



Agritourism Small Group Discussions

Summary | May 10, 2021

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Introduction

Skagit County is reviewing what agritourism means to the County’s agricultural community, residents, and businesses as well as how it fits in the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan. Agritourism definitions vary and involve five types of activities – education, entertainment, direct sales, outdoor activity, and hospitality – which differ in depth of connection to the primary agricultural activity at that site.

BERK Consulting, Inc. worked with Skagit County Planning and Development Services to schedule a series of small group workshops in March 2021. These discussions allowed producers of all types and sizes, supporting agricultural businesses (e.g. farmers’ market), and tourism professionals to hear what is special about Skagit County agriculture, and what are positive aspects of agritourism and associated concerns.

The meeting invitation was sent to agricultural technical providers and stakeholders (e.g. WSU Extension, Skagit Farm Bureau, Skagitonians to Protect Farmland, Friends of Skagit County), food networks (Farmers’ Market, Puget Sound Food Hub), agricultural and tourist economy organizations (chambers of commerce, Genuine Skagit, Port of Skagit, Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, Northwest Agriculture Business Center), and persons who had responded to a survey by Skagit County Planning and Development Services. WSU Extension, Skagitonians to Protect Farmland, and Genuine Skagit Label sent the invitation to their networks.

Eight one-hour sessions were held. About 36 persons participated; accounting for persons attending more than one session there were 33 unique participants. See Table 1.

Table 1. Small Group Sessions – Agritourism

Date	Session A	Participants	Session B	Participants	Session C	Participants
March 17	7:30 am	6	8:30 am	4	9:30 am	5
March 18	2:00 pm	4	3:00 pm	5	4:00 pm	2
March 26	3:00 pm	No sign ups	4:00 pm	4	5:00 pm	6

The meeting objectives included:

- Share early Agritourism Exploration and Analysis project purpose, schedule, and results.
- Share early survey results and ask for observations on support/concerns.
- Hear participant ideas and concerns about farming and agritourism in Skagit County.

Following a brief Power Point (see [Appendix A](#)), most time was spent in discussion:

- How did you start in agriculture? What makes your farm operation/related work feasible? What is critical to sustaining farming in Skagit County?
- What about agriculture in Skagit do you take pride in? What are the threats to maintaining those things for you?
- What is your relationship to agritourism? What/where is the potential for agritourism in Skagit County? What types of agritourism are most important to you? What concerns do you have about agritourism? What barriers need to be addressed? Should some temporary agritourism uses be allowed more permanently? (e.g. hospitality/food, weddings).

An image from one of the discussion sessions appears in Figure 1. Example Small Group Discussion Virtual Session.

Common themes are summarized below. A summary of each group’s discussions follow as well.

Figure 1. Example Small Group Discussion Virtual Session



Themes

Based on the discussions, some common themes emerged:

- Skagit County farmland is unique for its soils, productivity, maritime climate, and ongoing diversification of products and entrepreneurship. Farmland is difficult to acquire for new farmers.
- There needs to be balance with agritourism regulations – focus on maintaining a thriving agricultural base.
- Agritourism should have a relationship to the farming activity. It helps people connect with their food.
- Thoughtfully allow agritourism so it supports farming but does not adversely affect primary activity of farming. Ideas included:
 - Define a core area where primary agriculture should be retained and agritourism that brings heavy traffic, parking, or has the potential to alter farming (e.g. parking lot) is not allowed.
 - Allow agritourism on smaller farms to keep land in farming that would otherwise be converted.
 - Allow agritourism on larger roads on periphery and not in core.
 - Consider best locations for agritourism to avoid impacting small communities that have local restaurants and shops.
 - Limit the scale of agritourism – e.g. 1 acre in existing developed portions of sites (e.g. where buildings already are).
 - Ensure infrastructure (roads) is appropriate; require flaggers.
- Have clear rules that are enforceable and fair.
- Help people wishing to farm. How can the County support middle sized farms as well as small and big ones? How to address land speculation? Can farmers live on farms without allowing for subdivisions?

