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EXAMINING THE CONSUMER BEHAVIORS OF ILLINOIS AGRITOURISM

BY

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THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to examine consumer behavior relationships in order to better serve and provide information for those currently involved and those wanting to open agritourism sites. The study investigated consumers at a Central Illinois agritourism site in fall 2016. With the use of an on-site offline questionnaire, post-visits were evaluated as consumers exited the site. Results of the study indicated strong relationships exist between hours spent on site, the number of miles traveled to the site, the number of items purchased on site, and the likelihood to revisit. The most powerful predictor of consumer purchasing was the number of times previously visited. The most powerful predictor of the number of times previously visiting the site was the number of miles driven to the site. Results indicate consumers are willing to travel to purchase goods at the agritourism site while spending considerable time and, ultimately, deciding to visit again.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

More than two million farms dot the American landscape, while 97 percent of them are family owned (Hoppe & Banker, 2014; “Fast Facts About Agriculture - The Voice of Agriculture,” 2015; G. Veeck, Hallett, Che, & A. Veeck, 2016). Due to the ever-changing nature of agriculture, many opportunities are arising for consumers to visit farms or current owners to revitalize their current operations. “However, the activities that constitute important sources of income for many farm families have changed dramatically in the past several decades, as small U.S. farms work to develop and exploit niche markets (Bagi, 2014; G. Veeck et al., 2016; Coleman, Grant, Josling, 2004).”

In the last decade, agritourism has doubled in size across the United States with the number of farms with agritourism activities growing by approximately 90% (NASS, 2007). “Such growth is suggested to be sustained in the upcoming years, mostly because of increasing tendencies of traveling as a family, shorter travels by car, multi- activity trips, and desire to help out local farmers and communities (Gil Arroyo, Barbieri, & Rich, 2013, p. 40).” This allows families to make more meaningful trips with shorter destinations.

According to Hansson, Ferguson, Olofsson, & Rantämki-Lahtinen (2013), family farm diversification is driven by motives related to management and development of the business and the situation of the farmer’s family. In response, many family farms are diversifying their farms to fulfill personal aspirations, pursuits, and to enhance revenue and family finances (Hansson et al., 2013). Agritourism is a way for farmers to allow others to visit their farming operations and also for consumers to visit farms for tourism purposes. For the purpose of this study, agritourism can be defined as “visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness

operation to enjoy, be educated or be involved in activities happening there (Brown & Hershey, 2012, p. 4).”

Agritourism can include a number of different activities ranging from pumpkin patches and u-pick operations to winery, brewery, and food-based activities and tours (Bondoc, 2009). Also stated, agritourism has several main components including combining elements of the tourism and agriculture industries, attracting members of the public that are designed to increase farm revenue, provide recreation and entertainment, or an educational component to its visitors (Bondoc, 2009). For customers, agritourism provides a place to obtain fresh produce and experience nature with their families (Che, A.Veeck, & G. Veeck, 2007).

Many studies discuss the motivations of farmers diversifying into agritourism (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009; Nickerson, Black, & McCool, 2001; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007). However, limited research exists on agritourism tourist behaviors, predictors of agritourism customer purchasing and visits, as opposed to non-agricultural based tourism. Research has demonstrated a need for understanding consumer behaviors and motivations including their purchasing habits and their visit intentions. Simply stated, the more information known on the consumer, the higher the income, potentially, the farmer can earn. Beginning with the consumer and knowing preferences, behaviors, and relationships can allow farmers to understand exactly what their operation needs.

“The travel decision making process, or where to go, when, how, and for how long, is complicated and, thus, not easily managed or understood; however, we do know that travel parties, particularly families, want to have choices among things to do and see, as well as have traveler services that match their needs and wallets” (Wicks & Merrett, 2003, pg. 3).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Defining Agritourism**

Various studies define agritourism in a variety of ways. Each study includes a certain viewpoint and what factors influenced the decision for phrasing the definition. “It can be argued, however, that studies have yet to provide a clear and basic understanding of the characteristics that underpin and define agri-tourism” (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010, p.754). One study aimed to propose an original typology for defining agritourism by identifying key characteristics currently used then organizing them into an obvious and arranged framework which could then be used more broadly (Phillip et al., 2010).

Two key phrases consistently used in the typology were ‘working farm’ and ‘contact with agricultural activity’. However, the level and degree of contact can vary greatly. It can be separated into three categories, as mentioned by Philip et al. (2010). These categories are direct, indirect, and passive contact. Direct contact could be milking an animal and by participating one-on-one. An example of indirect contact could be by purchasing or consuming food, and passive contact by engaging in outdoor activities provided by the farm (Phillip et al., 2010).

