



Agritourism Factsheet -

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Industry Overview

The tourism sector is a significant contributor to the Scottish economy and plays a vital role in wider economic prosperity. The value of the Scottish tourism sector to the wider economy, in 2020, is estimated to be around £10.5 billion and employing around 218,000 people (Scottish Government).

For many rural areas of Scotland, particularly across the Highlands and Islands, tourism makes a substantial contribution to economic activity, employment, and livelihoods. Agri-tourism is a key growth area providing agricultural and rural based experiences to visitors looking to connect with farming, food production, and the environment. In the 2019 to 2020 financial year the average farm that had diversified drew 22% of their total income from that activity (FAS). There are currently around 500 agritourism businesses annually drawing in around 550,000 visitor's pre-pandemic (Scottish Agritourism).

Opportunities

Localism and Authentic Experiences

A trend that has arisen in the fallout from the Covid 19 pandemic is the demand for local authentic experiences. This can be local people looking to support both their own communities and businesses or visitors from further afield looking to immerse themselves in the food, culture and environment of the area they are visiting. Visitors will crave living like a local and creating memories discovering their own authentic Scotland.

Provenance is key, so whether you are providing the accommodation, food or the authentic experience utilising local produce, culture, art, music and history can be key to successfully providing local authentic experiences.

Adaptable Adventure

Adaptable adventures refer to a tourism activity that caters to people seeking adventure and this can refer to any activity from walking and cycling to rock climbing etc. An Agritourism business does not necessarily need to provide or host the activity but drawing the attention of guests to the available outdoor activities and experiences in the area such as cycle routes, rock climbing areas and wild swimming location. In addition, when marketing these activities, attention should also be drawn to the sensory aspects the local area, such as spectacular views, smell of the forest, the warmth of the sun, sound of the waves etc.



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development
Europe investing in rural areas



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Workcations

Workcations is another area of growth and a result of the increasing shift to remote working and a rise in flexible working enabling people to explore new areas and activities without having to use large amounts of their leave allowance. A workcation, also sometimes spelt workation or worcation, is an out of office experience that encompasses both work time and leisure time. A workcation is a combination of work and a vacation. The idea is that you can take a break somewhere, but still continue to work as you do so. Key consideration for Agritourism businesses looking to attract people on Workcations include providing for Visitor's IT requirements and flexible room set up to aide working (such as workstation), you may also need to be flexible around mealtimes, cleaning and other activities offered. In addition, if you are offering activities, it may be advantageous to offer shorter or bitesize experiences and out of hours or night-time activities.

Workcations offer destinations the opportunity to attract visitors all year round, outside of the traditional holiday season. With hotdesking becoming ever more popular, visitor attractions, community spaces and even outdoor venues should consider how they might welcome day tripping workers or longer term workationer's and add to their overall experience of a destination.

Artisanal Retail, Food and Drink

There is increasing interest from the public in food and drink, how it is produced, prepared and cooked. As such, providing local Artisanal food and drink can be a popular activity, as well as adding value to an activity or accommodation. This can even be included in the upfront cost of the activity and can provide an alternative income stream for an existing farming business.

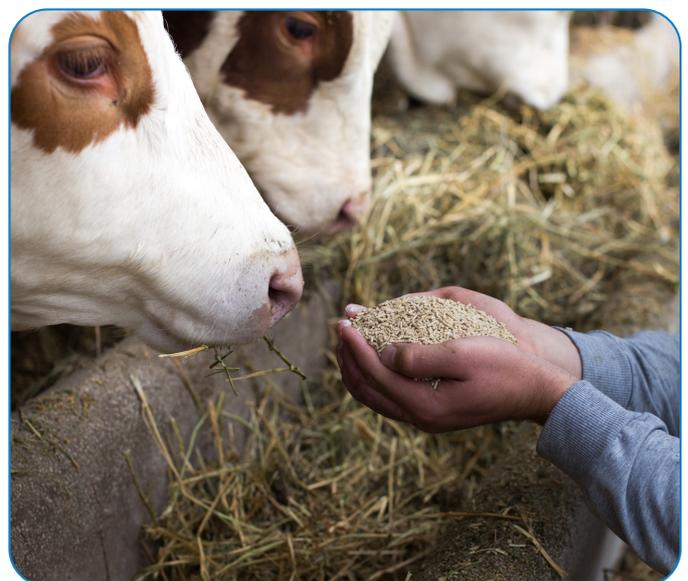
Activities that fall under this umbrella can include anything from a group cooking class where guests prepare and cook unique meals with local ingredients to simply providing guests to existing accommodation with a box of local food. In addition, linking up your accommodation with local food retailers, farm shops and restaurants or vice versa will also add to the guest's experience. This can also include activities such as, guided walks in the countryside with a picnic in a scenic spot, farm tours and tours to local distilleries and breweries. These activities can be marketed to individuals, groups, families and even corporate groups, for example a company team building weekend.



Voluntourism

Voluntourism is a form of tourism in which travellers participate in voluntary work, typically in a field that they are not experienced in. Within Agritourism this can include farm work related activities, habitat creation, tree planting or working in a local business such as local food and drink production. Voluntourism that relates to the rural sector has been borne out of increasing public interest in how food and drink is produced and growing concern for climate change and habitat loss.

Key considerations for a business considering offering voluntourism activities is to identify what activities you can offer, the level of skill required as well as the implications of having untrained people take part in that activity. In addition to this, ensuring that the activity is enjoyable and rewarding for the participants is key. Whether they are feeding livestock, picking potatoes for their dinner or being taught how to plant a hedge providing a new experience and leaving voluntarists with new knowledge or skills is a crucial part of a successful voluntourism enterprise.



Wellness

Another effect of the Covid 19 pandemic is an increasing public consciousness of health and wellness. Consumer sentiment has demonstrated an increasing desire for open space, clean air, better diets and exercise in travel choices as well as a digital detox.

Developed wellness tourism trends have historically looked to the spa model for inspiration. Relaxation was the foundation of the offering generally related to water or massage-based therapies. More recently the role of the natural environment and addressing mindfulness and mental welfare is much more prevalent in terms of tourism product offering. So, utilising the natural environment and the activities and resources it provides can significantly add to the offering of a new or existing agritourism business.

Wellness offerings can include but are not limited to healthy food and drink experiences, using natural locally grown produce, to offering health and wellness activities such as hill walking etc or simply providing remote accommodation with one or more of the following no access to Wi-Fi, low light pollution, seclusion etc.



Where to start?

The first place to start for anyone considering a new Agritourism enterprise is to consider what is currently provided locally, what Agritourism business are in your area, can you offer something different, can you offer something better, or can you provide something which will complement and add to the current local agritourism offering.

The next step should be to seek advice from existing Agritourism providers as well as professional advice.

Further Information

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/business-services/help-in-your-sector/food-drink/>

<https://tourismteacher.com/>

<https://www.goruralscotland.com/>

<https://www.scotland.org/visit>

<https://scottishagritourism.co.uk>

<https://agritourism-monitorfarm.com/>

<https://agritourism-monitorfarm.com/how-to-guide/>