

Agritourism in the Cariboo-Chilcotin 2023



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Agritourism in the Cariboo-Chilcotin

What is Agritourism

Definition

Agritourism is the convergence of agriculture and tourism, providing visitors entertaining and often educational experiences. It may:

- combine the essential elements of the tourism and agriculture industries;
- attract members of the public to visit agricultural operations;
- increase farm income; and
- provide recreation, entertainment, and/or educational experiences to visitors.



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Benefits

Agritourism is a growing industry in British Columbia with numerous benefits to the province's economy, environment, and communities. This unique blend of agriculture and tourism offers many advantages:

- **Economic Boost:** Agritourism diversifies revenue streams for farmers and rural communities. It generates income through farm tours, on-site sales, and event hosting, bolstering local economies and job creation.
- **Education and Awareness:** Agritourism allows visitors to gain a deeper understanding of agriculture, food production, and sustainability. This educational aspect fosters appreciation for local, seasonal products and encourages more informed consumer choices.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Agritourism facilitates cultural exchange between visitors and local communities. Tourists often get a taste of the region's traditions, heritage, and cuisine, fostering cross-cultural connections.
- **Healthy Lifestyles:** BC's agritourism promotes healthy living by showcasing fresh, locally grown produce and farming practices.

Areas of Opportunity

The Cariboo Regional District is an attractive destination for agritourism development. Entrepreneurs can tap into the region's underutilized potential, leveraging its natural beauty, affordability, and the variety of seasonal experiences it offers to create successful agritourism businesses.

- **Room for Growth:** The Cariboo currently has a limited number of agritourism operations, with significant opportunity for expansion in this sector. This lack of saturation means that entrepreneurs have the potential to establish new and innovative agritourism ventures, catering to a growing market of tourists seeking unique rural experiences.
- **Scenic Rural Atmosphere:** The Cariboo's picturesque and serene rural environment provides an ideal setting for agritourism activities. Farm stays, for instance, can leverage the region's natural beauty to market peace, privacy, and tranquility as key attractions. Tourists often seek escape from urban life, making this an enticing selling point.
- **Affordable Land:** Compared to more urbanized areas, land prices in the Cariboo are relatively affordable. This presents a cost-effective opportunity for entrepreneurs looking to acquire property for agritourism ventures, whether it's establishing a farm, building accommodations, or developing event spaces. Lower land costs can translate into higher profit margins.
- **Distinct Seasons:** The Cariboo experiences distinct seasons, each offering unique agritourism opportunities. In the fall, businesses can create corn mazes and pumpkin patches, capitalizing on the popularity of autumn-themed activities. Winter opens the door for sleigh rides and cozy farm-based winter getaways, appealing to tourists seeking a snowy escape.

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Challenges

Creating a successful agritourism business in the Cariboo, a region in British Columbia, Canada known for its rural and agricultural landscapes, can be a rewarding endeavor, but it also comes with its fair share of challenges. Keep these challenges in mind when developing your business:

- **Seasonal Nature of Agriculture:** Be aware of seasonal the demands of your agriculture businesses. Accommodating guests during calving season may be challenging.
- **Weather-Dependent Activities:** Many agritourism activities are dependent on good weather conditions. Unpredictable weather patterns, including wildfires, can disrupt planned events and affect visitor numbers.
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** Some parts of the Cariboo may lack proper infrastructure and transportation options, making it difficult for tourists to reach your agritourism location.
- **Regulatory and Zoning Requirements:** Understanding and complying with local zoning regulations, provincial land-use regulation for properties in the Agricultural Land Reserve, health and safety standards, and other legal requirements for agritourism can be complex.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Starting and maintaining an agritourism business requires a significant investment in infrastructure, equipment, and marketing. It may take time to become financially sustainable.
- **Labor Shortages:** Finding and retaining skilled labor for both agricultural and tourism aspects of your business can be challenging, especially during peak seasons.
- **Customer Expectations:** Meeting the expectations of agritourism visitors, who may have varying levels of agricultural knowledge and interests, can be demanding.
- **Maintaining Quality:** Ensuring consistent quality in your agricultural products and visitor experiences is essential for long-term success.
- **Insurance and Liability:** Agritourism activities can carry risks, and you need to have proper insurance coverage to protect your business and visitors.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding and respecting the cultural diversity of visitors and the local community is important for maintaining a positive reputation.

