Implementing Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children from the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

A Collaborative Project Of:

September 2010
Disclaimer

This document is intended to provide useful suggestions for protecting the health and safety of children visiting farms involved in agritourism. The North Carolina Agromedicine Institute/East Carolina University, Lazy O Farm, and National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety make no claims that these suggestions for implementing Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children from the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety will prevent all illness and injuries. Every farm is unique and therefore the users of this document are encouraged to adapt the information to their situation knowing they are responsible for the health and safety of children visiting their farms. The North Carolina Agromedicine Institute/East Carolina University, Lazy O Farm, and National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, the authors, and advisors cannot be held responsible for adverse events resulting from following or not following the suggestions in this document.

Support and Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the individuals and agencies who provided input on implementation of the Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children as well as to the content of this document. We are especially indebted to staff at the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety who provided feedback and technical assistance throughout the project.

Preparation of this document was coordinated by the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute.

Photos provided by Robin Tutor and Tami Thompson.

Funding was provided by the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety.

Additional Copies

Additional copies of this document and accompanying CD are available by contacting the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute or by visiting our website.

Phone: 252.744.1008
Email: tutorr@ecu.edu
Website: www.ncagromedicine.org
Introduction

Purpose and Intended Audience

Lessons learned, suggestions for implementation, and resources contained in this document as well as policies, procedures, forms, signage, and other resources included on the accompanying CD resulted from a mini-project with objectives to:

1) reduce child health and safety hazards on an agritourism farm;
2) reduce risk of injury annually to at least 4,000 children visiting an agritourism farm;
3) realize a positive cost benefit for making child health and safety improvements;
4) have at least 30% of agritourism farmers attending an open house training session to decide to implement Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children on their own farms;
5) have at least 30% of Cooperative Extension agents and agritourism insurers attending an open house training session to recommend implementation of Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children to their constituents; and
6) develop a collaborative relationship between the NC Agromedicine Institute and the North Carolina Agritourism Networking Association

Information included in this document is intended to provide farmers, Cooperative Extension Agents, agritourism insurers, and others with practical suggestions, resources, and an idea of the costs/cost benefit for implementing Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children. Again, as each farm is unique, farmers are encouraged to seek counsel from professionals and regulatory agencies within their own area. Costs for items needed to implement guidelines will also vary depending on suppliers, quantity of items needed, and items already on hand.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

An asterisk * beside a category or item in this document indicates that additional resources are available electronically on the accompanying CD.
LESSONS LEARNED

In addition to lessons learned and suggestions for implementing specific guidelines, individuals are encouraged to consider the following:

- implementation of *Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children* is a process that involves careful thought, investigation, and decision making
- taking steps to implement guidelines may result in the discovery of additional items that need to be addressed on the farm
- consideration must be given to local/state ordinances and the unique features of the individual agritourism operation
- implementation takes an extensive network of community partners from both public and private sectors
- resources and supplies needed to implement guidelines may already be available on the farm or in the community at no cost so it is important to do a thorough inventory before making expenditures
- implementation of *Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines for Children* requires a commitment of time, energy, and willingness to be open minded and look at health and safety issues in a new and different way
- ultimately it is the decision of the farmer as to what he or she views as an ‘acceptable level of risk’ for his or her farm
Emergency Preparation, Planning, and Documentation (Supplements A & B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Insurance

- In addition to posting limited liability law signage, it is important to consult with attorney and insurance company to ensure that all steps have been taken to protect farm from litigation
- Agritourism is a relatively new and unchartered area for insurance companies
- Not all insurance companies have an agritourism product. Farm liability insurance is different from agritourism insurance.
- Different insurance companies require different documentation for rating purposes
- Obtaining a rate quote may take several months and requires patience and persistence
- Rates vary widely among companies. Request quotes from several companies and compare rates carefully.