It is possible for more than one type of agritourism to occur at one establishment (Phillip et al., 2010). A study by (Gil Arroyo et al., 2013) stated there are many discrepancies and inconsistencies in the literature and pertain to three main issues. These include: the type of setting, the authenticity of the agricultural facility or the experience, and the types of activities included. Per the definitions, there are standards that a true agritourism site should meet, including having something for visitors to see, something for them to do, and something for them to buy (Adam, 2004).



## **Current Trends in Agritourism**

Agritourism generates additional dollars in local economies as visitors spend money associated with their travels (Brown, Goetz, Ahearn, & Liang, 2014). Farm recreation and agritourism activities often contribute more market activity in the local community than direct agricultural sales as these select farms are also far less common than direct-sales farms (Brown et al., 2014). Agritourism sites have an ability to be regionalized and is a critical strategy for developing agritourism experiences.

As a form of economic and community development, agritourism has a very strong and widespread appeal to agencies and governments (Wicks & Merrett, 2003). Agritourism may help in rural communities as it can assist local development by providing jobs, increasing community income, and by attracting other small business and industries (Bondoc, 2009). In a study conducted by (Brown et al., 2014), they found a \$1 increase in total agricultural sales led to a \$0.04 increase in a county's mean personal income.

Eckert (par. 2), stated agri-tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry. Eckert says,

“People want a new experience and escape from the stress of traffic jams, office cubicles, and carpooling in cities and suburbs, where the majority of the population resides. Children, as well as adults, can learn the process of growing food while enjoying a vacation together at an agri-tourism attraction” (Eckert, n.d., par. 2).

Those who visit sites often involve shared experiences in activities that are available on farms with their family, friends, and relatives. As tourism is usually experienced in a group, rather than alone, existing studies of agritourists have shown that two types of visitor groups frequently visit agritourism sites. These include couples and families with one or more child and

more than 2.5 people per group on average (Brown & Reeder, 2007; Che et al., 2007; Choo & Petrick, 2014). A 2012 Iowa State study by Nasers described Iowa's current agritourism participation and consumer trends based on selected demographics. This study found Iowa consumers were willing to travel and preferred to participate in agritourism activities in the fall with close family and friends (Nasers & Retallick, 2012). "Trends and future projections indicate continued increases in the number of participants, trips, and activity days for outdoor recreation as well as the increase of multi-activity but shorter trips" (Carpio, Wohlgenant, & Boonsaeng, 2008, p. 255).

### **Family Farm Diversification**

As aforementioned, the level of agritourism activity has risen in the last decade. Many family farms have diversified into agritourism for many reasons. A study conducted by Nickerson et al. (2001) determined 11 reasons for diversification into agritourism. Of these, they concluded 61% who diversified into agritourism did so for economic reasons, 23% for reasons external to the operation, and 16% diversified their operation due to a combination of social, economic, and external reasons (Nickerson et al., 2001). Multiple studies have concluded primary reasons for farm diversification as economic and social, but much attention is placed on understanding farmer's motivations for diversifying their businesses.

Diversification reasons differ vastly but, "One possible reason why farm tourism operators in the northern and southern hemispheres emphasize difference motivations is the difference in government subsidies for farming" (Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007, p. 451). As government subsidies fluctuate, another source of income is beneficial for farm owners as a source of financial security. It is important to understand why consumers are visiting these

establishments and once it is determined, farmers can diversify their current operations in a more efficient and prosperous way.

### **Evaluating Consumer Motivations and Behaviors**

Mentioned above, consumers are visiting and revisiting these agritourism destinations. There are many factors that drive consumers back to the same sites. These drivers, or motivations, are what inspire consumers to attend agritourism sites. A study in Chiang Mai, Thailand, concluded consumers' needs and motivations in which results indicated three groups of agritourist needs (Srikatanyoo & Campiranon, 2010). These included a need for activities and shopping facilities, need for decent services and locations, and a need for attractions and environment. There were also three sets of agritourist motivations which included motivations for engaging in agricultural experiences, to improve quality of life and relationships, and to experience adventure and relaxations.

