How to Use This Definition in Practice

This definition and values framework can be used to:

- Guide program eligibility and toolkit use
- Frame coaching and readiness conversations
- Support clear operator storytelling and marketing
- Inform future policy, zoning, and risk discussions





## 2.5 Five Categories of Agritourism Activities

Across both core and peripheral activities, agritourism experiences typically fall into one or more of the following categories:

- 1. Direct Sales** – farm stands, U-pick, on-farm product sales
- 2. Education** – tours, workshops, demonstrations, school visits
- 3. Hospitality** – farm stays, meals, tastings
- 4. Outdoor Recreation** – nature-based and seasonal activities
- 5. Entertainment** – festivals, events, seasonal attractions

Many experiences span multiple categories (e.g., a farm dinner may include direct sales, education, and hospitality).

## What This Means for Lac La Biche County

Together, the academic framework and the GAN definition and values support a shared understanding that:

- Agritourism must remain rooted in agriculture
- Experiences should be authentic, place-based, and meaningful
- Not all farms — or agritourism models — need to look the same
- Success is defined by alignment with farm capacity, values, and community context

This approach provides clarity without limiting innovation.

# 3 Working with Government Policies

Working effectively with government policies is a core part of building resilient, visitor-ready agritourism operations. Policies influence what activities are permitted on farms, how risk and liability are managed, and how agritourism fits within broader agricultural, tourism, and rural development goals.

This section helps operators and communities navigate policy frameworks constructively, rather than seeing them as barriers.

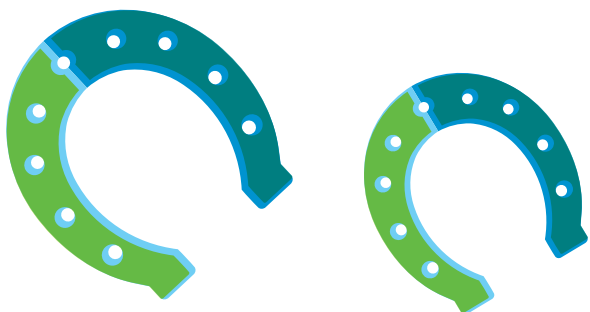
## 3.1 Why Government Policy Matters in Agritourism

For government policy, agritourism sits at the intersection of agriculture, tourism, business, health & safety, and land-use planning. As a result, it is often affected by multiple policy areas at once:

- Municipal bylaws & land-use planning
- Provincial agriculture, tourism & safety regulations
- Insurance and liability frameworks
- Food safety & alcohol service regulations
- Environmental & animal welfare standards

Understanding how these policies interact helps operators:

- Reduce uncertainty and risk
- Plan realistic, compliant experiences
- Advocate for clearer, more supportive frameworks



## 3.2 A Practical Approach to Working with Policy

Rather than “working around” policy, successful agritourism operators take a proactive approach and:

### Understand the Intent of the Policy

**Most policies exist to:**

- Protect public safety
- Preserve agricultural land
- Support economic development
- Reduce municipal or provincial risk

Framing agritourism as aligned with these goals strengthens conversations with regulators.

### Engage Early and Proactively

- Talk with municipal planners before launching new activities
- Share your concept and visitor flow visually (maps help)
- Ask: “*What concerns should we plan for?*”

### Use Clear Language

**Explain:**

- What visitors will do
- When activities occur
- How risks are managed
- How farming remains the primary land use

### Document Your Readiness

Policies are easier to navigate when you can demonstrate:

- Risk awareness and mitigation
- Clear visitor expectations
- Insurance alignment
- Operational limits and controls



### 3.3 Policy Is Evolving — and You Can Influence It

Across Canada and internationally, agritourism policies are changing as governments recognize its value in:

- Farm viability and diversification
- Rural economic development
- Food literacy and public trust
- Intergenerational farm succession

Organizations such as **Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association**, and **Global Agritourism Network** are actively working with governments to improve clarity, consistency, and support for agritourism operators.

Operators who document their practices and share real-world insights play an important role in shaping future policy.

### 3.4 Key Takeaway

Government policies are not static—and agritourism is helping to reshape them.

By understanding policy intent, preparing thoughtfully, and engaging constructively, agritourism operators can:

- Reduce risk
- Build trust with regulators
- Unlock new opportunities
- Contribute to better, more practical policy over time



# 4 Planning & Readiness Tools

Planning and readiness are the foundation of successful agritourism. This section helps farm operators think like hosts, assess readiness from a visitor's perspective, and translate ideas into practical, staged action plans.

