



Side of Agritourism; Farm/Food Safety; Event and Emergency Planning; Innovative Strategies to Market your Agritourism and Farm-Based Education Enterprise - Social Media, Collaborations and Partnerships. The collaborative capstone trip was a 3-day agritourism tour involving 32 participants.

Upon completion of the project, evaluations identified that 100% of the 75 participants had implemented at least two risk management tools/practices in their agritourism operations that contribute to improving farm viability; 50 participants had made significant improvements to their current/planned operations; and 25 had launched a new/improved agritourism or farm-based educational enterprise. Additionally, 32 participants had already reported improved farm viability/profitability as a result of changes based on workshop and technical assistance, and 17 reported improved quality of life (positive changes in personal time/personal satisfaction).

There was wonderful enthusiasm and passion around this project. It helped create a network of educators and producers who were able to learn from each other so that best practices could be translated into an improved program for building sustainable, profitable and viable direct markets in West Virginia.

In addition, the project provided an opportunity to build a unique partnership of agritourism-related agencies and stakeholders in West Virginia, who support both producers and agricultural service providers in their efforts to better manage risks and returns.

Growing Agritourism and Farm-Based Education in West Virginia - Managing Risks for Improved Income Diversification

Evaluations from risk management education programming previously conducted in West Virginia, as well as state tourism data, indicate that additional training for agritourism and farm-based education enterprises is in demand. Particularly for small operations, these agribusiness options offer flexibility and can provide great potential for income diversification.

To address this need, a team led by **Dr. Doolarie Singh-Knights** at **West Virginia University** developed a project to provide education, planning tools, and supplemental resources for existing or new operators of agritourism and farm-based education enterprises. Five business risk-management topics (production, marketing, financial, legal and human risks) were comprehensively addressed.

Three short-courses delivered tools and coursework leading toward an agritourism specific five-page business plan upon completion, and included supplemental risk management tools such as a farm/food safety plan. Project topics included: Emerging Opportunities and Consumer Demand - Assessing Your Agritourism Potential; the Business-



“I have been able to streamline my offerings and have seen an increase in profitability, better visitor management, and my family and I are much more relaxed and enjoying our agritourism initiatives...”

- WV Farmer





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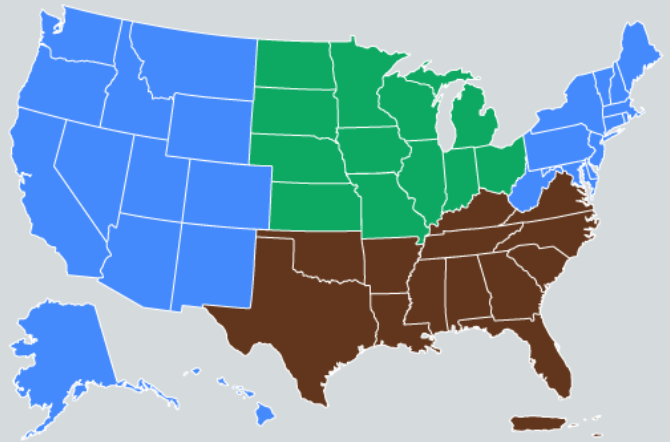
National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

**“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers
to manage the unique risks of producing food
for the world’s table.”**

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website. <http://ExtensionRME.org>



ERME Regional Centers



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