



Survey of Agritourism including On-Farm Direct Sales

Comparing California to the US

Online Survey

Between November 2019 and February 2020, 1834 farmers and ranchers throughout the US completed an online survey about agritourism including on-farm sales. In California, we received 139 responses. For more information about the project, visit <https://www.uvm.edu/vtrc/agritourism-survey>

What is Agritourism?

For the purpose of this survey, agritourism was defined as experiences and product sales taking place on farms, ranches, or vineyards. Examples include farm stands, u-pick, overnight farm stays, tastings, events, tours, horseback riding, farm walks, and hunting.

This summary compares responses from California (shown in dark blue) to total responses from across the US (shown in light blue).

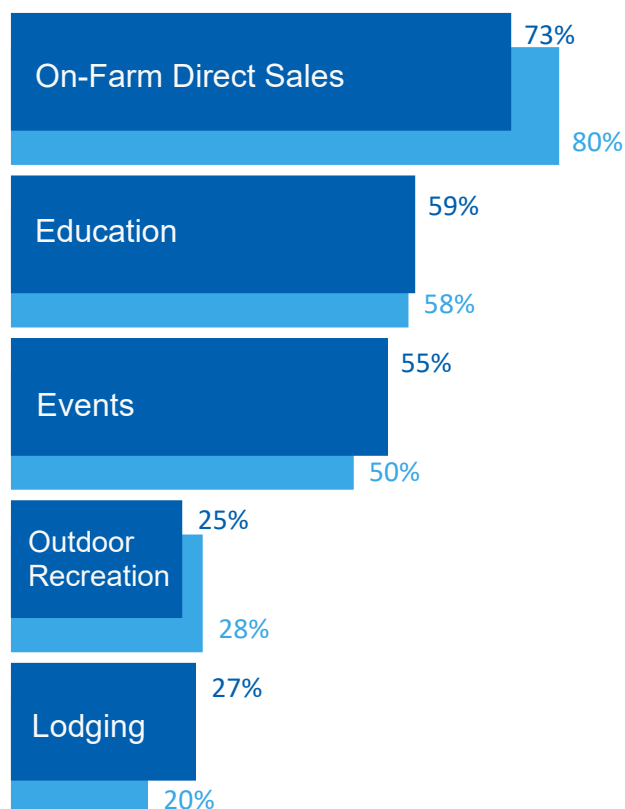


Agritourism Experiences

On-farm direct sales was the most common type of agritourism activity offered in California and the rest of the United States.

California agritourism operators offered educational activities, events, and lodging at a higher percentage than the combined US totals, while on-farm direct sales and outdoor recreation were offered at a lower percentage.

Agritourism Experiences Offered



Farm Size and Location

The median farm size of California agritourism farms was 37 acres, smaller than the national average of 60 acres.

More of California's agritourism farms are also in or close to cities of 50,000 people or more. In California, 38% of respondents were located within 10 miles of a city as compared to 21% across the US. By contrast, only 14% of respondents were located 50 miles or more from a city, compared to 30% of US responses.

37 Acres
California

60 Acres
US

Visitors

The average California and US agritourism operation welcomed roughly 300 visitors in 2018.

300 Visits
California

322 Visits
US

California respondents indicated that nearly half of all visitors traveled more than 50 miles to visit (47%), higher than other US agritourism operations (37%).

