

## Summary Report of September 26, 2019 Workshop #2

### **Introduction:**

Alberta Open Farm Days has served as a catalyst to mobilize agriculture stakeholders to explore diversifying and strengthening their revenue potential by educating consumers through on farm experiences. Community Futures Wild Rose has provided regional leadership in building awareness and uptake by agritourism operators, leading to significant growth in Open Farm Days participation in the region. Over the past year, Community Futures Wild Rose has engaged agritourism stakeholders in a study of the industry resulting in the development of a regional strategy, positioning Alberta's Wild Rose region as a leader in agritourism.

Please find the following, a summary of our CFWR Agritourism workshop #2 on Thursday, September 26, 2019, 10:00am – 3:30pm. This summary is divided into the following sections: who attended, definition of agritourism, agritourism opportunities, region themes, critical success factors & leadership and next steps.

A group of interested individuals including farms, ranches and regional stakeholders came together to participate, share and support the growth of agritourism in the region.

### **Attending Participants:**

Wendy Zak, Greentree Village  
 BJ Janzen, Rosebud Country Inn  
 Christina Stender, EH Farms  
 Matt Hill, Business Link  
 Sarah Schumacher, Wheatland County  
 Kristyn Smigelski, Rocky View County  
 Brenda Hanson, Government of Alberta, Economic Development, Trade & Tourism  
 Alexandra Ross, Town of Strathmore  
 Bruce Klaiber, CYBER Investments Ltd. and Historical Society and owner of the Historic Barn  
 Lonna Hoggan, Canadian Badlands Tourism and B&B Owner near Rosebud  
 Carolyn Melnyk, Government of Alberta, Ministry of Labour

Hayley Poirier, Strathmore Chamber of Commerce  
 Sydney Greidanus, Bee Keeper, High River  
 Matthew Gosling, Premium Ag & community citizen  
 Jacqueline Buchanon, EDO Three Hills  
 Megan Nimchuk, 748 Farms & Organic Abilities  
 Rhonda Stockwell, WDHS  
 Patrick Earl, Wheatland County  
 Terri Kinsman, Rocking R Guest Ranch  
 Andi Dzilums, Travel Alberta  
 Elaine MacDonald and Dalia Cheshire, Rockyford  
 Eric Burton, Factor 5  
 Wendy Gerbrandt, CFWR  
 Keleigh Cormier, ClearThink Group  
 Pierre Cormier, ClearThink Group

### ***I. What is Agritourism?***

The essence of agritourism: Any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch for authentic experiences.

### ***II. Agritourism Opportunities***

Agritourism combines the best of what we produce locally with the public's desire for local products and experiences resulting in increased local revenue and in keeping family farms viable. In other words, agritourism can be considered "a sustainable strategy", as it offers good opportunities for business and employment, conserving and developing rural landscape while answering to tourism demand.

Agritourism enterprise category types as defined by Rutgers University – Cooperative Extension. Farms can get involved in agritourism along a wide spectrum of channels and change as the goals of the farm changes:

- Supplementary enterprise: Agritourism as a minor activity that supports other products on the farm.
- Complementary enterprise: Agritourism activities share equal footing with other enterprises in the farm’s product mix.
- Primary enterprise: Agritourism as the dominant/primary activity on the farm.

There are five (5) agritourism development options for consideration of farms:

- Educational Experiences. Visitors enjoying an education experience at the farm. Learning something new or improve a skill through hands-on experiences, classes, demonstrations, and tours, or through conversations with the farmer.
- Entertainment Farms: or Agri-tainment. Provides a rural setting for families and groups who want adventurous fun on the farm.
- Special Events. Can be either a private party or public event and can range from on-farm dinners to Alberta Open Farm Days.
- Outdoor Recreation - Farm and Ranch Recreation. Appeals to urban populations searching for “down to earth” fun recreational activities close to home.
- Services. Includes complimentary services such as accommodations (B&B, camping), foodservices, farm retail sales, tours / trails).

### III. Themes:

The two primary themes identified through research and consultation which offer the ability to expand and develop into an agritourism strategy and action plan for the region:

- Culinary
- Our history and lifestyle ‘out here’ (linking past to present and lifestyle/culture)

Project ideas, by theme, from the group:

#### History & Lifestyle

1. Every farm has a history and unique product
  - Historic walk / drive tour
  - Tour homes and farms
  - Historical equipment
  - Children’s camps / hands on activities
2. History tour with augmented reality
  - Scenic tour
  - Scavenger hunt
  - Pioneer demonstrations
3. Historical landmarks
  - Irrigation system
  - Rail

#### Culinary

1. F3 (Farm to Farm Feast)
  - Pioneer themes
  - Authentic transportation
  - Progressive dinner
  - Dance

### IV. Critical Success Factors and Potential Leadership:

Critical success factors identified by the group with the potential of who leads.

| <i>Critical Success Factors</i>                                | <i>Potential Leadership</i>                 | <i>Notes</i>   |
|--|---|--|
| Organization and Collaboration<br>(Bridging everyone together) | Community Futures; Industry; Municipalities | - Engagement plan<br>- Shared understanding of Agritourism.<br>- Focus and vision. |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What's here, resources available, modernization, promotion and marketing.</li> </ul>  |
| Evaluation of agritourism businesses in the Region | Community Futures; Government of Alberta: Tourism Division; Travel Alberta   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Database and categorization of farms and level of market readiness.</li> <li>- Guidelines of what market ready is.</li> <li>- Level of commitment from interested farms.</li> </ul>   |
| Business Planning and Training                     | Community Futures; Government of Alberta: Tourism Division; Travel Alberta   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Farms understand tourism and what it means for their business, potential of 4 season product offerings, visitor friendly.</li> <li>- Business Plan development.</li> <li>- Knowledge of capital and funding options.</li> </ul>             |
| Marketing of Market Ready Businesses               | Industry; Community Futures; Travel Alberta; Government of Alberta: Tourism Division; Canadian Badlands Tourism; Strathmore & District Chamber of Commerce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marketing / promotion of those existing businesses who are market ready.</li> </ul>   |
| Government Expectations / Requirements             | Community Futures; Provincial Government; Municipal Governments  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding what the needs of agritourism businesses are and how they can be assisted.</li> <li>- Economic impact of agritourism in the region.</li> <li>- Rules and regulations (health, safety, alcohol).</li> <li>- Labour.</li> </ul> |

## V. **Conclusion and Next Steps:**

Action plans will be fleshed out to direct the agritourism project going forward, which support the themes of Culinary and Our history and lifestyle 'out here'. This will be included in the final report, at the end of October.

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback please reach out to the study team at 780-922-3211 or email [keleigh@clearthinkinc.com](mailto:keleigh@clearthinkinc.com).

Thank you!