

Public Comment received for the
2025 Farm Stands Rulemaking
June 13, 2025 through July 03, 2025

All public comment received for this rulemaking may be viewed at:
<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/lar/pages/rulemaking.aspx>

From: [Eric Walker](#)
To: [FOOTE Hilary * DLCD](#)
Subject: RE: Follow up for the 2025 Farm Stands RAC Meeting #2
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 2:40:11 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[image008.png](#)

Hello Hilary.

Below are my comments related to the questions below in **red**. They are a bit scattered, but happy to clarify if that is helpful.

The meeting minutes look good also.

Thanks, Eric

Hood River County
Community Development Director
601 State Street, Hood River, OR 97031
(541) 387-6840
eric.walker@hoodrivercounty.gov

From: FOOTE Hilary * DLCD <Hilary.FOOTE@dlcd.oregon.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 1:00 PM
To: TAYLOR Casaria * DLCD <Casaria.TAYLOR@dlcd.oregon.gov>; LOBNIBE Silas * DLCD <silas.lobnibe@dlcd.oregon.gov>; HOWARD Gordon * DLCD <Gordon.HOWARD@dlcd.oregon.gov>; BOYER Barbara * DLCD <Barbara.Boyer@dlcd.oregon.gov>
Cc: GREENE Kirstin * DLCD <Kirstin.GREENE@dlcd.oregon.gov>; BONINI Alyssa * DLCD <alyssa.bonini@dlcd.oregon.gov>; HAMMER Alexis * DLCD <alexis.hammer@dlcd.oregon.gov>; donna@dsconsult.co
Subject: Follow up for the 2025 Farm Stands RAC Meeting #2

Good afternoon RAC members,

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on promotional events at farm stands this morning. We found the discussion to be very helpful. Below are some of the questions we noted as emerging themes at the end of our meeting. There was a lot of material to digest today, so if you have additional thoughts on these questions or proposals related to these questions, it would be useful to staff to have those submitted as written comments.

1. What does the promotion of farm products involve? What sorts of activities are

not promotional for the purpose of the farm stand rule?

Tough question given the limited information provided in the rule. In Hood River County, we have recently struggled with the question of ... does a promotion event have to be promoting something that is being sold in the farm stand or just broadly promoting farm products in general. For instance, can a farm stand operator host an Easter event and call it “Spring on the Farm: Eggstravaganza” and offer baby animals (petting zoo) and egg hunt with plastic eggs with candy even though the farm stand neither sells livestock nor eggs? Initially, planning staff said that any promotional activity/event held must promote something that is actually being sold out of the farm stand. We ran this by our attorney and were told that the rule did not need to be interpreted that narrowly. It remains a gray area. It seems reasonable to assume that promotional activities/event should, at minimum, be promoting a product that is actually sold in the farm stand.

Another issue that Hood River County has run into is the creation of a playground with dozens of structures and games intended primarily for entertainment. These structures, geared towards kids, are a significant draw to the farm stand. In fact, people are willing to pay up to \$18-25 per person to attend an event given the amenities provided. If these amenities were not provided, it is doubtful that someone would pay that much to pick some flowers or a pumpkin. However, it certainly helps their farm stand business. The problem is that the event becomes the primary draw instead of the actual farm stand.

2. Would putting some parameters on scope and scale of allowable events be helpful or detrimental? What would that look like?

Another tough question. I think the answer is yes, but it is difficult to know where that line should be drawn.

3. How direct should the relationship between the event and products being sold at the farm stand be?

As stated above, it seems reasonable that the event must, at minimum, promote something that is being sold in the onsite farm stand. Should you really be able to have a festival around, say, eggs if you don't actually sell eggs in your farm stand? If so, then what are you really promoting. Let's leave those types of event to farmers who actually sell such products.

4. At what point is an application for an agri-tourism permit required rather than or in addition to a farm stand permit?

First thoughts... At minimum, when the event is hosted outside of the regular operating hours of the farm stand. Also, when the event is operated separate of farm stand operations. For instance, if a farm stand operator hosts a farm-to-table lunch or dinner that is operated completely separate of the farm stand and passholders are treated differently than just the general public visiting the farm stand, then the event is probably a separate agri-tourism event rather than a promotional event.

5. Should there be graduated standards based on the intensity of the farm stand operation?

Possibly. In Hood River County, we have a farm stand operator that hosts promotional event, both fee-based and non fee-based, almost continuously between April 1 through the end of the year. Although many of the activities and events are relative minor (e.g. farm pollinator party and honey tasting or peach u-pick), her four main events (which she sells admissions to) are quite large. I realize that the farm impacts test does not apply to farm stands, including fee based activities, however, the impact of these types of intense events is more than just access and parking. It's litter, noise, trespassing, etc. You can't host an event drawing hundreds of people into an agricultural area and not cause an impact on adjacent farm operators. Based on that, maybe there are some siting requirements that could be use, such as a buffer from adjacent farm properties, that could be used to minimize such impacts.

Another question is... At what point does a farm stand host so many events and activities that it becomes a de facto commercial event site instead of a farm stand (i.e. the tail wagging the dog). I am not sure what the answer is but it is something worse exploring.

More suggestions in the next question.

6. Should there be graduated standards based on the scale of promotional events?

Possibly. As stated previously, a farm stand can be established on EFU zoned property even with a minimal amount of onsite farm products being grown. In the first meeting, I used the example of a farm stand being established with just three blueberry plants. Technically, that person can establish a farm stand based on selling the berries they produce from their small farm operation. Now that the person has a farm stand, then there is nothing to prevent them from hosting large promotional events as long as they are selling an appropriate amount of other "local" (aka Oregon made) fresh or processed farm crops and remaining under the 25% incidental sales limit.

Plus, for large farm stands, it is easy to draw hundreds of people per day over a busy weekend (maybe more in the case of the Wood Shoe et al). At some point, is an event so large that it becomes more than just a promotional event? Would it be possible to

implement standards, similar to wineries, that allow certain intensities and scale of events only if certain criteria are met, such as parcel size or size of farm operation. Or, maybe, some sort of cap could be implemented, such as say 250 people, and if you go over that number then you need a different type of permit.

7. We have heard the need for clarifying that distinction between farm use marketing and farm stand marketing. Particularly on the topic of educational activities. Written comments on that would be helpful.

It seems very reasonable that either a farm operator or farm stand operator should be allowed to conduct educational activities, especially if no fees are being charged. In Hood River County, we would consider such activities as outright allowed as an incidental accessory part of the operation. The trigger for us, is whether the activity is being charged for. If so, then you need some type of permit, such as farm stand, agri-tourism event, or commercial use in conjunction with farm use.

Another question that comes up given the existing rule language is... Does a promotional activity or event have to be “fee-based”? The existing language seems to imply that a farm stand operator can only host fee-based promotional events. Hood River County has never interpreted it that way, but I think some jurisdictions have. HRC has looked at non fee-based activities as accessory aspects of the farm stand operation as long as they are promoting farm products sold there.

8. Should there be rule language clarifying different standards for temporary structures like tents and canopies? Should there be a time limitation or other standard to support a determination that the structure is temporary?

Again, another tough question. On one hand, the existing language that precludes structures not intended for the sale of farm crops and livestock is very easy to implement. However, from a practical side of things, when farm stand operator say they need a temporary tent to provide shade for customers, it’s hard to say no. Such a structure seems very reasonable and probably a good thing for safety and convenience. But then again, we have seen tents put up with the stated intent of safety, then being used as seating associated with their “temporary” food service during events.

The other issue to keep in mind about distinguishing between permanent and temporary structures is that the impacts are generally the same. For instance, a food cart or mechanical fair rides, which would both be considered temporary, could still have a significant effects on the farm stands operation. I would hate for provisions to be added that wholly exempt temporary structures because it will have significant unintended consequences. We have seen it first hand in regards to play structures

made out of hay bales, used tires, and pallets that become a mini-fairgrounds and a significant draw to the farm stand; allow high admissions to be charges and minimizing the actual farm stand itself.

Please provide your written comments to us by the end of the day on Wednesday, June 11th. Written comments received before June 11th will be included in the packet for the June 24th meeting.

Within the next few days, we will be sending out the meeting summary for today's meeting for your review and will ask for any corrections to the summary by the end of the day June 11th.

Thank you for supporting this effort! We appreciate the time you are volunteering on this rulemaking.

Hilary Foote |
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To provide comments to the Land Conservation and Development Commission please contact:

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From: [Sid Friedman](#)
To: [FOOTE Hilary * DLCD](#); [Donna Silverberg](#)
Subject: Fwd: Farmstands public comment
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:20:00 PM

Hilary and Donna,

Kim Lanyon asked me to forward the comment below regarding impacts to her farm operation from the neighboring farm stand. She apparently had difficulty submitting to the comment address on the webpage

Sid

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Land use / Farmstands

Date: Sun, 22 Jun 2025 20:03:01 -0700 (PDT)

From: KIM LANYON <klanyon2@comcast.net>

To: sidf@viclink.com <sidf@viclink.com>

Hi Sid I could not get the other email to work please forward this comment!
My name is Kim Lanyon and I have lived at 15921 Hwy 47 Yamhill, Or. for over 30 years. Source Farms (" The Hubb" Llc)bought the 5.13 acre plot that borders my south property line in March 2023. They have a single lane driveway that runs parallel to our farm road, which is how our farm equipment gets to the 90 acres below. In July of 2023 Source Farms with no communication or permission started digging and trenching on my property, they put up a 10.5ft by 5.5ft sign and logs completely on my property! I Went in to the planning dept every week for 4 weeks about this.. their response was to show good faith and work with them?? During this same time frame The Hubb was obtaining several permits from the planning dept. I have worked with the planning dept before for building permits and thought that these other permits would go through the same check point and final inspection. NO they fact check nothing stated in the permit application, No site check and when neighbors complain or comment during the process, the applying party just writes up some lies or whatever and submits it,nothing is confirmed. If the planning department has the power to approve these CONDITIONAL permits, they should be held accountable, Not just say "sorry there is nothing we can do" after they approved the permit and strung me along for over a month.. I should have got an attorney right away!! Do your due diligent inspect sites, fact check statements, especially when the neighbors are submitting complaints AND for the love of GOD when the conditions of the permit are NOT being met REVOKE the permit just like it says on the PERMIT. BOC also just accepts the statements made true or not and you have no recourse of their decisions. FACT CHECK, SITE CHECK!!! (If you get any notification of a hearing)
It is not right that people have to go to court and spend hundreds of thousands of

dollars to protect the property they have already purchased, paid taxes on and farmed for over 30 years. Source Farm has impeded our ability to farm the lower 90 plus acres by changes they made to my property, farm road since 2023, their farm store customers, employees, ect, are using my farm road, NOT my farmer. This property is all zoned EF-80 Why am I fighting a commercial business over my farming rights?? Give the planning department more tools to use then, the "approved" stamp, someone needs to be responsible for these decisions and accountable when it goes wrong.

This is so brief, concerning the issues, but I have shingles for the second time and our hearing is in a few weeks(YES this has been hell) My Mother is the land owner at age 86 and we are greatly concerned for her health.

PS. The planning department also sent all (7)but 2, notifications with my name on it, to the Source Farms store address!? Really they didn't know my address?They couldn't be bothered to look it up? Using the newspaper is an outdated form of notification, not everyone can afford a subscription(hard copy or digital)

Thank you,

Kim Lanyon Lazy as "L" Ranch

To: Hilary Foote

**Re: June 24 RAC Meeting Comments
Farmstand Comments on Agency Thoughts on RAC 1 and 2, and Comments on RAC 3,
Prepared Foods and Impacts to Neighboring Farms**

From: Mike McCarthy, Ag for Oregon

Why Does This Matter?

It has always been known that farms generate lower per acre short term returns than other industries. So the only way we protect farming and farm land for the long term from conversion is to limit non-farm uses on farm land in the Exclusive Farm Use Zone. The multiple paths for non-farm uses now allowed by the Oregon Land Use System threaten the land base by:

1. Actual permanent coverage of the land by man-made development and construction which removes acres and acres of soils from production
2. Fragmenting the farm zone with a patchwork of non-farm buildings, non farm dwellings, parking lots, extra septic fields and roads making it more difficult to acquire large enough parcels to be efficient and profitable.
3. Discouraging farmers from taking a long term view of their farm to make long term investments in crops and infrastructure.
4. Discouraging young farmers from taking over family farms because of the observed instability of the farming area.
5. Fragmenting land required for farming industries to survive. Farm “industries” require a critical mass of land to support local technical expertise, suppliers, equipment dealers, workforce, world class processing and packing facilities and global marketers. When the industry in an area shrinks because of loss of land base these support entities move away.
6. Increasing land prices to far beyond what can be supported by food production creating an environment where only the wealthy elite can purchase land. These parcels then often become “McMansions” and large non-farm out buildings with little or no farming.
7. Unenforced trespass, harm to crops and interference with operations, safety issues and traffic issues that block or slow harvest crop transportation.

Our farm lands in Oregon are essentially being rezoned in a stealth manner to commercial zones.

Comments on “Agency Thoughts on Rulemaking for Issues Addressed at RAC Meetings 1 and 2”

Structures

Temporary and permanent structures should be treated similarly as farmstands because the use and impacts are the same. Wording should be added to exempt temporary sales (one month duration or less) from vehicles or structures of 64 sq ft or less.

Local Agricultural Area

The current definition of “local agricultural area” really diminishes the potential financial benefits for farmers who want to sell the products they produce. The expansive current definition results in putting farmers who grow things at their farmstand in competition with farmers who buy produce from out of

the area and resell it. This is unfair competition and disincentivizes farmers from growing anything for the farmstand.

The current rule language “As used in this section, *farm crops or livestock*, includes both fresh and processed farm crops or livestock grown on the farm operation, or grown on the farm operation and other farm operations in the local agricultural area” does nothing to clarify or cause a farmstand to grow what they sell. The language is too vague and unenforceable. “Crops grown on the farm operation and other farm operations in the local agricultural area” does nothing to designate if the amount grown on the farm is required to be more than say 0.1%.

The problem with the current phrasing is that it is unenforceable. It is impossible for planners, citizens, neighbors or land use groups to determine if prepared, processed, or even fresh items at a farmstand are from Oregon or adjacent counties in other states or somewhere else. It is impossible to determine where flour, oats, beans, potatoes, sugar, sweet corn, canned tomatoes or melons etc are from. These types of issues must be clarified to make it possible for planners to make determinations and enforce.

Our Proposed Wording

As used in this section, *farm crops or livestock*, includes both fresh and processed farm crops or livestock grown on the farm operation, or where 75% or more is grown on the farm operation and 25% or less is grown on other farm operations in the local agricultural area. Local agricultural area is defined as no farther than 25 miles away from the farmstand.

The Relationship Between Promotional Activities and Farm Stand Products

Many farmers I talk to support farmstands in the farm zone and in cases farm-to-table dinners in only controlled situations. To commercial farmers, farmstands and farm-to-table dinners mean selling what is grown on the host farm. Now under current rules, there are few products grown on the host farm that are sold at farmstands and served at farm-to-table dinners.