California

47%

US

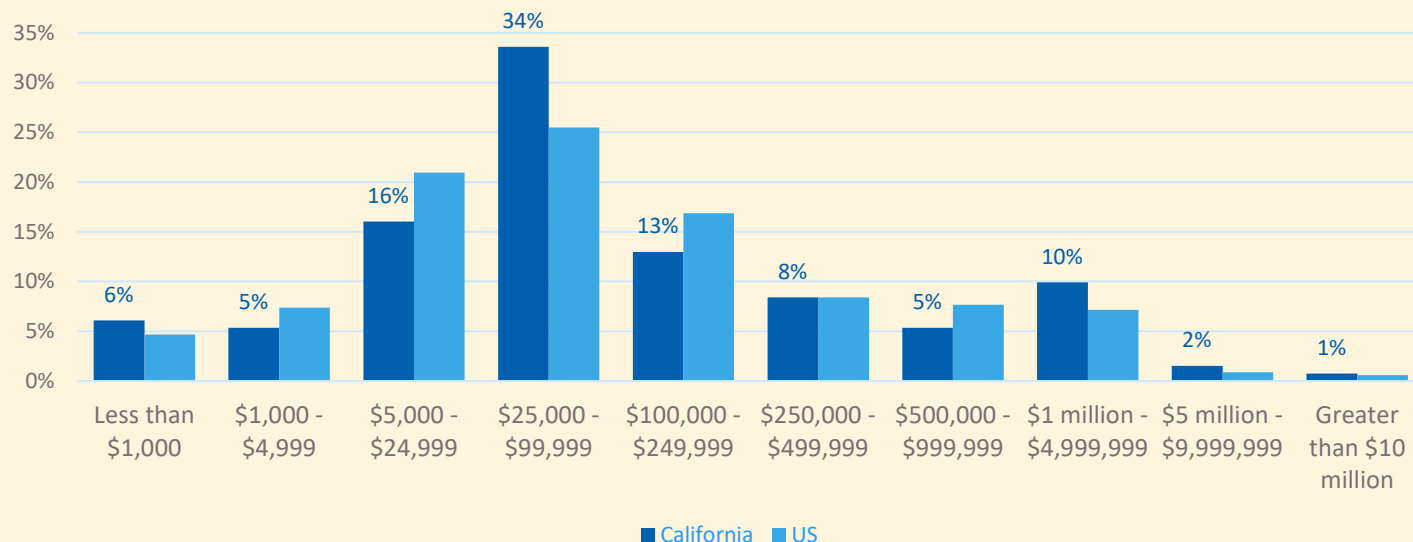
37%

Percent Visitors Traveled Over 50 Miles (2018)

Total Farm Revenue

Roughly three-quarters of agritourism operators in California (74%) and the US (75%) are farms and ranches earning less than \$250,000 in gross farm revenue. California has a higher percentage of farms earning \$25,000-\$99,000 (37%) than the US average (26%) and a greater share of farms earning over \$1 million (13% CA; 9% US).

Percent of Farms by Gross Revenue from All Farm-related Sources (2018)

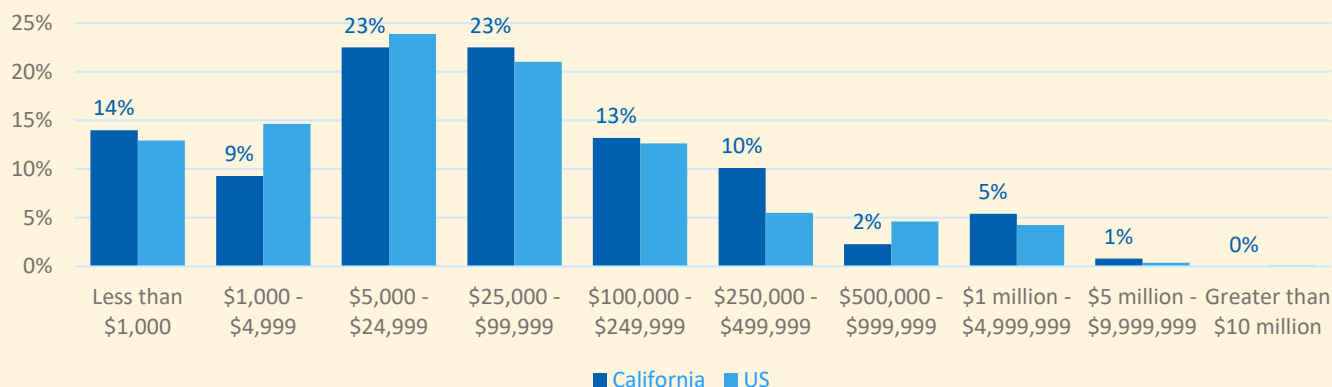


Gross Agritourism Income

Just under half of California (46%) and US (45%) farms and ranches report generating \$5,000-\$99,000 in revenue from their agritourism enterprises.

A higher percentage of respondents reported earning less than \$1,000, \$250,000-\$499,999, and \$1 million-\$4,999,999.