These tools are designed to be:

- Used together, not in isolation
- Applied in self-guided planning
- Revisited as agritourism offerings evolve

## 4.1 Agritourism Road Map

### What This Tool Is

The **Agritourism Road Map** is structured around the following **Visitor Journey Stages** — the key moments that shape a visitor's experience from arrival to departure:

1. Arrival & First Impressions
2. Reception & Orientation
3. Safety Readiness
4. Activities & Experience Design
5. Animals, Land & Stewardship
6. Visitor Comfort & Practical Needs
7. Farm-Based Revenue & Value Capture
8. Community Connections & Local Partnerships
9. Departure, Feedback & Follow-Up

### How to Use the Road Map

- Walk the property *as if you were a first-time visitor*
- Identify strengths, gaps, and risks
- Focus on clarity, flow, and comfort, not perfection

This tool is especially effective when used on-site, clipboard in hand.

Below is a condensed example set.

### 1. Arrival & First Impressions

#### Key questions:

- Is the farm easy to find for first-time visitors?
- Do visitors immediately know where to park?
- Does arrival feel welcoming rather than confusing?

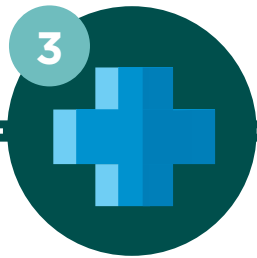
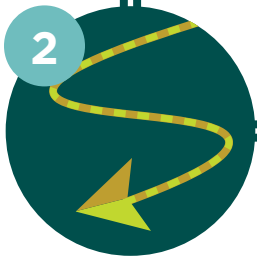
#### Checklist:

- Directional signage in advance of the farm
- Clear identification at the front gate
- Safe, visible parking layout; visitors know where to park and where to go next
- Greeter role identified (busy days/events); someone is clearly responsible for greeting or orientation



# Agritourism Road Map

1. Arrival & First Impressions
2. Reception & Orientation
3. Safety Readiness
4. Activities & Experience Design
5. Animals, Land & Stewardship
6. Visitor Comfort & Practical Needs
7. Farm-Based Revenue & Value Capture
8. Community Connections & Local Partnerships
9. Departure, Feedback & Follow-Up



## 2. Reception & Orientation

### Key questions:

- Do visitors understand what to see and do when they arrive?
- Are expectations clearly set?

### Checklist:

- Defined reception point
- Welcome and overview of activities provided
- Site map or visual orientation available; out-of-bounds areas are clearly defined
- Daily schedule shared (tours, demos, tastings)
- Farm rules communicated clearly; visitors receive clear “do’s and don’ts”

## 3. Safety Readiness

### Key questions:

- Have we removed obvious trip or hazard risks?
- Are off-limits areas clearly marked?

### Checklist:

- Trip and fall hazards removed
- Tools, equipment and chemicals are secured
- Restricted or private areas are clearly defined; out-of-bounds areas marked
- Emergency plan known to staff/volunteers and First aid kit accessible
- We have confirmed that our insurance coverage aligns with our agritourism activities



## 4. Activities & Experience Design

### Key questions:

- Do activities support learning and meaningful participation?
- Are they manageable with available people and time?

### Checklist:

- Activities align with farm strengths (connected to farming or food production)
- Tours or activities are time-bound and purposeful; experiences encourage meaningful participation without overwhelming visitors
- All activities align with staffing capacity
- Clear staging or gathering areas identified (tours, demonstrations, tastings)
- Sensory elements are included (visitors can see, touch, smell, taste, or hear something meaningful)

## 5. Animals, Land & Stewardship

### Key questions:

- How do we want visitors to interact with animals or living systems?
- What boundaries need to be clear?

### Checklist:

- Animal welfare and visitor safety are equally considered
- Visitor interaction with animals is intentional and supervised
- Visitors are encouraged to wash or sanitize hands
- The land is respected and interpreted, not just used as scenery

## 6. Visitor Comfort & Practical Needs

### Key Questions:

- What level of comfort is reasonable for this experience and audience?
- Are basic visitor needs addressed in proportion to the experience?
- How do weather, terrain, and season affect visitor comfort — and how are expectations communicated?

### Checklist:

- Basic amenities are appropriate to the experience offered
- Washrooms and handwashing options are addressed
- Shade, shelter, or rest areas are considered where appropriate
- Accessibility considerations have been thought through
- Visitors are clearly informed about what to expect, wear, or bring

## 7. Farm-Based Revenue & Value Capture

### Key questions:

- What can visitors take home that reflects the farm or experience?
- Are we capturing value in a way that feels fair and appropriate?
- Are we comfortable and confident explaining our pricing?

