

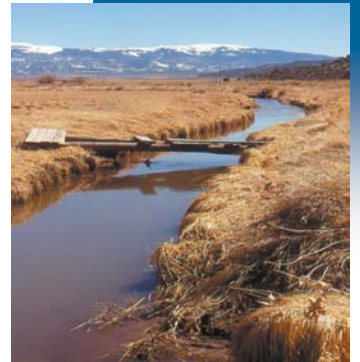


Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

El Parciante

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El Parciante



Increasing Farm Income on Small Operations

Agritourism helps U.S. farmers and ranchers generate revenue from recreational, historical and educational activities, such as tours of a working farm or “pick-your-own fruits and vegetables, or history walk programs. Beginning and small and mid-size farms are increasingly exploring agritourism as a strategy to remain competitive.

Agritourism also has the potential to help revitalize rural economies, educate the public about agriculture, and preserve agricultural heritage. In addition, community-focused farms may find agritourism an attractive option because it provides more labor opportunities for local residents.

Farm agritourism revenue more than tripled between 2002 and 2017, according to data from the Census of Agriculture. Adjusted for inflation, agritourism revenue grew from \$704 million in 2012 to almost \$950 million in 2017. The 2017 data excluded wineries, although they were included in the 2002, 2007, and 2012 data, which suggests agritourism revenue growth may have been even greater during that period. However, agritourism revenue is still small relative to total farm revenue, accounting for 5.6 percent of farm-related income in 2017.

Although many factors affect an operator’s decision to

adopt agritourism, ERS researchers identified farm and regional characteristics associated with higher agritourism revenue. Being located near natural amenities or in close proximity to other outdoor activities had a statistically significant positive impact on agritourism economic activity.

Farms and ranches in more populated counties also earned more revenue, although farms in less populated counties were more likely to adopt agritourism. This may be due to expanded marketing opportunities in more populated areas, whereas farms in more rural areas may be adopting agritourism due to fewer perceived alternative sources of income. For example, farms near urban areas also have higher local food sales, all else being equal.

Lastly, certain types of crop and livestock production—specifically, grapes, fruit and tree nuts, and specialty livestock farms—had a positive and statistically significant impact on agritourism revenue. Those types of farms involve multiple opportunities for human interaction and visitor engagement, which attract more visitors.

What Drives Agritourism Adoption

Researchers found several farm-level factors associated

with agritourism enterprises. Female operators were more likely to participate in agritourism, particularly on larger agritourism farms. Older operators were slightly more likely to adopt agritourism than younger farmers, all else being equal. In addition, farms and ranches that processed or sold food for human consumption, such as participating in local or regional food systems, were also more likely to adopt agritourism. Direct-to-consumer marketing (such as farmers markets) and direct-to-retail food sales (such as selling to restaurants) provide free marketing for agritourism enterprises through word of mouth. Lastly, farms and ranches with cattle and horses had a greater likelihood of implementing agritourism. Horses in particular are associated with higher value agritourism enterprises, such as dude ranches (ranches specializing in tourist activities, including camping and horseback riding).

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Sangre De Cristo Acequia Association Mission Statement

To Preserve Acequias, Their Traditional Governance And Water Rights

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Increasing Farm Income On Small Operations

Regional drivers of agritourism participation include a county's entrepreneurial spirit, as measured by proxy variables including the nonfarm self-employment rate and patenting rate. This suggests that nonfarm and farm entrepreneurship are likely linked in rural areas. Results also suggest some locations may provide greater opportunities than others in adopting agritourism based on regional assets, travel infrastructure, and already-established related sectors. Counties with high agritourism activity may benefit from industry concentration, likely an effect of well-established regional reputations. For example, visitors are more likely to visit known wine regions or agritourism farms near scenic byways in the county.