Percent of Farms by Gross Agritourism Revenue (2018)

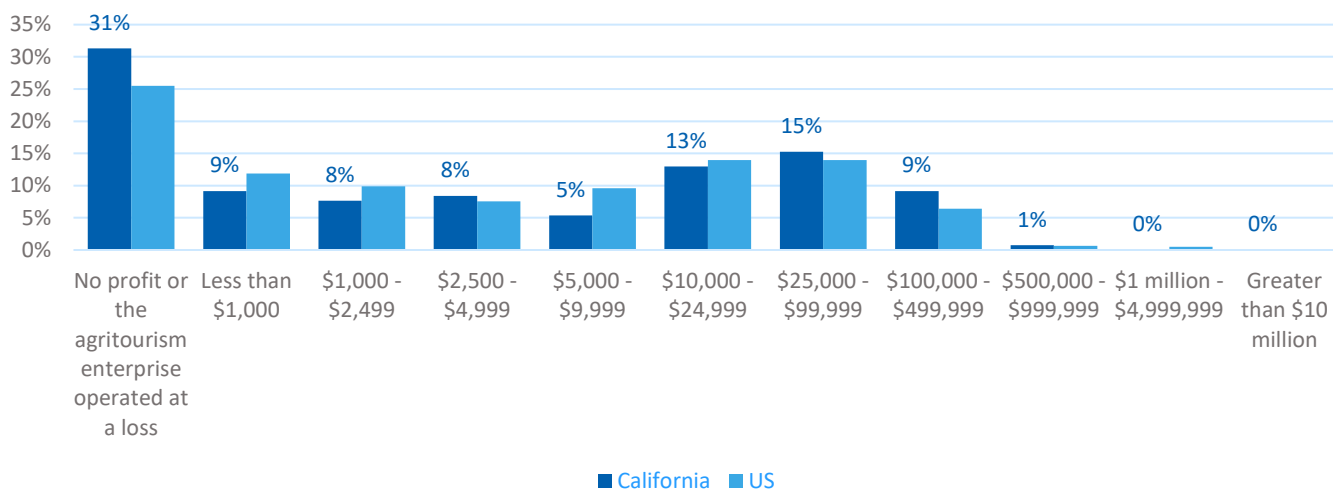


Agritourism Profitability

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the profitability of their agritourism enterprise by indicating their net income from agritourism activities.

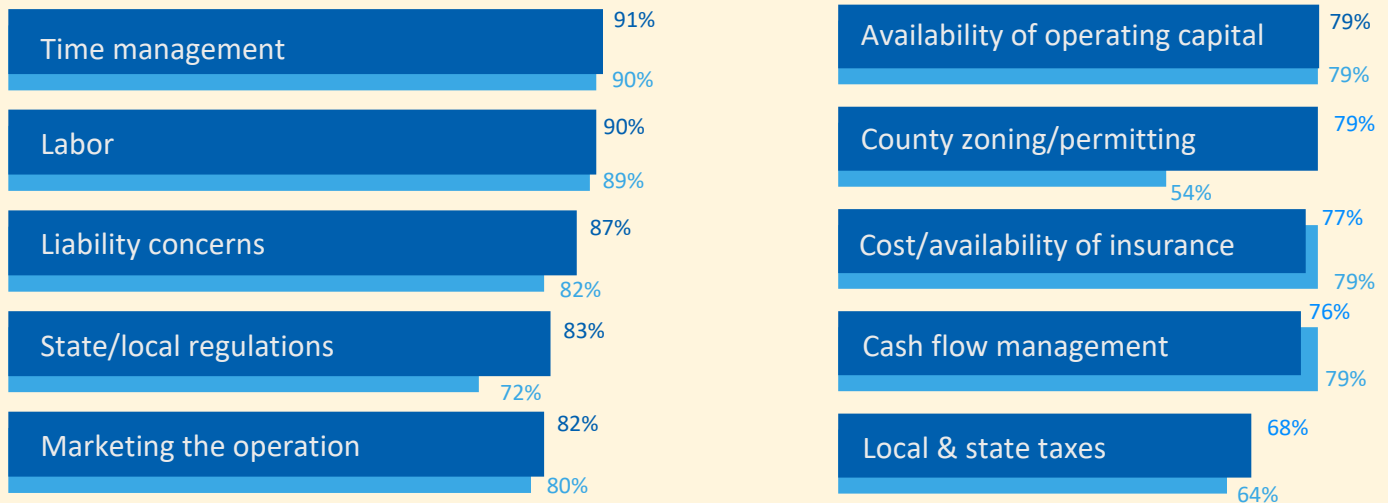
While California responses had a similar distribution as the US responses, a higher percentage of California operators reported earning no profit (31% CA, 26% US) and a higher percentage reported earning \$100,000-\$499,999 (9% CA, 6% US). Fewer California respondents reported earning less than \$1,000-\$2,499.

