

# Choosing to share your farm

FARMER AND COMMUNITY APPROACHES TO AGRITOURISM



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## Agritourism Research in the U.S.

- Agritourism is growing
- Relatively small # of farms involved compared to Europe
- Research in U.S. is relatively new
- Sources of data
  - US Census of agriculture
  - State Level Surveys



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## U.S. Census Data on Agritourism



- Total Farms
  - 28,016 in 2002
  - 33,161 in 2012
- Revenue
  - \$202M in 2002
  - \$567M in 2007
  - \$704M in 2012



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## Potential Benefits of Agritourism

### FROM RESEARCH

- Additional Revenue for family farms
  - Diversification
  - Specialty marketing
- Keeping land in agriculture
- More participation in conservation



Deep Rooted Greenhouses, Vernon County, WI

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## Defining Agritourism

- Most definitions in research rely on
- "working farm"
  - Income from agritourism

Misses the variety of agritourism enterprises

For this study

- Activities that bring customers/visitors to farms
- Farming or rural landscape is the attraction



Country Bumping Farm Market, Sauk County, WI

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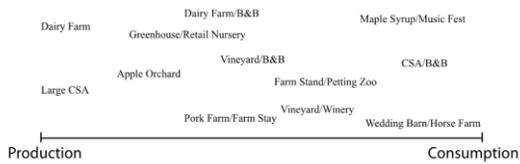
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## How do we use rural spaces?




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## Methods

### GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS

- Hotspot analysis
- Regression analysis

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

- Case Studies
- Interviews with farmers, key stakeholders
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - 37 interviews total
- Observation
  - in communities
  - agritourism events

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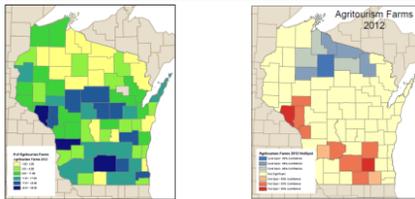
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## Wisconsin Agritourism Farms



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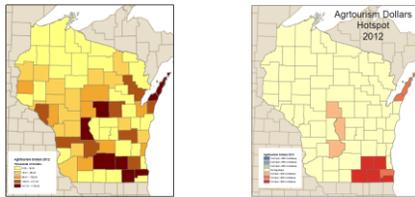
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## Wisconsin \$\$ per Farm from Agritourism



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## Case Study Communities

- Green County
- Vernon County
- Sauk County

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## What factors help communities create successful agritourism clusters?

### REGRESSION ANALYSIS

- Landscape characteristics
  - Water
- Access to consumers
  - Proximity to urban centers (negative)
  - Other tourism development
- Farm Characteristics
  - # of farms direct marketing
  - # of farms experiencing losses

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS/OBSERVATION

- Landscape characteristics
  - Hills
  - Lack of development pressure
- Access to consumers
  - Highways-Busy Roads
- Farm Characteristics
  - % of farmland inappropriate for cultivation
- Community Support
  - Active groups/organizations in the community
  - Supportive local regulation/zoning

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## Farmer motivations & orientations

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## Production oriented farms & agritourism

- Educating the public
- Managing public perception
- Promoting industry
- Community traditions
- Contested values
  - Farm consolidation




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## Transitioning Away from Production

- Staying on the farm
- Preserving the land
- Honoring farming heritage

*"So that was how the weddings got started. It was a way to make money to fix up the buildings. This is a beautiful old farm, keeping it up. This gorgeous old four square home that they don't have anymore. It's not about the dollars."*




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## Balancing Production & Consumption

- Challenges
  - Learning new skills
  - New types of work
  - Customer needs vs. production work
  - Learning local & state regulations



Soils Sisters Farm Tour, Green County 2015




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## Benefits for farmers

### Benefits

- Income for farm succession
- Family member participation
- Revenue for new farmers

*"Eventually the kids wanted to join us. They made this their mission. So now the business supports us and supports itself, my husband was able to quit working, but how is it going to support two more people?"*

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## Selling Products or Selling Farm Experiences?

Opening private farm spaces

Balancing competing demands

Will visitors understand how to treat the land?

### CSAs

- Marketing or "community building"
- Frustration w/time away from farming

*"Some people want to tag along and do chores. And so, obviously, it doesn't help me to have people help me with chores, it just slows me down. It is tough. I struggle with the boundaries. I got into the bed and breakfast because I like hosting people and I want to share my farm."*

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## Embracing customer experiences



Hawk's Mill Winery, Green County

*"When I first came up with the idea, I told my wife, 'You know what? We don't even have to make great wine. As much as I would like to, but being that I had no background in making wine. If we just make OK wine, people are still going to come for the view.' The view is the draw, it really is. People just love it."*

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## Remaking Farm Spaces for Tourism

New buildings/facilities

Permitting

Potential conflicts with neighbors

Reducing production activities

- Visitor safety

- Liability

*"The weekend we opened we had live music, one guy with an acoustic guitar and a microphone, Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 3, easy going James Taylor type music. The following Monday our neighbor, who was all excited about the winery last fall, came up here and just went off. "You are having concerts up here and we are hearing parking lot noises and everything!" So we cancelled all our concerts. We keep getting requests to do it but I'm trying to keep the peace."*

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## Challenges & Opportunities for Communities

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## Potential Benefits

- Additional tourism revenue
- Support for farmers
- Preservation of heritage
- Jobs
- Economic development while preserving "rural character"



Hops growing, Minhaus Brewery, Monroe WI

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## Potential Challenges

- Tourism = Touristy
- Traffic
- Noise
- Outsiders with different values
- Planning-regulating new businesses
  - What activities/business types should be encouraged?
- Cooperation/buy-in



Downtown Broadhead, Green County, WI




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## Supporting Agritourism




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## Opportunities

- Strong food & heritage tourism
- Strong organic farming community
- Awareness/interest in "local foods"
- Large Amish community
- Strong place-based identity
- Long history of tourism development
- Strong Arts community



Cheese shop, New Glarus, WI




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## Opportunities –Events & Education

- Vernon County
  - Bike the Barns Driftless
  - Norskedalen
  - Driftless Folk School
- Green County
  - Soil Sisters Weekend
  - Brodhead Farm Tour Day
- Sauk County
  - Fermentation Fest & Farm ArtTour



Bike the Barns Driftless, 2015

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## Challenges

- Strong food/heritage tourism
- Incorporating heritage tourism
- Incorporating longtime residents
- Development pressure
- Distance from large populations
- Funding



Rural housing development, Green County

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## Suggestions for Facilitating Agritourism Development

### LOCAL

- Proactive Local Planning/Zoning
- Promote networking - farmer to farmer
- Promote cooperation between tourist/retail businesses on events

### STATE

- Developing reference materials for farmers on permitting/regulations
- Active industry groups for networking, advocacy
- State Regulatory Environment
  - Cottage Food Laws

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## What we still need to know?

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How fast is agritourism growing?

What are the causes of geographic variability?

How can potential development conflicts be reduced?

How can potential benefits be maximized?



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## Questions?

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