### Checklist:

- Visitors have an opportunity to support the farm financially
- On-farm and/or local products available
- Merchandising layout planned
- Products or experiences are clearly priced to reflect your time, effort, and expertise
- Payment methods are simple, visible and workable on-farm



## 8. Community Connections & Local Partnerships

### Key questions:

- Are we showing visitors that our farm is part of a wider local food and farm community?
- Do visitors leave with a stronger sense of place and connection beyond our gate?

### Checklist:

- We can clearly explain how our farm fits within the local food system
- Local partners, neighbours, or businesses are acknowledged or promoted
- Visitors are encouraged to explore other local food, farm, or rural experiences
- Cross-promotion opportunities have been identified (e.g., brochures, displays, verbal mentions)
- We see realistic potential for collaboration or clustering over time

## 9. Departure, Feedback & Follow-Up

### Key questions:

- Are we closing the experience in a way that feels thoughtful and intentional?
- Do visitors leave knowing how to stay connected or return?

### Checklist:

- Visitors** leave knowing how to stay connected (e.g., email sign-up, social media, website)
- We have a simple, manageable way for visitors to share feedback (e.g., comment card, brief follow-up email, or informal conversation)
- Visitors are thanked and invited to return or stay engaged in the future
- We take time to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved

## How This Checklist Is Intended to Be Used

This checklist is designed as a planning tool, not an assessment or compliance checklist.

### It is intended to:

- Replace inspection-style thinking with reflective, visitor-first planning
- Build confidence and clarity by breaking agritourism into manageable stages
- Support farm-led decision-making grounded in capacity, values, and seasonality
- Encourage sequenced development, rather than doing everything at once
- Translate observations into clear, realistic actions

## Best Use in Practice

### This checklist works best when used:

- During an on-farm walk-through, viewing the site from a visitor's perspective
- Alongside the **Agritourism Road Map worksheets**, to identify readiness and gaps
- As a bridge into a **phased action plan**, prioritizing what to do now, next, and later



## 4.2 Agritourism Action Plan – From Readiness to Implementation

### *Turning Observations into Practical Next Steps*

While the **Agritourism Road Map** helps operators see their farm through a visitor’s eyes, the **Agritourism Action Plan** helps decide **what to do next, in what order, and at what pace**.

Together, these tools support thoughtful, step-by-step agritourism development.

### **What This Tool Is**

The Agritourism Action Plan is a *living planning tool*, not a one-time exercise.

#### **It is designed to support:**

- Phased, right-sized development
- Learning by doing
- Reflection and adjustment over time

The Action Plan helps farm operators move forward without pressure to do everything at once.

### **What the Action Plan Helps You Do**

The Agritourism Action Plan supports farm operators in:

- Prioritizing improvements identified through the Agritourism Road Map Checklist
- Breaking larger ideas into manageable steps
- Assigning timing and responsibility in a realistic way
- Turning insight into action while maintaining confidence and momentum

### **How the Action Plan Is Structured**

The Action Plan is organized around:

- Visitor Journey Stages, aligned directly with the Agritourism Road Map
- Specific, observable actions (not vague goals or wish lists)
- Phasing and sequencing, rather than doing everything at once

This structure helps operators focus on what matters most right now.

#### **Each action typically includes:**

- What needs to be done
- Why it matters (visitor experience, safety, clarity, confidence, or revenue)
- When it will be addressed
- Who is responsible
- Notes or supports required

### **How to Use the Action Plan**

The Agritourism Action Plan is used to prioritize and sequence improvements that strengthen the visitor experience while remaining realistic for the farm’s capacity, season, and goals.

It is not a list of everything that could be done — only what *should* be done next.

#### **STEP 1: Identify What Actually Needs Action**

Begin by reviewing insights gathered through:

- On-farm walk-throughs (viewing the farm from a visitor’s perspective)
- Agritourism Road Map worksheets
- Coaching conversations or peer feedback

From these inputs, identify *specific gaps or opportunities* that affect the visitor experience.

#### **What Moves Into the Action Plan:**

Only actions that clearly improve one or more of the following should be included:

- Clarity (Where do visitors go? What do they do?)
- Flow (How smoothly does the visit unfold?)
- Comfort (Are basic needs and expectations addressed?)
- Safety (Are risks understood and managed?)
- Confidence (For both visitors *and* hosts)

#### **STEP 2: Clarify Why This Matters**

For each action, briefly note why it matters from the visitor and operator perspective.

This helps answer the question: “What problem does this action solve?”

### Common reasons include:

- Improving first impressions
- Reducing confusion or stress for visitors
- Enhancing safety for visitors and animals
- Supporting learning and meaningful participation
- Capturing value and supporting farm viability

If the “why” is unclear, the action may not be a priority right now.

