



Marketing for the Agritourism Enterprise: Tour Report for the Milan No-Till Field Day¹

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Marketing is very important to the potential success for agritourism enterprises. In a 2003 survey of 210 Tennessee agritourism operators, advertising, marketing and promotions were identified most often as the most important factor of success.

A complete marketing plan contains seven main elements. These elements include market research and analysis, marketing and financial objectives/goals, marketing strategies, marketing mix/tactics, financial analysis and marketing budget, monitoring and evaluating market response and marketing plan check list. Although all of these elements are important, they can be boiled down to three general goals of marketing for the agritourism enterprise. These goals are to: 1) Attract customers to the enterprise, 2) Entice customers to spend money at the enterprise and 3) Create a desire in customers to return again and again to the enterprise.

Agritourism enterprises offer a variety of attractions. Attractions include everything from corn mazes and pumpkin patches to on-farm vacations and wineries. This wide variety of activities also targets a variety of target markets. Target markets for agritourism enterprises may include interstate travelers, local or vacationing families, traveling retirees, school, birthday, church or business groups, teenagers and many more. Clearly identifying a target market allows an enterprise to focus its marketing efforts on the needs and desires of this group.

A single marketing plan does not exist that will be effective for every enterprise and every target market. A marketing plan must be developed for each particular situation. It is helpful, however, to consider some examples from existing enterprises. Some methods currently used to attract customers to agritourism enterprises include on-farm demonstrations, special events such as a seasonal kick-off event, coupons or discounts and advertising. Enterprises entice customers to spend additional dollars at the enterprise by offering several attraction options or packages of attractions, offering farm and related products for sale, creating attractive displays and offering refreshments for sale. Enterprises have created a desire in customers to return again by making a good first impression, keeping facilities clean, training personnel to be courteous and knowledgeable, creating an expected farm ambiance, thinking of visitor needs and comfort, offering unique or new products, providing an enjoyable and memorable experience, and creating traditions.

Many strategies exist to attract customers to the enterprise, entice customers to spend their money at the enterprise and create a desire in customers to return again and again to the enterprise. It is most important to remember to develop marketing strategies based on the specific target market of an enterprise.

¹ Accompanying presentation is posted online at <http://cpa.utk.edu/pptpresentations/agri-tourism/AgriTEnterprise-milan.pdf>.