Small Group Discussion Results

March 17, 7:30 am

Participation

Six participants:

- Barbara Cleave, Sakata Seed America
- Scott DeGraw, Bank of the Pacific, SandL Farms
- Nicole Fisher, Padilla Bay Farm
- Audrey Gravley, board member for Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland
- Les Price, Jones Creek Farms
- Kim Rubenstein, 5th generation farmer

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager; Daniel Hasenoehrl, Long Range Planning Intern

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Raised field crops, dairy, other animals on 600 acres. Agriculture is in the blood. Diversity – farms change and adapt to trends. Key word is to sustain farming.
- As a teenager harvested fields.
- Growing up agritourism meant a farm stand – 1960s, 1970s. Agritourism = education of city folks. Thrilled with what they see.
- First generation of farming. Got to do what they wanted. Started as a dairy but then moved to other products, e.g. apples. Started serving farmers' markets. Brought customers to the farm.
- Farm cattle east of Sedro Wooley.
- Have a small space for parking. Schedule 10 families at a time. Come see the lambs

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- Richest farmland, don't cover it. An acre or less. Farmers make a profit. Interconnected community. Take care of environment.
- Mall was built on top of berry fields.
- Concern with decline of mid-sized farms. Skagit is unique in the world. Worthy of preservation. Need for protection. Make a living. 40-50 years have seen a diversity of crops.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Agritourism – good to consider – for each acre in a parking, won't get acres back. If there is a parking lot, is there a way to keep it contained?

- Parking is a concern. Park 100 cars on the roadside. Busy on weekends. Hired kids to park cars (used walkie-talkies). Avoided neighbors.
- Insurance – hard to insure a farm. Okay when u-pick was small. IF agritourism is bigger, harder to get insurance.
- Small farms are hard to make profitable. People and agriculture do not mix. E.g. spreading manure. Can't move equipment along roads.
- Weddings are not conducive.
- Bring people, educate, see animals. Hungry for agriculture.
- Keep “core” area of agriculture. Core is west of I-5 and south of SR20. Some areas are isolated. Also, north of Burlington, flats – Samish and Bow.
- Have balance. Close to airport, major roads can have agritourism.
 - Some roads are barely 2 lanes.
 - Consider bicyclists and plows.
 - Fir Island, birding, lack of safety, concerns.
 - Have law enforcement. Polite with warning.
- Small farms come and go; only pay a little more.
- WSU Agriculture Entrepreneurship. 20 acres or less. Can earn \$7,000-\$23,000 per year (from agritourism).
- Puyallup Valley – agritourism harmed.
- Skagit County should make its own definition.

March 17, 8:30 am

Participation

Four participants:

- Laura Fayley, Hidden Meadow Ranch, south of Mount Vernon
- Les Price, Jones Creek Farms
- Terry Sapp, cattle, Hoehn Bend Farm, Sedro Wooley area
- Linda Versage, Blanchard Mountain Farm, Bow

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager; Daniel Hasenoehrl, Long Range Planning Intern

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Small farm near Lyman. U-pick tree fruit and farmers market in Seattle. 30 years. Formerly an abandoned farm.

- Raise beef cattle, bitters. Sedro Wooley. Previously had a farm stay and hosted visitors.
- Farm south of Mount Vernon. Animals, petting farm. 23 years. Schools, non-profits.
- Produce and farm stand. One guest house 30-45 days. Education. Mount Vernon School District. Spot for birding. Sell at Puget Sound Food Hub, Bellingham and local farm stands.

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Some types of agritourism are clear and some are confusing. Farm stand – is a means to sell. Some get their daily produce there.
- Latent demand for entertainment. Customers in Seattle.
- Established a farm stand three years after buying farm. Sometimes there is a school bus. Let neighbors know ahead of time with text or call. Communicate to avoid conflicts.
- Started with 3-days of opening farms to public with music and vendors; hired to do parking and security. Ruined fields. Evolved into u-pick and farmers market.
- Farmers market = direct. No wholesalers.
- U-pick. Good value. Hard to think of it as agritourism. No educational aspect.
- Be connected with food. Sell to Terra and Chuckanut Manor.
- Staying overnight. Business spinoff.
- Do it for free. Promote farm stand and restaurants. It comes back around. Support local businesses.
- Entertainment, what's relevant to agriculture? Motocross does not relate to agriculture. What else could they do with land?
- Petting farm is educational and entertainment. Most came as customers for lambs, turkeys, hens.
- Top concern – liability. Now protected. Farm Bureau signs – no liability.
- The petting farm was a change. Secondary to other work. Some call when it is sunny to visit. Let them know it is not convenient, not best time. Balancing work and doing agritourism with city people wanting to connect with their food. Show all – geriatric animals, some not beautiful. About 1,000 people come through. People didn't know they were so soft. Exercise 5 senses.