Overcoming these challenges requires careful planning, adaptability, and a strong commitment to the long-term success of your agritourism business in the Cariboo region. Conducting thorough market research and seeking guidance from local agricultural and tourism organizations can also be beneficial.

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Preparing For Your Agritourism Business

Business Plan

The ultimate goal is to create a thriving business. A well-crafted business plan is a roadmap for success. It outlines goals, strategies, and financial projections, helping entrepreneurs clarify their vision. It guides decision-making, identifies potential risks, and provides a foundation for growth and a solid plan is crucial for sustainability and adaptability. A solid plan will identify and clarify the following:

- **Business Description:** An in-depth explanation of your business concept, its mission, and its unique value proposition.
- **Market Analysis:** Research on your target market, industry trends, and competitors.
- **Organizational Structure:** Details about your company's ownership, management, and team structure.
- **Product or Service Description:** Information about your offerings, including features, benefits, and pricing.
- **Marketing and Sales Strategy:** Your plan for promoting and selling your products or services.
- **Funding Requirements:** If you're seeking financing, outline your funding needs.
- **Financial Projections:** Projections for revenue, expenses, and profitability, often including income statements, cash flow statements, and balance sheets.
- **Risk Analysis:** An assessment of potential challenges and risks, along with strategies to mitigate them.
- **Implementation Plan:** A step-by-step plan for executing your business strategy.
- **Milestones and Timelines:** Key milestones and deadlines for achieving your goals.



Organizations are in place to help create a success business plan:

- For the North Cariboo - [Community Futures of the North Cariboo](#)
- For the South & Central Cariboo – [Community Futures of the Cariboo Chilcotin](#)

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Zoning and Land Use

Each property in British Columbia is zoned for specific use. There is an opportunity to have your property rezoned to allow additional or different use. Within the Cariboo, this is managed by the Cariboo Regional District Planning Department. Some areas of the Cariboo also have Official Community Plans made up of bylaws to help guide cohesive development. When developing your agritourism business plan, a good first step is to contact the CRD Planning Department to understand zoning stipulations.

To check your zoning:

- Visit the [zoning section of the Cariboo Regional District Website](#) and click on Check your zoning. You will need to type in your civic address.
- Contact the CRD planning department at 250-392-3351 or planning@cariboord.ca

The planning department can also help you understand all allowed uses with your zoning, if any bylaws apply to your property, and how to apply for rezoning.

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Agritourism in the Agricultural Land Reserve

Is your property in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)? The ALR is administered by the [Agricultural Land Commission \(ALC\)](#), a provincial government agency tasked with preserving agricultural land and encouraging farming on properties in the ALR. It oversees land use decisions and regulations to safeguard the province's valuable farmland for agricultural purposes. Approximately 11% of the land in the Cariboo (935,932 hectares, 2021 Census) is in the ALR.

If your land is within the ALR you will need to follow the provincial ALC Act and its two regulations. Agritourism is a well-defined term in the ALR Use Regulation. Other uses related to agritourism and are defined within the ALR Use Regulation include Gathering for an Event, Agritourism Accommodation, and Tourist Accommodations.

Contact the ALC to determine if your Property is in the ALR and if your proposed agritourism project is consistent with the ALR regulations. If your proposed project is not a permitted use in the ALR, it will require the submission and subsequent approval of a non-farm use application to the ALC. ALC Policy documents regarding agritourism as well as gathering for an Event and Accommodation for Tourists in the ALR are a valuable resources and include:

- Policy L-04 Agri-tourism Activities in the ALR;
- Policy L-22 – Gathering for an Event in the ALR; and
- Information Bulletin IB-06 – Accommodation for Tourists in the ALR.

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Safety, Regulations, Permitting and Licensing

Agritourism businesses invite tourists, members of the public, into working agricultural operation. A well thought out business plan addressing the well being for guests, staff, livestock, crops, and the surrounding environment helps businesses accomplish this safely and legally. Proper licensing, training, and permitting may be needed for a successful operation.