Researchers identified clusters of agritourism with a statistical method that groups counties with a high share of farms involved in agritourism. These clusters were identified as "hot spots," while groups of counties with low shares of agritourism farms were identified as "cold spots." Agritourism hot spots adjacent to

coastal urban centers were dominated by small farms. Dude ranch agritourism was also found in the intermountain West near natural amenities, such as national parks. Finally, a large hot spot in western Texas was driven primarily by hunting recreation. On the other hand, cold spots were predominantly in the Midwest. These patterns of agritourism differed with climate, culture, and landscape.

The Future of Agritourism

As the share of farms and ranches with agritourism revenue increases, more farmers and ranchers may be encouraged to adopt agritourism activities. Previous research has documented the loss of small and mid-sized farms and ranches, so agritourism revenue may offer a viable strategy to keep these farms afloat—particularly near agritourism hot spots.

Future research could help identify agritourism best practices, keys to success, or barriers to growth. Tracking agritourism operations over

time would help researchers better understand the characteristics of successful operations and why some enterprises have chosen to participate in agritourism. Future research could also help identify the rural economic development benefits of industry agglomeration and how they vary based on the type of agritourism enterprise, regional location attributes, and spillovers from other local industries

Want to know more about agritourism? Come to the annual Congreso on January 25th!

This article was originally published in the USDA Amber Waves Magazine on November 04, 2019 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2019/november/agritourism-allows-farms-to-diversify-and-has-potential-benefits-for-rural-communities/>

Calendar

- Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Meeting — the second Tuesday of each month. Beginning at 2:00 pm SLVWCD Office in Alamosa.
- SdCAA Monthly Meeting— February 11, 2020 at 6:00pm at the CCEDC Conference Room.
- The Congreso will be held on January 25, 2020

Have a an event you want readers to know about? Please send the information to Nancy Escalante at sangredecristoacequia@gmail.com

Water Use

Water in any stream, or river in Colorado is an adjudicated right . Therefore, it belongs to the water right holder, Acequia water is no different. The water that flows through the Culebra Watershed Acequias belongs to the parciantes (landowners) on the acequia, who use the water to irrigate their land. Using the water without this right is stealing and is in direct violation of Colorado Law.

Is Hemp The New Wonder Crop?

For all its Gold Rush aura, hemp farming may be more like life on the frontier, where everything must be built from the ground up, said advocates of industrial. Hemp can require a lot of manual labor to keep weeds under control, it's hard to find processors for the crop, and marketing networks are rudimentary.

"Every facet of this industry is new and under development," said Derek Azevedo, a California farm executive who took part in a Washington fly-in by the newly formed Hemp Federation of America, a trade group. Federation members asked lawmakers and USDA officials for regulatory certainty for a new crop.

The 2018 Farm Bill legalized cultivation of industrial hemp, with the USDA to oversee state regulation of growers. The USDA issued regulations in mid November that essentially opened the gate for farmers across the nation to grow hemp in 2020. Cultivation is legal in 46 states, and all are expected to submit regulatory plans for USDA approval.

Farmers planted 230,000 acres of hemp this year, three times as many as in 2018, according to the advocacy group Vote Hemp, which expects acreage to increase again in 2020. While the 2014 Farm Law allowed research and pilot projects, the 2018 Farm Bill created an opening for farmers looking for a new cash crop with better returns than corn, soybeans, or wheat.

Obstacles remain for hemp. Bankers are wary of hemp entrepreneurs — whether farmer, manufacturer, or retailer — for fear of being accused of handling illegal drug money. "No one is providing capital," said Mindy Joslin of HUB International Insurance Services. There have also been instances of police seizures of trucks transporting hemp to processors.

During visits on Capitol Hill, Hemp Federation members asked for legislation to clarify that it was legal for lenders to serve the hemp industry and for hemp to be shipped across state lines. They also asked the USDA to assure uniformity in state regulations. In addition, the group wants assurance that immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship will not be penalized for working in the hemp industry. At present, employment in the cannabis industry is an "exclusionary activity" for citizenship.