Safety Goals

- Goals should be measurable and reasonable
- A system should be implemented to provide documentation needed for evaluating goals on an ongoing basis
- Involving staff in goal setting and review will give ownership and incentive for safe behaviors
- Sample safety goals and documentation:
  - Implement and maintain a zero tolerance smoking policy
    Documentation: Record on Operations Report as to whether or not cigarette butts were found at end of each day in visitor areas including maze
  - Conduct at least 4 emergency drills per year
    Documentation: Log with date/time of each emergency drill
  - Keep number of accidents requiring more than a Band-Aid to less than 4 per year
    Documentation: Incident/Emergency Reports

Emergency Response Plan

- Local Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Fire Departments will visit farm and assist with emergency planning, including evacuation routes and location of safe areas*, at no cost
- Local Fire Department will provide fire extinguisher use training for free
- EMS and Fire Departments welcome the opportunity to pre-plan so that they are prepared when an actual emergency occurs
- Fire extinguisher signs are $2-3.00 at Wal-Mart, builder supply, or hardware stores but can cost as much as $15.00 from fire extinguisher vendor
- Fire extinguishers should be checked on a monthly basis*. In addition to checking pin and gauge, ensure that there are no dirt dobber nests or other debris in the end of the hose. A cotton ball can be used in the end of the hose to keep out debris. Chemical fire extinguishers should also be
turned upside down and hit on the bottom with a rubber mallet to ensure that chemicals have not settled and packed in the bottom of the extinguisher.

- To ensure that staff knows how to respond correctly to different types of emergencies, practice emergency drills during staff training, on non-visitor days, and even on visitor days. If drills are planned on a visitor day, visitors should be advised at check-in.
- To ensure that staff recognizes codes for different emergencies, provide laminated pocket cards on a snap ring that staff can keep in their pockets or on lanyards.

First Aid, CPR, Water Safety, and Basic Water Techniques

- Check with provider before attending a water safety or basic water rescue safety technique class. Content maybe more suitable to a swimming pool than to a farm
- EMS may be able to assist with water safety or basic water rescue safety technique training
- Water rescue supplies can be purchased at local pool supply stores or on-line
- Walkie talkies are a reasonable alternative to ensuring the ability to communicate at any location on the farm
- A bull horn with siren is also helpful for emergency drills, emergencies, and crowd control
- EMS recommends that in lieu of having an emergency vehicle, that any injured individual NOT be moved except by EMS
- A mailbox painted red and labeled ‘Fire and Emergency Plans’ can be strategically located on the farm making information readily available for first responders and other emergency personnel
- Google and MapQuest maps from farm to nearest hospital are not always accurate. Check carefully before duplicating. Print extra copies of map to have on-hand in case parents or caregivers choose to transport child to hospital themselves.*

Animal Bites

- Animal bites should be reported to the county animal control office. Check county listings for number. Add number to Emergency Contact Number form to be posted in prominent places with other emergency information.

Food Safety

- Check with local Environmental Health Staff *
- See ‘Cooking for Groups: A Volunteer’s Guide to Food Safety’*
- See Food Safety at near the end of this section

Guest Report of Safety Concerns

- To ensure that guests are asked about safety concerns, add to policy and procedures for staff exit activities with guests including group polling and/or written exit survey
**Americans with Disabilities Act** *

- Handicapped accessible port-a-johns are available for rent from companies regularly supplying port-a-johns
- Picnic tables can be raised so that they are wheelchair accessible
- by adding a 2x4 to the bottom of legs
- Picnic tables can be made wheelchair accessible at either end by adapting with a slide in bracket
- Bottom of handicapped parking signs should be five feet from ground

**Policies, Procedures, and Forms** *

- Incident-Emergency Policy
- Incident-Emergency Report
- Emergency Contact Number Form
- Emergency Drill Record
- Emergency Evacuation Map with location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and safe areas
- Employee Training Log
- Fire Extinguishers
- Fire Safety Procedure
- Map to nearest hospital
- Procedure for On-site Incidents
- Safety Issue Follow-up Log

**Resources**

**CPR &/or First Aid Training**

- American Red Cross
  [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- American Heart Association
  [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRAndECC/CPR_UCM_001118_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/CPRAndECC/CPR_UCM_001118_SubHomePage.jsp)
- Partnership for Children

**First Aid Kits**

- American Red Cross [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

**Handicap Accessibility**

- *Americans with Disabilities Act Guide for Small Businesses*
Supplies

- First aid kits*
- First aid guide*
- Fire Extinguishers*
- Signs: fire extinguisher, first aid kit, emergency exit, no smoking*, pond off limits*, handicapped parking, chemical storage, staff only areas*
- Water rescue equipment: pole with hook, buoy, and rope
- Weather radio
- Walkie talkies or cell phones
- Drinking water stations
- Locked storage box, cabinet, or room for chemicals
- Notebook or file to maintain all documentation including:
  - Emergency response plan including copy of fire safety and evacuation plans
  - Safety goals
  - Employee Training Logs and certificates, if applicable
  - Veterinary Records
  - Operations Report
  - Reservation confirmations
  - Incident/Emergency Reports
  - All policies and procedures
  - Safety follow-up log (optional – may be included in operations report)
Prearranged Groups (Supplement A)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