March 17, 9:30 am

Participation

Five participants:

- David Bauermeister, Northwest Agriculture Business Center
- Ron Extract, Garden Path Fermentation
- Les Price, Jones Creek Farms
- Jerry Shackette, Farmer's Market

- Blake Vanfield, Genuine Skagit Valley

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager; Daniel Hasenoehrl, Long Range Planning Intern

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Booster of agritourism. Look at other examples, hospitality.
- Apple farm, U-Pick
- Genuine Skagit Valley.
- Pumpkin patch.
- Seed to glass, Burlington. Modern brewing. 98% fermenting and ingredients from valley.
- Lifetime history in agriculture. Wheat farming. Started 16 years ago in Skagit County.

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- Change in number and extent of farms.
- Change in dairying and shift from west to east.
- Networks. Strengthen agriculture. On-farm education is important.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Zoning + water are barriers. Water is the bigger issue.
- Eagle Harbor. Farm to Table.
- Tasting rooms as a start.
- Agritourism in tension.
 - Tourism is with those from out of County, but there's a local connection.
 - Only recently lower cost of production to survive.
 - Selling to consumer in produce stands = direct.
 - Don't restrict how to sell product on farm. Retail v. wholesale.
 - Review types of restaurants and tasting rooms. Fine dining is not the same as a tasting room.
 - Hunting is not related.
- How Ag evolves; not more restrictive.
- Strong rules to protect Ag. What are the activities?
- What are connections and networks?
- Majority are small operators. Weekend sales are critical. Get off freeway for more than gas. Happens organically.
- Make it well thought out. Not Branson, MO.

- Sad to pass by agritourism opportunities to help small farmers.
- Best Road, daffodils. Careful Planning.
- Agritourism is a piece of economic development = EDASC.
- Tourism in Farmers' Market will shop locally. All win.
- Store Farm. Blue Hill Farm. Distinctions on scale.
- Brewery, winery, nothing out of scale + source local ingredients.
- Situation assessment – how many live on farm?
- Need education to protect agriculture. While one crop is often recognized (tulips) there are 90 Ag products in county. Grateful to farms that diversify.

March 18, 2 pm

Participation

Four participants:

- Julie Burgmeier, Skagit marketing, Skagit Farm to Pint
- Darrin Morrison, Morrison Farms
- John Roozen, Roozengarde & Tulips.Com
- Katie Rowley, historic barn and farm in South Fidalgo

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Trees and grapes. South of Mount Vernon. Multigenerational.
- Washington Bulbs
- South Fidalgo Rural Reserve, small farm with barn

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- Seed crops, potatoes, feasible with large tracts of land end to end.
- Not the only kind of farm. Small pumpkin patches.
- Good well-drained soils.
 - Not multiple homes.
 - Farmland preservation.
 - Snohomish and Whatcom Counties – lots cut off. Zoning.
- Take pride. Maritime climate. Close to markets. Sun and rain.

- Unique climate. Salish Sea. Fertile clay, different clay. High water table. 2-4 acre inches. Farmland is worth preserving.
- Built world-class drainage in floodplain. Watched fertilizers.
- Passed right to farm and voluntary stewardship.
- How does agritourism affect that?
- Threats – development.
- Audubon Society. Best in Western US.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Roadside stands. U-pick. Okay.
- Do allow hunting.
- Concerns – what would be allowed under banner of Agritourism.
 - Someone wanted to add a restaurant. What if restaurant drives the farm business? Don't want token farm.
 - How does farming stay primary and agritourism stays accessory?
 - Farm stays, weddings, concerns.
- Nursery/green house
 - Propagate plants
 - Structure is there
 - Supplement with gifts, Add café, store at Christmas, Ice Cream
 - Fear it will go that way
- Agritourism should be conditioned – e.g. different owners – does it transfer? Permitting, need some changes.
 - If sold, start over.
- Make agritourism accessory – support farming. Fought for the land. Keep it.
- There are many non-conforming uses. Hard to enforce.
- Open areas and big farms – keep. Equipment, fertilizer, and banks support.
- Keep houses near road.
- Right to farm.
- Effect on wildlife.
- Make agritourism complementary to farm. What is a farm? If you build agritourism then you need a bathroom, gates, rules, guidelines.
- Have a wonderful community. There are restaurants in small communities. Want villages to have business.
- Farm to plate, Cascade Loop, Harvest Loop. Gordon. Tulip Town.
- Move generation to steward land.

- Small 100-year old farm, 7 acres with two barns and house. Make cider. Preserve history. Showcase what is on site. Reward good decisions. Penalize bad ones. County concern on small farms. Make it easier to have small farms survive. Put buildings in same footprint.

