Introduction:

Agriculture is a most important occupation in the India including in Maharashtra. But today it has becomes unprofitable due the irregular monsoon, prices fluctuations of Agro-products and some internal weakness of the agriculture sector. Hence, there is need to do some innovative activities in the agriculture, which will help to farmers, rural peoples.

Agritourism represents a significant form of strategy that supports the rural communities and enhancing the sustainable rural development. Over the years, technology has changed the nature of business transactions between the consumers and suppliers of goods and services. As within any other industry, changes driven by technology pose a major challenge in agritourism especially to farmers that do not have access to and knowledge about available technologies in agritourism.

It is generally known that, tourism is one of the biggest economic sectors in the world. Travelling to some other parts of the world is gaining more importance because of various reasons; therefore, several effective changes are taking place in the supply of tourism sector all over the world. Although some broad definitions of the term tourism imply the explanations including the definitions about the leisure activities; the sector has evolved from the primary traveling activities to today’s contemporary popular facilities in recent years through the new demands.

Agri-tourism is a business venture located on a working farm, ranch, or agricultural enterprise that provides an “experience” for visitors while generating supplemental income for the owner.

Experiences provided to visitors usually take the form of educational or entertainment discovery and learning in a nature or agricultural based environment. For this reason, agri-tourism is also referred to as “agri-entertainment” and “agro-tourism.”

The history of agri-tourism dates back to the late 1800’s when people began leaving the city to come to farms to visit relatives for short stays to escape the
city life. After the invention of the automobile in the 1920’s it became easier for people to travel to the rural areas. In the 1930’s and 1940’s, the Great Depression and World War II gave rise to the first significant interest in rural recreation. In the 1960’s and 1970’s horseback riding and farm petting zoos became popular. In the 1980’s and 1990’s, farm vacations, overnight stays at bed and breakfasts, and commercial farm tours became popular. Today, the demand continues to grow for agri-tourism.

1.1 Forms of Agritourism:

Horseback riding; Wildlife viewing & photography; Fee fishing; Camping/picnicking; Fee hunting; Wagon rides; School tours; Garden/nursery tours; Winery tours; Agricultural exhibits; Game preserve; Skeet shooting; Exotic farm animals; On farm sales; Roadside stand; Agriculture related crafts; U-pick operations; Festivals/fairs; Petting zoo; Hunting/working dog trials/training; Farm/ranch vacations; B & B’s; Guest ranch; Youth camp; Farmer’s market; Bird watching; Christmas tree farms; Guided crop tours; Hay bale maze; Corn maze; Pony rides; Hiking trails; Packing trips; Pumpkin patch.

Benefits of Agri-tourism:

Agri-tourism can provide many benefits to the agricultural producer. It can provide:

- Cash flow during the off season.
- Opportunity to sell the “experience” of your agricultural venue.
- Opportunity to sell products grown and harvested in your agricultural operation.
- Opportunity to share your passion of agriculture with others.

The necessities such as health; education; sports organizations; religion; shopping; trade and so on are providing new directions to tourism sector through the possibilities of globalization of knowledge and more efficient traveling facilities. Reviewing literature about the tourism sector demonstrates the changes in traveling attitude; decrease in the seasonality feature of tourism and ‘active holidays depending on culture; nature; traditional way of life have become the objectives of new tourists’ (Tezcan; 2004) and the economic; social
and environmental impacts on the area where the tourism activity taking place in. Increase in tourist demands on nature-based areas leads to be served more tourism activities day by day and this situation leads the governments benefit from this increasing actual tourism tendency in a conservative manner; because the demand causes damages on the nature; in other words on the tourism products. Since tourism sector is one of the crucial instruments for the economic growth; especially in the developing countries; it tends to describe and develop various types of tourism activities; and plan them whether at global; national or regional

**Baramati District of Maharashtra State** is a tourism paradise. It is one of the favourite travel destinations in India. It is endowed with an abundance of tourism resources of considerable diversity.

However; agritourism sector of the country is in its initial stage. Only a few agritourism destinations are operating at present with general facilities and services. With the remarkable increase in the interest surrounding the concept of agritourism of other countries is influencing the development of agritourism in **Baramati District of Maharashtra State**. It is a suitable destination for agritourism. It has diverse agro-climatic conditions suitable for growing different types of crops; fruits; vegetables and trees.

Nevertheless; farmers are simple and hospitable. Sri Lankan villages and farms can offer unique experiences including local food and accommodation. Rural areas are rich with traditional things and cultural activities. Thus agritourism can cater to a niche market of agritourists.

Agriculture industry specifically in India is at the crossroad of a new revolution. The entire food chain is supposed to be modernized and the production is expected to be doubled in the coming 10 years. Apart from domestic demand; this industry brings in huge export prospects. At present agri-business may involve either an input or a product or service and encompasses items such as:

1. Productive resources (feed; seed; fertilizer; equipment; energy; pesticides; machinery; etc.)

2. Agricultural commodities – (raw and processed commodities of food and fiber)
3. Facilitative services (credit; insurance; marketing; storage; processing; transportation; packing; distribution; consultancy; soil testing etc.).

There are several evidences for agritourism contribution for rural development from various countries. Not only in developed countries; researches in developing countries have also discovered many findings regarding this phenomenon as agritourism has the ability to open up alternative income sources for the farmers as well as for the surrounding community. As it is a people-oriented industry; agritourism can offer many jobs which can help to revive rural economies. Agritourism has different ways and means of assisting rural development and has ability to influence the economic; socio-cultural and environmental enhancement of some societies.

Urban population is increasing day by day in Maharashtra; today the urban people’s world is restricted in the closed door flats; offices; clubs; television; video games; spicy fast food; computer; internet; and so on. Moreover; some people living in the cities do not have relatives in villages and they never visited or stayed in villages.

Agritourism; farm tourism or agricultural tourism is the process of attracting visitors and travelers to agricultural areas; generally for educational and recreational purposes (Lamb; 2008; Veeck et al. 2006). Because of economic difficulties and changes in the farming and livestock industries in many countries in the world; many farmers especially those who have small-scale; family-owned farms have understood the necessity of supplement their agricultural business model and find new ways of generating income. Agritourism can contribute to the overall income; cash flow and profitability of a farm by providing alternative income via farm products; and farming activities (Colton and Bissix; 2005; Huybers; 2007; Keith et al. 2003; Sharply; 2002).

Further; agritourism can also be explained as a holiday concept of visiting an agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment; education or involvement in the activities of the operation. Therefore; agritourism may be any form of farm-based tourism operation that provides economic benefit to the farm owner(s) and provides on-farm entertainment; activity; or product for the visitor. Normally; agritourism is small-scale; low-impact and in most cases; it is mainly
focused on education (Wicks; and Merrett; 2003; Wall; 2006). Often the farmers would provide farm-stay opportunities including educational programs and recreational activities (Nilsson; 2002; Weaver and Fennell; 1997). Small diversified farms may very much suitable for agritourism. Unlike the large-scale farms which produce bulk commodities; the small farm can recreate an earlier; simpler and human-scale vision of farming. The main qualification for the rural farmer who expects to make a living from the land through agritourism is the willingness and the ability to cater to visitors and meet their expectations of a farm visit (Nuntsu; et. al; 2004; Adam; 2004). Currently; more visitors than ever are enjoying at the diverse opportunities provided by agritourism; as the distance between the production and consumption of agricultural products grow (Lamb; 2008; Sharplay and Vass; 2006). Visitors are highly interested to know how crops are cultivated and livestock are raised. Moreover; they want to remember the traditional agricultural practices as well.