The proposed wording muddies the water even more. The new phrase defining promotional activities includes the wording “...farm-to-table dinners predominantly featuring crops and livestock sold at the farmstand”. This wording is problematic where the number of farm-to-table dinners allowed is not defined. Also how many people, the number of cars, amount of parking, number of hours dinner can last etc are not defined. “Predominantly” is not defined and likely is unenforceable even if a percentage is set. Many will have dinners all day every day. Because the current definition of “local area” is unenforceable, products “sold at the farmstand can have no relationship to area farms. The result of the wording will result in restaurants, delis and cafes in farm zone.

“Promotional activities authorized by this section are incidental and subordinate to the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand”. Without a definition of “incidental and subordinate” planners, neighbors, citizens and land use groups will not be able to enforce.

Proposed Wording

The 25% Farmstand Rule

The 25% rule remains challenging to planners, citizens, LCDC and land use groups to enforce.

Is a prepared food item weighing one pound, having an ounce of on-farm fruit juice in it (the rest not local) an incidental item or farm produced item? Data can not be collected to do the calculation to make the determination.

Rural Communities

There are obvious and serious problems with farmstand use in the farm zone under current or proposed wording. This allowed use (of what are really restaurants on rural lands) creates unfair competition with restaurants, delis, coffee shops and stores in Oregon's struggling rural communities. Many rural communities have empty storefronts. Operators in rural communities paid commercial land and building prices, pay urban commercial taxes and fees and have to compete with the low cost operations in the farm zone.

Prepared Foods

Because of the difficult time determining if criteria around prepared food are met, true farmstands should not sell prepared food. This was not the intent of farmstands.

Impacts on neighboring farms

True farmstands that sell what they produce as a rule will have fewer impacts to surrounding farms than the "carnival" type farmstands that we are creating. Farmstands as we now allow them should be a Sub II use. Neighboring farms need protections in place and enforcement of those protections. Farmstands that sell 75% what they produce could be a Sub I use.

Summary

Farmstand rules as written and newly proposed put no determinable limits on activities and promotions at farmstands. Restaurants that feature truly local produce should be in our rural communities. Farmers markets should be encouraged in communities.

The "local" definition is meaningless and unenforceable. The 25% rule is unenforceable as written and furthermore counties do not often request tax transcripts which alone are not adequate to make the determination of compliance. Counties don't often request "other information necessary to determine compliance". Simplifying rules to state 75% is grown on the farm would be easier to observe and enforce.

"Farm-to-table dinners predominantly featuring farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand" and "Promotional activities authorized by this section are incidental and subordinate to the sale of crops or livestock at the farm stand" are worded in a manner to be wide open to any use any time. The only way I see to make these work is to require specific defined data to be reported to counties, or DOR or DOJ.

The net result of these rules will be fragmentation of the farm zone into fewer acres of farmland, higher land prices and less actual food production. A full conversion of some areas of the state's EFU prime soils into a commercial and tourism zone will occur with food shipped in from somewhere else.

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From: [John Zielinski](#)
To: [COMMENT Farmforest * DLCD](#)
Subject: Farmforest comments/testimony
Date: Thursday, July 3, 2025 6:04:12 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-phw4t305.png](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from john@ezorchards.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To the DLCD Farmstand RAC

John Zielinski

E.Z. Orchards Inc.

July 2, 2025

I am a 5th generation farmer; my family came from Poland in the 1870's. Our direct retail sales started with a card table at the end of my grandparent's driveway in the early 1950's. My father built a "seasonal fruit stand" in 1978. For many farmers who are parents, they dream of having their children join them in the family operation. However, farming is both financially and physically challenging and many of "next generation" have left the farm. In Oregon and the US fewer than 1% of the population are farmers who receive the majority of their income from agricultural enterprises. Additionally, out of 68,564 farmers in Oregon, most are over the age of 55. In fact, the average age of an Oregon farmer is 58.6 years old, up from 57.9 years in 2017. Just over a quarter of Oregon farmers (around 25.5%) fall into the age group of 65 to 74 years, and 24.2% of farmers are aged 55 to 64. (2024 census of agriculture). On our farm three out of five children decided to stay on the farm. Our farm went from supporting one family to supporting four households in eight years.

Ag direct marketing and agritourism provided an opportunity for my generation, and one of my daughters has chosen to be a farmer. There are many young farmers for whom agritourism and direct marketing provide an opportunity. Farm direct marketing and agritourism offer a way for first-time farmers to enter the capital-intensive business of

agriculture by selling direct to consumers . The return on investment is much greater. It also allows small operations to survive without having to greatly expand acreage to make up for low commodity prices and returns.

We knew that our small operation could not support four families, so when a neighbor who owned a local tractor repair shop retired, we invested in our future, bought his land and built our Farm Market. We could see that the only opportunity to succeed was to market more of our products and our neighbors' products directly to the public. Through my 35 years of managing our seasonal farm stand and farm market, trends have changed. When we operated our seasonal farm stand in the 1970's and 80's people came out to the farm to purchase fruit by the bushel. Home canning was much more prevalent among consumers. Where we used to sell multiple boxes of peaches or apples to a single family, now we sell them 5-pound baskets of peaches or a few pounds of apples. Sure, we still sell a few boxes, but the average customer buys much smaller quantities. To survive this changing trend and remain viable we have increased the number of items that we sell from other farmers in Oregon. We have added items that complement the produce we sell; pasta to go with local tomatoes, shortcakes to go with local berries, wooden spoons for cooking, jams and jellies made with NW produce, and other ingredients for people to make a complete meal. We are not a grocery store, we cannot compete, and do not want to compete with the selection that grocery stores offer, dry goods, cleaning supplies, medicines and more. In the average household all the adults work, for most the ability to be a stay-at-home parent is not monetarily possible, shopping in limited free time needs to happen at fewer locations. People no longer have the time to buy peaches at one farm and berries at another farm; they want to buy all their local produce at one location. I don't want to see Big Box stores in rural areas, but I would like to sell items that complement the local fruit, vegetables and meat that we sell, attracting more customers because we offer more of what they need and want. The public wants the products and experiences we sell.

Our business is very seasonal, in the summer and fall my staff is from 12-16 people each day, we peak in October with 25 employees at the

farm market on weekends. Due to the seasonality, I have provided first time jobs for numerous high school and college students. In the winter my core staff diminishes to 5-6 people daily. I stay open to keep this core team employed and my repeat/regular customers satisfied. I do not make a profit from January through April. This seasonality shows two things; one that the public wants fresh local produce when it is in season, and two that it is vital for me to offer items that complement our and other local produce to be able to satisfy the needs of our repeat/regular customers. We provide jobs and are an important part of our community.

It seems to me that the proponents of very restrictive land use rules for farm markets, fruit stands and agritourism want to see Oregon revert to the mid twentieth century, when households canned extensively and they would go to farms to get a bargain. Should we expect farmers to be stuck in time? Society has changed, consumers have changed, business has changed. Think of the innovations in every business type since the 1950's. Farming practices have advanced significantly, tractors are larger, mechanical harvesting equipment is easily 10 times more productive, yet those of us who sell our farm products to the public are expected, by some, to be stuck in 1950's. You can't put farm direct marketing into a piece of Tupperware and expect it to survive.

Agritourism and farm direct marketing provide an educational opportunity for the public to see where their food comes from and talk with the people who produce the food and products they consume. With each generation the vast number of people who are not farmers, or work in agriculture, are more removed from their agricultural roots. Each fall I host over 8,000 school children visiting our farm, they get to pick a pumpkin, find out what happens in each of the four seasons in an apple orchard, pick an apple, pet some animals, travel through a corn maze in the shape of Oregon that has 70+ signs displaying information about the regional agriculture of Oregon, and they get to have a cup of cider and an apple cider donut. Do I charge for this, yes I do, it would not be sustainable to provide this service for free or just the cost of the apple and pumpkin. Sometimes the Farm is the Product that the consumer wants. These activities should not be considered ancillary, or not a product of the farm. Most of the children who visit our farm have

never been on a farm, we provide an educational experience. We also provide a similar experience to the public of all ages, and they love it.

Is it wrong of my family to have found a way to sustain four families and new generations that are becoming part of our agricultural business? Or should we have just produced more low-priced commodities where we are at the mercy of the ever-larger wholesale buyers? No, farm direct marketing and agritourism has allowed our farm to stay small to moderate sized and financially sustainable.

Agriculture, by its nature of requiring land and equipment is capital intensive. Farm Direct Marketing and Agritourism provide an opportunity for young farmers and people who don't come from an agricultural background to establish their own operation. With commodity agriculture this opportunity does not exist.

Farm direct marketing and agritourism need to have controls to keep amusement parks, box stores, and grocery stores out of rural areas. Farm Direct Marketing and Agritourism need to be respectful of neighbors. However, Farm Direct Marketing and Agritourism provide great opportunities for the public to buy local products, support the local economy, provide jobs, and provide educational experiences. Please don't send us backward 75 years in time.

Respectfully,

John Zielinski
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July 2, 2025

Via email to
Department of Land Conservation and Development
farmforest.comment@dlcd.oregon.gov

POTENTIAL RULES FROM RAC MEETINGS 1 & 2

Agency staff provided thoughts about rules addressing issues from the first two RAC meetings in a document dated June 17. Rules general enough to apply broadly yet specific enough to be meaningful are difficult to write, and these are carefully crafted. Thank you for this work. That said, we have concerns about potential unintended consequences of two of the rules.

1. The Relationship Between Promotional Activities and Farmstand Products

The suggested rule says that promotional activities “may include, but are not limited to, flower arranging classes at a farm stand that sells cut flowers, fee-based tours, cooking demonstrations using farm products sold at the farm stand, product sampling or tasting, rides to or through crop fields, *farm-to-table dinners predominantly featuring farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand.*” We urge removal of the italicized phrase. It will allow restaurants on Exclusive Farm Use land. Here’s how.

- a. Local agricultural area. Dinners are to feature crops and livestock “sold at the farmstand”. Because of the expansive definition of the “local” agricultural area, these ingredients can be grown anywhere in Oregon or an adjacent county. The meals may be made entirely from products shipped from hundreds of miles away, just as with any urban restaurant “Farm-to-table” is meaningless in this context.
- b. Predominantly featuring. Even a connection to Oregon is dubious because “predominantly featuring” is not defined. If a farm stand serves pizza featuring sauce from tomatoes grown in Oregon, and all the other ingredients are from the same suppliers used by Pizza Hut, is that enough? What portion of an item has to be grown in Oregon or adjacent counties? Is that portion determined by the weight of the ingredients? by volume? by importance? When there

are numerous items in the meal, must each item “predominantly feature” items grown in Oregon and adjacent counties? or if a four-course meal “features” a desert with apricots grown in Mosier, is that enough? If a farm stand in Hood River uses a supplier who processes meat from both Oregon and Idaho ranchers but does not maintain separation, was the hamburger grown in Oregon? These are the kinds of questions county planners will be forced to deal with. That is an impossible burden. Hood River County currently does not audit farm stands to verify the operator’s representations as to where crops and livestock were grown; County staff cannot be expected to further assess whether those products are “predominately featured” in numerous menu selections. A rule that cannot be enforced can be more problematic than no rule at all.

c. Dinner. “Dinner” is not defined. There is no requirement that the meal be a discrete event starting at a set time, with a fixed menu and a limited number of diners. The meals presumably can be menu-driven and available to anyone, as in any restaurant. There are no limitations on hours, the size of the venue or the number of seats. One of the planners on the RAC noted that since farms stands are a sub(1) use, counties currently could be challenged legally on basic conditions such as buffers, setbacks, trespass and litter. They may have similar difficulty in setting any limitations on farm stand restaurant operations.

d. Preparation. Where is the food to be prepared? Farm stands are authorized by statute for the *sale* of farm crops and livestock; there is no inherent allowance for processing facilities or commercial kitchens. When farm stands are given carte blanche to serve meals, there will be an inexorable push for permit stacking to allow commercial kitchens. Multiple land use permits on a single EFU parcel where those uses have overlapping or inconsistent regulations make enforcement difficult or impossible.

e. Design and Use. It’s not clear whether the intent is to allow meals inside or outside of farm stand structures. Statute and case law do not allow indoor structures to be designed and used for banquets, public gatherings or public entertainment. If the proposed rule is meant or interpreted to allow meals inside farm stand structures, it would obliterate the statutory limitation on the design and use of farm stands and allow unlimited restaurants, cafe and delis – indeed, any retail use. At the very least, the wording sanctions meals outdoors, and the draft rule about temporary structures, addressed below, allows the structures that would be used for those meals.

f. 25% Limit. Allowing temporary structures to be used solely for sales from fee-based promotional activities is contrary to case law. In *Greenfield v. Multnomah Cty.*, 259 Or App (2013) the court deemed it improper for a county to find that compliance with the 25% rule could be achieved through limiting the number of total food carts onsite, instead of requiring that each food cart itself comply with the rule. In other words, the 25% limit on sales of incidental items and fees from promotional activities applies to each farm stand structure individually, in addition to the farm stand as a whole. A tent or canopy structure designed and used for meals would have 100% of its sales from a promotional activity, in violation of the 25% limitation.

h. County Prerogative. Finally, this rule is simply not needed. During the June 24 meeting, LCDC staff noted that farm operations can currently have farm-to-table dinners by obtaining an agri-tourism or CACFU permit. One RAC member noted that not all counties offer agri-tourism

permits. That is exactly as it should be. Oregon's land use system is a statewide framework coupled with counties' ability to limit potentially destructive non-farm uses as fits their unique situations. If county has chosen not to offer agri-tourism permits, they should not be forced to do so by requiring those uses under sub(1) sections of the statute.

2. Temporary Structures

The potential rule is that "Temporary structures may be used to shelter visitors participating in promotional events authorized by this section."

Outdoor structures *designed and used for the sale of farm crops or livestock* are currently allowed, legitimate, and can provide shade and rain cover. This potential rule allows outdoor structures to be *designed and used for promotional activities*, not for the sale of farm crops or livestock. The change has been proffered as a health and safety issue, but public seating cannot feasibly be limited to use only during rain or excessive heat, and the rule makes no attempt to do so. So long as the "local" agricultural area is all of Oregon and (parts of) adjacent counties, and the 25% limit on revenue is easily evaded (Thrive Hood River comment letter of June 7, page 2), the proposed rule will allow unmitigated entertainment and restaurant venues on EFU land, contrary to statute and legislative intent.

INPUT REQUESTED AT RAC MEETING 3

At the third RAC meeting, LCDC staff asked for input as to whether products made primarily from local crops should be distinguished. This may be about one RAC member's request that farm stands be allowed to sell prepared foods outside of the 25% limit if they were grown on the farm operation. Any such allowance would have the issues detailed in items b.-h. above.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The breweries and restaurants that anchor Hood River County's rural centers like Parkdale struggle to compete with the same commercial uses sited on tax-deferred EFU parcels that have irrigated lawns, seating and views of Mount Hood. In Hood River, we have seen farm stand permits abused to create excessive and inappropriate activities such as:

- Month-long promotional activates strung together so as to be nonstop;
- Petting zoos;
- A fast food restaurant operated in an ag building and serving customers through walk-up windows;
- "Crops" like corn and sunflowers designed for entertainment and plowed under when that entertainment value is finished;
- Expansive playgrounds with dozens of structures, from trike tracks to tetherball; and
- Miniature country fairs with vendor booths selling photography, ceramics, jewelry, clothing, rocks, and other merchandise unrelated to agriculture.