Repeat visit intentions are also important to understand. As consumer motivation is a key component of agritourism, site owners must not only create a larger customer base, but also acquire repeat consumers. Since many agritourism sites are seasonal, obtaining a returning customer base is of utmost importance (Choo & Petrick, 2014). "Many tourism scholars have increasingly discussed the concept of revisit intentions and its antecedents by examining their beneficial rewards; creating positive word-of-mouth, achieving better cost-effectiveness by repeat visitors, and increasing economic profit" (Choo & Petrick, 2014, p. 374).

Repeat tourism can be defined as the loyalty of tourists who plan to visit multiple times. These types of tourists are notably different than other types of tourists as they attempt to minimize risk by visiting familiar destinations many times (Bradshaw, 2016; Caneen, 2004; Lehto, O' Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Niininen & Riley, 2004). "Repeat tourism is heavily

dependent on destination image and is economically desirable in that repeat tourists tend to engage in word of mouth advertising and spend more than first-time visitors” (Bradshaw, 2016, p. 3).

Many consumers are revisiting established agritourism sites time and time again and are engaging in more activities and experiencing different things. Also, consumer purchasing habits are a subject of interest as Adam (2004) states that agritourists need something to buy and shopping opportunities are major attractions to tourism sites (Kim & Littrell, 1999; Keown, 1989). Tourists tend to convey differing behaviors while on vacation and trips than while at home (Brown, 1992). Those on vacation are usually traveling on ‘unordinary time’ as most tourists are not working and are relaxing and spending time outside of their normal life (Crompton, 1979). Having something to take home in remembrance of the visit is a driving force. Adam (2004), states a farm store or gift section should display farm products in order to attract repeat sales.

In summary, consumers are driven to return to agritourism sites and this study intends to evaluate consumer behavior relationships as well as determine consumer purchase and consumer visit predictors. “Furthermore, the knowledge of agritourist motivations can be used in designing the right messages to the right consumer, and this will provide clarity and maximum impact of marketing communications and, indeed, the greater sales impact” (Srikatanyoo & Campiranon, 2010, p. 176). By acknowledging these consumer behaviors at agritourism sites, the study reflects important aspects of consumer’s experiences. This will show relationships that agritourism site owners should be evaluating to utilize in their own businesses.

### **Research Questions**

In regards to Choo & Petrick (2014), agritourist repeat visits are of utmost importance to understanding consumer behavior while visiting sites as well as knowing what products to sell to consumers for repeat business. Below are questions which pertain to the consumer aspect of agritourism sites and visits, and focus on understanding the relationships of consumer behaviors and predicting variables of consumer purchasing habits and revisit intentions. The variables to be evaluated include the number of times previously visited, the number of hours spent on the site, number of miles traveled to the site, number of accompanied people, the number of different items purchased, and the likelihood to revisit.

1. What are the relationships between consumer behaviors?
2. Which variables are most predictive of consumer purchasing at agritourism sites?
3. What variables predict repeat visits most at agritourism locations?

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Population and Sample**

Research was conducted on three separate dates (September 17, September 24, and October 8) in Fall 2016 as the site is a seasonal operation operating from late Summer to late Fall. Tanner's Orchard is located in Central Illinois in Speer, Illinois residing near the larger city of Peoria, Illinois. Started in 1947, Tanner's Orchard is a rural, four-generation family-owned and operated agritourism operation with thousands of visitors each year to the site. For this study, Tanner's Orchard was selected due to its overwhelming popularity and significant customer base located near the large city of Peoria, Illinois. Tanner's represents a niche agricultural market as well as a full-service agritourism site. Included at Tanner's Orchard are U-Pick Orchards, pumpkin patches, bakeries, activity sites for children, and much more. Over the three-day data collection dates, 306 usable responses were collected. On September 17, 2016, 107 responses were collected, 128 collected on September 24, 2016, and 71 on October 8, 2016.

Of the 306 participants who responded, 33.3% identified as male (n=102), 66.3% identified as female (n=203), and .3% preferred not to answer (n=1). More than 89% self-identified as White/Caucasian (n= 273). With regard to age, the sample was predominantly those who self-identified in the 18-24 range with 31.7% (n=97), 20.3% in the 25-34 range with (n=62), 14.1% in the 35-44 range (n=43), 14.7% in 45-54 (n=45), and 19.3% (n=59) in the above 55 range. The sample included a range of those who self-reported had previously visited Tanner's Orchard with 28.8% (n=88) having visited for the first or second time and 29.1% (n=89) having visited 5 or more times. In regards to revisit intentions, 72.2% (n=221) stated that they would be "Extremely Likely" to revisit Tanner's as opposed to only 1.6% (n=5) who stated they would be

“Extremely Unlikely” to revisit. In regards to miles traveled, 16.6% (n=51) drove upwards of 20 miles, 38.3% (n=117) drove 21-40 miles, and 45.1% (n= 138) traveled 40 or more miles.