**Important advantages of agritourism are**

1) The ability to bring the main primary industry (agriculture) and the major service sector (tourism) together; by creating win-win situation for both sectors;

2) Enhancing the possibility of the enlargement of the tourism sector and

3) The ability to absorb the expanding tourism sector (Singh; 2007).

Moreover; scope of the agritourism in the present context can be summarized as providing an inexpensive gateway for all the categories of visitors; giving solutions for the curiosity about the farming and farm life; meeting the increasing demand for wholesome family oriented recreational activities; provision of health conscious nature friendly tourism opportunities; providing a peaceful tranquility; interesting and natural tourism place for the visitors; and facilitating less crowded original conditions in rural areas for visitors to enjoy and be aware farming activities (Singh; 2007; Roberts and Hall; 2001). Many agritourism activities need only a small team of farm labors in order to be successful. For example; farm tours; farm stay with bed and breakfast; tractor or bullock cart rides; picking of grapes; mangoes; and other horticulture items; farm zoos; and many other activities may be operated with little additional
expenditure on labor (Agritourism Development Organization in India; 2008; Taware; 2009).

According to Griver; (2009); agricultural tourism is a global trend which provides city dwellers an opportunity to escape from urban concrete environment and re-discover their roots in rural areas with farming. Furthermore; visiting farmers; agronomists and other agricultural experts can evaluate worldwide developments in agriculture which have been highly influenced by modern agricultural technology and management (School of Travel Industry Management; 2007). Agritourism and ecotourism are closely related; but; in reality agritourism is farm attractions; which visitors are encouraged to partake in farming and agricultural activities; while ecotourism seems to have been green washed by the tour companies (Crete; 2009).

Based on the above literature; agritourism is an important alternative for rural farmers including small-scale farmers in many countries of the world; as an extra source of income. There should be basic facilities to start and operate an agritourism destination and it has ability to generate lots of benefits for the owner and the surrounding community. However; as the economic; socio-cultural; environmental; geographical conditions are varying country to country; country wise analysis of the feasibility of agritourism development is an important attempt to understand the reality of application of agritourism in Maharashtra.

These people want to enjoy rural life but there is problem of such type of facilities. Hence; it is opportunity to the farmers for development of the agrotourism centers and serve him and create additional income source.

Tourism is now well recognised as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled.

Today the concept of traditional tourism has been changed. Some new areas of the tourism have emerged like Agritourism. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people.

Agritourism is an innovative agricultural activity related to tourism and agriculture both. It has a great capacity to create additional source of income
and employment opportunities to the farmers. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centers in the India and there is large scope and great potential to develop agro-tourism.

Sustainable rural development is predicated upon locally created wealth and a diversity of profitable enterprises that can collectively weather our cyclical economy (Honadle 1990). While some may argue that the external costs of certain rural industries; such as mining; are too high to justify their pursuit; tourism is often touted as a “green” industry that is easy to develop and which quickly yields results (Frederick 1995). To the extent tourism development is incremental; uses existing resources; is not massively intrusive; nor the cause of severe environmental damage; the former statement is generally true. Thus; it is very likely that agritourism development in the Midwest can be successfully be integrated into local economies; environments; and rural lifestyles without great disruption.

Agritourism has no longer remained local in nature. It has the potential to attract the customers from all over the world. Globalization has thrown open many avenues providing lots of opportunities for this industry to flourish. As Butler et al. (1998) note economic and social forces operating at the global level are determining both the nature and of the rural landscape and how we value and use it. These changes; coupled with new ideas and approaches to leisure and recreation time are encouraging tourism development in rural areas at an ever increasing pace (Williams 1998; Reid et al. 2000). Rural tourism development in areas not traditionally considered tourism destinations per se occurs incrementally; either as a result of entrepreneurs developing businesses that attract visitors or as a result of visitors discovering the area and thereby generating a demand for tourism related activities to which local entrepreneurs respond. The development of tourism in a rural area is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability.

India is known as “Land of villages”. More than 77 crore farmers live in 5.5 lakhs of village (2001). Agriculture contributed about 18.5% of the national income (2006-07) as compared to a high 50% in 1950. 85% of population of India still
depends on Agriculture hence; Agriculture is not mere business; but is still the “True Culture of India”.

Today; the Indian Agriculture has to face tremendous competition because of the driven global trends. To add to this the agriculture crop growth is also weakened due to the uncertain climatic conditions. There is no minimum support price guarantee also. These changes have altered the form and practices of farming operation. Farmers are looking beyond traditional farming to generate income via various forms of direct on farm marketing and farm based non-agriculture business.

The Indian Tourism sector contributes 5.3 percent of India’s GDP 2006-07. The tourism industry shows that India had 367 million domestic tourists and 3.92 million international tourists. The Forex earnings from the tourism industry were 25,000 crores. The tourism industry created 38.8 million direct and indirect jobs. The tourism trend shows as per the 10th five year plan Indian government spent over Rs.2900 crores in the five years to boost the growth in this sector. It is also seen that domestic tourism has displayed greater buoyancy and resilience. The centre committed to contribute 765 crores for the state tourism development.

“It (Tourism) is the largest service industry in the country. Its importance lies in being an instrument for economic development and employment generation; particularly in the remote and backward areas”- Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-08 to 2011-12)

As a form of economic and community development; agritourism has a very strong and widespread appeal to agencies and governments. Unlike locating a processing plant where communities fiercely compete to attract industrial development; agritourism can actually provide a win-win scenario for many communities throughout the state that are willing to work collaboratively. There is very good reason to believe that agritourism enterprises could benefit similarly.

