



# ANIMAL AGRITOURISM



Ratchford Farms, Inc.

# The Ratchford Farm Story

- In 1952, Otis and Madge Ratchford purchased the farm to raise crops the old fashioned way with a mule team.
- In 1984, L.C, the son of Otis and Madge pursues a welding degree and spends next 20 years as a contract welder.
- 1986 Otis passes away and the farm was left without a main operator.
- 2004, LC returns to the farm and starts bison, beef and pork farming, as well as, Bee hives and a strong strawberry/blueberry crop.
- In 2009, Ratchford Farms was voted Farm Family of the year in Searcy County.



# Ratchford Products

## BUFFALO



## ELK



## BEEF



# How Do I Start?

- How Ratchford Farms Started
- How I Chose My Product
- What Hurdles I Overcame
- What's Next



# Do You Have The Resources

1. Land: Do you have access to land that has the proper soil, water and climate requirements?
  - *Farm in family since 1950's*
  - *Numerous springs that provide a constant flow of clean spring water*
  - *Buffalo were once native to Arkansas*



# Do You Have The Resources

2. Do you have the facilities to probably care for and handle you livestock?
  - *LC's experience as a welder gives him the abilities to manufacture and maintain his equipment and facilities*





# Do You Have The Resources

3. How will you achieve production and quality goals?
  - *The genetics of the Ratchford Farms heard of cattle have been in the Ratchford family for over 150 years.*
  - *Cattle and Buffalo are grass feed and natural raised with No hormones, antibiotics, or steroids. All animals are Spring watered, which can drastically affect the taste, color, and texture of the meat.*
  - *Pastures are rotated and animals have access mineral/salt blocks.*
  - *Low/No stress environment with only passive means used to handle livestock.*



# Do You Have The Resources

4. How will you operate the business?
- *Ratchford Farms operates a small fleet of delivery vans and maintains a on farm cold storage area for sales.*



# Do You Have The Resources

- *The Ratchford Farm has wide roadways and ample parking.*
- *Cattle Guards are used to allow free flow of vehicles.*
- *All potential hazards are marked and secured.*



# Legal, Regulatory and Liability

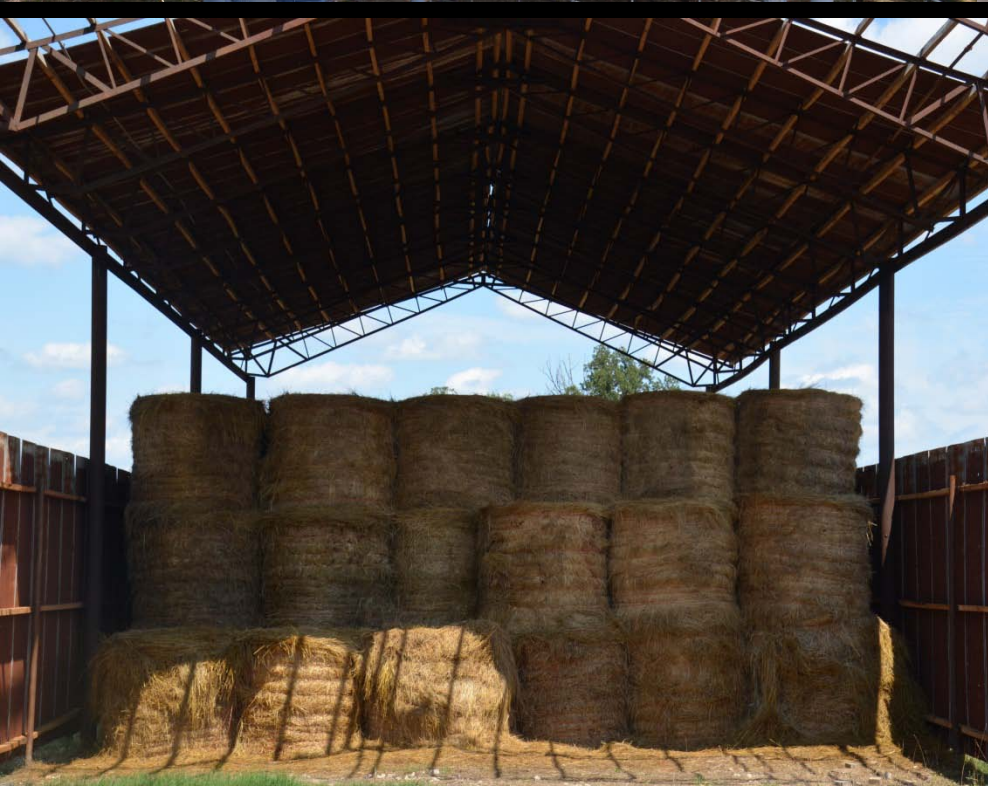
- *LEGAL*
  - *Each County has similar, but slightly different rules.*
  - *In Arkansas, the Arkansas Agriculture Department and the Arkansas Department of Health*
  - *On the Federal Level, APHIS & FSIS of USDA*
  - *Petting Zoo's and Exotic Operations might require federal permits from agencies other than USDA.*

# Legal, Regulatory and Liability

- *REGULATORY*
  - *Food or Drinks from the farm may require ADH permits. Products from the farm could require USDA & FDA permits or Inspections.*
  - *Exotic animals may require AGFC permits.*
  - *May need a animal exhibitor license.*
  - *For fee-fishing or hunting may require a AGFC license.*
  - *Water may require a ADH Permit.*

# Legal, Regulatory and Liability

- *LIABILITY*
  - *Liability insurance is highly recommended as home owners may not cover regular farm visitors or food safety issues.*
  - *Act 1024 of 2011 established liability protection for agritourism.*
  - *Negligence just wont hurt you, but also your peers.*
  - *Do you comply to ADA, OSHA, FDA-FSMA*



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