

Entertainment Farming

The New York Times has reported that in the 1990s, many owners of small farms in America began to reduce their wholesale farming to a mere sideline. Instead, they started using their property for another purpose: entertainment farming. Other terms for this new way to make a living on the farm are agritainment and agritourism.

Entertainment farmers attract paying customers to their property with country bands, hay-bale mazes, petting corrals and tricycle courses. City-dwelling families eager for a feel of life on the farm can pay \$12 or more for admission, food and amusements. It can cost a child \$1 to frolic in a pile of straw or pick a flower. Some farms have mazes cut into their cornfields that can take a person 45 minutes to navigate. The newspaper reported that one farmer in Arizona makes up to \$15,000 on a good weekend.

In 1994, Alaska and Oklahoma introduced agritourism as official parts of their state tourism policies. The catalyst for many of these farmers to take up agritainment, of course, was economic pressure. The American entrepreneurial spirit is certainly alive and well. The primary reason for being of a farm -- and a noble one, indeed -- is producing crops that feed both man and livestock. In many instances, its function is being changed.

The associates of Life Care, American Lifestyles and Life Care at Home are engaged in a great mission, and our product is serving our residents. We must not be diverted from that central purpose.

And in the spiritual realm, fruitfulness is God's will for every Christian and every church.

--Beecher Hunter