

# SPECIAL EVENTS ON THE FARM



## Information and Things to Consider

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Weddings and other special events can provide farms with opportunities to diversify the business with something other than an agricultural product. For many farms, the land, barns, and outbuildings make weddings a natural fit.

Please consider this document a starting point to help you craft your decisions and possible plans. See KDA's Agritourism Manual for additional details and resources on business planning, marketing, food safety, and more. Because of the unique nature of every venue and activity, we cannot provide you with a comprehensive list of items to consider. Like any business decision, KDA suggests consulting with your legal counsel, insurance agent, and tax professional as you plan.

### Are weddings right for your farm?

While farms have a lot to offer in the wedding and special event space, the wedding business is very competitive, and becoming a wedding venue is a large commitment. There are many things to consider before you jump into hosting special events. Ask yourself and others involved in your farm business these questions:

- *Do you enjoy sharing your property with guests?*
- *What will be the cost of physical modifications, such as roads, buildings, and landscaping, associated in created a safe, attractive atmosphere?*
- *Can you manage the additional business responsibilities associated with wedding venues, such as marketing, employee and vendor management, and client relations?*
- *Are you willing to create the ideal experience for your clients?*



### Planning and Zoning

Before marketing your farm for weddings, remember to check for local zoning requirements. Many towns do not include "event" in their definition of agriculture, but farmers may be able to seek a "conditional use permit" which would make exceptions to the zoning bylaws. Contact your local county clerk, city clerk, or planning and zoning office for information on zoning and building codes in your area. Zoning is a local issue, and the requirements can vary substantially in different locations.

### Building Requirements

In KY, the Department of Housing, Buildings, and Construction administers building code enforcement and inspections of existing public buildings for compliance for all state fire safety codes. Be aware of and in compliance with all building codes that apply to your property. Make guest safety and comfort a priority.

### Parking

Weddings will bring lots of vehicles to your farm. Consider your farm entrance and its visibility from the road, your parking area's safety for pedestrians and any impacts of negative weather, and helpful signage for traffic flow.

## ADA Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that businesses improve accessibility and/or eliminate or compensate for architectural barriers (such as doorways, stairs, water fountains, restrooms/bathrooms, eating accommodations, seating, curbs, sidewalks, parking, etc.) to the disabled in all commercial and public buildings and transportation systems. For more information about the ADA and businesses that are open to the public, see <https://www.ada.gov/topics/title-iii/>.

## Liability Signage

Kentucky state law provides agritourism destinations with limited liability protection. The law requires agritourism venues to warn visitors that they are assuming the risk of participating in the activities of the operation through signage and/or a signed waiver. Kentucky Proud sells warning signs at cost to Kentucky Proud members who are listed as an agritourism business. Find the order form here:

[https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/AT\\_LLWarningSign.pdf](https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/AT_LLWarningSign.pdf).

## Insurance

There are four broad ways a business or its owner may be found liable of negligence: 1) if something on the premises hurt somebody, 2) if a product hurt somebody, 3) if the property is causing an issue, or 4) if an individual personally hurt someone. Liability means that you are legally responsible for your actions or inactions that could bring harm to others. If what you did or did not do led in a predictable manner to harm, then you are negligent. Contact your insurance agent to discuss proper coverage for your farm and hosting events.

## Food Safety

Make sure you comply with all health department regulations. Your local Health Department sanitarian can assist with questions on planning your operation and required regulations. Find your local health department here: <https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dafm/Pages/lhd.aspx>

## Emergency Management

Keeping everyone safe and secure while visiting your farm should be at the top of your list. Having an emergency response plan can provide you with a sense of security for you, your employees, and your visitors. Find your county emergency management services here:

<https://kyem.ky.gov/Who%20We%20Are/Pages/County-Directors.aspx>

## Fire Prevention

Make sure you meet all building code requirements for sprinklers, exit signs, and smoke detectors. Have fire extinguishers strategically placed throughout the farm and train all employees on their use.

Arrange a walkthrough of your farm with fire/EMS personnel. Find more fire prevention tips here:

<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/2019-03/fireprotection.pdf>

## Animals and Visitors

If animals and visitors will come into contact on your farm, make sure you that you keep the animals clean, up-to-date on vaccinations, and monitored daily for health problems. Define on the level of contact between guests and animals and reinforce guidelines with signage. Provide a hand wash station for guests after they interact with animals and keep all food and drink away from the animal areas. Supervise all guest interaction with animals.

## Kentucky Sales and Use Tax Information

Sales tax may need to be collected on items sold or activities. For current updated information, visit the Kentucky Department of Revenue website:

<https://revenue.ky.gov/Business/Pages/default.aspx>

## Roadways and Signs

Getting visitors to your farm can be a challenge. Check with the State Transportation Cabinet or your local County Road Superintendent to prevent problems before they occur. Consider signage, narrow bridges or roads, and road weight limits.

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**The foregoing is provided for informational purposes only. The Department of Agriculture is not providing legal advice and does not guarantee the accuracy of the content herein. Each operator of an agritourism operation or activity is advised to seek its own legal counsel.**

**For more information about the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Agritourism Program, please contact:**

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