



Georgia Farm Gate Value 20-Year Trends – Agritourism and U-Pick

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This publication discusses trends in farm gate value (FGV) of agritourism and u-pick enterprises in Georgia since the beginning of data collection for the farm gate value report which began in 2001. Over the past 20 years, agritourism in many different forms has provided a valuable tool for agricultural enterprises to remain profitable and/or diversify in their business. The farm gate value survey currently utilizes UC Davis Sustainable Agricultural Research & Education Program’s definition of agritourism: “Agritourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment and education of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner or operator.”

See Figure 1 for normalized, inflation-adjusted farm gate value of school tours, equestrian trail rides, special events and special attractions. The gray bars represent the 2008 recession and Covid-19 pandemic. Inflation adjustments were made using U.S. Inflation Calculator, an online inflation calculation tool which uses Consumer Price Index (CPI) data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Real farm gate values are calculated by multiplying the nominal annual FGV of agritourism by the CPI inflation factor for each year relative to 2020. To normalize figures relative to 2020, each type of agritourism enterprise’s real annual farm gate value is divided by the base year 2020. Therefore, values in 2020 equal one and all other annual values are a ratio which represents their value relative to its 2020 value.

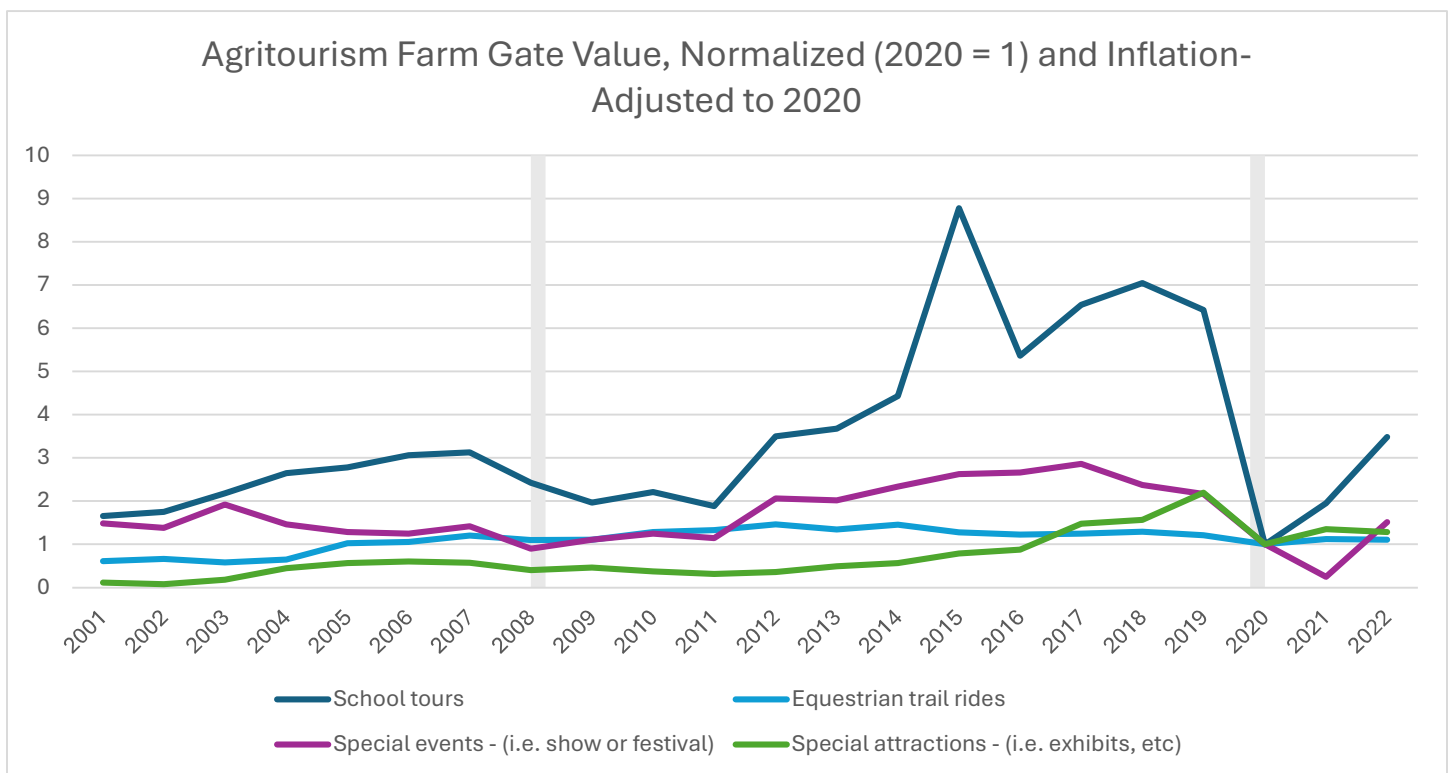


Figure 1. School tours, equestrian trail rides, special events, and special attractions normalized and inflation adjusted (to 2020) farm gate value.