The climate in Baramati District; Maharashtra State is tropical and monsoonal; but varies from warm in the coastal plains and low lands to temperate in the hills and mountain regions (Atlapedia online; 2010). Baramati District; Maharashtra State’s economy has traditionally been dominated by agriculture. It produces
various plantation crops; including tea; rubber; coconut; cocoa and spices for the export market. However; it is presently undergoing diversification as other sectors; such as manufacturing; are also making significant progress. The agriculture sector constituted 12.6% of GDP in 2010 and provided employment to about 32.7% of the labor force (World Factbook; 2011). An estimated 1.8 million families are engaged in farming. In Baramati District; Maharashtra State; agriculture is dominated by smallholders as over 64% of the farming families cultivate holdings of less than 0.8 hectares. Around 40% of the cultivated area is occupied by plantation crops; tea; rubber and coconut (UNESCAP; 2006). Out of the total land area of 6.5 million hectares 1.5 million (24 %) are recognized as agricultural land; 13.96% of the land is arable; 15.24% is used for permanent crops and 70.8% for other uses (Department of Census & Statistics; 2006). Baramati District; Maharashtra State is considered as a valuable repository of crop germplasm and agro-biodiversity. It has a rich treasure of rice genes and over 2;800 varieties have been recorded in the country. Besides rice; germplasm of the country is also rich in cereals; legumes; bananas and other fruit crops; root and tuber crops; medicinal plants; leafy and other vegetables; spice crops etc. Selection and cultivation of crop plants over several thousands of years by various traditional and modern farming practices and the country’s eco-edaphic variability are two reasons for high genetic diversity of crops in Baramati District; Maharashtra State (Living Heritage Trust of Baramati District; Maharashtra State (2009). Moreover; Baramati District; Maharashtra State has started organic farming which is having a very high attention of the health concerned consumers. According to IFOAM & FiBL (2006); there are 15;215 hectares of land under organic management; with a share of total agricultural land of 0.65% and a presence of around 3;300 organic farms. According to UNESCAP (2006); Baramati District; Maharashtra State is one of the major organic producers in Asia and one of the leading sources of organic tea. The organic market in the country has been described as a “niche market” (International trade centre; 2008). A number of organic products are increasingly being sold in major supermarkets. The main certified organic products are tea; desiccated coconut; cashew nuts; spices (cinnamon; cardamom; nutmeg; pepper; clove and ginger); fruits (mango; papaya and
passion fruit); and herbs (citronella and lemon grass). Most of these organic products are exported.

**1.2 Agritourism in Baramati District; Maharashtra State**

Baramati District; Maharashtra State is a tourist’s paradise. It is one of the favorite travel destinations in India. It is endowed with an abundance of tourism resources of considerable diversity; including beaches along its coastal line; natural/ecological and wildlife attractions; indigenous culture; Buddhist heritage. From the beginning Baramati District; Maharashtra State has enjoyed a growing number of visitors and gradual growth in the tourism industry.

Only a few agritourism destinations are operating at present with general facilities and services. With the remarkable increase in the interest surrounding the concept of agritourism of other countries is influencing the development of agritourism in Baramati District; Maharashtra State. It has diverse agro-climatic conditions suitable for growing different types of crops; fruits; vegetables and trees. Baramati District; Maharashtra State’s complex paddy cultivation systems (developed over the course of 2500 years); huge very old irrigation tanks; many tea and rubber plantations; milking cattle on dairy farms; having a go at plucking tea leaves using the traditional ‘bag-on-the-head’ method; rubber tapping under expert guidance; or even working in many scenic paddy fields (engaging ploughing using bullocks; work on paddy nurseries; transplanting seedlings in muddy fields) of Baramati District; Maharashtra State are just some examples of its diverse agricultural developments of the country (Advisory panel on community based sustainable tourism in Baramati District; Maharashtra State; 2008).

Nevertheless; farmers are simple and hospitable. Baramati District; Maharashtra Statern villages and farms can offer unique experiences including local food and accommodation. Rural areas are rich with traditional things and cultural activities. Thus agritourism can cater to a niche market of agritourists.

**1.3 Location for the Agritourism centre**

Location is most important factor for success in the agro-tourism. The location of the centre must easy to arrive and have a good natural background. Urban
tourists are interested into enjoying the nature and rural life. So; farmers should develop their centre in the rural areas only which have a beautiful natural background to attract urban tourist in your farm. The place of agro-tourism centre must be easily accessible by roads and railways.

**1.4 Benefits of Agritourism Centers**

Agritourism has the potential to change the economic face of traditional agriculture. The benefits of agritourism development are manifold. It would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the farmers and rural people. Some of the benefits are following:-

- Employment opportunities to the farmers including farm family members and youth
- Additional income source for the farmers to protest against income fluctuation.
- Cultural transformation between urban and rural people including social moral values
- Farmers can improve their standard of living due to the contacts with urban people.
- Benefits to the urban people; they can understand about the rural life and know about the agricultural activities.
- It supports for rural and agricultural development process.
- Help to the reduce burden on the other traditional tourist centres.

**1.5 Defining Agritourism:**

The Agricultural Perspective Agritourism is a hybrid concept that merges elements of two complex industries—agriculture and travel/tourism—to open up new profitable markets for farm products and services and provide travel experiences for a large regional market. Although a single definition of agritourism is not widely recognized; it is at the intersection of a number of important marketing and economic development concepts that are circulating today. Agritourism is unlikely to be the dominant sector of agriculture in most
areas of Illinois; but it may play a significant support role for many agricultural enterprises.

**Agritourism**, as it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally-based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. Agritourism has different definitions in different parts of the world; and sometimes refers specifically to farm stays; as in Italy. Elsewhere; agritourism includes a wide variety of activities; including buying produce direct from a farm stand; navigating a corn maze; picking fruit; feeding animals; or staying at a B&B on a farm.

The Tourism Perspective In the simplest terms; tourism development is about selling goods and services to people (travelers) not from the local market area. Marketing; promoting; and providing a distribution system for agricultural products within one’s local market is challenging enough; but when customers or potential customers reside far away; the challenges multiply. Although attracting travelers is difficult; the opportunity to reach out to large and potentially lucrative new markets can be substantial for the agritourism entrepreneur.

An agritourism business can be defined as any person; farm; or corporation actively engaged in the operation; management; or promotion of an agriculturally-related tourism business open to the public.

**1.6 Difference between Agritourism and Traditional Tourism**

Agritourism is also a tourism business but it is different from the common tourism because it has a base of agriculture and rural lifestyle. Generally; tourism was provided to see and enjoy the natural places as well as some heritages. But; agritourism has a tourism with includes experience; education and cultural transformation. It is very special from general tourism in the following manner:

- It provides pollution and noise free sites for travel and tourism as rural background.
- The cost of food; accommodation; recreation and travel is minimum in agritourism
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- Agritourism can satisfy the curiosity of urban people about sources of food; plants; animals; and industrial agro-raw materials.
- It provides information about the rural handicrafts; languages; culture; tradition; dresses and lifestyle.
- A family environment at the tourist place; is one of the most important characteristics in agritourism
- In agritourism; tourists not only see and watch agriculture farms but also they can participate in the agricultural activities and experience farming.
- It provides natural situations to watching birds; animals; water bodies; etc
- Agritourism could create awareness about rural life and knowledge about agriculture

It also provides opportunity for education through experience of farming and knowledge about the rural life including entertainment. Agritourism is an instrument of urban-rural connectivity through the tours.

1.7 Promotion of Agritourism in Maharashtra

Agriculture business is becoming more unsecured in Maharashtra due to the irregular monsoon; unsecured product prices. Many farmers cannot afford it and have a problem of indebtedness. Due to the agricultural problems some farmers are committed to suicide in various districts of Maharashtra. More than 29;000 farmers committed suicide between 1997 and 2005 in Maharashtra; official data show; no other state comes close to that total. Hence; there is need of start any of allied agri-business to support their farming and create allied income source from farm.

In order to encourage farmers for establish small and viable agro-business activity; such as agritourism. It offers several potential benefits to farm operators. It can help supplement income generation activity while providing an opportunity to more fully employ assets; including farm household members.

