Ag Tourism Clustering:

Country Soul Stroll to Brunch on the Beach
Partnering for Success

It’s amazing what can be done when a group of dedicated, passionate people get together …
What is an ag tourism cluster?

- An **ag tourism cluster** is a group of operators and stakeholders who **come together** to **increase the profile** for their operations and geographic area, along an **ag tourism theme**.
How the ball gets rolling ...

Local Stakeholders

Operators

Resource People

More Profit From Ag Tourism in the Region
Simple 4 step process

1) Rally the troops
2) Seed with some ideas
3) Pick something and run with it
4) Evaluate and follow-up
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livestock/vets</th>
<th>Ag Processing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crops</td>
<td>Regional Cuisine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apiary</td>
<td>Fruit Orchards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>Grain Elevators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horses/blacksmiths</td>
<td>Cowboy Poetry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market garden</td>
<td>Barn Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursery/greenhouse</td>
<td>Ag inspired artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag Machinery</td>
<td>Ag heritage historians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Amazing World of Agriculture

- Herding Turkeys
- Milking Cows
- Churning ice cream
- Sheep dog demos
- Sampling emu jerky
- Visiting upside down garden
- Team Penning
- Quilting
- Bottle feeding a calf
- Straw jumping
- Equine therapy
- Cheer on racing pigs
- U-cutting bouquets
- Riding toy tractors
- Scarecrow making
- Auctioning
Why do cluster development

- Link dispersed experiences = IMPACT
- Use the Ag Tourism theme to tie assets together
- Tap into new markets
- Boost profile and awareness
- Build Word-of-Mouth
- Increase profit – new $$
Ag Tourism Cluster Development Project

- Pilot project by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development 2003

- Criteria for choosing pilot cluster regions:
  - Critical mass of ag tourism operations
  - Proximity to major markets
  - Interest and leadership of local stakeholders
Cluster Project Outcomes

- **FAM Tours** — targets included: operators, local stakeholders, elected officials, tourism reps, media

- **Driving Tour Events** — Country Soul Stroll, Fur & Feathers Farm Tour, Country Drive
Red Deer County Ag-Tourism FAM Tour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name: __________________________</th>
<th>Date: __________</th>
<th>Circle Your Rating</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Impressions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>may consider curb appeal, cleanliness, easily accessible by bus or car</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments: __________________________</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal / Written Directions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>directions to site - easy to follow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Signage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>adequate; clear and easy to read (consider both highway and site signs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments: __________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>ample, accessible, well-drained and safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments: __________________________</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest of Site</strong></td>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site will appeal to a larger audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments: __________________________</td>
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Criteria

• Application Form:
  - Proof of liability insurance
  - Must provide a free 20 – 30 minute activity
  - Participation in meetings, etc
  - Application fee of $250
Country Soul Stroll

- Partners contribution 17 @ $200
- 15 Ag operators, 9 others
- 342 passes sold ($25/car, $7/pp)
- Site assessment & conducting tours workshop
- Signage and mapping
A Menu of Offerings

Wandering Picnic Showcase –
*Taste of Summer*

- Began as a buffet, now taste stations
- 350 participants
A Menu of Offerings

Brunch on the Beach
- Self serve buffet brunch
- 200 capacity –sold out
- 16 suppliers, 1 chef

Food event
A Menu of Offerings

Food Event – Outdoor Farm Partnership

- Flavours of the Foothills – 1 Day Food Inspired Festival
  - 3 operators (Bees, Berries and Bison)
  - 400(yr1)-1100(yr2) participants;

- FOOD! - honey and black current ice-cream; Bison BBQ
- Special Festival BBQ Sauce
A Menu of Offerings

- Sold out 250 tickets at $50, and liquor license = profit

- All food products provided by 8 local producers

- Producer profile: door prizes, bookmarks, and Powerpoint presentation

- Meet & Eat Sampler
Cluster Project Outcomes

- Driving Guide
- Development Fund grant
  - land use
  - economic impact
  - skills training:
    - mentorships, workshops
    (experience, mystery shop, marketing, FAM tour, imagery)
Lessons Learned

- Municipal sector supporting private operators
- A champion and many helpers
- Not reinventing the wheel
- Sponsor involvement
- Inventory mapping
- Cross promotion training
- Tracking