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A Preliminary Self-Assessment of Personal and Operation Attributes for Agritourism Enterprises

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If you are considering an agritourism enterprise this tool will be particularly useful in evaluation and planning for success. This tool will help individuals evaluate their potential to be an agri-entrepreneur. Several other areas will be covered including farm evaluation and pre-planning exercises. Although these worksheets will help you plan and evaluate your potential as an entrepreneur, they do not guarantee success. As with all businesses, there is a high level of risk.

The risk that is associated with opening a new business or enterprise varies. There are certain liability risks that require unique insurance. In addition there are risks associated with loss of invested capital and time. As with most risks, there are ways to look ahead and prevent unwanted outcomes. This is done by carefully planning for possible shortcomings and expecting the unexpected.

This tool is not intended to help determine potential financial shortcomings, but instead help you assess your ability as an entrepreneur and help guide you through an evaluation of your farm or business attributes to make it a potential successful agritourism enterprise. This document is segmented into six different categories: *Personal Evaluation, Land and Property Evaluation, Farm or Agribusiness Map Analysis, Idea Brainstorming and Development, Activity and Operation Compatibility and Defining Your Agritourism Enterprise.*

Personal Evaluation: “Are You Ready to be an Entrepreneur?”

One of the key components to the success of an agritourism enterprise is your ability to manage the business and work through the ups and downs. There are several personality traits that are common among entrepreneurs that have been identified. For example, entrepreneurs are risk takers, lifetime learners, independent, responsible, patient, efficient, resourceful, determined, goal-oriented, self-confident, leaders, creative, perseverant, objective, proactive, and communicators.

The following questions were taken from “Checklist for Going into Business,” a publication of the Small Business Administration in Washington D.C. These questions will help you evaluate your potential as an entrepreneur. Additional questions were added to help determine your ability to succeed at agritourism. For each of the following questions, circle the statement that best describes you.

1. Are you a self-starter?

- a. I do things on my own. Nobody has to tell me to get going.*
- b. If someone gets me started, I keep going all right.*
- c. Easy does it. I do not put myself out until I have to.*

2. How do you feel about other people?

- a. I like other people. I can get along with just about anyone.*
- b. I have plenty of friends. I do not need anyone else.*
- c. Most people irritate me.*

3. How do you feel about hosting a large number of children on your agritourism enterprise?

- a. I enjoy having children around and feel very comfortable controlling them.*
- b. I enjoy having children around, but I am unable to control them.*
- c. I do not like having children around and am unable to control them.*

4. How do you feel about opening your home, farm or agribusiness up to strangers?

- a. I enjoy meeting new people and am excited about sharing my enterprise with them.*
- b. I do not enjoy meeting new people, but I am willing to open my farm or agribusiness up to strangers.*
- c. I do not like to meet people and do not want them on my enterprise.*

5. Can you lead others?

- a. I can get most people to go along when I start something.*
- b. I can give orders if someone tells me what we should do.*
- c. I let someone else get things moving, and then I go along if I feel like it.*

6. Can you take responsibility?

- a. I like to take charge of things and see them through.*
- b. I will take over if I have to, but I would rather let someone else be in charge.*
- c. There is always some “eager beaver” around waiting to show how smart he or she is. I say let him or her.*

7. How good of an organizer are you?

- a. I like to have a plan before I start. I’m usually the one to get things lined up when the group wants to do something.*
- b. I do all right unless things get too confused. Then I quit.*
- c. You get all set and then something comes along and presents too many problems. So I just take things as they come.*

8. How good of a worker are you?

- a. I can keep going as long as I need to. I do not mind working hard for something I want.*
- b. I will work hard for a while, but when I have had enough, that is it.*
- c. I cannot see that hard work will get you anywhere.*

9. Can you make a decision comfortably?

- a. I can make up my mind in a hurry if I have time to. It usually turns out okay, too.*
- b. I can make up my mind if I have plenty of time. If I have to make decisions quickly, I think later that it should have been decided another way.*
- c. I do not like to be the one who has to decide things.*

10. Can people trust what you say?

- a. You bet they can. I do not say things I do not mean.*
- b. I try to be on the level most of the time, but sometimes I say what is easiest.*
- c. Why bother if the other fellow does not know the differences?*

11. Can you stick with it?

- a. If I make up my mind to do something, I do not let anything stop me.*
- b. I usually finish what I start – if it goes well.*
- c. If things do not go right from the start, I quit. Why beat your brains out?*

12. How good is your health?

- a. I never run down.*
- b. I have enough energy for most things I want to do.*
- c. I run out of energy sooner than most of my friends.*

Once you have completed all twelve of the above question you will need to tally up all of the responses for each question. Of the twelve questions you have answered, how many responses are there for each of the following letters:

Number of Responses

A ___

B ___

C ___

If most responses you circled are beside the letter “a,” your personality is very similar to individuals that have succeeded as entrepreneurs. If most of your responses are to the letter “b,” you are likely to have more trouble than you can handle by yourself. You might want to find a partner or hire someone who is strong in the areas in which you are weak. If many of the response you circled are beside the letter “c” you should reconsider your entrepreneurial project.