Industrial hemp is differentiated from marijuana by having less than 0.3% tetrahydrocannabinol, the psychoactive substance that makes marijuana users high.

While cannabidiol (CBD) is the hot-selling hemp product at present, long-term success may be in food and fiber applications, said Mike Gaynier, a specialist in agricultural insurance who is planning to experiment with hemp next year. "We have to attract processors to the industry." At the moment, processors tend to be "boutique" size rather than the large-scale operators capable of handling agricultural volumes, said Gaynier and

Azevedo. "You can grow a lot more hemp than you can process," Azevedo said.

Will Wheeler, a farmer from Chickasha, in central Oklahoma, said he hoed weeds by hand last summer because no herbicides are currently approved for use on industrial hemp. "This is a very labor-intensive crop," said his neighbor Jeff McVey, who described his interest in hemp this way: "Looking for a better way. Something that will make us a dollar."

There is no shortage of trade groups to support the fledgling industry. The Hemp Federation, which says it represents the entire industry, from grower to manufacturer, is one of several groups representing industrial hemp. The nonprofit Hemp Industries Association, formed in 1994, "stands for fair and equitable treatment of industrial hemp." The National Hemp Association, which is "dedicated to helping American farmers earn a living growing this environmentally sustainable cash crop," estimates the U.S. hemp market is worth more than \$600 million a year but says it is currently dominated by imports. The Hemp Farmers Association specializes in "advising hemp farms on established best practices, from seed to sale."

Since 2000, Vote Hemp has campaigned for "a free market for industrial hemp, low-THC varieties of cannabis" and the legalization of hemp. A cooperative, the American Hemp Association, says, "We are here to protect farmers from the so-called 'industry' to make sure America thrives." The U.S. Hemp Roundtable, launched in 2017, describes itself as a coalition of hemp companies — "from seed to sale" — and grassroots groups focused on the long-term viability of the industry. The American Trade Association for Cannabis and Hemp promotes "businesses engaged in the legal trade of industrial, medical, and recreational cannabis and hemp-based products."

Want to learn more about hemp regulations in Colorado? Come to the annual Congreso on January 25th

This article was originally published in Successful Farming Magazine in November 2019 <https://www.agriculture.com/crops/hemp/hemp-farming-may-be-more-pioneer-life-than-wild-west>



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

2020 Congreso de Acequias—Opportunities for Acequia Irrigators



The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association (SdCAA) will be hosting their annual Congreso de Acequia on Saturday January 25, 2020. Congreso de Acequias is a dynamic and vibrant gathering that celebrates the acequias as part of our way of life and our livelihood. We celebrate the people who keep our acequias flowing and their deep connection to land, family, and community. Our theme this year is “Opportunities for Acequia Irrigators.

We will begin the day with a short Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association update and officer elections. Remember only acequias that have appointed a delegate can vote for SdCAA board members. This year’s event will host a variety of topics that include the annual Blessing of the Acequia Water Ceremony, Watershed Assessment, Irrigating in Dry Times, The SLV Water Export Threat Update, Agritourism, and Acequia By-laws update.

As always, the event is free and open to the public and includes a traditional local foods lunch. We will also be having a drawing for a shotgun, a

load of firewood and a \$500 dollar ditch cleaning reimbursement, along with our usual door prizes.

The SdCAA will also be offering Acequia Mini grants, these funds can be used for acequia cleaning and maintenance. Acequias who have appointed a delegate are eligible for the drawing. If your acequia has not appointed a delegate, contact our office for a delegate form.

This event is made possible by these great partners and sponsors: Natural Resources Conservation Service, San Luis Valley Conservation Fund, the LOR Foundation, Trinchera Ranch, Costilla County Conservancy District, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and Colorado Open Lands.

For more information contact Nancy Escalante, at 719-298-6731 or visit our website at www.coloradoacequias.org

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Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association



What you should know