



**Ag - Entrepreneurship**  
 Bringing together ideas, people and resources ... going beyond the red barn

**Home on the Range:  
 Are you Ready to Host a Tour?**

Presented by: **Billy "The Kid" Reynolds**  
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**3 Observations from Successful Ag Tourism Operators**

- "Be proud of your role as an animal caretaker, a livestock producer, a crop grower, a supplier of food and fiber. A neat attractive farm with physical facilities and equipment in good repair creates a responsible, professional, positive image."



**3 Observations from Successful Ag Tourism Operators**

- "People are concerned about food quality, animal care, and sustainable agriculture."



**3 Observations from Successful Ag Tourism Operators**

- "They tell me they keep coming back not for the ride, but because of me."



**When Company's Coming ...**

- What do you normally do in preparation for guests?
  - Depends on why they're coming
  - Depends on who is coming
  - Depends on when they are coming
  - Depends on how many are coming



**AAAAAA Approach**

- For a successful visit you need to assess your:
  - Attributes
  - Appearance
  - Atmosphere
  - Ample Facilities
  - Adverse to Liability
  - Activities



Ag Tourism

- Every day you are open, you need to be host ready
- Tourism is a personality business
- Tourism is based on WOM – it will make or break you
- If visitors leave with a photo, you've helped your promotion
- If visitors leave with a smile, you have done your job




Ag Tourism

- You have to:
  - Want people on your property
  - Like people and interacting with them
  - Share your life and learn about theirs
  - Treat guests as a pleasure and eye opener



- You have to:
  - Be an agricultural ambassador
  - Harvest visitor \$\$\$\$\$\$\$
  - Grow your network and partner



### Getting Into Ag Tourism ...

**Opening Your Gates To Ag Opportunities**

The Western Alberta Agricultural Services and Extension of Alberta Limited  
10000-50th Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5A 0A6

Together we bring you a five-day workshop on enhanced agriculture opportunities.

**Day 1 - Hands-on Energy and Other Value-Added Ag Opportunities**  
Introduction to energy, water and irrigation.

**Day 2 - Opening Your Gates to Ag Tourism** The business of ag-based education, events and agritourism.

Come to the workshop and learn the steps of taking a new venture on your farm or your community. Hear from those that are in the business, discover the key resource people that help you address success, and meet and share partners in development.

**Work:** February 22 & 23, 2006, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Workshop:** March 14-15, 2006, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**Workshop Location:** The Westin Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta  
Address: 10000-50th Street, Edmonton, Alberta T5A 0A6  
Phone: 780-422-2222 Ext. 4444 Fax: 780-422-2222  
Email: info@wales.ca Web: www.wales.ca

**Registration Fee:** \$ 50 per person (includes workshop materials, Building Value Added Ag Opportunities manual, and a complimentary ag tour).  
Special rates and get both publications \$200 value worth!

- Upcoming workshop on Opening Your Gates to Ag Tourism
  - Lac La Biche February 23
  - Watch for a workshop this spring in the Lethbridge area
  - Watch for workshops this fall in the Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary SW and NW areas



Ag Tourism

- Who do you want to host (demographics, motivation)
- How many do you want to host (capacity issues)
- When do you want to host (daily, weekly, seasonally)
- Where are you located (destination or pass by)
- Is regional market large enough




Ag Tourism

### ATTRIBUTES

- What do you have? Evaluate your site strengths.



**AAAAAA Approach**



Ag Tourism

## ATTRIBUTES

- What do you have? Evaluate your site strengths.
  - Roads
  - Land Features (pasture, garden, field, hay meadow, woodlot)
  - Water Features (dugouts, marshes, watershed protection, irrigation, low wet zones)




**AAAAAA Approach**

Ag Tourism

## ATTRIBUTES

- What do you have? Evaluate your site strengths.
  - Buildings & Fences
  - Utilities
  - Plants (crop diversity, sustainable practices)
  - Animals (wildlife & domestic, handling & nutrition)




**AAAAAA Approach**

Ag Tourism

## ATTRIBUTES

- What do you have? Evaluate your site strengths.
  - Landscape (regional setting, photo views, heritage trails, tillage, EFP)
  - Equipment (seed, harvest, process)
  - Air (odours, noise, wind)
  - People (family, relatives, neighbours, community)
  - Resources





**AAAAAA Approach**

## ADVERSE TO LIABILITY

- Where do you NOT want visitors to go?
  - Identify sensitive areas
  - Hazards and off-limit areas
  - Climbing on farm vehicles
  - Visitor flow and circulation
  - Safety precaution/emergency protocol




