



Fall 2022 Agritourism Survey – Highlights

As part of Skagit County’s exploration and analysis of Agritourism about 17,000 postcards were mailed to rural areas of the county advertising an online survey and public meeting opportunities. The postcard was mailed in mid-October 2022. As of mid-December 2022, Skagit County collected 651 responses to the survey, which asked community opinions about different types of agritourism ranging from farm stands and u-pick operations to tasting rooms and weddings as well as special events. Highlights of the survey include:

- **Respondents:** Over 90% live in Skagit County and responded from locations across the county. About one-third own or lease farmland.
- **Agritourism Policy:** Over 80% support agritourism where accessory to a primary agricultural use.
- **Weddings:** About two-thirds felt weddings should not be prohibited (68%), but rather allowed to help keep farmers farming, particularly with some conditions. Most respondents were supportive of allowing weddings by special events and limited in size or frequency and with appropriate infrastructure (67%).
- **Tasting Rooms:** Most agreed to potential allowances for accessory tasting rooms subject to a special use permit with limitations on temporary events and other standards. Two thirds of respondents agreed with having small tasting rooms (65%). About half thought moderate tasting rooms should be allowed (50%). Most did not want to limit small or moderate tasting rooms.
- **Farm Stands and U-Pick:** A large majority of respondents (85%) would make no changes to the code for traditional types of agritourism like farm stands and u picks. Most would also like to simplify the permit process for these activities (81%). More than half (57%) would update the design standards, e.g., for parking and infrastructure.
- **Bed and Breakfasts and Farm Stays:** Over 90% would continue accessory bed and breakfast allowances. More than half (~58%) would allow temporary farm stays (RVs) including if there were limited days/vehicles; more support for the use was found with persons owning farmland than rural residents.
- **Festivals and Events:** A large majority (88%) would continue to have temporary activity regulations for festivals and events, and most would not limit the number or size of them (77% - keep number; 66% keep size). Most would also allow small farm-to-table events (81%).
- **Permits and Procedures:** Most would like to see updated application forms (83%), exemptions for seasonal, low-use/low-impact activities (72%), an annual self-certification form (77%), multi-year programmatic permit (79%), and better code enforcement (64%).

Skagit County will review these survey results as well as the results of meetings and events in November and December 2022 in formulating policies or codes for agritourism. Additional public input will be sought when legislative proposals are developed and vetted with the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners in 2023.