Chapter 17
Agritourism and Quality-of-Life for Farmers

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Abstract Agritourism is growing in popularity throughout the United States of America, Europe, and many other countries around the world. By blending tourism with agriculture, agritourism enterprises allow farmers to diversify core operations and keep farmland in production while educating visitors, preserving scenic vistas, and maintaining farming traditions. However, agritourism comes with challenges and is not for every farm. It requires different skills than traditional farming operations, and farmers interested in agritourism often have difficulty finding support for technical assistance and networking opportunities to ensure best practices.

This case study examines the impacts of agritourism on the quality-of-life (QOL) of farmers in the Northeastern region of the U.S. Survey findings indicate that agritourism can have both positive and negative impacts on QOL; however the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts for many farmers. Specifically, the personal satisfaction gains are typically greater than concerns about extra time required for agritourism enterprises. These findings have important implications for helping farmers and rural communities develop agritourism in ways that emphasize positive impacts and minimize potential negative effects. Methods and findings from this case study can be readily transferred to other locations to examine quality-of-life impacts of agritourism on farmers in a variety of settings around the world.

Keywords Agritourism · Direct sales · Food tourism · Quality-of-life

17.1 Introduction

As the economic and social fabric of rural communities has undergone changes in the past century, many communities have experienced a transition from economic dependence on natural resource extraction (e.g., agriculture, timber) to service-based economies, particularly tourism. Population shifts transforming rural areas

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into suburban sprawl have made it increasingly difficult for some small and mid-size farms to remain viable. In response, entrepreneurial farmers and ranchers have merged farming, ranching, and tourism into the alternative agricultural enterprise known as agritourism (Chase and Grubinger 2014). The growing interest in local food systems has provided new economic opportunities for small and medium-sized farms throughout the country (Kloppenburg et al. 2000).

Agritourism can be defined as “a commercial enterprise on a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment, education, and/or active involvement of the visitor, generating supplemental income for the farm or ranch (Chase 2008).” It has also been defined as: “A farm combining primary elements and characteristics of agriculture and tourism and providing members of the general public a place to purchase farm products and/or enjoy a recreational, entertaining or educational experience (Jensen et al. 2013).”

In many parts of the world, production of specific types of food and drink are the crux of agritourism in that region. In the European Union, protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI), and traditional specialties guaranteed (TSG) require that the names and labels of certain foods and drinks can only be used when they are produced in a specific region, sometimes following specific protocols. Well-known examples include Champagne and Cognac in France and Asiago, Gorgonzola, and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese in Italy.

Widespread use of the term agritourism around the world may have its origin in the Italian agriturismo law passed in 1985, which encourages overnight farms stays as a way for Italian farmers to diversify their incomes so they can maintain farming practices, landscapes, and barns and other agricultural buildings. Agriturismo has become increasing popular in Tuscany, Italy and many other places around the globe.

Agritourism can take many forms and includes many kinds of activities, such as overnight farm stays, hay rides, corn mazes, and use of farm land for bird watching, bike riding, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, snowmobiling and other recreational activities. Some farms may charge for these activities or use them as tools to promote retail sales. Agritourism also includes educational programs for the public, school children, seniors, and all types of visitors, often involving exhibits, demonstrations, and workshops around specific topics and skills. On-farm classes teach visitors how to milk cows, make cheese, prune raspberry bushes, and bake apple pies, for example.

On-farm retail sales offer a unique ‘shopping experience’ that helps farms compete with traditional retail stores. The experience of visiting the farm, seeing its environs and talking with the farmers and their employees while shopping can be of value by itself; in many cases that value to the consumer is further enhanced by educational activities on the farm. These can include observing or petting animals, touring the farm or its facilities, and picking your own produce. Pick-your-own, or U-pick enterprises exemplify the overlap between marketing of farm products and marketing a farm experience. Some customers may be primarily motivated by the opportunity to purchase super-fresh fruit, while others are more attracted to the chance to spend time outdoors in a farm field (Fig. 17.1).

Fig. 17.1 Pick-your-own strawberries. (Photo by Vern Grubinger)

Agritourism on any given farm often goes beyond food; it may also be about cultural heritage, family entertainment and enjoyment of natural resources. In other words, it's a multi-faceted experience that's connected to, and takes place on, a farm. During that experience, farm visitors may learn basic information about food production. They also take in the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of a farm, and along the way they may develop an appreciation for the hard work involved in producing food.

