



Fields of Opportunity

An Economic Growth Study for Ontario's Agritourism Industry



Acknowledgements

Prepared for:

Agritourism Ontario

Kevin Vallier, Chief Executive Officer

Written by:

Wilton Consulting Group

Dr. Bronwynne Wilton, Principal and Lead Consultant

Krista Chapman, Consultant

Jessica Deveau, Research Analyst

MNP

Susan Mowbray, Partner, Consulting

Ian Ho, Consultant, Economics and Research

Agritourism Growth Study Advisory Committee:

Allison von Westerholt, Economic Development Policy Analyst, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Amy Strom, Strom's Farm and Bakery, Agritourism Ontario board member

Chris Hiemstra, Clovermead

Jeff O'Donnell, Team Lead, Domestic Marketing Unit, Foodland Ontario

Jesse Lauzon, Spring Ridge Farm

Karla Uliana, Senior policy Advisor, Rural Policy and Engagement, Ministry of Rural Affairs

Megan Sipos, Senior Manager, Research and Policy, Greenbelt Foundation

Melinda McArthur, Heatherlea Farm, Agritourism Ontario board member

With appreciation to all the agritourism operators that helped contribute data and information to the project through the farmer survey, farm visitor survey, and point of sale data. Thank you as well to everyone that contributed insights through the interviews.

The Project is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

A joint message from the Chair of Agritourism Ontario, Darlene Downey, and the CEO, Kevin Vallier

There has never been a more exciting time for agritourism in Ontario. Interest in visiting local farms is at an all-time high, driven by a growing desire to support local businesses and access healthy, locally grown, and produced food. While agritourism operators continue to face challenges—particularly when it comes to growing and sustaining their businesses—the need for a clear roadmap for the future of agritourism has never been greater.

As Ontario’s only association dedicated to supporting and advocating for agritourism, we recognized the importance of charting that course. Our goal was to explore, identify, and share the opportunities and challenges ahead, helping our members, the province, and other stakeholders plan for the future and support agritourism in meaningful, impactful ways.

This study highlights the many exciting opportunities available to agritourism operators across Ontario. From the outset, we were committed to avoiding a one-size-fits-all or “cookie-cutter” approach. Instead, we focused on gathering real data and meaningful insights—providing credible, evidence-based findings that our members and stakeholders can trust and use to make informed decisions.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Bronwynne and her team at Wilton Consulting Group, as well as Susan and her team at MNP. We would also like to thank all the members and stakeholders who contributed their time, insights, and feedback to this important project. Your participation was invaluable to its success.

This project would not have been possible without the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, and in particular our partners at Foodland Ontario. We are deeply grateful for your continued support and commitment to agritourism in Ontario. Thank you.

Darlene Downey Kevin Vallier
Board Chair CEO

Executive Summary

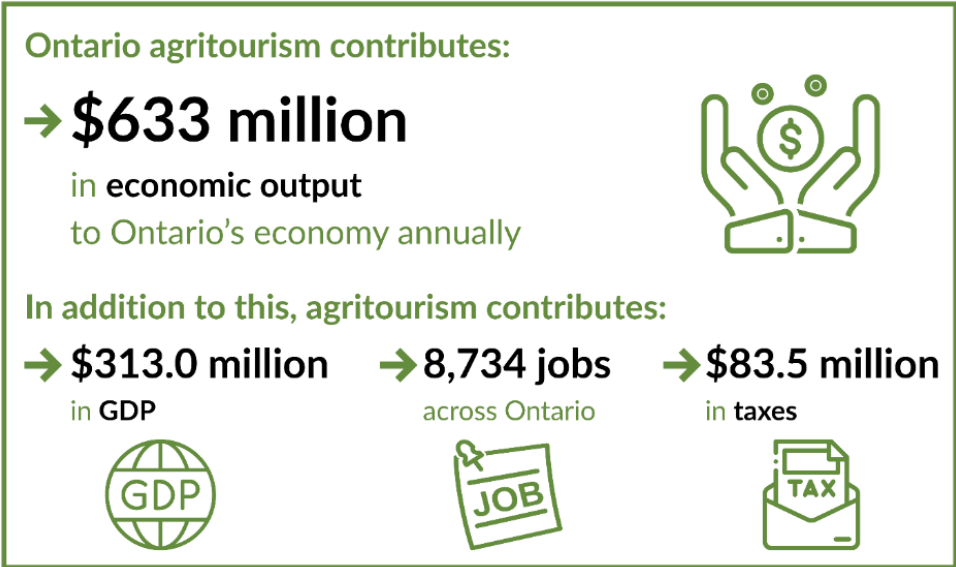
ONTARIO’S AGRITOURISM SECTOR PLAYS AN IMPORTANT AND GROWING ROLE IN THE PROVINCE’S RURAL ECONOMIES, FOOD SYSTEMS, AND COMMUNITIES.

Offering a wide range of on-farm experiences, agritourism generates significant economic, social, and environmental benefits and aligns closely with rising demand for authentic, local, and experience-based travel. As the sector continues to expand, agritourism is increasingly recognized as an important contributor to Ontario’s broader agri-food and tourism economies.

Drawing on surveys, economic analysis, and stakeholder input, the report offers evidence-based insights and a strategic roadmap to help strengthen the sector and ensure a resilient, prosperous future for Ontario’s agritourism industry. This report was developed to:

- 1) Assess the economic impact of agritourism in the province
- 2) Identify challenges and opportunities facing the industry
- 3) Develop recommendations to support its continued growth

Ontario agritourism generates significant economic benefits for Ontario, producing an estimated \$633 million in economic output and \$313 million in GDP while supporting 8,734 jobs and annually contributing \$83.5 million in federal, provincial, and municipal tax revenues.



Agritourism operators face a number of challenges that can constrain development alongside emerging opportunities that could further strengthen the industry.

	Challenges		Opportunities
 <p>Marketing & Visibility</p>	<p>Difficulty reaching new audiences, managing social media, and meeting evolving consumer expectations with limited time and resources.</p>	 <p>Expansion & Diversification</p>	<p>Growing revenue through new on-farm events, experiences, and overnight stays, supported by investments in agritourism infrastructure.</p>
 <p>Policy & Regulations</p>	<p>Complex and inconsistent municipal zoning, permitting, and regulatory requirements that can delay or limit business development.</p>	<p>"Buy Local" Movement</p> 	<p>Leveraging strong consumer demand for local food, authentic experiences, and regional tourism to increase farm gate sales and visitor engagement.</p>
<p>Financial Constraints</p> 	<p>High start-up and expansion costs, infrastructure upgrades, and ongoing economic pressures that affect business sustainability.</p>	 <p>Marketing & Partnerships</p>	<p>Strengthening promotion through coordinated marketing, regional branding, and partnerships with tourism organizations, municipalities, and local businesses.</p>
 <p>Labour & Staffing</p>	<p>Challenges recruiting, training, and retaining seasonal and skilled workers in a competitive labour market.</p>	<p>Education & Engagement</p> 	<p>Expanding educational programming and community engagement to build public understanding of agriculture, strengthen urban–rural connections, and foster long-term consumer loyalty.</p>
<p>Insurance, Liability, & Risks</p> 	<p>Rising insurance costs, liability concerns, and uncertainty related to regulatory changes, including Bill 186.</p>		

Recommendations

To support the continued growth and long-term sustainability of Ontario’s agritourism sector, this report identifies a set of practical, high-impact recommendations. These recommendations are intended to guide coordinated action by industry, government, and partners to strengthen the sector, reduce barriers, and unlock agritourism’s full economic and community potential across Ontario.

Recommendation		Timeline
1. Supportive policies for the growth and development of the Ontario agritourism sector		
1.A	Improve municipal policy support for agritourism in Ontario	Short term (1-2 years)
1.B	Utilize community improvement plan programs to support agritourism businesses	Short-medium term (2-3 years)
1.C	Ease agricultural to commercial uses transition	Medium term (3-4 years)
2. Business development support for agritourism		
2.A	Develop a ‘One Stop Shop’ for agritourism businesses	Short term (1 year) and ongoing
2.B	Explore opportunities to build the labour force	Short term (1 year) with annual recruitment activities
2.C	Create partnerships with insurance providers	Short-medium term (1-3 years)
2.D	Collaborate to distribute language from the Growing Agritourism Act	Short term (1-2 years) and ongoing
3. Marketing initiatives to support agritourism		
3.A	Explore opportunities to implement joint marketing campaigns	Short term (1-2 years)
3.B	Advocate to have October designated as agritourism month in Ontario	Short term (1-2 years)
4. Data collection to better understand and support the agritourism sector		
4.A	Request to add agritourism specific questions to the Census of Agriculture	Long term (5-6 years)
4.B	Commit to ongoing agritourism research and reporting	Medium-long term (4 years)

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Introduction

Ontario's agritourism sector plays an important and growing role in the province's rural economies, food systems, and communities. The sector delivers substantial economic benefits, generating \$633 million in economic output and \$313 million in GDP while supporting 8,734 jobs and annually contributing \$83.5 million in government revenues.

Agritourism creates opportunities for farmers to diversify their income, welcome visitors onto their farms, and strengthen the connection between urban and rural residents.ⁱ Additionally, this tourism supports local businesses, preserves rural landscapes, and contributes to vibrant, livable communities.ⁱⁱ

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of agritourism's broader economic and social value. Beyond generating additional income for farm families, agritourism provides benefits that ripple through rural communities as it:

- Attracts visitors to small towns and villages, supporting restaurants, shops, and other local businesses
- Creates jobs and contributes to tax revenue
- Sustains local services and community amenities
- Offers new leadership and income opportunities for women and younger generations on family farms
- Preserves rural landscapes, cultural heritage, and agricultural traditions
- Fosters necessary connections between urban and rural communities

To better quantify the value and future growth potential of Ontario's agritourism sector, Agritourism Ontario undertook this economic growth study. The purpose of this study is three-fold:

- 1) Assess the economic impact of agritourism in the province
- 2) Identify challenges and opportunities facing the industry
- 3) Develop recommendations to support its continued growth

Through a province-wide farmer survey, a farm visitor survey, point-of-sale data, interviews with key industry representatives, and in-depth research, this study will help chart a path forward for Ontario's agritourism industry.

This report includes an overview of Ontario's agritourism sector, outlines the economic impact of agritourism, examines key challenges and opportunities, and provides practical recommendations and next steps for advancing agritourism in Ontario.

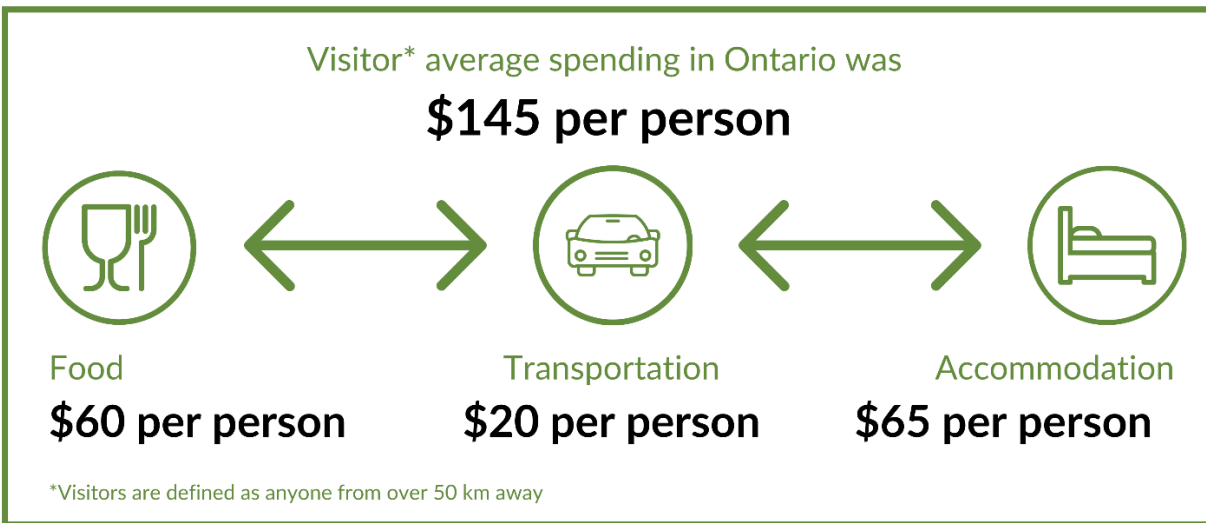
The agritourism industry in Ontario

Agritourism is thriving in Ontario. Offering a variety of experiences from pick-your-own operations, farm stays, farm tours, workshops, family fun, and more, Ontario’s agritourism farms have something for everyone.

“Agritourism is driving growth across Ontario’s \$51 billion agri-food industry.”

- Trevor Jones, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness

Regions across Ontario have recognized the potential of agritourism as an economic development tool and key component of a “new rural paradigm” that positions rural areas as destinations for leisure, tourism, and food experiences.ⁱⁱⁱ Agritourism generates benefits for these destinations by increasing visitor spending at restaurants, shops, and local services.^{iv} For visitors travelling more than 50 km to an agritourism business, total visitor spending in Ontario exceeds \$246 million annually (based on combined spending of \$170.6M for food, \$56.9M for transportation, and \$18.5M for accommodation). This visitor spending circulates through local economies, supporting business growth, job creation, and tax revenue generation.




“There is growing demand for authentic, local, and seasonal experiences. Expanding into curated on-farm experiences like harvest festivals, farm-to-table events, educational tours, or wellness retreats presents a major opportunity to deepen visitor engagement and increase revenue streams.” - Agritourism operator

For farmers, agritourism offers a strategy to diversify farm income and generate new, untapped sources of revenue beyond traditional production.^{vii} In fact, 17% of agritourism operators report that agritourism is their primary or sole source of income, while 54% say it represents an important share of their overall farm income.


Agritourism also provides opportunities for younger farming generations to contribute to the farm business in new ways, supporting long-term farm viability and, in some cases, helping fund intergenerational transition. While the average age of farmers in Ontario is 56 years (in 2021), the results of this study show that 45% of agritourism operators are between the ages of 35 and 54.^{1, vii} This suggests that agritourism is increasingly being taken up by mid-career operators who are looking for innovative ways to diversify and sustain their operations.




Survey finding: Most common agritourism activities



On-farm retail



Tours



Workshops

Other types of agritourism activities in Ontario

Farm gate stand	Pick-your-own	On-farm entertainment	Wedding, special events, and birthday parties	Animal feeding and petting area
Wellness activities	On-farm café and restaurant	Bakery, butcher, and value-added processing	On-farm winery, brewery, cidery, and distillery	Horseback riding
Nature trails	Sports activities	Community shared agriculture	Camps	Other

¹ Please note, as there is limited Census of Agriculture data on agritourism businesses in Ontario, this data is based on the survey conducted for this report.

Beyond economic gains, agritourism also:



1. Contributes to vibrant, livable communities and rural quality of life



2. Strengthens local food systems



3. Improves agricultural education



4. Strengthens connections between farming and non-farming residents



5. Strengthens community identity and helps preserve rural heritage

Figure 1. Agritourism benefits beyond economic gains.^{viii, ix, x, xi}

There is a “growing [opportunity] for environmental farming practices in schools (e.g., field trips, educational offerings).” - Agritourism operator

Agritourism fosters wellbeing by creating spaces for public education, cultural exchange, and community-building. Farm operators frequently cite the opportunity to educate visitors about agriculture, build goodwill within their communities, and create meaningful social interactions as key motivations for their tourism ventures.^{xii} Agritourism creates broader community resilience by fostering understanding between farm and non-farm populations and providing recreational, educational, and cultural activities for residents and visitors alike.

Ontario loses
319 acres of farmland
every day to non-agricultural uses;



this is equivalent to
nine family farms
every week.

(Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 2022)

Agritourism also supports environmental sustainability by encouraging diverse farming practices and resource conservation. Around the world, research shows that agritourism supports biodiversity and promotes environmentally-friendly habits like composting, water conservation, and waste reduction.^{xiii, xiv, xv} Experiences like pick-your-own and farm tours also help visitors connect with local food systems and encourage more local buying habits.

^{xvi}

Beyond this, agritourism also creates an opportunity to help protect Ontario's agricultural land by supporting and showcasing the long-term viability of small and family-run farms. Through farm-based tourism experiences, farms can diversify their income while actively maintaining the working landscapes, heritage, and agricultural practices that are essential to the province's rural identity.

Agritourism helps preserve working farms and local economies while offering accessible, meaningful experiences for visitors. It represents a sustainable, community-rooted approach to rural development, grounded in the distinctive cultural, environmental, and social assets of rural Ontario.

Tourism Growth Strengthens Opportunities for Agritourism

Canada's tourism economy is thriving, with travel on Airbnb alone generating nearly **\$10.8 billion** in estimated economic impact and supporting **over 105,000 jobs** nationwide in 2024. The typical guest spent more than **\$850 per trip** on local restaurants, entertainment, and shopping (often in smaller communities without traditional hotels).^{xvii} This growing interest in local, experience-based travel directly supports agritourism, a sector already valued at **USD \$340 million** (CAD \$478 million) in 2024 and projected to more than **double by 2030**.^{xviii} As travellers seek authentic connections to the countryside, farms and rural businesses are well positioned to capture this momentum and showcase the richness of Canada's agricultural landscape.

Economic Impact

Agritourism delivers significant economic benefits to Ontario by generating employment opportunities, province-wide government revenues, and economic activity. Table 1 presents the estimated total economic impacts of agritourism in Ontario in 2025, capturing direct, indirect, and induced effects across the broader economy.²

Overall, agritourism is estimated to generate approximately \$633 million in total economic output, including \$350.3 million in direct output from agritourism-related activities and \$282.7 million in indirect and induced output. These agritourism activities

contribute an estimated \$313 million to Ontario’s GDP, comprising \$165.5 million in direct GDP and \$147.5 million in indirect and induced GDP. In addition, agritourism is estimated to support approximately 8,700 jobs across the province, including 7,500 direct jobs and 1,200 indirect or induced jobs, while generating \$37.7 million in federal, \$32.0 million in provincial, and \$13.8 million in municipal tax revenues.

Ontario agritourism annually contributes:

- 
\$633 million
in economic output
- 
\$313.0 million
in GDP
- 
8,734 jobs
- 
\$83.5 million
in taxes

Table 1. Summary of the Economic Impacts

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (Jobs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Direct	\$350.3	\$165.5	7,489	\$19.3	\$14.4	\$6.1
Indirect & induced	\$282.7	\$147.5	1,245	\$18.4	\$17.6	\$7.7
Total	\$633.0	\$313.0	8,734	\$37.7	\$32.0	\$13.8

² To estimate the economic impacts generated, MNP employed an input-output methodology using multipliers published by Statistics Canada. See Appendix C for more information.

Categories of Economic Contributions

The economic impacts generated by the agritourism in Ontario can be categorized as outlined in Figure 2.

