

# Verdant View Farm

B&B | Farm Tours | Grass-Fed Beef

- 5th-generation farm in Lancaster County
- 54 years: B&B
- 12 years: Farm Tours
- 37 cow-calf beef herd
- 74-acres crops and 25-acres pasture





# Outline

The Pandemic Pivot

Understanding Needs &  
Setting Expectations

Exceeding Expectations



# Generational Changes

In agritourism and for our family

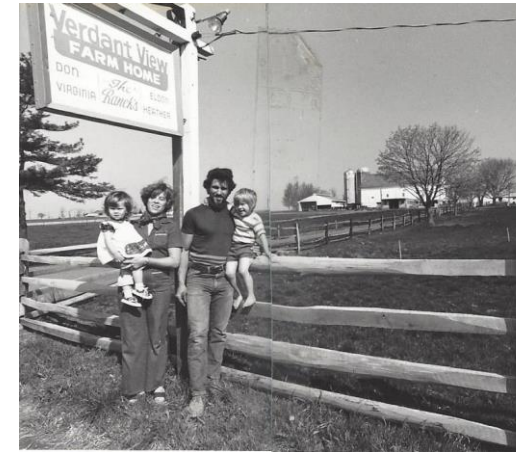
1916-1946



1946-1975



1975-2013



2013-present



US Data	1920	1945	1974	2017
# Farm Operators (primary producer)	6,400,000	5,800,000	2,279,270	2,042,220
Population (millions)	106	140	214	325
% Farmers	6.04%	4.14%	1.07%	0.63%
Share farmers working off-farm		27%	54%	93%

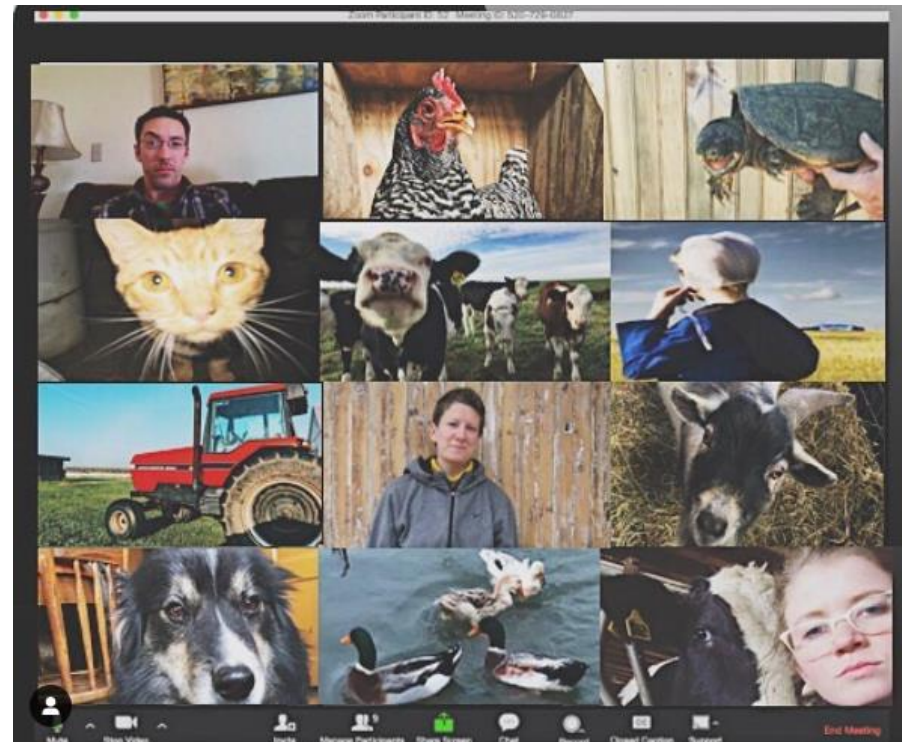
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture Historical Archive, <http://agcensus.mannlib.cornell.edu/AgCensus/homepage.do>



# Farm Hospitality:

## Pivoting during the Pandemic

- How can we provide a safe & welcoming environment?
  - Listen to customers, coworkers, & family
  - Meet others where they feel comfortable
- What do we already provide?
  - Multiple handwashing stations
  - Plenty of space to spread out
  - Unstructured play during a farm stay
  - Outdoor dining, recreation
  - Private accommodations
  - A sense of humor



# What do visitors seek?

## Pre-covid: Activities & Options

- Hands-on activities for kids
- Dedicated time with the farmer, farm crew
- Family-style breakfast indoors
- Animal interaction
- Accommodations with opportunities for their children to play with other children
- Packing in lots of other activities in the surrounding area
- Regular cancellation policy

