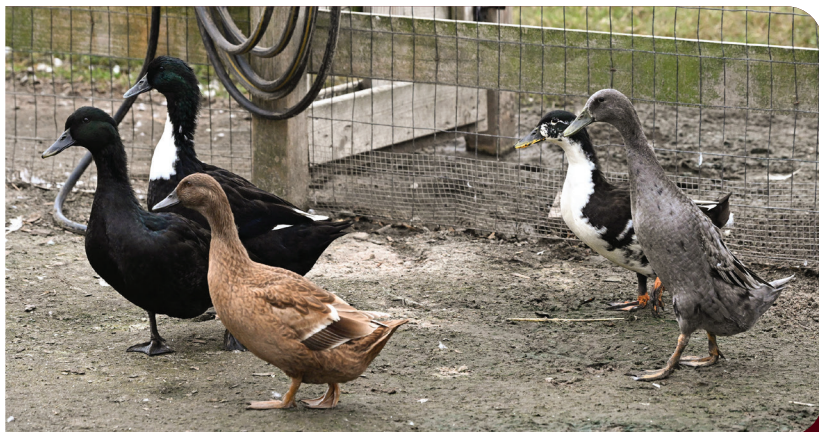


# AGRITOURISM

## Challenges facing agritourism operations in Maryland

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Photos: Todd Dudek



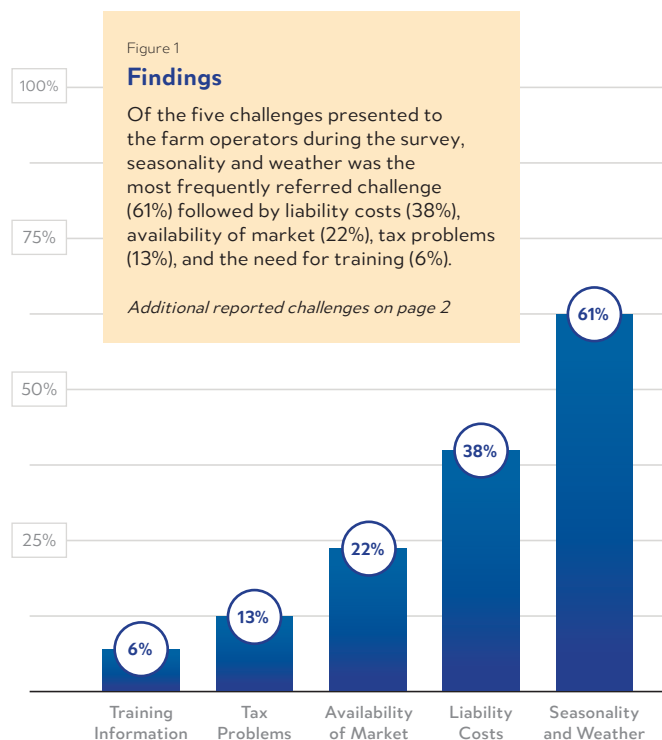
**U.S. small- and medium-sized farms face a variety of challenges, but those specific to agritourism, a growing trend, have been less known.**

Between 2017 and 2022, the U.S. lost 141,733 farms and more than 20 million acres of farmland. Most impacted were small-scale, minority and disadvantaged farmers because they cannot compete with the large-scale farmers.

Yet many small and medium-sized operations are bettering their sustainability by moving toward agritourism, a move that diversifies their income sources. These farmers have opened their farms to the public through offerings including active involvement on the farm, recreation, and education (also known as agritourism farms). Data points to a growth in agritourism in both Maryland and the nation.

The types of challenges facing agritourism farmers and operators of Maryland was previously lacking in empirical evidence.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) Extension collected data in a survey from 91 Maryland agritourism operators in 2022. Findings are below. (Figure 1)



## Other reported challenges

- Advertising and marketing
- Availability of workers/labor force
- Ambiguous regulations
- County planning and local zoning issues
- Farm presentation
- COVID-19/pandemic effect on tourism
- Local county and tourism support
- Regulation around alcohol production

## How UMES Extension is helping

To help address these challenges UMES Extension is organizing conferences, workshops and training to educate farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

## Other Sources for Information

### References

Bhandari, Prem B., Kingsley Ejiogu, Lila Karki, and Enrique N. Escobar. (2024, April 6-9). *Challenges Facing Agritourism Operations in Maryland*. [Conference oral presentation]. Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD) Research Symposium, Nashville, Tennessee, United States.

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