



7 tips for starting

HERE are some tips from Bill Keizer, Riverview Christmas Tree Farm, Canton, S.D., on getting started in agritourism. He and his wife, Darlene, sell Christmas trees, operate a U-pick pumpkin patch, and provide hay rides and bonfires for groups. They also ran a cross-country trail on their farm and nearby land for 18 years.

- 1. Buy adequate insurance.** The Keizers carry a \$2 million liability policy through American Family Insurance.
- 2. Don't set admission prices too low.** Don't think of what you would pay. Imagine what someone who doesn't have access to a farm would pay for what you offer.
- 3. If you have to raise prices,** raise them enough so you can live with them for a couple of years.
- 4. Make prices all-inclusive.** The Keizers don't charge extra for service.
- 5. Focus on repeat customers and word-of-mouth advertising.** The Keizers have 1,200 customers on their mailing list. Newspapers are effective.
- 6. Cultivate free publicity.** Bill offers himself to local media as an expert on how to pick the best Christmas tree.
- 7. Build bigger facilities if you can afford to make the investment.** Several years ago, Bill and Darlene put up an 800-by-30-foot building for their Christmas-tree business. Now they wish they had a larger building or had moved an old barn onto their farm.

More advice

Hosting guests on your ranch isn't a way to get rich quick, says Harry Olson. He and his wife, Maureen, have a cabin on their Naard Creek Ranch near Killdeer, N.D., that they rent out to visitors.

The income is rather erratic, he says. Bookings largely depend on repeat customers, Web site traffic and word-of-mouth advertising.

His advice:

- Don't invest a lot of money to get started.
- Don't expect to make a lot of money.
- Do your homework before you start a venture.
- Make sure you enjoy meeting new people and don't mind having them on your property.

Commerce and get products to sell or rent out. Focus on the niche. Do not leave the niche. Run your idea past someone who can give you their honest opinion and will let you know if it is a good idea.

You have said that South Dakota farmers could sell silence. What do you mean?

Silence is golden. People living in the East desperately want silence, even if it's just a day, two days, a week of silence — to read, to meditate, to think. And we can give it to them.

I know it sounds crazy, but trust me. I know people who hike far up into the mountains just so they can read a book alone. I met a man yesterday who was flat on his back on the city's grass in one of our local parks, and he was reading a theology book and communing with nature. Silence will make you money.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEATHERGRAM

January precipitation: below normal. January temperatures: warmer, South Dakota; near normal, North Dakota.

Dec. 11 - Jan. 10

By FRANK WATSON

TEMPERATURES are favored to average above normal with cooler temperatures after New Year's Day for portions of North Dakota. Precipitation is expected to total below normal.

The outlook for significant precipitation for this forecast period is very low. Snow cover for the period looks very poor as well.

Fair skies are favored from Monday to Friday, Dec. 11-15. Above-normal temperatures are expected.

Clouds are expected to increase over the weekend of Dec. 16-17 and through Dec. 20. These clouds will provide a fair chance for light precipitation, mostly in the form of snow. Amounts will be slightly heavier over North Dakota.

Prospects are poor for precipitation the following week, Dec. 21-29. Portions of North Dakota will see slightly more clouds than South Dakota and will have a slightly better chance for isolated precipitation. Temperatures are favored to average above normal.

The waning days of 2006 and the beginning of the new year, Dec. 30-Jan. 4, may provide the best prospects for precipitation during this period. However, totals are expected to be light. Temperatures will trend downward.

Noticeably colder temperatures with sunny skies are favored Jan. 4-7.

Temperatures are expected to rebound, bringing light snow over North Dakota for Jan. 8-9.

Watson is a White Bear Lake, Minn., meteorologist.

	North Dakota				South Dakota			
	S K Y	P C P	T E M P	N O T E	S K Y	P C P	T E M P	N O T E
MO 11	☁				☀			
TU 12	☀		-		☀		-	
WE 13	☀		-		☀		-	
TH 14	☀				☀			
FR 15	☀		+		☁		+	
SA 16	☁		+		☁		+	
SU 17	☁	☆☆		L I G H T	☁	☆☆		L I G H T
MO 18	☁	☆☆	-		☁	☆☆	-	
TU 19	☁	☆☆	-		☁	☆☆	-	
WE 20	☁	☆☆	-		☁	☆☆	-	
TH 21	☁				☀			
FR 22	☁		+		☁		+	
SA 23	☀		+	F A I R	☀		+	F A I R
SU 24	☁	☆☆			☁	☆☆		
MO 25	☁			S K I E S	☀			S K I E S
TU 26	☁		+		☀		+	
WE 27	☁		+		☀		+	
TH 28	☀				☀			
FR 29	☀		+		☀		+	
SA 30	☁	☆☆	+	L I G H T	☁	☆☆	+	
SU 31	☁	☆☆			☀			
MO 1	☁	☆☆		S N O W S	☁	☆☆		L I G H T
TU 2	☁	☆☆			☁	☆☆		
WE 3	☁	☆☆			☁	☆☆		
TH 4	☀		-		☀		-	S N O W S
FR 5	☀		-		☀		-	
SA 6	☀		-		☀		-	
SU 7	☀				☀			+
MO 8	☁	☆☆	+		☀			+
TU 9	☁	☆☆	+		☀			+
WE 10	☀				☀			+

Cloudy ☁	Rain ☔	Partly Cloudy ☁
Rain Widespread ☔	Sun ☀	Snow ⭐
Light Snow ☁	Cool Below Normal ❏	Mild Above Normal +

Trade mission garners sales

SEVERAL North Dakota manufacturers hope to sell more farm machinery to Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine in the future as a result of a recent state-sponsored trade mission to the region. SolarBee, Dickinson, N.D., entered an agreement to sell its solar-powered water circulators — a deal valued at \$220,000. The initial sale is expected to be part of a much more lucrative, long-term partnership between SolarBee and two Russian companies that have landed five projects to improve the

quality of water supplies in Kazakhstan and Russia, says Chris Harris, SolarBee vice president of international marketing.

WCCO Belting Inc., Wahpeton, secured a major order to supply swather belts to a Kazakhstan manufacturing company.

Titan Machinery, Fargo, met a distributor slated to sell Titan equipment and parts throughout Kazakhstan. "I believe we will be doing a lot of business in Kazakhstan," says Darrel Gillespie, Titan's marketing manager.

Holdings Co., Fargo, is negotiating a deal to supply used, late-model farm equipment to a limited-liability company that controls 128,000 tillable acres near Kazakhstan. Brandt Holdings is a privately owned company with 14 John Deere farm-equipment dealerships in North Dakota, Minnesota and three other states.

Gates Manufacturing Inc., Lansford, N.D., is pursuing leads to sell its field harrows.

Sund Manufacturing Co. Inc., Newburg, is negotiating with a company to

sell its grain handling equipment.

Duratech Industries, Jamestown, is starting talks with a finance company that will buy its feed grinder and haying equipment and lease them to Asian farms.

"Exploring trade in a part of the world with such great potential for agricultural and manufacturing growth has already yielded trade deals for some of our delegation, and we have good prospects for more," says North Dakota Lt. Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who led the trade delegation.