



AgCache: An Innovative Marketing Tool for your Agribusiness

French Price, Kohl Centre student, Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, Virginia Tech; Kathryn Baugh, Kohl Centre student, Animal Science, Virginia Tech; Kathryn D. White, M.S. 2013 Graduate, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech; and Kimberly L. Morgan, Assistant Professor, Kohl Junior Faculty Fellow, Agricultural and Applied Economics, Virginia Tech

This fact sheet is a product of the 2014 Spring Kohl Centre Experience. To find out more about this project team and related information, please go to the Kohl Centre at Virginia Tech's website:

www.kohlcentre.aaec.vt.edu

What is an AgCache?



An AgCache is a unique spin on a popular outdoor past time called GeoCaching. GeoCaching is a high tech treasure-hunting experience using GPS where seekers use GPS coordinates to find hidden caches. Once they have found the caches they post pictures and comments about their experience online.

AgCache uses the geocaching network to allow visitors to experience the real treasure: agriculture. AgCache visitors have the opportunity to learn the importance and history of agriculture by visiting operating agricultural businesses and farms. Not only do AgCaches educate visitors, but they also bring traffic and business to the AgCache hosts.

AgCache is a fun, exciting way to turn your business into an agritourism destination.

How can hosting AgCache benefit you?

1. AgCache connects you to your customers at your farm and allows you to build customer relationships.
2. AgCache allows you to tap into a new audience and expose your business to new partners and customers.
3. AgCache visitors give you instant feedback on what appeals most to your customers.
4. AgCache hosting provides an added product line to your product mix, i.e. agritourism activity during non-production seasons.
5. AgCache hosting gives you an opportunity to educate people about agricultural production realities.
6. AgCache requires very little time or money – select your site, choose your box (be creative!), include the log sheet, and check in every week to track your visitors!





Preliminary steps prior to hosting an AgCache:

Before deciding to host an AgCache, there are specific considerations to address with your farm family and employees.

Must Like People

Agritourism invites the public onto your agribusiness and encourages curiosity. AgCache hosts should be prepared for curious visitors and their questions. Hosting an AgCache requires friendly interactions and knowledgeable responses to the inquisitive public. An AgCache is a form of agritourism that does not demand your physical presence, however, setting the stage to provide responses to the wide range of questions from the public help visitors get the most out of the experience.

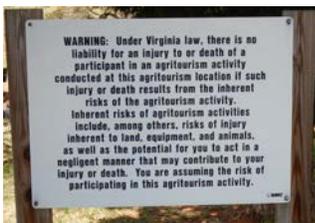


Know Caching Rules

When it comes to choosing the location and disguise of your AgCache box, the choice is all yours. Most cache boxes include a journal to allow seekers to note their name and visit date, and visitors often include a small memento, such as a sticker, toy car or animal, keychain, and other assorted items. There are a few rules that keep the experience fair, fun, and safe for everyone involved.



- **All caches must be at least 0.1 miles apart.** This is mandated by the Geocache organization. The organization holds various running competitions and if the density of caches is too high, it gives some GeoCachers an unfair advantage.
- **No visitors after dark.** This ensures the safety of all participants especially on agriculture operations where accidents can occur very easily even in the daylight.
- **Cannot charge fee where the cache is located.** For example, a cache can be placed next to a for-fee corn maze, but cannot be inside a for-fee corn maze. AgCache is an opportunity that can be experienced by everyone, whether they brought their wallet with them or not.
 - **AgCache must be accessible 365 days a year, regardless of the operating schedule of the site.** For example, a cache cannot be placed at a seasonable produce stand.



Invest in insurance liability policy

An agriculture operation can be a dangerous place to those unfamiliar with production, harvesting and processing activities. An insurance liability policy protects your agribusiness should an accident occur during an AgCache visit. These policies may provide additional protection beyond the Code of Virginia Title 3.2 Chapter 64 – [Agritourism Activity Liability](#) legislation. The Virginia Farmers Direct Marketing Association offers an [Agritourism Liability Signage Order Form](#), and potential AgCache hosts are encouraged to purchase and post these warning signs on their premises.

Add signage

Many AgCache visitors may have never even seen an operating farm before and are unaware of the unspoken rules, such as “always close a gate if you open it.” Before inviting visitors to your agribusiness, ensure that appropriate signage has been placed. Examples can include “Please close gate behind you”, “Keep off grass”, etc. Also be sure to rope off any restricted areas that you would not be comfortable with visitors exploring. Establishing these measures will make hosting an AgCache an easier and more enjoyable experience for you.

Contact AgCache Creators

Once you have completed this checklist and chosen the design and location of your AgCache, the next step is to contact the creators of AgCache, [Chris and Jennie Simms](#). The Simms will schedule a farm visit and provide confirmation that the proposed AgCache site meets the requirements. Once the Simms approve your AgCache site, your farm will be added as an official host of an AgCache in Virginia.

If you are interested in learning more about Virginia agritourism opportunities or adding value to your agribusiness by hosting an AgCache, please contact Dr. Kimberly Morgan at KLMorgan@vt.edu.

Resources for this project were provided by the Kohl Centre. The Kohl Centre serves a dual mission: (1) To provide business, financial, marketing and management advice, using the resources of Virginia Tech students and faculty, in the entrepreneurial spirit of Dr. Dave Kohl; and (2) To facilitate action-oriented, immersive professional development project opportunities for Kohl Centre Teams in response to identified clientele needs. Please visit www.kohlcentre.aaec.vt.edu for more information.

