



Enjoying the rural landscape during a farm or ranch stay



Recreational horseback riding

Alternative Enterprises

For Higher Profits and Healthier Land

Get Off to a Smart Start

Before you choose an alternative enterprise, contact your USDA Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) area office. They can help you discover opportunities for diversifying into new enterprises or expanding those that you already have. Together you will assess the natural, economic, and social resources on your operation. You will:

- Identify the potential of the resources on your land or operation.
- Evaluate the possible effects that the enterprise could have on your resources and operation.
- Examine the capabilities and limits of your resources.
- Assure that your alternative enterprise is sustainable and compatible with resources on your operation and in your community.
- Learn about laws and regulations regarding your choice of enterprises.

Alternative Enterprises Can Mean Higher Profits and Healthier Land

To find out more about alternative enterprises, contact your USDA Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) area office. To find the location of your RC&D office, contact your local USDA service center or visit our website:

<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm>



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Family farmer Oscar Stevens and Gordon Bowdler of NRCS assess the progress of a vegetable crop. Stevens earns higher per-acre profits by growing vegetables and marketing them directly to local restaurants.

Protect your profits and keep your commitment to conservation through alternative enterprises—businesses that can help you get the most from the natural resources on your land.



Fee fishing through leases or 1-day contracts



Natural resource education tours

What's the Big Idea?

Choosing the right alternative enterprise can bring you higher profits, which means more money and more opportunities to keep your family on the farm, and your farm in your family. Making the right choice can produce a stronger economy for your community, and increase awareness of the many values and uses of natural resources.

Here are some alternative enterprises. One of them might be right for you!

Recreational Enterprises

- Hunting, skeet-shooting, archery, and paintball
- Fishing, kayaking, and canoeing
- Hiking and biking
- Rock climbing and cave exploration
- Picnicking and camping
- Bed and breakfasts
- Pony rides, petting zoos, and other animal attractions
- Birdwatching
- Nature photography
- Farm and ranch vacations

Crops/Horticultural Enterprises

- Herbs and dried flowers
- Bedding plants
- Pick-your-own fruit, berries, and vegetables operations
- Community gardens
- Seed production
- Wildlife feeds
- Organic food production

Agroforestry Enterprises

- Maple syrup production
- Nut, herb, mushroom, and fruit growing
- Christmas tree farms and nurseries
- Home decorations
- Furniture making and part production

Livestock Enterprises

- Specialty meats
- Leather, feathers, wool, and mohair
- Breeding animals for resale
- Organic range-fed meat, poultry, and dairy products

Aquaculture Enterprises

- Fish and shellfish farming
- Reptile and amphibian products
- Aquatic plants

Non-Farm Enterprises

- Self-storage units for recreational vehicles, boats, motorcycles, and furniture
- Animal boarding and facilities for field trials and trail riding
- Insect production
- Outdoor classrooms
- Plays, concerts, and celebrations of historical events
- Fairs, farmers markets, arts and craft shows, and re-enactments

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA's)

CSA is a new way to put the power of partnerships to work for people, farms, and the environment. Through CSA, farmers and consumers make annual agreements with each other that benefit local agriculture, economies, and natural resources.