



Iowa farmers love to engage with visitors. Agriculture experiences for group tours range from tried-and-true farm tours to tours with a different take.

"Iowa is known for its agriculture but offers so much more than fields of corn and soybeans," says Chelsea Lerud, executive director of Iowa Travel Industry Partners. "Bring your next group tour to experience the farm life in America's Heartland. Heaven? No, it's Iowa!"

Rusty Stars Alpacas in Winterset is where groups can experience alpacas in their environment and then see and shop for the products made from their fiber. In addition to an alpaca farm, Madison County is the home of Simple Life Farms, which raises Lamancha goats and processes their milk into delicious cheeses and luxurious soaps, lotions, and lip balms. Also in Madison County is Dalla Terra Ranch, Iowa's only organically-certified sheep ranch, and Kaysen Family Farms, which raises homegrown, purebred pigs. Group visits can be arranged at all the farms.

Hungry? The Wallace Centers of Iowa can provide farms-to-table, locally-sourced meals at its two locations: the Wallace Farm in Madison County and the Wallace House in Des Moines. Group programs and tours are available.

Reserve a guided group tasting, tour, or both at Fireside Winery in eastern Iowa. Other Iowa wineries with their own vineyards include Oscar Carl Vineyard in Sioux City; Lindon Wines in Burlington, Winneshiek Wildberry Winery in Winneshiek County, and Soldier Creek Winery in Fort Dodge.



*Hansen's Dairy  
Credit: Iowa Tourism Office*

Visit Hansen’s Dairy in Hudson to see how cows are raised and milk is processed. The adult farm tour lasts 90 minutes and consists of a guided farm tour that shows how milk gets from the cow to the table. There’s a trolley ride to the farm, and a walking tour to see the cows and calves, milking parlor, barn, and creamery. Better yet, all tourgoers get ice cream.

Le Mars, in Iowa’s northwestern corner, is known as the “Ice Cream Capital of the World.” That’s because the city is the headquarters of Wells Enterprises, a family-owned ice cream manufacturer. Get the scoop on ice cream at the Wells Visitor Center & Ice Cream Parlor. The interactive virtual production line shares how Wells Enterprises produces more than 200 million gallons of ice cream annually. Visitors can sample flavors that are exclusive to the parlor, such as Huckleberry and Mocha Almond Fudge, and then enjoy ice cream, banana splits, floats, sundaes, and other treats in the parlor.

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area is a 37-county region in northeast Iowa with a mission to interpret farm life, agribusiness, and rural communities—past and present. Possibilities for group-tour itineraries range from dairy farms and museums to vineyards and tractor assembly tours. Silos & Smokestacks helps tour operators put together itineraries that meet their groups’ needs. One of the modern farms in the Silos & Smokestack area is Cinnamon Ridge Farms in Donahue. Group tours at Cinnamon Ridge Farms are about two hours long and begin in the farm home. Outside, there are equipment demonstrations and visits to the robotic dairy barn, so groups can see the cows being milked by robots. An optional beer/wine and cheese pairing is available for an additional charge.

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Featured Image: Cinnamon Ridge Farms; Credit: Iowa Tourism Office

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