

# 2017 Agritourism Safety and Emergency Management Workshops Evaluation Summary



The LSU AgCenter offered two agritourism workshops titled Safety and Emergency Management in March 2017. The first workshop was held March 7, 2017, at the LSU AgCenter’s Hill Farm Research Station in Homer, and the second took place March 9, 2017, at Mrs. Heather’s Farms in Albany. These educational activities were part of the Enhancing Louisiana Agritourism: Managing Financial and Legal Liabilities grant funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) and the Southern Risk Management Education Center (SRMEC).

The workshop emphasized two themes: (i) Integrating safety into agritourism and (ii) Strengthening your agribusiness operation. Marsha Salzwedel with the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety was the keynote speaker. She presented on safety issues and emergency management related to agritourism operations. Afterwards participants took a mock tour at the workshop host’s farms. Participants were asked to conduct safety inspections using checklists designed to help identify safety hazards. Marsha worked with agritourism operators to stage safety hazards. The attendees assembled in groups and discussed the safety hazards they spotted, ways to prevent them and ways to document and address them. For the second topic, Tanya Ruffin with the LSU AgCenter shared her expertise on the use of social media, and Dora Ann Hatch and Maria Bampasidou presented on the steps to becoming a Louisiana certified agritourism operator.

The workshops were well attended. Fifty-four people participated, 19 at the LSU AgCenter’s Hill Farm Research Station and 25 at Mrs. Heather’s Farms. Forty-four people

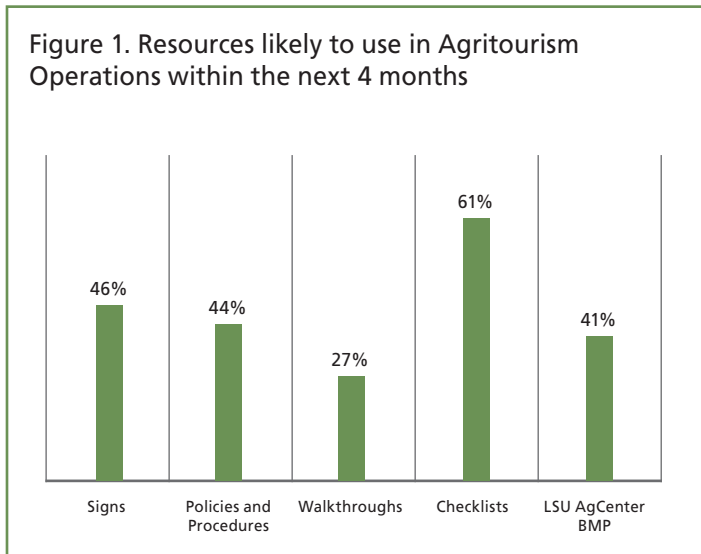
completed and returned the workshop evaluation at the end of the workshop, an 81 percent response rate. Seventy percent of the attendees were white and 77 percent were women. A copy of the workshop agenda and a copy of the evaluation form are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

The participants were asked to identify the role that best fits them related to agritourism. Eight participants identified as “a farmer already conducting agritourism,” and 13 indicated they were “farmers interested in starting an agritourism operation.” Two of the attendees identified as “industry partners including tourism, insurance, and banking” and six participants were from LSU AgCenter extension and parish agencies. One of the attendees identified as a “farmer interested in agritourism,” an “industry partner” and as an “extension agent.” The participant numbers indicate a wide range of interest in agritourism. The remainder of our participants (17 in number) did not fall in any of the above categories. Two were faculty members from Louisiana Tech University. The rest were visiting scholars from China, Latin America and Slovakia. We were happy to coordinate with the LSU College of Agriculture International Programs to accommodate visiting scholars and students and highlight an example of Louisiana agritourism.

Before each topic, participants were asked to evaluate how knowledgeable and familiar they were with the topic. The options provided were: (1) very high, (2) high, (3) moderate, (4) low and (5) very low. This exercise was repeated at the end of each presentation. The topics and the numbers and percentages of people responding “very high” or “high” are reported in Table 1.

Topics	BEFORE		AFTER		CHANGE	
	Number Responding “Very High” or “High”	Percentage Responding “Very High” or “High”	Number Responding “Very High” or “High”	Percentage Responding “Very High” or “High”	Change in Number Responding “Very High” or “High”	Change in Percentage Responding “Very High” or “High”
Agritourism Safety	2	5	37	86	35	82
Emergency Management	5	11	36	82	31	70
Becoming a Certified Agritourism Business	4	9	23	55	19	45
Social Media	8	19	23	56	15	27

Participants were given a list of resources that had been highlighted during presentations. They were asked to select the resources they were likely to use in their operations. The list of resources included signs, policies and procedures, walkthroughs, checklists and the LSU AgCenter Best Management Practices (BMP) on how to become a certified agritourism operator. From the 90 responses collected, the most frequently selected resource was the checklists, followed by the signs, policies and procedures and the LSU AgCenter BMP. The resource less likely to be used within the next four months was the walkthroughs. Walkthroughs received the least attention from all different sample populations.