**AAAAAA Approach**

## ACTIVITIES

- What do you want them to experience (do and understand)?
  - Demonstrations: "Ing" the thing:
    - seeding, harvesting, milling, milking, sheep herding, wheat weaving, corn husk dolling




**AAAAAA Approach**

## AMPLE FACILITIES

- What visitor needs are taken care of?
  - What level of comfort is offered?
    - » Parking/drop off/RV friendly
    - » Welcoming/reception
    - » Tour gathering/on-site map



**AAAAAA Approach**

## AMPLE FACILITIES

- What level of comfort is offered?
  - Washrooms (change room, rocking chair)
  - Picnicking
  - Rest/shelter (partner with willow chair maker)
  - Garbage




**AAAAAA Approach**

## AMPLE FACILITIES

- What level of comfort is offered?
  - » Play (hay bale maze, peddle tractor park)
  - » Retail
  - » Gobbles and Gulps (health regulations)




**AAAAAA Approach**

## Group Exercise

- Need 2 groups
- Challenge for Group #1:
  - Imagine that you are the sales manager for this hotel. In five minutes come up with your top 3 ideas to make the walk from the lobby to this meeting room more welcoming and appealing to you, the potential client.
- Challenge for Group #2
  - Imagine that you are the sales manager for this hotel. In five minutes come up with your top 3 ideas to make the inside of this conference room more welcoming and appealing to you, the potential client.



**AAAAAA Approach**

## ATMOSPHERE

- How do you stand out?
  - Displays
  - Ambience (partner with gardener)
  - Heritage
  - Characters  
Street theatre



**AAAAAA Approach**

## ATMOSPHERE

- How do you stand out?
  - Stories
  - Surprise (random freebies)
  - FUN (think of as "pixie dust")
  - Colours, aromas, textures, sounds, flavours

*"Change an ordinary space into a distinctive place"*




**AAAAAA Approach**

## APPEARANCE

- How to dress up the "stage":
  - Access and approach
  - Directional (make it easy)
  - Entrance and exit image (flags, banners, planters)
  - Site signage (is it readable, fresh)
  - Curb appeal (white trim and weed free)
  - Creative dress code (image, pride, identity, promo wear)





**AAAAAA Approach**

**Customers want 3 things: Credibility, Confidence, Trust**

- Is it safe to walk around here?
  - Is everything neat, tidy and organized
- Is it safe to eat here?
  - Is everything clean, painted, rust-free and presentable
- Does anyone go here?
  - Have they won awards?
  - Are there testimonials?



**Customers want 3 things: Credibility, Confidence, Trust**

- Are the people approachable?
  - Have I been welcomed? Do they have a sense of humour?
- Are they considerate?
  - Did the signage reinforce directions all the way in and at the gate? Is it clear where I am supposed to park? Was it hassle free to get here?
- Do they care about us?
  - Professional sign, flowers greeting us, can grandma sit, shade handy, tissues given out on a cold day



**Cater to the customer's needs: stress reduction, family togetherness**

- Is there enough to do?
  - Do I see a variety of animals and buildings?
- Where do we go when we get there?
  - Is it clear what is open and what is closed?
- What are the rules?
  - Are there things we have to be aware of?
- Will my kids ask me questions I don't know the answer to?



■ "This is not a volume business ... so you can't go low-end."

■ "You don't have to be upscale, but you do need to offer a quality experience, and it sure helps if you offer a specialty item."



Ag Tourism

**James Gilmour's WOW Experience Blueprint**

- 4 E's
  - Pay attention to esthetics
    - » The environment that you create that makes your guests want to 'hang-out'
  - Once they are there, focus on escapism
    - » What you want them to do
  - Education
    - » Provide some new understandings (active learning)
  - Passive entertainment
    - » More fun so they'll stay

Blur the boundaries between the 4 realms – this is the SWEET SPOT



Ag Tourism

■ Tours allow you to connect with customers as individuals so one u-pick, one greenhouse is NOT the same as the next

■ Avoid the **been there done that** problem



Ag Tourism



- Tours allow you to generate trust by letting visitors know and like you
- Form a relationship
- “People do business with people they know, like and trust.”
- “People don’t want to be sold – they want a conversation.”



Ag Tourism



**Ag - Entrepreneurship**  
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*In the eyes of the consumer are you seen as someone who is:*

*Proactive, responsible, caring, constantly improving,  
professional, science-based, sustainable, accountable, take  
pride in production?*

