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EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF INDIVIDUALLY OWNED VS COOPERATIVE AGRITOURISM BUSINESSES IN NEBRASKA

By

Craig Easley

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Evaluating the Success of Individually Owned vs Cooperative

Agritourism Businesses in Nebraska

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University of Nebraska Lincoln, 2012

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Agritourism has been practiced by Nebraskans for many years; it offers an alternative land use and has a positive economic impact for business owners as well as the local community. The agritourism industry in Nebraska is relatively minor but the unique landscape and traditions allow great potential to for it to grow. Consumer demand for rural nature-based activities remains a largely untapped source of income on the Northern Great Plains' privately owned grasslands (Schutz). The potential for agritourism to expand and become a large economic incentive for Nebraska is the reason Nebraska was chosen for this study. Agritourism is often considered a broad concept but can be defined as "An alternative enterprise allowing an agriculture operation to earn higher profits by replacing or supplementing traditional agriculture operations with innovative or sustainable resources" (Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism). Nebraska offers a variety of rural tourism approaches, *ecotourism*: environmentally responsible travel to relatively undisturbed areas to enjoy and appreciate nature and learn about the importance of preserving natural resources, *cultural& historical tourism*: teaches visitors about local peoples way of life both past and present, and *geotourism*: sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place being visited. Most rural tourism businesses in Nebraska offer some sort of combination of these different approaches. To simplify the context of the paper, we will combine these types of tourism into the term *agritourism*.

With a decreasing availability of land and water quantity for agricultural practices, some ranchers and farmers have converted some, or in some instances all, of their operation to agritourism.). Twenty-one percent of all Nebraskans are employed in farm or farm-related jobs. Agriculture is the largest industry in Nebraska and tourism is ranked third (Nebraska Department of Economic Development); agritourism combines the two for a unique experience and has great potential to expand throughout the state. However, many famers and ranchers remain pessimistic about the idea of growing the agritourism market in Nebraska. The key barriers include farmer awareness and paradigms, time

constraints, and liability concerns (Kolm, 2006). Increased rural tourism in Nebraska could improve employment opportunities, the local economy, and increasing the number of visitors for rural areas and small towns. In the past three years, 87 million Americans have taken at least one trip to a rural destination and 63 million visit farms annually (Brown 2008). Tax revenues collected from visitors can go directly towards enhancing local development. Rural business owners are realizing the importance of diversifying ways of agricultural revenue. Agritourism has a positive impact on small community's economy by bringing in revenue from outside of the community. For each dollar spent by out-of-state tourists in Nebraska, which is re-spent in the state, creates an overall economic impact of $2.70 (NE Division of Travel and Tourism). Rural tourism also creates both permanent and seasonal employment opportunities for community members. Individuals familiar with their local area and who have an emotional attachment to their rural community make admirable employees which tourists can connect with and learn from. Another benefit of agritourism is the cultural involvement that tourists experience when visiting rural tourism businesses. This can create tourism into a more educational based activity and help sustain on-going traditions. Nebraska's natural resources, old traditions, and rich natural heritage make for an ideal location for agritourism.

The purpose of this study will be to compare the success of two different approaches to operating an agritourism business, individually owned and a cooperative. Cooperative is a business organization owned and marketed by a *group* of individuals for their mutual benefit; whereas individually owned is operated solely by one *individual* or family. For this thesis, the definition of success will consider both financial records (quantitative) and personal satisfaction (qualitative). Ultimately, the driving factor of operating any business is usually money. However, operating a tourism business in rural Nebraska is challenging and often does not create a large income. An agritourism business is often started by an individual's motivation and passion for giving others the opportunity to experience a

unique rural lifestyle; this is why personal satisfaction will also be measured. The attitudes and personal thoughts of Nebraska agritourism regarding marketing, growth and development will also be collected.

Agritourism is a growing business trend, throughout the United States business owners understand the potential impact their business may not only for themselves but also their local economy. There are both positives and negatives of businesses being a part of a cooperative or individually owned. This research demonstrates to be important because Nebraska has great potential for growth in agritourism. This new knowledge will allow for a better understanding of successful agritourism business approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Canada Story

Kolm paper

Niobrara River Valley *The Economics of Ecotourism in the Scenic Niobrara River (*Johnsgard, 2007)

California: http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/

METHODS

Surveys were taken by agritourism business owners and individuals with experience in the industry from across Nebraska in February of 2012. The survey (appendix A), completed via e-mail, was constructed of 21 questions inquiring demographics, financial information, personal satisfaction, and methods of operating an agritourism business. The survey was created using Google Survey and questions were multiple choice, check-lists, and short answer. It was estimated to take 10-30 minutes to complete, depending on the amount of in-depth answers participants provided.

Survey participants were chosen from attendants of the 2012 Nebraska Agri/Ecotourism Workshop held in North Platte, Nebraska in late January 2012. The workshop attendants consisted of agritourism business owners and employees from Nebraska, along with members of state and city governments working with travel and tourism. However the participants chosen for the survey were strictly business owners and employees from Nebraska. These participants were chosen because they have first-hand experience working in the agritourism industry. A member of the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism also provided the survey to a large number of agritourism business contacts across Nebraska. All participants were given a consent form (appendix B) stating the survey was anonymous, completely voluntarily, and participants did not have to answer any questions they did not feel comfortable answering. Results of the surveys were analyzed by comparing cooperative and individually owned businesses.