Maharashtra has a great potential of agritourism due to the beautiful natural site and basic infrastructures.
Agritourism development can take a number of different forms; from complete destinations to attractions serving in ancillary or supporting roles in a broader package of area travel destinations. For the agritourism entrepreneur; this means that their level of involvement can range from small to very large in terms of investment in time and money.

The all-encompassing enterprise could be a permanent facility or a special event. In either case; there is a need to create markets and promote the stand-alone destinations with programmed activities and unique attractions as well as travel services such as restrooms; safe parking; and food services that appeal to visitors. A temporary attraction; such as a special event (like the Sula wine festival; held every year in February; in Nashik; Maharashtra; since 2010); may also serve the travel industry well. In rural areas without infrastructure; short-duration events that depend on temporary structures can be huge attractions. Special events are very appealing to rural areas because they can generate the drawing power for travelers but do not need the sustained services and labor that might not otherwise be available. An agritourism entrepreneur may also consider how he or she could become a small part of a larger attraction.

An example of a multi-attraction agricultural destination might be farmers working together to each offer different agricultural products and experiences for the traveler. By working together; they can create a larger; more attractive destination that will have greater drawing power and presumably generate more profits for everyone. The goal of that area would be to position itself as an agritourism destination Conversely; an area known for a different type of tourism experience could benefit from new agritourism attractions that offered more in the way of diversity for the visitor.

1.8 Agritourism Abroad

Agritourism is a form of niche tourism that is considered a growth industry in many parts of the world; including Australia; Canada; the United States; and the Philippines. Other terms associated with agritourism are "agritainment"; "value added products"; "farm direct marketing" and "sustainable agriculture".

According the USDA Cooperative State; Education and Extension Service; "Tourism is becoming increasingly important to the U.S. economy. A
conservative estimate from the Federal Reserve Board in Kansas; based on 2000 data; shows that basic travel and tourism industries accounted for 3.6 percent of all U.S. employment.

Through the Small Farm Center at the University of California; "Agricultural tourism or agritourism; is one alternative for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities. Some forms of agritourism enterprises are well developed in California; including fairs and festivals. Other possibilities still offer potential for development". The UC Small Farm Center has developed a California Agritourism Database that "provides visitors and potential entrepreneurs with information about existing agritourism locations throughout the state".

At the foundation of marketing is the need to give the consumer what he or she wants for a mutually agreed upon price. Although many people involved in agritourism continue to focus on the commodity grown or raised; or the activity participated in; the real issue is fulfilling the motives of the traveler. It might surprise those with a product orientation that; in many cases; the cost of the product sold to the traveler is almost irrelevant. A family going to a fall pumpkin patch is likely to buy a jack-o-lantern or gourd but what they really purchased was a family experience.

And the real value of that experience may far exceed the cost of the pumpkins. Not only is that grower benefiting from direct farm marketing by selling at retail prices or above; but they are not competing with other producers on price.

1.9 Concept Marketing Agritourism

Farm Products + Visits Lodging Recreation Agritourism Transportation Retail Food + Hospitality is almost foreign to most agricultural producers who routinely study wholesale prices and futures markets.

An old marketing adage is that people buy benefits not products. The possible benefits provided to tourists from agritourism enterprises are vast. What is most important; though; is the value of those experiences to people. Can we even place a dollar value on a hunting experience between a parent and their son or daughter; or an annual family trek to the Christmas tree farm? Agritourism attractions can provide convenient; safe; educational; and fun family
experiences for the millions of Midwestern residents and out-of-state or international visitors who pass through Illinois annually.

To make an agritourism marketing plan work; it is vital to understand what travelers do and why they travel. An appealing part of tourism development is that many economic sectors may benefit; not just a specific destination. This fact is important when seeking partnerships or assistance from agencies and other businesses. For example; Chicagoans may visit a farm in Central or Southern Illinois and; during that excursion; they may purchase fuel for their vehicle; stop at unrelated attractions; make retail purchases; and stop for meals.

Possible Travel Expenditures from Agritourism This complex purchasing pattern in tourism is positive insofar as a diverse set of businesses and individuals can benefit. That form of community development is more likely to be sustainable than those that are firm specific; however; with the benefits of diverse economic benefits come significant challenges that will need to be overcome. When benefits accrue to many parties; some serious organizational issues arise. There would be unanimous support for saying that a visit to a farm retail operation by persons on a leisure trip from a distant state would be an example of agritourism; however; two large issues emerge that cause some confusion. The first is how to recognize the many small contributions agritourism can make to multiple markets. The second is how or if outdoor recreation activities are considered to be agritourism.

The traveling public's role in agritourism can be almost imperceptible at times. For example; if someone who was visiting friends or relatives in your community stopped at the local farmer's market; who would even know their contribution was made as a tourist? Another example of a hidden contribution might be a restaurant that serves locally raised beef on their menu. To what extent does that restaurant serve tourists? It is also quite conceivable that a single crop could be sold a number of ways to different markets. For example; fruit can be sold at a roadside stand (direct marketing with considerable tourist participation); at a farmer's market (direct marketing with low tourist participation); to a restaurant (discounted direct marketing with variable tourist participation); through a U-pick program (direct marketing with high tourist participation); through a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program (low
tourist participation); and any remainder can be sold on the wholesale market. The lesson from this example is that the nonlocal market can represent an important part of the coveted direct sales market.

In addition to the above examples; there are a range of agritourism and "agritainment" opportunities that might lure tourists into rural locales.

These opportunities may be divided into three broad categories:

(1) Crops;

(2) Livestock and Machinery and

(3) Facilities and Land use.

1.10 The Agritourism Product

Many farms particularly those with large acreages and varied soils and typography represent complex natural resource systems. The Sustainable Agriculture Movement and common sense suggest that the farm system be assessed to determine how that resource can be employed to generate the greatest profit while doing the least damage to the land and the farmer’s quality of life. In some cases; promoting fee hunting on part of one’s farmland may generate equal or greater revenues than using that same land if it is ill-suited to row crops. If we view the farm as a system; and recognize that fee-hunting enterprises require management; then logic suggests it is. Note that the hunter; bird watcher; mushroom picker; and any other outdoor recreation participant is now defined as a tourist.

1.11 Planning for a New Agritourism Enterprise: A Five-Step Process

i) Create an Idea. The starting point is to generate an idea for a new enterprise that has potential for travellers and other markets. New and creative ideas can be very difficult to generate; especially if one is not accustomed to thinking in those terms. Suggestions to help might include some or all of the following:

(1) Brainstorm with family members and trusted friends;
 Seek the advice of agricultural professionals in agencies such as Extension; Farm Bureau; Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA); or U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA);

Join new organizations like the Specialty Crop Growers or Direct Farm Marketing Association and read as much of their material as possible;

Look at travel literature for rural areas and see what others are doing; and don’t limit that search to Illinois; and

Hit the road. Go visit as many agritourism businesses as you can; and be sure to try and talk to the owners.