Attendees were asked to rate their perceptions of a number of statements. A Likert scale from 1 to 6 was used. A numeric value equal to 1 was assigned to the “Strongly disagree” option, and a numeric value equal to 6 was assigned to the “Strongly agree” option. The vast majority of the respondents rated the statements as “Agree” and “Strongly agree.” The results are presented in Table 2. The results suggest that the workshops were well received and that the material presented was informative and highly applicable. In addition, the answers show that the delivery method for the workshops was appropriate and that the keynote speaker was an effective speaker and knowledgeable.

The last part of the evaluation asked the attendees to suggest a topic they would like to see in future workshops and to share comments on the workshop. Workshop participants would like more information on food safety for small farms, event planning at agritourism venues, funding opportunities and risks, legal and financial liabilities and insurance. The latter topics were covered in our first series of workshops in fall of 2016, and participant suggestions validated the need for the workshops. The comments section also highlighted the need for more face-to-face interaction with farm operators and agritourism operators. Representative comments included:

- Very good information. Inspired me to reevaluate and review my safety plans and walk over my place with fresh eyes.
- Very informative — so glad I came.
- Loved the class and tour today. Great information that was learned.
- This was very helpful. I feel equipped and prepared to implement safety and emergency plans.
- Very good awareness of what are major agritourism issues.
- Great presenter. Love getting out and doing onsite activities.
- How to make a specific plan for a specific farm/ranch. Is this service free or not? How much maybe will it cost?
- Include PPT slides in workbook. Email/tweet/ otherwise continually gather questions, comments and concerns and share at workshops. Focus on local agritourism possibilities.
- Is there someone to come around and do safety inspections?
- Would have liked to know approximate cost of liability insurance, cost of certification, lawyer consultation, checklist and safety training.

Statement	Number of Respondents	Average Response Rating
I have a better understanding of safety management.	44	5.59
I have a better understanding of how to prepare for and respond to an emergency on the farm.	44	5.45
Using the checklist during the farm tour helped clarify how to use the checklist.	44	5.54
The workshop presentations and/or activities were clear and easy to understand.	42	5.70
Marsha was an effective presenter and was able to answer questions knowledgeably.	42	5.88
The scale and numeric score used were: ‘Strongly disagree’ (1), ‘Disagree’ (2), ‘Somewhat disagree’ (3), ‘Somewhat agree’ (4), ‘Agree’ (5) and ‘Strongly agree’ (6)		

## Summary

Two agritourism workshops with the theme Safety and Emergency Management were held in March of 2017. The workshops were funded through USDA-NIFA and SRMEC. Our keynote speaker was Marsha Salzwedel with the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety. Her presentation focus was on safety concerns and emergency management related to agritourism operations. Tanya Ruffin with the LSU AgCenter shared her expertise on the use of social media, and Dora Ann Hatch and Maria Bampasidou presented on the steps to become Louisiana certified agritourism operators. A total of 54 people participated.

We collected 44 completed evaluation forms. Workshop participants evaluated the topics and resources highlighted during the workshop. Respondents indicated they had a better understanding of how to identify safety issues in their operations and had a better understanding of how to prepare for and respond to an emergency. Our analysis suggested that participants were familiar with the process of becoming a certified agritourism operator, but the presentation clarified its importance and the steps to be undertaken. A smaller population of participants indicated that they better understood the use of social media in agritourism operations. Participants indicated that they plan to implement the use of checklists to record their safety efforts, use more signage in their operations and assess policies and procedures. Workshop participants would like more information on food safety for small farms, event planning at agritourism venues, funding opportunities and risk, legal and financial liabilities and insurance. The latter topics were covered in our first series of workshops in the fall of 2016.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the following organizations and individuals for their contributions to the Agritourism Safety and Emergency Management Workshops:

- Our speakers: Marsha Salzwedel with the Marshfield Clinic and the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety and Tanya Ruffin with the LSU AgCenter.
- Our hosts at the LSU AgCenter's Hill Farm Research Station and Mrs. Heather's Farms.
- The USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Southern Risk Management Education Center for funding these workshops.
- Our grant collaborators: Annie's Project, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation and the National Agricultural Law Center.
- First South Farm Credit and Louisiana Land Bank for providing refreshments for our workshops.
- Our steering committee members for their input and for promoting these workshops.
- The Bienville Parish Library and the Tangipahoa Parish Convention and Visitors Center for accommodating our steering committee meetings.
- Deborah Cross, Tobie Blanchard, Kathy Green, Marla Jones and Jody Bisset for assisting us in making the workshops successful.

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