

Hosting Special Events on Your Farm

For farmers, weddings can provide 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.

The KDA knows this is a big decision for you and your operation. Please consider this document a starting point to help you craft your decisions and possible plans. Because of the unique nature of every venue and activity, we cannot provide you a comprehensive list of items to consider. Like any business decision, the KDA suggest consulting with your legal counsel, insurance agent, and tax professional as you plan.

Are Weddings Right for Your Farm?

The wedding business is very competitive, but each farm can offer a unique experience. Hosting even one wedding each summer is a large commitment involving time, communication, and significant attention to detail about the safety and the attractiveness of your farm. Before you decide to jump in, start by asking yourself and everyone else involved in your farm business a few questions.

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



Things to consider:

Building/Zoning Permits

Before marketing your farm for weddings, remember to check for local zoning requirements. Many towns do not include "events" in their definition of "agriculture," but farmers can seek a "conditional use permit," which would make exceptions to the zoning bylaws.

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.

Local Building Requirements

The Planning and Zoning Commission regulates the use and development of land by issuing permits for new construction and by adopting and enforcing zoning regulations. Not every county in Kentucky has a Planning and Zoning office.

Contact your local county clerk, city clerk, planning/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.

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.

Buildings and Bathrooms

You should be aware of and in compliance with all building codes that apply to the property.

Lighting is provided for public areas for night activities.

You have clean, well-stocked bathrooms if square footage requires it, must have bathrooms, not port-o-lets.

You have properly functioning handwashing stations.

You established visitor capacity limits (buildings, attractions, etc.).

Fire Prevention

Building code may require sprinklers and exit signs.

Regularly inspect and maintain working smoke detectors in buildings.

Properly store flammable and combustible materials.

Maintain fire extinguishers strategically throughout farm.

Be sure workers are trained to use a fire extinguisher.

Enforce a strict no-smoking policy.

Post "In Case of Emergency" signs, with contact person, emergency phone numbers, farm address and farm phone number.

Provide emergency vehicle access.

Arrange a farm walk-through with fire/EMS personnel.

Remove brush, cobwebs, and other combustible materials from buildings.

Properly dry all hay before storing it.

Parking

Driveway/entrance is visible from either direction on road.
Parking spaces are adequate for your peak number of visitors.
Overflow parking areas are available.
Internal (farm) traffic lanes are wide enough.
Areas for drop-off/pick-up for buses are available (if needed).
Guests are prevented from parking on public roads.
There is adequate lighting between dusk and dawn (if needed).
Parking is easily identifiable and safe for pedestrians.
Workers help direct traffic and wear bright/reflective safety colors (as needed).
Contingencies are in place in the event of weather conditions (rain/mud/snow).

Liability Signage

KY State Law, KRS 247.8091 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 and a signed waiver.

Link for Warning Sign At-Cost order form:

http://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 lead in a predictable manner to harm, then you are negligent.

- Premises Liability
- Product Liability
- Property Liability

Contact your insurance agent to discuss proper coverage for your farm and hosting events.

Emergency Management Services

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.

Link to finding your County Emergency Management Services:

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

Food Safety

Comply with all health department regulations. Your local Department of Health sanitarian can assist with questions on planning your operation and the specific details of regulations.

Link to finding your local County Health Departments:

<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dafm/Local%20Health%20Department%20Information/AlphaLHDListing.pdf>

Animals and Visitors Together

If animals and visitors will come into contact on your farm, make sure that you keep the animals clean, monitor them daily for health problems, are up-to-date on their vaccinations, and keep good health records on them.

Decide on the level of contact between guests and animals and reinforce guidelines with appropriate signage.

Inform visitors (visually and verbally) about animal behavior, and ask them to wash hands (or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer) after touching animals. Make sure that food and drink is prohibited in the animal areas and that the eating/ drinking area is well separated from animals. Closely supervise all visitors' interactions with animals.

Kentucky Sales and Use Tax Information

Sales tax may need to be collected on items sold or activities.

For current updated tax information, please contact 502-564-5170 or visit

<https://revenue.ky.gov/Business/Sales-Use-Tax/Pages/default.aspx>

Roadways

Getting your customers to your farm can be a challenge and checking with the State Transportation Cabinet or your local County Road Superintendent may be a good place to start to prevent problems before they occur.

Things to consider:

- Proper road signage
- Narrow Bridges
- Weight limit for bridge
- Additional entrance/exit to your farm

State Roadside Signs

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Signage Program

Contact: Tim Tharpe, Email: tim.tharpe@ky.gov

Phone: 502-782-5542 or 502-330-6016

Link for the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Signage Program:

<https://transportation.ky.gov/TrafficOperations/Pages/Sign-Programs-and-Standards.aspx>



KY Department of Agriculture Agritourism Marketing Programs

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