At this phase of the process; don’t be afraid of what might at first appear to be wild or crazy ideas. The goal is to generate as many thoughts as possible. One can always discard unworkable ones later.

ii) Do a business plan. You have heard that advice before and; without question; you must understand that this is the most vital step in the process. The business plan will help tell us if the great idea we have come up with will be profitable. That is the bottom line; and even if the answer to that question is “no” or “not likely;” remember that a decision to abort a business idea can be one of the best decisions you ever make. A “no-go” decision does not mean you can’t participate in agritourism; it just means that the idea you tested is not the best. It can be very difficult to give up that great idea when the numbers don’t look good; but a brutally honest evaluation is still the best approach. The business plan must also be written out rather than stored in our minds. Writing forces us to logically clarify and organize our thoughts and; besides; if you intended to borrow money for this enterprise; you will need the plan to present to your lender.

Business plans can be a fair amount of work; help is available; however. Sources of assistance include
(1) Step-by-step guides; books; and manuals;

(2) Websites such as the Small Business Administration’s;

(3) An array of educational institutions such as Southern Illinois University (2000); Western Illinois University (IIIRA 2003); University of Illinois Extension (Wicks 2001); and community colleges;

(4) Economic development and agricultural agencies; and

(5) Consultants.

iii) Examine your farm/land resources. If you have come up with a good idea and it has potential for positive Return on Investment (ROI); be sure your physical resources can deliver. For example; certain crops may need a particular soil type not present on your land; the habitat may not support wildlife for hunting or observing; the market may be too far away to expect visitation; or you may not have the necessary structures.

i. Conduct a risk assessment of your proposed agritourism endeavor. Depending on the type and location of an agritourism enterprise; there may be a range of liability; licensing; and zoning issues that must be addressed prior to inviting tourists onto your property. Here are some of the issues any potential agritourism operator should consider.

By their nature; farms are characterized by rugged landscapes; heavy machinery; unpredictable livestock; and toxic chemicals; among other health risks especially for small children (Jolly and Skidmore 2003).

Hence; farm operators should address potential safety problems to ensure that risks are minimized. For example; high risk areas should be cordoned off. Visitors should be warned to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Jolly and Skidmore also suggest that for some activities; such as horseback riding or hiking; operators should ask tourists to sign a “hold harmless agreement.” This is a statement that the tourist is willing to assume some responsibility for any
injuries incurred on the farm. Agritourism operators should also be prepared to administer first aid. Additionally they should investigate liability insurance given the potential that exists for injuries to occur on a farm.

In addition to liability issues; there are also logistical questions that must be addressed; including the provision of adequate parking; bathroom facilities; and shelter in the case of inclement weather. If prepared foods or cooking exhibits will be offered; appropriate local; state; and federal licenses and food safety issues must be addressed. In the case of snowmobiling and motorcycling; among other activities; operators should check to make sure that proposed activities do not violate local zoning ordinances. Some counties have rural zoning bylaws that may prohibit some activities; especially if the activities are loud or generate noxious odors. This list is merely suggestive; and operators are encouraged to seek professional advice if liability; licensing; or zoning questions arise.

ii. **Critically look at yourself and/or your team:** Is this something you really want to do? Having visitors on your farm on their terms or schedule may totally disrupt your lifestyle. New revenues can be great; but if you or your family are miserable as a result; is it worth it? In many cases; tasks we are not particularly well-suited for can be done by others. A family member or employee might assume that responsibility; you need not do it all alone. The big challenge with this step is admitting we may not have all the needed skills and having enough sense to know that we need help. A negative conclusion anywhere in this process means that we need to go back to a previous step or the beginning; make the necessary adjustments; and start again.

Although starting a new agritourism enterprise may appear to be a daunting endeavor; it should be recognized that the idea is not new and that there are many success stories from which to learn. As a result of numerous farm visits in Illinois and beyond; networking; and a review of related literature (Sharpley 2002); the following recommendations have emerged:
Agritourism represents an important means for diversifying the farm economy in Illinois and providing quality travel and recreation experiences. Affluent urban and suburban markets that have great untapped market potential surround many of our rural areas and farming centers. By most accounts; it is recognized that the demand for agritourism experiences exceeds supply. The pressures of foreign competition on row crop prices; the continued need for efficiency-driven consolidation of farms; the uncertainty about continued price supports; and the vagaries of international markets suggest that catering to the tourism market is a viable alternative for many farm families. Adequate levels of income are needed to sustain any farm and its operators. Hopefully; agritourism’s broad opportunities will help many achieve success in that domain. Many agritourism enterprises have helped restore the farm family as well as the values that have typically been associated with rural farm life for so long. Studies of many agritourism sites have demonstrated that these enterprises have fostered a family approach to the business where the farm wife again plays a key role and youth actively participate. Alternative cops; livestock; and land uses typically require labor and skills unrelated to mass farming practices.

Many in the agriculture sector lament the loss of public support for agribusiness in general and farmers in particular. Our highly efficient food production; processing and distribution systems have placed a vast gap between the grower and the consumer. It may take a generation or more; but new systems like agritourism and direct farm marketing will slowly rebuild those valuable connections between rural and urban populations and the result can’t be anything but positive.

Entrepreneurship is at the heart of the farm economy. Determination to succeed has driven farmers to amazing accomplishments for generations. Yet; today; the control many farmers have over their enterprises has been taken over by the actions of multinational corporations; domestic policymakers; and foreign governments. The kind of enterprises supported by agritourism keeps control where it belongs—with the farmer.
1.12 Public awareness

People have become more interested in how their food is produced. They want to meet farmers and processors and talk with them about what goes into food production. For many people who visit farms; especially children; the visit marks the first time they see the source of their food; be it a dairy cow; an ear of corn growing in a field; or an apple they can pick right off a tree.

Farmers and ranchers use this interest to develop traffic at their farm or ranch; and interest in the quality of their products; as well as awareness of their products.

1.13 The Concept of Agritourism

The Agritourism concept was formally launched by Agri Tourism Development Corporation Baramati; on 1st May 2004. The concept of Agri tourism envisages involvement of private sector; the farmers / Agri Tourism Service Providers based on public private partnership. The Agri Tourism Service Providers act as both hosts; and guides to the visiting tourist. The Agri tourism centers have clean; hygienic environment with modern facilities for comfort of visitors. Preference is given to farm which have agricultural land attached. The Agri Tourism Service Provider is supposed to provide home cooked food; stay facilities and show the visitor the agricultural practices such as floriculture; harvesting; bee keeping; dairying etc. and introduce to him the village way of life through various participatory activities. The visitors can enjoy the natural surroundings in fresh air. The visitor gets an exposure of local community life which means attending a panchayat meeting; exposure of local songs; food; dances; art and craft etc. The tour of village includes visiting the local artisans like the carpenter; blacksmith etc. The visitors have experience of festival occasion such as marriage and local meals. Conducting of games such as wrestling; gulidanda; kite flying and have ride on bullock cart; tractor etc. Experiences such as jumping on the hay and taking bath in the tube well could be unique feature for the people and children from urban areas. Important fairs and festivals being organized in these areas along with important monuments; havelies; historical sites etc. Each farm can aim at developing a unique selling
point some are specializing in organic farming; others is in floriculture; natural health management etc.