Three interviews of agritourism businesses were also performed. Interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes, and summaries of the interviewee's responses and personal opinions were taken. The interviews focused on the business owners experience, what they think of current agritourism methods in Nebraska and, their thoughts on how to establish a larger agritourism market in Nebraska. The individually owned businesses were Calamus Outfitters located near Burwell, Nebraska and 2 The Ends of The Earth LLC near Nenzel, Nebraska. Calamus Outfitters is a family run business and the interview

was conducted with their Director of Planning. The other interview was with the owner of 2 The Ends of The Earth LLC, who operates a photography and river adventure company. The cooperative marketing agritourism group interviewed was Northwest Nebraska High Country located near Chadron, Nebraska and surrounding area. Northwest Nebraska High Country is comprised of 26 businesses that offer a large variety of agritourism activities. Interviews consisted of informal phone conversations in February and March of 2012.

RESULTS

Quantitative Data

Respondents to the survey provided the quantitative data for analysis. In total, there were sixty-four survey respondents, fifty-eight were owned individually and six were part of a cooperation (figure 1). Most participants provided an answer for every question, however a few participants did not respond to some questions.

Survey participants were asked to provide a range of annual income their agritourism business generates (figure 2). Of the fifty-seven participants who responded, twenty-nine (51%) stated their agritourism business makes less than $20,000. Seven (12%) responded they make $20,000 - $29,999; nine (16%) responded they make $30,000 - $39,000; one (2%) responded they make $40,000 - $49,999; four (7%) responded they make $50,000 - $59,999; two (4%) responded they make $60,000 - $69,999; zero (0%) responded they make $70,000 - &79,999; and five (9%) responded they make more than $80,000. All five business owners who make more than $80,000 were individually owned and businesses part of a cooperation did not generate more than $30,000.

Participants were asked to state if agritourism was their primary source of income (figure 3). There were a total of fifty-six respondents. Nine (16%) answered that agritourism was their primary source of income and forty-seven (84%) answered agritourism was not their primary source of income. Thirty-six respondents make less than $30,000; and thirty-five (97%) stated agritourism was not their primary source of income, the one (3%) that responded agritourism was their primary income source stated they were a retired couple operating a business to keep busy. The five (9%) businesses that make more than $80,000 all responded that agritourism is their primary source of income.

Personal satisfaction of agritourism business owners was asked in the survey. Respondents were to list their personal satisfaction of the agritourism business on a scale of one (low) to ten (high) (figure 4). There were sixty-three respondents and the most common response was ‘five’ at thirteen (21%).

Thirty-nine (62%) of the respondents rated their satisfaction as 'six' or higher, and ten (16%) rating their satisfaction as 'ten'. Nine (14%) of the respondents answered their personal satisfaction 'four' or lower.

Survey participants were asked about their local community's opinion about their agritourism business when it began (figure 5) and their current opinion (figure 6). According to survey responses of agritourism business owners, 46% of communities supported or strongly supported agritourism, 45% neither supported nor opposed, and 9% of the community were opposed or strongly opposed. Currently 71% of the community support or strongly support agritourism, 27% neither support nor oppose, and 2% oppose or strongly oppose.

Participants were asked to provide the year their agaritourism business began (figure 7). There were fifty-six respondents and thirty-four (61%) began their business since the year 2000, and twenty-two (39%) began before the year 2000.

Respondents provided the region of Nebraska where their agritourism business in located (figure 8). All sixty-four participants responded to the question. The most common response was 'Southeast Nebraska' with thirteen, and the least common was 'Southwest Nebraska' with six. The range was small but the number of businesses slightly increased across the state from west to east, maybe a connection with population density of Nebraska.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected from the three phone interviews along with survey questions that required some short answer responses. The qualitative data from the survey was listed into four topics and trends: 1) their motivation for beginning an agritourism business, 2) why they chose to market individually or as a cooperative, 3) their marketing process, and 4) how their business could be more successful. Most participants agreed that Nebraska has a large potential to develop the agritourism industry.

There seemed to be a trend on people's motivation to begin an agritourism business in Nebraska. There reoccurring responses were additional income, to educate visitors about agriculture, and to share the scenic views of the Sandhills. From a personal observation while conducting the interviews, owners seemed most excited about the educational role they offer to guests and teaching them about agriculture. Some of the interviewees and participants answered,

> There is a high satisfaction feeling with educating people about agriculture and reconnecting people with the land. Guests have reiterated they learn so much about how agriculture systems work and about the ecology of land here, which makes us feel good. And we enjoy learning about their background as well. - *Interviewee*
>
> We are getting too far removed from our rural roots and disconnected with the land. We're trying to do a service to others to help them be in touch with the land, animals, and food which is rare for most people these days. - *Interviewee*
>
> We want to reconnect people with the rural areas and where their food is produced and how it is produced.
>
> I love the Sandhills of Nebraska, it's where I grew up and agritourism helps people find beauty in the rural environment
>
> Develop a sense of community pride and unity.
>
> To educate and entertain…to celebrate excellence in agriculture industry, commerce, education, sciences, and technology. Also to reinforce a sense of community and shared culture for the citizens of Nebraska.
>
> Extra income and to offer the beauty of this area to others.
>
> Supplement our ranching income and possibly be able to bring our children back to the ranch to live and operate the ranch and agritourism business someday soon.
>
> To promote the beauty and uniqueness of the Nebraska Sandhillls.

The motivation and interest seems to be a topic that most agritouirsm business owners can agree on. However, when responding to the question about why they market individually or as a cooperation, most people seemed to be solely concerned about themselves and less willing to support others agritourism owners; also not interested on expanding the industry on a regional scale. Participants responded with,

> We are the owners and want to promote our own business, not those of competitors.
>
> It began as a family owned business.