### STEP 3: Set Timing (Now / Next / Later)

Rather than scheduling everything at once, group actions by timing:

- *Now* – Actions that are low-cost, high-impact or required before visitors arrive
- *Next* – Improvements to address after testing or later in the season
- *Later* – Longer-term ideas or investments that require more planning

#### Timing should reflect:

- Farming seasons and workload
- Staffing and volunteer capacity
- Weather and event cycles

This step replaces rigid timelines with realistic sequencing.

### STEP 4: Assign Responsibility

Each action should have a clear owner:

- Farm operator
- Family member
- Staff or volunteer
- External support (contractor, advisor, partner)

Clear responsibility increases follow-through and avoids assumptions.

### STEP 5: Identify Notes or Supports Required

Before implementation, note any support needed to complete the action successfully.

#### This might include:

- Materials or tools
- Guidance or examples
- External expertise
- Permissions or confirmations
- Timing constraints

These notes help prevent actions from stalling.

### STEP 6: Review and Update Regularly

The Action Plan should be revisited:

- After busy weekends or events
- At the end of the season
- Before adding new experiences

Regular review supports learning, confidence, and steady improvement over time.

### How This Tool Works Best

The Action Plan is most effective when paired with:

- An on-farm walk-through
- The Agritourism Road Map worksheets
- Seasonal reflection, learning and adjustments
- Coaching or peer discussion

Together, these tools support **intentional, sustainable agritourism development** – at a pace that works for each farm operation.



## 4.3 Sample Agritourism Action Plan

*Context:* A mixed farm offering limited public access (U-pick days and guided tours, 6–8 weekends per season).

### What This Example Shows

1. What action is planned
2. Why it matters to the visitor and the farm
3. When it fits (Now / Next / Later)
4. Who is responsible
5. What support may be needed
6. Condensed Action Plan Snapshot

Visitor Journey Stages	Action	Why This Matters	Timing	Responsibility	Notes
Arrival & First Impressions	Add temporary directional signage	Reduces confusion and late arrivals	Now	Farm owner	Reusable sandwich boards
Arrival & First Impressions	Clearly mark parking area	Improves safety and visitor flow	Now	Family member	Adjust after first weekend
Reception & Orientation	Set up clear reception point	Visitors know where to start	Now	Farm owner	Table, banner, signage
Reception & Orientation	Identify greeter role on busy days	Improves first impressions	Now	Volunteer / family	Rotate role
Safety Readiness	Remove visible trip hazards	Reduces injury risk	Now	Farm owner	Re-check mid-season
Activities & Experience Design	Limit tours to set times	Prevents overextension	Now	Farm owner	Post daily schedule
Animals, Land & Stewardship	Supervised animal interaction only	Protects animals and visitors	Now	Farm owner	Clear boundaries & signage
Visitor Comfort & Needs	Provide shaded seating	Improves visitor comfort	Next	Farm owner	Picnic tables or pop-up tent
Farm-Based Revenue & Value Capture	Set up small farm retail table	Captures visitor support	Next	Farm owner	Focus on 3–5 products
Departure, Feedback & Follow-Up	Collect visitor emails	Encourages repeat visits	Now	Greeter	Clipboard sign-up

*This example shows how small, intentional actions—planned with clarity—can make a meaningful difference for visitors and operators alike.*



# 5 Experience Design & Messaging Tools

These tools help farm operators clearly describe their agritourism experiences, set visitor expectations, and communicate confidently — **without requiring marketing expertise or outside agencies.**

The emphasis is on **clarity, authenticity, and readiness**, not hype or volume.

## 5.1 Agritourism Experience & Messaging Worksheet

*Clarifying What You're Offering — and How You Talk About It*

### What This Tool Is

The Agritourism Experience & Messaging Worksheet is a **combined clarity and communication tool.**

#### It helps farm operators:

- Define their agritourism experience from a visitor's perspective
- Clarify who the experience is for (and who it is not)
- Align their farm story, experience promise, and boundaries
- Translate that clarity into consistent, visitor-facing descriptions

### What This Tool Helps You Do

#### This combined worksheet helps farm operators:

- Think through the experience **before** promoting it
- Reduce mismatched expectations
- Communicate clearly and confidently across platforms
- Feel more comfortable setting boundaries, capacity and pricing

### When to Use This Tool

Use this worksheet when:

- Developing a new agritourism experience
- Refining or adjusting an existing offering
- Creating or updating a website experience page
- Posting an event listing or Open Farm Days description
- Sharing your experience with partners, tour operators, or group organizers
- Drafting consistent experience descriptions for social media

### How to Use This Tool

Use this worksheet in two phases:

#### PHASE 1 — Clarify the Experience

**(This phase is for internal clarity and alignment.)**

Complete the sections related to:

- Your farm or operation story
- Who the experience is for
- What visitors will do and learn
- What you want visitors to respect
- What the experience is *not*

This phase builds confidence and alignment before anything is shared publicly.