### **Variables and Instrumentation**

The goal of this study was to determine consumer behaviors while visiting agritourism sites. This included the wants, needs, and motivations of agritourists. Through the use of a digital survey questionnaire, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which included questions of behavior, motivation, and experiences. To determine the questionnaire, similar questions were adapted from the (Srikatanyoo & Campiranon, 2010) Chiang Mai study and the (Nasers & Retallick, 2012) Iowa State study. Such questions asked were those of product purchases, time spent on location, revisit intentions, experiences at the location, activities involved in, and many more.

A sample question of the behavioral scale for example, “Would you mind sharing what you purchased today?” A sample of motivation scale, “Why did you visit Tanner’s Orchard today?” Last, a sample experience scale question of, “What did you do today? Did you like it?” The response option design of the questionnaire included multiple choice, multiple answer, ranking, and Likert-style questions. Multiple choice questions allowed for a selection of options, multiple answer to select more than one choice, ranking for an order of importance, and Likert to scale responses. Appendix A includes the full survey utilized in the study.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected at three separate dates in fall 2016. Participants completed an offline Qualtrics designed questionnaire on location using electronic tablets. Participants were asked to complete the four minute questionnaire at the completion of their visit to Tanner’s Orchard while exiting the main store area. The study was incentivized as each participant was offered various

collegiate memorabilia, Tanner's Orchard coupons, and also smaller items such as fall themed candy and snacks.

### **Analytic Design**

This research was designed to understand consumer behaviors while visiting agritourism sites and also to understand what variables predict consumer purchasing and the number of times consumers visit. To determine relationships and the significance between consumer behaviors, a bivariate correlation matrix was conducted, where I defined statistical significance as  $p < .05$ . These behaviors include the number of times previously visited, the total number of hours spent on the agritourism site, the number of total miles traveled to the site, the number of accompanied people with the consumer, the number of different items purchased, and, last, the likelihood to revisit. Predictors and significance of consumer purchasing habits and times visited were assessed by conducting two linear regressions with the dependent variables of the number of times visited to the site and the number of different items purchased while visiting.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Correlative Relationships Among Consumer Characteristics

A correlation matrix table was completed to determine relationships across consumer behaviors. Results can be found in Table 1. Results indicated a strong positive correlation between the number of persons accompanying the consumer and the hours spent at the site. Also, significant positive correlations were noted between the miles traveled and the number of hours spent and between the numbers of items purchased and number of times previously visited. Two significant negative correlations emerged between the number of miles traveled and the number of times previously visited. As the number miles traveled increased, the number of times previously visited decreased. Also, a negative correlation existed wherein the number of times previously visited increased, the likelihood to revisit the site decreased.

Table 1

*Correlations Among Key Variables Describing Consumer Behaviors*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Times Visited	—					
2. Hours Spent	-.034	—				
3. Miles Traveled	-.197**	.218**	—			
4. People	-.110	.415**	.145*	—		
5. Items Purchased	.159**	.078	.120*	.041	—	
6. Likelihood to Revisit	-.171**	.001	.097	.075	-.146*	—

\* Statistically significant at  $p < .05$

\*\* Statistically significant at  $p < .01$

#### Predicting Purchasing Habits

Research question two aimed to predict key variables in determining consumer purchasing habits while visiting agritourism sites. Results can be found in Table 2. The linear regression model revealed the most important variable as the number of times previously visited to the site which means the number of times a consumer has visited is the most significant in

understanding consumer's purchasing at agritourism sites. Other significant variables which predicted consumer purchasing are the number of miles traveled and the overall likelihood to revisit. Two variables that show no significance were the number of hours spent at the site and the number of people who came with the visitor. These variables have little to no influence on predicting and understanding why consumers purchase the way they do.

Table 2

<i>Predictors of Self-Reported Number of Items Purchased</i>				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	1.985	.307		.000
Times Visited	.156	.054	.168	.004
Miles Traveled	.108	.042	.151	.011
Likelihood to Revisit	-.124	.053	-.134	.020
Number of Hours	.037	.061	.039	.539
Accompanied People	.021	.044	.029	.640

### **Predicting Repeating Agritourism Business**

The third question investigated the number of times consumers previously visited and their intention to revisit. Results can be found in Table 3. The linear regression model showed the number of miles traveled was most predictive of consumers visiting and revisiting which means the number of miles consumers are having to travel has significance on why they revisit. Other predictive variables (in order) include the number of items purchased, and the likelihood to revisit. How many items consumers purchased and how likely they were to revisit also had impact on why they may revisit. The least predictive variables include number of hours spent on site and the number of accompanied people which is similar to the second results question. Again, the number of hours spent on site and the number of people who came with the visitor showed little to no influence.