The current overly-expansive farm stand criteria encourages this harmful nonfarm commercial development. And the threat to commercial agriculture is growing. Remember that Oregon's

land use system is agnostic as to ownership. As I type this, my computer is open to the website of an investment corporation which “owns a number of different farms throughout the Hood River Valley” and whose “investment strategy is to continue to acquire both raw land and established farms throughout Oregon” on “high quality zones” with “future agritourism potential”. Free rein to set up structures with essentially no design or use limitations at “made-in-Oregon” retail outlets masquerading as farm stands will inexorably attract large investment and entertainment consortiums that have the means to bid up Hood River’s irreplaceable, high-value farmland to its entertainment value, forever removing it from agricultural production.

Hood River County has some fantastic farm stands selling truly local farm crops raised by the farmers who are selling them. But with the expansive definition of the “local” agricultural area, nothing ensures that a farm stand is about farmers marketing *their* products, or that farming is the primary use of the property. We are concerned that these potential rules will allow even more commercial uses and activities under the guise of a “farm stand” permit. The focus of rulemaking should be to prevent nonfarm commercial uses on our limited supply of highly productive agricultural land.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris Robuck", written in a cursive style.

Chris Robuck
Co-President

From: [Inga Williams](#)
To: [COMMENT Farmforest * DLCD](#)
Subject: Farm Stand RAC comments
Date: Wednesday, July 2, 2025 3:50:55 PM

My thoughts on permitted uses

A permitted farm use that supports “disposing of, by marketing” and does not require farm stand review includes a seasonal farm product stand [roadside stand] and u-pick operations.

- Structures to support these uses must be free-standing, temporary structures or free-standing display shelving or tables.
- A farm product stand may only sell farm crops or livestock products grown or raised by the farm operator on property they lease or own or processed items from those same products.
- A farm product stand can be full service or self-service. If full service, there can be no space for patrons inside the farm stand, only a front counter for service and a canopy roof for patrons’ protection. If self-service, the area may have a roof and it may be three-sided with internal access.
- A single, domestic sized refrigerator may be used to sell items requiring freezer or cold storage.

Activities allowing public access to the farm, where no fee is collected, and where the only purpose of that access is to allow the farm operator to provide education about, explain the uses of, and encourage the sale of farm products grown or raised by the farm operator is considered marketing of farm products and permitted as a farm use. Non-farm product specific refreshment, recreational, or entertainment activities are not permitted.

My suggestions on your suggested language.

For purposes of this section “retail incidental items” are items with a direct relationship to the farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand ~~and which are intended to promote the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand.~~ Such retail incidental items may:

- *utilize one or more of the farm products as an ingredient, such as sauces and chutneys or beeswax candles*
- *feature the farm or its products in an artistic rendering such as greeting cards, kitchen towels, t-shirts or hats*
- *be items that can be utilized for the farm product, such as melon scoopers, flower vases, or pumpkin carving kits*

-
“For purposes of this section a “promotional activity” ~~is an activity that involves activities related to the farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand and which are intended to encourage the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand~~ by featuring that product or products as the primary focus of the activity or provides education ~~visitors on the agricultural practices being conducted on the farm.~~ Such activities may include, but are not limited to, flower arranging classes at a farm stand that sells cut flowers, fee-based tours, cooking demonstrations using farm products sold at the farm stand, product sampling or tasting, rides to or through crop fields, farm-to-table dinners

predominantly featuring farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand. Promotional activities authorized by this section are incidental and subordinate to the farm operation ~~sale of farm crops or livestock at the farm stand~~. [not sure you need this sentence at all as the 25% cap should be keeping these activities incidental and subordinate to the farm stand and therefore the farm operation]

Thoughts on Primary Use Test

The law allows the farm stand owner to sell their products AND locally grown [in a very broad sense] products. I am ok with allowing someone to operate a farm stand even if they only grow a small patch of tomatoes as long as they can produce enough tomatoes to continuously sell alongside the other products. As soon as they run out of their products, they need to close the farm stand.

Sincerely,

Inga Williams, AICP

Union County Planning Director

Planning Department, [1001 Fourth Street, Suite C, La Grande, OR 97850](#)

[Planning - Union County \(unioncountyor.gov\)](#)

Office phone: 541-963-1014 Ext. 300, Monday through Thursday 7:30 to 5:30

Cell Phone: 541-497-4589

TO: Hilary Foote and Farm Stand RAC
FROM: Sid Friedman, Friends of Yamhill County
DATE: July 3, 2025
RE: June 24 meeting summary

This memo addresses several issues that arise in the summary of the June 24 Farm Stand RAC meeting.

1. According to page 5 of the summary, a RAC member questioned whether the screenshots I showed of farm stand websites were accurate reflections. I don't recall any RAC member questioning their accuracy or authenticity. Nonetheless, I can affirm that the screenshots I showed were accurate slides of actual farm stand websites in Clackamas, Yamhill, and Marion Counties. The screenshots were taken on June 20, 2025 and June 23, 2025, as indicated on the screenshots themselves.

2. Page 6 of the summary notes the suggestions of a square footage standard for farm stands. The rule should define a farm stand as a structure of no more than 1,000 square feet, for farm stands sited after the effective date of the rule.

Larger farm markets could still be potentially be approved as commercial activities in conjunction with farm use (CACFU), subject to the attendant impact analysis that a CACFU requires.

3. Page 6 of the summary also notes the suggestions of a frequency standard for events. I propose that a farm stand could hold up to 6 incidental events annually to promote the sale of farm products sold at the farm stand. That proposal is informed by the additional criteria in the agri-tourism statute that apply to more than 6 agri-tourism events in a calendar year.

More frequent events at a farm stand could potentially be approved under the agri-tourism provisions in 215.283(4), subject to the attendant impact analysis that an agri-tourism permit requires.

4. The Marion County definitions of processed and prepared foods that appear on pp. 3-4 of the meeting summary provide clarity and guidance. LCDC should adopt them by rule.

5. The staff-proposed rule in the June 24 meeting packet arguably expands the current definition of local area by including all of Oregon and any area within 50 miles in an adjacent state. We understand that some definitional change must be proposed to give LCDC the option of amending it. Nonetheless, the proposed change should reflect the legislature's intent that the local area be something much less than the entire state. Suggestions for rule language more in line with the legislative intent has been proposed by both RAC members and the public. The staff-proposed rule should look to these proposals.

To the DLCD Farmstand RAC

Claire Zielinski

President of the Oregon Agritourism Partnership

July 3, 2025

I became President of the Oregon Agritourism Partnership (OAP) in late 2024. Before becoming president, I was the treasurer for over three years. I am passionate about the mission of the OAP and helping to spread the word about agritourism operations in Oregon through our tourism group, the Oregon Farm Loop. I consider myself an advocate for farming and agritourism, so when I heard that there would be a DLCD farm stand RAC, I was excited to apply and represent not only my family's farm stand, E.Z. Orchards, but all of our OAP members. I was disappointed when not selected to serve on the RAC, and then frustrated when the list of RAC members came out showing that there were two 1000 Friends representatives on the RAC (Friends of Yamhill County and 1000 Friends), plus two others who are closely associated with 1000 Friends. I decided to keep an open mind in the hope that the DLCD was going to remain unbiased and would act fairly in this RAC.

During the first two meetings I attended, and gave public comments not representing the OAP, but instead representing myself and my family business, E.Z. Orchards Farm Market. On June 24th, I was deeply unnerved, disrespected, and saddened by DLCD allowing Friends of Yamhill County to make the presentation that they did. During the June 24th meeting, Friends of Yamhill County gave a presentation by Sid Friedman showing photos and stating false information on multiple farm stands in Oregon. Friedman accused these farm stands of being out of compliance. The presentation was accompanied with unedited photos of three farm stand websites: Fir Point Farms, Source Farms, and E.Z. Orchards Farm Market. Two of these farms are members of the Oregon Farm Loop, and were unjustly accused of being out of compliance. As stated by Friedman, "none of these promote the farm products that are being sold at these various farm stands." This is simply false.

When asked by the mediator if Friedman knew that the photos he was using in his presentation were from farm stands that are not permitted for anything other than a farm stand, Friedman answered "yes, to the best of my knowledge." Friedman was incorrect about our members and their compliance. OAP also believes a question about compliance should have instead been directed to the DLCD staff or the county planners present in the meeting. It is clear that Friedman had not done his research and was instead making biased statements that were then accepted by the staff and moderator until later corrected by a RAC member. We do not believe this presentation should have been permitted to take place from the beginning, as none of the photos used in the presentation were edited or modified to protect the farm stands in question. We believe the meeting should have been stopped immediately when Friedman

mentioned these farms by name. Not only is accusing these farms by name slander, but it is also libel as this meeting is transcribed afterwards.

It is my understanding from the comments given in the meeting that the moderator did not see the presentation photos before they were presented. However, DLCD staff had seen those photos, and did not flag the issues. Whichever staff members were involved, the DLCD allowed the presentation to take place even after seeing the photos within it. This confirms our suspicions that DLCD staff are biased and allowing their personal views to blind their judgement and benefit groups on the RAC like Friends of Yamhill County.

We are also concerned that this public presentation which was supposed to be taken as a chance to give educational materials and further background to the RAC on farm stands was instead used as an opportunity to lodge public complaint. Furthermore, the public complaint was given to the DLCD staff along with County Planners present in the meeting who could then take this information to retaliate against these farm stands. There should be some kind of shield to protect these farm stands from retaliation measures on compliance, or any other future complaints given. While, to our knowledge, this has not triggered an audit or compliance review for any of these farm stands, the concern still stands that it could happen to these farm stands or happen again in the future for other farms if not properly controlled.

The OAP is disappointed that the DLCD operating this 2025 farm stand RAC did not think ahead of the consequences for allowing such a presentation, and that some of the DLCD staff has biased opinions which are influencing the direction of these rulemakings. We hope that there will be a public apology offered by the DLCD to the farm stands mentioned for allowing the presentation to take place, and that the Friends of Yamhill County apologize for turning an educational presentation into a public complaint, accusing these farm stands falsely and publicly slandering their names.

As of July, 3rd 2025 the video has not been blurred or sensitized to protect the farm stands shown in the presentation photos, and has 98 views on YouTube.

To conclude, the OAP is concerned for the future of farm stands and agritourism in the State of Oregon. It is clear that one of its state agencies has been allowed to operate on a biased basis, impacting our farmers, state policy, and the future of Oregon.

AN INITIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT ESTIMATE OF AGRITOURISM in Oregon's Willamette Valley



Oregon State
University



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The authors would like to thank Daniel Bigelow with Oregon State University's Department of Applied Economics for his sharing of ideas and knowledge for this study. We also appreciate the time spent and very useful suggestions of six reviewers who did so anonymously. This project was graciously sponsored by Travel Oregon, Lane County Community and Economic Development, Mt. Hood Territory, Willamette Valley Visitors Association, SEDCOR and the OSU Extension Service in Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Linn, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties.

All photos by Audrey Comerford, © Oregon State University.

Abstract

By researching agritourism's economic effects on Oregon farms and our communities, this study explores how agritourism can diversify farming businesses. We reviewed existing agritourism data and supplemented our analysis with two surveys and knowledge from industry experts, producer associations and the authors. This report was created for Oregon partners and organizations interested in agritourism. It should not be used to make precise estimates for other study areas without gathering the descriptive data referenced above.

Our estimates suggest:

- ▶ Agritourism is very diverse, and many farmers provide several agritourism products and services, which range from selling food at farm stands to on-farm lodging. Agritourism consumers are primarily people living within 50 miles of the farms. However, approximately a third of consumers come from more than 50 miles away for day (19%) and overnight visits (15%) to the area.
- ▶ Approximately 4,000 of the total number of 18,679 farms in the Willamette Valley may be engaged in agritourism.
- ▶ Producers that diversify with agritourism may increase their sales and financial resilience, potentially spreading almost half of their gross and net revenues between the wholesale and agritourism portions of their operations.
- ▶ When the economic effects of agritourism sales (Table 9), day visitor spending (Table 11), and overnight visitor spending (Table 13) are totaled, the direct sales exceed \$985 million and the value-added (sales minus outside inputs similar to GDP) exceed \$572 million.
- ▶ The employment impact, including full- and part-time jobs, is near 11,000 jobs — calculated from the combined total of agritourism employment (Table 9), day visitor employment (Table 11), and overnight visitor employment effect (Table 13).
- ▶ Depending on whether the median of survey responses or the adjusted average of survey responses is used for estimating the number of agritourism visits there may be between 3.7 million and 13.7 million visits annually. Agritourism is a way that both urban and rural residents can engage with farming and rural activities in the Willamette Valley.

Agritourism lacks a common definition and data. Most of the data required for agritourism does not need to be based on experiments or trials. Instead, Oregon's agritourism needs a foundation of descriptive data, including an inventory of agritourism farms by county, a summary profile of those farms' production and enterprise budgets, consumer research that identifies products and services that customers purchase from agritourism farms and other vendors as part of their trips to agritourism farms, and an inventory of each county's agritourism-related regulations. If you have questions about this study or plan to undertake a similar study, we would be glad to visit with you about what we learned.

Introduction

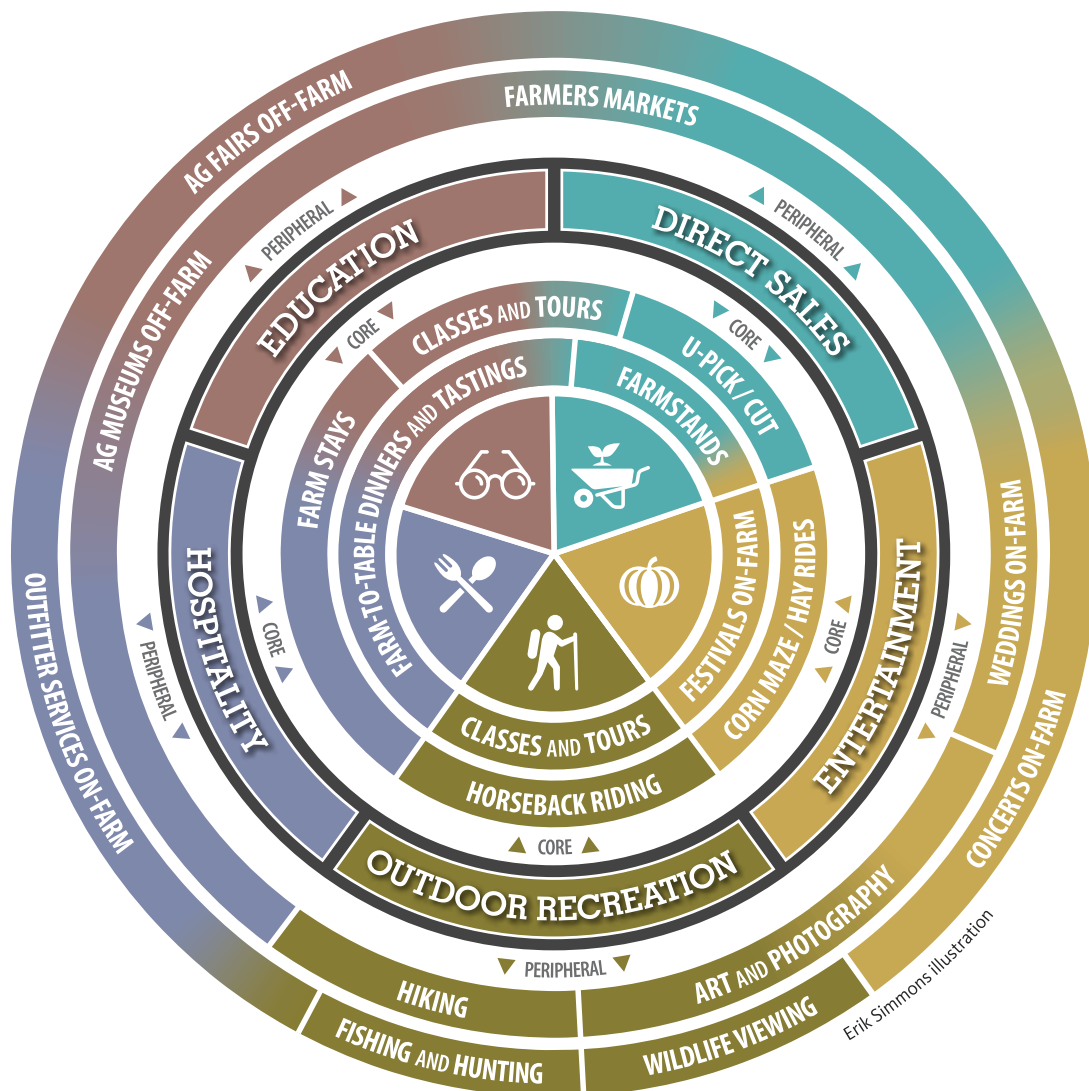
Agricultural commodity markets are typically characterized by many individual farms producing similar outputs. The competitive nature of agricultural production makes it difficult for producers to charge prices that allow them to sustain long-run profits. Producers may benefit from diversifying their revenue sources to differentiate themselves and boost their bottom lines.¹ One potential opportunity for farmers to address these challenges is through various forms of agritourism, a term encompassing a broad suite of activities. For this study, we used a 2021 national agritourism survey, in which Oregon participated, to inform our agritourism framework. It includes farm-direct sales, education, entertainment, outdoor recreation and hospitality.²