Additional Regulations, Permits and Licensing

Depending on your agritourism business offerings you may need additional permits and training. Some of these considerations include:

- Are you preparing and/or serving food and beverages?
 - [Food Safe](#) – preparing food
 - [Interior Health](#) – operation a food premise in Central & South Cariboo
 - [Northern Health](#) – operating a food premise in North Cariboo
 - [Serving it Right](#) – serving alcohol
 - [Farmgate & Farmgate Plus Licenses](#) – slaughtering your own meat

Liability and Insurance

Belonging to certain organizations can provide access to cost-effective insurance options. Below is a list of organizations and websites dedicated to this purpose:

- [BC Farmers' Market](#) – Members may access a group rate on general liability insurance.
- [Small Scale Meat Producers Association](#) – Member of this organization may be eligible for a comprehensive insurance package with discounted commercial liability rates.
- [AgriStability](#) - AgriStability protects agricultural producers against declines in their net farming income due to market conditions, production loss or increased costs of production. Payments are made if a producer's current year margin falls more than 30% below their reference margin.
- [Gov BC](#) - Government of BC Resources for Agricultural Insurance and Income Protection.

Human Resources Support

- [Go2HR](#) – a resource for human resources, health & safety, industry training, research, strategy, and more

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Emergency Management and Planning

Emergency planning and management are vital for Cariboo region tourism businesses. With its remote and natural beauty, the area can be vulnerable to wildfires, floods, or other crises. Preparedness ensures the safety of visitors, staff, and assets, while maintaining the region's reputation as a resilient and responsible destination. The organizations and websites listed below can help you prepare your business, should disaster strike:

- [Cariboo Regional District Emergency and Protective Services](#) – This webpage contains links to information about emergency notifications, preparedness, reporting and maps.
 - [Emergency Notifications](#) – sign up here to be notified when a disaster or emergency strikes.
 - [Emergency Preparedness](#) - Natural disasters can strike at any time. It is important to know what to do before you must act and how to be prepared.
- [BC Wildfire Service](#)
- Government of British Columbia –
 - [This site has resources from the provincial government for emergency management resources for farmers and ranchers.](#)
- [Emergency management for agriculture](#)
- BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA)
 - [Disaster Preparation and Recovery](#)
 - [Wildfire Resources](#)
 - [Local Economic Recovery & Restart ToolKit](#)
- [Community Futures](#) – Emergency preparedness information.
- [Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association](#) – A list of resources for the tourism industry.
- [Destination BC](#) – Emergency preparedness information and links for tourism based businesses.



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Marketing and Tourism

Tourism Overview

Joint marketing and tourism clusters bring together tourism experience and attractions, amplifying their collective reach and impact. This collaboration creates a more fulsome tourism experience and enhances visibility. Also, marketing as a consortium or cluster can create impactful campaigns with smaller investment from each individual business making them more affordable. Working together ultimately drives more visitors, benefiting the entire region's economy and reputation.

The North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association has effectively showcased agricultural producers, farm sales, markets, and agritourism. Collaborating to create a map and listings highlights proximity, making the area more attractive to potential tourists.

Destination BC's Co-op Marketing Program enables strategic promotion, including digital marketing and content creation, which highlights the Cariboo's agritourism offerings. By harnessing these resources, agritourism businesses can connect with a broader audience, drawing nature enthusiasts and food lovers alike to this picturesque region.

Destination BC's Co-op Marketing Program leverages funds to help partners pay for online marketing and content creation to promote tourism offerings. Collaborative marketing through tourism clusters leverages combined resources to expand reach and influence, boosting visitor numbers, and bolstering the region's economy and reputation.