Table 3

<i>Predictors of Self-Reported Number of Times Visited</i>				
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	p
(Constant)	2.996	.303		.000
Miles Traveled	-.144	.045	-.187	.001
Number of Items Purchased	.178	.061	.165	.004
Likelihood to Revisit	-.123	.057	-2.165	.031
Number of Hours	.025	.065	.024	.698
Accompanied People	-.063	.047	-.083	.180

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The research questions in this study focused on the behavior variables that were statistically predictive of consumer purchasing habits and repeat agritourism business. The findings suggest that the more additional people each consumer brought to the agritourism site, the more hours the consumer spent at the site. Also, the more miles driven to the site, the more hours spent by people on site. The correlation table in the previous results section showed the relationships in which each of the behaviors are connected to one another.

The number of miles traveled to the site and the number of times previously visited however, show a negative correlation of  $-.197$ , which indicates that the more miles consumers had to travel, the fewer times customers have previously visited. The number of times previously visited and the likelihood to revisit demonstrated a negative correlation of  $-.171$  suggesting the more times a consumer previously visited, the less likely they are to revisit. Consumers who had previously visited Tanner's Orchard were more likely to make more purchases, which suggests consumers had purchased items previously or are looking to purchase new or other items.

The most powerful predictor of consumer's purchasing habits was the number of times they had previously visited, which supports previous research findings (Bradshaw, 2016). The number of miles traveled to the site were also significant in predicting consumer purchasing habits which is similar to other studies as consumers were willing to drive the distance to visit established sites to make purchases (Nasers & Retallick, 2012). Also, consumer's intentions to return to the site contributed to the number of purchases they made. The more consumers are more likely to return, the stronger their potential to purchase more items at their next visit. These findings suggest that repeat customers, likelihood of consumer intentions, and the location of the site all play a large role in the site's economic and retail success.

Results showed that repeat business is driven most by the number of miles traveled to the site. The further the site from the consumer, the less likely a repeat visit will occur. Also, the number of items purchased was a strong predictor of how many times the consumers will visit. The more items purchased and products tried, the more times they may visit. These items ranged from food products to non-edible products such as toys and decorative items. Last, the likelihood to revisit for consumers may explain the number of times they have previously visited. The more times the consumers have visited, the more likely they are to revisit. This is consistent to previous literature as a positive relationships have been discovered between the number of previous visits and their likelihood to revisit (Bradshaw, 2016).

Overall, the findings suggest strong relationships between the number of hours spent on site, the number times previously visited, the amount of accompanied people, number of miles traveled, the number of items purchased, and the likelihood to revisit, collectively. Participants in this study are willing to drive the miles to reach Tanner's Orchard as many drove more than 50 miles to the site. However, the more miles they travel, the less likely they are to revisit as the results suggest. Also, the more likely someone is to travel to the site, the less miles they may travel. Once there, they are spending time with the people they brought with and are engaging in various activities of which are requiring a significant amount of time spent on site. Those who have visited before purchased more items as they most likely have purchased them before, or are willing to try others. Many participants stated they would be "Extremely Likely" to revisit, but, a negative correlation exists between wanting to revisit and the times visited. This suggests the more times visited, the less likely they are to revisit, or vice-versa.

## **Implications**

Several key implications emerged from this study. As a farmer wanting to try to become an agritourism site or business, knowing that repeat business is key to a successful business, these implications are useful to both attract and keep consumers. For example, the number of miles traveled was negatively correlated with the times previously visited. Location is key in agritourism. It is beneficial to be located near larger metropolitan areas as they can attract diverse crowds to the site. If large events, such as those previously mentioned, are occurring, more visitors may attend if there is time.

Larger farms with means to travel may also have the option to sell goods at larger farmer's markets or other venues. Fairs and festivals could also be venues to advertise at. For example, selling produce or packaged goods can show a sample of goods that may make consumers want to see more of the entire operation. This may allow repeat business to occur as well as new visitors to the site to see the full range of products a farm or agritourism site may offer.