Source: University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Farm Gate Value Report, calculations made by authors

Over the past two decades, agritourism in Georgia has exhibited moderate and steady growth until the pandemic in 2020. This trend aligned with national patterns, as agritourism revenue experienced a remarkable threefold increase from 2002 to 2017, according to the U.S. Census. The sector’s growth has been fueled by rising consumer interest in farm-to-table experiences, educational farm visits, and outdoor recreational activities. School tours have gained continuous attention in Georgia but were dramatically affected by the pandemic. However, the value for school tours in 2021 and 2022 was approximately two times and three times higher than the 2020 baseline. Special events saw moderate growth over the past decade until the pandemic disrupted operations. Trail rides showed the least impact from the pandemic. Overall, despite facing challenges during the pandemic, the agritourism sector has demonstrated resilience and is poised for further growth.

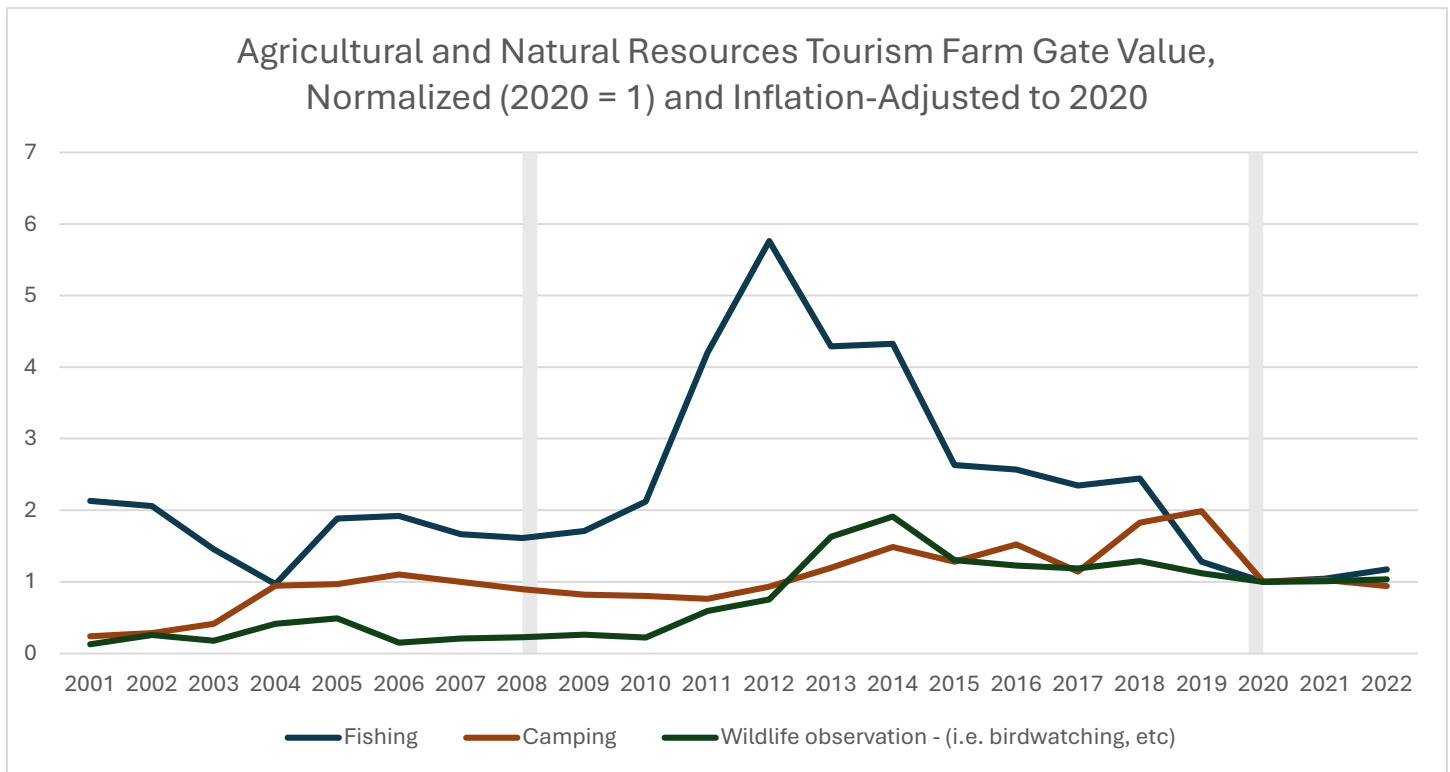


Figure 2. Fishing, camping, and wildlife observation normalized and inflation adjusted (to 2020) farm gate value.

Camping and wildlife observation exhibited relatively stagnant trends until 2012. While camping interest showed some growth leading up to the pandemic, wildlife observation remained largely unchanged since 2015. Fishing saw a significant increase from 2010 to 2012, followed by a decline towards 2020. The pandemic underscored the value of outdoor activities nationwide, leading to a surge in participation as people sought safe alternatives to indoor recreation. However, unlike the national trend, Georgia's outdoor sector did not experience a significant increase post-pandemic. This data may suggest that Georgia has yet to fully capitalize on the rising demand for outdoor activities, indicating that a deeper focus on this sector could provide valuable insights and opportunities for growth.