Agritourism may or may not be closely connected to the marketing of agricultural products. Farms that produce wholesale commodity products, like fluid milk, may offer tours, accommodations or recreation, but they usually don't, or can't, sell their primary product directly to their visitors. When schoolchildren take a field trip to a farm to learn how fruits and vegetables are grown, or how cows are milked, the focus is education, not marketing. Offering a tangible product may be part of the experience, perhaps an apple, a carrot or some cheese. The goal of this kind of visit is to help children understand where food comes from.

For other farms, the visitor experience *is* the marketing strategy for their products. Pick-your-own apple orchards do more than just sell fruit; they sell an experience that goes with it. The experience may include a beautiful setting for a family excursion, an apple cider making demonstration, samples of hot cider, or the chance to see the farm's horses or tractors at work.

In some cases, agritourism may not involve the farm product but there may still be indirect market benefits to the farmer. For example, after touring a vineyard, some visitors will purchase a bottle of wine, but others may not. However, their

experience may lead them to buy wine from that vineyard at a later date. Visitors to a dairy farm, who can't purchase the milk directly, might be more inclined to buy locally-produced cheese that was made using that farm's milk.

Agritourism includes a range of experiences, some are directly connected to the marketing of a farm's product and some are not. In essence, they provide authentic experiences related to agriculture that enhance marketing of farm products, educate the public about farming, and improve public support for agriculture. But agritourism comes with challenges and farms must carefully weigh the benefits with the costs to understand how agritourism will impact their quality-of-life (QOL) (Chase and Kuehn 2010).

Quality-of-life is a central concern for individuals and communities (Chase et al. 2010), including farmers making decisions about agritourism. However, QOL is a particularly difficult concept to measure as it has multiple definitions and meanings, and can be examined at several scales ranging from an individual to a community to a country (Chase et al. 2012a, b). Costanza et al. (2007) describe QOL as "a multi-scale, multi-dimensional concept that contains interacting objective and subjective elements." To measure QOL, indicators are used that can be divided into subjective and objective categories. Subjective indicators reflect an individual's perceptions of satisfaction in several life domains including work life, family life, social life, and leisure life. Objective indicators include external evaluations of income levels, family life, social life, and health (Sirgy et al. 2000).

The objective of this chapter is to examine quality-of-life of farmers with agritourism as a component of farm viability. As such, the focus is on subjective quality-of-life indicators that reflect an individual's perceptions of satisfaction in work and leisure. This chapter begins with a brief history of agritourism in the United States, followed by a discussion of QOL and the benefits and challenges of agritourism. Background is presented on the case study, a University of Vermont Extension program to support agritourism in the northeastern region of the United States of America. Next, methods and results focused on QOL indicators are shared. Discussion and implication assess the contributions of the QOL indicators and the need for further research and outreach to improve our understanding of, and ability to, measure quality-of-life. The chapter concludes with lessons learned regarding agritourism and quality-of-life.

17.2 History of Agritourism in the United States

Although the term agritourism is relatively new, the concept of travel to celebrate and learn about agriculture has existed for centuries. Native American tribes in what is now the United States traveled long distances to participate in planting and harvesting feasts and ceremonies. Maple syrup production in the late winter was a time of reunion and renewal for tribes such as the Ojibwe and Abenaki. Family groups, reunited with their bands after the winter, would gather for the ritualized work of collecting sap and boiling it into maple syrup. European settlers in rural America

Fig. 17.2 Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks. (Photo by Lisa Chase)

learned about maple syrup from Native Americans and created their own cultural traditions and sugaring celebrations. Today, sugarmakers attract visitors with on-farm breakfasts and accommodations, sugarhouse tours and direct sales of maple syrup, maple candy, and other maple products (Fig. 17.2). This combination of activities is a major source of farm income in areas where sugar maples are abundant.

Throughout the nineteenth century, many large farmhouses also served as country inns. Immigrants traveling westward would spend their nights at these farms along their route, paying or working for room and board. In the late 1800s, as the United States became increasingly urbanized, families living in cities would visit farms or ranches for a few weeks or months in the summer to escape the heat and hectic pace of city life, and learn about farming and rural life during their stay. Some urban families would visit the same farm or ranch year after year, developing close relationships as their children grew up together during these annual visits.