#### PHASE 2 — Describe the Experience

**(This phase focuses on clear, consistent external communication.)**

Once clarity is established, use the worksheet to draft:

- Website experience descriptions
- Event or Open Farm Days listings
- Partner or tour-operator summaries
- Social media descriptions (adapted in length and tone)

## 5.2 Sample Agritourism Experience & Messaging Worksheet

*Context: A mixed farm offering limited public access (U-pick days and guided tours, 6–8 weekends per season).*

### 1. Experience Name

**(Clear, simple, seasonal if applicable)**

Late-Summer U-pick & Farm Walk

### 2. Our Farm / Operation Story

**(1–2 sentences)**

*(Why do you farm here? What matters to you?)*

We are a family-run mixed farm focused on growing food responsibly and sharing where it comes from. Agritourism helps us connect directly with our community while keeping farming as our primary focus.

### 3. Who This Experience Is For

**(Families, couples, seniors, foodies, schools, etc.)**

- Families and couples
- Local residents interested in food and farming
- Visitors looking for a relaxed, seasonal outdoor experience

### 4. What Visitors Will Do

**(Plain-language activity overview)**

- Pick seasonal produce during designated U-pick hours
- Join a short guided farm walk to learn how food is grown
- Ask questions and explore at a comfortable pace

### 5. Experience Promise

**(“Visitors will leave with...”)**

Visitors will leave with a better understanding of how food is grown, a connection to the farm, and fresh produce to take home.

### 6. What to Expect

**(Set expectations clearly — this reduces risk and improves satisfaction)**

- Outdoor experience on uneven ground
- Weather-dependent activities
- Guided portions plus time for independent picking
- Working farm environment with equipment nearby

### 7. Seasonal Notes

**(Weather, timing, harvest windows, animal care, etc.)**

- Offered late summer to early fall
- Availability depends on crop readiness and weather
- Limited to 6–8 weekends per season

### 8. Accessibility & Considerations

**(Terrain, walking distances, age suitability, washrooms, pets, etc.)**

- Uneven terrain; walking required
- Not stroller-friendly in all areas
- Portable washroom available on-site
- Pets not permitted during U-pick days

### 9. What We Want Visitors to Respect

**(Farm rules framed positively)**

- Please stay within marked areas and follow signage
- Children must be supervised at all times

### 10. What This Experience Is NOT

**(Helps avoid mismatched expectations)**

- Not suitable for large groups or private events
- Not a petting zoo or playground
- Not available outside posted dates or hours

### 11. Notes for Promotion & Consistency

**(Optional internal use)**

- Use the same core description on website and social media
- Emphasize limited dates and seasonal nature
- Reinforce that this is a working farm



## 5.3 Call-to-Action (CTA) Language Examples

These examples are intended to invite the right visitors and reinforce expectations, not to create urgency or increase volume.

### Booking / Registration

#### (Setting capacity and preparation expectations)

- “Advance booking required to ensure a quality farm experience.”
- “Limited spaces available to keep the experience personal.”
- “Pre-registration helps us prepare and welcome you properly.”

### Event Promotion

#### (Inviting interest while reinforcing fit)

- “Join us for a behind-the-scenes farm experience.”
- “Spend time on a working farm and learn where your food comes from.”
- “Come prepared for an authentic, hands-on experience.”

### Open Farm Days

#### (Reinforcing respect and safety)

- “We’re excited to welcome visitors to our working farm. Please follow posted signage and guidance so everyone can enjoy a safe and positive visit.”
- “We look forward to welcoming visitors who are curious about farming and enjoy learning in a working farm setting.”



# 6 Photo & Video Assets for Agritourism

Photos and videos help potential visitors **see themselves on the farm**, understand what to expect, and connect with the people and place behind the experience.

This section includes:

- **A shared photo & video library** captured during the Cultivating Growth Program, and
- **Simple guidance** to help operators continue capturing usable content using their phones.