March 18, 3 pm

Participation

Six participants:

- Marlene Finley WSU Master Gardener, Discovery Garden
- Craig Knutzen, Farmer
- Andrew Miller, Spinach Bus Ventures (Tulip Town, Fairhaven Mill, Skagit Acres, Skagit Landing)
- Amy Moe / Byron Betts, Hop Skagit
- Amber Watts, Garden Path Fermentation

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Burlington, Source to glass, hard to find property.
- Family farm with potatoes, barley.
- Science based gardening.
- Hopp farm west of Mount Vernon
- Grew up in Skagit. Private equity and management. Economic development.

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- It is the place it is today because of protecting productive farmland and reducing conflicts. There are more regulations and requirements. Food safety. Global Gap. Must meet requirements.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Want small farm to table, 5th generation farming family.
- Do something connected with land, small scale – financially feasible. Excised to produce beer.
- Give a chance. Don't want landscape to change.
- Avoid loopholes, e.g. subdivisions. Have a beautiful place.
- Grow and sell. Urban adjacent farming. Look at what has worked in valley.
- Moved from Austin Texas on 100-acre ranch to Washington. Be close to ingredients. Creating hyperlocal products. Expand enterprise. Show where ingredients come from, and provide a sense of place. Zoning + water killed it. Tasting room is not a taproom. Charcuterie versus sandwich. Winery tasting room.

- Agritourism is important to the valley. Positives to tell story.
- Concerns 8-10 cars parked for photos of snow geese. Traffic, frustrations.
- Harmonious if careful.
- Good agritourism in Snohomish County, poor Agricultural base.
- Don't cover more than 1 acre.
- Need big producers.
- Tell urban adjacent farming story. Skagit County is doing it right. Rotational crops. Why water in August. We have credibility. There is an emotional attachment. Different than South Lake Union.

March 18, 5 pm

Participation

Two participants:

- Jennife Schuh, Schuh Farms
- Allen Rozema, Skagitonians to Protect Farmland

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming | Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County | Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- U-pick strawberries and Berry Stand, pies made with berries at farm, or peaches from Yakima. Love sharing farm. Know where their food comes from. Parking on grass field. School Classes come. During COVID, self-guided tour. QR code. Talking fields. Curriculum. Dinners on the farm, temporary. Members only.
- Skagitonians to Protect Farmland – role is balance. Farm and agritourism; is agritourism subordinate?
- Keep pipeline of small farmers. Difficult if farm is less than 20 acres and below economic threshold. Exclude home, then highest and best use. Schedule F. Allow 3-year average. Farmland Legacy. Change value of development right.
- Agritourism needs to relate to agriculture.
- Operators permit.
- Wedding and Schedule F.
- Restaurants, food service if not a table and chair.

March 26, 4 pm

Participation

Four participants:

- Amy Frye, Boldy Grown Farm
- Joan Gordon, Mount Vernon resident, VRBO rental owner
- Laura Hartner, Skagit Land Trust
- Andy Mayer, Mount Vernon Chamber

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Organic vegetables. Rent at Viva, plus rent other land. 75% wholesale and 25% CSA. Distribute I-5 to Oregon. UBC Sustainability Program. Embedded part of community. Puget Sound Food Hub and Viva Farms. Want to buy farm. Current lease – good location. Production farm.
- Moved to keep flowers in Skagit. Tulip volunteer.

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- Value Skagit Land Trust and keeping land or farmer in agriculture.
- Interesting hollowing out middle farms – could change food security. Is it a problem?
- Challenging to find land. Doesn't leave much space. Broader issue.
- Competing with land divisions. Flex for farmworker housing. Conservation easement – harder to find. Development rights removed. Then no opportunity to live on farm.
- Water rights.
- Pressure from Seattle.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Preserve that (farming) way of life. Agritourism can carry farmers for months. Tap into existing markets. Restaurants in Seattle. Like Skagit Fresh.
- Want on-farm store, coffee. Make compatible. Traffic and parking. Ag at urban edge. Tool for economic viability.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Viva farm incubator. Do you have any comments about the data that many of our Skagit farms are woman-owned? Can we use that fact and connecting that with public attention to inclusion and diversity, and support of women and minority-owned businesses?
- Festivals helpful to local businesses.

March 26, 5 pm

Participation

Six participants:

- Darin Blanchard
- Margy Dariotis, La Conner Gardens
- Kristen Keltz, Hotel Services Group
- Todd Gordon, Todd Gordon Farms
- Steve Omdal, Port of Skagit
- Jennifer Schuh, Schuh Farms

County Staff: Peter Gill, Long Range Planning Manager

BERK Consulting: Lisa Grueter, Jescelle Major

Discussion

Type of Farming

- Vegetables.
- Cider press and beer. Make but do not sell onsite.
- Fighting a global market. New Zealand.
- Moved from Shoreline. Love area.
- AirBnB in backyard. Want tourists.
- 18 acres tiny farms and gardens with 1 acre + stand.
- U-pick fun, pies. Use every part of berry.
- Grow hay for cattle.