Source: “Checklist for Going into Business,” Small Marketers Aids #71 (Washington, D.C.; Small Business Administration, 1977 Revision, pp. 4-5.

Land and Property Evaluation

As with all businesses and tourism activities, the natural environment and the experience or product that is offered to the customer is at the heart of success. Therefore, it is extremely important to analyze all of your property assets and characteristics to maximize your potential for success. This information sheet will assist you in this analysis and help you develop an agritourism enterprise that is unique and marketable to consumers.

When answering the questions, remember that something you believe is ordinary; another person could find it very unique and interesting. These questions will also help you identify limitations of your existing enterprise. *(Note: Think very broadly about your enterprise, both the physical and non-tangible assets, such as the age of the farm or agribusiness.)*

Size and Scope

How much land do I own or have access to? *List the acreage amount, location and proximity. List property that is deeded, leased, private, state-owned and federally-owned.*

Current Land Use

How do I currently use the land described in the previous section? *You should consider all activities the property is being used for. This would include the raising of livestock; growing fruit, vegetables and flowers; fee or recreational hunting and fishing; recreational hiking, ATV use; recreational camping, or family or church retreats. Be very specific and list all activities that currently take place on the property.*

Idea Brainstorming and Development

After considering the limits and opportunities that are present for your operation, it is beneficial to brainstorm and list all possible ideas and activities that you have heard about and believe are interesting. To help guide you through this activity, a number of agritourism activities and operations have been listed. Read through the list and mark the activities that will best fit the limits and strengths of you and your family and the land or business.

- Bed and Breakfast
- Bird Watching & Wildlife Viewing
- Boating & Canoeing
- Canoeing and Kayaking
- Corn Maize
- Cross-country Skiing
- Dove Hunting
- Family Reunions
- Farm or Ranch Work Experience
- Fee-Fishing
- Floral Arrangements
- Fly Fishing and Tying Clinics
- Game Preserve and Guided Hunts
- Gathering mushrooms, wild berries...
- Golfing
- Guided Crop Tours
- Habitat Improvement Projects
- Hay Rides / Sleigh Rides
- Hiking Trails
- Horseback riding
- Hunting Dog Training & Competition
- Laser Tagging
- Natural photography
- Off-road vehicle driving
- On-Farm Retailing
- Bicycle Racing and Rentals
- Bird Watching & Other Wildlife Viewing
- Camping / Picnicking
- Children's Camp (Summer or Winter)
- Corporate picnics
- Deer Hunts and Deer Camps
- Educational or Technical Tours
- Farm Fishing – Pond and Stream
- Self-Guided Driving Tours
- Fee-Hunting
- Flower Shows or Festivals
- Food Festivals
- Gardens (flowers, greenery, herbs...)
- Go-carting
- Goose and Duck Hunting
- Guiding and Outfitting
- Harvest Festivals
- Hiking / Cave Exploring
- Historical Museums and Displays
- Horseback Riding
- Junior Hunts
- Mountain Biking
- Off-Road Motorcycling
- On-Farm Camping
- Pack Trips

- Paint balling
- Pheasant Preserves
- Picnicking
- Roadside Stands & Markets
- Rock Climbing and rappelling
- School Tours & Educational Activities
- Shooting Range Moving-target skeet
- Snowmobiling
- Tee Pee Building
- Trap & Skeet Shooting
- Tubing on rivers, ponds, and lake
- U-Pick Operations
- Wilderness Experiences
- Petting Zoo
- Photography / Painting
- Ranch Skills (horseshoeing, leatherwork...)
- Rock Climbing
- Rodeo
- Shooting Range Firearm
- Small Game Hunting
- Swimming
- Tobogganing and sledding
- Tubing & Rafting
- Turkey hunting
- Wagon Trains

At this point it is beneficial to further brainstorm and come up with activities that are unique to your interests and land or business characteristics. With this in mind think of any other activities that you are interested in or would like to consider as part of you agritourism enterprise and list them here.

Activity and Operation Compatibility

With the responses to the previous section in mind, list any activity that your enterprise could offer as an agritourism venture. List all potential or additional activities that would fit into your existing enterprise. *(Again, it would be beneficial to include all family members or partners involved in the potential venture or expansion when working through the activity analysis.)*

Activity:

Description:

Activity:

Description:

Activity:

Description:

Activity:

Description:

Activity:

Description:

Activity:

Description:

