

**DRAFT**

**Assessing the Agritourism and Farm-Based  
Education Potential of your Region and your  
Farm Property**



Doolarie Singh-Knights (Ph.D.)  
Extension Specialist,  
West Virginia University  
Morgantown, WV

Adapted from the "Farm and Country Tourism on your Property: Assessment Tool" of  
the CRC for Sustainable Tourism Development, Queensland, Australia



## Assessing the Agrotourism Potential of your Region and Property

The addition of an agrotourism offering to your existing farming operation may yield benefits that are personally rewarding and far reaching. These benefits include:

- Generating new or secondary income for farm operators;
- Diversifying product lines and markets;
- Allowing direct feedback from consumers about preferences for products and services;
- Providing urban people and tourists with an experience of rural living, thereby creating a “culture of understanding” about the importance of agriculture in rural communities – thus, reducing conflicts over farm practices and strengthening public support for the existence of farms;
- Preserving the visual and cultural rural landscape;
- Reducing out-migration by providing jobs and diversifying the rural economy, and
- Creating eventual market contacts with urban centers.

The following assessment tool offers a way to make a preliminary assessment about the ‘magnetism’ of your region and property – the extent to which they can attract tourists as a result of their characteristics. It is based on the premise that the region and your property are the ‘foundation stones’ for agritourism activities; the more magnetic the region and property are, the more likely you are to attract visitors and the more likely you are to develop a successful agritourism business. This assessment tool is adapted from ***the “Farm and Country Tourism on your Property: Assessment Tool” of the CRC for Sustainable Tourism Development, Queensland, Australia.***

This tool consists of 60 statements that are expressed in very positive terms and represent ideal situations. You are asked to honestly evaluate each statement and allocate a score from 1 to 5 to show how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement.

Part A offers a way to examine the tourism potential of the region (of the state) where your operation is located. If the region can attract persons to it, the more likely tourists are to visit your property.

Part B offers a way to examine the tourism potential of your property. The more attractive your property is in terms of its characteristics, the more likely tourists are to visit.

Part C helps you evaluate your agritourism/farm-based education potential based on the potential of both the region and your property, and offers some interpretation of your findings as well as recommendations for further action. Whether or not you decide that agritourism is right for you, or the marketing strategies you will pursue if you decide to invest in an agritourism venture, will depend on your final placement on the tourism potential grid.

Once you have scored each statement, add up each block of scores and transfer the section sub-totals to the summary tables on page 11. Follow the instructions to obtain your final scores. Results of the total scores are explained on page 12.

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<b>AGROTOURISM DECISION MATRIX FOR EVALUATING POTENTIAL OFFERING</b>					
<b>RATING</b>	<b>5 Strongly Agree</b>	<b>4 Agree</b>	<b>3 Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>1 Strongly Disagree</b>
	<b>PART A: REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>				<b>RATING</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Natural Beauty of Your Region</b>				
a.	The region has a diverse range of geographic features such as hills, mountains, rivers and/or streams, soils and colors.				
b.	The region has an abundance and variety of native animals that are readily accessible and visible to visitors				
c.	The vegetation in the region is very diverse, with an abundance of flowering plants, interesting trees or shrubs, and habitat areas for native wildlife.				
d.	Natural and man-made water features exist and offer many opportunities for recreational activities.				
e.	Traveling through this region is a visually stimulating experience.				
	<b>Sub-Total 1</b>				
<b>2</b>	<b>Cultural and Social Characteristics of Your Region</b>				
a.	The region has a rich history, which has been developed for visitors, and is represented by many historic buildings and homes, and contains many historic settings such as Great Houses, abandoned estates, and historic villages or towns.				
b.	The region maintains a strong link with its past, with an abundance of museums, monuments, historic markers and historic buildings.				
c.	The region actively promotes the preservation of historic information and knowledge by maintaining education and interpretation centers.				
d.	Local celebrations such as fairs, agricultural shows, and special festivals (such as art and crafts, music etc.) are attractions for visitors to the area.				
e.	In spite of a rich heritage, the region embraces diversity and all visitors are made to feel welcomed.				
	<b>Sub-Total 2</b>				

<b>3</b>	<b>Sports and Recreational Offerings in Your Region</b>	
a.	The region has a wide variety of developed sporting facilities/opportunities such as golf courses, mini-golf, go-carts, bowling, arcades, etc.	
b.	The region has an abundance of facilities suitable for children’s recreational pursuits such as playgrounds, parks and safe play areas.	
c.	The region boasts a wide variety of tourism activities such as horse-riding trails, nature trails, hiking tracks, and bike trails.	
d.	There are well-catered facilities for canoeing, boating, sailing, windsurfing, diving, fishing, swimming and the like.	
e.	The region provides many opportunities for adventurous people to pursue more extreme recreational activities such as off-road driving, hang-gliding, caving, rock climbing, parachuting/sky-diving, and ballooning.	
	<b>Sub-Total 3</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Shopping and Commercial Facilities of Your Region</b>	
a.	The region is serviced by a wide selection of shops including general stores, specialty shops and gift shops catering to tourists.	
b.	The commercial needs of residents and visitors are well served with adequate banking, postal, mobile telephone receptivity and internet facilities.	
c.	The region is well served with automotive, marine, and other necessary repair, maintenance and refueling facilities.	
d.	Tourists and local residents are well catered for with clubs, hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres and other entertainment and food and beverage services.	
e.	Visitors to the region can be comfortably accommodated in a wide range of hotels, motels, camping parks, bed & breakfast/guest farms, cottages and inns.	
	<b>Sub-Total 4</b>	

<b>5</b>	<b>Public Infrastructure to Support Tourism in Your Region</b>	
a.	The region is well serviced by transport services including road and/or air, as well as a wide range of transport rental options.	
b.	The region has adequate and reliable emergency medical facilities.	
c.	Adequate police and other emergency services maintain the security and safety of residents and visitors to the area.	
d.	Public areas such as parks, wayside stops, toilets and streetscapes, are clean, tidy and well maintained.	
e.	The region assists visitors by providing tourist information centers, maps, brochures, interpretation of local attractions and features, tours, local guides, signage, and other tourism supportive services.	
	<b>Sub-Total 5</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Attitudes Toward Tourists in Your Area</b>	
a.	The region is investing a lot of energy and resources into attracting tourists to the area.	
b.	The tourism infrastructure (including private and public tourism services) is well established and meets the needs of visitors to the region.	
c.	Local businesses meet the needs of visitors in a warm and welcoming manner.	
d.	People involved in tourism related businesses and services in the region cater to visitors from other cultures in a sympathetic and understanding manner.	
e.	When I travel within this region I am always made welcome, even though I may be a stranger.	
	<b>Sub-Total 6</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Accessibility of Your Region</b>	
a.	The road system in this region is well developed.	
b.	Visitors easily navigate the roads in this region, and there is extensive road and tourist signage.	
c.	Traffic along the main access routes runs freely at all times.	
d.	This region is close enough to other attractive regions/attractions (10-30 mile radius) to ensure that tourists will find it rewarding to visit here.	
e.	The farm is in close proximity to a non-farm population threshold of 5,000 to >10,000 (40 mile radius).	
	<b>Sub-Total 7</b>	

<b>8</b>	<b>Existing Tourism Activity in Your Region</b>	
a.	A number of different tourism operations currently operate in the region (e.g. small businesses, family run operations or large corporate businesses).	
b.	The region is serviced by a domestic/international airport, major highway, or developed roads which will allow easy access to your region and destination.	
c.	The tourism industry in your region is <b>NOT</b> seasonal due to climate or special events/festival.	
d.	The current tourist market in the region is large enough for your business and competing tourism products.	
e.	The region provides opportunities to create alliances with existing tourism enterprises in your area (e.g. tour operators, accommodation providers, complementary attractions, and gift shops).	
	<b>Sub-Total 8</b>	

