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Edmund - That's a good way to put it, Federal Notes.

Participant #8 - That's right. It'll hurt your feelings but you got to keep going, and I think endurance. It's hard for me to imagine that if you've got the right people and the right passion with the people involved, it's hard for me to see in this day and time an agritourism flop. I think it's going to be in the character and motives of person if it's a failure, because, to me, agritourism, you can just about do anything. We started off with company picnics and all. Well, like all these you-pick-its here now and it's because people are wanting to buy something. What do you have to buy? Do you sell your beef? What do you mean you don't have anything to sell? It was by demand. We backed into all that. I think those are some of the highlights on leadership, which is where we are, right?

Edmund - Yes, sir. The last question. *What future do you see for the agritourism industry in the state of Georgia and why?*

Participant #8 - I think it's bright, I think it's a fantastic future. I think it's a youthful future. Farming is always associated with the World War II generation. We so closely associate it with grandparents and things like that. That is

the case, but there's a whole new wave of people, whether they are caught up in organics or they just want the work ethic that comes with living on a farm in a rural community for their children. I think you're going to see folks, maybe leaving corporate jobs and making a go of it whether it's apples or organics or locally grown or whatever it happens to be. There's a guy that I just heard about, now his daddy is filthy rich and he's been running a bed-and-breakfast and a restaurant in some high-end place in Mexico the last few years. His dad got a big cattle farm down the road and so all a sudden, this kid is moving here and he's going to start a big organics operation. I'm not so sure if he's got a passion for it or if it's just the next thing with daddy's money. I don't know him, and I guess we'll find out with time, but he's a great example. I hope he's the real deal, and I hope he's very successful because he is what I believe is exactly what it is. The guy couldn't be hardly 30. He's got a passion for the land. Yes, his father is wealthy and can help him get set up, but there are others out there that don't have that, but they still have that same thing. I think for the future it's that. I hope that politically and litigiously agritourism is going to grow to catch up with the industry. The industry right now is at this level. Organization, support, political muscle, voice, things like that are down here and hopefully we're going to catch up to it, at least get close and I think that's going to happen in the next five years. I hope that you'll see, more educational institutions paying attention to what are the specifics about agritourism. You need to know what pot ash does and nitrogen,

sure, but have you ever thought about how to park 500 cars on your farm? Have you figured out how you're going to feed them? We learned pretty quick that if Bubba's Radiator Company comes, they bring 150 people and Bubba's Uncle Clem has a barbeque restaurant and he gets lost getting here and the food's late and cold, all they remember is they had a bad meal at our farm. There's just so much to think about. Your safety issues. I told you about the little boy that was burned and we had fortunately had enough sense on this one particular day that we had contacted the right people and we had three GPS approved landing sites for these Life Flight helicopters years before the little boy was every burned, just anticipating. You start having people, you're going to have a heart attack. I'm telling you, in every crowd there's three great big giant obese women with weak ankles and they are going down, they just do. One little thing, crack, their ankles go. Then nowadays, kids, they drink four PowerAde's and they're dehydrated because it's all electrolytes, so they're not drinking the water. They're getting off the couch. They're coming out here and its 101 degrees. They're passing out left and right. How you going to handle all that? There's so much more to know and learn. I've got some friends up in Augusta and they had one little accident that could've been prevented. It was a stupid thing that they didn't train their employee right and then they grossly mishandled it themselves. They weren't sweet. They weren't friendly. They just were worried about the insurance data and capturing this and it snowballed on them, and they just lost heart, started

making weird decisions and, man, they're all but in business anymore. They had a fantastic business. There wasn't anybody there to say to them, "hey, somebody's going to get hurt some day." You didn't mean to do it, but you got to deal with it. I think that's what I hope is that we are more uniform in what people see. It's like we talked about earlier, one devastating injury on, say, one of these little cow trains, that hurts us all.

Edmund - Yep, exactly. It affects the whole industry.

Participant #8 - Then you get some of these people right now and there's actually a group, I'm not going to name them, but there's a place in Georgia right now and they were real estate people and I'm sure they're great folks. I've never met them. They're a little aloof and they had a piece of property that was in a rural area that was not going to be developed. They came visited us anonymously. They visited everybody around, and they took parts of it and created what's really more of a farm-based theme park than it is true agritourism. They grow a little thing, a little corn maze, but they took everybody else's good ideas and had the financial backing to start it and I hope they're successful. I think they're probably representing what they are very well, but I can't say that it's genuine agritourism, but then again, some people would say that we're not.



Edmund - It comes back to the true definition of agritourism and what it is. Well, the goal of this study is to try to educate people on what the agritourism is in the state of Georgia. That was the last question. Is there anything you want to add to this research?

