

## CULTIVATING LOCAL CHECKLIST

# Agritourism

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Starting or diversifying a farm business requires careful planning, especially when exploring direct sales channels. Through the Cultivating Local project, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) has developed a series of nine checklists to support you in your direct-to-consumer sales journey.

### Plan your agritourism experience

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**Identify your unique assets.** What features of your farm can you leverage to enhance the experience? Think of your location's unique assets and find ways to incorporate the buildings, farm animals, wildlife, and trails you have access to.

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**Develop your agritourism activity.** Agritourism offerings can include pick-your-own produce, farm-to-table dinners, corn mazes, wine or cider tastings, cooking classes, petting zoos, horseback rides, farm stays, seasonal festivals, and educational workshops (e.g., guided farm tours, working farm experiences).

### Research applicable agritourism laws and regulations

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**Reach out to your local municipality** to ensure compliance with local land use planning policies and zoning by-laws.

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**Building and fire codes.** Ensure any of the structures you may be building comply with the applicable legislation, including the Ontario Fire Code.

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**Manage the risks.** Understand the protections provided to you by reviewing the Growing Agritourism Act and choosing the appropriate liability insurance for your operation. Check out the “public event displays & live animal exhibits” resources on the Farm and Food Care Ontario website for more helpful tips.

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**Ensure visitors are safe.** Install relevant signage and safety instructions.

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**Ensure animal safety.** Maintain clear guidelines on visitor conduct, especially around animals. Signage, safety instructions, handwashing stations, and relevant biosecurity measures should be paired with all animal interactions.



## Develop your business plan

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**Determine your pricing strategy.** Benchmark where similar experiences are and assess the value of the unique experience you are offering. Visit the “Pricing your product” page on Ontario.ca to learn about common pricing practices.

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**As part of your business plan,** consider investments in infrastructure, facilities, and staffing needs. For more information on developing a business plan, see checklist one, Getting Started.

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**Start small,** plan for seasonality, and assess the financial viability of your agritourism activities.

## Leverage partnerships & industry resources

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**Networking.** Consider a membership with Agritourism Ontario to benefit from networking, advocacy, and access to resources.

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**Tourism initiatives.** Explore initiatives like taste trails, culinary guides, or farm maps in your area. Find your local Regional Tourism Organization and consult Simcoe County’s “Agritourism Toolkit” on the agricultural resources page at [edo.simcoe.ca](http://edo.simcoe.ca) for useful tips.

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**Partnerships.** Consider partnerships with other local artisans, tourism businesses and farms to offer combined experiences or events.

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**Access free webinars** through the Global Agritourism Network to learn more about the different agritourism strategies you could consider.

In response to consumer demand and growing interest in opportunities to sell local, OFA’s Cultivating Local project has developed a series of nine checklists, nine recorded workshops, a resource hub, and a final report. To learn more, visit: [ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local/](http://ofa.on.ca/cultivating-local/)



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