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<b>AGROTOURISM DECISION MATRIX FOR EVALUATING POTENTIAL OFFERING</b>					
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	<b>PART B: PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS</b>				<b>RATING</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Natural Features of Your Property</b>				
a.	The property contains or has visible off-site areas of spectacular beauty, with exceptional views and interesting landforms.				
b.	The property has a diverse range of natural flora with many examples of native vegetation systems and natural habitats.				
c.	There is an abundance of native wildlife on or adjacent to the property, which can be readily observed by visitors.				
d.	Water features are on or near to the property such as lakes, dams, rivers and streams are ideal for water-based activities including boating, swimming and fishing.				
e.	There are many nearby features and attractions that are readily accessible from this property.				
	<b>Sub-Total 9</b>				
<b>10</b>	<b>Built Features and Cultural Artifacts on Your Property</b>				
a.	The property includes, or is close to important historic and cultural features such as historic buildings, indigenous sites, fossil deposits, and other historical artifacts such as signs of early explorers, museums etc.				
b.	Commercial, industrial or agricultural processes (such as production, harvesting and value-adding) that would be interesting to visitors are conducted on the property.				
c.	There are many recreational amenities close at hand, such as walking trails, riding trails, golf or min-golf courses, national parks and the like.				
d.	The property contains interesting examples of old equipment and other memorabilia that can be used to offer visitors an interesting means of touring the property.				
e.	The property has other features of interest that are considered to be of great interest to prospective visitors.				
	<b>Sub-Total 10</b>				

<b>11</b>	<b>Site Infrastructure</b>	
a.	Electricity (or other power supply), water and sewerage treatment facilities are sufficient for the extra demand placed upon them, or can be upgraded to meet the new requirements.	
b.	Roads (including the entrance to the property), pathways and car-parking facilities are sufficient, or can be upgraded to the level required for the proposed venture.	
c.	Food and restaurant services, and lodging are available (on-site or nearby) to meet the needs of visitors, or are planned for inclusion in the new venture.	
d.	Picnic and barbeque areas, children play areas, signage, walkways with identified restricted areas are updated to meet the needs of visitors, or are planned for inclusion in the new venture.	
e.	The site maintains a high level of safety practices and safe facilities for visitors, and will work closely with an insurance provider to maintain safe facilities.	
	<b>Sub-Total 11</b>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Business Potential and Human Resource Features</b>	
a.	The property can supply or hire appropriately skilled labor to meet the needs of the proposed venture (visitor management, social skills, risk mitigation, etc.).	
b.	The owners have, or will be able to, develop the business management skills necessary for the ongoing operation of the new venture.	
c.	The time demands of other routine or seasonal activities on the property are unlikely to interfere with efficient operation of the proposed venture.	
d.	The property has a uniquely differentiated product that will attract repeated visitors.	
e.	The property has significant profit potential, either as a stand-alone venture or as part of the overall agricultural operation (significant potential for increased agricultural production)	
	<b>Sub-Total 12</b>	

<b>13</b>	<b>Business Skills and Personal Qualities</b>	
a.	I am motivated to take on a new enterprise and manage the new risk that may arise.	
b.	I have, or will be able to, develop a business plan for the new agritourism/farm-based education operation, including a solid marketing, financial, and risk management plan.	
c.	I have a lot of energy and contagious enthusiasm for what I do, enjoy interacting with a wide variety of people, and enjoy sharing my work with others.	
d.	I do not mind people wandering around my farm or answering questions about my farming practices.	
e.	I am a good planner/organizer and have creative ideas, and adapt to change well.	
	<b>Sub-Total 13</b>	

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## SUMMARY TABLES AND INTERPRETING YOUR SCORES

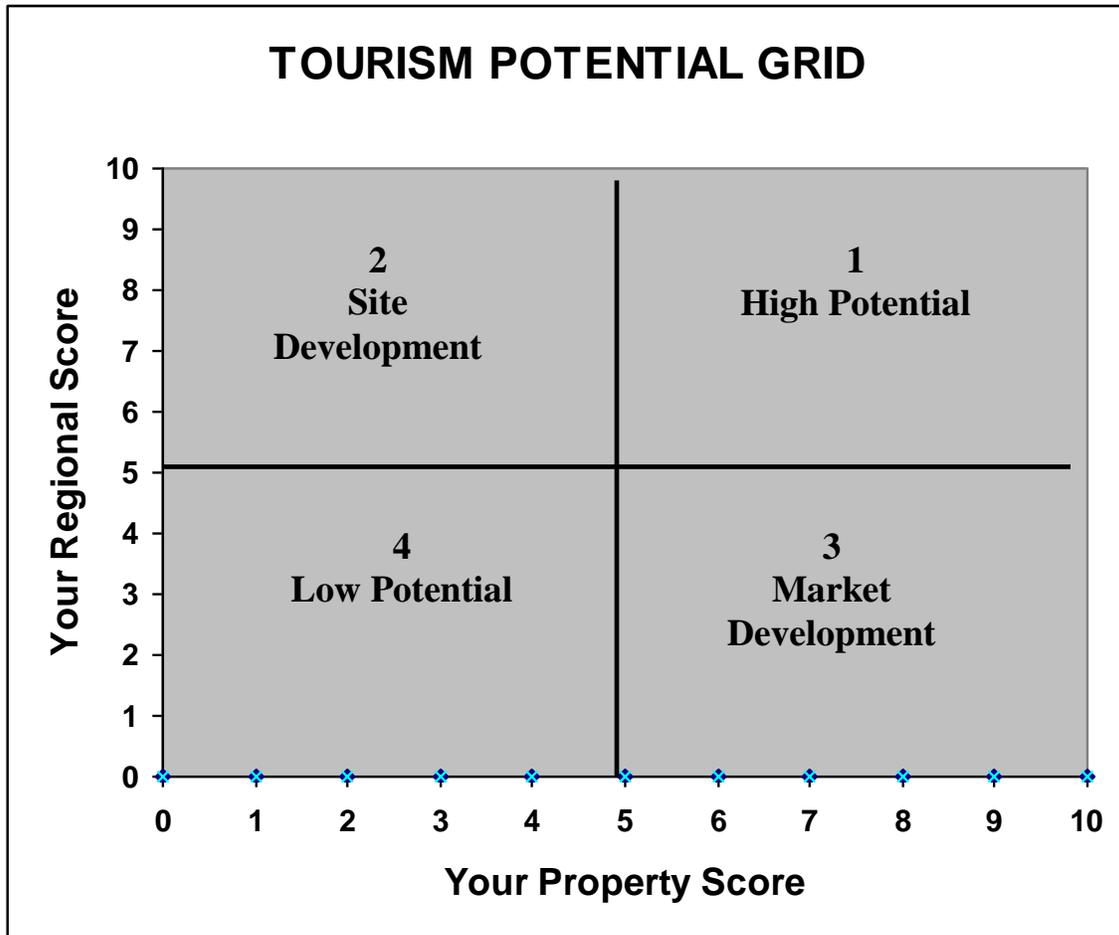
Add all the scores for the regional characteristics (Part A) to get a gross total for regional characteristics. The gross total will fall between 0 and 200. Then divide the gross total by 20 to create a 'Standardized Regional Score' that should fall between 0 and 10.

<b>PART A: REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
1. Natural Beauty 2. Cultural and Social characteristics 3. Recreational Offerings in Your Region 4. Shopping and Commercial Characteristics 5. Public Infrastructure to Support Tourism 6. Attitudes Towards Tourists 7. Accessibility 8. Existing Tourism Activity	
<b>Gross Total</b>	
Divide Gross Total by Standardizing Factor	20
<b>NET REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS SCORE</b>	

Add all the scores for the property characteristics (Part B) to get a gross total for property characteristics. The gross total will fall between 0 and 100. Then divide the gross total by 10 to create a 'Standardized Property Score' that should fall between 0 and 10.

<b>PART A: PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
9. Natural or Farm Features 10. Built Features and Cultural Artifacts 11. Site Infrastructure 12. Business Potential and Human Resource Features 13. Business Skills and Personal Qualities	
<b>Gross Total</b>	
Divide Gross Total by Standardizing Factor	12.5
<b>NET PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS SCORE</b>	

The net scores should be plotted on the Agrotourism Grid below. Mark the regional score on the vertical axis and the property score on the horizontal axis. The position of the proposed venture on the grid would determine the likelihood for success, given the property and regional characteristics.



Each square of the Tourism Potential Grid can be interpreted according to the following:

1. **High Tourism Potential:** Balanced tourism structure between attractive of the property and the region in which it is located. Should proceed to the Business Planning Workbook.
2. **Site Development Potential:** Your region is very attractive to tourist, but your property must be further developed to capitalize on the regional development. Follow on to the Business Planning Workbook to further evaluate your property.
3. **Market Development Potential:** Your property has many suitable features for agrotourism, but your region needs to be developed. Since regional development is outside of your control, proceed to the Business Planning Workbook to see how you can potentially overcome this disadvantage.
4. **Low Tourism Potential:** It appears that neither your property nor the region have sufficient attractiveness for agrotourism activities. Improving the viability of your business will be a huge undertaking. If you are committed to your project, proceed to the Business Planning Workbook for a more detailed analysis of what you need to do.