*Information Provided to Group Organizer*

- An alternate rule of thumb for adult child ratios is to follow adult child ratios of group organizer’s organization (i.e., childcare, public school)
- EMS recommends that farm not treat injuries but that decision to treat injuries be left to parent, caregiver, &/or 911
- Childcare centers and public schools are required to have personal contact information for parents or guardians as well as information about children having special needs with them on field trips.

*Policies, Procedures, and Forms*
- Pre-visit information for group organizer
- Reservation confirmation

*Resources*
N/A

*Supplies*
N/A
Supervision (Supplement A)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Adult: Child Ratios

- See Information Provided to Group Organizer

Mazes

- Raised platforms are recommended for millet as well as corn mazes
- An alternative to having a fixed raised platform is to have a platform on wheels that can be moved when not in use (ex. wagon, rolling stock ladder, mobile home steps adapted with wheels and fall barrier).

Petting Zoos*

- Wipes and hand sanitizer can be made available in animal areas in addition to availability of hand washing stations at exit of animal area
- For more detailed information on Petting Zoos, see Animals and Hand-washing later in this section

Policies, Procedures, and Forms

Resources

- For additional Petting Zoo resources, see Animals and Hand-washing later in this section

Supplies

- Elevated platform
- Hand sanitizer
- Wipes
- Handwashing station stocked with soap and paper towels
WEATHER and RELATED EMERGENCIES (Supplement A)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Weather Radio

- Battery operated weather radios are available that clip onto a belt so that weather can be easily monitored

High/Low Temperatures and Inclement Weather*

- Establish weather policies as part of routine policies and procedures. Example:
  - Visitors will not be permitted when heat index reaches X degrees
  - Visitors will not be permitted when chill factor reaches X degrees
  - Visitors will be asked to conclude visit as soon as weather radio indicates there is a severe thunder storm warning.

- In the summer:
  - Employees can benefit from wide-brimmed hats (brims should be at least 3”), long sleeved shirts, and sunscreen; encourage visitors to bring with them as well
  - Water stations should be located so they are easily accessible to visitors and employers. Opportunities for hydration can be easily incorporated into activities. Hydration is recommended every 15 minutes
  - Simple lessons about sun safety can easily be incorporated into activities. For example:
    - Show a very dry sponge and a very wet sponge. The dry sponge represents what happens to the body when one becomes dehydrated. The wet sponge represents the body when one is well hydrated
    - Show a green tomato, tomato that is at mid-ripening stage, and a tomato that is very ripe with a rotten spot. The green tomato represents the skin before it has been exposed to the sun. The mid-ripe tomato represents the skin when it has been exposed to the sun with sunscreen. The ripe tomato with the rotten spot represents the skin when it has been repeatedly exposed to the sun without protection.

- A supply of extra coats and sweaters of various sizes is helpful to have on hand as there are always a few children with daycare and school groups who arrive inappropriately dressed for cold weather

- In order to decide if the farm is ‘prepared’ to handle guests during inclement weather in case departure is not possible, work with local EMS and Fire Departments to determine capacity of safe space and ability to move visitors quickly from one location to another

Policies, Procedures, and Forms

N/A
Resources

**Sun Safety**
- NC Department of Labor
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency [http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)
- American Cancer Society [http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/BeSafeintheSun/index](http://www.cancer.org/Healthy/BeSafeintheSun/index)
- All In One Posters
  [http://www.allinoneposters.com/s.nl;jsessionid=0a010a601f433c8fd873770040a9ba6baaaaea26c529.e3eSch0Pb30Pe34Pa38Ta38LbNb0?it=A&id=149](http://www.allinoneposters.com/s.nl;jsessionid=0a010a601f433c8fd873770040a9ba6baaaaea26c529.e3eSch0Pb30Pe34Pa38Ta38LbNb0?it=A&id=149)