I felt I could create a marketing strategy on my own in order to better target the type of customer I need to be successful.

It is the way it has always been here.

We market our own business so that we can update whenever we want as far as our website, rack cards or business cards. I have marketing experience in the financial world and understand how, where, and when to market in small communities.

We weren't interested in becoming a large corporation - just a small homey atmosphere.

There were a few participants who responded stating that they currently are or have attempted to market their business with a cooperation. Here are their remarks,

Often times it is more powerful to be a part of a partnership/coop to inform those unfamiliar with Nebraska that we have many opportunities. Nebraska Tourism, regional groups or local coops make money sense. Also the cost savings factors of breaking down the thousands of dollars it takes for national marketing.

We belong to Northwest Nebraska High Country which was a few ag related individuals who started a marketing cooperative several years ago and has grown to probably 25 or more now. We also advertise on our own as well.

Advertisements are less expensive in a co-op.

We are a stand-alone business, though we have partnered with other organizations to cross promote from time to time.

The marketing aspect of these business owners did not seem to be a high issue of concern. The majority of respondents agreed that word-of-mouth was the best and most widely used concept in terms marketing throughout Nebraska. A variety of people reported that they use local newspapers, radio ads, television, internet social media, and personal websites. Here are some of their responses,

We've found that the internet and word of mouth are our most effecive means.

Word of mouth only.

Word of mouth and newspaper stories

Website, brochures, and sometimes newspapers.

Facebook, twitter, limited television, posters, printed schedules, and a web site. We are moving towards more social media networking rather than traditional print and radio ads.

Marketing has been limited to local newspapers and radio.

Marketing is all done through personal contacts, and referrals.

The survey asked participants what they feel would be necessary to make their business more successful. There was a large diversity of responses but a number of people did mention working together with other businesses to discuss ideas and methods to increase agritourism as a whole in the state of Nebraska. Some responses eluded towards less regulations and more assistance from state governments; and others even mentioned creating a cooperation in local regions to promote agritourism. Here are some responses,

> Cooperation with other agribusiness ventures along the highway between within 300 miles. We could supply a diverse range of experiences for all kinds of travelers.
>
> The ability to utilize a database to research various business participating in agritourism.
>
> More statewide participation! The Central Nebraska community is very strong in numbers and support of agritourism! We would also like to pull in more participants and visitors from our bordering states in all directions.
>
> The rural areas of America have some of the most distinguished, unique, and certainly under-developed 'attractions' that can possibly be offered to today's tourist industry. Our audience is typically older, so they tend to go only where they like and are less adventurous than the younger generations. But it's the young that can find a tremendous new experience once they take the initiative to explore the less publicized offerings that rural entertainment provides.
>
> Get the government and all of their over-regulations off my back.
>
> Education of business owners, assistance with promotion through free or low cost ads, grants, low rate loans, partners with different outdoor/conservation minded entities such as Nebraska Game and Parks or The Nature Conservancy. Work with different educational programs such as universities to provide internships and have mentors from other successful businesses. The one I see as my role-model at the present is Calmus Outfitters.

The interviewees were asked if they have noticed any new trends in agritourism in Nebraska over recent years. They agreed that there has been an increase in the number of visitors interested in the ecology and management practices of prairies and wildlife. As environmental awareness is on the rise, guests want to learn with hands-on experiences and adventures with the natural world. One participant said,

> There are fewer rednecks and tree huggers, and more people who seem interested in actual conservation. People want to come to see how the natural systems work out here. Bird watching is on the rise year after year; and hunting is viewed more often as a conservation method as well as recreation these days. We definitely see more true environmentally focused folks now. - *Interviewee*

Another consensus about agritourism potential in Nebraska was the unique environment and beauty of the Sandhills in Nebraska. People have lived here for many generations and a large part of the Sandhills still contains its natural habitat. All interviewees stressed the attractiveness of the Sandhills and the environment it offers. Here's how one stated his opinion,

> I've traveled to over a dozen countries in over 60 years now; I go to places for their geographical landmarks and beauty. Believe me that the Sandhills are just as unique as any of those places, I think Nebraska should be proud of what it has to offer, its natural beauty. - *Interviewee*

There is definitely an increasing demand for agritourism activities in Nebraska. Many survey participants and interviewees stated that their guided hunting trips are completely full for the upcoming season and guests have scheduled trips multiple years in advance to reserve a weekend. With a continued rise in agritourism business development, Nebraska will be able to accommodate more visitors, creating better rural economies and bringing in more tax revenues.

DISCUSSION

The primary issue address in the research on this thesis was *Comparing the Success of Individually Owned Agritourism Businesses to Cooperatives.* As this issue was addressed, many other observations were discovered through survey respondents and interviews with business owners. Research found that business owners recognize the great potential agritourism has to develop in Nebraska, and a growing number of farmers and ranchers are beginning to understand that agritourism can offer as an additional method of income.

The number of individually owned businesses compared to cooperations makes for a more competitive industry. The high number of individually owned businesses creates for more competition in an industry that would thrive better if businesses would work in a local or regional cooperation. Forming cooperations make economic sense but would also neighboring landowners could create healthier habitat and wildlife populations. With the growing trend of agritourism businesses in Nebraska, and as cultural trends are shifting towards environmental friendly based operations, the small and new agritourism industry in Nebraska could become a leader by establishing a great reputation of agritourism.