Pride/Threats about Agriculture in Skagit County

- Pumpkins, peas, corn, cucumbers. Lost most of it. If not for pumpkins would be gone. Value add. All seed crops are down. Wholesale, direct marketing.
- Rules and regulated to death. Need leeway.
- Don't over develop. Don't want it to go away.

Potential for Agritourism/Barriers/Concerns

- Want to increase business. Direct marketing.
- Need cohesive plan for tourism.
- New Tourism Promotion Area (TPA), Skagit Tourism Bureau. 7:1 return on investment.
- Existing restaurant in Bow. Artisan versus large farms. How do you find balance?
- Value add – focus on farm.

- Keep farm ground and make it flourish and work as a group.
- Work with WSDOT – wider driveways.
- Have licensed flaggers.
- Want people to have memories, educate people. Understand where food is coming from. Make it fun.
- Magical, make memories.
- Traffic, road speeds, accidents, 50 MPH. Have seen tourists, snow geese, road rage.
- Skagit Valley Lodging can speak with groups.

Appendix A – Discussion Group Slides



Discussion Groups
March 2021

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Overview of Agritourism Effort
- Discussion
- Next Steps

How does Agritourism fit Skagit County?

What is the potential for agritourism in Skagit County? How can it support your livelihood in farming? How can it sustain agriculture in the region? How is change most obstructed? How would it support the local economy?

JOIN BERK Consulting for a DISCUSSION GROUP to share your ideas and questions. We are hosting small-group sessions lasting under 90 minutes and we'll have morning or afternoon options to fit your schedule. If none of the proposed dates work, please reach out to joan@berkconsulting.com to get someone to schedule or with any questions you may have.

Schedule with us: <https://calendar.berkconsulting.com/berk-agritourism>

DO YOU KNOW?
Agriculture defines our land, feeds the types of activities, education, and recreation, and contributes to the economy. It is a vital part of our identity and our way of life.

WANT TO JOIN THE MOVEMENT?
There are 10,000+ farms in Skagit County. We're looking for people who want to share their stories and help us tell the story of Skagit County.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?
Contact us at joan@berkconsulting.com or call us at 360-885-1111. We'll be happy to help you get started.



- Reach out to producers, commodity groups, agricultural interest groups
- Share situation assessment and early findings
- Hear farm and agritourism stories, concerns, ideas

Skagit Agritourism Background

- Long been part of the AG landscape of Skagit County
- 2018 Comprehensive Plan Amendment for food services in AG – NRL zone
- Board requests a study to assess impacts of agritourism

10. SKAGIT VALLEY FARMERS MARKET
The Skagit Valley Farmers Market is a weekly outdoor market held on Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm at the Skagit Valley Fairgrounds. It features a variety of fresh produce, meats, and artisanal goods from local producers.

11. ANNETZ FARM
Annetz Farm is a family-owned farm in Skagit County that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They also offer agritourism activities like pumpkin patches and hayrides.

12. SUN HOLLOW RANCH MEAT
Sun Hollow Ranch Meat is a local meat producer that raises and processes a variety of meats, including beef, pork, and lamb. They offer a variety of cuts and are available at local markets.

13. PRADISE SPRINGS RANCH
Paradise Springs Ranch is a family-owned farm that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They also offer agritourism activities like pumpkin patches and hayrides.

14. ROKZENGAARD
Rokzengaard is a family-owned farm that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They also offer agritourism activities like pumpkin patches and hayrides.

15. SAMHEIM CHEESE & MEAT
Samheim Cheese & Meat is a local cheese and meat producer that produces a variety of cheeses and meats. They offer a variety of cuts and are available at local markets.

16. SCREEN FARMS
Screen Farms is a family-owned farm that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They also offer agritourism activities like pumpkin patches and hayrides.

17. SKAGIT RIVER RANCH
Skagit River Ranch is a family-owned farm that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They also offer agritourism activities like pumpkin patches and hayrides.

18. SNOWGLOBE PRODUCE
Snowglobe Produce is a local produce producer that produces a variety of fresh produce, including apples, pears, and berries. They offer a variety of cuts and are available at local markets.