A typical farm stay in the Northeast in the late 1800s is described by the Adams Farm in Wilmington, Vermont: "Walter and Ada Adams opened the Adams Farm homestead to the public during the late 1890s, for summer guests to get away and beat the heat of the city. Families would bring their children and spend a week or two enjoying Vermont's beauty, swimming in the Deerfield River and Lake Raponda, gathering eggs, playing with lambs, and eating fresh delicious home baked foods from the farm kitchen (Adams Family Farm n.d.)."

The Adams family continued to provide summer farm stays into the next century and they also opened up their farmhouse to winter visitors who traveled to Vermont.

Many came for the sport of skiing starting in the 1950s. The Adams farm took a brief break from agritourism in 1969 when they expanded their dairy herd and shifted their primary focus to dairying. A decade later, milk prices fell and the Adams family invited guests back onto the farm, this time for winter sleigh rides. Nearby ski areas provided the Adams Farm with a steady stream of visitors who bought maple syrup produced on the farm. Run by the fifth generation of the Adams family today, the farm continues to offer horse-drawn sleigh rides and direct sales of maple syrup. For more than a century, agritourism in a variety of forms has provided supplemental income for the Adams family, helping them keep their land in farming even when commodity prices dropped and other farming ventures became unprofitable.

While farm stays were becoming popular in the Northeast in the late 1800s, dude ranches in the American West were beginning to attract wealthy Easterners and Europeans on hunting trips and sightseeing excursions. To supplement their income, Western ranchers began taking in paying guests or 'dudes' who would share their homes and learn about the ranching lifestyle, horseback riding, herding cattle, hunting, and fishing. Famous dudes such as Theodore Roosevelt helped popularized dude ranches in the early 1900s and railroads made travel to dude ranches feasible. Tourists arrived on trains with their steamer trunks and often stayed for the entire summer, as dude ranches became the main tourist attraction in the Rocky Mountain area during the 1920s and 1930s.

Today, farm and ranch stays continue to be a major component of agritourism in rural America. To improve farm stay product development and marketing, farms and ranches in the United States often look to Asia and Europe, especially Italy, Greece, France, and Ireland. Farmstays dominate the agritourism market in many European countries where agricultural and culinary tourism complement each other. Culinary tourism, the pursuit of unique and memorable dining experiences often while traveling, emphasizes fresh foods creatively prepared (World Food Travel Association n.d.) and is a hot trend in tourism throughout the world. Projected growth in culinary travel brings external resources into local food systems, as farmers earn revenues by selling experiences and products to people from 'away'. For example, California's success in attracting tourists to wine tastings at vineyards by marketing the Napa Valley Wine Trail has been extended to other specialty food products, including the Wisconsin Cheese Tour and the Oregon Beer Trail.

Food festivals are another part of culinary agritourism, where crops and foods with special significance to an area are celebrated and promoted. Some of these festivals have been around for a long time while many are relative newcomers. The Apple Blossom Festival was started by the first apple shipper in Wenatchee, Washington, in 1919. The Florida Strawberry Festival was established in 1930 in Plant City, Florida, where 10,000 acres of the fruit are grown nearby. In 1967 the Morton Pumpkin Festival began in the Illinois town where most of the world's canning pumpkins are processed. In California, the Gilroy Garlic Festival started in

1979 and the Stockton Asparagus Festival in 1986. The Chatsworth, New Jersey, Cranberry Festival began in 1983 to celebrate one of the state's most valuable fruit crops. West Stockbridge, Massachusetts, kicked off its Zucchini Festival in 2003. While some of these festivals attract tens of thousands of people, there are hundreds if not thousands of small town events celebrating crops and foods in their own unique ways.

Some food celebrations are less festival and more feast. They may be more exclusive, perhaps requiring reservations and fetching a high price. For example, 'feasts in the field' are dinners that take place in farmers' fields or barns. Some are gourmet affairs, where accomplished chefs create multiple course meals made with locally-sourced products and served with local wines. Others may be family-style meals made with the farm's products, perhaps ground beef and sweet corn. From festivals to feasts and everything in between, recent studies of consumers and tourists indicate that demand is increasing for agricultural products and experiences, especially those focused on local foods and authentic experiences (Mandala Research 2013).

