

WHAT IS AGRITOURISM? RECONCILING FARMERS, RESIDENTS AND EXTENSION FACULTY PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Visiting a farm for recreation is an activity that has been increasing in the last 10 years. Despite its growth, a myriad of labels (e.g., farm tourism, agritainment) along with many definitions are used to depict this form of recreation, situation that is constraining its marketing and further diffusion. Therefore, a study was conducted to examine the meaning and label preferences of this form of recreation among three main stakeholders. Data was collected in 2011 from samples of residents, farmers, and extension faculty in Missouri and North Carolina through an online survey. Results showed significant differences on the preferred labels across samples, being “farm visit”, “agricultural tourism”, and “farm tourism” the ones most preferred. Among those labels, study results suggest that the “farm visit” label may be the most suitable to use for marketing purposes as it showed the highest preferences among residents and farmers. Results showed that a good definition of agritourism should include the terms: *agricultural setting*, *entertainment*, *farm*, *farming*, *education*, and *working*. Results also showed that agritourism should be carried out only on agricultural working facilities; however, the type of contact or experience with agricultural resources (e.g., crops) and practices (e.g., milking a cow) were not relevant for defining this form of recreation across the study samples. Implications of this study are also discussed.