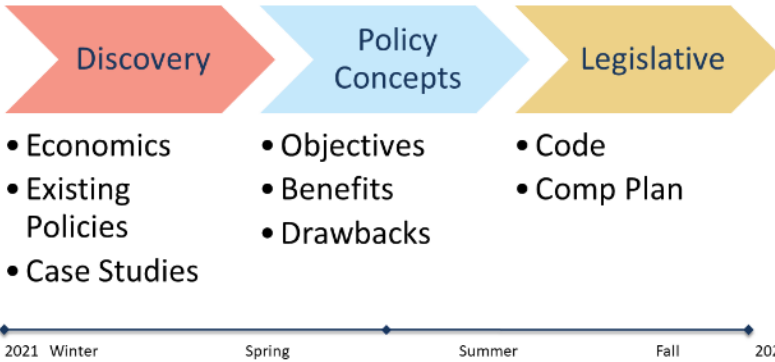
19. SKAGIT VALLEY FARMERS MARKET
The Skagit Valley Farmers Market is a weekly outdoor market held on Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm at the Skagit Valley Fairgrounds. It features a variety of fresh produce, meats, and artisanal goods from local producers.

20. SKAGIT'S OWN FISH MARKET
Skagit's Own Fish Market is a local fish market that offers a variety of fresh fish, including salmon, trout, and steelhead. They also offer a variety of seafood products.

21. ANACOSTIS FARMERS MARKET
Anacostis Farmers Market is a weekly outdoor market held on Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm at the Anacostis Fairgrounds. It features a variety of fresh produce, meats, and artisanal goods from local producers.

22. EDSON FARMERS MARKET
Edson Farmers Market is a weekly outdoor market held on Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm at the Edson Fairgrounds. It features a variety of fresh produce, meats, and artisanal goods from local producers.

Process



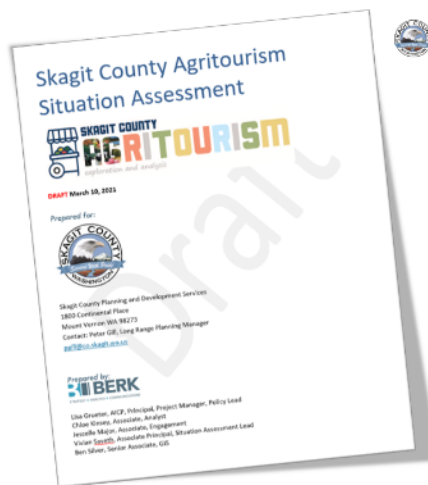
What is Agritourism?



Report is Available

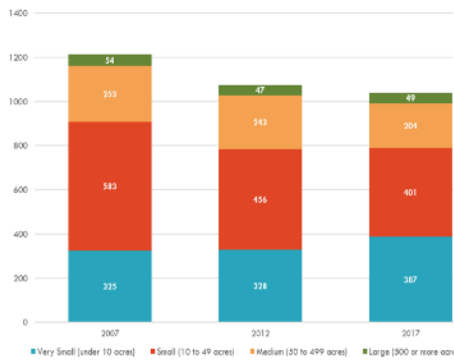
- Economics: National, state, and local studies and trends
- Existing Policies and 10 Examples
- Case Studies: Data and Interviews

www.Skagitcounty.net/SkagitAGT

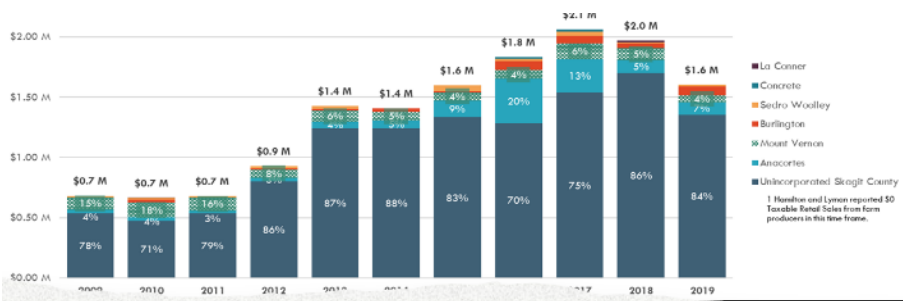




Skagit County Farm Size 2007 - 2017



- Farms < 10 ac have increased (blue)
- Relative stability in the number of very large farms (Green)
- Declining number of small and medium-sized farms (Red & Orange)



Upward Trend in Taxable Retail Sales from Agriculture (2009 – 2019)