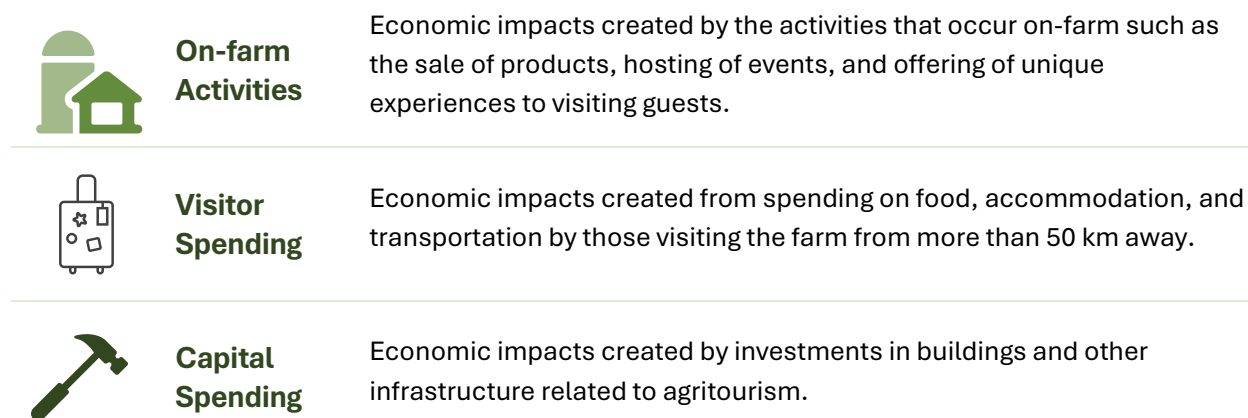



Figure 2. Categories of economic contributions in agritourism.


Economic Impacts of On-Farm Activities

Farms that offer agritourism generate economic impacts by encouraging spending on goods, services, and labour that contribute to producing agritourism products.³ Agritourism is an essential revenue strategy for many farms. Most agritourism operators expect agritourism profits to grow in the next year (62%) and categorize the income generated from agritourism as a primary or important part of their overall income (71%).

Agritourism is a **key income source** for **71%** of Ontario farmers offering agritourism.



62% of agritourism farmers expect profits to **grow** next year.



Agritourism revenues are comparable to the annual farm revenues from **Oats, Barley, Canola, and Mixed Grains** combined in Ontario

³To estimate the impacts, MNP developed estimates of the total revenues generated from on-farm activities in Ontario using information from the Farmer Survey and Statistics Canada.

Total revenues for all agritourism activities were estimated to be approximately \$125.4 million. Sale of unprocessed and value-added products accounted for ~62% of revenue, while on-farm experiences, events and other activities accounted for the remaining 38%.



Agritourism activities generates **\$125 million** in revenue across Ontario



Sale of unprocessed farm products **\$44.6 million**



Sale of value-added products **\$33.5 million**



On-farm experiences and activities **\$23.8 million**



Events **\$10.4 million**



Other **\$13.1 million**

The majority of direct employment in agritourism is seasonal or casual (75%) (Figure 3).

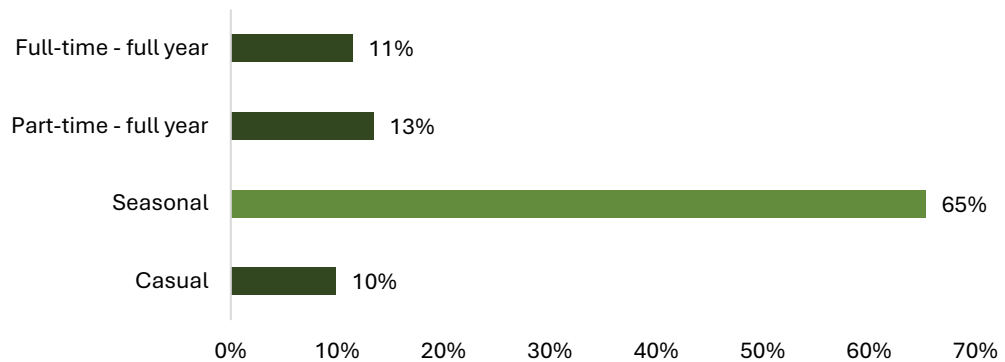


Figure 3. Distribution of Employment. (Source: Farmer Survey)

Summary: Estimated impacts of on-farm agritourism activities (2025)

In total, on-farm agritourism activities are estimated to generate approximately \$206.4 million in economic output, including \$125.4 million in direct output and \$81.0 million in indirect and induced output. These activities contribute an estimated \$109.7 million to Ontario's GDP, comprising \$66.8 million in direct GDP and \$42.9 million in indirect and induced.

On-farm agritourism is also estimated to support approximately 5,380 jobs across the province, with the majority (5,015 jobs) occurring directly on farms and an additional 365 jobs supported through supply chain and induced effects. In addition, these activities generate approximately \$24.4 million in federal, provincial, and municipal tax revenue.

Ontario agritourism economic impacts from farm operations contributes:



\$206.4 million

in economic output



\$109.7 million

in GDP



5,380 jobs



\$24.4 million

in taxes

Economic Impacts of Capital Investments

Ontario agritourism economic impacts from capital investments contributes:



\$19.5 million

in economic output



\$10.3 million

in GDP



88 jobs



\$2.8 million

in taxes

Capital spending on buildings and infrastructure to support agritourism generates economic impacts through construction-related spending.

Overall, capital spending related to agritourism infrastructure is estimated to generate approximately \$19.5 million in total economic output. This includes \$11 million in direct output associated with construction activities and \$8.5 million in indirect and induced output. These investments contribute an estimated \$10.3 million to Ontario's GDP. Capital investment in agritourism infrastructure is also estimated to support approximately 88 jobs, while generating approximately \$2.8 million in federal, provincial, and municipal tax revenues.

Visitor Economic Impacts

There were estimated to be between 4.7 million and 6 million guests that visited agritourism operators in 2025. Some of these guests were from the local area and some were out-of-town visitors.

Out-of-town visitors⁴ associated with agritourism generate significant economic impacts in Ontario by supporting businesses beyond the farm gate. This includes accommodations, food services, retail, and transportation. In 2025, an estimated \$246 million was spent on these three activities, highlighting the important spillover benefits of agritourism for the broader tourism and service economy.

Approximately 54% of visitors were estimated to be from outside the local area. Of these, 40% were domestic, 52% were from the United States, and the remainder were international visitors. The majority of visitors (~ 90%) were on a day trip with overnight visitors often visiting family or friends or had a vacation property in the area.

3-4.5 million

locals visit agritourism farms annually

Equivalent to

1 in 4 Ontario residents

visiting a farm

Agritourism brings

0.25 to 0.3 million

overnight visitors



Visitor* total spending in Ontario was

\$246 million

Food

\$170.6 million



Transportation

\$56.9 million



Accommodation

\$18.5 million



*Visitors are defined as anyone from over 50 km away

Total visitors* in 2025 was

2.5 to 3.2 million

Domestic

1 to 1.3 million



United States

1.3 to 1.6 million



Other international

0.2 to 0.3 million






*Visitors are defined as anyone from over 50 km away

⁴ For the purpose of this analysis, visitors are identified as anyone from over 50km away from the agritourism business.

In total, out-of-town visitor spending is estimated to generate approximately \$407.1 million in economic output, including \$213.9 million in direct output and \$193.2 million in indirect and induced output. This spending contributes an estimated \$193 million to Ontario's GDP, supports approximately 3,200 jobs across the province, and generates approximately \$56.3 million in federal, provincial, and municipal tax revenues.

Ontario agritourism economic impacts from out-of-town visitor expenditures contributes:

-  **\$407.1 million**
in economic output
-  **\$193.0 million**
in GDP
-  **3,265 jobs**
-  **\$56.3 million**
in taxes



1.0 Industry challenges and opportunities

1.1 Challenges

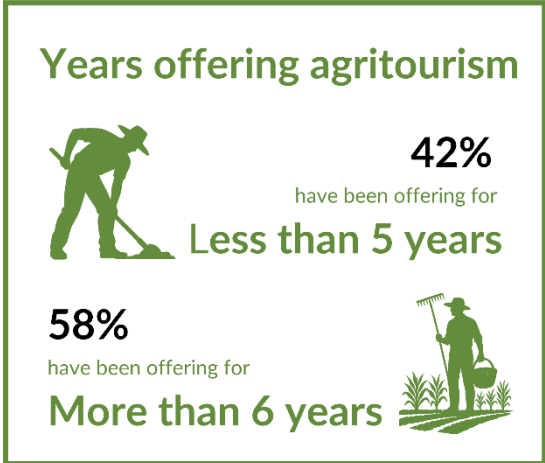
While many operators are optimistic about future opportunities, survey responses also revealed several barriers that impact growth and day-to-day operations. The following five challenges came up the most:



1.1.1 Marketing and visibility

Marketing and consumer expectations

Agritourism is a growing sector that supports a diversity of businesses ranging in activities and size. This can make it difficult to promote the sector in a coordinated way or ensure all operators are equally visible to potential visitors. This diversity is also reflected in operator experience, with 42% of operators offering agritourism for five years or less and 58% for six years or more. This range necessitates different levels of support based on differing levels of experience within the sector.



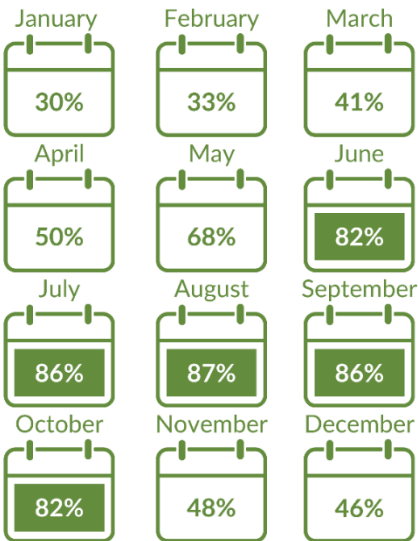
“We’re competing for attention in a crowded tourism market.” – Agritourism operator

Regional Tourism Organizations and economic development offices see opportunities to further strengthen the sector through shared storytelling, cohesive branding, and consistent messaging. As one operator noted, it can be hard to “adapt to new business and the new needs of the customer.”

"Every farmer is starting from a different place. Some might just need a paddle, others need a sail, but the goal is to help everyone reach the same shore." - Interviewee

Agritourism operations are highly seasonal, occurring mostly in

summer and fall:



Agritourism operating hours can vary with seasonal demand, adding further complexity to the sector. Most agritourism experiences are concentrated in summer and fall, leaving farms with fewer opportunities to engage the public year-round. One operator stated that “seasonal fluctuation in visitor numbers” can be challenging.

While many communities have shown interest in farm-based tourism, operators noted that effectively communicating the economic and community benefits of agritourism remains a challenge, particularly with those unfamiliar with the concept of agritourism. Some have found success by showcasing agritourism as a strategy to preserve farmland and sustain farm businesses, which can help council members, neighbours, and residents better understand its long-term value to the area.

Using social media

Agritourism operators stated that marketing and visibility were main concerns with 39% identifying them as challenges. Some operators lack the time, background, or resources to build a strong digital presence, with one operator stating that they find it difficult navigating “social media and getting the word out,” which limits their visibility to potential visitors. Some operators also stated that it can be costly and hard to find the right form of advertisement. Another stated that while the “information is online, it is not coherent or easy to find.”

Social Media Tools for Agritourism Operators

Effective social media use helps operators promote experiences, manage seasonal traffic, and connect with new visitors. Helpful resources include:

- Local Line’s guide to building a farm-focused social media strategy (<https://www.localline.co/blog/social-media-for-farms>)
- OFA’s social media checklist for producers (<https://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local/>)
- Discussion from farmers and experts on leveraging social media platforms (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLS2lNtQuOQ>)
- Creative ideas for sharing farm tour content and driving bookings (<https://www.peekpro.com/blog/social-media-ideas-for-farm-tours>)

1.1.2 Policy and regulations

Regulatory and municipal barriers

Agritourism operators find navigating zoning bylaws, permitting processes, and regulations challenging. Forty two percent of respondents stated that understanding or implementing local bylaws was a big or major challenge while 46% said the same for restrictive local policies. For example, an agritourism operator mentioned that “We are limited by the activities allowed by our local planning department. For example, weddings would require a rezoning to commercial.”

Local interpretation and implementation of the provincial planning statement for on-farm-diversified uses are largely left to municipal planning departments and council interpretation. This means that similar projects might be permitted in one municipality and restricted in another; leading to confusion and sometimes frustration for operators who see their peers in other municipalities diversifying their agritourism offerings in ways that may not be permitted under their own local municipal bylaws.

The 2024 Provincial Planning Statement indicates that:

“In prime agricultural areas, permitted uses and activities are: agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses based on provincial guidance.”

*“Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses may be **based on provincial guidance or municipal approaches, as set out in municipal planning documents**, which achieve the same objectives.” (Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. 4.3.2.1)*



While municipalities work hard to balance community interests, economic development goals, and safety standards, the approval process for agritourism projects can be complex and sometimes unclear.

Many interviewees emphasized the value of clear examples and case studies from other communities to help councils and staff feel more confident supporting agritourism initiatives.

Collaboration amongst communities: Enabling agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses in North Durham

In April 2024, Durham Region undertook a study to update their policies for agriculture-related and on-farm diversified activities in addition to approval and application processes within the Townships of Brock, Scugog and Uxbridge.

Durham Region developed a series of recommendations and a draft application toolkit for the three Northern municipalities through community consultation with local municipal planning staff, farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. As of June 2025, each of the Townships endorsed the recommendations and will begin implementing them through their local land use planning processes.

This project exemplifies how upper-tier municipalities can engage with member municipalities to enable a thriving agricultural system and rural economy that includes agritourism.



1.1.3 Financial constraints⁵

Getting started and upgrading the business

When asked about the top 2-3 challenges for their farm business over the next five years, 39% of operators surveyed spoke about the challenge of starting and expanding an agritourism venture. High startup and operating costs can be a hurdle, particularly for smaller farms exploring new experiences or looking to add visitor-focused amenities.

While some sector-specific programs exist, access to capital remains limited, and operators often must piece together funding from multiple sources to move a project forward. This challenge is compounded by the physical infrastructure needs of agritourism businesses, where the top three farm buildings in use are storage buildings, barns, and farm stores. Structures like these come with added financial pressure, with the average cost of maintenance reaching approximately \$30,693, further stretching already tight operating budgets.

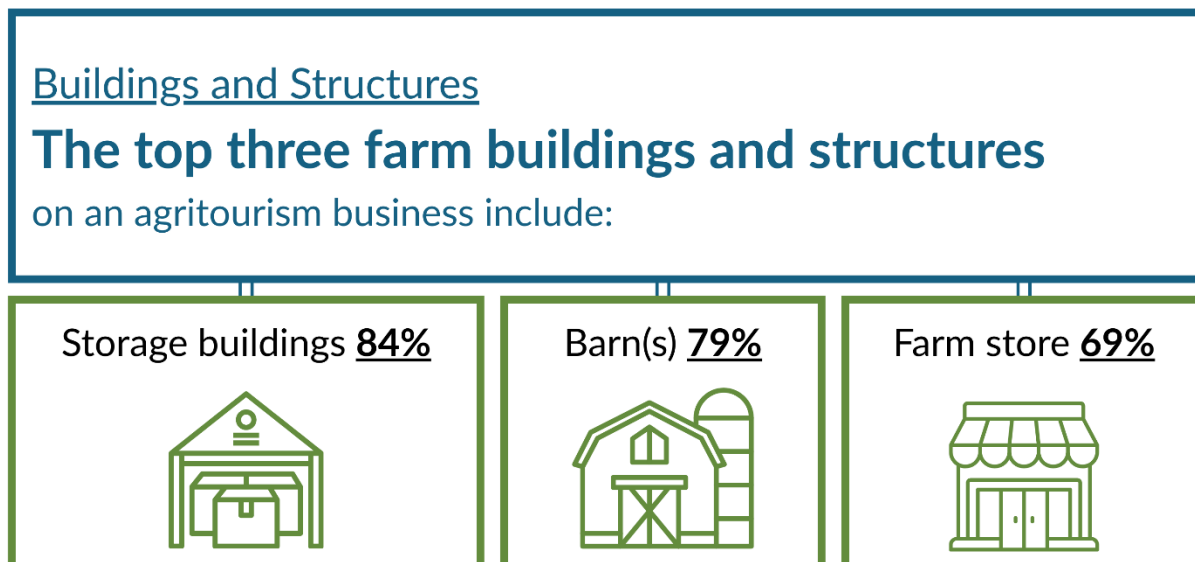


Figure 4. Top three farm buildings and structures on agritourism businesses farms.

⁵ While insurance costs were also raised frequently as a financial constraint, they are discussed separately in the Insurance, liability and risk section, where they are explored in greater depth due to their complexity and the range of concerns expressed by operators.



Figure 5. Annual median and average maintenance costs identified by agritourism operators.

Upgrading existing buildings or developing new spaces adds another layer of complexity. Meeting public safety standards, incorporating accessibility features, and retrofitting older structures can be expensive, making it challenging for some farms to take the next step in growing their agritourism offerings. These financial considerations highlight the importance of clear funding pathways and supportive programs that help farms modernize, enhance visitor experiences, and continue contributing to their local communities.

Economic pressure

Broader economic pressures are shaping how Canadians make spending decisions. The all-items Consumer Price Index has continued to rise, with inflation rising to 2.4% in September 2025.^{xix} With this rising cost, some operators are finding it can limit visitor spending and bookings. One agritourism operator said, “Local family budgets are tight, and we are seeing decreased spending in 2025.” This rising cost of living is also impacting the operators directly with one saying, “Fuel prices are eating away at our profit margins.”

On top of these domestic pressures, agritourism and farm businesses also face external uncertainty from trade tensions. Broad-based tariffs and policy shifts are pushing input costs higher as tariffs on steel and aluminum are driving up the price of farm equipment and repair parts.^{xx} Meanwhile, retaliatory and unpredictable tariff policies are squeezing profit margins and weighing on investment decisions.^{xxi}

1.1.4 Labour and staffing

Labour shortages remain a challenge across the broader farming sector, and agritourism operators face these same pressures.^{xxii} Agritourism operators encounter the added difficulty of finding staff who have both farming knowledge and the customer-service skills needed for hospitality. Many operators highlighted this issue, with over one-third describing the ability to find skilled labour as a big or major challenge.

Many farms report difficulty finding reliable seasonal workers, which limits their capacity to offer or expand visitor experiences. This challenge is especially acute in rural areas, where small labour pools, limited housing options, and a lack of reliable transportation make it harder to attract workers during peak agritourism seasons.

