Abstract: Agritourism offers consumers the opportunity to purchase locally grown food on the farm along with the educational experience of learning about food production. This project was designed to help energize Iowa’s agritourism industry.

What was done and why?
Agritourism offers small- and medium-sized producers an opportunity to add income while drawing on increasing interest in rural and nature tourism. It also provides an avenue for marketing food and agricultural products directly on the farm, as well as an opportunity to expand educational and public relations activities for agricultural producers.

Project objectives were to:
• Identify currently utilized advertising and promotions (marketing) channels for Iowa agritourism and other on-farm retail operators.
• Collect and quantify a minimum of 50 responses from existing agritourism operations on expenditures for marketing their agritourism businesses and their primary marketing outlets.
• Educate a minimum of 100 current and prospective Iowa agritourism operators about the importance of an effective marketing plan.
• Educate a minimum of 100 small- to medium-sized producers in Iowa to identify opportunities to create regional and statewide marketing initiatives for agritourism.
• Gather data from at least 50 agritourism operators to identify opportunities for cooperatively promoting/marketing Iowa agritourism operations and local food production in the area.
• Encourage investment/support from additional state and local entities and organizations.

What did we learn?
This project created a marketing infrastructure that previously didn’t exist. The newly devised marketing brand, logo and program will allow for continued usage and integration within Iowa’s agritourism industry. Partnerships have begun and awareness has been focused on cooperating across statewide organizations to promote Iowa agritourism. Increased collaboration within producer groups such as the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association also has resulted from this project and will help ensure more effective usage of limited marketing resources.