

Agri-Tourism/Business Decision Tree **A Tool for Evaluating Agri-Tourism/Business Proposals**

The Committee recommends that all applicants for a conditional use permit for an agri-tourism/business enterprise be required to complete the following application. The application form will facilitate evaluation of agri-tourism/business proposals by identifying aspects of the proposed activity that may or may not be “of the same general character as the above (other conditional uses) or contribute to keeping a farm active as an agricultural enterprise.”

In this decision tree, applicants are asked a series of questions designed to assess the impacts of the proposed activity on various qualities associated with an agricultural district. In addition, the series of questions serves as an informational tool, highlighting for applicants, critical issues that should be considered for proposals. Each answer yields a point score and a possible 100 points can be accumulated by those proposed agri-tourism/business activities most likely to be “of the same general character” as those in an agricultural district.

Proposals accumulating at least **70** points should be automatically approved, proposals receiving **30-69** points need additional review, and proposals receiving less than **30** points should be rejected. The applicant will receive the form without the point system so as to not influence their answers.

General Information

Will the proposed activity be daily, seasonal or event-based?

- I. DAILY
- I. SEASONAL
- I. EVENT-BASED

Impact Questions

Will the proposed activity occur on an Woodford County farm currently being operated as active agricultural enterprises?

YES +30 points

NO Will the proposed activity contribute to keeping open land (i.e., land that is not currently being operated as an agricultural enterprise) as green space?

NO Reject

YES +10 points

Rationale: The purpose of permitting agri-tourism/business activities in an agricultural district is to open opportunities for farm land owners to maintain their land in agricultural activities or as open land. If the proposed activity does not accomplish these two objectives then it should not be permitted in an agricultural district.

Does the proposed activity involve using agricultural commodities from Woodford County farms?

YES +20 points

NO Does the proposed activity add value to agricultural commodities from Woodford County farms?

NO 0 points

YES +20 points

Rationale: A proposed activity that uses agricultural commodities from Woodford County or adds value to Woodford County agricultural commodities represents an expansion of the market for commodities and thus increases the likelihood that Woodford County farmers can make a profit from their agricultural enterprises.

Environmental Issues

Will the proposed activity affect water quality on this agricultural enterprise? In other words, will the proposed activity alter the water quality management plan for this farm?

NO +10 points

YES Explain the water quality impact in detail and attach the original and the revised water quality management plans for this farm.

No revised Water Quality Management plan attached -10 points

Revised Water Quality Management plan attached and approved by SCS +10 points

Rationale: The quality of the natural environment is essential to a healthy agricultural ecosystem. Therefore maintaining the quality of the natural environment should be of paramount importance in evaluating any potential impacts of agri-tourism/business proposals. Water quality is the most important environmental impact because groundwater quality affects both rural and urban populations in addition to agricultural production.

Liability and Risk Issues

Does the owner/operator carry liability insurance?

YES If YES, attach a copy of proof of insurance +10 points

NO 0 points

Will the proposed activity allow visitors to be out of the sight of or control of the farm owner/operator or their employees?

NO +10 points

YES If visitors will be out of the sight of or control of the farm owner/operator or their employees:

A. Provide a draft of a statement to be provided to visitors defining the boundaries of the farm that will be the site of the agri-tourism business.

No draft of statement defining property boundaries attached 0 points

Yes draft of statement defining property boundaries attached +5 points

As the owner/operator of the agri-tourism business, are you willing to post “no trespassing” signs on your boundary fences?

YES +5 points

NO 0 points

Rationale: Liability and risk management are fundamental business concerns for agricultural operators. If agri-tourism/business activities are going to be permitted in the agricultural district, they must not increase the liability risks for neighbors since this could lead to high and potentially devastating economic costs for neighbors. Therefore, it is imperative that the individual proposing the agri-tourism/business demonstrate reasonable and prudent efforts to protect neighbors from increased liability. There is no net gain to Woodford County if we permit activities in agricultural districts that benefit one agricultural enterprise at the expense of others. It is important to insure equity and fairness in burden unless compensation for losses can be provided.

Will the proposed activity have noise that can be heard by neighbors?

NO +10 points

YES Explain in detail the nature and types of noise impacts and attach the plan to mitigate the noise impacts

No plan to mitigate noise impacts attached 0 points

Yes a plan to mitigate noise impacts attached +10 points

Rationale: The average noise level in rural/agricultural areas is lower than in urban area and the “quiet” is a component of the “character” of rural areas. But it must also be acknowledged that agricultural activities can also produce noises from the operation of equipment. So, the issues with respect to noise are: Is the nature of the noise similar to or different from the noise that normally occurs in rural/agricultural areas? If not, will the noise associated with the activity be daily, seasonal or event-based? And, is it possible to buffer the noise? Noise diminishes the quality of life for neighbors, and so must be a factor in evaluating development proposals.

Will the proposed activity involve the construction of new structures that would be visible from the road?

NO +10 points

YES Will the structure be designed to be appropriate to an agricultural setting? Attach a rough draft of the structure to be constructed

No, the structure will not be appropriate to an agricultural setting 0 points

Yes, the structure will be appropriate to an agricultural setting +10 points

Rationale: A key noneconomic value of the agricultural district is the viewshed – the open landscape that can be seen from the road. In Woodford County, this viewshed is a significant component of the tourism value of our agricultural lands. As a result, development proposals that involve structures not in keeping with an agricultural district would diminish the visual quality of the district. But it is acknowledged that it is possible to architecturally design structures that are physically appropriate for an agricultural district although their function may not be agriculturally-related (e.g., the library/conference building at Keeneland). Therefore, while structures or other activities in the viewshed of the agricultural district diminish the value of the viewshed, it is possible to mitigate these effects.