## 6.1 Lac La Biche County Agritourism Photo & Video Library

During the Cultivating Growth Program, Lac La Biche County captured photos and videos of participating farms and agritourism experiences. These assets are intended to support:

- Operator marketing and promotion
- County and regional storytelling
- Program reporting and future funding applications

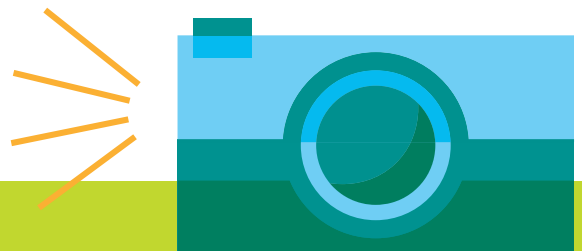
### Suggested Asset Categories

(Use these as folders or tags)

- Farm landscapes & settings
- Farm families & operators
- Visitor experiences & interactions
- Food, products, and hands-on activities
- Events, tours, and Open Farm Days
- Seasonal moments (planting, harvest, animals, weather)

### Usage Notes

- Assets may be used by operators and the County for promotional and reporting purposes
- Where people are clearly identifiable, consent should be confirmed
- Attribution guidelines should be followed where required



### Recommended Asset Log (Simple Table)

Each photo or video should be accompanied by basic information:

*(This can live in Excel or Google Sheets.)*

Asset Name	Farm	Season	People Shown	Approved Uses
IMG_001	_____	_____	Yes / No	Marketing / Reporting



## 6.2 Ongoing Photo & Video Capture Guide (For Operators)

This guide helps operators **build confidence** capturing content themselves — no special equipment required.

### What to Capture

#### People

- You and your family working on the farm
- Visitors engaging (from behind or at a distance)
- Hands, smiles, interactions

#### Process

- Harvesting, feeding, preparing, explaining
- Before/after moments
- Behind-the-scenes tasks

#### Place

- Entrances, signage, pathways
- Fields, barns, orchards, pastures
- Seasonal changes

### What to Avoid

- Close-ups of faces without permission
- Unsafe activities
- Visitors ignoring rules
- Cluttered or misleading scenes

### Phone Photography Tips (Quick Wins)

- Shoot in natural light (morning or late afternoon)
- Hold your phone horizontally for video
- Take 3-5 shots of the same moment
- Keep videos short (10-30 seconds)

### Seasonal Shot Checklist

(Revisit this list throughout the year)

- Arrival & welcome
- Working moments
- Learning moments
- Food & products
- Quiet landscape shots
- End-of-day scenes

## 6.3 Consent & Respectful Use

### Best Practices

- Use signage indicating photography may occur
- Ask verbal permission when possible
- Avoid photographing children without a guardian present
- When in doubt — don't post

### Simple Consent Statement (Optional)

“Photos and videos may be taken during your visit for promotional purposes. Please let us know if you prefer not to be included.”



# 7 Risk, Safety & Compliance

*Supporting safe, welcoming, and resilient agritourism experiences*

Agritourism blends **working farms** with **public-facing experiences**, which means risk, safety, and compliance must be considered early and revisited often. This section is designed to help farm operators understand common agritourism risks, prepare for insurance conversations, and clearly communicate expectations to visitors.

The goal is **risk awareness, not risk avoidance**—supporting informed decisions that protect people, farms, and long-term viability.

## 7.1 Agritourism Risk Awareness Overview

Agritourism introduces new dynamics to farm operations by inviting visitors into environments that are not purpose-built tourism sites. Understanding where risks may arise allows operators to design experiences more intentionally, reduce uncertainty, and build confidence with partners, insurers, and local authorities.

### Common Agritourism Risk Categories

Risk varies by operation, scale, season, and activity, but often falls into the following areas:

#### People & Movement

- Uneven ground, wet grass, gravel paths

- Mixed-use spaces (visitors, staff, vehicles, equipment)
- Children, seniors, and accessibility considerations

#### Animals & Living Systems

- Livestock behaviour and unpredictability
- Biosecurity and animal health
- Interaction between visitors and animals

#### Structures & Infrastructure

- Temporary structures (tents, hay seating, fencing)
- Heritage barns or farm buildings
- Washrooms, handwashing stations, lighting

#### Activities & Experiences

- U-pick, tours, workshops, tastings
- Wagon rides and mazes
- Food handling, meals and sampling
- Seasonal or special events

#### Environment & Weather

- Heat, cold, rain, wind, smoke
- Seasonal conditions (mud, ice, dust)
- Emergency response and shelter planning

### Key Principle

Most agritourism risks are manageable through thoughtful design, clear communication, and operational discipline—not expensive infrastructure or excessive rules.

## 7.2 Agritourism Insurance Application (Educational Use)

Insurance is often one of the **most intimidating aspects** of agritourism for operators. This tool is designed to help farms **prepare for insurance conversations**—*not to provide legal or insurance advice*.