Source: University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Farm Gate Value Report, calculations made by authors

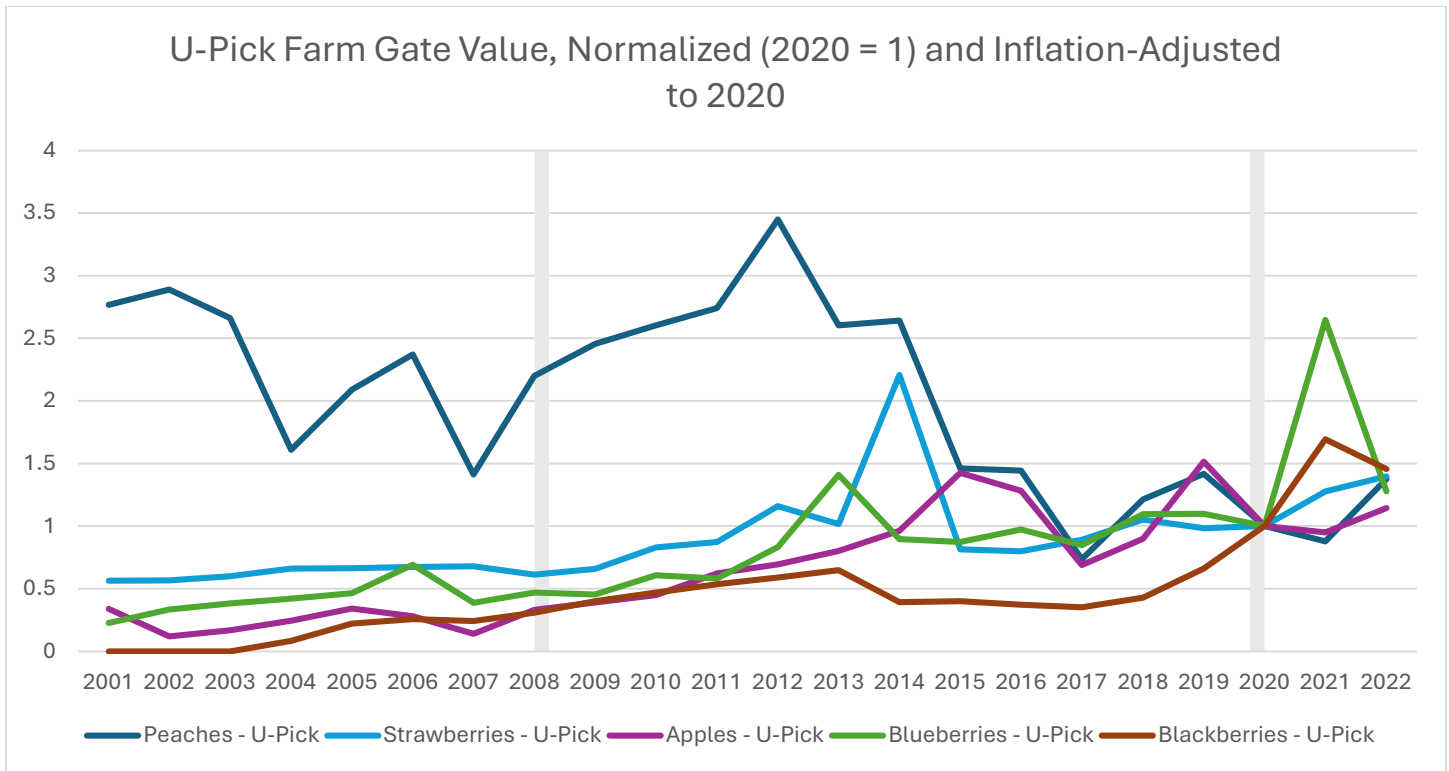


Figure 3. U-Pick apples, blackberries, blueberries, peaches, and strawberries normalized and inflation adjusted (to 2020) farm gate value.

U-pick peaches experienced steady growth until their peak in 2012, followed by a decline until 2017, with a slight increase observed until 2019. This decline in peach U-pick might have been partially offset by the growing interest in other fruits, such as strawberries and blueberries. The value of U-pick strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries has since surpassed pre-pandemic levels. The growth of U-pick blueberries has been particularly notable, aligning with a broader increase in blueberry acreage and sales. For instance, from 2017 to 2022, blueberry acreage in Georgia expanded by 52%, and sales surged by over 80%, based on the U.S. Census, reflecting a strong and sustained interest in this fruit.

Georgia's outdoor and agricultural sectors have shown varying levels of growth, with certain areas like U-pick blueberries and school tour experiencing expansion since the pandemic, while others, such as camping and wildlife observation, have remained relatively stagnant, indicating untapped potential and a need for strategic focus on fully leverage the increasing demand for outdoor activities.

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