“Finding seasonal help who understand hospitality is hard.” – Agritourism Operator

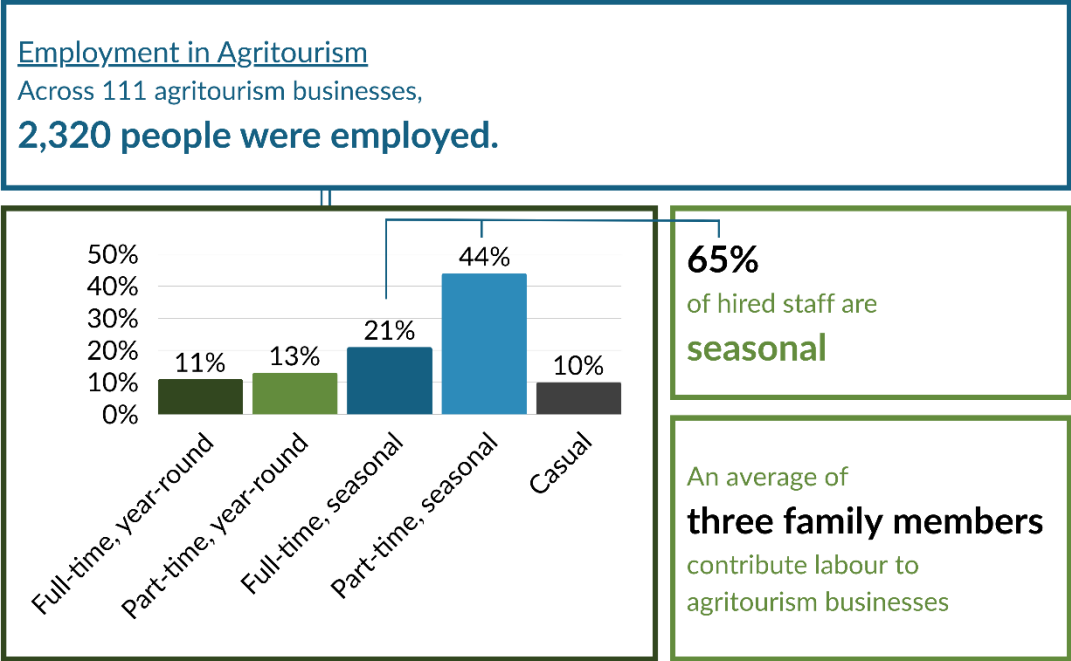


Figure 6. Staff hired by agritourism operators related to agritourism offerings.

Beyond availability, operators also noted the rising cost of labour and increased wage expectations. Higher staffing costs make it more difficult to offer consistent programming or extend operating hours. Together, these labour pressures reduce the operational flexibility that agritourism businesses need to grow and adapt in a competitive tourism environment.

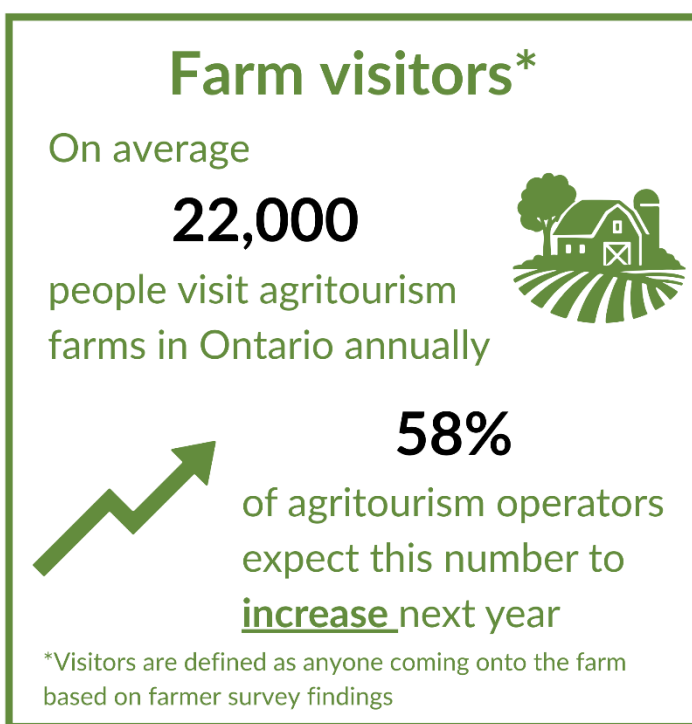
1.1.5 Insurance, liability, and risks

Insurance and liability emerged as a major concern with more than half of agritourism operators identifying this as a big or major challenge. Many described how rising insurance premiums, limited coverage options, and policies not tailored to agritourism discourage new investments or expansion. As one participant said, getting “insurance to actually meet our needs and not break the bank” is often out of reach, especially for higher-risk activities such as overnight stays or food service on the farm.

The Canadian farm-insurance market is shrinking as insurers are facing lower capacity, rising loss severity, and increasing system costs, putting upward pressure on premiums.^{xxiii} According to an OFA summary, farm liability and agritourism-specific insurance are private-market products, and premiums vary widely based on risk exposure, property details, and visitor numbers.^{xxiv}

On average, agritourism operators host almost 22,000 people annually, and 58% expect this number to increase next year. With so many guests moving through farm spaces, operators feel they must be even more diligent about liability protections, public safety requirements, and insurance coverage, further elevating the cost and administrative burden.

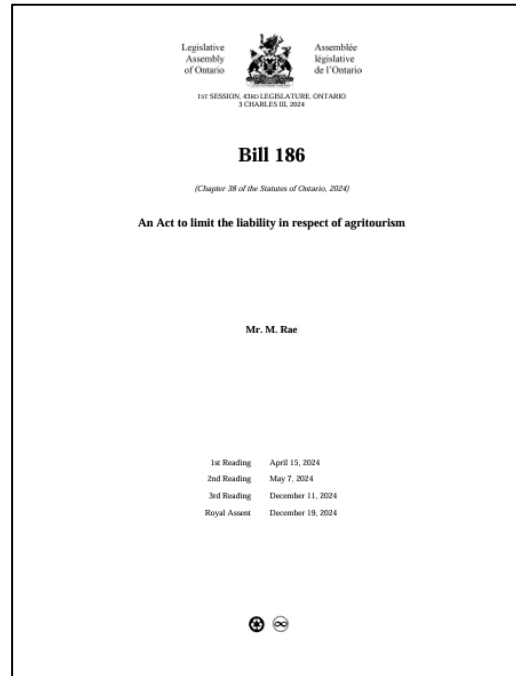
Operators also highlighted the complexity of navigating regulations. While municipalities and public health units set safety standards, many feel overwhelmed by the volume of requirements and confusing liability parameters.



Bill 186 – Legal risk and regulatory change

One major recent positive change is [Bill 186 \(Growing Agritourism Act, 2024\)](#), now law in Ontario. This act limits liability for agritourism providers, provided they follow specific requirements. Under the law, operators who post the prescribed warning language will have fewer legal risks for “inherent” agritourism dangers (e.g., uneven ground, animals, or typical farm equipment).⁶

This (first of its kind in Canada) legislation will have a very positive impact on Ontario’s agritourism industry. While it will take some time for insurance rates to lower, rates have stabilized and some farms who struggled to get insurance have been able to do so thanks to the Growing Agritourism Act.



⁶ Please note, protection would not apply in cases of gross negligence on the part of the operator.

1.2 Opportunities

The positive economic contributions of agritourism point to several areas of opportunity for Ontario producers. Many operators anticipate further momentum in the coming years with over half (58%) of Ontario agritourism operators expecting to see growth in the number of visitors from the 2024 season (Figure 7).

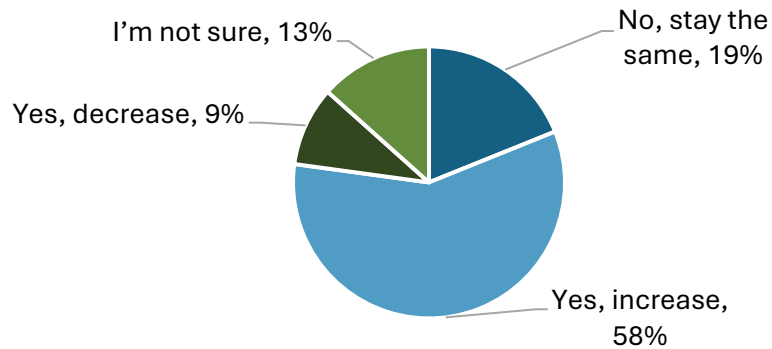


Figure 7. Operators' expectations around changes in the number of visitors from the 2024 season to the 2025 season (n=127).

Agritourism operators across Ontario have a strong sense of optimism for the future of their agritourism business. Four key opportunities include:



1.2.1 Expansion and diversification

Expanding agritourism through events and overnight stays

A popular opportunity for agritourism operators is expanding into on-farm events such as weddings, seasonal events or festivals, and overnight stays.

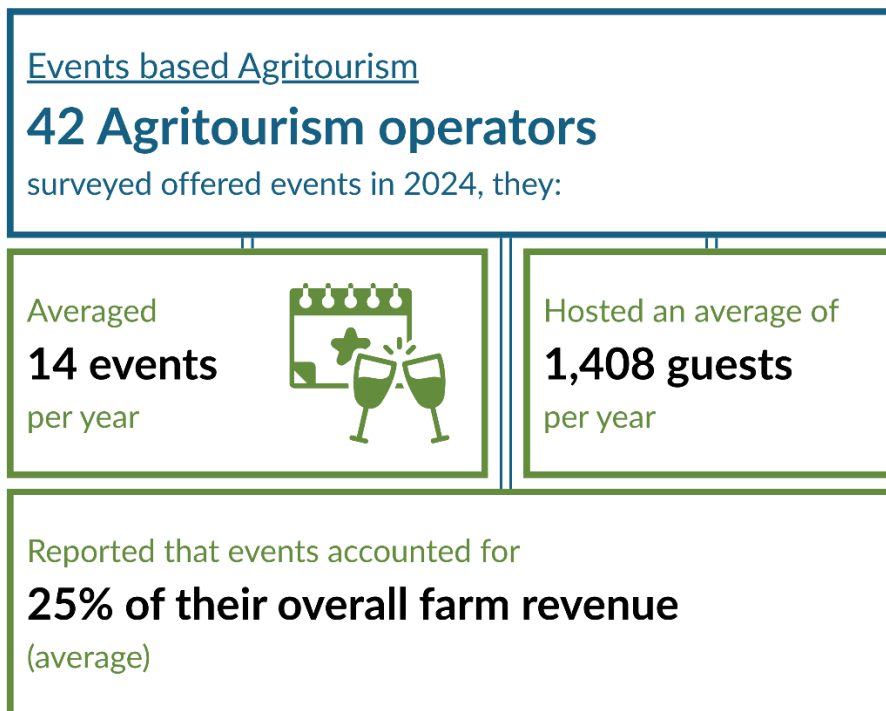


Figure 8. Event based agritourism breakdown.

Through the online survey, operators highlighted a strong sense of optimism around a growing agritourism industry and spoke of opportunities to expand and diversify their agritourism businesses. A commonly reported opportunity was the addition of new offerings, including accommodations, event hosting, and on-farm food services. Several operators described plans to build or expand on-farm cafes, pancake houses, and bed-and-breakfast options.

“Our wedding venue and event space just opened in July 2025 - it has been really well received. We have eleven bookings for 2025 and already 13 for 2026.”

– Agritourism operator

Offering these types of experiences will require support from local municipalities; including the assurance that planning policies are supportive of these types of on-farm diversified uses and the language is clear.

Single entry point for farmer resources

Producers currently rely on multiple organizations for agritourism support, including:

- ✓ Agritourism Ontario
- ✓ General farm organizations (i.e., the [Ontario Federation of Agriculture](#), [National Farmers Union](#) and [Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario](#))
- ✓ Farm and Food Care
- ✓ Regional Tourism Organizations
- ✓ Local municipal resources (e.g., Simcoe County's Agritourism Toolkit)

Agritourism Ontario is well positioned to lead this work. A centralized hub would streamline the process for new and existing agritourism operators by bringing information on marketing, business planning, funding, and regulatory requirements into one accessible location.

Investing in infrastructure for agritourism

To support agritourism business growth, operators are investing in both physical and digital infrastructure. Physical infrastructure includes amenities like washrooms, seating areas, parking areas, accessibility improvements, and on-farm storefronts.

Digital infrastructure investments include things like website development, online store/shop development, point-of-sale systems, and more. Operators surveyed shared they are looking to strengthen their digital presence to improve promoting their business and reach wider audiences.

Agritourism operators planned to spend an **average of over \$28,000** (median \$5,000) for new investments in 2025; with planned investments on farms ranging from **\$2,000 to \$1,000,000.**



Simcoe County Agritourism Toolkit

[Simcoe County's Agritourism Toolkit](#) is a practical model of how municipalities can support producers investing in agritourism infrastructure. Designed for farmers who are exploring agritourism or looking to expand existing offerings, the Toolkit helps operators determine whether agritourism is right for their farm and outlines the steps to add or grow on-farm activities. It is organized into four components based on a standard business development planning approach to guide producers through planning, regulatory requirements, operational considerations, risk, and marketing. By consolidating this information in one place, the Toolkit reduces uncertainty, supports informed investment decisions, and makes it easier for farms to build visitor-ready infrastructure.

1.2.2 “Buy local” movement

Surging demand for local products and experiences

When asked about the top 2-3 opportunities for their farm business over the next five years, 32% of operators surveyed spoke about the growing demand for local experiences. These predictions are projected to become reality. For example, TD Bank estimates that tourism spending in Canada is expected to grow between 2% and 4% in 2025, namely due to a shift in Canadian tourism spending in U.S. markets.^{xxv} A survey done by Interact found that nine in 10 Canadians say that supporting local is important to them.^{xxvi} Further, Grandview Research estimates that Canada’s agritourism market is expected to grow at a rate of 12.9% from 2025-2030.^{xxvii}

The growing demand for local experiences means the industry can leverage this momentum in marketing campaigns to raise an awareness that agritourism is an ideal opportunity for Ontarians to explore locally.

Operators who completed the survey also shared how local population growth is an opportunity to expand their agritourism business; with the closer proximity to the farm, it is making it more convenient for the growing public to participate in on-farm experiences.

“For us, population growth means more customers.” – Agritourism operator

Promoting local tourism experiences

Direct marketing organizations and municipalities across Ontario have developed tourism routes and maps. Sometimes they are agritourism centred, and in other cases, agritourism is incorporated into a breadth of other experiences. In both instances, grouping several attractions together creates a roadmap for visitors to choose multiple stops and enjoy more of the community. In fact, visitors are usually drawn to an area because of multiple attractions.

Creating local trails/routes helps local businesses with marketing and promotion but can also open business-to-business opportunities, too. For example, a brewery-tour may partner with a nearby farm with a bed-and-breakfast to offer a package deal.

Spotlight on Waterloo Region Fields & Flavours Trail

The Fields & Flavours Trail offers visitors a self-guided tour of 18 local farm experiences across Waterloo Region.

The Fields & Flavours Trail website also includes “Meet the Farmer” and “Know Before You Go” pages to give visitors an opportunity to learn more about the farmers and story behind the businesses, and a chance to prepare for their trip for the best experience.

1.2.3 Marketing and partnerships

Operators, tourism industry representatives, and agricultural organizations all shared enthusiasm for collaborating to uplift Ontario's agritourism ecosystem. Marketing and partnerships were also seen as important growth opportunities. In the ranking question, 45% identified marketing and promotion through local tourism initiatives as a big or major opportunity, and 40% highlighted partnerships with other agritourism businesses or events as a big or major opportunity. Many operators described the value of collaboration, regional tourism networks, and online promotion to attract visitors and share resources.

Examples of opportunities include:

- ✓ Continuing to build and promote local tourism routes and maps that include agritourism (e.g., taste trails)
- ✓ Support for the development of resources, including a single-entry point for existing resources, for farmers in agritourism (e.g., business planning materials, guidance on on-farm diversified uses, supports for managing visitors)
- ✓ Enabling agritourism festival creation and support

Promoting agritourism together

Festival creation and support

Farmers and tourism organizations shared success stories of festivals that benefit the agritourism industry, and ideas for new or expanded festivals to bolster tourism activity. For example, these include events like:

- The Elmira Maple Syrup Festival
- Niagara's Ice Wine Festival and Grape and Wine Festival
- Kawartha Craft Beer & Food Festival
- Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Strawberry Festival

Festivals are fun, creative ways of bringing together people to celebrate the

food and beverages they love. Continued support for festivals, including new ideas, can enable growth and awareness for the agritourism industry.



Norfolk County's tourism support initiatives

Norfolk County provides a \$175 Tourism Marketing initiative that guarantees participating farms and tourism businesses a spot in official promotional materials, including brochures and social media campaigns. Their Planning Department also produces "Planning 101" videos to help growers, producers, and residents better understand local planning and zoning regulations, making land use planning more transparent and accessible.^{xxviii}

Collaborative agritourism marketing

Agritourism marketing works best when operators and community partners promote shared experiences. [Wellington County's Rural Romp](#) is a strong example: held in spring and fall, it brings together farms, markets, nurseries, and local food and beverage along mapped routes, with municipal support to attract visitors and reduce individual marketing burdens.

Similarly, [We Heart Local](#) in Windsor-Essex uses a digital directory and pass that helps visitors discover farm stands, vineyards, markets, and orchards. It also offers prizes and incentives that increase engagement.

These coordinated campaigns build regional identity, encourage longer visits, and create benefits for farms and surrounding businesses alike.

October is agritourism month

In [Michigan](#), October is designated as Agritourism Month, providing a coordinated framework for statewide promotion of farm-based experiences during peak fall season. Adopting a similar approach in Ontario would create a clear, shared promotional window, helping partners align marketing efforts, raise public awareness of agritourism offerings, and strengthen the sector's economic impact across the province.



1.2.4 Education and engagement

Another motivator for operators providing agritourism experiences is their passion for educating the public about agriculture. ^{xxix} Agritourism offers a great “gateway” for the public to learn about agriculture directly from operators in a fun setting.

A fifth of agritourism operators surveyed shared they got into agritourism because they wanted to educate the public about farming and agriculture. One participant emphasized the value of “developing agro-educational tourism projects,” while another described opportunity to “allow guests to learn about growing crops.”

Across Canada, education-based agricultural programs are already showing strong results. Agriculture in the Classroom Canada delivers more than 2 million learning experiences for students each year, helping youth understand where their food comes from and the many careers connected to the sector. ^{xxx} Schools participating in Farm to Cafeteria Canada programs report that 95% of students gain greater awareness about gardening, agriculture, and the environment. ^{xxxi}

Nationally, initiatives like Protein Industries Canada’s youth outreach have introduced over 90,000 young people (including more than 5,700 Indigenous youth) to the agri-food sector. ^{xxxii} These examples highlight the growing impact of connecting youth and families to agriculture through direct, hands-on experiences, something agritourism is uniquely positioned to provide.



2.0 Recommendations to grow the industry

The following recommendations outline practical, high-impact actions to strengthen agritourism across Ontario. Each recommendation includes a clear lead and a suggested timeline. The summary table below provides a quick snapshot of all actions before the full recommendations that follow.

Table 2. Summary table of recommendations to help strengthen the Ontario agritourism sector.