### The Agritourism Insurance Application (Educational Use) helps operators:

- Clarify what they are offering to the public
- Identify activities that may affect coverage
- Communicate confidently with brokers or insurers
- Avoid surprises later in the process

### What This Tool Is (and Is Not)

- ✓ An educational planning aid
- ✓ A conversation starter with insurance professionals
- ✓ A way to document activities and controls
- ✗ Not an insurance policy
- ✗ Not a guarantee of coverage
- ✗ Not a substitute for professional advice

### Typical Information Covered

Operators may be asked to describe:

- Types of visitor activities offered
- Expected visitor volumes and seasonality
- Use of animals, food, alcohol, or equipment
- On-site safety measures and supervision
- Event vs. ongoing operations

### Why This Matters

Well-prepared operators:

- Reduce delays and misunderstandings
- Often access more appropriate coverage options
- z
- Completing this worksheet early—even before contacting an insurer—can shape smarter experience design and operational choices.

### Worksheet

This worksheet helps farm operators think through agritourism activities, risks, and controls *before* speaking with an insurance broker or advisor.

### Important Note:

This worksheet is for educational and planning purposes only. It is *not an insurance application*, does not guarantee coverage, and does not replace professional insurance or legal advice.

### A. Farm / Operation Overview

**Business / Farm Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Contact Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location (Municipality / County):** \_\_\_\_\_

#### Type of Operation (check all that apply):

- Crop / Market Garden
- Livestock
- Orchard / Vineyard
- Mixed Farm
- Food Processing / Value-Added

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Agritourism Activities Being Offered

List **current or planned** activities that involve visitors on-site.

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### C. Visitor Profile & Use of Site

Who are your typical visitors? (check all that apply):

- Families with children
- School groups
- Seniors
- Tour groups
- Couples / adults only
- Mixed / general public

How do visitors move around your site?

- Guided only
- Self-guided
- Combination of both

Are there areas visitors are NOT allowed to access?

- Yes  No

If yes, how are these areas identified or controlled?

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## D. Animals, Equipment & Farm Operations

Do visitors interact with or observe animals?

Yes  No

If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are visitors near operating equipment or vehicles?

Yes  No

If yes, what controls are in place? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are any of the following present during visitor hours?

- Tractors or farm machinery
- ATVs / UTVs
- Electric fencing
- Working dogs
- None of the above

## E. Structures, Facilities & Infrastructure

Structures used by visitors (check all that apply):

- Barns or sheds
- Tents / temporary structures
- Picnic or seating areas
- Washrooms / portable toilets
- Parking areas

Are any structures older, heritage, or non-standard?

Yes  No

If yes, describe condition and use: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## F. Food, Beverage & Tastings

Do you offer any of the following?

- Food samples
- Prepared meals
- Farm store / retail food
- Alcohol tastings
- None

If food or beverage is offered, briefly describe how it is managed:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## G. Safety Practices & Visitor Information

What steps do you currently use to inform visitors about safety or expectations?

- Website or social media messaging
- Signage on-site
- Verbal orientation or check-in
- Waivers or acknowledgements (where applicable)
- None yet

What supervision is provided during visitor activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## H. Incident Awareness & Preparedness

Have you experienced any incidents or near-misses related to visitors?

Yes  No

If yes, briefly describe (optional): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a basic plan for emergencies (injury, weather, fire)?

Yes  No  In progress

## I. Operator Reflection

Answering these questions helps prepare for insurance and planning conversations.

1. What feels most uncertain or concerning about hosting visitors?
2. What parts of your operation feel well-managed and confident?
3. What supports, advice, or information would help you move forward?

## J. Next Steps

- Use this information to speak with an insurance broker
- Adjust activities or site layout before proceeding
- Incorporate actions into the Agritourism Action Plan

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## 7.3 Setting Clear Visitor Expectations

Clear visitor expectations are one of the **most effective risk-management tools** available — and they cost very little to implement.

When guests understand where they are, what to expect, and how to behave, incidents decline and satisfaction improves.

### What “Clear Expectations” Look Like

- Visitors know they are entering a *working farm operation*
- Boundaries are visible and understandable
- Rules are framed positively and respectfully
- Information is shared *before arrival, upon arrival, and on-site*

### Tools for Setting Expectations

- Website and social media messaging
- Booking confirmations and waivers (where appropriate)
- Signage and wayfinding
- Verbal orientation at check-in or tour start

### Key Messages to Communicate

- “This is a working farm—conditions may be uneven or seasonal.”
- “Children must be supervised at all times.”
- “Please stay within designated visitor areas.”
- “Animals may behave unpredictably—follow staff guidance.”