This report details an economic study of agritourism in the Willamette Valley region of Oregon, which includes the following nine counties: Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Yamhill and Washington. While vineyards and wineries are a major contributor to agritourism in the Willamette Valley, these agritourism activities are already well established and widely adopted³. For this reason, our study focuses on all other types of operations and their agritourism products and services in the Willamette Valley. Original survey data collected for the study sheds light on the importance of agritourism and highlights the diverse offerings across the region. Using economic input-output analysis informed by the survey results and the 2017 Census of Agriculture for Oregon, this report estimates the economic effects of agritourism for farmers and local communities in the Willamette Valley. Our findings provide policy-relevant insights into the role that agritourism could play in shaping the character and economic well-being of farmers and rural communities in the years to come.



Defining agritourism

Agritourism refers to how farmers generate income, as noted above, by directly selling goods to customers visiting the farm. This includes farm-direct sales of unprocessed and farm processed agricultural products, and services to consumers in education, entertainment, outdoor recreation, and hospitality. Throughout much of agriculture's history, this is how farmers marketed traditional agricultural products. The advent, development and widespread adoption of refrigeration brought about a significant change in the industry.⁴ As a result, wholesale trade, processing and retail trade gradually claimed a larger portion of the food dollar, while direct sales from farmers to consumers declined significantly, becoming more of an exception than the norm. This shift in marketing practices led to a growing disconnect between producers and their customer base, as consumers became gradually more distanced from farming — and more broadly — the rural lifestyle. As a consequence, the ability of consumers to personally visit a farm has transformed into a special experience akin to tourism. Over time, agritourism as a concept has grown to encompass a wide range of services and experiences, including on-farm meals and events, farm stands, lodging, hunting/fishing, food tasting, pumpkin patches and “u-pick” opportunities.



Over the past century, Oregon's population has become increasingly urbanized, with fewer and fewer people living on farms. Remaining producers have a greater ability to give people an authentic farm experience through agritourism.⁵ In many ways, this makes agricultural producers similar to the owners of nonfarm businesses, which throughout modern history, have adapted to new market circumstances by changing and diversifying their products and services. A large proportion of farming families already diversify their business revenue streams through off-farm earnings that support farm household finances, which is a particularly important source of income for smaller farms.⁶ Agritourism could introduce a new stream of on-farm income that decreases the reliance of farming families on off-farm income.

Farms have also become more specialized, relying on scientific advances (such as in machinery and seed technology) and the resulting increases in productivity to maintain revenues. Scale economies in agricultural production, among other factors, mean that larger farms have a greater advantage in using technological advances and making necessary investments in equipment, land and other farm inputs.⁷ As a result, agricultural production for many commodities has become increasingly consolidated.^{8,9,10} For example, consider our study area of the Willamette Valley. Since 1950, there has been a clear increase in large (500+ acres) farm acreage coinciding with a decline in mid-sized (100-499 acres) farm acreage. Specifically, mid-sized farm acreage declined by 74% between 1950 and 2017, while large farm acreage increased by 30%.¹¹ At roughly 850,000 acres in total, large farms now account for more than half of all farmland in the Willamette Valley.

Smaller farms typically lack the scale associated with modern large-scale commodity production, making diversification of revenue streams like off-farm income more important. Agritourism has a similar potential to diversify a producer's on-farm revenue streams. While agritourism may provide benefits to farms of all sizes, its potential to produce a more robust farm revenue stream may be more beneficial and appealing to small and mid-sized producers.¹²



The additional revenue from agritourism may also bolster the resilience of farming operations and the communities that rely upon them to prevent the conversion of farmland to nonfarm uses, such as residential housing. Resilience is the ability to bounce back quickly from a shock, such as an unanticipated drop in wholesale prices, the cancellation of a processor contract or a severe weather event. Diversification in farming operations and other types of business often allows the farmer to bounce back from a shock in one area by offsetting losses with gains in another area.

According to the 2017 USDA National Resources Inventory, Oregon lost about 242,000 acres of cropland, pastureland and rangeland to development between 1982 and 2017.¹³ This occurred despite the protections afforded to Oregon's agricultural landowners through the establishment of exclusive farm use zoning in the 1960s and the implementation of urban growth boundaries brought about by a 1973 law.¹⁴ Earnings from farm-related activities will rarely be sufficient to offset the lucrative financial returns that could be gained from development. However, by bolstering farm-related income, agritourism could increase the likelihood of producers retaining farmland in its current use and creating a more viable farm succession strategy. Agritourism may also strengthen urban-rural connections and foster social support for maintaining a healthy agricultural sector in Oregon.

Our report provides new insight into how different types of agritourism may add resilience to farm operations in the Willamette Valley. However, we acknowledge several caveats. Much more work is necessary to develop a commonly accepted definition of agritourism, an inventory by county of the different types of agritourism farms and services, and a better profile of consumer tastes and preferences related to agritourism.

Although many consider agritourism a positive development for the region, there are competing views. Of particular concern is whether certain agritourism activities, such as lodging, food service and events, are appropriate to be carried out on a farm and whether they run counter to the original intent of Oregon's farmland protection policy framework. Indeed, the number of non-exempt uses of Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) zoned land has increased significantly over the past several decades¹⁵. While there are potentially legitimate concerns raised about land

use conflicts in rural areas, our goal is not to promote agritourism as an industry or suggest that any particular farm should adopt any specific agritourism practices. Rather, we aim to provide economic and other information that may shape and inform both current and future policy debates around agritourism.

Surveys used to collect a sample of local data

Due to the varying definitions of agritourism and because agritourism operations connect into many economic sectors, we collected local data to supplement the modeling program and Census of Agriculture data. Localized agritourism data does not exist in a central location. To overcome this gap in data availability, we conducted an agritourism inventory with publicly available sources. Then, we surveyed and interviewed farmers in the study area that currently offer on-farm activities and direct sales.

To begin an inventory of farms offering agritourism, we performed online searches for different types of agritourism activities in the study area and found those operations actively advertising on search engines, websites and social media. We also requested contacts of known agritourism operations from other agriculture-focused OSU Extension colleagues and community partners. Even though the inventory process was as comprehensive as possible, we could not feasibly collect contact information for all agritourism operators in the study area nor did we expect all collected contact information to be accurate.



We developed and distributed an electronic survey administered through Qualtrics with input from an informal advisory group. We used a “snowball” method of sampling for the electronic survey, whereby an initial group of producers were sent the survey link and asked to respond. Additionally, the same survey link was distributed digitally through partner organizations’ communication channels and outreach from OSU Extension Service, community partners including agritourism and farmer networks, local and regional tourism, economic development and agriculture producer organizations. The survey accepted responses for approximately one month, from the first week of February 2023 to the first week of March 2023.

The survey captured the following input data needed for the economic impact analysis modeling:

- ▶ Estimated number of visitors
- ▶ Estimated percentage of visitors who are local and repeat customers, visitors that have traveled more than 50 miles for a day trip, and those traveling more than 50 miles and are likely spending the night in the area
- ▶ Approximate amount of spending for both local and traveling visitors
- ▶ Estimated percentages for gross revenue from agritourism
- ▶ Approximate agritourism costs for labor and the number of additional employees hired for the agritourism enterprise
- ▶ Estimated percentage of total nonlabor agritourism costs calculated from spending on suppliers from the Willamette Valley, other parts of Oregon and outside of Oregon
- ▶ Estimated percentage of the operation’s net revenue (or profit) from agritourism used for annual on-farm production expenses, on-farm capital/land investments, reinvestment in agritourism enterprises and nonfarm purposes

In addition, the survey collected basic farm demographic information, such as location and acreage, and other farm business characteristics, including number of years engaged in agritourism, primary agritourism product or service, seasonality of operating hours, and motivations for starting agritourism alongside farm production.

We received 152 usable online survey responses that included partial and full responses and conducted 10 phone interviews from farms currently offering various types of agritourism in the study area for a total of 162 responses. Of these responses, 140 were complete enough to use for the economic analysis, and all responses were used to characterize agritourism operations. A survey response rate is not available due to the distribution method.

The different number (n) of respondents in the tables represent respondents whose responses were incomplete or did not fit the requested format.



Study area within the state of Oregon

Characteristics of agritourism operations

The 162 respondents are operating agritourism businesses distributed across the nine counties in our Willamette Valley study area (Table 1).

Most of the farms are small to mid-sized acreages, which is consistent with the size of farms in the Willamette Valley region. Notably, 7% are 200-499 acres and 6% are over 500 acres (Table 2).

More than half of the respondents indicated that agritourism has been part of their farm business for at least 10 years (Table 3). 15% of respondents indicated that they have operated an agritourism enterprise since 2020.

Table 4 provides information about the primary agritourism service or product that farmers in the study area operate. Nearly one-third of respondents reported having a farm stand or farm store as the primary agritourism activity. Other common primary activities included “u-pick/u-cut” operations, vineyards/wineries and nurseries. While data from the vineyards/wineries were not included in the economic analysis, some respondents reported

Table 1. Farms by county. n=162

County	Number of farms	% of total operations
Clackamas	34	21
Marion	28	17
Lane	22	14
Yamhill	21	13
Benton	20	12
Polk	15	9
Washington	9	6
Linn	8	5
Multnomah	5	3

Table 2. Farms by acreage size. n=162

Farm acreage	% of total operations
1-9	17
10-20	22
21-79	33
80-199	15
200-499	7
500+	6

Table 3. Number of years farms have engaged in agritourism. n=151

Years offering agritourism	% of responses
More than 50 years	5
30-49	11
20-29 years	16
10-19 years	20
4-9 years	33
1-3 years	15

vineyards/wineries as their primary form of agritourism. Respondents who chose “Other” indicated activities, such as weddings, photography settings and farm camps, as their primary agritourism service.

Why start agritourism?

We asked producers an open-ended question about their motivation(s) for starting an agritourism enterprise on their farm or ranch. Responses were coded into topic patterns using NVivo software. Producers’ top motivation was additional income that supports the economic sustainability of the farm business. Other motivations spoke to increased social connections with consumers and building community support. These motivations included creating a sense of community, educating visitors about farming, and the joy of sharing their farm and products with others. (Table 5).



Surprising results of agritourism

The survey also posed an open-ended question allowing respondents to share what they have found most surprising about operating an agritourism business. The coded responses to this question showed three equally surprising factors: (1) agritourism provides learning opportunities for urban visitors, (2) Oregon laws and zoning are not conducive to agritourism, and (3) producers are surprised by how much the public enjoys the rural experience (Table 6). A recent study showed that visiting farms improves adults’ attitudes toward local foods and children gain agriculture literacy after engaging in an agritourism experience (Barbieri et al., 2023).

Table 4. Primary agritourism service or product. n=161

Primary agritourism product or service	% of farms
Farm stand or farm store	29
“U-pick” or “u-cut”	14
Vineyard/winery	10
Nursery	9
Educational farm tours	7
On-farm lodging	7
Classes, demonstrations or workshops	5
Other	5
Open farm days	4
Private events	4
Festivals	2
Brewery/cidery	2
Farm-to-table dinners	1
Outdoor recreation	1

Table 5. Ranked motivations for starting an agritourism enterprise

#1	Increased income
#2	Creating sense of community
#3	Educating visitors about farming
#4	Joy of sharing their farm products and farm with others

Table 6. Documented surprises from on-farm agritourism

#1	Provides learning opportunities for urban dwellers
#2	Laws and zoning are not conducive for agritourism
#3	How much the public enjoys the rural experience

Methods used to estimate the economic effects of agritourism

When President George Washington began writing letters to personally gather data about agriculture in 1791 and the United States conducted the first Census of Agriculture in 1840¹⁶, there was no need to distinguish direct sales to consumers from sales to distributors or processors. Direct sales were the typical form of marketing. As agriculture became more commercialized, the Census of Agriculture started gathering data on direct sales. In the 1974 Census of Agriculture, new questions were added on the different sources of farm-related income and expenses.¹⁷ The 1978 Census of Agriculture then added an explicit question about direct sales to consumers.¹⁸ While the 2002 Census of Agriculture asked about recreational services, a question containing the term agritourism did not appear until 2007, which defined agritourism as wine tours, hay rides, hunting, fishing and other activities.¹⁹ Similar questions appeared in the 2012 and 2017 questionnaires.



We estimated the economic impacts of agritourism in the Willamette Valley using IMPLAN, an economic modeling software program that measures how various projects or policy changes contribute to economic activity (sales, value-added or gross domestic product and jobs) in a specific region, which can range in size from the nation to a ZIP code. The IMPLAN model relies on input-output analysis, which considers the interdependencies between different sectors of an economy. By modeling all economic activity in a defined geographic region, IMPLAN can measure how the activity attributable to a certain project will ripple throughout the entire

economy. The IMPLAN model itself is based on various data inputs, which we supplemented and adjusted using data from our original agritourism survey and publicly available data from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Our analysis is based on our input data and parameters combined with IMPLAN's most current data set from 2021.

Agritourism data from the most recent (2017) Census of Agriculture is informative but not precise enough to provide the necessary data to estimate the local economic impacts of agritourism for the Willamette Valley. For this reason, we conducted the original agritourism surveys described above to collect the following data:

- ▶ Agritourism farm counts
- ▶ Type(s) of agritourism practices used
- ▶ Farm production for agritourism operations
- ▶ Gross revenue and net revenue (profit) for both the agritourism sales and those sales from other marketing channels
- ▶ Marketing practices
- ▶ Annual visitor counts

To the extent possible, we relied on our data sources and other published studies to generate the input data for the economic impact analysis. However, definitional inconsistencies and limited data availability posed challenges for certain measurements. In a few instances, we consulted with commodity association representatives and used our best judgment to inform the input parameter values.