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Tourism and Marketing Supports:

- [North Cariboo Agricultural Marketing Association](#)
 - [Agriconnect](#) – connecting consumers and products
- [Explore Cariboo](#) – This tourism marketing site created with joint support from the District of 100 Mile House, Williams Lake First Nation, City of Williams Lake, City of Quesnel, District of Wells, and the Cariboo Regional District, to market opportunities, experiences and businesses in the region.
- [South Cariboo Visitors Info Centre](#) (100 Mile House) – By becoming a partner you will have opportunities to promote your business.
- [Tourism Quesnel](#) – Market your business through this organization’s website.
- [Tourism Williams Lake](#) – This organization offers opportunities for marketing.
- [Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association](#) – This regional destination marketing organization, funded by the province of BC, offers marketing opportunities and business listings for members. Membership is free.
 - [Become a Member/Partner](#)
 - [For Industry](#) – information and links for regional tourism providers
 - [Marketing Programs](#) – opportunities funding
 - [Things to Do – Agri-Tourism & Cuisine](#) – there is an opportunity to have your business or experience listed on this page.
- [Indigenous Tourism BC](#) - The Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia is a non-profit, membership-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry.
- [Destination BC](#) – This is a provincially funded, industry led crown corporation. Destination BC is focused on attracting overnight visitors to the province, by promoting our Super, Natural British Columbia® brand to the world, and increasing tourism revenues by supporting industry in the development and delivery of remarkable experiences.
 - [Destination Development](#)
 - [Co-op Marketing program](#) – apply for funding to market you tourism-based business as part of a consortium or sector
- [Tourism Industry Association of BC](#) – to advocate for support for the tourism industry.
- [BC Farmers Market](#) – one of the benefits of membership is a listing on BC Farmers’ Market Trail Directory
- [Gold Rush Trail](#) – This website offers marketing opportunities for businesses in the region.
 - [Gold Rush Trail Agri-Tourism Page](#)

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Funding Opportunities

Funding support for Cariboo region businesses is essential for growth and resilience. It can come from government grants, local economic development agencies, and community initiatives. This financial aid boosts economic vitality, encourages entrepreneurship, and strengthens the region's business landscape. The following organizations can offer supports for your small to medium sized business:

- [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) – The goal of this independent, non-profit corporation is to stimulate and support economic and community endeavours in the north. This includes the Cariboo Chilcotin Region. They offer business development supports including:
 - [Competitive Consulting Rebate](#) to small and medium sized businesses in eligible industries for customized consulting services. A rebate of up to 50% to a yearly maximum of \$30,000 can be recovered for the cost of external business consulting projects. Projects must focus on increased resiliency, productivity, revenues, profitability and/or job creation;
 - [Small Business Recovery Consulting Rebate](#) to help businesses reduce the barrier to accessing professional expertise and recover the costs of third-party consulting projects.
- [BC Employer Training Grant](#) - The B.C. Employer Training Grant provides funding to small, medium and large enterprises to support skills training for their workforces, including prospective new hires.
- [Business Façade Improvement Grant](#) – This program offers matching grants of up to \$5,000 for business façade improvements. This grant is administered each spring by municipalities and the Cariboo Regional District.
- [Cariboo Regional District Grant Newsletter](#) – This monthly newsletter details funding opportunities. Subscribe to ensure you don't miss any opportunities.



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Resources

[Agricultural Development Advisory Committee](#) (ADAC) - The Committee works in collaboration with related agencies and organizations to further agricultural economic development, address agricultural infrastructure, research and training needs, pursue and develop partnership opportunities, and promote awareness of agriculture's role in the local and regional economy

[Cariboo Regional District Agricultural Area Plan](#)

[Cariboo Agriculture Research Alliance](#) - The Cariboo Agricultural Research Alliance (CARA) supports farmers and ranchers by providing access to regionally-relevant applied research, helping set regional priorities, and coordinating activities that benefit the agricultural community.

[Kersley Farmers' Institute](#)

[Cariboo Cattlemen's Association](#)

[British Columbia Cattlemen's Association](#)

[Small Scale Meat Producers Association](#) - The Small-Scale Meat Producers Association represents British Columbia farmers and ranchers who are raising meat outside of the conventional, industrial system. We are a registered non-profit society made up of primary-producers as well as supportive individuals and organizations. Members are eligible for discounted insurance rates.