Recommendation		Timeline
1. Supportive policies for the growth and development of the Ontario agritourism sector		
1.A	Improve municipal policy support for agritourism in Ontario	Short term (1-2 years)
1.B	Utilize community improvement plan programs to support agritourism businesses	Short-medium term (2-3 years)
1.C	Ease agricultural to commercial uses transition	Medium term (3-4 years)
2. Business development support for agritourism		
2.A	Develop a ‘One Stop Shop’ for agritourism businesses	Short term (1 year) and ongoing
2.B	Explore opportunities to build the labour force	Short term (1 year) with annual recruitment activities
2.C	Create partnerships with insurance providers	Short-medium term (1-3 years)
2.D	Collaborate to distribute language from the Growing Agritourism Act	Short term (1-2 years) and ongoing
3. Marketing initiatives to support agritourism		
3.A	Explore opportunities to implement joint marketing campaigns	Short term (1-2 years)
3.B	Advocate to have October designated as agritourism month in Ontario	Short term (1-2 years)
4. Data collection to better understand and support the agritourism sector		
4.A	Request to add agritourism specific questions to the Census of Agriculture	Long term (5-6 years)
4.B	Commit to ongoing agritourism research and reporting	Medium-long term (4 years)

1. Supportive policies for the growth and development of the Ontario agritourism sector

1.A Improve municipal policy support for agritourism in Ontario

Ensure **local municipal planning policies support agritourism business development and entrepreneurship**. Agritourism operators often face uncertainty due to different zoning interpretations between municipalities. Policy development should be guided by consistency across the province and be in alignment with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) to ensure on-farm diversified uses are interpreted as intended and in a consistent manner across the province.

Agritourism Ontario has recommended forming a committee of sector experts to support this work. The **Agritourism Policy Committee** would include industry representatives and members from the ministries of: Municipal Affairs and Housing; Tourism, Culture and Gaming; and Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. The committee would develop best practices for on-farm diversified use policies that could be applied consistently across Ontario, reducing interpretive discrepancies and providing municipalities with clear guidance to support agritourism businesses.

If it is not possible to form a committee of sector experts, this work could also be facilitated by a working group made up of members of the Agritourism Ontario board with support by potential funding from Foodland Ontario. This funding could go towards a ‘policy scan and best practice study’ covering the costs of a researcher to do work on best practices and produce educational materials for municipalities.⁷

Upper- and lower-tier municipalities will play a key role in operationalizing these policies. By developing best practices and gathering agritourism operator input, municipalities can reduce barriers, improve clarity, and foster rural entrepreneurship. OMAFA’s guidance and technical expertise can complement this work, ensuring municipal approaches reflect agricultural realities and support long-term agritourism business growth.⁸

Lead	Timeline
<p>Lead: Agritourism Policy Committee (as described above)</p> <p>Supporting partners: Agritourism Ontario, Upper- and Lower-tier municipalities, and OMAFA.</p>	<p>Short term (1-2 years)</p>

⁷ This study could cover activities across recommendation 1A-1C.

⁸ The North Durham Region in the 1.1.2 Policy and regulation section of this report is a good example of how this would look.

1.B Utilize community improvement plan programs to support agritourism businesses

Find opportunities to include agritourism operators in Community Improvement Plans (CIP). Streams for agriculture innovation or tourism can open doors for agritourism operators to participate in CIP funding and invest in their tourism business. Incorporating agritourism into CIP eligibility criteria helps producers access capital for visitor infrastructure, marketing, and on-farm improvements that directly support diversified rural economies. The first step in this process should be to consult agritourism operators directly to understand their needs, barriers, and investment priorities before drafting or updating CIP criteria.

As part of the same Foodland Ontario–funded policy scan and best practices study (Recommendations 1.A–1.C), this work could examine how municipalities across Ontario currently use CIPs to support agritourism, identify gaps, and document transferable CIP models that better enable farm-based tourism investment.

Examples of ways CIPs could be updated to support agritourism operators:⁹

- Create an **Agritourism or Rural Tourism stream** within existing CIPs to support signage, public-facing amenities, and accessibility upgrades.
- Introduce **marketing and branding support programs**, including reimbursement for website development, signage, digital advertising, or collaborative tourism campaigns.
- Provide **start-up or innovation supports** for new agritourism offerings.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Policy Committee (as described above) and Municipalities	Short-medium term (2-3 years)

⁹ The Norfolk County in the 1.2.3 Marketing and partnership section of this report is a good example of supports that could be included in a CIP.

1.C Ease agricultural to commercial uses transition

Explore ways to ease the property tax burden on farms transitioning part of their operation from agricultural to commercial uses. For example, Tax Increment Equivalent Grants can help offset the initial costs of increased property tax rates, easing landowners into new property tax classes and allowing for better business planning and cash flow in the early years of operation. These tools are particularly important for agritourism businesses that may experience gradual growth and seasonal revenue in their early years.

To support implementation, municipalities could develop or adapt an agritourism toolkit, like Simcoe County’s¹⁰ approach, to clearly outline tax implications, available incentives, and planning pathways for farm-based tourism activities. A practical, plain-language toolkit can help operators understand when and how property tax changes may apply, what supports are available, and who to contact, reducing uncertainty and improving compliance while encouraging investment.

This recommendation would complement Recommendations 1.A and 1.B within a Foodland Ontario–funded policy scan and best practices study, helping to identify practical tools, incentive models, and municipal guidance (such as agritourism toolkits) that support farms transitioning into tourism-related commercial uses.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Lower-tier municipalities	Medium term (3-4 years)

¹⁰ The Simcoe County Agritourism Toolkit in 1.2.1 Expansion and diversification section provides more details on the toolkit.

2. Business development support for agritourism

2.A Develop a 'One Stop Shop' for agritourism businesses

Agritourism businesses often struggle to find timely, clear information on funding programs, planning requirements, insurance, labour, and marketing support, which are typically spread across multiple organizations and websites. Agritourism Ontario is well positioned to lead this work as the provincial organization representing and supporting agritourism operators. Creating a centralized, easy-to-navigate “one-stop shop” would reduce information barriers and help operators more efficiently access the resources they need to start, grow, or expand agritourism activities.

This resource could build on existing information such as Local Line’s [Farm Grants in Canada: Programs, Eligibility & How to Apply \(2026\)](#) webpage, which aggregates funding opportunities in a user-friendly format. Information could also be pulled from municipal tools like the [Essex County agritourism toolkit](#) and similar regional guides. A provincial one-stop shop could consolidate links to grants, incentives, planning guidance, toolkits, and sector supports, while directing operators to relevant local and regional resources. By organizing information in one accessible place, this approach would improve uptake of programs, support better business planning, and reduce administrative burden for agritourism operators.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Ontario	Short term (1 year) and ongoing

2.B Explore opportunities to build the labour force

Agritourism businesses rely heavily on seasonal workers to support peak summer and fall operations, yet many operators struggle to recruit staff with agriculture and hospitality experience. Agritourism Ontario, in partnership with local municipalities and educational institutions, should explore opportunities to build a stronger labour force.

Potential actions include:

- Participating in or co-hosting job fairs with schools that offer agriculture, hospitality, or tourism programs,
- Working with local school boards, colleges, and universities to expand co-op and internship placements, and
- Coordinating with employment service providers to promote seasonal agritourism roles.

Strengthening these connections can help operators access more reliable, skilled seasonal labour while creating pathways for students to gain hands-on experience in the sector.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Ontario, local municipalities, and educational institutions	Short term (1 year) with annual recruitment activities

2.C Create partnerships with insurance providers

Agritourism Ontario should **explore a partnership with an insurance provider to develop a sector-specific insurance product for agritourism operators**. Many farms offering visitor experiences struggle with high premiums, uncertain coverage, or policies that do not reflect the realities of on-farm activities. By leveraging the language and intent of the Growing Agritourism Act, Agritourism Ontario can work with insurers to establish clear good-practice standards that, when followed, allow operators to access reduced rates, more consistent coverage, and greater confidence in managing risk.

Agritourism Ontario could also explore whether a preferred insurance rate could become a direct benefit of Agritourism Ontario membership. Similar to how the [Farmers' Markets Ontario \(FMO\) insurance program](#) offers tailored coverage and discounted rates for its members, Agritourism Ontario could work with an insurance provider to create a members-only rate tied to agritourism best practices.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Ontario	Short-medium term (1-3 years)

2.D Collaboration to distribute language from the Growing Agritourism Act

Agritourism Ontario should **collaborate** with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario and National Farmers Union to **distribute signage with language from the Growing Agritourism Act** to farms that welcome visitors.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Ontario	Short term (1-2 years) and ongoing
Supporting partners: OFA, CFFO, NFU	

3. Marketing initiatives to support agritourism

3.A Explore opportunities to implement joint marketing campaigns

Agritourism Ontario should collaborate with the tourism sector (e.g., Destination Ontario) and agriculture partners to launch a province-wide marketing campaign promoting agritourism experiences. A coordinated campaign would elevate awareness of Ontario’s farm-based experiences, strengthen regional tourism brands, and help operators reach new markets. The campaign should also feature the new Agritourism Ontario app, positioning it as the primary tool for visitors to discover local farms, seasonal activities, and events across the province.

Key steps to advance this recommendation include:

- Form a small working group of Agritourism Ontario, Destination Ontario, OMAFA, and regional tourism organizations.
- Develop a shared marketing strategy, including brand messaging, target audiences, and regional storytelling assets.
- Create promotional materials (videos, itineraries, social content) highlighting farms, festivals, markets, and seasonal activities.¹¹
- Promote the agritourism app as the central visitor platform through all campaign materials.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Agritourism Ontario Supporting partners: Foodland Ontario, Destination Ontario, Regional Tourism Organizations, OMAFA, producer groups, and municipal and regional economic development	Short term (1-2 years)

¹¹ The Collaborative Agritourism Marketing in 1.2.3 Marketing and partnership section of the report provides good examples of collaborative marketing.

3.B Advocate to have October designated as agritourism month in Ontario

To support long-term visibility, Agritourism Ontario is recommending that Ontario follow the lead of several U.S. states, such as Michigan, which recently declared October as Agritourism Month. Establishing October as Agritourism Month in Ontario would provide a dedicated annual platform to celebrate agriculture, agrifood, and agribusiness, drive tourism during the fall season, and anchor the marketing campaign with a recognizable, province-wide call to action.

A provincial proclamation could be paired with coordinated launch events, media engagement, and a digital toolkit for agritourism operators to promote experiences. A designated Agritourism Month would also help unify marketing efforts and reinforce Ontario’s commitment to supporting diversified farm businesses.

Lead	Timeline
Lead: Province of Ontario Supporting: Agritourism Ontario, OFA, and other commodity organizations	Short term (1-2 years)

4. Data collection to better understand and support the agritourism sector

4.A Request to add agritourism specific questions to the Census of Agriculture

Agritourism remains largely invisible in current Census of Agriculture data, with only a small number of questions capturing the scope of the sector. As agritourism continues to grow and diversify, the lack of accurate, sector-specific data makes it difficult for governments, industry associations, and operators to understand trends, advocate for supportive policies, or plan investments.

Agritourism Ontario (with support from OMAFA) should formally request that Statistics Canada expand the Census of Agriculture to include more detailed questions on what agritourism activities operators offer and revenue generated (see Appendix D for more details).

Lead	Timeline
<p>Lead: Agritourism Ontario</p> <p>Supporting partners: OMAFA and OFA</p>	<p>Long term (5-6 years)¹²</p>

4.B Commit to ongoing agritourism research and reporting

As Ontario’s agritourism sector continues to evolve, regular research is needed to track growth, emerging trends, labour and investment needs, and economic impacts. Continuing to undertake periodic economic studies and sector scans will help ensure policy decisions, funding programs, and advocacy efforts are informed by current and reliable data.

Agritourism Ontario, in partnership with government and sector stakeholders, should establish a regular research cycle to update sector data, build on the findings of this study, and monitor progress over time. Consistent reporting will strengthen long-term planning, support evidence-based decision-making, and help demonstrate the value of agritourism to Ontario’s rural and agricultural economies.

Lead	Timeline
<p>Lead: Agritourism Ontario</p> <p>Supporting partners: Provincial partners</p>	<p>Medium-long term (4 years)</p>

¹² The 2026 Census of Agriculture questionnaire has already been released (July 2025), so efforts should go towards getting questions in the next questionnaire.

Conclusion

Agritourism is a vital and growing contributor to Ontario's economy, generating \$633 million in economic output, \$313 million in GDP, supporting 8,734 jobs, and contributing \$83.5 million in tax revenues annually. These impacts underscore the sector's importance not only to farm businesses, but also to rural communities, tourism operators, and governments across the province.

Continued growth will require coordinated action, with Agritourism Ontario well positioned to serve as a central leader and advocate, supporting collaboration across agriculture, tourism, and government. The 11 recommendations outlined in this report provide a clear and practical path forward to strengthen the sector, address key barriers, and ensure agritourism continues to deliver meaningful economic, ecological, and community benefits for Ontario.

Appendix

Appendix A: Methodology

This project used multiple approaches to gain insight into the current state of agritourism in Ontario (Figure 9). The findings from the research review, engagement activities, and economic impact analysis are synthesized and integrated throughout the report.

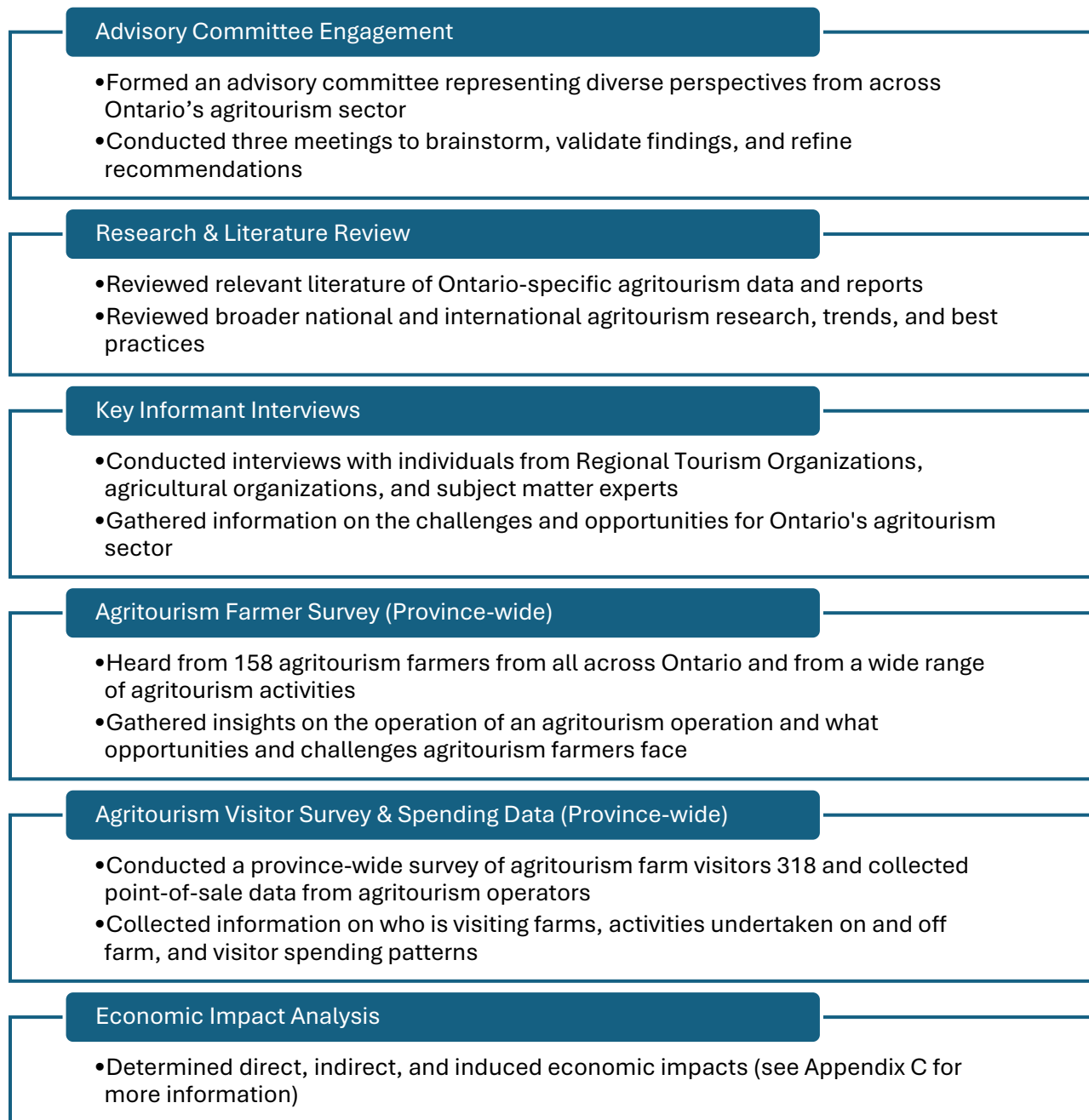


Figure 9. Key activities of study methods.

Appendix B: Farmer survey results

2025

Agritourism Ontario Farmer Survey Analysis

WILTON
CONSULTING GROUP



AGRITOURISM
ONTARIO

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Methods

The Agritourism Farmer Survey was an open survey that was promoted to agritourism businesses across Ontario. For the survey, an agritourism operation is described as any farm that offers an on-farm experience like farm tours, pick-your-own, an on-farm café/shop, farm stays, or other activities like these. The survey was open between May 28, 2025, and July 29, 2025. The survey was promoted through Agritourism Ontario newsletters, Regional Tourism Officers, and other related agricultural organizations. The survey was filled out by **158** agritourism farmers.

Key Findings

Through analysis of the open survey, agritourism operators identified distinct themes around land use, revenue strategies, visitor expectations, market growth, and financial constraints.

Encompassing strengths, challenges, and opportunities for agritourism in Ontario, Figure 1 presents five key findings of the survey.

Agritourism land use varies significantly, demonstrating flexibility in how farms integrate agritourism.

- Farms dedicated anywhere from less than 2% of their acreage (14%) to more than 50% (18%) to agritourism activities.
- The largest group of respondents reported using 10–25% of their farm (19%).
- This even distribution shows agritourism can work as both a complementary activity and a major business focus.

Agritourism is an essential revenue strategy for many farms and most operators expect agritourism profits to grow.

- Increasing farm revenue is the top motivator, indicated by 69% of agritourism operators.
- 62% anticipate increased profits from 2024 to 2025.

Agritourism operators are optimistic about visitor levels heading into 2025.

- 58% expect visitor numbers to increase.

Local tourism trends are key growth opportunities for agritourism.

- 70% of respondents view growing consumer interest in local food and agriculture as a big or major opportunity.
- 65% identified growth in the local tourism sector as a big or major opportunity.

Financial pressures (especially insurance and input costs) pose a major barrier.

- 52% identified insurance and liability costs as a big or major challenge.
- 48% also identified increasing fuel prices as a big or major challenge.

Figure 10. Key findings about agritourism in Ontario identified through the open Agritourism Farmer Survey.

Summary Data

About Agritourism Farmers

Agritourism farmers came from across Ontario ranging from 27% from Central to 7% from Northern Ontario (Figure 2). Please find a Regional Breakdown at the end of this analysis.

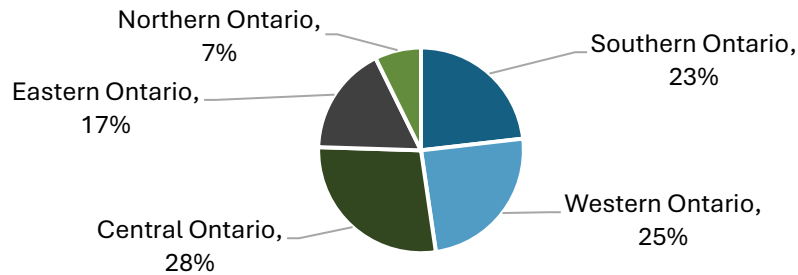


Figure 11. Location of agritourism farmers by region (n=151).