Nebraska has an exceptional land resource in the Sandhills and is a unique place for outdoor enthusiasts to explore. The area near Calamus Outfitters in north central Nebraska is considered an Important Bird Area (IBA) consists of more than 48,000 acres and is habitat to 145 bird species; the species of conservation concern has been a huge marketing tool attracting many visitors and the attention of major magazines such as National Geographic (Price).

To reach the point of obtaining a large market and demand for agritourism, there are a variety of things the agritourism industry in Nebraska needs to implement: effective marketing, state government assistance, and working together or collaboration. The marketing approach for agritourism in Nebraska could be greatly improved. Marketing via word of mouth to promote business can be

effective, but is not always reliable until the business has a strong and positive establishment. People are excited to experience rural tourism but often times do not know what to expect. We need to establish a set of standards, or minimal criteria, for business owners to set so visitors understand the level of service they will be given. To be the most effective for tourism planning purposes, regions should have similar characteristics throughout (Kuehn, 2000). If Nebraska had more modernized agritourism facilities in the Sandhills, further business recruitment and workforce development could be created. One interviewee put it this way,

> Anybody thinking about opening up a tourism place should be required to participate in some hospitality classes, paid for by the government. Set standards for how to treat visitors. Everyone needs the basis of how to run a good tourism business; the government should take it as an investment to the state. Currently, in Nebraska, there is a lot of different levels of service in agritourism. We needs to set standards, help owners understand what they are getting into, visitors understand what to expect, and build a good image and reputation across the state. - *Interviewee*

Government also needs to play a key role to help develop the agritourism industry. First, potential businesses are afraid to begin due to liability issues of operating an agritourism business. For example, if a guest falls off a horse while on a trail ride and breaks their leg, whom is responsible? One interviewee who previously lived in Colorado said,

> Liability costs are too high. Colorado does not have near the issue compared to Nebraska, and it stops a lot of people from trying to start an operation. - *Interviewee*

Secondly, government could assist in the expansion of agritourism by offering greater subsidies and/or larger tax breaks for those who chose operate an agritourism business. More businesses have begun to open in recent years, but if Nebraska would really like to magnify the rural tourism industry, there needs to be a larger economic incentive from the government for people to begin operating. Along with economic benefits, there should also be conservation methods implemented by state agencies, such as the Nebraska Game and Parks, and continued to be practiced by business owners. Improved prairie and wildlife management would help as a conservation method for these areas, as well as attract more

visitors. With government assistance, more agritourism businesses will develop and a larger market will exist.

In Nebraska, people are often raised to be independent when it comes to the workforce and supporting your family. The mindset of working together on a regional or even a local scale with other agritourism businesses has yet to sink in. As mentioned above, there are many benefits for working together with others in your industry: learning from others, less expensive advertising, stronger community, referrals from others, less liability, etc. However, the Midwest cultural tradition of looking out for yourself and your family before others, is a tough mentality to change and may take a while for owners to become more open-minded about working with each other rather than against. Owners can work together and still continue to sustain the same cultural values and traditions. Community-based ecotourism (CBET) has become a popular tool for biodiversity conservation; based on the principle that biodiversity must pay for itself by generating economic benefits, particularly for local people (Kiss 2004). Culture, which is often well preserved in rural areas, is a valuable resource to include; and community-based partnerships such as cooperatives have the power to be very effective (MacDonald, 2003). Nevertheless, once businesses are established and owners across the state realize first-hand the benefits of working more as a cooperation and less as an individual, then will agritourism industry be more effective.

CONCLUSION

The agritourism industry will continue to grow in Nebraska. Consumer demand for rural nature-based activities remains a largely untapped source of income on the Northern Great Plains' privately owned grasslands (Schutz). Nebraska agritourism offers guests farming and ranching education, human connection with the land, outdoor adventure activities, and scenic views. For local communities agritourism creates employment opportunities and positive economic impacts for other local businesses. Agritourism offers an alternative form of traditional agriculture land use along with supplemental income methods.

The objective of this study was to compare various methods (individually owned vs cooperative) of agritourism business approaches in Nebraska. Both quantitative and qualitative data allowed for other findings within the research. Agritourism is a new developing industry in Nebraska but has high potential for growth across the state. Data showed that there is an increase in agritourism businesses beginning each year, and that farmers and ranchers understand the growing interest of agritourism. As more businesses develop, agritourism cooperations make long term sense both financially and environmentally as owners begin to work together to expand the industry.

As more studies are performed on agritourism in Nebraska, a better understanding to business approaches and their benefits will be learned. Although statistical data was great for this study and in most cases is necessary for research, verbal interviews allowed for better communication and understandings of how actual business owners operate their business and their personal experience working with agritourism.

Figures and Graphs

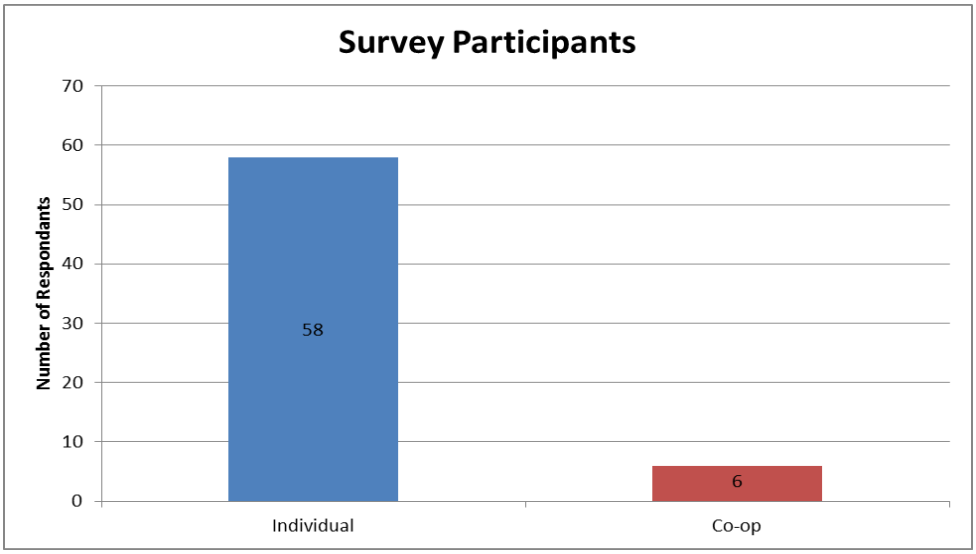

Figure 1 - the number of respondents who are owned individually or part of cooperation

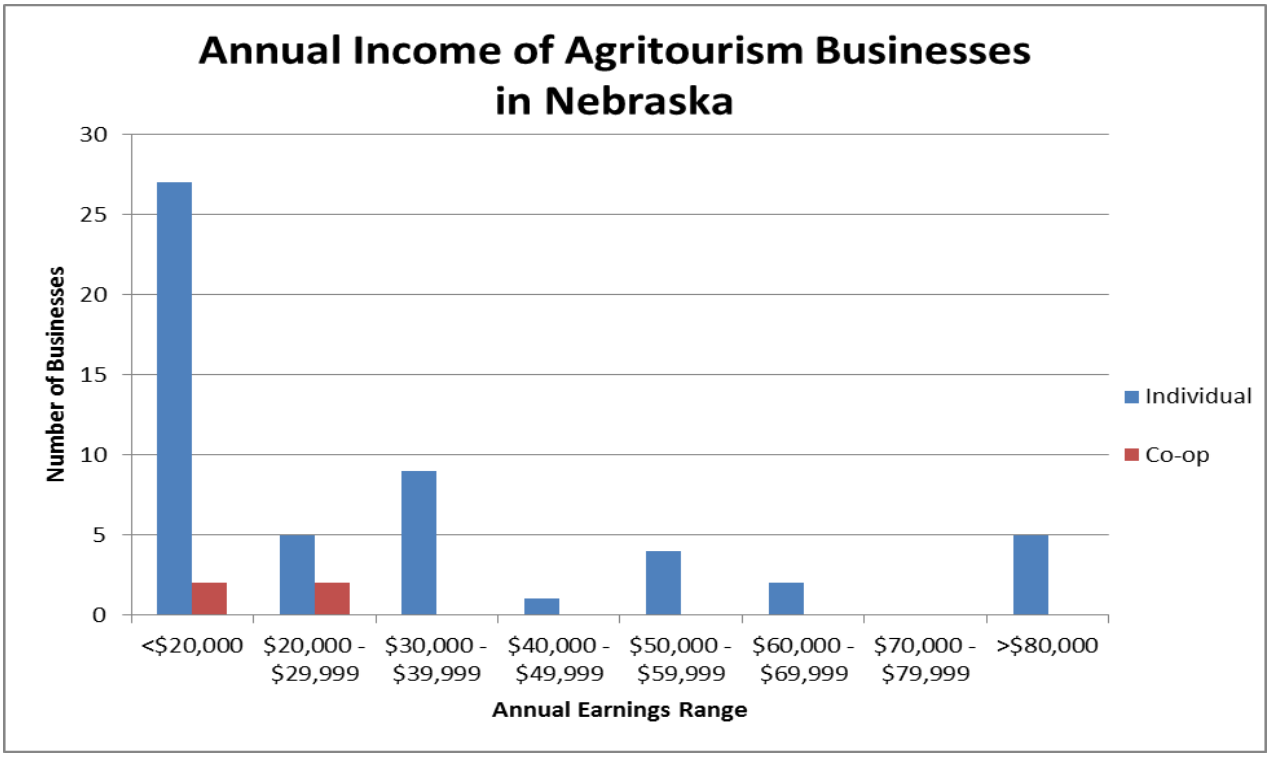

Figure 2 - annual income of agirtourism businesses in Nebrasa

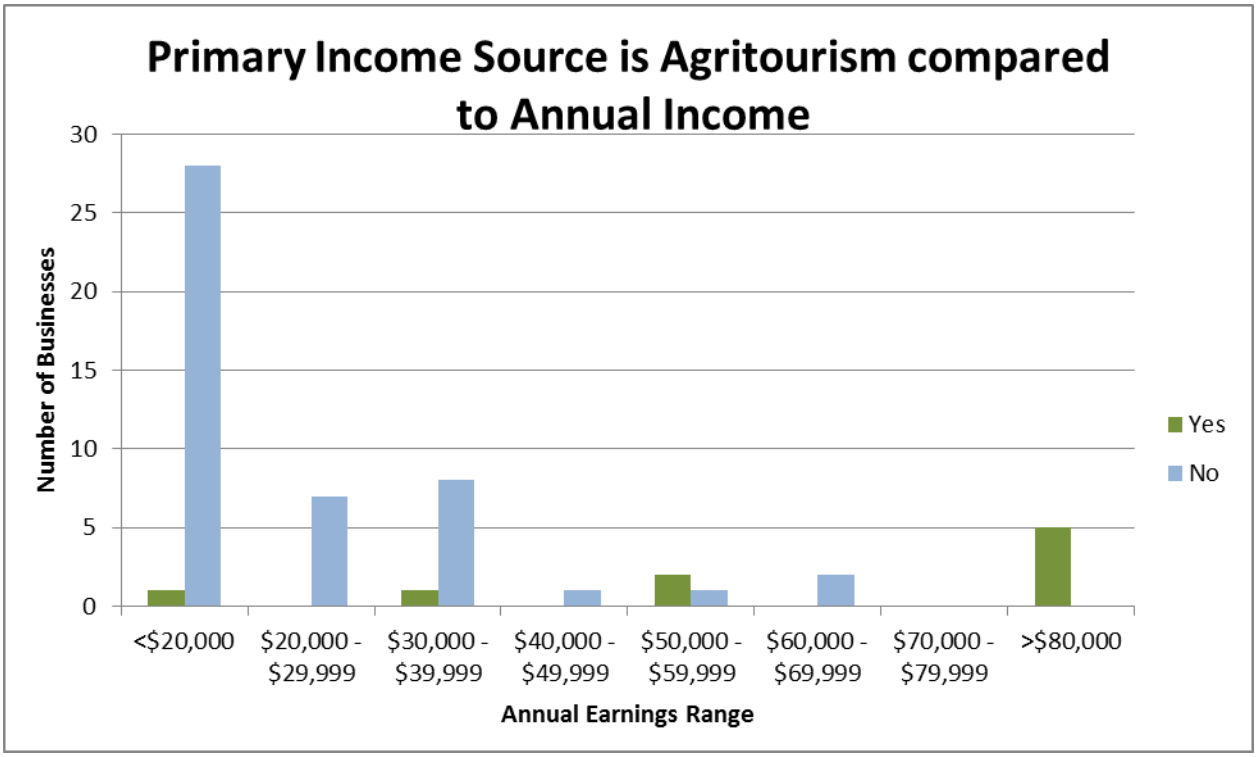

Figure 3 - agritourism as primary source of income, copmared to annual income from agritourism business

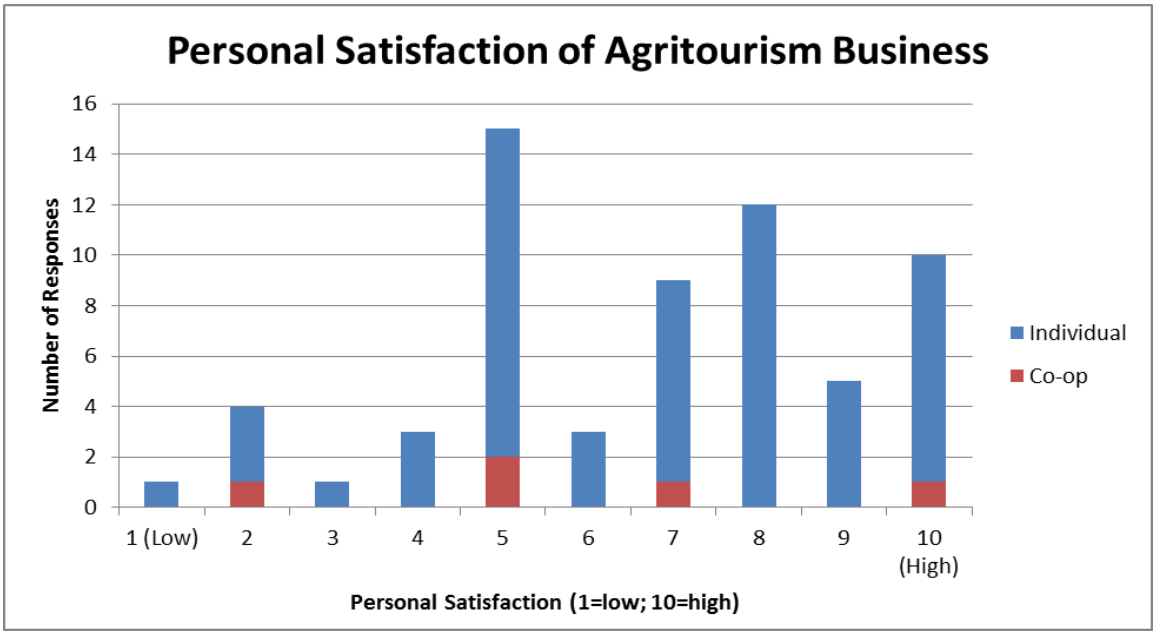

Figure 4 - personal satisfaction of agritourism business owners in Nebraska

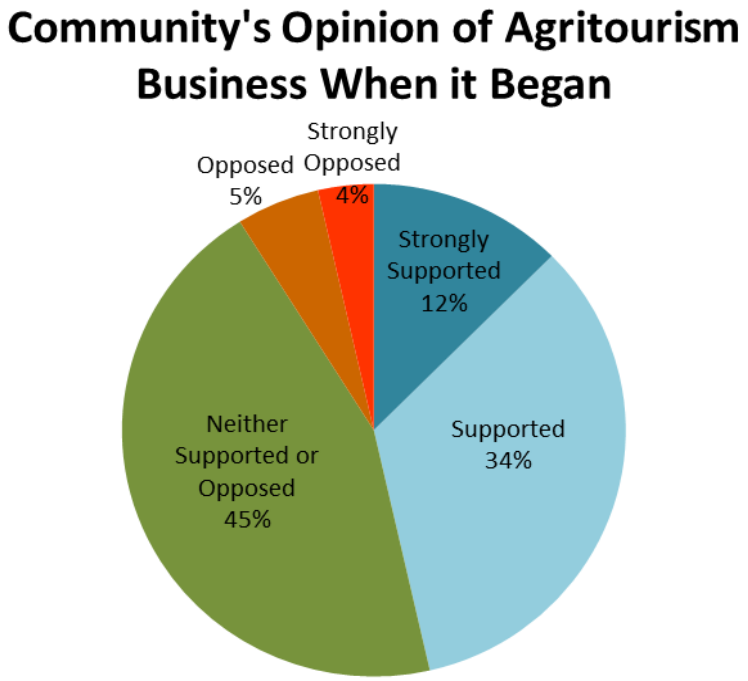

Figure 5 - community's opinion of agritourism business when businesses began

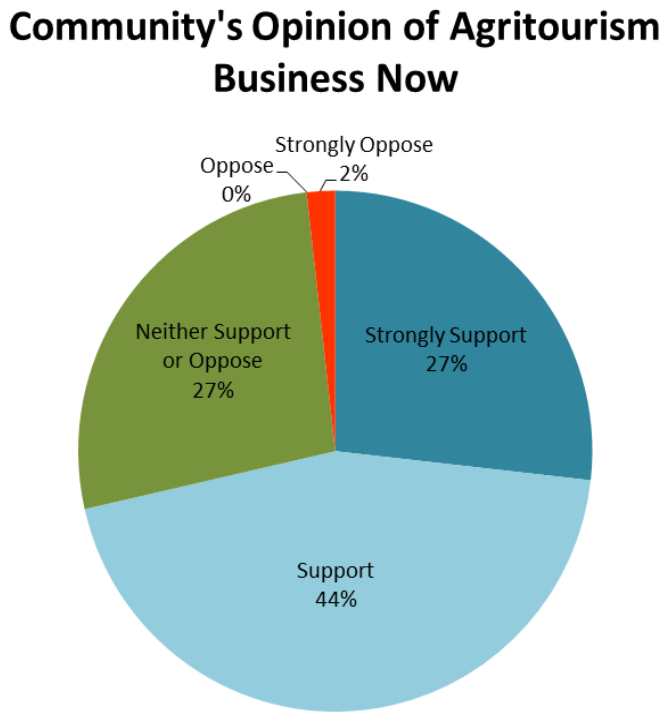

Figure 6 - community's current opinion of agritourism business

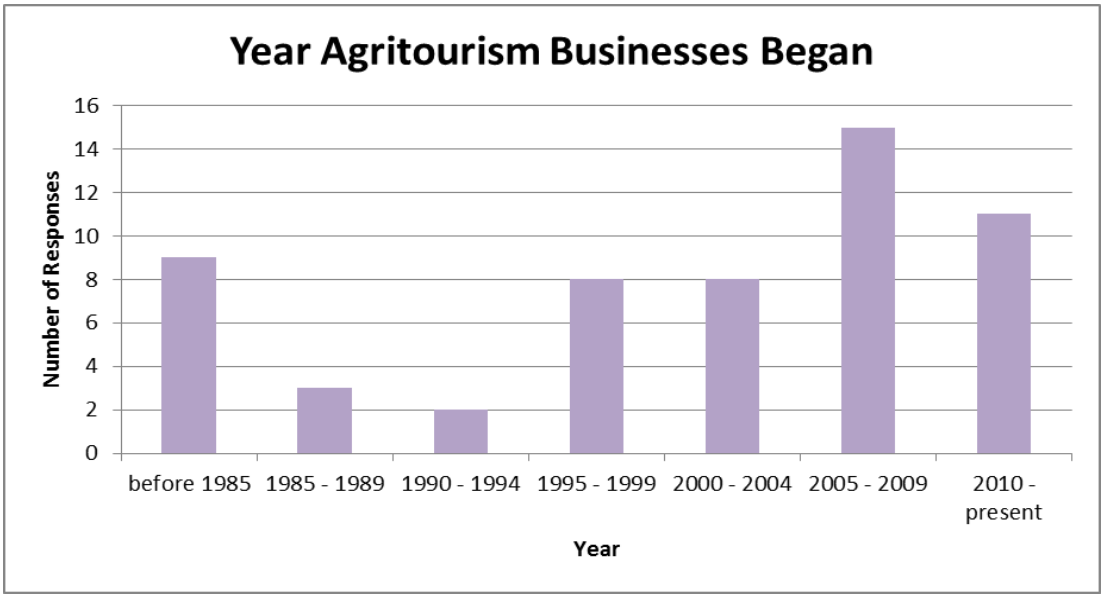

Figure 7 - year agtitourism business began

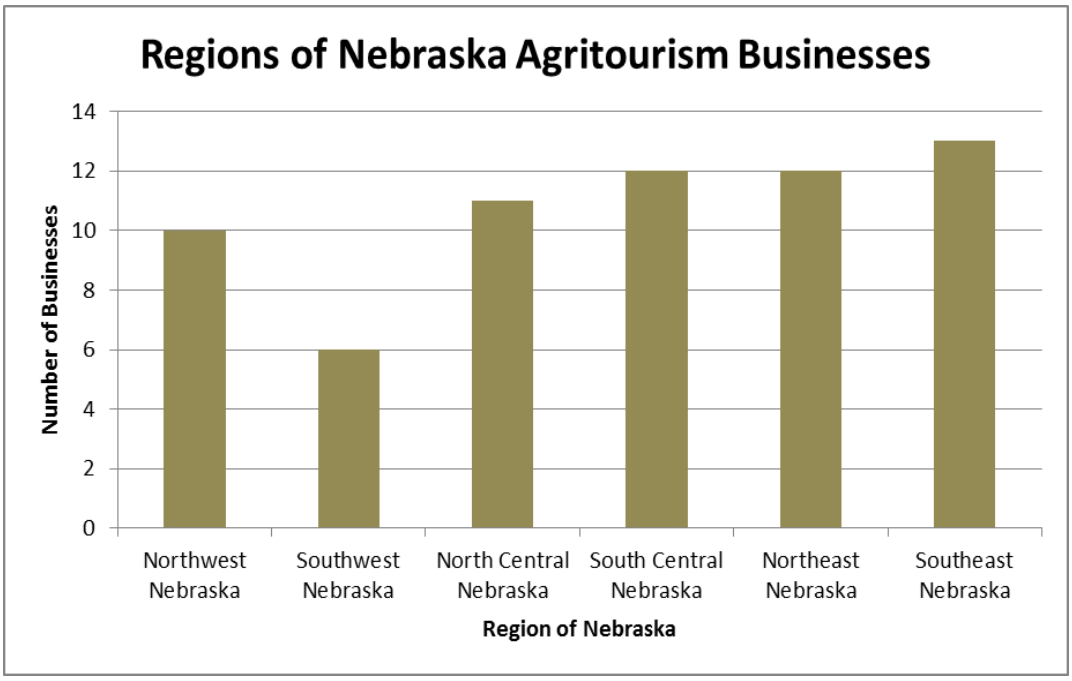

Figure 8 - region of Nebraska agritourism businesses

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Are you male or female?

☐ Male ☐ Female

What is your age range?

☐<30 ☐30-39 ☐40-49 ☐50-59 ☐60-69 ☐70-79 ☐80+

Is your agritourism business part of a marketing co-op or marked on your own?

☐ Co-op ☐ Own

Where in Nebraska is your business located?

☐ Northwest Nebraska ☐ North Central Nebraska ☐ Northeast Nebraska
☐ Southwest Nebraska ☐ South Central Nebraska ☐ Northeast Nebraska

Is agritourism your primary source of income?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What percentage of your business income is derived from the agritourism portion? ____%

How many people does the agritourism part of your business employ?

☐ <5 ☐ 5-14 ☐ 15-24 ☐ 25+

What activities does the agritourism portion of your business offer?

☐ Hunting ☐ Fishing ☐Guided Tours ☐Trail Rides ☐ Hiking ☐ Camping
☐ Bed & Breakfast ☐Bird Watching ☐ River Trips ☐ Mountain Biking ☐ Museum
☐ Farmers Market ☐ Other

What year did the agritourism portion of your business start? _____

What was your motivation to begin an agritourism business?

Explain the marketing process of the agritourism portion of your business (internet, radio, tv, brochures, etc.).

Why did you choose to either be part of a marketing cooperative or market your business individually?

What is the annual cost to operate the agritourism portion of your business?

☐ <$10,000 ☐$10,000 - $19,999 ☐ $20,000 - $29,999
☐ $30,000 - $39,999 ☐ $40,000 - $49,999 ☐ >$50,000

How much annual income does the agritourism portion of your business generate?

☐ <$20,000 ☐ $20,000 - $29,999 ☐ $30,000 - $39,999 ☐ $40,000 - $49,999
☐ $50,000 - $59,999 ☐ $60,000 - $69,999 ☐ $70,000 - $79,999 ☐ >$80,000

How do you think your salary compares to other careers in your community?

☐ Below Average ☐ Slightly Below Average ☐ Average
☐ Slightly Above Average ☐ Above Average

How are the spendings of the agritourism portion of your business distributed [in terms of percentage]?