17.3 Quality-of-Life and the Benefits and Challenges of Agritourism

The blending of agriculture, marketing, and tourism poses both challenges and opportunities. The benefits and costs of agritourism businesses are important to assess when considering new enterprises (Table 17.1). For example, farmers taking on more interactions with the public have to deal with interruptions in daily operations and public scrutiny of farming practices. On-farm marketing and agritourism require different skills than other aspects of farming. These are areas in which many farmers do not have training. They also require different or expanded uses of land on farms such as parking areas, housing, and trails. It may require additional signage and restrooms. An agritourism enterprise that is not a farm's main marketing method may be viewed as an additional business, on top of the farming business. It can require additional investment, human capital, and cash flow to generate additional returns.

Agritourism is important to quality-of-life for economic and cultural reasons, promoting experiential education, preserving traditional land use, and contributing to a rural sense of place. In many cases, agritourism allows farmers to diversify their core operations and keep farmland in production while preserving scenic vistas and maintaining farming traditions. Although agritourism is growing rapidly in the northeast region of the U.S., the industry remains underdeveloped in many states, lacking technical assistance support, infrastructure, and networking opportunities to ensure best practices (Kuehn and Hilchey 2001).

Table 17.1 Benefits and costs of an agritourism business

Benefits	Costs
Provides potential additional income	Provides a low financial return, at least at first
Creates a physical operation that appreciates in value	Interferes with farming or ranching operations
Efficiently uses underutilized facilities, equipment, land, and talents	Hard work! Adds workload to family members
Allows you to be your own boss	Demands your full and constant attention, interfering with family time and activities
Allows you to work your own hours	Steals your privacy people are always around.
Allows you to express yourself creatively	Requires you always to be “on”-upbeat, available, and attentive
Allows you to live your own creation	Involves risk and liability.
Is personally rewarding	Can create staffing problems
Generates new opportunities for spouse and children	Generates excessive paperwork
Maintains family attention and interest on the farm or ranch	
Provides the opportunity to meet people – visitors as well as agritourism and nature tourism professionals	
Provides the chance to play a significant role in community activities	
Provides the chance to educate people about rural living, nature, and the agriculture industry, which in turn can lead to improved local policies	
Provides the chance to learn about outside perspectives, which in turn can lead to better educated rural residents and improved local policies	
Promotes the agriculture industry	
Models sustainable local industries	

17.4 Case Study: Impacts of Agritourism on the Quality-of-Life of Farmers in the Northeastern U.S.

To address these concerns about agritourism and help farmers assess the benefits and challenges of developing agritourism enterprises on their farms, Extension educators and farmers in Northeastern states collaboratively developed a program of agritourism training modules consisting of workshops and follow-up technical support. With funding from a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant and additional resources, 19 workshops were held in 10 states (Maine, Maryland, Delaware, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, West Virginia, and Rhode Island) between January 2009 and March 2010. Evaluations were conducted on-site immediately following the workshops to assess short-term outcomes.

An internet survey was conducted 1 year later to assess medium- and long-term outcomes. Both the on-site and internet evaluations included questions about improvements in farm viability, which was defined as increases in profitability and/or increases in quality-of-life indicators including personal time and personal satisfaction.

17.4.1 Methods

To measure changes in QOL, an index of indicators was needed for the internet survey. Researchers typically use indicators as a way to quantify quality-of-life concerns and considerations, rather than directly attempting to measure these abstract concepts (Wong 2006). A literature review on quality-of-life revealed extensive works examining both subjective and objective aspects of quality-of-life, ranging from individual to county to national data (Sirgy et al. 2000). However, indicators measuring changes in quality-of-life as a result of an intervention (e.g., an Extension program) were not found through the extensive literature review. For the purpose of measuring impacts of a one-time Extension program on quality-of-life, an index of indicators with straightforward questions is needed. Our study addresses this need by developing such an index and applying it to an Extension program on agritourism in the Northeast.

A total number of 763 farmers, service providers, and others participated in the 19 workshops. A questionnaire was handed out at the end of each workshop (conducted between January 2009 and March 2010) to collect baseline data on farm operations, and to assess the knowledge gained from the workshop and the likelihood of adopting new practices. All participants had the opportunity to participate in the survey, and 143 completed questionnaires were received from farm operators, 129 of which included contact information for farmers willing to complete an online follow-up survey, which was administered in January 2010. Five follow-up e-mail reminders were sent to the 129 farmer every 2 weeks after the initial mailing, following recommendations from the Tailored Design Method (Dillman 2007). Of the 129 surveys distributed to farmer participants at the workshops, 62 responded for a response rate of 48%. Non-respondents were then contacted via phone, which boosted the sample to 98 respondents for the follow-up survey.