Most agritourism farmers are between the ages of 35-54 (45%) (Figure 3).

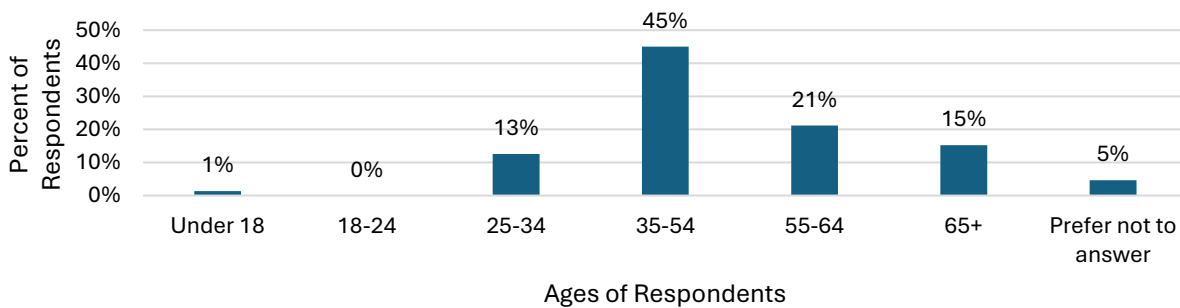


Figure 12. Age of agritourism farmers (n=151).

In terms of agritourism farmers’s experience farming, the majority are established farmers (40%) or the next generation of the farm family (33%) (Figure 4). Just under a fifth of agritourism farmers are new farmers. For agritourism farmers that indicated "other", responses included operating the agritourism business but not doing the farming on the farm and already being retired.

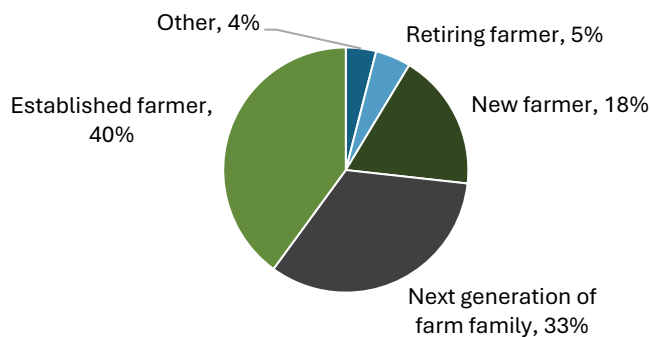


Figure 13. Farming experience of agritourism farmers (n=151).

About agritourism businesses

Ontario agritourism operators offer a wide variety of activities and experiences, reflecting the sector’s diversity. The most common activities include on-farm retail stores (59%), farm tours (55%), and teaching or educational workshops (46%), all of which highlight the strong role of direct engagement and learning in agritourism (Figure 5).

Popular attractions also include farm gate stands (43%) and pick-your-own operations (35%), which connect visitors directly with local food. Entertainment and event-based offerings are also significant, with on-farm entertainment such as corn mazes, hayrides, and festivals (33%) and weddings or special events (33%) both drawing a variety of visitors to farms.

While less common, specialized experiences such as wellness activities (20%), on-farm cafes or restaurants (18%), and alcohol or food processing ventures like wineries or bakeries (15–16%) show how some farms are diversifying into new markets. Together, these activities illustrate how agritourism in Ontario blends food, education, entertainment, and hospitality to create unique visitor experiences.

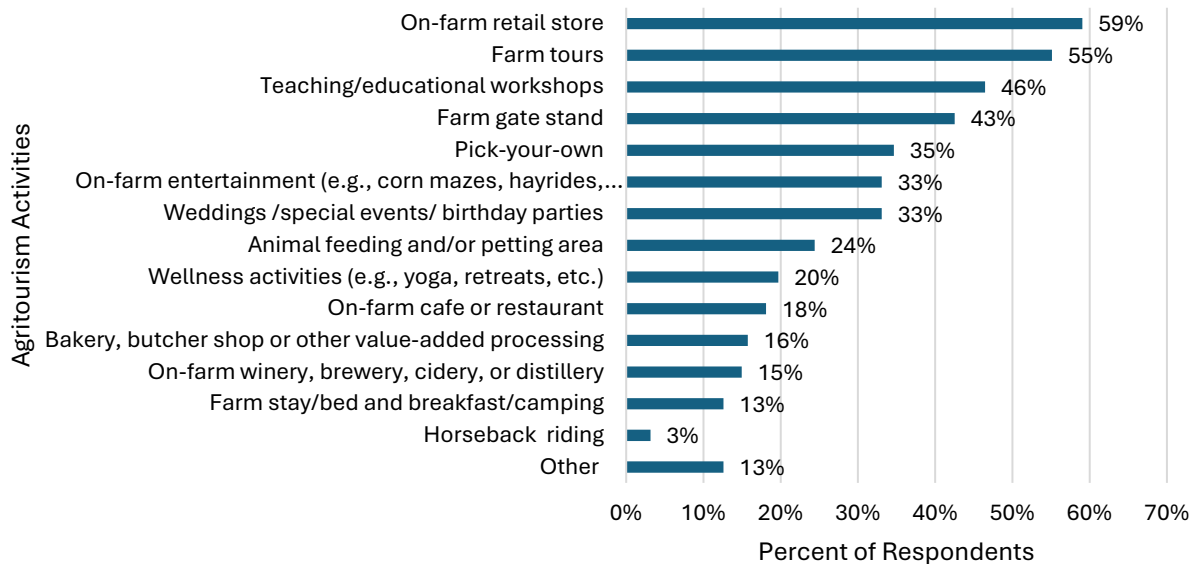


Figure 14. Types of agritourism activities offered on farms in Ontario (n=127).¹³

¹³ For respondents that indicated "other," responses included nature trails for hiking, sports (e.g., disc golf), community shared agriculture (CSA), and camps.

Weddings and special events

Agritourism farmers hosting weddings and special events reported an average of 14 events in 2024, with numbers ranging from just 1 event to 75. In total, farms represented in the survey hosted over 500 events. The most common frequency was 11–20 events per year (31%), followed by 1–5 events (29%), and 6–10 events (23%) (Figure 6).

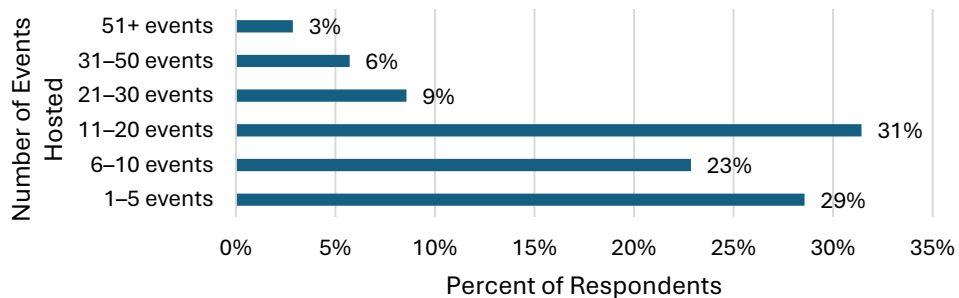


Figure 15. Number of weddings and special events hosted by farms in 2024 (n=41).

When it comes to visitors, farms hosted an average of 1,609 guests, for a combined total of 56,310 visitors. While some operations welcomed as many as 13,000 guests, the largest share of agritourism farmers (26%) reported hosting fewer than 200 visitors annually. Another 20% each hosted between 200–499, 500–999, or 1,000–2,999 visitors, while only a small minority (6%) reported more than 10,000 guests per year (Figure 7).

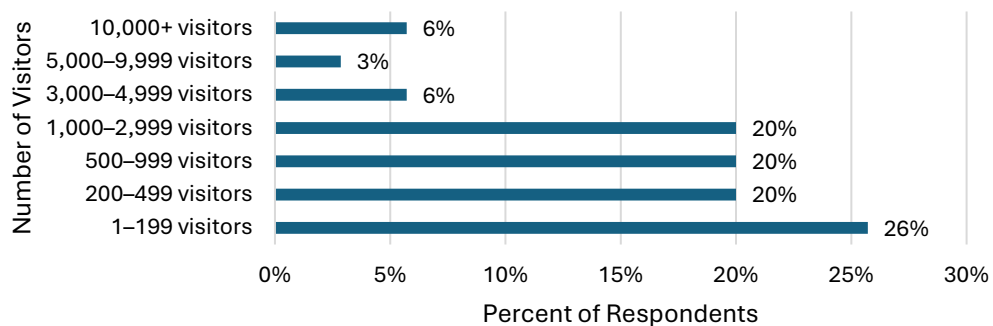


Figure 16. Number of visitors at weddings and special events hosted on farms in 2024 (n=40).

Nearly half (48%) of the agricultural commodities produced on farms related to the agritourism business are fruit and/or tree nuts (Figure 8). This is followed by vegetables (35%), greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture crops (24%), and poultry and eggs (20%) (Figure 8 and 9). The top agricultural commodities grown on agritourism farms but not related to the agritourism business include grain and oilseed (28%), fruit and/or tree nuts (28%), vegetables (26%), and poultry and eggs (23%).

Agritourism and Horses
 agritourism farmers offering horseback riding reported keeping 30–51 horses, highlighting the large scale and care required to

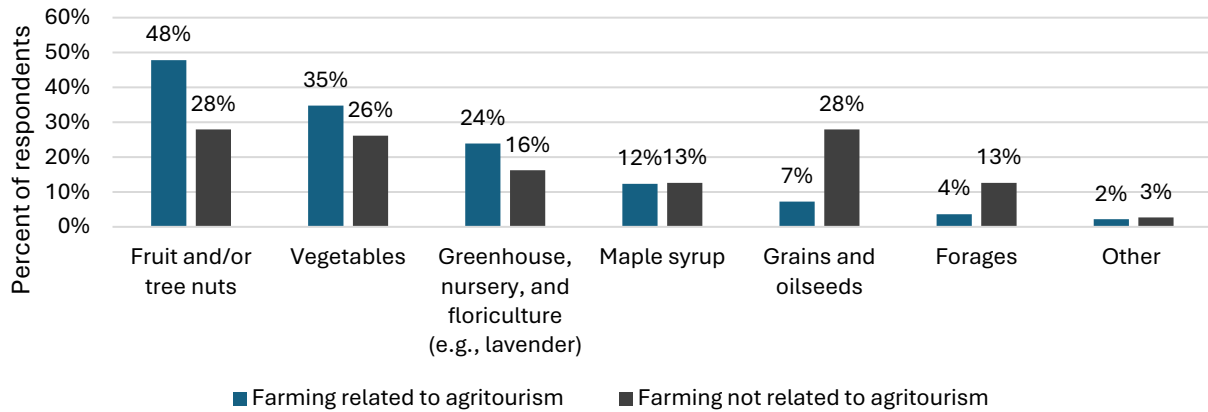


Figure 17. Crops grown on agritourism farms related to the agritourism business (n=142) and not related to the agritourism business (n=118).

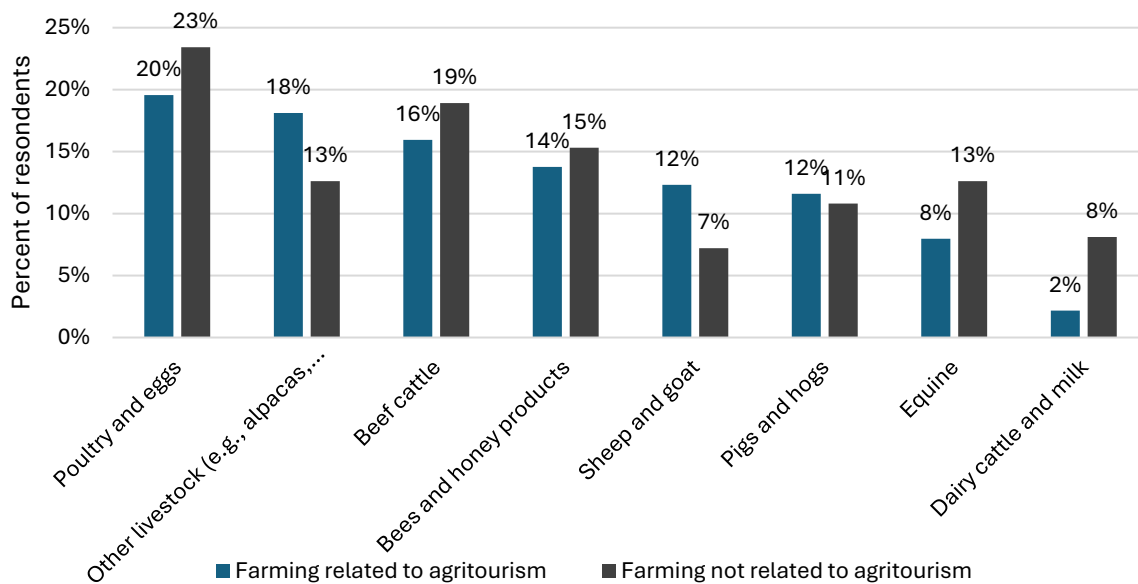


Figure 18. Livestock and animals grown on agritourism farms related to the agritourism business (n=142) and not related to the agritourism business (n=118).

Most agritourism farmers (58%) have been offering agritourism on their farms more than 6 years (Figure 10). Over one-third (35%) have more than 20 years of experience, while 23% have between 6 and 20 years. Another 38% are relatively new to agritourism, with 1–5 years of experience, and only 3% have been active for less than a year. (Figure 10).

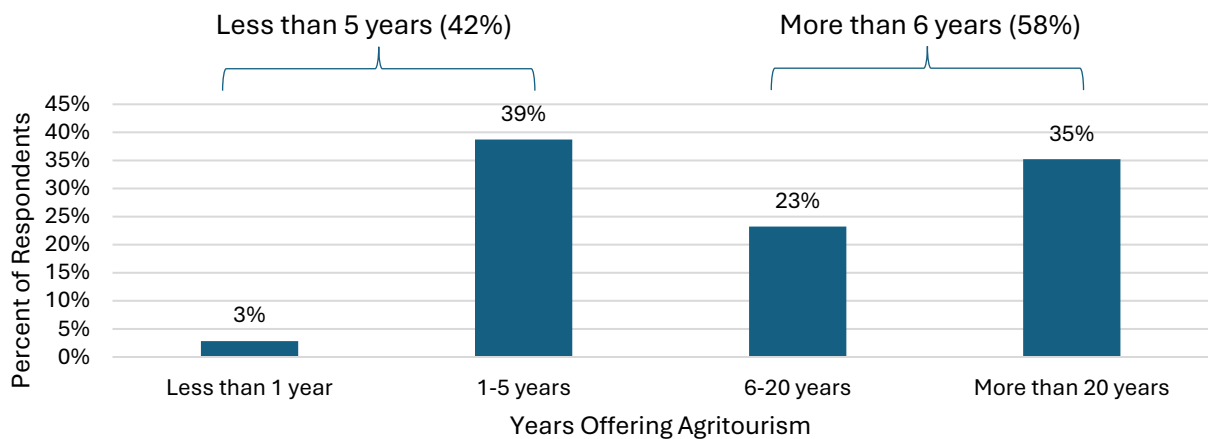


Figure 19. Number of years agritourism farmers have offered agritourism on their farm (n=142).

Most agritourism businesses are structured as family corporations (33%), followed by sole proprietorships (24%), and family partnerships (24%) (Figure 11).

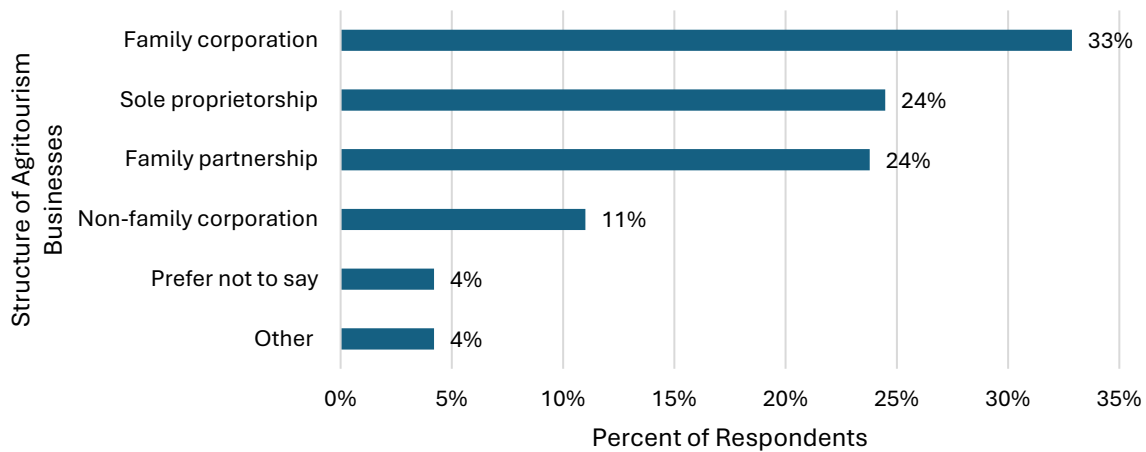


Figure 20. Structure of agritourism businesses (n=143).¹⁴

Most agritourism farmers categorize the income generated from agritourism as an important part of their overall income (54%) or primary/only source of income (17%) (Figure 12).

¹⁴ For respondents that indicated "other", responses included business corporation, registered charities, sole ownership but with family help, and changing ownership structures.

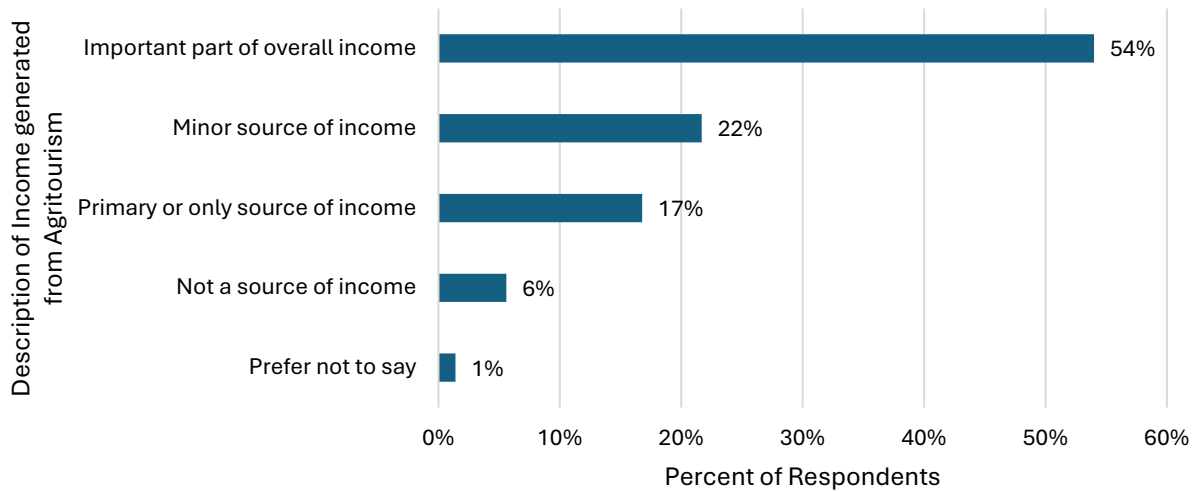


Figure 21. Descriptions of how income generated from agricultural activities impacts agritourism farmers businesses (n=143).