For those wanting to diversify into agritourism, it is also vital to attract large numbers of people. It is important to have a diverse range of activities for families and individuals to engage in as well as possibly having family events or family days. However, some farms are not as well-located for easy accessibility. In other studies, (Nasers & Retallick, 2012) word-of-mouth is a large component to agritourism site awareness, so obtaining vocal consumers is vital for advertisement. Having diverse and unique products to purchase is also important due to consumers being willing to travel multiple miles to agritourism sites.

Repeat tourism is another key element to the success and survival of agritourism sites. As noted by this study, purchasing is a main contributor to repeat business. In order to keep

purchasing sustainable, it is important to have diverse products to keep consumers purchasing. One could also offer incentives. While collecting data at Tanner's Orchard, one of the incentives of completing the study's survey was a coupon for a free food item. Many participants mentioned they would use the coupons upon their next visit to Tanner's Orchard. It is always beneficial to be innovative in all areas of the agritourism site as well as being creative in the activities for families and individuals to enjoy and also the food selections.

Main takeaways include attracting large groups of people who are willing to travel the distance to the agritourism site. If located near a city, attract those in the city to expand those consumers' knowledge of agriculture. If not located near a city, advertise and attract consumers using diverse products and activities to make the drive worthwhile. Again, having something for consumers to do, see, and buy is essential (Adam, 2004).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Two overarching limitations exist in this study. First, data was only collected at one location due to scheduling and location. Second, only three dates were allowed to collect data, as, again, scheduling conflicts and time management were problematic as dates conflicted with graduate school events. These dates were also specifically Saturdays. More dates throughout the week with longer collection hours would be useful to gather more data. Expanding the research to more agritourism sites, both in and out of Illinois would provide more insight into consumer relationships, purchasing habits, and revisit intentions of agritourism consumers.

A more powerful and purposeful sampling technique could also be used to provide a better analysis of Illinois and American agritourism. Identifying more consumer behavior variables to form more powerful predictors could provide a better analysis, potentially. Tanner's Orchard differs from various other agritourism sites in the state of Illinois. As Tanner's Orchard

focuses on apple orchards, U-Pick operations, and other fall themed activities, per the definition of agritourism, other sites such as wineries and livestock operations can contribute to agritourism. The information gathered at other Illinois and United States agritourism sites could be compared to this study to determine generalizable agritourism consumer behaviors.

During the collection dates, many collegiate and community events in neighboring Peoria, Illinois brought in different ages, ethnicities, and genders which may have skewed data and results. Bradley University, located in Peoria, was hosting their annual Family Weekend on the first day of collection. As students were wanting to spend time with family, nearby Tanner's Orchard was a destination for families of these college students, which may not visit for any other reasons. Also, fall weekend athletics were occurring and as Tanner's Orchard is located on two main Illinois highways, it is a popular destination to and from events.

Race, gender, age, salary, and marital information were not considered vital in this study as consumer behaviors were the main goal of this project. Perhaps demographic information could be of use in other studies, as it would provide a better description of consumers.

Demographics, such as the self-reported mean salary of site visitors, could aid in determining what products to offer that would be purchased more regularly. Knowing the age and gender of these visitors would be incredibly beneficial in determining products and services that could be catered to these groups.

## **Conclusion**

Agritourism is important as it reconnects consumers to agriculture but also allows farmers to diversify their current or future farming operations into a profitable business. As more agritourism sites are arising, consumers or visitors to the site need to be better understood to fully enhance the business owner's operations. This study was intended to discover and describe



consumer behaviors while visiting agritourism sites. The results were to demonstrate to farmers the behaviors exhibited while consumers are visiting their farms and agritourism sites.

Farmers understanding their consumers and visitors will help them better understand their market and what to provide to consumers. Questions asked revolved around what behaviors contained important relationships and what consumer behavior variables were most predictive of consumers purchasing and visiting. Results indicated a large amount of people and the number of hours spent on the site showed a relationship as to why they many explain one another. Another relationship was the amount of traveling to the agritourism site and the number of hours consumers stayed on the site. One last relationship was between the number of items purchased and the number of times the consumer had previously visited the site.

To understand and predict why consumers were making purchases and revisiting the way they were, results indicated consumers were visiting more often which explains why they made as many previous purchases as they did. Also, the results stated that the number of miles consumers had to travel to the site explained their likelihood to revisit again to the site. To conclude, consumers are willing to travel to the sites, spend considerable time while visiting, purchase goods and services, and may decide to return.

