IMPORTANCE OF AGRITOURISM FOR AGRIPRENEUR GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

Christine Tew

Dr. Carla Barbieri, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

As the agricultural context in the U.S. changes, farmers’ attention is increasingly turning toward agritourism (Veeck et al., 2006; Nickerson et al., 2001), an entrepreneurial venture in which farms generate income or add value through activities for visitors (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009). Goals related to agritourism development have been identified, and include reducing fluctuations in farm income, making use of farm resources, educating the public and providing opportunities for the farm family, among others (McGehee & Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001). This study examined the importance of agritourism in accomplishing 16 economic and intrinsic entrepreneurial goals of agritourism providers, as well as the farm household and business attributes associated with the importance of agritourism in accomplishment within four goal dimensions via descriptive-relational survey research.

Agritourism farms in Missouri are in the business of agricultural production, rather than maintaining their land exclusively for landscaping a tourism destination. Operators perceive agritourism as being important for accomplishing their marketing, social and personal entrepreneurial goals. Study results are important as they show that efforts to promote agritourism as a development tool should emphasize the role of this activity in accomplishing a diversity of entrepreneurial goals and not only those related to the economic health of the farm.