Percent Farms by Net Income (2018)



Challenges with Agritourism

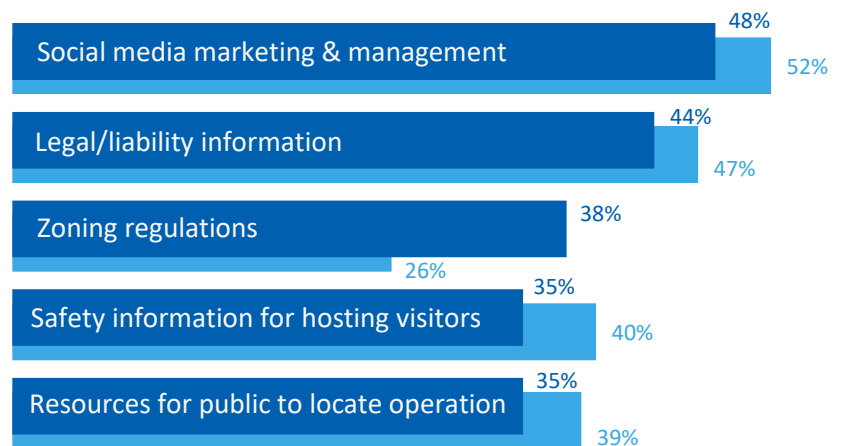
California and US respondents indicated the same top 3 challenges. California operators are identified liability concerns, state/local regulations, and county zoning/permitting as a challenge at a higher rate than the rest of the US. Of the challenges that were in the US top ten, but California respondents were less concerned about include managing visitor accessibility and developing/implementing a business plan.



Supports Needed to Succeed

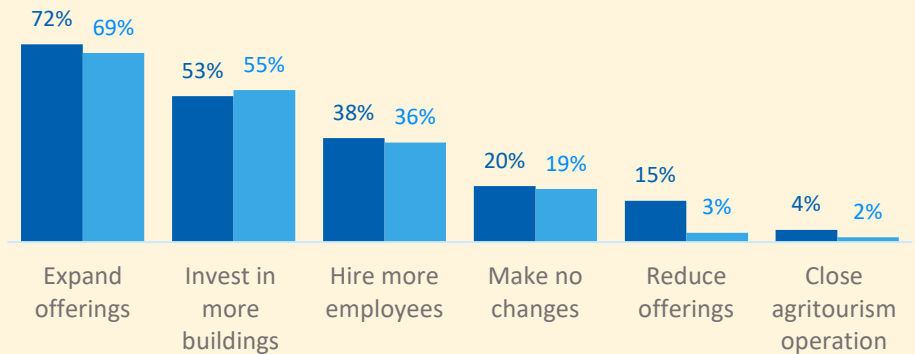
California respondents need support in marketing their operation, ensuring visitor safety, and legal and regulatory information. Support with zoning regulations was identified much higher than the rest of the US (38% CA, 26% US).

US respondents identified marketing plan development at a much higher rate than Californians (43% US, 30% CA).



Plans for the Future

Over two-thirds of California (72%) and US (69%) respondents plan to expand their agritourism operations. A higher percentage of California respondents plan to reduce their offerings or close their operations over the next 5 years.



This work is supported by Critical Agriculture Research and Extension (CARE) grant no. VTN32556 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Agriculture Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC), located at Iowa State University, www.agmrc.org. AgMRC is a national website dedicated to providing information to producers and service providers on value-added agriculture businesses. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The survey was administered by the University of Vermont College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in collaboration with: