

Host Farm Dinners

AGRITOURISM BEST PRACTICES SERIES

F *exciting way to showcase farm products and teach*

Assessing and Planning

Always check with your town's zoning officials about your intent to have a farm dinner.

Learning about zoning regulations early and acting in compliance with them will protect you down the road.

These could include raising money for farm infrastructure, a cause you are aligned with, CSA shares for low-income families, or simply increasing farm revenue. Additional goals might include showing customer appreciation, showcasing a new piece of the farm, celebrating the farm crew, or offering a fun evening in the field.

If yes, identify skills and how each can contribute to making a successful event. Consider how much time you have to put into organizing the dinner. If you don't have the time or expertise, consider hiring someone who does. Additionally, contact your town health officer and town clerk to confirm that no other permits are needed before hosting the event.

Managing Liability

Liability exposure will always be present when there are employees or guests on the farm. There are many types of liability exposure:

Premises Liability

Property owner fails to protect people from potentially hazardous conditions. Customer is injured on property or "premises."

EXAMPLES:

Product Liability

Customer is injured by a product that was prepared and/or served to them.

EXAMPLES:

consuming food

Property Damage

Customer's property is damaged by business/employee.

EXAMPLE:

Personal Liability

Have a written agreement detailing each party's responsibilities.

Review insurance policies regularly (at least annually) with an attorney and insurance provider.

Ask guests about food allergies ahead of time, and describe clearly if and how you are able to accommodate them.

Check with your liability insurance provider to see if you need additional coverage for hosting dinners on your farm.

Marketing

There are two layers to marketing farm dinners: marketing the event, and then marketing your farm and all that you have to offer during the event. Bringing people to your farm is a powerful way to build customer relations and cultivate customer loyalty. Before the dinner, your efforts will naturally focus on selling tickets to the event. It's important not to lose sight of the marketing opportunity you are creating at the dinner.

Preparing for Your Dinner

- Will your event be rain or shine?
- Will your dinner be a buffet, family style or plated?
- Will you offer farm related activities for kids, families or adults?
- Email group day before with time to arrive, what to wear, what to expect.
- Pick up donations from other farms, or purchase other farm products.
- Harvest all dinner food.