Farm sizes among agritourism farmers ranged from just 1 acre to 800 acres, with a total of 17,073 acres represented and an average size of 131 acres. This spread reflects the diversity of agritourism operations, from small-acreage farms to large properties.

Grouped results show that 23% of farms fall between 50–99 acres, 19% are between 100–199 acres, and 22% operate on larger acreages (Figure 13).

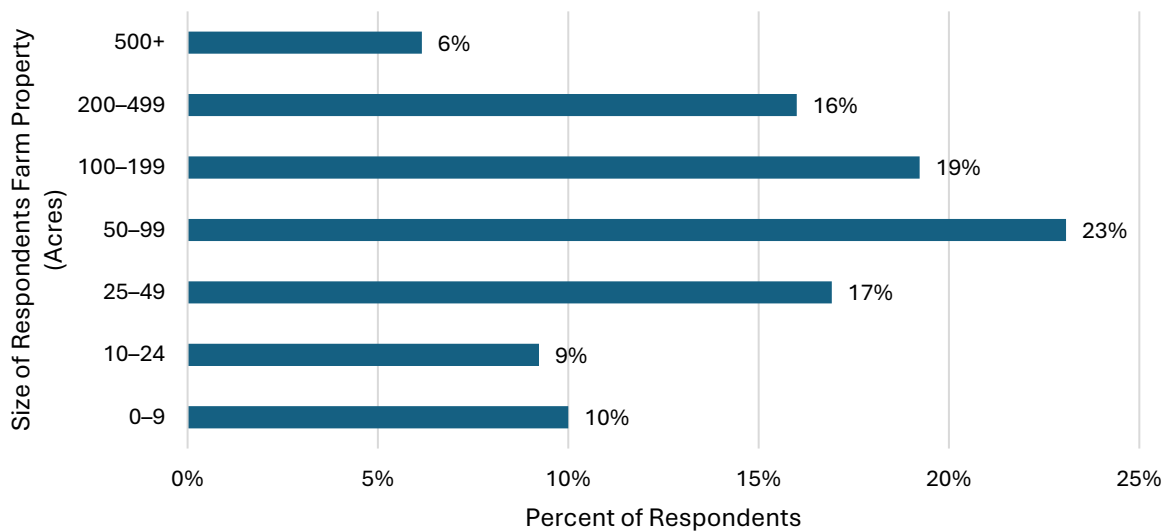


Figure 22. Size of farm properties (acres) (n=130).

The share of farm acreage dedicated to agritourism ranged from less than 2% of the farm (14%) to more than 50% of the farm (18%) with the largest group reported using 10-25% of the farm (19%) (Figure 14). This spread highlights that while some farms dedicate relatively small portions of land to activities like parking, pick-your-own fields, or trails, others have integrated agritourism much

more extensively into their overall operations. The even distribution suggests agritourism can work as both a complementary business activity and a major focus for farm businesses.

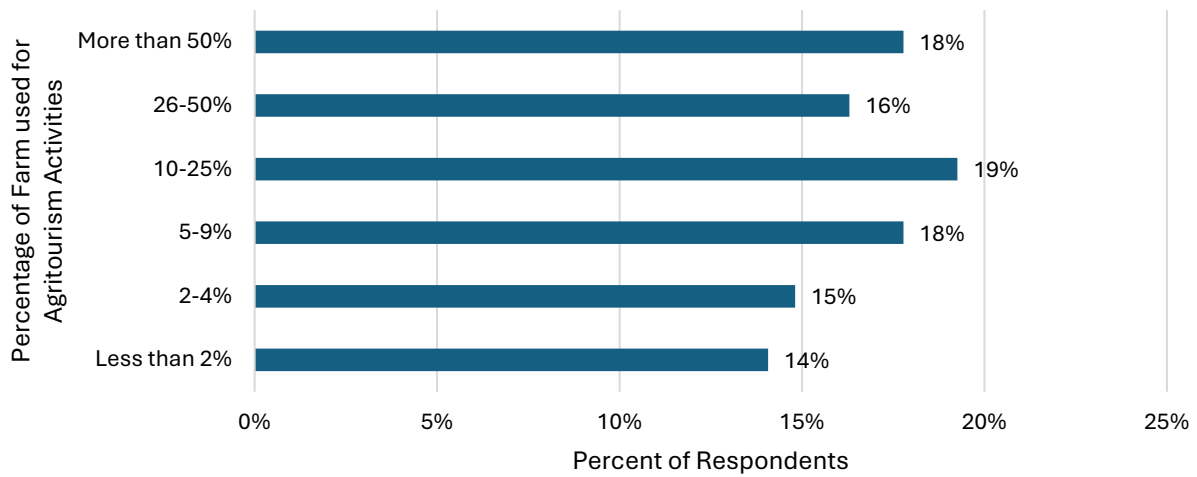


Figure 23. Portion of farm acreage currently being used for agritourism activities (n=135).

Agritourism operations are highly seasonal, with the busiest months aligning with summer and fall. The majority of businesses reported being open in August (87%), September (86%), July (86%), and June and October (82% each), reflecting the strong draw of warm-weather activities, harvest events, and fall attractions (Figure 15). In contrast, only 30% of agritourism farmers were open in January and 33% in February.

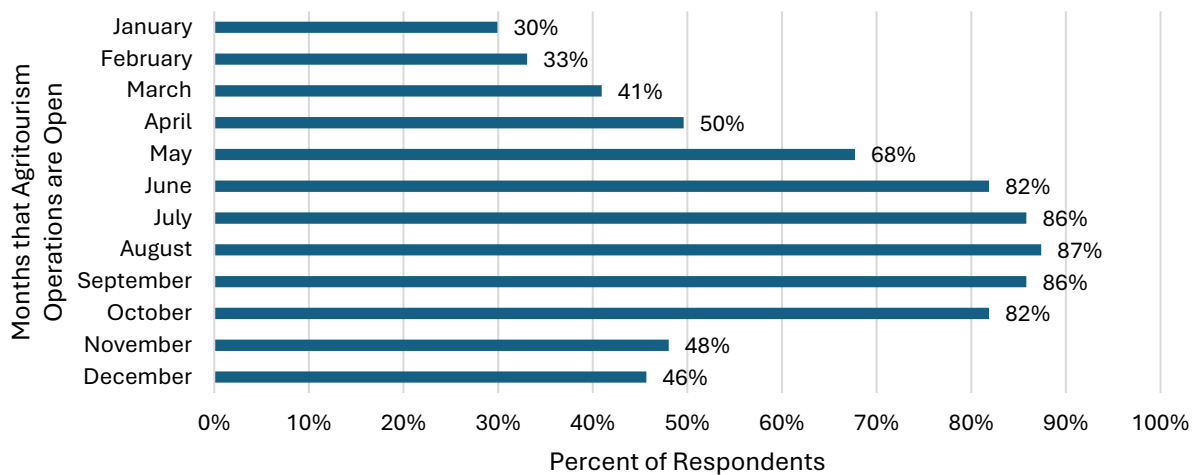


Figure 24. Months of the year agritourism operations are open (n=127).

In terms of weekly operations, the most common pattern is being open seven days a week, reported by 38% of agritourism farmers (Figure 16). The remaining businesses are fairly distributed across

fewer days, ranging from 1 to 6 days per week with one day per week being the least common (3%).

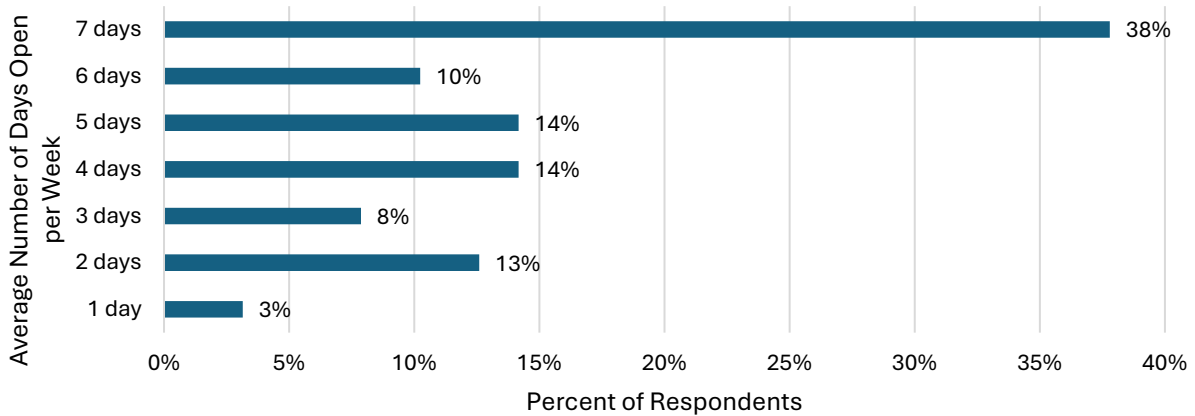


Figure 25. Days per week agritourism operations are open (n=127).

Doing business

Profits

Agritourism operations vary widely in their profitability. Roughly one-quarter (25%) of agritourism operators reported profits between \$10,000 and \$49,999 (Figure 17). A smaller portion (16%) achieved profits between \$50,000 and \$99,999. On the lower end, 13% earned \$9,999 or less, which may reflect early-stage ventures, or operations focused more on education and engagement more than income. Only 3% reported profits of \$500,000 or more, underscoring that high earnings are possible.

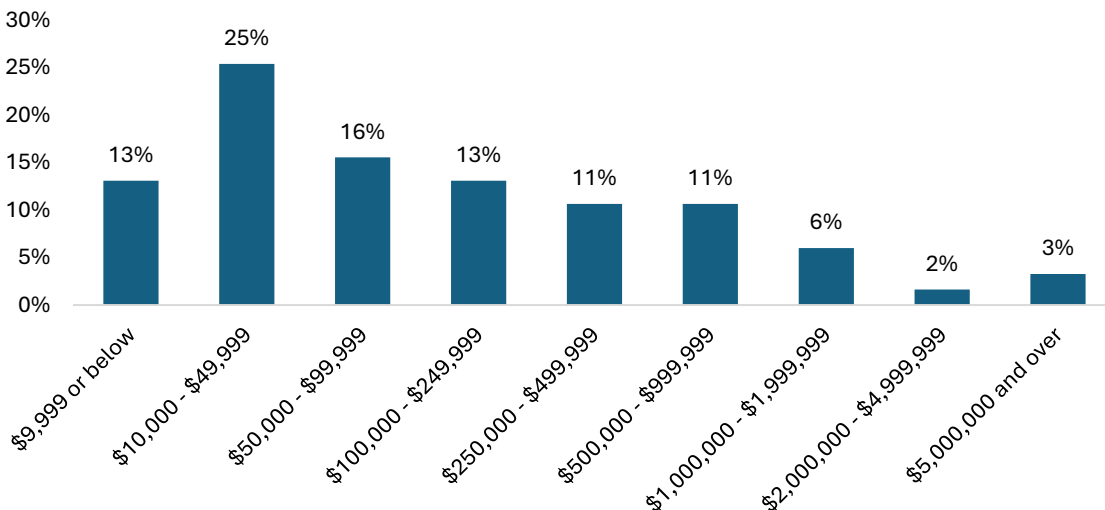


Figure 26. Agritourism operators revenue earned from agritourism offerings between January 2024 and December 2024 (n=122).

Majority (62%) of agritourism operators anticipate their agritourism profits will increase between the 2024 season to the 2025 (Figure 18). Some operators stated that they predict their revenues will

increase due to offering new experience and product. Other agritourism operators predicted their revenue will decrease due to poor weather/poor cropping seasons, uncertainty with the economy, decreased travel tourism in their area, and increased competition. Ultimately, there is optimism among agritourism operators that their business will continue to be successful.

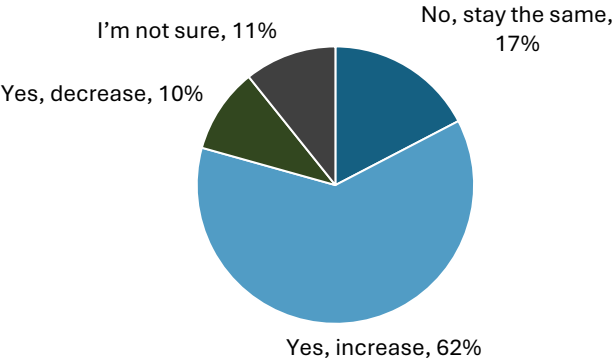


Figure 27. Agritourism operators anticipated revenue changes between 2024-2025 for their agritourism business (n=121).

Staff and wages

Farms participating in the survey reported hiring a wide range of staff to support their agritourism operations. Seasonal positions were the most common, with 1,515 people hired across full-time and part-time seasonal roles (Table 1). Part-time seasonal staff alone accounted for the largest number of hires (1,030 people), with some farms employing as many as 400 individuals during peak seasons. Year-round employment was also significant, with 576 people hired across full-time and part-time positions. On average, farms hired between 4 and 18 staff depending on the type of role, reflecting the mix of ongoing and seasonal labour needs across agritourism operations. In addition to paid staff, 87 farms reported a total of 260 family members who help out but are not on the payroll (an average of three per farm).

Table 3. The number of staff hired by agritourism operators related to agritourism offerings (include family members who are on payroll) (n=111).

Type of Hire	# of Farms Reporting	Total People Hired	Average per Farm	Maximum per Farm
Full-time, year-round	59	265	4	32
Part-time, year-round	48	311	6	55
Full-time seasonal	54	485	9	70
Part-time seasonal	58	1030	18	400
Casual	41	229	6	50

Across all farms reporting, a total of \$11.6 million was spent on wages for agritourism staff. Reported wage spending varied widely among operations, reflecting differences in scale and

staffing needs. The average annual wage expenditure per farm was approximately \$152,000, while the median was \$47,500, indicating that while a few larger operations employ significant numbers of staff, most farms operate with smaller teams and more modest payrolls.

Buildings and structures

The top three farm buildings and structures on an agritourism business include (Figure 19):

- Storage buildings (e.g., equipment or production storage) 84%
- Barn(s) 79%
- Farm store 69%

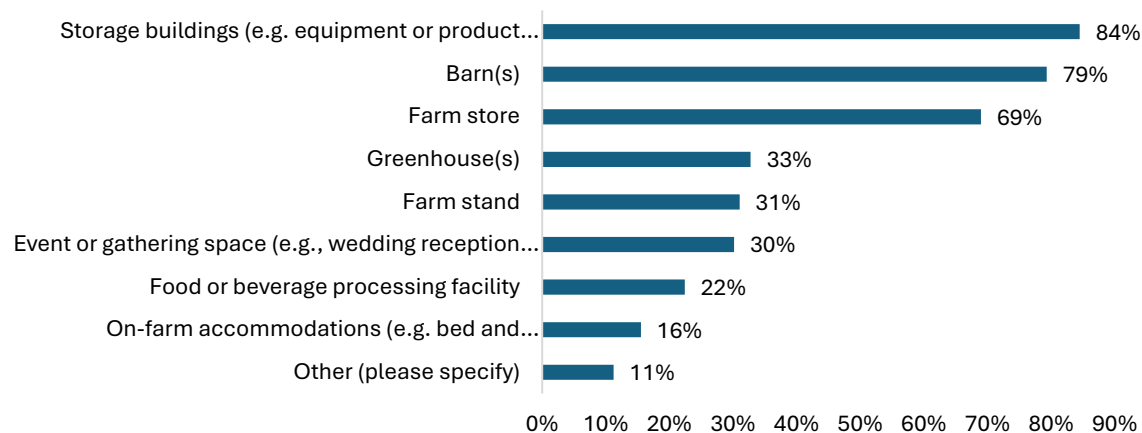


Figure 28. Types of farm buildings and/or structures on agritourism businesses properties (n=116). Please note, agritourism farmers could select multiple answers.

Farms reported an average of \$22,922 (median \$10,000)¹⁵ spent annually on maintenance for buildings, equipment, and infrastructure (Table 2). Of the agritourism operators planning on spending money on expanding their operations, the average reported amount is \$36,693.75 (median \$10,000).¹⁶ Almost a quarter of farmers (23%) are planning on not many any new investments.

Table 4. Breakdown of money spent on maintenance and adding new buildings, equipment, and infrastructure for agritourism businesses.

	Average	Median
Spent on maintenance for buildings, equipment, and infrastructure (n=101).	\$22,922	\$10,000
Spent on new buildings, equipment, and infrastructure (n=104).	\$36,693.75	\$10,000

¹⁵ One farm reported spending \$800,000 on maintenance. Given that this value significantly exceeded the range of other responses, they were removed as an outlier.

¹⁶ Two farms reported anticipated new building investments of approximately \$1 million. Given that these values significantly exceeded the range of other responses, they were removed as outliers.

Agritourism Visitors

In 2024, the number of farm visitors at agritourism farms ranged from just 1 to 600,000, with a total of 2,584,337 visitors represented. This spread reflects the diversity of agritourism operations, from small to large farms. The most common group was farms welcoming 1,000–4,999 visitors (26%), while another 18% reported 10,000–24,999 visitors, and 16% hosted 100–499 visitors (Figure 20). At the upper end, a smaller but notable share drew very large crowds, including 6% with 50,000–99,999 visitors and 5% with 100,000+ visitors annually.

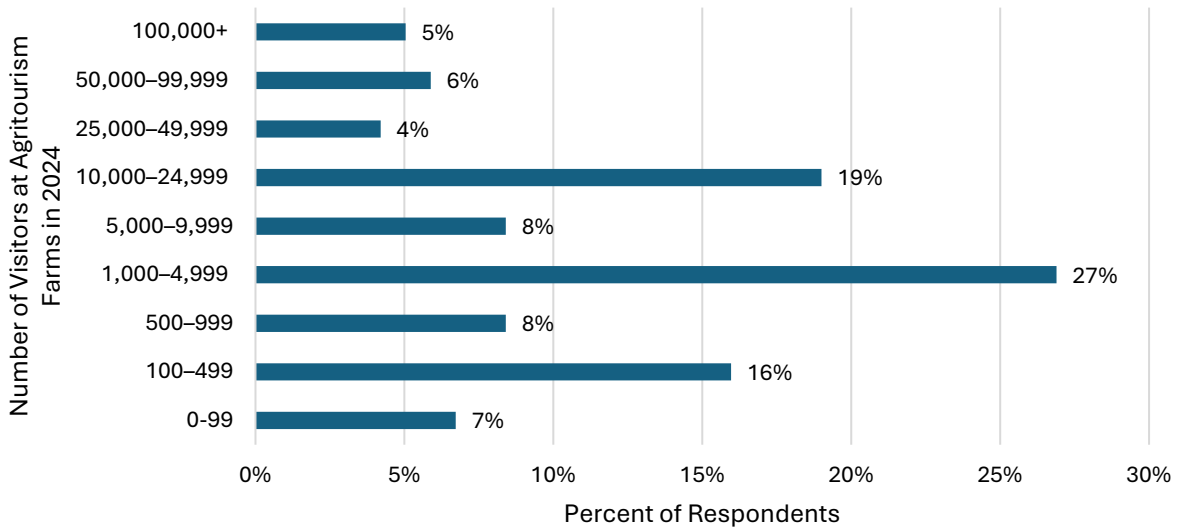


Figure 29. Approximate number of farm visitors in 2024 (n=119).

