

Overview

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of current safety protocols on agritourism operations in Virginia. The question guiding this research was: What types of safety protocols are in place for visitors, how are they managed on Virginia agritourism operations, and how could they be improved for future operations?

Background Information



Agritourism examples: Top Picture- Sensory bin at a farm field trip.

Bottom picture- Meat educational workshop at a local farm market.



Types of Agritourism:

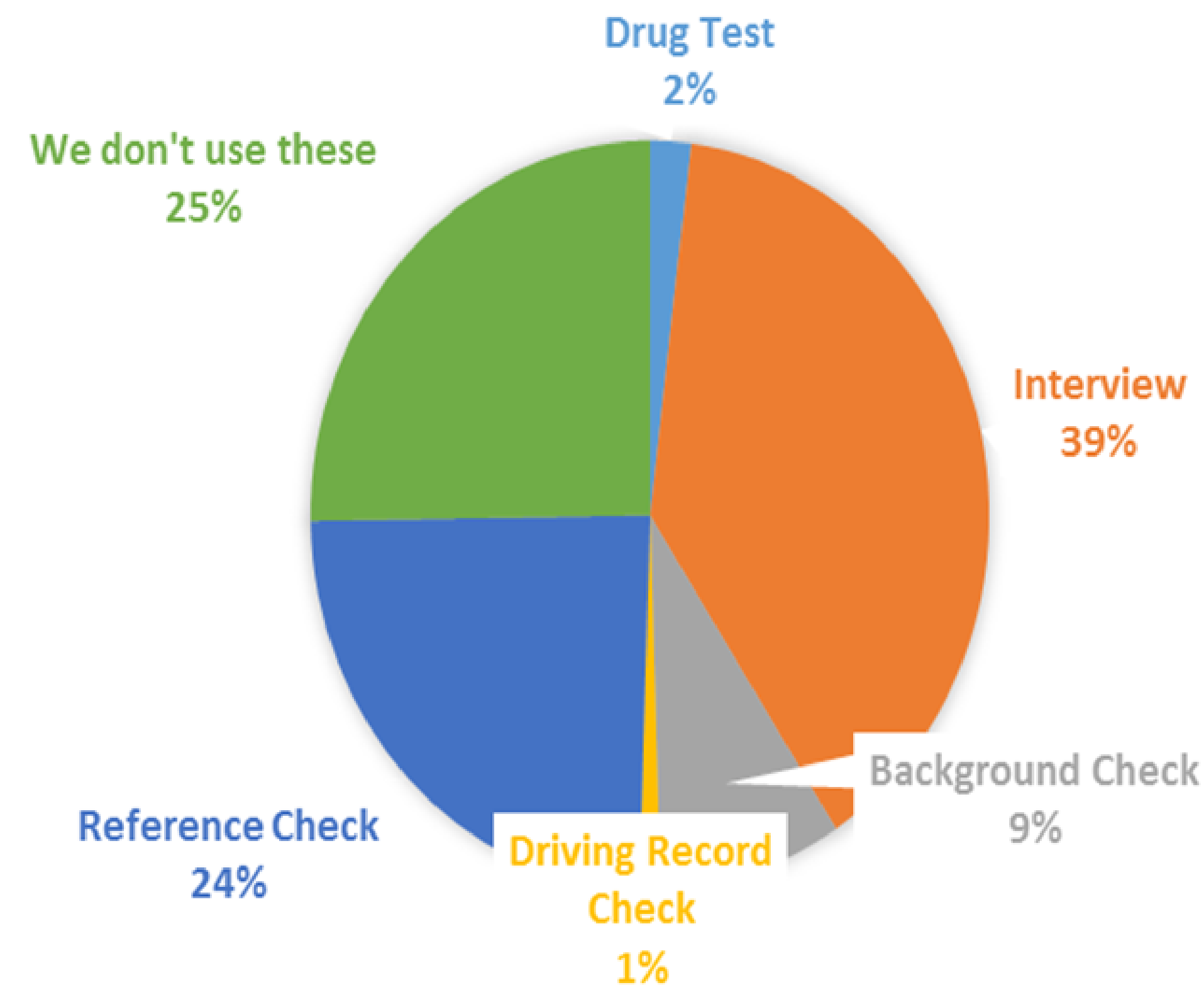
- ✚ Farm tour
- ✚ Field trips
- ✚ Educational workshop
- ✚ Festivals
- ✚ Weddings
- ✚ Beer, wine, cider tastings
- ✚ On farm lodging
- ✚ Hayrides
- ✚ U-pick operations
- ✚ Pumpkin patch
- ✚ Farm markets
- ✚ Christmas tree farm
- ✚ Cut your own operations
- ✚ Corn maze

Methodology

Utilizing the Dillman method, a Qualtrics survey was sent to Virginia agritourism operators. The survey was broken into four question areas; Farm Employees, Farm Visitors, Insurance, and Signage.

Results

FIGURE 1: PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING FOR FARM EMPLOYEES



Farm visitor safety was evaluated to showcase the current protocols utilized to keep visitors safe. Participants were also questioned regarding insurance. Additionally, insurance agencies covering agritourism operations were recorded, as well as the frequency of farm walkthroughs. Signage was the last area of study. Several reported having the Virginia agritourism liability sign posted on their operations in various locations and languages.

WARNING
 Under Virginia law, there is no liability for an injury to or death of a participant in an agritourism activity conducted at this agritourism location if such injury or death results from the inherent risks of the agritourism activity. Inherent risks of agritourism activities include, among others, risks of injury inherent to land, equipment, and animals, as well as the potential for you to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to your injury or death. You are assuming the risk of participating in this agritourism activity.

Note: This liability sign must be in 1 inch black lettering.

Recommendations

- Supplementary operational walkthroughs (some being mandatory)
- More extensive employee screening
- Increase employee training and expectations
- Expand signage (both visuals and languages)
- Encourage emergency personnel contact



Conclusion

Agritourism safety should be considered from the entrance to the exit of every operation. Things to consider before opening your operation:

- ✚ Parking
- ✚ Bathrooms
- ✚ Hand washing stations
- ✚ Signage
- ✚ Employee training
- ✚ Emergency plans
- ✚ Updating insurance
- ✚ Walkthrough completion

Sign examples from safeagritourism.org.



References

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