The on-line survey included questions on demographics (gender, year of birth, number of people in household, years of education); involvement of household members in the business; perceived impact of the farmer's business on local networking and the community; and impact of the economy, weather, workshop, and family life on the business. Farmers were asked to describe any business income and expenses during the previous 12 months that resulted from the workshop or technical assistance received. Questions regarding how the respondent's business has impacted the local community and business networking used a five-point scale ranging from highly negative impact to highly positive impact. An identical scale was used to identify the impact of the economy, weather, workshop, and changes in

family life on the business during the previous year. Respondents were asked to identify changes in seven variables related to personal time and personal satisfaction over the past year using a five-point scale ranging from greatly decreased to greatly increased. To measure quality-of-life, a new set of indicators was developed based on related literature and our direct experience working with numerous agritourism stakeholders including farmers, consumers, visitors, community members, and Extension educators.

A principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used to identify factor composition for “changes in personal time” and “changes in personal satisfaction.” The mean value for each factor was obtained by averaging the variables included in each factor (averaging was used to maintain the five-point scale and enable interpretation of results). Cronbach’s alpha was used to identify the reliability of the two factors; an alpha of 0.7 or higher indicates adequate internal consistency of factors (Hair et al. 1998).

17.4.2 Results

17.4.2.1 Response and Demographics

Of the 98 farms responding to both the on-line and phone surveys, 76 reported that they had assessed their business, implemented improvements, and/or created or changed a business plan.

Most of the survey respondents owned a farmstand (32% of respondents), u-pick operation (29%), farm-stay bed and breakfast (14%), greenhouse/plant nursery (11%), Christmas tree farm (11%), or operated farm tours (10%). Smaller percentages (less than 8%) of respondents owned a winery, retail store, or corn maze; functioned as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); or sold maple products. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were female, 79% were married, and the average age was 55. The average respondent had 16 years of education, with 69% having 4 years or more of college education. The average household size of respondents was 2.5 people, ranging from one to six household members. Respondents indicated that household members were moderately involved in their agritourism business (i.e., most household members sometimes assisted with farm operations).

17.4.2.2 Impact Variables

Results indicated that 64% of farms had implemented agritourism improvements or new ventures. Examples included involvement in local schools, social media marketing, maple tours for the off-season, pairing and tasting events, and educational nature trails. Farm owners were asked how certain external elements (e.g., the economy, the workshop) impacted their business, and how their business impacted others (e.g., networking opportunities among local businesses). The economy and the

Table 17.2 Means for independent variables related to impacts on and from respondents' businesses

Question type	Variable	n	Mean	Standard error
Impact of variable on business[a]	The economy	61	−0.61	0.118
	The weather	62	−0.61	0.109
	The workshop	61	0.66	0.061
	Changes in family life	62	0.21	0.083
Impact of business on variable[a]	Networking opportunities among local businesses	52	0.73	0.073
	Marketing and packaging opportunities among local businesses	52	0.44	0.080
	The local economy	52	0.52	0.101
	The number of jobs available in your community	52	0.33	0.094
	Your neighbors	49	0.59	0.105
	Other people in your community or area	51	0.84	0.076

[a]The following scale was used for these variables: −2 = highly negative impact, −1 = negative impact, 0 = no impact, 1 = positive impact, 2 = highly positive impact

weather were identified as having a negative impact on the farm business during the previous year, both having a mean value of −0.61 (Table 17.2). In contrast, the workshop was identified as having a positive impact on the farm business (mean = 0.66); changes in family life had a slightly positive impact (0.21). Respondents indicated that their business had a positive impact on networking opportunities, marketing, the economy, job availability, and residents.

17.4.2.3 Time and Satisfaction Factors

QOL indicators included a series of questions about personal time and satisfaction (Table 17.3). Over two-thirds of respondents reported increased enjoyment from sharing farm life and/or heritage with visitors and 71% reported increased enjoyment from meeting new people through their business. Over half reported increased personal satisfaction from their business, while 45% reported no change and 2% reported a decrease. However, the increases in QOL indicators were tempered by 29% reporting a decrease in the amount of free time they have and only 9% reporting an increase in their free time after diversifying to include or expand agritourism on their farm. The majority of respondents (62%) reported no change in free time. Regarding the amount of time respondents spent with family during both work and free time, 72% reported no change, 16% reported an increase and 12% reported a decrease.