**Hypothermia/Frost Bite**

**Supplies**
- Emergency weather radio
- Sun-screen for employees; encourage guests to bring
- Wide-brimmed hats for employees; encourage guests to bring; brims should be at least 3”
- Sun safety poster
ANIMALS and HAND-WASHING (Supplement A and B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Transition Areas*

- Following the North Carolina State Fair E. coli outbreak in 2004 the General Assembly passed Aedin’s Law that is administered by Dr. Karen Beck with North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS).
- NCDA&CS recommends that in addition to signs that are available from the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians that a sign on proper hand washing technique be posted and that a means to properly wash hands following any animal contact be made available.
- A suspended hose pipe with holes punched in the underside makes a great hands free water source.
- Portable propane heated water heaters are available for providing warm water for hand washing in outdoor locations.
- Teach children to sing while washing hands to encourage washing for 15-20 seconds:

  Old McDonald Had a Farm  
  And on this farm he washed his hands  
  With a wash-wash here and a wash-wash there  
  Old McDonald washed his hands

Animal Bites

- Animal bites should be reported to the county animal control office. Check county listings for number. Add number to Emergency Contact Number form to be posted in prominent places with other emergency information.

Adequate restroom facilities

- A suggested rule of thumb for ‘adequate restroom facilities’ is the ability for 20 kids to toilet in 10 minutes given two port-a-johns or restroom stalls with supervision by two adults. Time toilet use to adjust as needed.
- Test strips for testing bleach used to sanitize or disinfect can be purchased at local restaurant supply stores or online. As bleach solutions lose their strength when exposed to sunlight and air, solutions should be made fresh daily. Label bleach bottles for different strengths: Sanitize or Disinfect*.

Policies, Procedures, and Forms*

- Bleach Record
- Cleaning log for hand-washing facilities and restroom
- Daily Cleaning Record
• Disinfecting and Sanitizing
• Hand washing Policy
• Hand washing Procedures

Resources

Animal Exhibits

• NCDS & CS http://www.ncagr.gov/oep/AnimalContactExhibit.htm; http://ncagfairs.org/lawsnforms.html

• Dr. Karen Beck - Emergency Programs Public Health Surveillance Specialist
  1035 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1035
  Phone: (919) 807-4330 • Fax: (919) 807-4303
  karen.beck@ncagr.gov

Supplies
• Signs for hand washing, prohibited items/actions in animal areas, and caution signs*
• Hand washing facilities stocked with soap and paper towels
• Hand sanitizer
TRAFFIC and PARKING (Supplements A and B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Farm Location Signs

- Check local ordinances for placement of farm location signs
- If property ½ mile in either direction is not owned by farm, check with other land owners as well

Handicap parking

- Check *American with Disabilities Act Guide for Small Businesses* for guidance on handicap parking
- Van accessible signs for handicap parking must be purchase separately from handicap parking signs
- Different states have different requirements for handicap parking signs so check for specific state with vendor

Speed Limit Signs

- Bottom of speed limit signs should be five feet from the ground

Policies, Procedures, and Forms

NA

Resources

N/A

Supplies

- Signs for farm entrance, children present, speed limit, handicap parking
- Reflective vests for traffic workers
FIRE SAFETY

See Emergency Planning at the beginning of this section
TRACTORS and OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT (Supplements A and B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

- The Nationals Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety recognizes a ‘properly licensed adult’ for operating tractors as an individual who has a valid driver license
- Certified Safe Farm trained professionals can assist with auditing farm equipment to ensure it is safe for operation

Policies, Procedures, and Forms
N/A

Resources

Certified Safe Farm

- Johnston County, NC Cooperative Extension (919) 989-5380
- Duplin County, NC Cooperative Extension (910) 296-2143
- Sampson County, NC Cooperative Extension (910) 592-7161
- NC State University, Department of Toxicology (919) 515-7961
- University of Iowa www.certifiedsafefarm.org
- NC Agromedicine Institute 252.744.1008

Supplies

- Barriers to prevent child access to operating and non-operating machinery
- Wheel blocks
WALKWAYS and STRUCTURES

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation
N/A

Policies and Procedures
N/A

Resources
N/A

Supplies
- Locks for storage areas
- Signs to direct visitors from one attraction to another, exit signs, and no entrance/staff only signs*
BARRIERS and FENCING (Supplements A and B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation
N/A