Thus; Agri - Tourism should ensure the following three basic principles.

a. Have something for visitors to see - Animals; birds; farms and nature are few things which Agri-Tourism could offer to the tourist. Apart from these; culture; dress; festivals and rural games could create enough interest among visitors in Agri-Tourism.

b. Have something for visitors to do - Participating in agricultural operations; swimming; bullock cart riding; camel riding; buffalo riding; cooking and participating in the rural games are few activities to quote in which tourists can take part and enjoy.

c. Have something for visitors to buy - Rural crafts; dress materials; farm gate fresh agriculture products; processed foods are the few items which tourist can buy as memento for remembrance.

1.14 Role of Maharashtra state agri & rural tourism Cooperative federation ltd

The project envisages a public and private sector Partnership with the Government acting as a facilitator. MART selects the farms according to fixed norms. MART also benchmarks the farms and monitors the delivery of services rendered by the Agri Tourism Service Providers. The packages are developed by Farmers in consultation with MART. The packages are different for each Agritourism Center involving both groups and individuals. MART markets the packages at different national and international Tourism Meets.

Implementation:

Advertisements for seeking expression of interest of the Agri Tourism center are released from time to time to register new physical inspection of the Agri Tourism centers is done by the Committee of officers of MART.

As is well known that Tourism is always has multiplier effect and here too it was envisaged that the tourist’s trips and associate spending would make significant contribution to rural economy and improve quality of life of the farmers. Agri Tourism has provided the Farmers a source of additional income on their
existing assets. Besides it provides them with an opportunity to interact socially with various kinds of visitors; elevating their social status and enriching their lives in general.

Community participation:

Community participation is a very important part of this concept as the scheme envisaged visit to the village; interaction with Panchayat members and attending village functions etc. As our experience has shown the tourists cannot be looked after by the Farmers alone. The spill over effect is witnessed by whole of the village community. In most of the group packages; numbers of activities are undertaken such as bullock ride; artisans display; mehndi; folk music and dance; village safari; gift article shop etc. This has resulted in community participation of the villages; generation of employment and additional income for the villagers.

1.15 Agritourism and Farm Products

Agritourism may be any form of farm-based tourism operation that provides economic benefit to the farm owner(s) and provides on-farm entertainment; activity; or product for the visitor.

Beekeeping

Beekeeping can be an income-producing venture by providing pollination services to orchards and farmers; or by harvesting and selling honey and other products such as royal jelly; beeswax; and pollen.

To get started in beekeeping; you will need some basic equipment including a hive; protective gear; some bees; equipment to handle the honey; and other gear. Some beekeepers make their own hives; but you can readily purchase them and assemble the hives yourself. If you purchase equipment; make sure it has been inspected and certified to be free of disease and mites.

Beekeepers need to be aware of the laws related to their livelihood. In many states; bee hives must be inspected annually for disease and infestations. Also; it is important to find out about the pesticide use and pesticide notification laws in your state. You should frequently inspect your own hives for disease or pests.
Corn Mazes

Corn mazes are a form of agritourism that provides entertainment for all ages. Elaborate pictorial mazes can be cut into growing corn fields to establish a path for tourists to travel. Some agritourism operators add trivia games to their mazes for additional fun.

Mazes should be planned; designed; and cut prior to the corn reaching full height. The earlier you cut the maze; the easier it is. There are private companies that can be hired to license and cut the mazes; or individuals can cut their own using GPS technology and mapping software.

When charging visitors to enter a corn maze; certain considerations for the safety of visitors must be considered. Liability insurance is recommended and agritourism operators must be aware of any applicable state laws.

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets provide an opportunity for local agricultural producers to increase their income from farm products. By providing high quality produce; farm products; and cut flowers; vendors can often charge higher prices compared to supplying these wares to other markets. Vendors often establish relationships with their customers by interacting with them at the markets. Farmers' markets can foster tourism in small communities; often becoming a destination for tourists and locals.

The farmers' market manager is integral to the success of the market and must have many skills to keep the market running smoothly. Clear rules and regulations can help make a successful market. Managers must handle the recruiting of new vendors; ensure compliance with laws and regulations; ensure customer safety; handle the day-to-day management activities; promote the market; and evaluate its success.

The popularity of farmers' markets is growing - as more and more people are looking to purchase organically grown produce and locally grown produce. Many farmers' markets also supply their communities with a gathering place and a source of entertainment and leisure.
Growing Mushrooms

The specialty mushroom market in the United States is growing. These mushrooms include oyster; shiitake; maitake; and lion's mane. Shiitake and oyster mushroom production is a viable choice for small-scale production. These do not require the amount of equipment and facilities of some of the other mushrooms produced in the United States.

The shiitake mushroom is used in food and can be found in health food stores. This mushroom is growing in popularity in the United States due to its flavor and consistency. Production of these mushrooms in the U.S. began in the 1980's. Shiitakes grow on rotting hardwood; in commercial production; the moisture and temperature of logs used for growing must be carefully controlled. Although large-scale commercial production requires a large commitment in terms of time and money; small scale production or hobby farming can provide supplemental income. Farmers should carefully consider the risks and benefits associated with growing specialty mushrooms before entering into the venture.

Oyster mushrooms are grown on a sterilized cereal grain substrate and grown in bags or bottles. As with shiitake production; moisture; air movement; light; and temperature must be controlled for best production. These edible mushrooms are relatively easy to produce on a small scale.

You-pick Farms

Many growers are inviting the public onto their farms to harvest their own produce. These farms known as pick-your-own; or PYO; are attractive to farmers because there is reduced labor required for harvesting and they can sell produce that is too fragile to ship. PYOs do; however; require long working hours and more liability insurance. With the right location and crop offerings; PYOs offer an opportunity to diversify existing farm businesses.

Farmers need to research the buying habits; tastes; income levels and proximity of their potential customers. Knowing customer needs can help farmers decide what to sell. Advertising can be as simple as a roadside stand or as involved as a direct mail flyer or putting ads in local papers. Planting crops that are harvested at different times can prolong the harvest season and increase the number of customers.
PYO owners must also supply ample parking and signs providing customers with rules; prices; hours and information on crops for harvest. To maintain customer satisfaction; PYO owners should have weekend hours and stay open during spring and summer holidays. Wide; clean rows of produce and a good variety will help encourage customers to return and recommend the PYO to others.

**Resources for Agritourism Development**

Agritourism; or agricultural tourism; refers to leisure travel and experiences related to farm; ranch; or other agricultural industries.

For agricultural operators; agritourism represents a means of diversifying operations and is a potential source of additional revenue. It may also present an opportunity to enhance relationships between farms; ranches; and other agricultural operations and surrounding communities.

**Tourism and Agriculture**

Value-added production is at the heart of modern agricultural business models. The difference between the price of an agricultural commodity at its source and later in its final processed state at the point of consumption is significant. To the extent feasible; it benefits farmers and land owners if they can capture as much of the added value as possible. Just think of the value lost in sending a birds-eye maple saw log from southern Illinois to Japan to be processed into veneer for very expensive furniture. Or consider the value difference between raw specialty wool and an exclusive garment. Granted; markets; processing; and distribution mechanisms need to be in place to capture this added value; but the cost of not doing so is now so compelling that action needs to be taken.