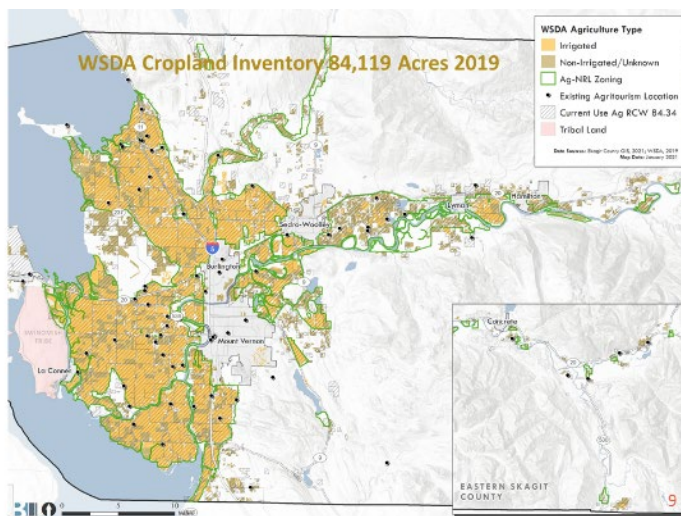
(reported by Skagit County Crop and Animal Producers)

At the same time that very small farms have proliferated, income from agritourism and direct-to-consumer sales have increased, perhaps indicating a trend towards bifurcation in the farming industry, with fewer mid-sized farms.

8

Ag-NRL, Current Use Cropland, Agritourism

- Top Zones for Ag
- Ag-NRL
 - RRv
 - RRC-NRL



Top Zoning Designations for Agriculture



Zone	WSDA 2019 Acres	Current Use Acres
[Ag-NRL] Agricultural - NRL	57,329	68,352
[RRv] Rural Reserve	4,186	10,597
[RRc-NRL] Rural Resource - NRL	1,646	3,887
[A-UD] Anacortes UGA Development District	242	1,666
[SF-NRL] Secondary Forest - NRL	168	735
[IF-NRL] Industrial Forest - NRL	211	711
Incorporated Area	437	689
[URR] Urban Reserve Residential	212	413

Case Studies and Examples

- ✓ Growing agritourism
- ✓ Similar locations near population centers
- ✓ Different types of regulatory approaches

Place/Features	Experiences
Snohomish Ag Acres 2017: 63,671 Code: Wide ranging, evolving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type: B and Bs, farmers markets, museums, wedding facilities (in existing structures), and limited seasonal special events for activities such as pumpkin patches, corn mazes, and outdoor movie nights. U-pick part of regular harvesting. • Economic: Second in the state in number of new farms. Tech workers moving in and want to farm. Highest dollars reported in Census of Ag for Agritourism in state. Key concern/opportunity: traffic. • Permitting: Ag Advisory Board in wants code amendments; processing in 2021 including more flexibility for wedding facilities and special events and new ag accessory use category for farm stays/lodging and farm camps. Restrictions on the siting on non-ag related accessory uses in order to be compliant with RCW 36.70A.177.
Thurston Ag Acres 2017: 62,250 Code: Overlay, Flexible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type: Wide cross section ranging from cattle farms (not accessible to the public) to smaller working farms for tourists (i.e., pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, corn mazes, etc.) Some sell goods directly or at farmer's markets (i.e., lavender, soap, etc.). • Economic: The growth = more awareness as to what farms there are and cross-promotion rather than new farms or businesses. In marketing also list restaurants, breweries, wineries, museums etc. that get visitors out rural areas. Working to align with Washington Tourism Alliance. • Permitting: Challenges have been more related to events. Venues/farms that want to host events, either public or private, have had issues obtaining permits because of perceived traffic and utilities overload. Many of our venues are only allowed to host a few events a year and there is usually a curfew.
Marion County, OR Ag Acres 2017: 288,671 Code: Focus on temporary due to state rules. Tighter range of permanent uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type: Size ranging from 1 acre to 1,000 acres. Activities: farm stands, farm store, tastings, tours, classes, markets, outdoor recreation, u-pick, and more. Survey: 59% seasonal activity, 36% year-round, 5% not applicable. • Economic: Agritourism and farm-direct sales is growing in popularity. • Permitting: Have ununified set of state and county rules; county wants more flex. A few communities are unhappy with the amount of extra traffic on rural roads due to certain agritourism activities.



Skagit County Agritourism Allowed

Permanent Uses

- **Permitted:** Farm-based businesses and accessory agricultural uses, e.g. farm tours, U-pick, value add sales.
- **Admin. Special Use:** Bed and Breakfasts, accessory.
- **Special Use Permit:** Outdoor outfitters enterprises (e.g. hunting, fishing, bird watching) incidental to agriculture, resulting in no conversion of agricultural land.

