What is Agritourism?

Agriculture + Tourism

**Defined as,** “any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment or education purposes to view or enjoy rural activities.”
Economic Impact Analysis

Agritourism in the Fields of Gold region:

• Estimated to have generated $22.4 million in sales in 2011

• The total economic impact of the industry in 2011, including multiplier affects, is estimated to have been $34.8 million that supported 811 jobs
Agritourism’s Economic Impact

Study conducted by Virginia Tech in 2017:

• The total economic activity stimulated by Virginia’s agritourism sector during 2015 was approximately $2.2B

• The Central Virginia region has the second highest number of agritourism venues, estimated at 287

• Three of the top five agriculture producing counties, Rockingham, Augusta, and Shenandoah, are within the Fields of Gold region.
Fields of Gold kicked off in 2012 and is funded through grants and participating localities.

The vision has been guided by a number of foundational plans – marketing, strategic and most recently, a fund development plan and action plan.

White Oak Lavender, Harrisonburg
Counties of:
Augusta
Bath
Highland
Rockbridge
Rockingham
Shenandoah

Cities of:
Harrisonburg
Lexington
Staunton
Buena Vista
Waynesboro
• Established a Steering Committee that represents private and public sector stakeholders

• Grew program awareness by hosting workshops and sponsoring buyer/consumer festivals, and participating in events

History: Partners
History: Inventory & Mapping

• Surveyed over 200 agritourism operators
• Categorized and produced an interactive, web-based map of sites
• Currently represents 235 members in 6 counties and 5 cities

Wades Mill, Raphine
Agritourism Activities

Ag Venues
Christmas Trees, Nursery
Experience the Farm
Farm Stand
Farm to Table Restaurant
Farmers Market
Local Grocery Store
On-Farm Lodging
Pick-Your-Own
Trout Farm, Aquaculture
Winery, Brewery

Harrisonburg Farmers Market
Marketing: Website

- Mobile responsive
- Search engine optimized
- Interactive, web-based map with “Create Your Own Adventure” tool
- A profile page for each member
- Monthly events calendar
- List of area attractions
- Visitor e-newsletter sign up button
- New member survey

Ready for an adventure? On the Fields of Gold Farm trail, you’ll discover the home-grown side of Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley. After all, it’s where agriculture got its roots. Pick your own fruit in one of our orchards, stroll through a farmers’ market, savor a wine tasting, tour a working farm, celebrate at a farm festival, or feast on a locally-grown meal at one of our farm-to-table restaurants. Whether you are planning a day-trip with your family, a week-long excursion with friends or just a spur-of-the-moment getaway, adventure awaits you on the Fields of Gold Farm Trail. Start your adventure now!
Facebook and Instagram

- Daily posts feature member events, news, products and related articles of interest
- A great way to personalize and tell member’s unique “story”
Marketing: Advertising

- Magazines
- Newsletters
- Newspapers
- Press releases
- On-line publications

Find Your Inner Farmer
ON THE FIELDS OF GOLD FARM TRAIL

Visit our website to enter to win GIFT CERTIFICATES From several of our 185 farm trail members. Valued at over $200. Drawing to be held in August.

www.fieldsofgold.org
Marketing: e-Newsletter

**Adventure Awaits YOU on the Farm Trail!**

- Monthly e-newsletter
- Targeted to over 1,000 potential visitors to the Farm Trail
- Highlights events and activities happening around the region
• Promotes the Farm Trail through information and education
• Increases information mailing list
• Recruits new members and “followers”
• Provides networking and partnership development opportunities with other organizations
Marketing: Members

- Brochures and rack cards
- Bumper stickers
- Tote bags
- Member signage

Discover your next destination on the trail by visiting

www.fieldsofgold.org

www.fieldsofgold.org
Partnering with the “pros” to provide training and workshops to assist with:

- Marketing & social media
- Value adding
- Product diversity
- Healthy business expansion
- Funding opportunities
- State and federal regulations
- And more!

Business Support: Training

Pebble Hall Wildflowers & Herbs, Weyers Cave
Fields of Gold hired professional photographers and videographers to create high-quality promotional materials for members.

View videos on website:

“Meet Our Farmers”

“See You on the Farm Trail”

Back Creek Farms, Monterey
Regular regional “Meet & Greets” are hosted by Fields of Gold in partnership with local Economic and Tourism Departments

- Distribute new member packets
- Outline member benefits
- Review available tools & resources
- Q&A with potential members
- Relationship building & networking
Fence Talk

• Members-only benefit
• Business support
• Trainings and workshops
• Funding opportunities
• New and existing member highlights
• Important industry information
Many factors have lead to the success of Fields of Gold...

- Research
- Clear Mission
- Partners
- Collective Marketing
- Ambassadors
- Point Person
- Story Telling

Turtle Brook Farms & Cabins, Warm Springs
200+ Agritourism Operators
11 Localities
Shenandoah Valley Partnership
Chambers of Commerce
JMU
VA Cooperative Extension
Farm Credit
Farm Bureau
VDACS
VA DHCD
VTC
VAPDC
Rural Development
ARC
EDA
Center for Rural Virginia
and many others
The Shenandoah Valley ~ where agriculture got its roots

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Creambrook Farm, Middlebrook