Marketing:___% Update & Development:___% Employment Costs: ___%
Utilities: ___% Other: ___%

Over the past five years have profits been…
☐ Decreasing ☐ Slightly Decreasing ☐ Steady ☐ Slightly Increasing ☐ Increasing

In terms of personal satisfaction only, how satisfied are you with the agritourism portion of your business? Not satisfied (1) through extremely satisfied (10): _____

When the agritourism portion of your business began, what was your local community's opinion?
☐ Strongly opposed ☐ Opposed ☐ Neither opposed or supported
☐ Supported ☐ Strongly supported

Currently, what is your local community's opinion of the agritourism portion of your business...
☐ Strongly opposed ☐ Opposed ☐ Neither opposed or supported
☐ Supported ☐ Strongly supported

What do you think would make your agritourism business more successful?

Appendix B: Informed Consent Letter

Informed Consent

Title of Student Research Project: *Evaluating the Success of Individually Owned vs. Cooperative Agri/Ecotourism Businesses in Nebraska*

Dear Participant,

I am asking for your voluntary participation in my Senior Thesis Project about Agri/Ecotourism in Nebraska. Please read the information below about the project. If you would like to participate, please complete the survey attached with the email. Thank you in advance for your time.

Purpose of the project: The purpose of this project is to better understand the agritourism and ecotourism industry in Nebraska. This project will allow for improved understanding about Nebraska's rural tourism industry's impacts on the economy of local communities and the state; also comparing success of individually owned businesses and cooperatives.

Participation includes: Answering survey questions to the best of your ability.

Time required for participation: The time required to complete this interview ranges between 10 to 40 minutes.

Risks: There are no known risks with this project.

Benefits: Participation in this study will allow for a better understanding of the agritourism and ecotourism industry in Nebraska.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative consequences. Also, if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time.

All responses are anonymous.

By answering the questions I am attesting that I have read and understand the information above and freely give my consent to participate.

Sincerely,
Craig Easley

Student Researcher: Craig Easley
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Advisor: Dr. Lisa Pennisi
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