[BC Agricultural Land Commission](#) - The ALR is BC's provincial zone that preserves agricultural land for the future. The ALC is the administrative tribunal that adjudicates applications in the ALR while prioritizing and protecting the ALR land base and its use for agriculture.

[Agricultural Land Reserve \(ALR\) Use Regulations](#) – This is link directly towards the document detailing allowable use for land within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

[Agri-tourism uses in the Agricultural ALR](#) – This link takes you to a consultation summary from 2016 regarding a Ministry of Agriculture and Food Initiative to consider establishing a Minister's Bylaw Standard on Agritourism in the ALR.

[BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food](#)

[BC Agri-Business Planning Program](#) - The B.C. Agri-Business Planning Program supports producers and food processors through three business planning streams.

[BC Agrifood Business Management](#) – This site links to business resources for farms and farmers.

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[AgriService BC](#) – Providing funding, tools and services to help your business succeed in BC.

[Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#) - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada supports the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector through initiatives that promote innovation and competitiveness.

[Investment Agriculture Foundation](#) - IAF delivers programs and services to support a thriving agriculture and agri-food sector in British Columbia.

[Young Agrarians – BC Land Match Program](#)

[AgPal Program and Service Finder](#) – A web-based discovery tool to help producers and others in the agriculture and agri-business sector.

[AgSafe BC](#) - AgSafe strives to create a safe and healthy work environment in BC agriculture through outreach and an active program of education, training and consultation in all regions of the province

[BC Climate Agri-Solutions](#) - BCCAF provides funding to help farmers tackle climate change by adopting beneficial managing practices (BMPs) in three specific areas: Nitrogen Management, Cover Cropping and Rotational Grazing. BCCAF is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF).

[BC Climate Change Adapt Program](#) - The Climate Change Adaptation Program supported the agriculture sector in British Columbia with adapting to climate change.

[Work Safe BC](#) – ensure the health and safety of workers, supply resources to small business owners about legal obligations, coverage, claims, and meeting you responsibility for health and safety

[BC Centre for Disease Control](#) – Temporary Food Markets Guidelines for the Sale of Foods at Temporary Food Markets

[BC Farmers Markets](#) – MarketSafe, Guidelines for the Sale of Foods at Markets

[Quesnel Farmers Market](#)

[South Cariboo Farmers' Market](#) - The South Cariboo Farmers' Market in 100 Mile House, is the place to be every Friday, from May to September.

[Willaims Lake Farmers' Market](#)

[Sprout Kitchen](#) - Sprout Kitchen provides space and support for emerging and existing food entrepreneurs to get their ideas off the ground or scale their business for new markets.

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[Quesnel & District Chamber of Commerce](#)

[South Cariboo Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Williams Lake & District Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Small Business BC](#) - Small Business BC is an independent non-profit organization that exists to elevate every BC business. Whether we offer the service you need or connect you to another source, our goal is the same – to help you succeed.

[Go2HR](#) – this organization supports strong workforces and safe workplaces in BC's Tourism & Hospitality Industry

[Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) – The goal of this independent, non-profit corporation is to stimulate and support economic and community endeavours in the north. This includes the Cariboo Chilcotin Region. They offer business development supports including:

- [Competitive Consulting Rebate](#) to small and medium sized businesses in eligible industries for customized consulting services. A rebate of up to 50% to a yearly maximum of \$30,000 can be recovered for the cost of external business consulting projects. Projects must focus on increased resiliency, productivity, revenues, profitability and/or job creation;
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[Indigenous Tourism BC](#) - The Indigenous Tourism Association of British Columbia is a non-profit, membership-based organization that is committed to growing and promoting a sustainable, culturally rich Indigenous tourism industry.

[Explore Cariboo](#) – This tourism marketing site created with joint support from the District of 100 Mile House, Williams Lake First Nation, City of Williams Lake, City of Quesnel, District of Wells, and the Cariboo Regional District, to market opportunities, experiences and businesses in the region.

[Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association](#) - Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism is a non-profit, stakeholder-based Regional Destination Management Organization

[Destination BC](#) - Destination BC, a provincial Crown corporation, leads the marketing of British Columbia as a tourist destination and promotes the development and growth of the provincial tourism industry.

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