Policies, Procedures, and Forms
N/A

Resources

- National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety

Supplies

- Signs for off limits and electric fences
- Double fencing
PEST CONTROL (Supplements A and B)

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

- Contact local Cooperative Extension Office for assistance with pest control
- To attract yellow jackets away from children and trash cans use hummingbird feeders and suet holders with raw meat
- To kill fire ants, pour boiling water in mounds at dusk when ants have returned to the mound. Take precautions to prevent injury.
- To attract ticks away from common areas, place dry ice at the periphery. Ticks will be drawn to fumes as ice disintegrates

Policies, Procedures, and Forms
N/A

Resources
N/A

Supplies
- Hummingbird feeders
- Suet holders
FOOD SAFETY

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Policies, Procedures, and Forms*
- Refrigerator Cleaning and Temperature Monitoring Policy
- Refrigerator Temperature Log

Resources
N/A

Supplies
- Disposable plastic gloves
- Hand washing station with soap, warm running water, and paper towels
- Refrigerator Thermometers
RECORDKEEPING

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation
N/A

Policies, Procedures, and Forms *
- Operations Report
- Accident Incident Report
- Administer first aid using first aid guide
- Safety Issue Follow-up Log

Resources
N/A

Supplies
- Notebook or file
- Dividers
HAYRIDES

Lessons Learned/Suggestions for Implementation

Inspections

- Tractors, wagons, hitches, and chains should be included in as part of daily operations checklist

Policies, Procedures, and Forms

Resources

Supplies

- Elevated platform
- Flags
- Fire extinguishers
- Signs for maze rules and entrance/exit
- Bullhorn or loud speaker
CORN MAZES

Lessons Learned/ Suggestions for Implementation

- Use of flags for guests to alert staff from within corn maze may or may not work. If flags are used, encourage guests to return on exiting the maze and not leave in the maze.

Policies, Procedures, and Forms
N/A

Resources
N/A

Supplies
N/A
Supplemental Information

Information included in this section has been developed in addition to and independent of Agritourism Health and Safety Guidelines from the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety.

Crowd Control
- Whistles on lanyards can be helpful for getting visitors attention and crowd control but encourage staff not to over use them.

Emergency Procedures *
- Consider development and implementation of emergency procedures for child abduction, lockdown for terror or weapon threat, and missing child.
- If it is reasonably suspected that employees will come in contact with blood or other body fluids in the course of interacting with visitors, consider providing blood borne pathogens training.* Check with your local health care provider and Department of Labor for more information.

Hayrides
- Consider handicap accessibility for hayrides. Consult with an AgrAbility professional, occupational or physical therapist, or mobility specialist for assistance to ensure that all slope and safety precautions are considered.

Playground
- If the farm has a playground area consult Creating Safe Play Areas On Farms* for guidance.
- If the surfacing is being purchased to go under playground equipment, check with vendor to ensure that surfacing is compliant with Consumer Protection Safety Commission and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. If products is compliant with these requirements, vendor is required to provide a certificate of compliance at the time that surfacing is installed.

Plants
- To ensure that plants are non-poisonous to children, work with local Cooperative Extension Office, nursery, or community college horticulture program. A poster with poisonous plants is also available.

Snakes
- Knowing how to recognize which snakes are poisonous and which aren’t can be helpful.
- Tools kept to dispose of snakes during times when visitors are at the farm should be kept readily accessible but out of the reach and view of children.
Resources

Blood borne Pathogens


Hayrides

- AgrAbility www.agrability.org

Playgrounds

- National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health

Poisonous Plants

- News and Observer

Snakes

- News and Observer
COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYEE TRAINING LIST

- First Aid
- Fire Extinguisher
- Equipment
- Water Safety
- Basic Water Rescue
- How to report animal bites
- Welcome to Guests including:
  - Hazards found on farm
  - Need to immediately report illness or injury
  - Danger of open water, if applicable
  - Child supervision requirements
  - Need to report wild animals and/or unwanted pests
- When to speak to guests about inappropriate child supervision
- Low temperatures, wind chill factors, and hypothermia
- Signs/symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke
- Risks for disease and injuries associated with animals and how to show and explain to guests how to reduce risks
- Proper handwashing techniques
- Bloodborne pathogens (optional)
- Farm specific policies and procedures
COMPREHENSIVE SUPPLY LIST WITH COSTS
SUPPLIERS