Direct farm marketing has been around for many years and is widely recognized by consumers and producers. Simply stated; the grower sells his or her produce to the final consumer at retail prices as opposed to entering the wholesale market and traditional distribution systems. Whether the farmer comes to the consumer; as in farmers’ markets; or the consumer goes to the farm or farm-stand is immaterial; a direct sale is made and the net effect is the same. The ability to participate in the benefits of direct marketing comes with a price in
terms of time and dollar investments; yet the rewards may easily outweigh the costs

Best Management Practices for an agritourism business include:

- Providing an authentic farm or ranch experience;
- Providing an educational experience;
- Providing excellent customer service;
- Providing adequate public facilities;
- Maintaining a safe and accessible environment;
- Creating good community relations; and
- Planning for your financial future.

When starting an agritourism business or assessing your existing operation; consult the available resources (see backside) and consider the following best management practices:

- **Authentic Farm or Ranch Experience:** This business provides visitors with an educational experience aside from one that is solely commercial.

- **Educational Experience:** Farms & ranches can offer an agriculturally-oriented educational experience suitable for different ages.

- **Customer Service:** This should be an integral part of your business planning. Training your staff to interact with customers in an appropriate way will ensure a safe and high quality experience for customers. It also ensures these customers will return and tell other potential customers about your business.

- **Adequate Public Facilities:** Your farm/ranch needs to have sufficient capacity (staff and infrastructure) to provide basic services such as parking; transportation; signage; customer assistance; education; and roads. In order to maintain a safe and customer friendly business; provision of services and facilities like restrooms becomes necessary.

- **Safe and Accessible Environment:** You should ensure that your property and facilities are maintained and in compliance with zoning;
health and environmental regulations. It is useful as well to create a risk management plan for your farm/ranch. In addition; depending on your type of business; consider compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; which mandates equal customer access to certain facilities (entrances; exits; and bathrooms).

- **Community Relations:** To create good community relations; it is important to regularly provide opportunities for organized groups and individuals in your community to visit your property (e.g.; schools and business associations).

- **Planning for your Financial Future:** Regularly review your business plan and appropriately add value (price) to all farm/ranch services; products; and experiences in order to provide for the long-term sustainability of your business.

### 1.16 Agritourism Potential in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is the third largest state of India; both in area and population. It is located on the west coast of India with a 720 km long coastline along the green Konkan region. Nestled in the Western Ghats and the Sahyadri mountain range are several hill stations and water reservoirs with semi-evergreen and deciduous forests. There are many tourist centres in Maharashtra which are the supporting natural environment for the agro-tourism centres in Maharashtra. Although; Maharashtra has a total 22368 thousand hectar area under the agriculture and 36122 thousands of livestock (cow; buffalos; goats etc.). Principal crops include rice; Jowar; Bajra; wheat; pulses; turmeric; onions; cotton; sugarcane and several oil seeds including groundnut; sunflower and soyabean. The state has huge areas; under fruit cultivation of which mangoes; bananas; grapes; and oranges etc.

Maharashtra is blessed with a rich and diversified cultural heritage. The state has several communities belonging to different religions; and a number of festivities colours the culture of Maharashtra with the spirit of exuberance. Some of the popular festivals that are celebrated in Maharashtra are Diwali; Ganesh Chaturthi; Gudhi Padwa; Dasara; Nag Panchami; Gokul Ashtmi; Narali Pournima; Pola; Makar Sankranti; Banganga Festival and Holi etc. 43 percent
of total core populations is living the urban areas of the Maharashtra; which will can becomes a customers’ of the agro-tourist centres are located in the rural areas. Other than nature and culture there is an enough road and rail connectivity in urban rural areas to travel in rural Maharashtra. Maharashtra abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient cave temples; unspoiled beaches; ancient forts and monuments; forests and wildlife; unique hill stations; pilgrimage; centres; and a rich tradition of festivals; art and culture. About 25 more such locations have been identified in Maharashtra as rural agro-tourist destinations. Thus all the districts of Maharashtra have a tourism potential. Some following notable factors are helpful to the agro-tourism in Maharashtra.

- Tourist places are already exist to support Agro-Tourism
- Good communication and transport facilities
- Green house cultivation of long stem cut flowers; vegetables; fruits etc.

Some historical and natural tourist places along with the agro-tourism. Hence; the centre should be developed near of these tourist places. It is more beneficial to both tourist and farmers.

The places which are already tourist centers like Mahbaleswara; Panchgani; Nashik; Jotiba; Narshinghvadi; Pandharpur; Akkalkot; Konkan etc. These are the better places for the development of agro-tourism. Other than these places farmer can develop their centres in any affordable places.

Maharashtra now is a major horticulture state.

- Maharashtra is already established as one of the top tourist destination in the world
- Maharashtra has major producer of fruit; spices; medicinal and aromatic plant allowed under horticulture in India.
- There are an increasing number of tourists preferring non-urban tourist spots
- Maharashtra has diverse Agro-climatic conditions; diverse crops; people; deserts; mountains; which provide scope for promotion of all season; multi-location agro-tourism
Some of the popular folk dances in rural Maharashtra are Lavni; Dhangari Gaja; Povadas; Koli dance & Tamasha and Dindi are the religious folk dances. Culture of Maharashtra is very glorious with a great variety. It gives a unique identity to the rural Maharashtra.

1.17 Support to Agritourism in Maharashtra

Promotion of Agritourism involves some more important stakeholders namely Ministry of Agriculture and rural development ministry of the state and central governments. To promote domestic tourism; thrust areas identified by the governments of India are development of infrastructure; product development and diversification; development of eco-adventure sports; cultural presentations; providing inexpensive accommodation etc. The government also has realized the importance of agritourism. The Planning Commission of India had constituted a Working Group for the formulation of Tenth Five Year Plan on Tourism. It has accorded high priority to tourism as an instrument of employment generation and poverty alleviation in rural and backward areas by developing the potential of agritourism to supplement farm incomes; and heritage tourism to promote village development.

1.17.1 Agriculture Tourism Development Corporation

ATDC of Maharashtra has main promoter of this activity in the Maharashtra. ATDC is promoting to agriculture tourism for achieving income; employment and economic stability in rural areas. Help boosting a range of activities; services and amenities; provided by farmers and rural people to attract urban tourists to their area thus providing opportunity to urban people to get back to the rural roots”. ATDC is now providing following facilities to the farmers of Maharashtra;

- Prepare Agri Tourism project report and business plan of the each applicant agriculture farm.

- Help facilitate the financial support from Nationalize Banks; Institutes and Government Agencies to build Agri and Rural Tourism facilities and infrastructure like accommodation; sanitation; approach road etc.

- Conduct Agri Tourism Business Training Program.
Chapter 1

Introduction

- Conduct seminars and conferences on agri tourism business Conduct lectures of the successful National and International Farmers in agritourism business
- Provide sales and marketing support.
- Conduct and coordinate tours from urban areas to the farms.
- Arrange National as well as International Agri Tourism Center study tours.
- ATDC has entertained National as well as International visitors

1.17.2 Problems of the Agritourism Projects in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra has a greater potential of the development of the agro-tourism centers due to the good natural and climatic conditions.

