

Agritourism: More than ag and more than tourism
A documentary by Catherine Spolarich and Kaitlyn Feely

This short documentary explores the economic, social, and environmental benefits of agrotourism. It includes footage from Wegmans, The Ithaca Farmers Market, Indian Creek farms and interviews with farmers and agritourists.

We are becoming more and more disconnected from our food system. Ninety-eight percent of the U.S. population doesn't directly engage in farming. But agritourism is this really unique outlet where people can connect with their food system. When you visit a farmers market or an on-farm market, you can talk directly to farmers. You know exactly where the food came from and how it was produced. You can ask them about pesticides, fertilizers. You can ask them about food miles and have some assurance about where your food comes from. But when you buy food from Wegmans, it is harder to tell. It might say "from the U.S."

Agritourism is of economic benefit to farmers. When farmers are selling directly to the consumer, they have greater pricing power because they don't have to pay distributors and processors nearly as much.

[interview with Tim Springston of Oxbow Farm]
"overwhelmingly since we started the farm, we have been doing direct market retail. We do do some limited amount of wholesaling mostly to restaurants. Definitely, if you were to chart it out, like there would be a place where wholesale would start making you more money. I feel like the scale that we are at, it is hard to do enough volume of wholesale to recoup the money that you would of, that you lost because you are not getting the retail dollar."

People are also willing to pay extra for the experience of engaging with their own food and experiencing the beauty of agricultural landscapes that otherwise could not be monetized.

[interview with agritourist, Angelina]
"so I've picked this misshapen little apple myself. And normally, if I were like getting apples just on my own and I saw, kind of a misfit apple, let's say, I would probably stay away from it. But because I picked it myself, I really reached up there, I want to eat it now!"

Ultimately, agritourism has great social benefits as well. It creates educational opportunities for the ninety-eight percent

of the population that is not directly involved in farming. It also helps gather more of a community around a farm and farmers get to meet more people from different walks of life. It also is just fun for the consumer.

[interview with agritourist, Angelina]

I learned that it is important not to stand right under an apple and tree and gaze up at it too long because the apples could suddenly just start falling on you head. Oh! I learned about Brussel sprouts too. And apical dominance!"