

## CULINARY ACTIVATIONS

Food tourism is on the rise, and there is increasing awareness and quest for authentic tourism experiences. The trend of incorporating authenticity as a selling proposition for products or businesses is nothing new, but for farms this is still an emerging concept for destination branding looking to attract the experiential food adventurer.

The language around food is evolving in an interesting way. Descriptors initially used were to elevate the experience like culinary, gastronomy, haute cuisine, epicurean or gourmet; however, we are now seeing a shift to simpler terms like simply food or agritourism. The notion of simplistic supported by exceptional ingredients is now touted as the ultimate experience.

The first step as you consider including culinary in your Open Farm Days participation may include asking yourself the following questions:

1. What is your primary reason for wanting to add a culinary activation? Is it to:
  - a. Make a profit from the food activation?
  - b. Draw attention to other items you are currently producing and or selling?
  - c. Expand the natural extension of your business or products?
  - d. Increase exposure and general awareness or storytelling for your farm?
  - e. Connect with community?
  - f. Something else?
2. Do you have a clear vision of what you want the food activation to be, or are you looking for support in creating a product for your farm?
3. Do you have the resources or connections to add a food component or will you require additional support?
4. Is there an opportunity to partner with a neighbouring farm to raise awareness and share in the project? You may have natural connections that you may or may not have considered. Consider neighbouring farms, restaurants, community halls, other local businesses as part of your network.
5. Have you considered what assets your farm or region have that could help you with your activation?
  - a. Do you have picnic tables, natural areas that could provide space for an outdoor activation?
  - b. Do you have outdoor barbecue, fire pit, pig roaster, smoker, etc. that could lend itself to an activation with a chef?
  - c. Is there a local community hall with commercial kitchen, tables etc. that could be utilized for an individual or community event?

## ALBERTA OPEN FARM DAYS

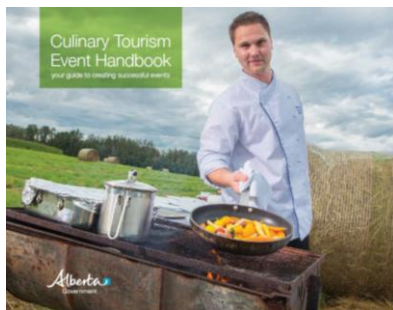
6. Have you set aside a start-up budget for the food activation?
7. Have you considered a pricing strategy or looked at a Profit & Loss scenario?
8. Have you considered a partnership with a local beverage company such as a brewery, distillery or fruit winery?
9. Outside of the Open Farm Days promotional site, have you considered other ways you may want to market your event?

### **Sample Opportunities:**

- Selling picnic baskets with pre-made lunches
- Gourmet baskets
- BBQ lunches/pig roast/corn roast etc.
- Food trucks
- Group farm/partner activations
- Farming community partnerships with community halls and kitchens
- Food demos with chef partners
- Canning, preserving and pickling or other hands on activations

If you are interested in discussing your program with the committee members from Open Farm Days, there are several individuals with a variety of skill sets that can be of assistance. They can provide some direction and connections if you have questions or are looking to share some thoughts on how this can benefit your farm.

For additional resources download the Culinary Tourism Event Handbook



<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/73935202-0857-4bcd-8cb9-aab80dde5803/resource/99e657bb-d4f9-4f22-8dbb-622e5ca58ea9/download/culinary-tourism-handbook.pdf>