Again, this study should be replicated and advanced in other agritourism locations in the State of Illinois to gain more in-depth information on consumer behaviors in the state as well as advancing the study to agritourism locations outside of Illinois and across the United States. Results have shown a deeper knowledge of consumer behaviors will influence a farmer's and business owner's decisions to diversify their farm. Any insight into consumers' preferences is a gain for business owners.

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## APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE

### Examining the Consumer Experiences of Illinois Agritourism

What did you, your friends, or your family wish to do today? Please select all that apply.

- Spend time with friends and family (1)
- Looking to purchase goods (2)
- Spend time on a farm (3)
- Special event going on today (4)
- N/A (5)

Which of the following did you experience today? Please select all that apply.

- Escaped stress (1)
- Escaped "hustle and bustle" of the city (2)
- Was able to relax (3)
- Enjoyed the scenery (4)
- N/A (5)

How many times have you previously visited Tanner's Orchard?

- 0-1 (1)
- 2-4 (2)
- 5-10 (3)
- 10 or more (4)

How many people accompanied you today?

- 0 (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (5)
- 5 or more (6)

Would you mind sharing what you purchased today? Please select all that apply.

- Produce (pumpkins, apples, blueberries, etc. ) (1)
- Baked goods (donuts, pies, cakes) (2)
- Beverages (apple cider, other ciders and drinks) (3)
- Canned or preserved food (jams, jellies, salsas, etc. ) (4)
- Snacks (popcorn, nuts, ice cream) (5)
- Non-food items (toys, decorative items) (6)
- N/A (7)

What did you do today?

	What areas did you visit?	Was it enjoyable?	
	Select one or more (1)	Yes (1)	No (2)
Play areas (Playgrounds) (1)			
Family photo areas (Wood cut-outs, etc.) (2)			
U-Pick areas (Pumpkins, apples, etc.) (3)			
Recreational areas (GoKarts, corn maze) (4)			
Animals (Petting zoo, feeding animals) (5)			
Bakery and Produce areas (Apple Bin Bakery, Fudgery) (6)			

How many hours did you spend here today?

- 0 (1)
- 1 (2)
- 2 (3)
- 3 (4)
- 4 (5)
- 5 (6)
- 6 (7)
- 7 (8)
- 8 (9)
- 9 (10)
- 10 (11)
- 11 (12)
- 12 (13)

How likely are you to revisit Tanner's Orchard in the next year?

	Extremely likely (1)	Moderately likely (2)	Slightly likely (3)	Neither likely nor unlikely (4)	Slightly unlikely (5)	Moderately unlikely (6)	Extremely unlikely (7)
Please select one. (1)							

How important are the following to you to revisit Tanner's in the future? Please rank the items in order of importance to you. Rank all 4 items together in order from 1 (most important) to 4 (least important).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Convenience of technology use (Cellphone signal, Wi-Fi (if available)) (1)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Easy to access (Handicap accessible) (2)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Products to consume and bring home (3)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal and family safety (4)

Which is best about Tanner's Orchard in your opinion?

- Environmentally friendly (1)
- Beautiful scenery (2)
- A lot of activities to do (3)
- Convenience of location (4)

What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer not to answer (3)

What is your age?

- 18 - 24 (1)
- 25 - 34 (2)
- 35 - 44 (3)
- 45 - 54 (4)
- 55 - 64 (5)
- 65 - 74 (6)
- 75 - 84 (7)
- 85 or older (8)
- Prefer not to answer (9)

What is your current marital status?

- Single, never married (1)
- Married without children (2)
- Married with children (3)
- Divorced (4)
- Separated (5)
- Widowed (6)
- Living w/ partner (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)

What is your combined household salary in U.S. dollars?

- \$0 - \$25,000 (1)
- \$25,001 - \$50,000 (2)
- \$50,001 - \$75,000 (3)
- \$75,001 - \$100,000 (4)
- \$100,001 - \$125,000 (5)
- \$125,001 - \$150,000 (6)
- \$150,001 - \$175,000 (7)
- \$175,001 - \$200,000 (8)
- \$200,001+ (9)
- Prefer not to answer (10)



How far did you travel today from your home?

- 0-10 miles (1)
- 11-20 miles (2)
- 21-30 miles (3)
- 31-40 miles (4)
- 41-50 miles (5)
- 50+ miles (6)

What is your race?

- White/Caucasian (1)
- Black/African American (2)
- Latino (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native American (5)
- Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)

Where do you usually hear about Tanner's Orchard?

