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An Introduction to “Agritourism Clusters”

Megan L. Bruch
Marketing Specialist

Definition of “Agritourism Cluster”¹

- A network of related businesses in close geographic proximity with market identity and distinctive business culture who follows a common vision, strives for continuous innovation and works closely with local institutions and organizations
- May be an informal producer group who cooperates to promote and implement a single special event to a formal association or cooperative led by a board of directors for year-round efforts

Potential Purposes/Objectives^{1,2,3}

- Increase income at farm gate
- Increase appeal and draw to a region
- Increase exposure and awareness of offerings
- Access new markets
- Pool marketing resources to gain marketing efficiencies
- Maintain product/service quality standards
- Maintain environmental conservation standards
- Gain purchasing power for supplies/inputs
- Work to obtain grant funds or subsidies
- Network - share experiences and exchange ideas
- Lobby

Criteria for Success³

- Close proximity/access to major markets
- Critical mass of market-ready agritourism product
- Sufficient interest, commitment and time availability of local stakeholders

¹ Szymoniuk, Barbara and Stanislaw Walukiewicz. *Setting up rural clusters in Poland*. April 2004.

² Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. *Ag Tourism Cluster News*. Volume 1, Issue 1. Winter 2005.

³ Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. *Ag Tourism Cluster Development*. September 2004.