Principal components factor analysis revealed two factors: "changes in personal time" and "changes in personal satisfaction" (Table 17.3). Changes in personal time included the variables of "changes in the amount of time I spend with my family (during both work and freetime)" and "changes in the amount of free time I have."

Table 17.3 Factor and variable means related to personal time and personal satisfaction

Factor	Variable	n	Variable mean	Factor mean	Cronbach's alpha
Changes in personal time[a]	Changes in the amount of time I spend with my family (during both work and free time)	42	0.07	−0.08	0.722
	Changes in the amount of free time I have	42	−0.24		
Changes in personal satisfaction[a]	Changes in the amount of personal satisfaction I receive from my business	41	0.59	0.64	0.876
	Changes in my enjoyment in sharing farm life and/or heritage with visitors	41	0.80		
	Changes in my satisfaction with preserving the agricultural landscapes of my farm	41	0.88		
	Changes in the wages I receive from my business	41	0.05		
	Changes in my enjoyment with meeting new people through my business	41	0.90		

[a]Based on the following scale: −2 = greatly decreased, −1 = decreased, 0 = no change, 1 = increased, 2 = greatly increased

The factor mean was −0.08, a neutral value indicating that the average respondent had neither increases nor decreases in their amount of family time or free time. The 29% reporting a decrease in the amount of free time was offset by those reporting increases or no change in the amount of free time combined with those reporting no change or increases in the amount of time spent with family during both work and free time. The reliability of this factor was moderately high at alpha = 0.722.

The "changes in personal satisfaction" factor included the variables "changes in the amount of personal satisfaction I receive from my business," "changes in my enjoyment in sharing farm life and/or heritage with visitors," "changes in my satisfaction with preserving the agricultural landscapes of my farm," "changes in the wages I receive from my business," and "changes in my enjoyment with meeting new people through my business." The factor mean was 0.64, a positive value that indicates that the average respondent had an increase in the satisfaction they received from their business. The reliability of this factor was high (alpha = 0.876).

17.4.3 Discussion and Implications

In summary, results indicated that 76 farmers had assessed their business, implemented improvements, created a new businesses plan, or changed an existing business plan related to agritourism. Examples of agritourism ventures included farm

stays, involvement in local schools, social media marketing, hosting fundraising events for non-profits, online newsletters to keep customers up-to-date on farm activities and varieties at their peak, educational nature trails, maple tours for the off-season, farm education retreats, pairing and tasting events, monthly dinners on the farm with a local chef, educational programs for children, and farm infrastructure improvements including roads, buildings, parking lots, farm stores and restrooms.

Because diversifying to include agritourism may not necessarily improve farm viability over the long-term, we examined farm viability by measuring increased profitability and increased quality- of-life. To assess changes in quality-of-life, the survey included a series of questions about "changes in personal time" and "changes in personal satisfaction." Changes in personal time included the variables of "changes in the amount of time I spend with my family (during both work and free time)" and "changes in the amount of free time I have." The factor mean was −0.08, a neutral value that indicates that the average respondent had neither increases nor decreases in their amount of family time or free time. "Changes in personal satisfaction" included the variables "changes in the amount of personal satisfaction I receive from my business," "changes in my enjoyment in sharing farm life and/or heritage with visitors," "changes in my satisfaction with preserving the agricultural landscapes of my farm," "changes in the wages I receive from my business," and "changes in my enjoyment with meeting new people through my business." The factor mean was 0.64, a positive value that indicates that the average respondent had an increase in the personal satisfaction they received from their business. Overall, 51 farmers reported increases in quality-of-life indicators as a result of changes made to their farm business based on the workshops and technical assistance.

Defining farm viability as increases in profitability and/or quality-of-life, we found that 72 farmers reported improved farm viability as a result of changes made based on workshops and/or technical assistance, with 38 reporting both increased profitability and quality-of-life indicators, 21 reporting increased profitability only and 13 reporting increases in quality-of-life indicators only.