Economic impact estimates based on IMPLAN or other similar input-output models have received increased skepticism in recent years.²⁰ These types of studies sometimes pursue a “wow” factor to attract support from policymakers, producing results that may sacrifice credibility. To avoid overstating the economic impacts of agritourism, we were conservative in our calculations.

For example, in one of our data challenges, we could not determine if farmers selling unprocessed food directly to consumers also sold value-added products, such as processed food, to consumers. Furthermore, we could not determine if these producers provided agritourism-related services, such as tours or hunting leases.

The complexity of distinguishing farms' income sources complicated our final tally of agritourism farms in the Willamette Valley. The 2017 Census of Agriculture provided estimates for the number of farms involved in both direct unprocessed food sales and those selling value-added products. To avoid double counting, we only included farms exclusively selling unprocessed food directly to consumers. This assumes that most farms selling processed or value-added food were also selling unprocessed food. However, there is the possibility that some farms selling value-added food do not sell unprocessed food. Therefore, relying solely on the number of farms selling unprocessed foods may underestimate the total number of farms participating in direct sales and agritourism activities.

Since the direct-to-consumer sales information in the 2017 Agricultural Census does not distinguish between on-farm and off-farm sales, we likely offset some of our previously stated undercount of farms engaging in direct sales. Surveys completed for this study along with the 2021 survey by Stewart et al.²¹ indicated that most of the direct-to-consumer sales derive from on-farm sales. While direct-to-consumer sales, both on-farm and off-farm direct sales, capture more of the food dollar by allowing the farmer to sell at or closer to the retail price, our best data source to validate this came from direct-to-consumer sales in the 2017 Agricultural Census. Even if this includes some off-farm direct sales, we believe those sales are consistent with capturing more of the food dollar. We did not include any sales in direct-to-retail markets and to institutions or food hubs, which predominate off-farm sales aside from wholesale or processor marketing channels.



Agritourism sales often substitute local production for imports typically sold by food stores, thereby preventing leakage of dollars to outside the region. However, agritourism may displace some labor (in food stores, for example) by shifting sales activity to farms. The displacement effect is likely small. Due to limitations with IMPLAN and available data, our estimates do not account for any displacement effects due to agritourism. We have also not accounted for government or other organizations' spending to support agritourism. That spending could have a positive or negative impact on local economic activity, depending on whether the value of dollars spent on agritourism outweighs the value gained by spending for alternative purposes.

Survey respondents estimated the total number of annual agritourism visitors they received. These annual visitation counts were categorized as visitors who are local, from more than 50 miles away on a day visit, and from more than 50 miles away on an overnight visit. The annual number of visitors in our survey responses ranged from six to 250,000. The median number of visitors was 800. To extrapolate the survey responses to all farms selling directly to consumers, we removed four responses from farms reporting 100,000 or more visitors because they would have substantially increased the average number that was applied to all farms selling directly to consumers. Using the median instead of an adjusted mean would likely undercount the number of visitors, so we used an adjusted mean for farms selling food directly to consumers, which was 3,709 visitors per year. For the other categories of sales, we gathered data from the surveys, producer associations and OSU Extension specialists to estimate the average number of visits.

In estimating the impacts of agritourism, we had to make assumptions about site visit attribution, or the extent to which consumers visited an area because they wanted to purchase an agritourism product or service. While agritourism may be the primary purpose of some trips, if someone stops at an agritourism farm on their way to visit family, for example, then agritourism is incidental to the trip, not its primary purpose. Similarly, sporting events and other local attractions can be a primary reason for a trip that involves some agritourism activity along the way. We based our agritourism visit attribution estimates on a study for the Hatfield Marine Science Center on the Oregon Coast.²² We assumed 40% attribution for day visitors and 20% attribution for overnight visitors not staying at farms. For overnight visitors staying at farms, we used a 100% attribution value.

Our economic impact analysis is based on the 4,033 farms we estimate to be participating in agritourism-related direct sales to consumers. As mentioned, we did not include a separate category for farms selling value-added food in this number of farms estimate, and we did not have a way to determine the number of farms selling only

off-farm. We included the value-added (such as jams) sales dollars because they are in addition to the unprocessed food (such as berries) dollars. There are 18,679 farms in the Willamette Valley.

Using the full set of input data, we constructed agritourism sales, and income and employment profiles for our study area. These profiles formed the basis for the following two categories of agritourism economic effects that we estimated:

1. Impacts on agritourism farm operation and revenue, including how agritourism revenue is re-spent within the local economy.
2. Impacts on local and regional business revenue, including how revenue is re-spent within the regional economy, by attracting visitors from more than 50 miles away to the community for day and overnight visits.

To generate our farm sales and visitor impacts, we used IMPLAN's detailed model with 546 business sectors, when we understood how many sales to apply to each detailed sector. For example, in crop production, we estimated the sales at 40% vegetables and melons, 40% fruit, 10% tree nuts and 10% other crops. When we were unable to estimate the percentage of sales for each detailed sector, we used a coarser three-digit North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) aggregation of 88 sectors. One example of using the three-digit model can be found in visitor impact estimates for meat and egg sales direct to consumers and prepared food. As noted above, conducting on-farm consumer surveys in the future would be very valuable to make these estimates, allowing the detailed model to be used for all the impacts.

All estimates are presented in inflation-adjusted 2023 dollars. The sidebar contains a glossary of key terms used in our presentation of results. Our estimates can be easily adjusted because the IMPLAN model is linear and scalable. For example, if you believe that we have overestimated by 100%, divide by two, or if you believe we have underestimated by 50%, multiply by two.

Economic footprint of agritourism

Agritourism industry

This section presents the direct effects of agritourism sales, which measure how they supplement total farm sales. By running the agritourism direct sales through the IMPLAN input-output model, we estimated agritourism's backward linkages in the supply chain through

KEY TERMS

Full- and part-time jobs: The estimate of total employment by industry in IMPLAN is equivalent to the annual average of monthly jobs in that industry. This is the same definition used by other national databases. Estimates of employment should be interpreted as counting either full-time or part-time jobs as a whole job.

Output: The market value of all goods and services including other operating income and inventory.

Value-added portion of sales: This is the total output of an industry, minus the cost of intermediate inputs that are purchased from other industries.

Direct effects: The size of the initial sale or outputs of each category of agritourism or the community businesses to visitors going to the agritourism farms.

Indirect effects: The inter-industry or supplier effects. This is the value of output that comes from other sectors within the region to support the production of the direct effects.

Induced effects: These are household expenditures made by agritourism operators and employees, expenditures by supplier owners and employees and all their linked businesses to agritourism farming operations, and expenditures by owners and employees of agritourism or local businesses who sell to visitors of agritourism farms.

Total effects: These values include the direct effect, indirect effect and induced effects.

Multipliers: This report uses multipliers calculated by dividing the total effect by the direct effect. A multiplier measures the strength of the linkages of agritourism within a local economy. If the multiplier is 2.0, then for every dollar spent in agritourism, another dollar is spent in the local economy when all related effects are combined.

various layers of re-spending. We referred to impacts involving the re-spending of agritourism-related farm income as indirect effects. We then estimated how agritourism operators, their employees and their suppliers' owners and employees spent their income from agritourism-related production. These are the induced effects of agritourism. In addition to the three types of effects concerning agritourism, we measured broader impacts on tourism within the Willamette Valley economy that are brought about by agritourism farms in the region. These broader community impacts resulting from agritourism are likewise decomposed into direct, indirect and induced effects.

Local consumers and visitors generate economic activity through agritourism-related spending and re-spending. However, spending by local consumers may occur with or without agritourism. If local consumer spending occurred without agritourism and agritourism sales declined, this would cause a short-term change to the economy but little long-term change. Spending by visitors, which we defined as those coming from more than 50 miles away, can provide a net gain to the economy that would not have occurred without agritourism. If that visitor spending disappeared, we would expect the economy to contract proportionately. The difference between short- and long-term changes is based on economic base theory, which stresses that the economic growth of an economy is dependent on exporting goods and services. This is why businesses and communities strive to increase their sale of exports. Sales to visitors from more than 50 miles away can be considered an export. However, import substitution blurs these distinctions. To a large degree, agritourism spurs local consumers to purchase food

that is produced locally, rather than imported food, which prevents leakages from the local economy and avoids long-term economic contraction.

Table 7 provides a snapshot of the agritourism industry using data from 2017 to 2021 and adjusted to 2023 dollars. Agritourism is grouped into five categories that show the number of farms/producers and the number of visitors to the different types of farms. We consulted local stakeholders to inform the Christmas tree farm and nursery estimates. Overall, agritourism sites experience roughly 13.7 million visits per year. Local consumers within 50 miles of the farm site represent two-thirds of these visits. The remaining visitors comprise day visitors (19%) and overnight visitors (15%) from more than 50 miles away.

One of the frequent reasons producers stated in our survey for doing agritourism was their desire to educate people about farming. For context, we estimate that there are roughly 13.7 million agritourism trips per year, including repeat visitors. Another prominent way that many people who live in urban areas learn about farming is through county and state fairs. In 2022, 346,000 people attended the Oregon State Fair, including repeat attendees.²³

As shown in Table 7, an overwhelming majority of agritourism is attributable to direct sales of farm goods to consumers, as this accounts for over 90% of both total visitors and agritourism farms. Unsurprisingly, most lodging and farm dinners come from overnight visitors outside the region. For the other categories, local consumers are responsible for the majority of visits, particularly for Christmas tree purchases. The highest relative share of day visitors falls in the direct nursery sales category.



Table 7. Willamette Valley agritourism farms — number and visitors

	Number of Farms	Average Number of Visitors	Total Visits Per Year Using Adj. Mean	Local Visits Per Year		Day Visitors Per Year From More Than 50 Miles Away		Overnight Visitors Per Year From More Than 50 Miles Away	
				Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Farms selling food direct to consumers	3,411	3,709	12,651,399 2,728,800 (if median had been used)	8,476,437	67%	2,277,252	18%	1,897,710	15%
Nurseries selling direct to consumers	229	3,750	858,750	541,013	63%	231,863	27%	85,875	10%
Christmas tree farms selling direct to consumers	120	600	72,000	61,200	85%	7,200	10%	3,600	5%
Farms providing private events and festivals	20	1,500	30,000	21,300	71%	5,100	17%	3,600	12%
Farms providing lodging and/or farm dinners	253	161	40,733	8,147	20%	10,183	25%	22,403	55%
Total Willamette agritourism farms	4,033		13,652,882	9,108,096	66%	2,531,598	19%	2,013,188	15%
Total farms in Willamette Valley	18,679								
Percentage of agritourism farms of total Willamette Valley farms	22%								

Economic effects of agritourism sales

Table 8 shows those direct effects by type of product or service and primary source of data for the various types of agritourism farms. In total, the direct effects of agritourism amount to annual sales of roughly \$353 million. Approximately half of the direct impacts come from nursery direct sales. Direct-to-consumer value-added products and food products also account for significant shares of total sales, at 25% and 15%, respectively.

To explore a more complete picture of Oregon agritourism and not skew overall results, we excluded wine sold at vineyards directly to consumers from Table 8. A report published in 2021, which has some useful regional and marketing channel proportions, estimated vineyard sales of wine at 47% or \$74,025,550 of the study area's total processed or value-added.²⁴ We used \$82,688,450 for nonwine value-added sales. We adjusted that amount to 2023 dollars, or \$87,088,081, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Agritourism sales

Product or service including primary source of data	Direct sales — 2023 dollars
Direct to consumer sales (dtc) food products — 2017 census of agriculture	\$54,632,979
Value-added food products — 2017 census of agriculture with wine removed	\$87,088,081
DTC Christmas trees — judgment	\$3,677,032
DTC nursery — surveys	\$176,924,443
Recreation and tours — 2017 census of agriculture	\$6,495,347
Farms providing only private events and festivals with over 100K events removed — surveys	\$1,837,500
Farms with only on-farm lodging and/or farm dinners — surveys	\$22,166,697
Total	\$352,822,079

Table 9 provides a summary of the cascading economic effects of the \$353 million in agritourism-related sales. Total Willamette Valley Farms was calculated by using IMPLAN's estimate of crop and animal production for 2021 adjusted to 2023 dollars, which is \$3,259,518,663. We ran those sales through the model and added together all the direct, indirect and induced effects for each category: Sales, Value-added and Employment. In addition to the sales effects, we showed the value-added effects of agritourism, which are essentially the gross domestic product of agritourism and those "driven" by agritourism through the indirect and induced effects.

As a reminder, job estimates from IMPLAN included total full- and part-time jobs. Also based on our judgment and 105 survey responses, which averaged eight extra employees being hired by agritourism farmers for agritourism activities, we increased IMPLAN's job estimates by 16 jobs at \$8,750 per job per million dollars of sales for direct-to-consumer sales of unprocessed and value-added food; 16 jobs at \$4,375 per job per million dollars of sales for Christmas tree and event sales; and 8 jobs at \$8,750 per job per million dollars of sales for greenhouse, recreation and on-farm lodging sales. To run the impacts of these additional part-time jobs, we used IMPLAN's \$30,000 – 40,000 income range and Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates of annual farmworker salary.²⁵ IMPLAN's estimates are for all marketing channels ranging from wholesale to agritourism, with agritourism being more labor-intensive than all marketing channels combined.

Sale prices of agritourism products and services or their direct effects include not only the effects directly attributable to the agritourism producer but also include the inputs that the producer purchases from suppliers, such as fuel, fertilizer, etc. The local purchases of these inputs are included in the indirect effects as well. Sales dollars always include some "double counting," and if all sales in an economy were added together, they would represent a much larger productive capacity than exists. We included sales dollars or direct effects to remain consistent with other analyses and others' descriptive estimates of economic activity.

Value-added removes those outside inputs and tabulates the additional value created only by the agritourism producer, which is primarily provided by the farmers' labor, soil, equipment and facilities, and only the production of businesses in the indirect and induced effects that are related to agritourism.

The multipliers indicate that for every agritourism dollar from sales more than another dollar is generated from suppliers of products and services to the farmer and employees. The employment multiplier suggests that for every job in agritourism, another 0.29 jobs are necessary to support the farmworkers.

Table 9. Economic effects of agritourism production

Type of effect	Sales	Value-added	Employment
Direct	\$352,822,078	\$202,651,008	6,984
Indirect	\$133,179,500	\$72,363,691	789
Induced	\$227,058,117	\$136,235,103	1,243
Total Willamette Valley agritourism farms	\$713,059,695	\$411,249,802	9,016
Multiplier	2.02	2.03	1.29
Total Willamette Valley farms	\$5,976,579,887	\$3,062,941,282	48,701
Percentage agritourism farms	12%	13%	19%

Economic impacts of agritourism: consumers from more than 50 miles away (day visitors)

About one-third of agritourism's customers come from more than 50 miles away, both for the day and overnight (Table 7). These customers could have come from outside or within the study area. The surveys asked the farmers to estimate the percentage of their customers who were not local as defined by coming from more than 50 miles away. Measuring nonlocal agritourism impacts can help align visitors' reasons for traveling to the region with their interest in purchasing agritourism products or services. While we did not collect information for our study area that attributed agritourism to visitors' reasons for traveling, the previous study cited above in Newport, Oregon, for the Hatfield Marine Science Center asked visitors if their reasons for traveling were related to visiting the center. Most of the day visitors had planned several stops and attributed 40% of their reason for traveling to the place we studied. In those surveys, we also asked visitors about their expenditures during those visits. Table 10 shows the primary businesses from which we estimated agritourism visitors will purchase and the amount of sales attributed to their visits at agritourism farms based on that previous study.