Temporary Uses

- **Admin. Special Use:** Temporary events in the Ag-NRL zone provided the events are related to agricultural production, no agricultural land is converted, and no permanent structures are constructed. Maximum 24 per year.



Agritourism Exploration and Analysis Survey

Skagit County Community Survey - Please answer the following 15 questions. Required responses are indicated by an asterisks. Results will help inform future policy proposals by Skagit County Planning and Development services.



We Want to Hear From You.

Required

1

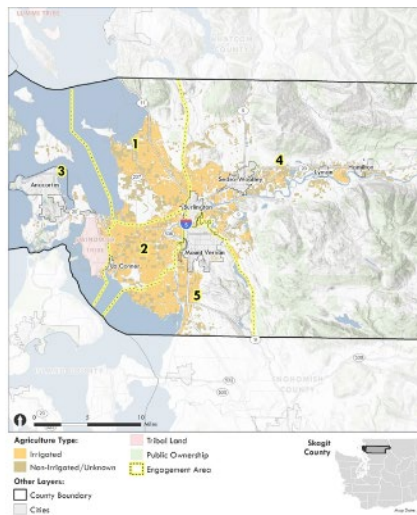
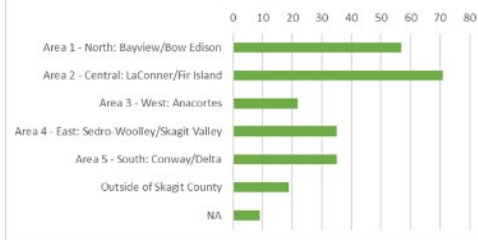
Please mark all the answers below that you consider agritourism *

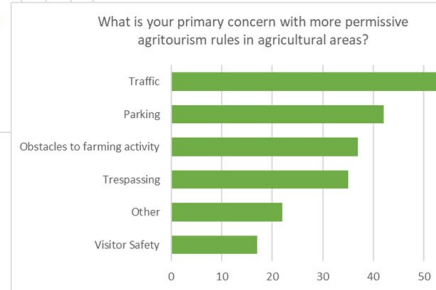
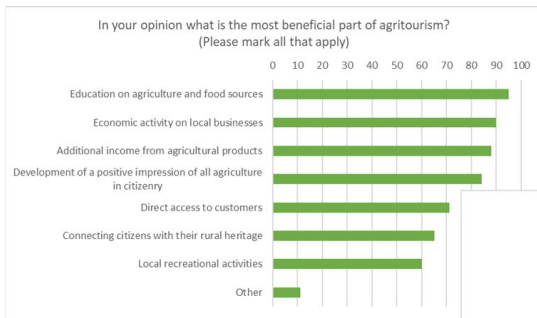
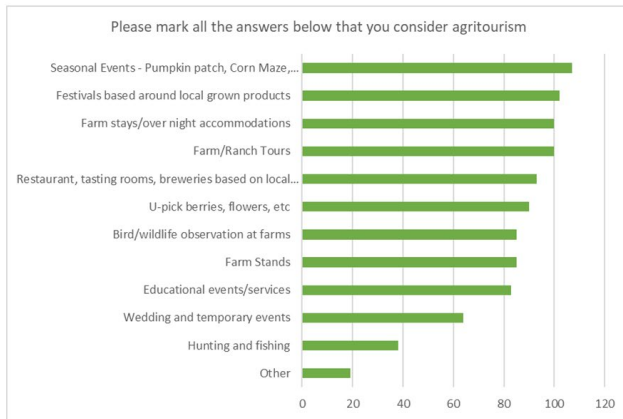
- Farm/Ranch Tours
- Seasonal Events - Pumpkin patch, Corn Maze, Christmas tree
- U-pick berries, flowers, etc
- Hunting and fishing
- Wedding and temporary events

www.Skagitcounty.net/SkagitAGT

Early Results ~ 116 responses

Where do you conduct or attend agritourism activities. (See map)





Discussion



- How did you start in agriculture? What makes your farm operation/related work feasible? What is critical to sustaining farming in Skagit County?
- What about agriculture in /Skagit do you take pride in? What are the threats to maintaining those things for you?
- What is your relationship to agritourism? What/where is the potential for agritourism in Skagit County? What types of agritourism are most important to you? What concerns do you have about agritourism? What barriers need to be addressed? Should some temporary agritourism uses be allowed more permanently? (e.g. hospitality/food, weddings).



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