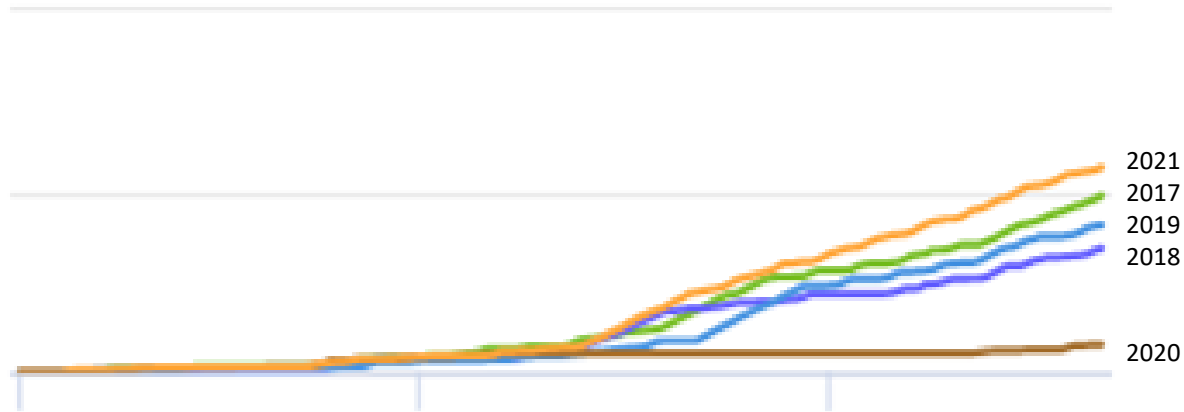
## Post-covid: Safety & Retreat

- Safe environment (outdoors, indoors)
- Limited interaction
- Outdoor dining, 6 ft. spacing, sitting at separate tables
- Animal interaction with social distancing
- Private accommodations, private tours
- Limiting off-farm activities, staying on the farm all day
- Covid cancellation policy

# The Great Balancing Act

How do we accommodate customers while safeguarding family, farm, and/or business needs?

How do we account for changes in staffing, mitigate liability, and reduce business exhaustion caused by the pandemic?



Room Revenue (January 1-June 10) Comparison, 2017-2021





# How We Pivoted

## Bed & Breakfast

- Offer private accommodations
- Modify check-in, payment procedures to limit exposure
- Adjust breakfast: food prep, seating visitors, serving food
- Enclose outdoor dining area to extend the seasons
- Update housekeeping procedures
- Adjust farm activities
- Improving Wifi

## Farm Tours

- Offer private tours
- Limit tour size / capacity
- Discontinue activities where people must be close together (bottle-feeding of calves, bunnies, workshops)
- Sanitize credit card and pen after purchase
- Encourage handwashing





# Setting Expectations

## With a Farm Experience

### Before they arrive

- Lots of communication (phone, email, etc.)
- Items to pack
- Policies
- FAQs

### Upon arrival

- Signage
- Self check-in note
- Masks, social distancing, interacting outdoors
- Meeting them where they are comfortable

### During their visit

- In-room materials
- Follow protocols, be consistent







# All that is Unspoken

- Visitors arrive with covid baggage
  - Isolation, mental health fatigue
  - Stress related to changes in work, education, childcare, family dynamics
- Visitors crave something different, a retreat, feeling “normal” again



# Rooted Hospitality

The farm can provide grounding to others as she shows what is *unchanging* in the midst of this upheaval.

- A welcoming smile
- Animal therapy
- Connection to others, animals, plants, sunshine
- Breath of fresh air
- Unstructured play for children
- Sustainable practices
- Warm hospitality







# Exceeding Guest Expectations

During their Visit

- Focus on key opportunities to connect, build relationships, and foster dialogue
- Give visitors space to be at ease, to be themselves
- Share a positive, welcoming spirit that allows “normalcy” to return

# Exceeding Expectations



pastorlaura9 wrote a review Jul 2020

Dormont, Pennsylvania • 26 contributions



## Awesome Socially-Distanced Vacation!

"Our family of three, including a young child, found the ideal vacation-during-pandemic in Verdant View! We stayed in the little White House, as the only guests in the house for most of the week, which meant we had a kitchen and living room to use. The playground, pond, farm animals, and farm provided plenty of opportunity for the little guy to be entertained (with parental supervision). The staff wore masks and kept socially-distanced as much as possible. (It's hard to keep distant when teaching a kid to milk a cow.). The farm chores in the morning were a joy, the breakfast gourmet, and our hosts made us feel super welcome. Plus, my son cried for a full half hour after we left because he wanted to go back. A family win!"

[Read more](#) ▼

Date of stay: July 2020



# Key Takeaways

- Agritourism is a niche market, and people are eager to use outdoor options in these pandemic times
- By pivoting operations, agritourism businesses can continue to provide welcoming and safe opportunities for visitors.
- Setting expectations and meeting people where they are comfortable enhances guest experiences.
- Ultimately, we can help to build connections and provide opportunities for rejuvenation.





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