In the surveys, producers estimated their visitors' origins based on whether visitors were local or traveled more than 50 miles to the farm. This means that the visitors could be from within the study area, other parts of Oregon or outside Oregon. Even if visitors from inside the study area originated more than 50 miles away from the farm, they



likely made tourism types of expenditures, which distinguished them from local visitors who typically traveled from home to farm, made other local stops, and then returned home. By multiplying the product/service-specific per-person expenditures, day visitation counts, and attribution level (40%), we computed direct sales to day visitors as shown in Table 10, which was then fed into the IMPLAN model to generate the estimated economic impacts from day visitors (Table 11).

Table 10. Day visitor expenditures

Product or service	Expenditures per person — 2023 dollars	Direct sales — 2023 dollars
Prepared meals	28	\$28,353,898
Food stores	8	\$8,101,114
Gas	6	\$6,075,835
Entertainment	8	\$8,101,114
Retail all types	6	\$6,075,835
Total	56	\$56,707,795

Table 11. Economic impacts of agritourism day visitors

Type of effect	Sales	Value-added	Employment
Direct	\$56,707,796	33,216,250	588
Indirect	\$24,561,566	14,527,562	113
Induced	\$26,367,793	15,622,245	148
Total Willamette Valley agritourism farms	\$107,637,155	63,366,057	849

Economic impacts of agritourism: consumers from more than 50 miles away (overnight visitors)

Overnight visitors have an even greater economic impact per person, per visit than day visitors. This is because they stay longer and may purchase overnight accommodations. The expenditures per person, per visit in Table 12 are based on estimates from Dean Runyan Associates, a report from a consulting firm focused on travel and recreation, which was the most currently available data as we made our estimates using IMPLAN.²⁶ We used an attribution level of 20% for overnight visitors because overnight visits are made primarily for agritourism and are less likely to occur than day visits. The 20% is based to a large degree on the HMSC study and our judgment. If that level seems low or high, the attribution level can be easily adjusted as mentioned above. Using a process similar to what was used to measure the day visitation impacts, the economic impacts of overnight visitors are shown in Table 13.



Table 12. Overnight visitor expenditures

Product or service	Expenditures per person — 2023 dollars	Direct sales — 2023 dollars
Accommodations	43	\$17,313,417
Prepared meals	61	\$24,560,894
Food stores	22	\$8,858,027
Gas	30	\$12,079,128
Entertainment	33	\$13,287,041
Retail all types	28	\$11,273,853
Total	217	\$87,372,360

Table 13. Economic impacts of agritourism overnight visitors

Type of effect	Sales	Value-added	Employment
Direct	\$87,372,360	\$52,303,899	873
Indirect	\$36,847,048	\$21,704,478	175
Induced	\$40,601,199	\$24,055,195	228
Total Willamette Valley agritourism farms	\$164,820,607	\$98,063,572	1,276

Comparing agritourism and other marketing channel farm sales

We used the 2017 Agricultural Census data to determine most of the direct effects/sales (which are only to the producer). If those direct effects in the top row of Table 9, which are \$352,822,078, are divided by the total number of agritourism farms or 4,033, the average sales per farm related to agritourism is \$87,484. On average, respondents in the surveys we conducted and discussed above, said they earn half of their gross revenues from agritourism. Doubling the agritourism sales estimates an agritourism farm's average total sales to be \$174,968. The agritourism employment is higher, yet the remaining portion of the agritourism farms' employment remains at the level when other marketing channels are used, which is lower. For the agritourism half of the farm's operations, employment is 3.51, and for the remaining portion, it is roughly 1.8 for a total of 5.31 full- or part-time jobs.

To compare farms with and without agritourism, we created a weighted average of total sales per farm from the 2017 Agricultural Census for the nine counties. Those numbers included the agritourism farms. However, half of the agritourism farms' sales are not directly related to agritourism and agritourism farms represent only 22% of the total farms. So, the sales per farm for all farms in the Willamette Valley came directly from the 2017 Agricultural Census, which we adjusted by 10.6% using the IMPLAN inflation factor for crops to get from 2017 to 2023 dollars. The jobs estimate came from IMPLAN. Average per farm sales for all the Willamette Valley farms is \$102,152 and average per farm employment is 3.6 full- or part-time jobs.

Using these rough calculations, agritourism farms have 70% higher sales and 48% higher employment than the average of all farms. These differences are likely to be driven by agritourism farms capturing a portion of the wholesale, processing (for the portion of agritourism farms that add value), and retail portion of the food dollar, which is approximately 35% or more than three times the farmgate price. Another consideration for these differences is that many of the small to mid-sized farms are not able to produce quantities that brokers or wholesalers will purchase for sale to processors or retailers. In those cases, agritourism becomes a critically important option.

Maintaining good relationships between agritourism farms and other rural landowners

While agritourism can provide many benefits to farmers and their communities, it can introduce more traffic, noise and other effects of increased economic activity. People have different views of what activities are appropriate for farm country. This has led to inconsistent policies, inequities and confusion as to what is allowable and acceptable for agritourism.



Oregon wineries have specific statutes that allow them to offer more on-farm activities than other types of farms. Both small and large wineries are allowed tours and tastings, luncheons and dinners, open houses, fee-based outdoor concerts, facility rentals, celebratory gatherings and charitable activities. As of 2019, on-farm cideries and breweries are treated similarly to wineries under Oregon law.

Most of these agritourism activities are prohibited on other types of farms or require a conditional use permit for different activities. It is not clear why this inequity among types of farms persists. Yet, recently when a bill (SB1087)

was introduced in the 2023 Legislature to allow a pilot program for farm cafes in Lane County, the divergence of views of appropriate agritourism activities was apparent in the Senate Committee on Rules hearing on the bill.²⁷ Opposition to the bill included themes of individuals wanting to retain valuable land use laws, to rank prepared food sales as subordinate to farm crops, to minimize the building and infrastructure on farmland that is not directly related to traditional farming, and to impact neighbors and other farming operations. Those in favor of the bill cited reasons, such as agritourism's ability to help offset the rising input costs of farming, to help diversify revenue sources, and to help farmers make a living wage while trying to preserve the greater land use goal of preserving farmland.

Developing more consistent policies, which will require mediating the concerns of those in support and opposing further development of agritourism, will determine whether the economic footprint and impacts estimated above can be increased — and maybe even maintained. It can help to examine the experiences of destination tourism communities and urban areas with mitigating conflicts, such as the effects of increased congestion or neighbors whose land uses differ significantly. A collaborative effort is necessary to better understand what the agritourism activities are in the Willamette Valley and Oregon and engage a wide range of stakeholders, both rural and urban, to develop the necessary compromises.

Agritourism can be important to the survival of farmers who want to diversify and keep their land in farming.²⁸ However, neighbors should not be expected to pay a high price, in terms of quality of life, so that agritourism farms can survive.

Summary

This analysis indicates the potential value that agritourism may provide to the agritourism farmer and the communities of the Willamette Valley. Through the surveys we conducted, respondents overwhelmingly indicated agritourism was important to their financial viability and to their efforts to help people understand and appreciate the importance of farming.

An informal inventory estimated that approximately 22% of farms in the Willamette Valley produce one or more types of agritourism products and services. A market study gauging consumer demand would be needed to recommend opportunities for more farms to expand into agritourism or for existing farms to expand their agritourism products or services.



Based on our surveys, agritourism farmers may earn 50% of their gross revenues and 50% of their net revenues/profits from their agritourism production. With income derived from agritourism sales and other marketing channels, producers can diversify their income sources and risk as a protection against economic fluctuations.

When the agritourism farm production and the expenditures made by farm visitors are combined, the economic effects exceed \$985 million in sales, \$572 million in value-added/GDP, and 11,000 jobs. Although these effects are not a major portion of Oregon's economy, they contribute significantly to the Willamette Valley economy and the economies of local communities.

Efforts beyond the farms involved would be needed to increase the economic contribution of agritourism, which can potentially enhance opportunities for people to better understand farming and rural lifestyles. Adding financial resilience to agritourism may help retain land in farming operations.



Appendix: An example of how agritourism may be expanded

Other states offer agritourism products and services that may not be allowed in Oregon. Often, the regulations in Oregon are so confusing and inconsistently applied among and within counties that many farmers are hesitant to consider adding agritourism products or services to their operations.

Oregon Revised Statutes define and provide guidance and some flexibility for agritourism activities: “What is consistent no matter where you are is that agritourism and other commercial events must be related to and supportive of agriculture. All the activities approved by these provisions must be ‘incidental and subordinate to existing farm use.’”²⁹

Based on farmer interviews, one example of those agritourism activities is offering on-farm lodging. Often on-farm lodging does not just include lodging. It may include educational activities, such as farm tours, opportunities to interact with the livestock, and even in some cases help with livestock or crop management tasks. Some farms are currently offering on-farm lodging through online platforms like Vrbo or Airbnb. Those types of on-farm lodging are less likely to include additional experiential learning activities or support the price level of formal on-farm lodging.

If the policies for on-farm lodging, both at the state and county levels, were legalized and standardized to allow a season of up to 100 rented days per year for a small number of rental units or even just one unit, a number of current agritourism farms would likely add on-farm lodging to their offerings. Farms not active in agritourism may find on-farm lodging a good way to diversify into agritourism. The season would extend beyond 100 days because it would include a day between rented days for cleaning.

Again, the on-farm lodging must be supportive of agriculture, and incidental and subordinate to the existing farm use. The on-farm lodging option cannot be used as a method to site large lodges or essentially motels on EFU land.

The average price per night of on-farm lodging is approximately \$250. Using just one unit as an example, a season could create an additional \$25,000 (100 nights x \$250) in revenue for the farm. Using IMPLAN’s Other Accommodations sector in the detailed IMPLAN model, two-thirds of the \$25,000 — or \$16,500 — would go to the farmer and employees. Since the farmer often takes care of the on-farm lodging unit(s), we do not have a good way to allocate that \$16,500 between the farmer and employees. 24%, or \$6,000, would go to supplies or intermediate inputs. From our surveys, we would expect a major portion of that \$6,000 would be spent locally. The remaining 10% would go to lodging taxes and other property income not directly related to the on-farm lodging.

Using the average sales per agritourism farm of \$174,968 from above, a single on-farm lodging unit can increase total sales for the average agritourism farm by 14%. For agritourism farms selling other products and services, guests staying will likely purchase some of those products and services, thereby boosting sales. In addition, we would expect that many of the on-farm lodging guests would come from more than 50 miles away and generate additional economic impacts to the farm and communities similar to those noted above for overnight visitors.

Allowing agritourism farm owners to rent one or a small number of units would limit the number of people staying at the farm and minimize disruption to neighbors.

Notes

- ¹ Van Sandt, Anders, Sarah A. Low, and Dawn Thilmany. 2018. "Exploring Regional Patterns of Agritourism in the U.S.: What's Driving Clusters of Enterprises?" Cambridge University Press 47 (3): 592-609. <https://doi.org/10.1017/age.2017.36>
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- ³ Economic Forensics and Analytics, Inc. 2021. "The Economic Impact of the Wine and Wine Grape Industries on the Oregon Economy 2019 and 2020 Estimated." (January), 1-31. <https://industry.oregonwine.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/OR-Econ-Impact-2019-2020-FINAL.pdf>.
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- ⁵ Stewart, M., A. Comerford, B. Sorte, S. Angima, L. Chase, W. Wang, R. Bartlett, D. Conner, C. Hollas, C. Brittain, L. Quella., 2021. "Increasing Farm Viability Through Agritourism and On-Farm Direct Sales: An Oregon Producer Survey." OSU Extension Service.
- ⁶ Giri, Anil K., Dipak Subedi, Jessica E. Todd, Carrie Litkowski, and Christine Whitt. "Off-Farm Income a Major Component of Total Income for Most Farm Households in 2019." Amber Waves, 2021. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2021/september/off-farm-income-a-major-component-of-total-income-for-most-farm-households-in-2019/>.
- ⁷ Scale economies refer to the idea that the cost per unit of production declines as the size (or scale) of the farm increases. For example, consider a row-crop farm operation. As the acreage of the farm increases, some costs, such as the fixed cost of machinery loan payments, become smaller on a per-acre basis.
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- ⁹ MacDonald, James M. "Tracking the Consolidation of U.S. Agriculture." Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy 42, no. 3 (2020): 361-79. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aep.13056>.
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- ¹¹ Drawing direct historical comparisons with total farm/farmland is problematic because of statistical changes to the Census of Agriculture methodology over time. This is particularly true for smaller farms, hence our focus on changes in acreage for farms of at least 100 acres. See MacDonald (2020) for more information on the issues with comparisons of the Census data over long periods.
- ¹² Khanal, Aditya R. and Ashok K. Mishra. 2014. "Agritourism and off-farm work: survival strategies for small farms." Agricultural Economics, 45: 65-76.
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- ¹⁵ 1000 Friends of Oregon. 2020. "Death By 1000 Cuts: A 10-Point Plan to Protect Oregon's Farmland." (June), 1-48. https://friends.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Death%20By%201000%20Cuts_2020.pdf.
- ¹⁶ 2017 Census of Agriculture, Introduction VII.
- ¹⁷ 1974 Census of Agriculture - Oregon; State and County Data p. A-8.
- ¹⁸ 1978 Census of Agriculture - Oregon; State and County Data, p. D-4.
- ¹⁹ 2007 Census of Agriculture - Oregon; State and County Data, p. B-43.
- ²⁰ Crompton, John. "Uses and Abuses of IMPLAN in Economic Impact Studies of Tourism Events and Facilities in the United States: A Perspective Article." Tourism Review 75, no. 1 (2020): 187-90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-05-2019-0159>.
- ²¹ Stewart, M., A. Comerford, B. Sorte, S. Angima, L. Chase, W. Wang, R. Bartlett, D. Conner, C. Hollas, C. Brittain, L. Quella., 2021. "Increasing Farm Viability Through Agritourism and On-Farm Direct Sales: An Oregon Producer Survey." OSU Extension Service.
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- ²³ Oregon State Fair attendance and revenues rebound from the pandemic. Oct. 31, 2022. Oregon Public Broadcasting. <https://www.opb.org/article/2022/10/31/oregon-state-fair-attendance-and-revenues-rebound-from-pandemic/>.
- ²⁴ Economic Forensics and Analytics, Inc. 2021. "The Economic Impact of the Wine and Wine Grape Industries on the Oregon Economy 2019 and 2020 Estimated." (January), 1-31. <https://industry.oregonwine.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/OR-Econ-Impact-2019-2020-FINAL.pdf>.
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- ²⁶ "The Economic Impact of Travel in Oregon 2021p (Preliminary) Travel Oregon." 5/6/2022 PRIMARY RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY Dean Runyan Associates 811 SW 11th Avenue Suite 920 Portland, Oregon 97205.
- ²⁷ Written testimony, Oregon Senate Committee on Rules, April 6, 2023, <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023r1/Measures/Testimony/sb1087>
- ²⁸ Van Sandt, Anders, Sarah A. Low, and Dawn Thilmany. 2018. "Exploring Regional Patterns of Agritourism in the U.S.: What's Driving Clusters of Enterprises?" Cambridge University Press 47 (3): 592-609. <https://doi.org/10.1017/age.2017.36>.
- ²⁹ Oregon Law: Agritourism, Commercial Events or Activities, https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/smallfarms/factsheet5_agritourismeventsactivities.pdf

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

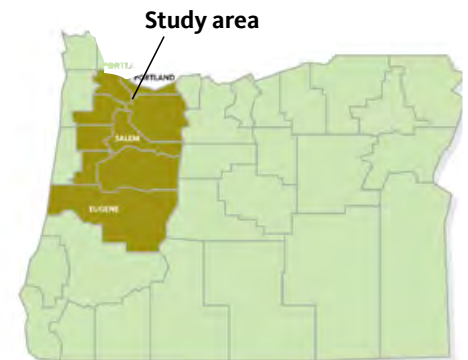
An Initial Economic Impact Estimate of Agritourism in Oregon's Willamette Valley

Bruce Sorte, Melissa Fery and Audrey Comerford

In agritourism, producers combine farming with some aspects of tourism. Agritourism can take the form of farm-direct sales, education, entertainment, outdoor recreation and hospitality. Surveys tell us that farmers take up agritourism to:

- Increase income.
- Create a sense of community.
- Educate visitors about farming.
- Share farm products and farm with others.