## Why This Matters

Clear expectations:

- Reduce misunderstandings and risky behaviour
- Protect both visitors and farm operations
- Support insurance and liability conversations
- Improve the overall visitor experience

**Good agritourism design doesn’t remove the farm reality—it explains it.**

## Visitor Expectations Checklist

*Helping guests understand the farm environment before issues arise*

This checklist helps agritourism operators clearly communicate what visitors can expect when arriving on a working farm operation—and what is expected of them in return. Clear expectations support safety, reduce misunderstandings, and enhance the visitor experience.

### A. Setting the Context: “You Are Visiting a Working Farm”

- Visitors are clearly informed that this is a working farm
- Messaging sets expectations about **natural, uneven, or seasonal conditions**
- Visitors understand this is **not a theme park or urban attraction**
- Farm language is welcoming, respectful, and plain-spoken

### Where this is communicated (check all that apply):

- Website
- Social media
- Booking confirmation / ticketing
- On-site signage
- Verbal welcome / orientation

## B. Arrival & Orientation

- Visitors know where to park
- Visitors know **where to check in or start their visit**
- A brief orientation is provided (verbal or posted)
- Visitors know who to ask if they have questions

### Orientation method:

- Staff greeting
- Signage
- Printed handout
- None (self-guided)

## C. Where Visitors Can and Cannot Go

- Designated visitor areas are clearly identified
- Restricted or staff-only areas are clearly marked
- Physical or visual cues guide movement (fencing, paths, signs)
- Visitors understand why certain areas are off-limits

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## D. Children, Supervision & Group Behaviour

- Expectations for child supervision are clearly stated
- Group leaders or parents understand their responsibility
- Visitors know what behaviours are not permitted (climbing, running near animals, etc.)
- Messaging is framed positively and respectfully

### Typical visitors:

- Families with children
- School groups
- Adult-only groups
- Mixed

## E. Animals & Living Systems

- Visitors are informed if animals are present
- Rules for animal interaction are clearly stated
- Visitors understand animals may behave unpredictably
- Biosecurity or hygiene expectations are communicated (handwashing, no feeding, etc.)

### Animal interaction type:

- Observation only
- Supervised interaction
- No interaction

## F. Activities, Experiences & Participation

- Visitors understand which activities are **guided vs self-guided**
- Physical ability requirements are communicated (walking, standing, etc.)
- Seasonal or weather-related limitations are explained
- Time commitments are clearly stated

**Activities covered:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Activity	Seasonal or Year-Round	Approx. # of Visitors	Notes
Example: U-pick berries	Seasonal	500-1,000 / season	Families, children common
1.			
2.			
3.			

## G. Food, Beverage & Tastings (if applicable)

- Visitors understand what food or beverage is offered
- Allergens or dietary considerations are communicated
- Alcohol service rules are clearly stated (if applicable)
- Visitors know what is permitted (outside food, pets, etc.)

## H. Clothing, Footwear & Personal Preparedness

- Visitors are advised on appropriate footwear
- Weather-appropriate clothing is encouraged
- Messaging prepares visitors for outdoor conditions
- Visitors know what to bring (water, sun protection, etc.)

## I. Weather, Environment & Seasonal Conditions

- Weather-related risks are acknowledged
- Visitors understand activities may change due to conditions
- Shelter or shade options are communicated (if available)

- Smoke, dust, mud, insects, or farm smells are acknowledged where relevant

## J. Safety, Emergencies & Respectful Conduct

- Expectations for respectful behaviour are stated
- Zero-tolerance behaviours are clearly identified (if applicable)
- Emergency instructions are available if required

## K. How Expectations Are Reinforced

- Expectations are shared **before arrival**
- Expectations are reinforced **upon arrival**
- Expectations are visible **on-site**
- Staff/volunteers are briefed and consistent

## L. Operator Reflection

1. Where do visitors most often seem confused or surprised?
2. Which expectations are assumed but not clearly stated?
3. What one improvement would most reduce visitor risk or friction?



## About This Toolkit

Agritourism can open new opportunities for farms – but it also requires thoughtful planning, clear communication, and realistic pacing.

This toolkit was created to support **farm-led agritourism development** in Lac La Biche County, drawing on real on-farm experiences, workshops, and coaching. It offers practical tools to help operators think like hosts, assess readiness, design meaningful experiences, and build confidence over time.

Whether you are exploring agritourism for the first time or refining an existing offering, this toolkit is designed to help you move forward **with clarity, intention, and respect for the working farm.**

## A Final Thought

*We hope these tools support thoughtful decisions, confident hosting, and experiences that reflect the values of your farm and your community.*



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welcoming by nature.



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