- Social Media (1)
- Television (2)
- Radio (3)
- Newspaper (4)
- Word of mouth (5)
- Other (6)
- I've known about Tanner's Orchard for years. Don't remember! (7)

## APPENDIX B IRB APPROVAL

### UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects  
528 East Green Street  
Suite 203  
Champaign, IL 61820



August 16, 2016

David Rosch  
Agr & Consumer Economics  
137 Bevier Hall  
905 S. Goodwin Ave.  
Urbana, IL 61801

RE: *Examining the consumer experiences of Illinois agritourism*  
IRB Protocol Number: 17066

Dear Dr. Rosch:

Thank you for submitting the completed IRB application form for your project entitled *Examining the consumer experiences of Illinois agritourism*. Your project was assigned Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Number 17066 and reviewed. It has been determined that the research activities described in this application meet the criteria for exemption at 45CFR46.101(b)(2).

This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted. Please note that additional modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and exemption determination or approval before the modifications are initiated.

Copies of the attached, date-stamped consent form(s) are to be used when obtaining informed consent. If there is a need to revise or alter the consent form(s), please submit the revised form(s) for IRB review, approval, and date-stamping prior to use.

**Exempt protocols will be closed and archived five years from the date of approval. Researchers will be required to contact our office if the study will continue beyond five years. If an amendment is submitted once the study has been archived, researchers will need to submit a new application and obtain approval prior to implementing the change.**

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subjects research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at OPRS, or visit our website at <http://oprs.research.illinois.edu>

Sincerely,

Dustin Yocum, MA, CIP  
Human Subjects Research Specialist, Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Attachment(s): Oral Consent Scripts, Waiver of Documentation of Consent

c: Taylor Wilkinson  
Julie Hafermann

### Oral Consent Script

#### Coordinating Researcher Statement (for Taylor Wilkerson)

Hello, I am Taylor Wilkinson, a graduate student in Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Would you be interested in participating in a study pertaining to agritourism and your experiences here today? This study is examining the wants, needs, and motivations of agritourists such as yourself.

This will only take 3 to 4 minutes of your time via a questionnaire and any information given is both anonymous and confidential. All you need to do is complete the survey on the tablet I will provide you, clicking through your responses. I will be available to help you if you have questions about anything.

You must also be 18 years or older to participate in this study.

By participating, you are giving consent to use your given information.

#### Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

Yes, but not always. In general, we will not tell anyone any information about you. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information may be seen or copied by the following people or groups:

- The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for [Protection of Research Subjects](#);
- University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research;

#### Team Statement (for Nicole Nelson and Rachel Hazen)

Hello, I am (insert name), a graduate student in Agricultural Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Would you be interested in participating in a study pertaining to agritourism and your experiences here today? This study is examining the wants, needs, and motivations of agritourists such as yourself.

This will only take 3 to 4 minutes of your time via a questionnaire and any information given is both anonymous and confidential. All you need to do is complete the survey on the tablet I will provide you, clicking through your responses. I will be available to help you if you have questions about anything.

You must also be 18 years or older to participate in this study.

By participating, you are giving consent to use your given information.

#### Will my study-related information be kept confidential?

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- The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for [Protection of Research Subjects](#);

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Institutional Review Board

Approved: 8-16-16  
IRB #: 17066

- University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research;

RECEIVED  
AUG 12 2011  
FIRST REVIEW BOARD



## WAIVER OF DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Application for Waiver of Documentation on Informed Consent

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SIGNED AND SUBMITTED AS SINGLE-SIDED DOCUMENTS. PLEASE, NO STAPLES.

**Responsible Project Investigator:** David Rosch

**Project Title:** Examining the Consumer Experiences of Illinois Agritourism

**IRB Number** 17066

To request a waiver of documentation [signature] of informed consent, please provide a response to either of the following questions. Please be specific in explaining why either statement is true for this research.

In cases in which the documentation requirement is waived, the IRB may require the investigator to provide subjects with a written statement regarding the research.

1. Explain that the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern. \*Note: A waiver of documentation of informed consent is **not permissible under this category if subject to FDA regulations.**

2. The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside the consent.

This research study represents minimal risk to participants. Data collection will take place only through an anonymous Qualtrics questionnaire collected at the research site. The use of a signed consent form is not advised as this information poses no harm or confidentiality threats.

Responsible Principal Investigator

8/2/16

Date

IRB Approval:

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Institutional Review Board

Approved: 8-16-16

IRB #: 17066

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