This analysis sought to quantify the potential value that agritourism may provide to Willamette Valley farmers and their communities. Based on our surveys, farmers offering agritourism may earn 50% of their gross revenues and 50% of their net revenues or profits from agritourism. These producers diversify their income sources, which protects against economic fluctuations.



Key takeaways for farmers and policymakers

- Agritourism is diverse, and many farmers provide several agritourism products and services, which range from selling produce at farm stands to on-farm lodging and school visits to farms.
 - A majority (66%) of agritourism customers and visitors live within 50 miles of the farms. One-third of consumers come from more than 50 miles away for day (19%) and overnight visits (15%) to the area. (Estimates include one-time and repeat visitors.)
 - Approximately 22% of Willamette Valley farms produce one or more types of agritourism products and services.
 - When we total the economic effects of agritourism sales, daytime visitor spending and overnight visitor, direct sales exceed \$985 million. Value-added sales (sales minus outside supply or production inputs) exceed \$572 million.
 - Agritourism supports, in full and part-time jobs, approximately 9,000 jobs on farms and contributes to approximately 2,000 jobs in both rural and urban communities.
 - Between 3.7 million and 13.7 million people visit agritourism farms annually.
- **Survey participants overwhelmingly indicated that agritourism was important to their financial viability and their efforts to help people appreciate the importance of farming.**

This project was sponsored by Travel Oregon, Lane County Community and Economic Development, Mt. Hood Territory, Willamette Valley Visitors Association, SEDCOR and the OSU Extension Service in Benton, Clackamas, Lane, Linn, Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

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July 3, 2025

Public Comment for the 2025 Rules Advisory Committee on Farm Stands

To: RAC members

Thank you to the RAC members who are taking the time to serve on this important committee. There have been many thoughtful comments in the first three sessions.

Of particular interest to me was Washington County Planner Maitreyee Sinha's observation that some applicants for a farm stand were really only interested in events, and that was a problem. It was indeed a problem for our rural Washington County neighborhood in 2011, when a wedding and event venue was issued a county farm stand permit in an attempt to justify their business. The farm stand shed contained little or no produce. Within two years, the venue proprietors sought a pathway to events through applications for a winery, a farm stand and then a private park. None of these options was approved after County and/or LUBA hearings. Objections to the farm stand permit can be found in *Keith v Washington County*.

RAC member Michael McCarthy stated that the burden of solving farm stand issues should not be on the neighbors. Our small neighborhood association prepared diligently for county hearings, and also needed to hire our attorney for two LUBA hearings. We also aided a nearby association on a third LUBA hearing for a sister-operation's winery application to mask an event site. The toll on our neighborhood group in time, energy, stress and money was significant. Our group was 100 per cent successful in hearings at the County and at LUBA, but that burden should not have been on us.

Jim Johnson emphasized that the primary purpose of a farm stand needs to be to sell products from the farm. We would like to ask that that purpose be made clear without shifting the task to neighbors. The complaint-based system makes it difficult to not depend upon neighbors.

My neighbors and I know the burden of heavy traffic in an agricultural area when drivers are headed to an event. Visiting drivers often do not know to give right of way to our farm vehicles, horses and sheep. A high-end wedding can have 200 guests, and additional vehicles include Party Pro set-ups, caterers, florists, and musicians. Noise from amplified music from events is also problematic.

While the RAC does not change law, the clarity can be improved. After many hours and thousands of dollars invested in keeping our area safe for living and safe for agriculture, we in our neighborhood will appreciate clarification of rules that support farm stands as a complementary asset for for a farm, not an event center.

Thank you,

Linda de Boer
Rural Washington County



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

503-581-7124 ♦ www.FriendsofFamilyFarmers.org

Dear LCDC members, DLCD staff and members of the RAC regarding OAR 660-033-0130:

Friends of Family Farmers represents more than 1,600 small and midsize, highly diversified, local market farmers across Oregon. Many of our farmers operate farm stands and many more are interested in using this as a direct to consumer sales channel in the future. We believe very deeply that enhancing the connection between food production and consumption and encouraging non-farmers to have a meaningful experience and connection to the people growing/raising our food in OR will strengthen our community food system. With that goal in mind, we do want to make sure that farmland stays in production and accessible to the next generation of farmers by being thoughtful in how we tie farmstand activities to the farm production. Selling the products of the host farm and the local agricultural area is the explicit goal of a farmstand, and without that as the focus, it is simply a retail/commercial use of EFU zoned land. We all want farms to remain productive and prosperous in Oregon, and so a balanced approach is needed.

We have reached out to our community to gather input on the topics of the RAC and the following points are agreed upon and important to our farmers:

- Primary Use Test:
 - 25% sales of incidental items and fee based activity should stand
 - This should be based on farmstand sales (not farm operation sales)
 - Fee-based activity which includes the sale of a product of the farm should be allowed to be parsed out. For example if a flower farmer holds a wreath making class and charges \$100, but the retail value of the greenery and flowers used in the course is \$70, they should only count the other \$30 as an incidental/fee-based activity sale.
 - Audited financial statements should not be required to prove this, as it is an undue burden for small operations, sales logs with transaction types noted should suffice.
 - Definition of local agricultural area
 - After receiving feedback from our farmers on the eastern side of the Cascades, we stand by the definition of local agricultural area to include the whole state of Oregon. If a farmstand is located in a county adjacent to a stateline, we also believe that the farmstand should be allowed to carry product from the adjacent county in the neighboring state. Not the entire neighboring state, but only the county with which the host farm shares a border.
 - Definition of Agricultural product

- Products grown/raised on the farm where the farmstand is hosted should be allowed to include all things covered by the Oregon Farm Direct Marketing Law (including the Farm Direct Producer Processed Exemption, and the 1,000 bird poultry exemption). Although we understand that this is a food safety code, these are considered farm products colloquially and many small farms build a business based on this law. Creating a separate set of standards for farm products legally processed on farm for the purpose of extending shelf life or making them useful to the consumer as ingredients, creates unfair standards for small farmers.
- A farm stand must carry some product from the host farm in the store at some point throughout the year to qualify as a farmstand. We are open to further discussions on percentages or thresholds of host farm product present and would be happy to share further feedback from our farmers.
- Processed agricultural products should be considered any farm product altered from its natural state by any process including (but not limited to) washing, cutting, drying, shelling, dehydrating, freeze drying, freezing, canning, pickling or meat slaughter/processing with the intention to create a product for sale that is not intended for immediate consumption. Think about something that would be eligible for purchase with SNAP at a grocery store.
- Sale of processed agricultural products where all fresh produce used is from the host farm or the local agricultural area should not be considered incidental. The additions of preservatives like sugar, pectin or salt should not make a processed farm product incidental.
- Both host farm products and agricultural products from Oregon (or a neighboring county where applicable) must conform to food safety standards appropriate to the holding conditions of the farmstand (refrigeration, etc.) and farmstand operators are responsible for understanding and obtaining all relevant licenses for food safety and handling for product originating off their farm.
- Fee-based activity
 - Educational activity regarding agricultural practices (including farm tours), usage of tools, ecosystem preservation/conservation, farmer led research (like SARE), animal husbandry/welfare, plant biology and educating children in farm to school or outdoor school contexts should be allowed without additional permitting.
 - All fee based activity (promotional and educational) when combined with sale of incidental items at the farmstand should constitute no more than 25% of farmstand sales.
 - No other limitations are needed as long as operators understand that they must obtain other relevant permits if they generate more than this income cap from fee based activities.
- Inside/outside farmstand

- As long as fees for promotional and educational events do not constitute more than the 25% allowed for incidental and fee based activity, it should not matter if the activity takes place inside or outside the farmstand building.
- Farmstand operators are responsible for the cost and permitting requirements needed to construct a building that is safe and to code for public use if their intentions are to use it for the allowable events. We believe that the costs of this type of construction and the limitation on income from fee-based activities and incidental sales act as an effective cap on building permanent event spaces under the guise of farm stands.
- The use of temporary structures for shade and rest in farm stand contexts should be noted in the permitting process and considered by the county. These temporary structures must be securely staked, weighted or tied down, and need to have a plan for removal in off seasons.
- Prepared Foods
 - Prepared foods outside the definition of processed farm products above should be considered incidental items.
 - Even if the food is served packaged and cold for consumption off site (and would be eligible for SNAP purchase in a grocery store, as referenced above), if its primary ingredients (fresh produce, meat and dairy) are not products of the host farm or the local agricultural area, this is an incidental product and should be counted in the 25% allowable incidental and fee based activity sales. Products permitted under the Oregon Cottage Food Law/Home Bakery Bill are incidental when sold at farm stands.
 - Preparation of ready to eat food for consumption on site should require an agritourism permit for a specific event. We would be in favor of the exploration/development of a new agritourism permit type that allowed for something [akin to a temporary restaurant license](#) (issued by counties for use at farmers markets and community festivals) that would allow a farmer to apply for an agritourism (sub 2 use on EFU, not sub 1) permit for a temporary ability to serve ready to eat food for up to a 90 day season. We would only be in favor of this option if there was a requirement that all primary ingredients (all fresh produce, meat and dairy) be produced by the host farm or purchased directly from another farm in the same or neighboring county. We understand this is a strict requirement, but it is important to remain true to the point of the farmstand which is to connect people to the bounty of the area, help them understand the seasonal cycles of farming, and make sure our farmers have an option to diversify income. Further conversation is necessary and we would be happy to be involved. We understand this may be a statutory, not rulemaking, change.
- Impacts to neighboring farms
 - DLCD should develop guidance on a daily or weekly visitor count that should trigger requirements for additional parking, traffic management, or facilities.
 - These thresholds should be communicated to farm stand operators during the permit process

- The permit process should require an assessment of existing parking and sanitary facilities and a preliminary plan of emergency mitigation should their capacity be exceeded unexpectedly.
- The farmer hosting the farmstand is responsible for the management of the traffic their farmstand creates and has an obligation to take steps to prevent trespass from their patrons on neighboring farm properties.
- Mediation of conflicts from the ODA program should be available to farmers seeking to rectify harm done from agritourism activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, we look forward to continuing this conversation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Alice Morrison".

Alice Morrison
Co-Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers

Rule Language to clarify when a farm stand is a “farm use” and when it requires a farm stand permit.

There seemed to be broad support among RAC members for clarifying when certain activities are a ‘farm use’ and when they require a farm stand permit. We heard a desire on the part of RAC members to clarify when educational activities and tours are permissible as a farm use.

Several proposals were received from the public which were very. There seems to be general agreement that educational activities for which no fee is charged may be permitted as a farm use.

Suggestion:

Possible rule language:

“A temporary structure designed and used only for the sale of farm crops and livestock grown on the farm operation is not a farm stand. Low-intensity promotional activities, such as farm tours, for which no fee is charged or collected do not require a farm stand approval.”

“For purposes of this section “temporary structure” includes structures such as tents, canopies, chairs, benches and tables that are sited on the property for no more than 90 days in a calendar year. “Temporary structure” does not include food trucks.”

Jackson County Response:

*“A temporary structure designed and used only for the sale of farm crops and livestock grown on the farm operation **does not require a farm stand permit.**” ~~is not a farm stand~~*

*“For purposes of this section “temporary structure” includes structures such as tents, canopies, chairs, benches and tables that are sited on the property **and operating** for no more than 90 days in a calendar year. “Temporary structure” does not include food trucks.”*

“Low-intensity” and “promotional activities” are problematic in their vagueness which appears to add more areas for interpretation rather than clarity. Many roadside stands are standing structures year-round although they may not be operating year-round. Some roadside stands like egg stands do operate all year so would fail to be exempt based on the modified Rule as written. Jackson County defines “Temporary” as 30 days unless otherwise specified.

Provide an agency guidance document or memo post rule-adoption with examples such as the following:

- Approve as a “farm use” proposals that do not involve selling processed foods, retail items, produce from other farms or developing structures.
- A temporary structure such as a roadside table and tent canopy selling farm crops and livestock produced on the hosting farm is a “farm use”.
- A u-pick operation supported by a table and temporary tent canopy for weighing produce and collecting money is a “farm use”.

Jackson County Response: We are in favor of an agency guidance document. Low-intensity promotional activities, such as farm tours, for which no fee is charged or collected do not require a farm stand approval could be listed here as well if the Rule is not modified.

Local Agricultural Area

“Local Agricultural Area” is defined in rule (OAR 660-033-0130(23)(d)):

(d) As used in this section, "local agricultural area" includes Oregon or an adjacent county in Washington, Idaho, Nevada or California that borders the Oregon county in which the farm stand is located.

This section was added to rule in 2006. A number of RAC members expressed verbal and written support for the current version of the rule and like the flexibility to be able to offer a wider range of products, particularly in the off-season. Members shared that the diversity allows them to keep employees during the off-season.

Other members expressed a belief that the legislative intent was for products being sold at farm stands to be sourced from a more localized area. These members are advocating for adoption of a narrower definition. Several proposals were received for language that would narrow the definition of “local agricultural area”.

Suggestion:

If no change to this section of rule is included in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, LCDRC would be precluded from making any changes to this section of rule during the hearings process.

Possible rule language:

“Local Agricultural Area” is defined in rule (OAR 660-033-0130(23)(d)):

(d) As used in this section, "local agricultural area" includes Oregon. or an area in Washington, Idaho, Nevada or California that borders the Oregon county in which the farm stand is located and is within 50 miles of the Oregon state boundary.

Jackson County Response: We support not changing the Rule.

Retail Item Limitations

Some RAC members proposed clarifying the relationship between incidental retail items sold at a farm stand and farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand. The concept was brought up during the first RAC meeting and did not engender much discussion.

Suggestion:

“For purposes of this section “retail incidental items” are items with a direct relationship to the farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand and which are intended to promote the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand. Such retail incidental items may include, but are not limited to, vases for flowers grown on the site, carving kits for pumpkins grown on site, t-shirts advertising the farm itself.”