Looking ahead to 2025, most agritourism farmers are optimistic about visitor numbers with 58% expecting an increase and 19% expecting numbers to remain the same (Figure 21).

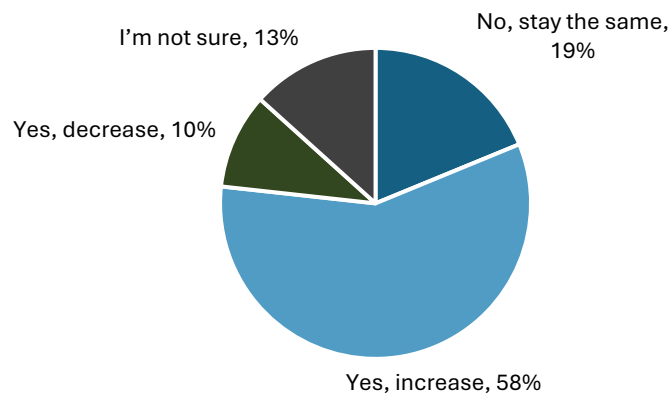


Figure 30. Respondent's predictions for visitor numbers at their farms in 2025 (n=127).

The survey results show that agritourism in Ontario is not limited to local audiences, with many farms attracting visitors from more than 50 km away. A majority of farms (82%) reported that at

least some of their visitors travel this distance, including 29% who said that 31–50% of their visitors and 21% who said more than half of their visitors come from further than 50 km (Figure 22). Only a very small number of agritourism farmers (1%) reported seeing no visitors from beyond 50 km. This demonstrates that Ontario agritourism operations often serve as regional destinations, drawing interest well beyond their immediate communities.

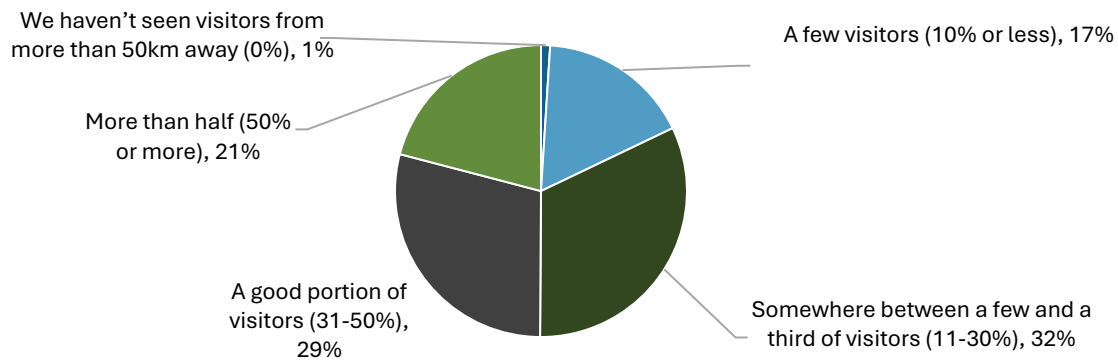


Figure 31. Predicted number of farm visitors that travel more than 50 km for farm experiences (n=125).

Motivations for offering agritourism

The most common reason agritourism farmers offer agritourism is to increase farm revenue (69%) (Figure 23). For many, agritourism is not optional but essential, with operators sharing that it is “the only way for the farm to be profitable” or “a necessity more so than a want.” Some also noted that additional revenue helps them adapt to challenges such as crop price fluctuations, natural disasters, or unexpected costs, reinforcing how central agritourism is for their overall business model.

Many agritourism farmers (64%) also said their motivation was to build direct connections with consumers. Many described wanting to “be part of the community,” “share our picturesque property,” or simply “love our space and love to share with others.” Others emphasized the joy in meeting new people and giving urban visitors the chance to spend meaningful time in the countryside. This sense of connection was often framed as reciprocal, with one respondent noting, “People who come here are grateful, and I love seeing their reactions.”

Diversifying the farm business was also a strong motivator (61%). Agritourism allows agritourism farmers to spread risk and create new income streams, with one farmer noting that it provides “different ways to buffer against bad years.” Others described it as a way to stabilize their operations over the long term, adding that diversification helps sustain both the farm and the family behind it.

Educating the public was also a big motivator for agritourism farmers (58%). Some offer farm tours, while others bring people in through experiences like sunflower walks, lavender fields, or animal encounters. As one participant put it, “Most people from cities enjoy experiencing farm life for a short time... agritourism lets me share the beauty of the countryside, the simplicity of farm work, and the unique local customs.” Agritourism is both a business strategy and a form of agricultural

literacy, giving visitors an authentic window into farm life.

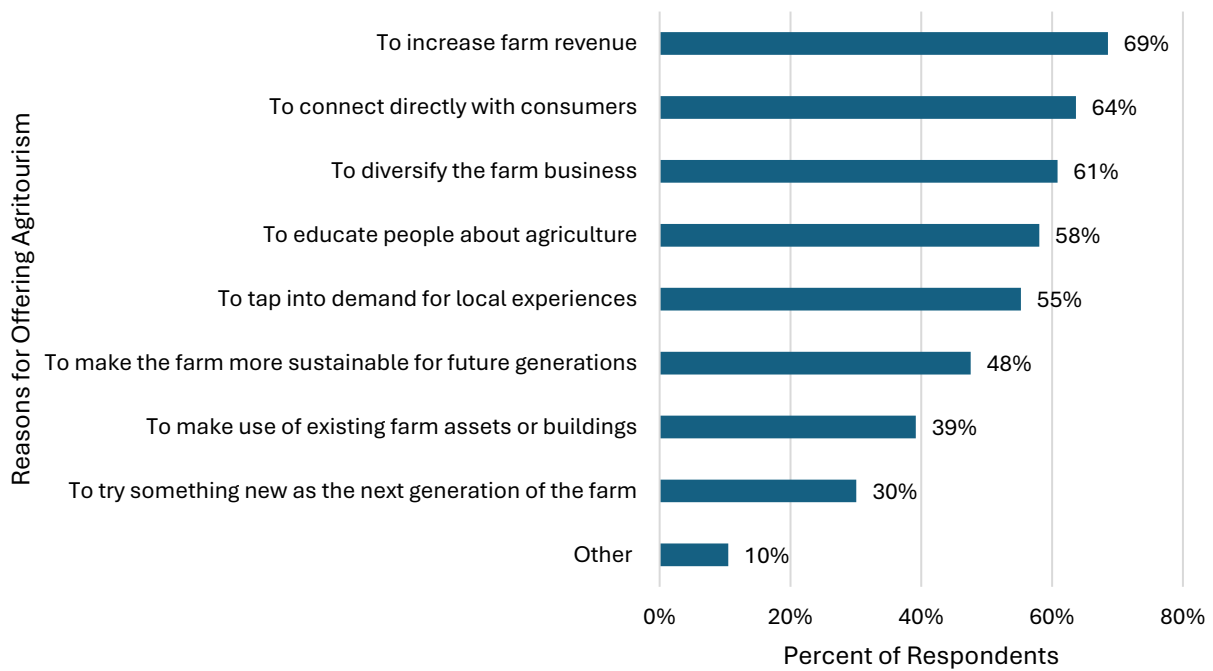
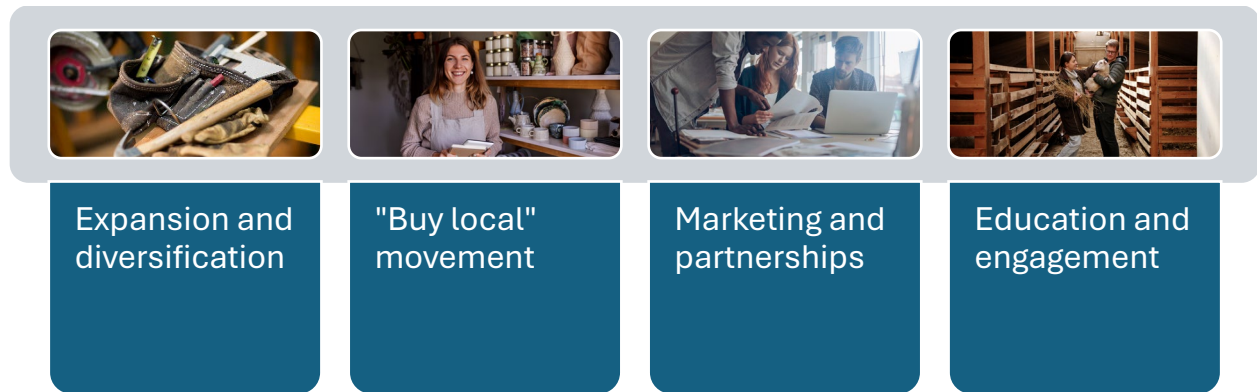


Figure 32. Reasons farmers offer agritourism on their farm (n=143).¹⁷ Please note, agritourism farmers could select multiple answers.

¹⁷ For agritourism farmers that indicated "other", responses included bringing the business to them, educating people on their food choices, the opportunity simply presented itself (e.g., community requested it or OSCIA opportunity), and having a shared experience with other farmers.

Opportunities

Agritourism operators highlighted a strong sense of optimism for the future of their agritourism business. With the following four opportunities coming up the most:



Opportunities for expansion and diversification was commonly reported. This included working towards new offerings such as accommodations, event hosting, and on-farm food services. Several respondents described plans to build or expand cafes, pancake houses, and bed-and-breakfast options. New experiences can help extend visitor seasons and attract broader audiences. One respondent noted, “Our wedding venue has been really well received. Eleven bookings for 2025 and already 13 for 2026.”

A separate survey question asked respondents to rate the level of opportunity presented by specific factors. The highest-rated opportunities aligned closely with the themes identified in written responses. Seventy percent of respondents said that growing consumer interest in local food and agriculture represented a big or major opportunity, and 65% pointed to growth in the local tourism sector (Figure 24). Agritourism provides direct connections between farmers and consumers, reinforcing Ontario’s “buy local” movement.

“Locals looking for more locally produced food and making relationships with local producers.”
- Agritourism operator

“Working together with nearby farms helps everyone draw more visitors.”
- Agritourism operator

Marketing and partnerships were also seen as important growth opportunities. In the ranking question, 45% identified marketing and promotion through local tourism initiatives as a big or major opportunity, and 40% highlighted partnerships with other agritourism businesses or events. Many operators described the value of collaboration, regional tourism networks, and

online promotion to attract visitors and share resources.

Education also emerged as a strong priority for many farms, with operators expressing a desire to teach visitors about food production, sustainability, and farm life. One participant emphasized the value of “developing agro-educational tourism projects,” while another described opportunities to “allow guests to learn about growing crops.” These educational elements reflect both an interest in consumer engagement and a response to the growing demand for authentic, experience-based tourism.

“Most people from cities enjoy experiencing farm life for a short time... agritourism lets me share the beauty of the countryside.”
- Agritourism operator

Some respondents also mentioned opportunities related to supportive policies. While zoning and permitting were identified as challenges for many, 15% said local bylaws or zoning policies that support agritourism were a major opportunity, suggesting potential for improvement where municipalities are actively enabling agritourism development.

While enthusiasm for growth was clear, several operators emphasized the importance of manageable expansion. One respondent advised, “Do what you can handle.”

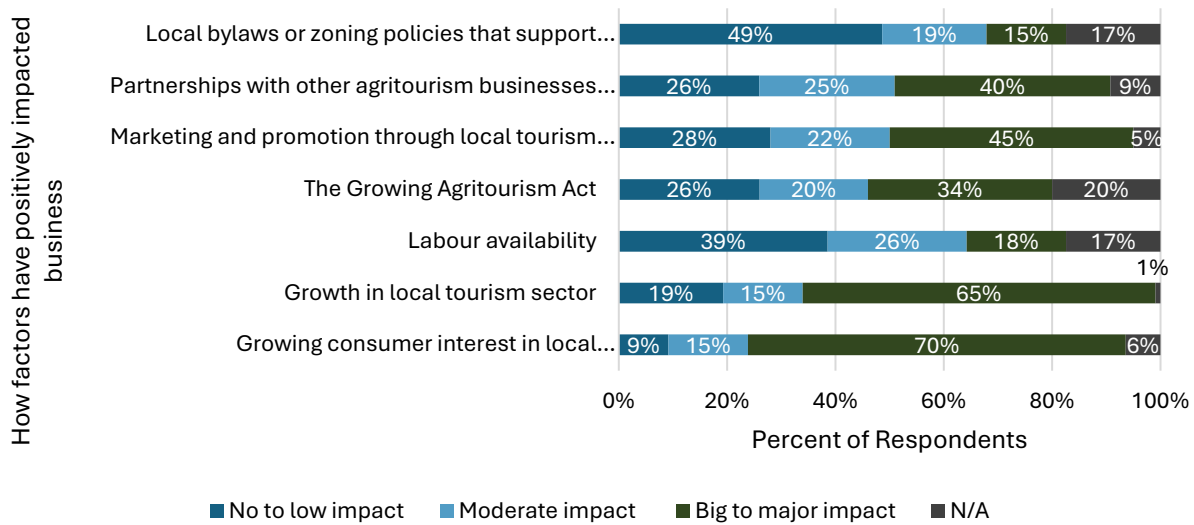


Figure 33. Level of impact of various factors on agritourism business opportunities. (n=110)

Challenges

While many operators are optimistic about future opportunities, survey responses also revealed several barriers that impact growth and day-to-day operations. With the following five challenges coming up the most:



Operators described challenges tied to the broader economy and changing customer expectations. Rising costs of living and high interest rates are limiting visitor spending and bookings, while seasonal fluctuations and distance from population centres restrict demand. Respondents emphasized the need to stay relevant, price appropriately, and engage visitors meaningfully. As one noted, “Local family budgets are tight, and we’re seeing decreased spending in 2025.” Inflation, high operating costs, and fuel prices add pressure. Almost half (48%) of respondents cited fuel and energy costs as a major challenge (Figure 25).

Zoning, permitting, and regulatory barriers were a top mentioned challenge. Operators described unclear or restrictive bylaws, inconsistent rules across municipalities, and lengthy permitting processes that increase costs and limit innovation. An agritourism operator mentioned that “We are limited by the activities allowed by our local planning department. For example, weddings would require a rezoning to commercial.” These concerns were reinforced in survey results with 42% saying that understanding or implementing local bylaws was a big or major challenge, and 46% said the same for restrictive local policies.

“Township is not helpful. We needed all kinds of permits which cost us way more than expected.”

- Survey respondent

Insurance and liability issues were a major concern. Participants described rising premiums, limited coverage, and a lack of policies suited to agritourism. “Insurance to actually meet our needs (and not break the bank)” remained out of reach for many. Over half (52%) identified insurance and liability costs as a big or major challenge. Rising input costs, including fuel, further impact profitability with respondents saying, “Fuel prices are eating away at our profit margins.”

“We’re competing for attention in a crowded tourism market.”

- Survey respondent

Labour and marketing challenges were also a common challenge with operators citing difficulties hiring and retaining staff, managing seasonal roles, and meeting wage expectations. Thirty-five percent identified skilled labour availability as a major challenge, and 21% said the same for general labour. Marketing and visibility were also barriers, with limited budgets and uncertainty about effective approaches. As one respondent said, “Cost of advertising and how to pick the right form” remains a challenge. In total, 39% identified marketing and promotion as a big or major issue.

Climate change, weather variability, and succession planning were also growing concerns: “I am over 75 and no family members locally available to take over.”

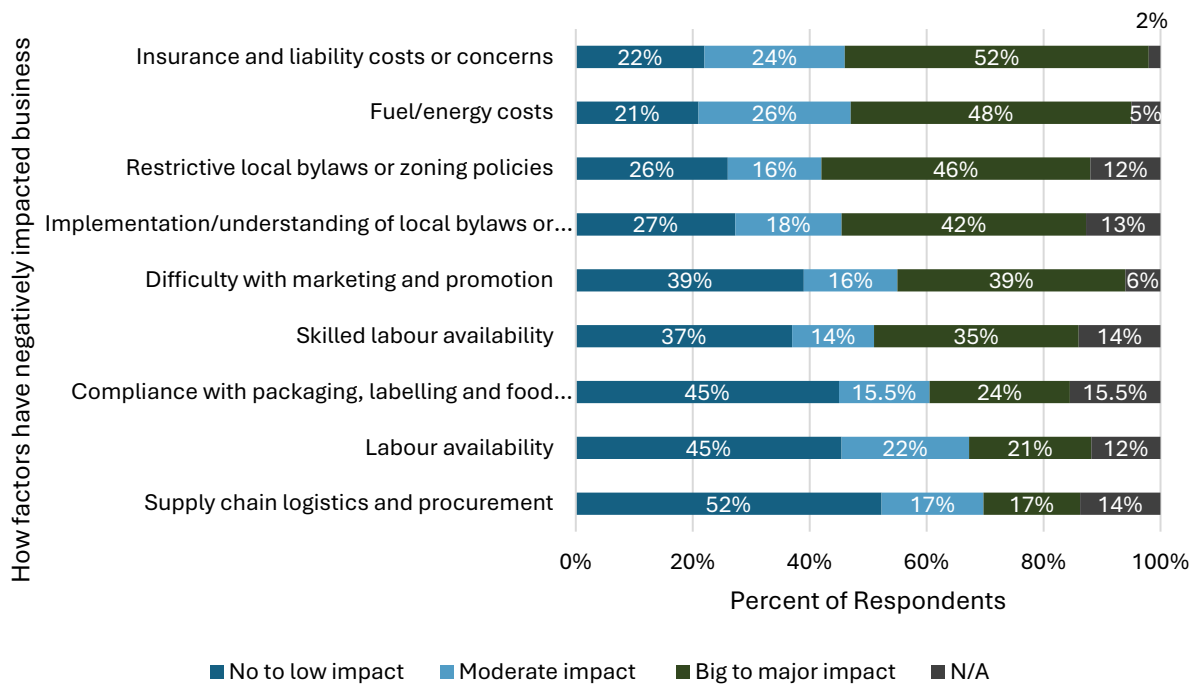


Figure 34. Level of impact of various factors on agritourism business. (n=110)

Regional Breakdown

Region	Municipality	Number of Respondents
Southern Ontario	BRANT	4
	CHATHAM-KENT	2
	ELGIN	3
	ESSEX	1
	HALDIMAND-NORFOLK	6
	HAMILTON	3
	LAMBTON	3
	MIDDLESEX	2
	NIAGARA	7
	OXFORD	4
Western Ontario	BRUCE	1
	DUFFERIN	1
	GREY	3
	HALTON	1
	HURON	2
	PEEL	3
	PERTH	3
	SIMCOE	7
	WATERLOO	8
WELLINGTON	8	
Central Ontario	DURHAM	14
	HALIBURTON	1
	HASTINGS	1
	KAWARTHA LAKES	1
	MUSKOKA	0
	NORTHUMBERLAND	8
	PARRY SOUND	0
	PETERBOROUGH	4
	PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY	7
	TORONTO	0
	YORK	6
Eastern Ontario	FRONTENAC	2
	LANARK	2
	LEEDS AND GRENVILLE	7
	LENNOX AND ADDINGTON	0
	OTTAWA	8
	PRESCOTT AND RUSSELL	2
	RENFREW	0
	STORMONT, DUNDAS AND GLENGARRY	5
	Northern Ontario	ALGOMA
COCHRANE		2
GREATER SUDBURY (CITY)		0

KENORA	0
MANITOULIN	1
NIPISSING	2
RAINY RIVER	0
SUDBURY (DISTRICT)	1
THUNDER BAY	0
TIMISKAMING	4

Appendix C: Economic impact analysis and methodology

Report Limitations

The report is provided for information purposes and is intended for general guidance only. It should not be regarded as comprehensive or a substitute for personalized, investment or business advice.