17.5 Lessons Learned

The rapid growth in agritourism has some farmers concerned, especially when the diversification and expansion move beyond 'authentic' agriculture, which has different meanings to different people. Agritourism suffers from two types of image problems. Both deal with the idea of an 'authentic' farm. The first concern is that 'agri-tainment' on a working farm will take away from the core business of food and fiber production on the farm. But this doesn't have to be the case. Agritourism in Europe is typically far-removed from the corn mazes, hay rides, and other forms of entertainment often found on American farms that host visitors. Rather, European farm visitors stay overnight and immerse themselves in a true farm experience; they don't visit just to play for a few hours. There's no rush to install catapults for

smashing pumpkins, or apple cider doughnut machines on European farms. Similar to the American concept of fast food, agri-tainment can provide a fast farm experience. It may seem satisfying in the short-term and it can fit into our fast-paced schedules but, like fast food, it may not nourish us over the long term. A fast farm agri-tainment visit can lack substance and authenticity; it can be a distraction, not a true educational experience.

Another concern about agritourism is that a tourist attraction may pose as a farm in order to draw visitors. For example, a bed-and-breakfast owner with a few acres of land may plant a vegetable garden and put up some pickles and jams. Does that make it an authentic farm experience? Is the public's knowledge of, and respect for, food production actually diminished by hobby farms? Such concerns lead some farmers to avoid the term agritourism even while welcoming visitors onto their farms for educational, enriching, and authentic agrarian experiences.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of agritourism for farmers and their communities are numerous, from increased economic activity to the preservation of rural lifestyles and landscapes. Interactions with consumers build new connections that give farmers and their work visibility and public support that they might not have otherwise. Agritourism can provide opportunities for income generation beyond the growing season, creating potential to hire year-round rather than seasonal employees. By adding agritourism to their farm enterprise, farmers may be able to include additional family members in the business, enhancing the likelihood that farms will be passed on to the next generation.

The La Mota Ranch just outside of Hebbronville, Texas is a prime example of the benefits of agritourism for multiple generations. The cattle ranch was founded in the 1890s and is still owned and managed by descendants of the original owners. La Mota's primary business is its purebred and commercial cattle herds. Being amateur historians, La Mota's owners, the Hellen family, saw the value in promoting the unique mixture of Mexican and Texan ranching history along the South Texas border. They were further encouraged by the state legislature's recognition of the area's historical significance, so they capitalized on their natural amenities, historic buildings, and local color to create ranch tours. The added income from running tours has allowed the Hellen family to keep the ranch working, and the involvement of the entire family in the tourist enterprise has made the business strong. The La Mota Ranch is an agritourism leader in their region and has helped other businesses with similar goals through a regional agritourism collaboration known as the Llanos Mesteños South Texas Heritage Trail (Chase et al. 2012a, b).

On the other side of the country, Karen Fortin of Carman Brook Maple & Dairy Farm in the remote northwest corner of Vermont credits direct sales of maple syrup on their farm for broadening her children's cultural awareness and sensitivity. While Karen educates visitors from around the world about traditional Native American methods of making maple syrup, she and her family learn about the traditions and lifestyles of visitors who come from Canada, Europe and Asia. According to Karen, "Inviting visitors to our farm has opened up new worlds to us. Living in this rural part of Vermont, my kids would have only known our neighbors, who are a lot like us. Now we have friends from around the world." Contributions to quality-of-life like that are part of the reason why farms offer agritourism.

But it is important to keep in mind that agritourism is not for all farms, or even most farms. Throughout the U.S., regions with the strongest record of direct sales and agritourism account for only about 20% of farms selling direct to the public; and those tend to be small farms for the most part. In one-third of the states, fewer than 5% of farms engage with the public (United States Department of Agriculture 2009). The challenges are many for those farmers who do decide to open their farms to visitors. They need to develop new skills for marketing and hospitality, expand infrastructure on the farm to accommodate visitors, and deal with zoning and liability issues, all in addition to the primary function of producing food, fiber or fuel.

For those farms who do engage with the public, the contributions to quality-of-life can be great – for the farmers, for consumers, and for the broader community. Agritourism enterprises allow farmers to diversify their core operations and add jobs, often keeping family members employed on the farm. By adding new revenues, these additional enterprises help keep farm land in production, preserving scenic vistas and maintaining rural traditions. At the same time, the public is educated about the importance of agriculture to our economy, culture, and quality-of-life.

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