Jackson County Response: We support this change to the Rule.

Activities that Promote Sale of Farm Products, the Farm Operation Itself, or

Agriculture

The agency posed a number of questions to RAC participants around clarifications on events that are allowable at farm stands as opposed to events which require other permits. There is a variety of opinion on this topic with some members advocating for more restrictions and others advocating for more flexibility.

Jackson County Response: Because Farm Stands are Sub-1 uses, events should be limited in size and scope when compared to the farm based on clear and objective standards. Other types of permits are available for more intensive events.

The relationship between promotional activities and farm stand products

Statute allows “*fee-based activity to promote the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand*”. There are a variety of opinions on how direct the relationship between the activities and the farm stand products should be. The agency received several proposals for language that would clarify the necessary relationship between the activities and farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand. The agency has also heard that there is a need to clarify how fee-based educational activities may be permitted and that examples of allowable activities would be useful.

Suggestion:

“For purposes of this section “promotional activity” involves activities related to the farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand and which are intended to encourage the sale of farm crops or livestock sold at the farm stand or educate visitors on the agricultural practices being conducted on the farm. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, flower arranging classes at a farm stand that sells cut flowers, fee-based tours, cooking demonstrations using farm products sold at the farm stand, product sampling or tasting, rides to or through crop fields, farm-to-table dinners predominantly featuring farm crops and livestock sold at the farm stand. Promotional activities authorized by this section are incidental and subordinate to the sale of farm crops or livestock at the farm stand.”

Jackson County Response: We support this change to the Rule.

Parameters on scope and scale of allowable activities

There was some discussion at the RAC of standards which would limit the scope, scale or intensity of promotional events at farm stands. Several comments submitted indicated that these types of standards, if adopted should focus on capacity issues such as parking spaces, sanitation, etc. Some comments received indicated that such standards may not be able to apply to a variety of proposals (ie there is no one-size- fits-all solution) and may be burdensome. Other comments included proposals for specific limitations such as days of events and number of cars.

Suggestion:

At this time the agency is not proposing any standards addressing scope or scale of allowable activities.

Jackson County Response: This is a key question for understanding the relationship between a farm use and a Farm Stand. How can clear and objective standards apply to a use where “there is no one-size-fits all solution”? Sounds like a Sub-2 use. When does a Farm Stand stop being a farm use and become more of a commercial use and how do we tell the difference? We tell the difference without being subjective by thresholds based on size of the structure compared to the “farm” and the intensity of the use (# employees, operational hours, # events, size of events). Possibly by a threshold for the area ratio dedicated to farm stand verses the farm, time spent farming verses time spent on events.

Farm Stand Events vs Other Permitting Pathways

Several proposals were received that would prohibit promotional activities at farm stands that could be permitted under another use category. Not all counties offer these alternative pathways.

Suggestion:

At this time the agency is not proposing a rule amendment that would prohibit promotional activities.

Jackson County Response: The County does not offer Agri-tourism at the moment and does not suggest removing the ability for promotional activities.

Temporary Structures

Statute prohibits the use of farm stand structures for banquets, public gatherings or public entertainment. The holdings in the Greenfield case include that temporary structures are subject to this limitation. This interpretation means that no farm stand structures, including temporary tents and canopies, may be used for banquets, public gatherings or entertainment. This means that promotional events only occur out-of-doors, or that they occur in a structure only if the promotional events do not involve banquets, public gatherings or entertainment. Several RAC members cited this as a health and safety issue.

There was a variety of opinion on this topic, however, with some RAC members expressing concern that these structures become permanent in practice and allow a larger scale of activity than permitted by statute.

Suggestion:

“Temporary structures may be used to shelter visitors participating in promotional events authorized by this section.”

“For purposes of this section “temporary structure” includes structures such as tents, canopies, chairs, benches and tables that are sited on the property for no more than 90 days in a calendar year. “Temporary structure” does not include food trucks.”

Jackson County Response: This modification to the Rule appears to be useful.

July 3, 2025

Ms. Hilary Foote
Farm/Forest Specialist
Department of Land Conservation and Development
635 Capitol Street NE
Suite 150
Salem, Oregon 97301

Comments submitted via email to farmforest.comment@dlcd.oregon.gov

Dear Ms. Foote:

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Department of Land Conservation & Development's (DLCD) Farm Stand Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) process as a RAC member and for the opportunity to share these comments and recommendations as DLCD seeks to modernize its rules associated with the operation of farm stands.

Introduction

Farming, ranching, or any kind of cultivation and/or management of natural resources are inherently dynamic practices. Because of the virtually unlimited number of environmental and man-made variables associated with natural resource lands, they stand in stark contrast to the sterile environment of a lab or the methodical repetition of a manufacturing assembly line. These variables can work independently of or in concert with one another, resulting in exponential complexities. Profitably navigating this extraordinarily complex, fluid environment and seeking to impose order on a natural system fundamentally committed to disorder is a challenging endeavor, even under the best of circumstances. An experienced farmer might do everything right and produce a high-quality crop only to be pulled underwater by market forces outside the scope of his or her control. Conversely, the market may be favorable and best agricultural practices applied, but because of

limitations brought on by drought, disease, pests, or any other unpredictable force, the farmer experiences reduced crop yields or quality, delivering only a fraction of expected revenue, or even a financial loss. At the core of farming is the effort to navigate these dynamic forces consistently over an extended period in a way that brings profitability to the agricultural enterprise. However, at present, costs are up, prices are down, and agricultural producers are getting squeezed.

The current challenges associated with maintaining economic viability in Oregon's evolving agricultural sector are not inconsequential, nor are they hard to find. Even with OFB, our membership grapples with policy adaptations that are integral to economic survival. Each year, OFB has a transparent and robust policymaking process that is undertaken by its extensive statewide membership. During the 2024 iteration of this policymaking process, the organization adopted important changes to its policies concerning the diversification of farm-based revenue streams intended to provide our members the flexibility to better adapt to shifting economic challenges. It is upon this backdrop that OFB shares these recommendations related to the current rulemaking "regarding farm stands in exclusive farm use zones and agri-tourism (OAR 660-033-0130)."

When Mother Nature and global markets conspire against a farmer—especially over an extended period of time—there is a very real risk that the farmer will go out of business. When that happens, the farm is typically absorbed into a larger operation, further marginalizing the voice of agricultural producers who only comprise about one percent of the general population. We are not here to debate the pros and cons of consolidation but find it necessary to underscore the real-world implications of farms losing their economic viability and going out of business. Considering these consequences is not an academic exercise. There has been much discussion about the loss of farms and even farmland in Oregon. Ultimately, the OFB position is that protecting the economic viability of our farmers is the strongest, most effective, and simplest way to protect our farmland while aligning with the original goals of Oregon's land use system established in 1973.

Additionally, we embrace the unique aspects of Oregon's agricultural industry. With an abundant diversity of crops grown in the state, producer creativity is a feature of Oregon agriculture, not a bug. Inevitably, there will be tension between a land use system that nobly seeks to preserve agricultural land and the inherent creativity and adaptability of our agricultural producers who are seeking to remain profitable, stay in business, and ultimately, protect their agricultural land. These systemic tensions are not observed everywhere and we caution against a disproportionate reliance upon a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach that can create undue burdens upon agricultural operations that do not represent the lowest common denominator. On the contrary, we encourage flexibility, local empowerment, and local solutions to local problems.

The DLCD Farm Stand RAC was charged with addressing five main questions. OFB has participated in each of the meetings and appreciates the meaningful input and valuable

perspectives from the RAC participants and contributors. As a result of the discussions, we have a better understanding of the problems or challenges that updated farm stand rules are seeking to address. The following recommendations from OFB are put forward not only in the context of our organizational policies, but also the collective feedback from and discussion with other members of the DLCD RAC.

1. *Primary Use Test: Is farming required to be the primary activity on the property hosting a farm stand? If so, how do counties ensure that farming rather than sales and events remains the primary activity on the property?*

OFB recognizes that strict income-based definitions of "primary use" may not sufficiently account for the variability and economic realities faced by Oregon farmers. Rather than enforcing rigid thresholds based solely on income, OFB encourages a flexible approach that considers both the agricultural integrity of the operation and the economic sustainability of the farm business. This nuanced interpretation better supports farm viability, rural economic development, and farmland preservation goals that underpin Oregon's land-use planning system. Thus, farming should remain a foundational activity on properties hosting farm stands, but a strictly income-based test may be too rigid to accommodate agricultural diversity and fluctuating market conditions. OFB supports an approach that emphasizes farming's core role, but with sufficient flexibility allowing complementary activities to supplement farm income.

Counties should primarily ensure farming remains the core activity on properties hosting farm stands through flexible, farm-focused assessments that prioritize agricultural integrity and production practices rather than rigid economic thresholds. This approach involves periodic evaluations of agricultural activities, such as crop management, livestock presence, infrastructure investment, and contributions to local agriculture, reflecting the dynamic realities of Oregon farming. Counties should leverage adaptable local guidelines and qualitative measures that validate ongoing agricultural engagement and land use practices before resorting to IRS documentation, thus reserving financial compliance checks as a last resort when other clear, practical evidence is insufficient or unavailable.

2. *Activities that Promote Sale of Farm Products, the Farm Operation Itself, or Agriculture: What types of promotional events and activities may be authorized in conjunction with a farm stand instead of being authorized through an agritourism events permit or other process? Note that agri-tourism events not in association with a farm stand may be, and often are, permitted under the standards for 'agri-tourism and other commercial events' (ORS 215.213(11)/215.283(4)). This is a different use that the Legislature added to the exclusive farm use zone statutes in 2011.*

Promotional events and activities associated directly with farm stand operations should be broadly interpreted to include those that authentically promote, educate, and enhance the connection between consumers and agriculture. OFB recommends

clearly authorizing events such as farm tours, educational workshops, product demonstrations, harvest celebrations, tasting events featuring farm-produced goods, and limited-scale farm-to-table experiences directly linked to the agricultural production on the farm. These promotional activities should clearly complement and support farm product sales at farm stands, thereby enhancing farm viability without necessitating more burdensome agritourism permits. The distinction should focus on the direct and functional linkage of the promotional activity to the farm's primary agricultural products and its operations rather than rigid, one-size-fits-all criteria or overly prescriptive definitions. To ensure clarity, counties may provide interpretative guidelines and decision-making tools to help farmers understand what qualifies as promotional versus commercial or entertainment-focused activities. Such tools and guidelines would aid compliance without resorting to restrictive or complicated permitting processes, fostering operational creativity and economic adaptability for farms. This balanced approach maintains agricultural primacy while enabling flexibility crucial to Oregon farmers' economic sustainability and innovation in the face of ongoing market and environmental uncertainties.

3. *Promotional Activities Outside and Inside Farm Stand Structures: A farmstand may not include structures for banquets, public gatherings or public entertainment. Where on the property may promotional events occur?*

OFB supports a flexible interpretation regarding the physical locations for promotional activities on farm stand properties, provided they directly relate to promoting and enhancing farm product sales. Rather than strictly limiting promotional events to existing farm stand structures, OFB advocates for clearly allowing promotional activities to occur in suitable, temporary, and non-permanent structures such as tents, seasonal canopies, or modest open-air setups, located appropriately throughout the property to authentically enhance the agricultural experience and promote the farm's products and agricultural practices. Such structures should align with the farm's rural context and not become venues primarily intended for unrelated public entertainment or large-scale commercial events. Counties should ensure that the siting of these temporary and flexible event spaces minimizes adverse impacts on agricultural operations, public health, safety, and neighboring farms, while not unduly burdening farm businesses with restrictive regulatory constraints or rigid facility requirements. This balanced approach respects the statute's intent—preventing dedicated permanent banquet halls or entertainment venues—while realistically accommodating the practical and economic needs of farms to utilize diverse and adaptable spaces on their property for legitimate farm-promoting activities and consumer engagement. This interpretation supports local flexibility, agricultural viability, and farmer adaptability to evolving economic challenges, market dynamics, and environmental conditions.

4. *Prepared Foods with a Direct Tie to the Farm Operation or the Local Agricultural Area: To what extent may prepared foods and beverages be offered at a farm stand?*

OFB supports clear, flexible rules allowing farm stands to offer prepared foods and beverages, significantly benefiting agricultural economic viability while preserving the integrity of EFU zoning. OFB advocates specifically that any prepared foods and beverages substantially derived from agricultural commodities produced on the farm should not count toward the statutory 25% income cap. Items like baked goods, juices, salads, milkshakes, sandwiches, and similar farm-linked prepared foods—when featuring ingredients sourced from the farm itself—should be encouraged and clearly distinguished from other non-farm sourced products subject to income limits. To avoid ambiguity and simplify enforcement, OFB supports aligning the definitions of prepared foods with existing laws and/or standards.

In fact, a strong argument could be made that collaboration among Oregon farms for the collective benefit of Oregon agriculture should be encouraged and not included in the 25% limitation. In this scenario, increased agriculture-based economic activity from enhanced direct-to-consumer marketing would simultaneously strengthen multiple farms. This practical approach enables farm stands to further diversify their revenue streams, respond dynamically to market demands more effectively, create additional value, thereby directly supporting OFB's goal of maintaining Oregon farms' economic sustainability and adaptability. The ultimate outcome is more robust protection of Oregon's farmland through a stronger agricultural-based economy.

5. *Impacts on Neighboring Farms: Should counties consider impacts to neighboring farms or forest operations from a farm stand operation as part of the permitting review process?*

OFB recognizes the essential balance needed between fostering farm economic viability and ensuring harmony among neighboring agricultural and forestry operations. Given that farm stands are categorized as outright permitted ("sub 1") uses within EFU zones, OFB understands the existing statutory constraints limiting counties' ability to perform formal impact assessments. However, OFB strongly encourages counties to proactively consider practical impacts on neighboring agricultural or forestry operations—such as increased traffic, parking challenges, noise, or other disturbances—and work collaboratively with farm stand operators and neighboring agricultural landowners to mitigate these impacts through clear communication, mediation, and creative local solutions. Rather than imposing restrictive requirements or burdensome formal permitting processes, OFB supports a flexible approach, empowering local, working agricultural communities to develop tailored strategies that support neighborly cooperation and operational compatibility while preserving the core agricultural function of EFU lands. This balanced, community-oriented method emphasizes local empowerment, agricultural creativity, and economic adaptability, ultimately promoting sustainable, vibrant agricultural communities throughout Oregon.

In closing, the Oregon Farm Bureau appreciates the opportunity to actively engage in this critical rulemaking process to modernize farm stand and agritourism regulations. OFB remains committed to a regulatory framework that balances necessary protections for agricultural lands with pragmatic flexibility, economic sustainability, and innovative opportunities vital to Oregon's diverse and evolving agricultural sector. Farm stands uniquely empower farmers by enabling them to directly set their own prices, allowing greater control over profitability, and helping them to better manage volatile market conditions and economic uncertainty. By emphasizing local empowerment, clear yet adaptable rules, and proactive neighborly cooperation, OFB believes these updated standards will meaningfully support farm viability and community vibrancy statewide, fulfilling the foundational goals of Oregon's celebrated land use planning system established in 1973. We look forward to continued collaboration to ensure Oregon's farm stands and agritourism enterprises can thrive sustainably for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Krabill', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ryan Krabill
Oregon Farm Bureau