But there are some problems in the process of agro-tourism development in the state. Major challenges and problems are follows;

- Lack of perfect knowledge about agritourism
- Weak communication skills and lack of commercial approach of the small farmers
- Lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for the agritourism
- Ignorance of the farmers regarding to such type of activities
- Presence of unorganized sector in the Agri-Tourism industry.
- Ensuring hygiene and basic requirements considering urban visitors
- Lakhs of farmers have small size holding; low quality land and little or no access to credit or irrigation. Have to negotiate with consistent drought

1.17.3 Key Techniques for Success in Agritourism

Agro-Tourism is a one of the business activity. So; farmers must have commercial mind and some marketing techniques for the success.

For the better success in the agro-tourism you should follow the following things:
• Give a wide publicity of your tourism centre by new papers; television etc.
  Use all possible advertisement means.

• Develop contacts with the schools; colleges; NGOs; clubs; unions; organisations etc.

• Train your staff or family members for reception and hospitality

• Understand about the customers wants and their expectations and serve

• Charge optimum rent and charges for the facilities/services on the commercial base

• Do the artificially use local resources for the entertain / serve to tourist

• Develop your website and update time to time for attract foreign tourist

• Take their feedback and comments about the service and suggestions to more development and modification

• Develop a good relationship with the tourist for future business and chain publicity

• Develop different agro-tour packages of for different type of tourist and their expectations.

• Preserve a address book and comments of the visited tourists for future tourism business

• Behave sincerely with the tourists and participate with them / him

• Small farmers can develop their agro-tourism centres on the basis of cooperative society.

1.18 The Agritourism Project at Baramati

The Agri Tourism Project at Baramati owned by ‘Agricultural Development Trust Malegoan; Baramati is the only organized player in the Agri Tourism sector. It offers 100% pure and completely pollution free environment to the tourists. It helps in de-stressing as the experience bring you closer to nature and provides opportunity to experience the farm life in its purest untouched form. Besides this; it brings tourists closer to the village culture and hospitality of the rural people. It also offers rural games; which are refreshing and genuinely exciting
for the urban people. It presents authentic rural Indian food; which has a very special taste; which is unforgettable in our lifetime.

On top it gives a thrilling experience in staying in either cottages or tents in the middle of the huge 110 acres of farms. Lunch; breakfast and dinner are offered under mango; guava or coconut farms. Every cottage has the authentic rural look and feel are comfortable from tourist point of view. It bestows 365 days holiday period.

Here we have the benefit to enjoy at 4 such units – Malegaon unit; Rajguru Nagar unit; Ali Baugh unit and Junnar Unit. It provides us an opportunity to stay in an independent bungalow; which has 100 ft deep well. The bungalow has the rural look and feel. For school and college students; it is a good source of education plus entertainment.

Tourists can get an opportunity to work in the fields with the farmers and experience the farm life. Tourists can enjoy farm fresh fruits and vegetables during their farm tours.

Agri Tourism offers edutainment farm tours in Malegaon Village; where guests would be given information about the cultivation of grapes; sugarcane; pomegranate; guava; mango; chikkoo; Custard apple; coconut; lime; banana; amla; jackfruit; anjeer; and many more fruits plantation; there will be visit to dairy farm; milk collection centers; goat farm; emu (like ostrich bird) farm; or get an insight of sericulture (silk producing) production of jaggery and sugar.

This information farm tours will be laced with an entertainment programme in the evening. Guests will be acquainted with Marathi folklore like Bharud; Jagran Gondhal; Shekoti folk songs (all these are combinations of songs; drama; acting with music and dance).

This place will try to give you nostalgic memories about the games that you might have played in your childhood like gillidanda; gotya; lagori; galori and bhavra. Tourists can also go for the village sight seeing tour; mingle with locals; know about their administration (Gram Panchayat; visit schools know their lifestyle. This would give tourists food for thought.)

Agri Tourism is however not all about staying in a village and relishing the food.
This is an opportunity to be close to where the 75% of Indians live. “One of the best things about staying on a farm; is that guests can contribute to the place through their involvement;” The idea is to make tourists live life like a villager; right from milking the cow; ploughing the field; bathing in a well to climbing a tree and plucking fruits;” says ATDC Director (sales and marketing) Pandurang Taware.


The present study envisages examining and evaluating the existing systems and practices of management in Agritourism business and the scope of application of modern practices for the balanced development of Agri Tourism sector. For this purpose a model based on five functions of management will be used. The five functions or management are as follows:

Planning:

Planning is a basic requirement and important input of a management process. Everyone who is pre-occupied with the responsibility of managing has to plan. Planning is a process of deciding in advance what is to be done; how; when and by whom it is to be done.

Organizing

Organizing (also spelled organising) is the act of rearranging elements following one or more rules. Anything is commonly considered organized when it looks like everything has a correct order or placement. But it's only ultimately organized if any element has no difference on time taken to find it. In that sense; organizing can also be defined as to place different objects in logical arrangement for better searching.

Organizing; in companies’ point of view; is the management function that usually follows after planning and it involves the assignment of tasks; the grouping of tasks into departments and the assignment of authority and allocation of resources across the organization.
Directing

Here we are discussing the work of managers and administrators; starting with those who direct their own companies and larger organisations.

The decisions taken; by those who head enterprises and by those who govern; affect more people and greater resources than do those taken by ourselves in the course of our daily and private lives; but there is much common ground. Very basic is an understanding of what is going on; of what is happening; of the problems of the day.

Coordinating

Coordination is the process of synchronizing activities of various persons in the organization in order to achieve goals. It is undertaken at every level of management. It deals with the task of blending efforts in order to ensure successful attainment of an objective. It is accomplished by means of planning; organizing and controlling. It is a part of all phases of administration and that is not a separate and distinct activity.

Controlling

The control process involves carefully collecting information about a system; process; person; or group of people in order to make necessary decisions about each. Managers set up control systems that consist of four key steps:

1. Establish standards to measure performance. Within an organization's overall strategic plan; managers define goals for organizational departments in specific; operational terms that include standards of performance to compare with organizational activities.

2. Measure actual performance. Most organizations prepare formal reports of performance measurements that managers review regularly. These measurements should be related to the standards set in the first step of the control process. For example; if sales growth is a target; the organization should have a means of gathering and reporting sales data.

3. Compare performance with the standards. This step compares actual activities to performance standards. When managers read computer reports or walk through their plants; they identify whether actual
performance meets; exceeds; or falls short of standards. Typically; performance reports simplify such comparison by placing the performance standards for the reporting period alongside the actual performance for the same period and by computing the variance—that is; the difference between each actual amount and the associated standard.

4. Take corrective actions. When performance deviates from standards; managers must determine what changes; if any; are necessary and how to apply them. In the productivity and quality-centered environment; workers and managers are often empowered to evaluate their own work. After the evaluator determines the cause or causes of deviation; he or she can take the fourth step—corrective action. The most effective course may be prescribed by policies or may be best left up to employees' judgment and initiative.

These steps must be repeated periodically until the organizational goal is achieved.

**Marketing Plan**

- Market Trends
- Customers
- Marketing Contracts
- Strategic Partners
- Pricing
- Promotion
- Distribution
- Target Markets
- Competitive Advantage