Participant #8 - Yes, I think you've got an easier row to hoe to educate the masses than the influencers. Stereotypically, agritourism is not a huge economic driver. It's extra spending cash for, other businesses up there in north. That's what it is to them. They don't realize what an enormous economic driver it is. The influencers, the people with the yes and no voices for grant funding or the universities, the extension services, the Department of Ag, the Department of Tourism, all that. One of my big things has been to postpone this roadside agritourism signage which was a nice thing and it's a great thing, but you've got a Chevron station in South Georgia with the four signs pointing to Georgia Agritourism and it's so-and-so whatever. And it's a Chevron station that sells local pecans. It's a gas station, and they're endorsing them as agritourism. Now if you have to drive four miles out of your way and you get there and you're disappointed, are you going to follow another agritourism sign?

Edmund - Probably not.

Participant #8 - Heck no. What I've been trying to do is get them to don't stop the program, but just postpone it until we can get a good definition of what is agritourism and then we can also structure the signage program where

there's a set of protocols that you have to meet. You got to have running water. You got to have bathroom facilities. You got to have a parking area that's safe. Lighting. There's just some fundamental things that you got to have to be in business and until we have some kind of cooperative effort between all these agencies. There we can say, okay, yes, a group of peers from the Georgia Agritourism Association has set up some guidelines. They meet the guidelines. The Tourism Department folks have gone and seen them and they've been in business for five years and they're a real deal, and here you go Department of Agriculture, you tell the Department of transportation to set their signs out. That's the way we ought to be, but right now we've got one person in the Department of Agriculture that really doesn't know that much more about what agritourism is than the people you're trying to educate. They're just basically saying, oh, I think that's agritourism, and that's how they get sign up. Changing as far as your role in educating, hopefully you can put a little bit of a slant on comparing it's an easy, easy comparison on what other states are doing for the agritourism industry versus what Georgia's doing. Huge difference. We recently had the SERAC, Southeastern Regional Agritourism Council. Right now, the chairman of that organization is Martha Glass in North Carolina and they do a great job. We had Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, North Dakota, Ohio, because there's no national organization for

agritourism. That's where these professors, these extension specialists, your tourism specialists that have a passion for agriculture, they're coming to that meeting and we had it here. Not one single word was published anywhere in the state of Georgia that that group was here, not one, and that was this last year. Now in 2007 or 2008, NAFDMA which is the North American Farmers Direct marketing Association, which is the global parent for agritourism. That's Europe, Canada, South America, and the United States. People from everywhere. They have a fantastic trade show, they're wonderful. It's a great place to find mentors and learn and come up with good ideas. They actually had their national conference in Georgia, in Savannah, and nobody did anything. Our local paper wrote something about it. They toured the whole state, about 1100 people, I don't remember how many. From all those countries.

Edmund - No one knew about it.

Participant #8 - Do you know what they said when they were done? The worst conference ever. The organizer, he said, "In every occasion" and he'd been doing it 15 years, he said, "In every occasion, having this conference in someone's state, turbo boosts agritourism 10 years ahead within the next year." He said, "That will not happen here." He said, "Politically, you all are invisible." He said, "I feel sorry for you." Those are his words. Those are a direct quote.

Edmund - : There's a lot of work to be done.

- Participant #8 - A lot of work to be done in Georgia. A lot of work to be done. I would say Georgia has as much potential as anybody because we got the coast, we got the mountains, we got so much diversity. We got rivers and so much potential here.
- Edmund - I think so, too.
- Participant #8 - It's amazing. That's where you can make the biggest difference is doing a comparison. Each one of those states went around the table and said, okay, what are you doing, Tennessee? Well, PhD Sally Jo says, oh, our agritourism major is really coming along. Then Department of Tourism lady says, well, here's what we're doing and we got matching funding grants for folks that want to start up an agritourism and for Century Farms we've got this going on and that going on. Then the Department of Ag, well, what do you got going on? Oh, well, we're partnering with the organics people and we're going to partner with this people to help market specifically small farm commodities. All of them, all the way around are like that even Mississippi. They got this PhD that came, she's just learning and she said, I have no idea what I'm doing, but I'm excited and all that. Then comes the Georgia representative that spoke on behalf of, the group there and she goes, "Well, we got a signage program." Of course, their signage program has been in business for years. They're looking at us, like, you just got a signage program? We're like we've got a signage program. They're like, huh? Then we start talking about the primary marketing initiative for the Department

of Agriculture right now which is Georgia Grown which is a phenomenal push. It's a wonderful thing. I'm really excited about it. If I'm selling strawberries, it's going to help me. It's going to help in a lot of ways, but it doesn't do anything for the industry of agritourism. There's a misconception that, well, Georgia Grown has got that covered. Georgia Grown is not doing anything for the definition of agriculture, or anything else. Georgia Grown is the best program that's comes out of the Department of Agriculture ever as far as helping Georgia farmers from an industry standpoint, commodity and brand what is Georgia agriculture. There's none better, but, the signage program doesn't help. It helps identify people, but if their County Commissioner comes after them, then he just uses that as proof that they're really not agriculture, the signs, you see. There's a lot to it. You don't have time for all that, but that's where we are.