Recommendations

1. **Supportive Financing for Agritourism:**
   One of the most paramount challenges faced by agritourism operators is access to funds provided by financial institutions. Such challenges maybe occurring due to the financial institutions themselves having limited knowledge of benefits and values of agritourism as a whole. The other challenge is that the farmers are not aware of the framework of how to approach financial institutions. The recommended strategy would be to educate farmers about the types of financial schemes and programs available to start an agritourism venture.

   On the other hand, there is a need to educate financial institutions about the benefits of the agrarian sector and agritourism business. In addition, workshops should be organized to build relationships between financial institutions and farmers.

2. **Recognition of Agritourism as an industry:**
   Although the diversity and number of agritourism ventures is growing in India, the recognition of agritourism potential is limited. Rather than a state support, it’s evident that individual farmers are nurturing the agritourism ventures. Such farmers can be declared as members of regional tourism associations in order to participate in broader agritourism marketing initiatives.

   An indirect support to agritourism is being provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. This is in the form wherein they are running schemes such as small farmers finance scheme, building farm water lakes, drip irrigation, food processing finance support, etc. Another indirect support is by Ministry of Rural Development, Tourism and Culture in the form of running a clean village scheme and the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation running the Mahabrahman Scheme and the Bed and Breakfast scheme.
Recommendations

The recommended strategy would be to develop a central body like Indian Agritourism Council (IAC), which can act as a central body coordinating product development, and also marketing and training all agritourism initiatives in India. A combination of Public and Private sector of agricultural and tourism representatives active nationwide could guide the IAC in its activities.

3. Establishment of Product and Quality Service Standards:
Consumers travelling to agritourism spots, just like any other consumers are concerned with getting proper value for their money. Thus, it is necessary for establishment of accurate product and quality service standards that can be delivered consistently. The major challenges visible are lack of information on traveller expectations of agritourism product quality, lack of awareness of meeting expectations for product quality standards, and lack of awareness of parity in pricing and its relationship with quality standards.

The recommended strategy would be to establish quality standards. For e.g. meeting health standards, quality of food and beverages served, etc could be formulated in the form of “Codes of Conduct” being followed by various hospitality and tourism bodies such as FHRAI and the Indian Hotel Industry.

4. Strategic Alliances:
A strategic alliance is when two or more businesses join together for a set period of time. The businesses, usually, are not in direct competition, but have similar products or services that are directed toward the same target audience (Dussauge, Garrette & Mitchell, 2000).

To enjoy the benefits of mutual benefits, organizations can attempt to capitalize on advantages of creating strategic alliances. Such partnerships could be formed with the public as well as private sector. Such strategic alliances have benefits of pooling resources for a common goal and could be beneficial in reducing risks, cooperative competition, improve market image, or even to have a barter system of exchange by providing information or products in exchange for expertise.
The best example to support this way a program started by Singapore Tourism which is called Product Club Program under which small and medium business have been clubbed together to create strategic alliances in tourism sectors related to festivals and events, skiing and snowboarding, golfing, bed and breakfast accommodation, ecotourism, health spas, and themed food and beverage business.

Similarly, there could be encouragement in fostering development of partnership between agritourism and other tourism businesses at the regional level. Using internet as a tool, there could be facilitation of networking of ideas and information between researchers and farmers.

5. **Adding Agritourism as a subject in Agriculture Colleges:**

As per ICAR website there are 4 state agriculture universities, there are the 18 government/aided colleges having a total capacity of 1952 seats for BSc Agriculture course under these 4 universities, and 74 private agriculture colleges affiliated to one of the four state agricultural universities offering BSc (Agriculture) in Maharashtra, having 7470 seats. To ensure that the farmer has awareness of agritourism, the subject should be included in the agriculture colleges through the 4 universities.

The best example here would be the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) of Philippines, under the Ministry of Agriculture, encourages farmers in adopting agritourism. ATI also organizes training to those individuals who are interested to develop and manage agri/farm tourism projects in their respective areas. In China, the Agricultural Management Institute under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) organises training for officials in charge of agricultural departments from national agritourism demonstration counties and representatives of MoA.

Source:
6. **Appropriate Marketing of Agritourism:**

As agriculture falls under the primary sector and tourism, which is a service, falls under the tertiary sector, the farmer will lack the experience of marketing a service business. Even the best managed agritourism can be unsuccessful without the function of marketing.

The recommended strategy would be to develop marketing material to support the image of Indian farm experiences and distributed to consumers. There should be a provision of media avenues that individual farmer and agritourism associations can use to reach a wider market-place. The tourist information centres could play a major role in creating awareness of regional agritourism venues through the brochures and other materials like guides, etc. distributed by them. Similarly, communication channels can be developed between agritourism operators and consumers via well designed websites. An example of a well-designed agritourism website is [www.agritourism.in](http://www.agritourism.in).

7. **Appropriate Framework of Policies and Regulations for Agritourism:**

As of now, there is no clear understanding by all Government bodies as to how the existing policies and regulations are impacting agritourism operations. There is a lacuna about any policy which can define the requirements and size of facilities and the use of land for agritourism activities. There is limited awareness and understanding of existing agritourism policies and regulations amongst farmers. As well, many farmers are unaware of how to obtain information on these regulations and how to apply them to their specific operations.

The recommended strategies for the above challenge would be to identify a central advocate for the industry. It has been suggested earlier to form a body like Indian Agritourism Council to formulate the regulations and policies at a nationwide level. Formation of a central body will have an advantage as it can work as mediator between the agritourism businesses and other Government bodies such as ministries, regional districts, municipalities, Land Reserve Commission, etc.