We have relied upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of all information and data obtained from survey respondents and public sources believed to be reliable. The accuracy and reliability of the findings and opinions expressed in the presentation are conditional upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of the information underlying them. As a result, we caution readers not to rely upon any findings or opinions for business or investment purposes and disclaim any liability to any party who relies upon them as such.

Economic Impact Analysis

Economic Impact Methodology

In general, economic impacts are viewed as being restricted to quantitative, well-established measures of economic activity. The most commonly used of these measures are output, GDP, employment and government revenue:

- **Output** is the total gross value of goods and services produced by a given company or industry measured by the price paid to the producer. This is the broadest measure of economic activity.
- **Gross Domestic Product (“GDP”)**, or value added, refers to the additional value of a good or service over the cost of inputs used to produce it from the previous stage of production. Thus, GDP is equal to the unduplicated value of the goods and services produced.
- **Employment** is the number of additional jobs created.
- **Government Revenues** are the total amount of revenues generated for different levels of government. Revenues arise from personal income taxes, indirect taxes, less subsidies, corporate income taxes, taxes on products and royalties. Please note that because tax revenues can frequently change due to modifications in tax policy, the government revenues in this report are estimates only and subject to change. They should be viewed as approximate in nature.

Economic impacts may be estimated at the direct, indirect, and induced levels:

- **Direct impacts** are due to changes that occur in “front-end” businesses that would initially receive expenditures and operating revenue as a direct consequence of the operations and activities of an industry, organization, or project.
- **Indirect impacts** arise from changes in activity for suppliers of the “front-end” businesses.
- **Induced impacts** arise from shifts in spending on goods and services as a consequence of changes to the payroll of the directly and indirectly affected businesses.

To estimate the economic impacts generated, MNP employed an input-output methodology using multipliers published by Statistics Canada. Input-output modelling is a widely used and widely accepted approach, making it recognizable by many different stakeholders and audiences. The structure of the approach also facilitates easy comparisons between reported results for different industries and organizations.

Economic Impact Modelling Methodology and Assumptions section provides more information about the approach and assumptions used. In reviewing these estimates, it is important to recognize that there is limited data on participation in agritourism by farms type. The estimates presented here were derived from the farmer survey and visitor survey. These surveys were widely advertised, however, participation was voluntary and the responses may not fully capture the extent of agritourism activity in Ontario.

Categories of Economic Contributions

The economic impacts generated by the agritourism in Ontario can be categorized as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 35: Categories of Economic Contributions of the Agritourism



On-farm Activities

Economic impacts created by the activities that occur on-farm such as the sale of products, events and experiences for guests visiting the farm.



Visitor Spending

Economic impacts created from spending on food, accommodation and transportation by those visiting the farm from more than 50 km away.



Capital Spending

Economic impacts created by investments in buildings and other infrastructure related to agritourism.

Economic Impacts of On-Farm Activities

Farms that offer agritourism generate economic impacts through the spending on goods, services and labour that go into producing agritourism products. To estimate the impacts, MNP developed estimates of the total revenues generated from on-farm activities in Ontario using information from the Survey of Farmers and Statistics Canada.

Table 1 shows the estimated revenues from on-farm agritourism activities. Total revenues were estimated to be approximately \$125.4 million. Sales of unprocessed and value-added products accounted for the majority of revenue (approximately 62%), while on-farm experiences, events and other activities accounted for the remaining 38%.

Table 5: Estimated Revenues from On-Farm Activities, 2025

Type of Activity	Amount (\$ million)
Sale of unprocessed farm products	\$44.6
Sale of value-added products (e.g., jams, oils, baked goods, cider, etc.)	\$33.5
On-farm experiences and activities (e.g., horseback riding, corn maze, pumpkin patch)	\$23.8
Events (e.g., weddings and other special events)	\$10.4
Other	\$13.1
Total	\$125.4

Table 2 presents the estimated economic impacts of on-farm agritourism activities. In 2025, these impacts were estimated to be:

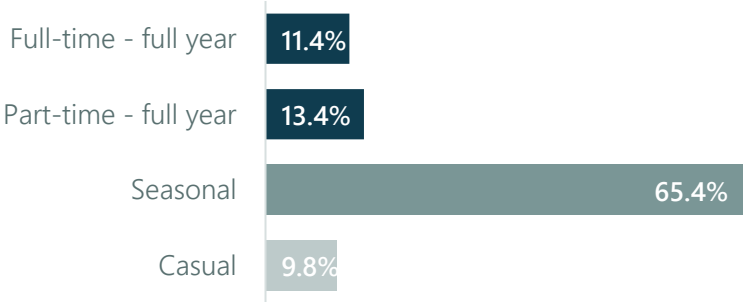
- Approximately \$206.4 million in total output, consisting of \$125.4 million of direct output and \$81 million of indirect and induced output.
- Approximately \$109.7 million in total GDP, including \$66.8 million of direct GDP and \$42.9 million of indirect and induced GDP.
- Approximately 5,380 total jobs, including 5,015 direct jobs and 365 indirect and induced jobs.
- Approximately \$10.4 million in total federal government tax revenue, \$9.1 million in total provincial tax revenue, and \$4.9 million in total municipal tax revenue.

Table 6: Estimated Economic Impacts from Farm Operation in 2024

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (Jobs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million) ¹⁸
Direct	\$125.4	\$66.8	5,015	\$5.2	\$4.4	\$2.9
Indirect & Induced	\$81.0	\$42.9	365	\$5.2	\$4.7	\$2.0
Total	\$206.4	\$109.7	5,380	\$10.4	\$9.1	\$4.9

As shown in Figure 2 the majority of direct employment in agritourism is seasonal or casual.

Figure 36: Distribution of Employment



Source: Survey of Farmers

Economic Impacts of Capital Investments

Capital spending on buildings and infrastructure to support agritourism generates economic impacts through construction-related spending. To estimate the value of capital investments in agritourism infrastructure we used information from the Survey of Farmers to calculate the capital spending as a share of revenue. This was then applied to the revenue estimates in Table 1 to estimate capital investments in 2025.

Capital investment in agritourism in 2025 was estimated to be approximately \$11 million. As shown in

¹⁸ MNP assumed the Hill & Levene Schools of Business paid no municipal taxes, reflecting the common practice of universities being exempt from such payments.

Table 3 this investment was estimated to have generated:

- Approximately \$19.5 million in total output, consisting of \$11 million of direct output and \$8.5 million of indirect and induced output.
- Approximately \$10.3 million in total GDP, including \$5.7 million of direct GDP and \$4.6 million of indirect and induced GDP.
- Approximately 88 total jobs, including 49 direct jobs and 39 indirect and induced jobs.
- Approximately \$1.2 million in total federal government tax revenue, \$1 million in total provincial tax revenue, and \$0.6 million in total municipal tax revenue.

Table 7: Estimated Economic Impacts from of Capital Investment, 2025

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (Jobs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Direct	\$11.0	\$5.7	49	\$0.6	\$0.4	\$0.4
Indirect & Induced	\$8.5	\$4.6	39	\$0.6	\$0.6	\$0.2
Total	\$19.5	\$10.3	88	\$1.2	\$1.0	\$0.6

Visitor Economic Impacts

There were estimated to be between 4.7 million and 6 million guests that visited agritourism operators in 2025. Some of these guests were from the local area and some were out-of-town visitors. Those that were from outside the local area create additional economic impacts through their spending on food, accommodation, and transportation while visiting the local area.

To estimate the number of visitors to agritourism operators, MNP used information on spending, number of guests and place of residence of guests from the Survey of Farmers and the Farm Visitor Survey, along with the point-of-sale data provided by farms. Guests from more than 50 km from the farm were considered to be visitors.

Table 4 shows the estimated number of visitors by origin. Approximately 54% of guests were estimated to be from outside the local area. Of these, 40% were domestic, 52% were from the United States, and the remainder were international visitors. The majority of visitors (approximately 90%), regardless of country of origin, were on a day trip. Overnight visitors were often visiting family or friends or had a vacation property in the area.

Table 8: Estimated Visitors to Ontario Agritourism Operations, 2025

Estimated Out-of-Town and International Visitors	Visitors (million)
Domestic (>50 km from farm)	1 to 1.3
United States	1.3 to 1.6
Other International	0.2 to 0.3
Total Visitors	2.5 to 3.2
Overnight Visitors	0.25 to 0.3

Table 5 shows the estimated spending by visitors. For overnight visitors, one night of accommodation was assumed to be attributable to agritourism.

Table 9: Estimated Visitor Spending

Type of Visitor Expenditure	Spending Per Day Visitor	Spending Per Overnight Visitor	Estimated Total Spending (\$ million)
Meals	\$60	\$60	\$170.6 million
Transportation	\$20	\$20	\$56.9 million
Accommodation		\$65	\$18.5 million
Total spending	\$80	\$145	\$246 million

Table 6 presents the estimated economic impacts generated by out-of-town visitors. In 2025, their expenditure was estimated to have generated:

- Approximately \$407.1 million in total output, consisting of \$213.9 million of direct output and \$193.2 of indirect and induced output.
- Approximately \$193 million in total GDP, including \$93 million of direct GDP and \$100 million of indirect and induced GDP.
- Approximately 3,200 total jobs, including 2,400 direct jobs and 800 indirect and induced jobs.
- Approximately \$26.1 million in total federal government tax revenue, \$21.9 in total provincial tax revenue, and \$8.3 in total municipal tax revenue.

Table 10: Estimated Economic Impacts from Out-of-town Visitor Expenditure in 2025

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (Jobs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Direct	\$213.9	\$93.0	2,425	\$13.5	\$9.6	\$2.8
Indirect & Induced	\$193.2	\$100.0	840	\$12.6	\$12.3	\$5.5
Total	\$407.1	\$193.0	3,265	\$26.1	\$21.9	\$8.3

Summary of Economic Impacts

Table 7 presents the estimated total economic impacts generated by agritourism in Ontario in 2025:

- Approximately \$633 million in total output, consisting of \$350.3 million of direct output and \$282.7 million of indirect and induced output.
- Approximately \$313 million in total GDP, including \$165.5 million of direct GDP and \$147.5 million of indirect and induced GDP.
- Approximately 8,700 total jobs, including 7,500 direct jobs and 1,200 indirect and induced jobs.
- Approximately \$37.7 million in total federal government tax revenue, \$32 million in total provincial tax revenue, and \$13.8 million in total municipal tax revenue.

Table 11: Summary of the Economic Impacts

	Output (\$ million)	GDP (\$ million)	Employment (Jobs)	Federal Tax (\$ million)	Provincial Tax (\$ million)	Municipal Tax (\$ million)
Direct	\$350.3	\$165.5	7,489	\$19.3	\$14.4	\$6.1
Indirect & Induced	\$282.7	\$147.5	1,245	\$18.4	\$17.6	\$7.7
Total	\$633.0	\$313.0	8,734	\$37.7	\$32.0	\$13.8

Comparisons

To provide perspective on the impacts of agritourism MNP compared revenues from agritourism to selected farm revenues in Ontario and to visitation. These comparisons show that:

- Agritourism revenues are equivalent to approximately five percent of gross revenues for farms producing fruits, vegetables and non-forage crops in Ontario.¹⁹
- Agritourism revenues were estimated to be roughly equivalent to the annual revenues generated by the production of oats, barley, canola and mixed grains in Ontario.²⁰
- There were estimated to be between 3 and 4.5 million visits to farms offering agritourism products by residents of the local area. This is equivalent to one in four Ontario residents visiting a farm.²¹

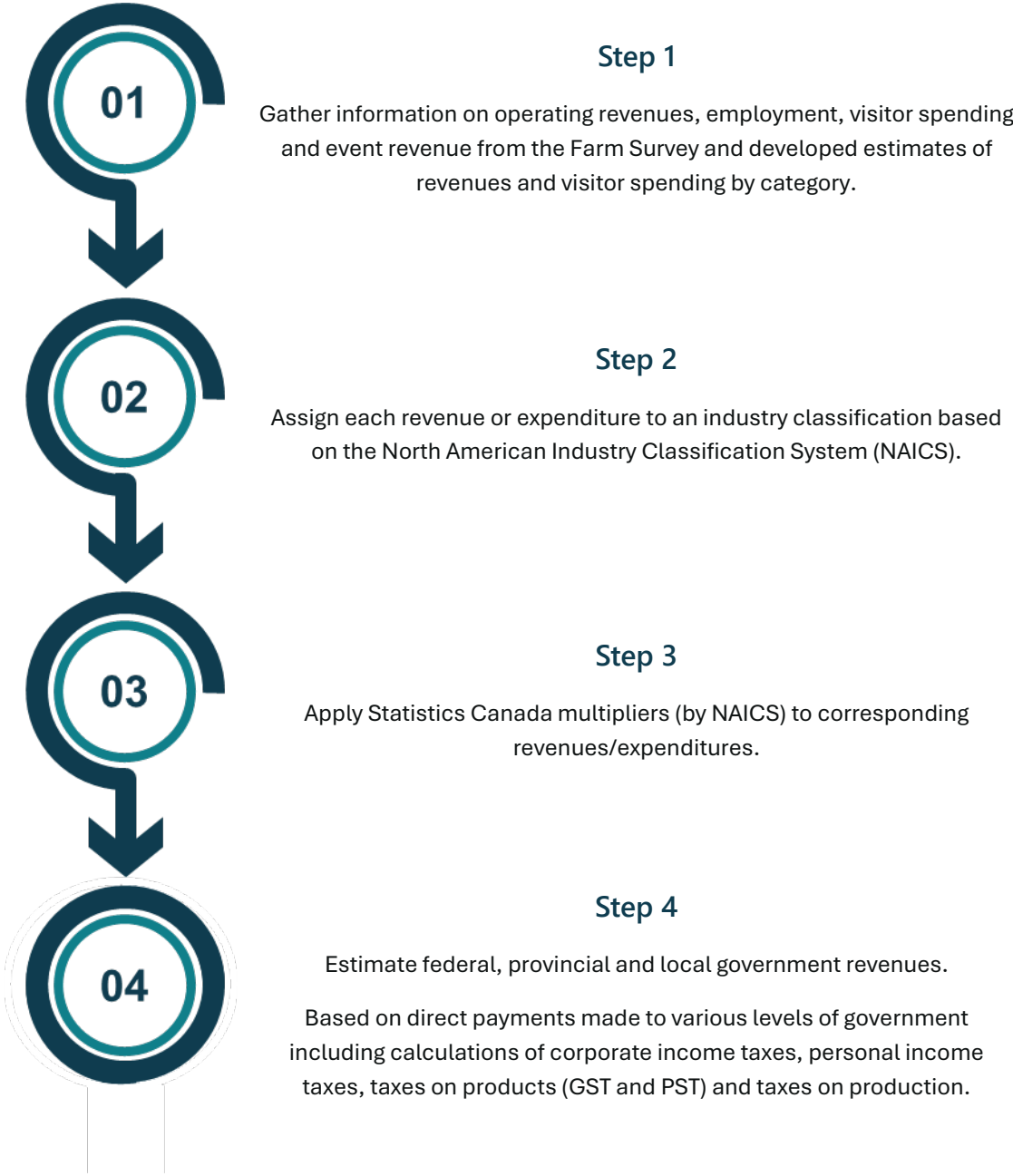
¹⁹ According to data from Statistics Canada farm operating revenues for farms producing fruits, vegetables and non-forage crops were between \$2 billion and \$3 billion between 2022 and 2024 (see Statistics Canada. [Table 32-10-0136-01 Farm operating revenues and expenses, annual](#))

²⁰ According to data from Statistics Canada farm operating revenues for farms producing oats, barley, canola and mixed grain were between \$125 million and \$133 million between 2022 and 2024 (see Statistics Canada. [Table 32-10-0136-01 Farm operating revenues and expenses, annual](#))

²¹ In 2025 the population of Ontario was approximately 16 million (see Statistics Canada. [Table 17-10-0009-01 Population estimates, quarterly](#))

Economic Impact Modelling Methodology and Assumptions

MNP's approach to economic impact modelling is based on published Statistics Canada multipliers and input-output modelling. Below is a step-by-step overview of our approach to estimating the economic impacts.



Estimates of Revenues by Products Sold and Activity

The table below shows the revenue estimates by category of agricultural product farms produce. For example, the category fruits, vegetables, eggs etc. includes farms which have one or more of these as their main product. They may also produce other products.

Agricultural Product	Revenue (\$ million)	Share of Revenue (percentage)				
		Sale of unprocessed farm products	Events (e.g. weddings and other special events)	On-farm experiences and activities	Sale of value-added products	Other
Fruits, Vegetables, Eggs, etc.	\$113.8	37%	8%	13%	29%	13%
Maple syrup	\$3.0	22%	1%	18%	58%	1%
Honey and Related Products	\$1.1	9%	0%	6%	85%	0%
Other*	\$7.5	1%	23%	76%	0%	0%
Total	\$125.4	36%	8%	19%	27%	10%

Estimates of Number of Guests

To estimate the number of on-farm guests we used total revenues (table above) and the average spending per guest on products purchased on-farm reported in POS data and the farmers survey. The table below shows the resulting estimates.

Agricultural Product	Average on-farm spending per guest	Number of guests (low)	Number of guests (high)
Fruits, Vegetables, Poultry etc.	\$20-\$25	4,448,750	5,687,500
Maple syrup	\$25	120,000	120,000
Honey and Related Products	\$40	28,125	28,125
Horseback riding*	\$85-\$100	75,000	88,235

*Estimates are based on 50 farms providing horseback riding or similar horse experience.

Appendix D: Recommended Census of Agriculture changes

Current data on agritourism activity in Ontario is limited, making it challenging to fully understand the size, scope, and economic contribution of the sector. Strengthening agritourism-related data collection (particularly through the Census of Agriculture) would provide a more accurate evidence base to support future economic studies, policy development, and sector advocacy. The following recommendation outlines opportunities to improve how agritourism is captured in [national agricultural data](#).

Expand on Q64 to differentiate between:

- On-site sales
- Off-site sales including direct deliveries to the consumers.

Add a question on participation in agritourism such as:

- Did this operation offer on-farm experiences to consumers? (Yes/No)
- **[If yes] Which of the following on-farm experiences were offered:**
 - Weddings, special events
 - Farm tours or educational workshops
 - Animal feeding or petting area
 - Entertainment (e.g., corn mazes, festivals etc.)
 - Horseback riding
 - Wellness activities (e.g., yoga, retreats etc.)
 - Other
- **What percentage of revenue is generated from on-farm experiences?**

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