

## RESEARCHES ON THE CONCEPT OF AGROTOURISM AND ITS ROLE IN DEVELOPING MOUNTAIN AREAS

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### *Abstract.*

Ecotourism, green tourism, rural tourism, rural tourism are just some of the terms that define the tourism activities taking place in specific and unique environment offered by rural areas.

If ecotourism and green tourism are usually concepts related to a particular component of tourism, that the activities in nature and nature protection purposes, the concept of rural tourism is a term that includes all forms of tourism that takes place in rural areas , including agrotourism.

**Key words:** Ecotourism, green tourism, rural tourism, agrotourism

### **INTRODUCTION**

The concepts of rural tourism and agrotourism is identified to a certain level, but having both common elements and elements that distinguish them. Examine the concept of agrotourism versus rural tourism concept to identify similarities and differences, is especially difficult given that in practice they are confused.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The definitions given by the specialty literature allow us to observe the generality of the term rural tourism:

- all forms of tourism practiced in rural and farm tourism, tourism practiced by small family hotels, etc., which aim to highlight natural areas, local culture and gastronomy;
- All tourist activities intended for rural areas (farms, villages, etc.) which includes all local characteristics, intrinsic to rural areas to attract tourists;
- the amount of recreational experiences involving rural visit in order to participate in activities, events, or see the sights that are not found in urban areas.

Bring into question these definitions, because it should be noted that definitions of international literature, treat and almost always separates the concept of tourism compared to rural tourism. Trying to highlight the

common factors and differences between the two concepts is found since the early '90s. Then, both in Europe and the U.S. there is a clear confusion in using these terms.

In the U.S. the term agrotourism is reflected in the form of agriturism or rural tourism.

The definition of these terms differ according to different regions that practice. In North Carolina, for example, agrotourism is defined as "economic activity that occurs when people try to establish a link between travel and activities products, agriculture and food services.

In California, for example, is "the act of visiting a farm or agricultural society, horticultural, or agribusiness for entertainment, educational, or actively participate in the work unit.

In Canada tourism are multiple definitions:

- tourist practice associated with pleasure to sit in nature, a type of ecotourism;
- goings rustic, activities conducted on farms, events of agricultural, agri-food production locations and sales outlets from farms, where the public is invited to interact with the farmer and his family;
- an activity that combines nature, products of agriculture and tourism experience; agritourism includes a wide offer of products and services from fruit and vegetable stall, to hotel services or visits to the farm; these products and services have in common combining components agricultural and tourism;
- a leisure activity of visiting a professional enterprise of agricultural, horticultural or food, and may include active participation of the visitor, an educational component, or may be just for entertainment;
- an economic activity that occurs when products, services and agricultural heritage are on the market; is based on supply of goods or travel services offered at festivals and fairgrounds; promote the agricultural industry to tourists through agricultural museums, or agro-processing sites, are also part of the agro sector;
- tourist activity complementary to agricultural activity that takes place within a firm, and which creates a relationship between farmers and tourists, allowing tourists to discover the agricultural production methods, using information provided by the host.

At European level, although it uses the notion of agrotourism, the beginning of the last decade there is still an accepted definition of it, the terms of rural tourism, stops (Gite) rural tourism is confusing. However, we identified the following definitions of the agro French literature:

- tourism (farm) proposed by the farmers and link with their traditional activities;

- reception activities, accommodation, food and relaxation occurring within a household (farm) agricultural
- all delivery activities, accommodation and other services using the resources of a household (farm) farming, which contributes to the economic viability and its multifunctionality.

As seen from the above definitions, concepts of rural tourism and agrotourism is identified to a certain level, but having both common elements and elements that distinguish them. Examine the concept of tourism versus rural tourism concept, to identify similarities and differences, is especially difficult given that in practice they are confused.

First we start with the fact that both forms of tourism include activities that place in rural areas, and allowing contact with material values tourist, cultural, natural, economic and social landscape.

However:

- principal place of space tourism is farm (farm) agriculture, but rural tourism takes place in the community, area, region, etc., which allows the following distinction:

- Rural tourism has a wide scope of coverage, with tourism activities undertaken at a rural area (region, micro-regions, etc.), or rural communities;

- Agritourism has a broader coverage limited, with tourism activities undertaken in the household, farm or farm

- rural tourism is an activity complementary to agriculture, with direct benefits to the farm economy (household, farm), while rural tourism is a complementary form of mass tourism, the rural economy-wide benefits;

- agrotourism is an activity designed to capitalize excess of the farm household, while rural tourism highlights the potential of natural, man and human an entire community or region;

- agritourism is a secondary source of income in the household (farm), the main activity is agriculture, while rural tourism is an independent activity that is integrated in the tertiary sector of rural economies.

Given the above, specific customer profile of rural tourism and agrotourism can be characterized as follows (table 1.1):

Category clientele	Agrotourism		Rural tourism	
	MOTIVATION	EXPECTATIONS - depending on the profile of rural tourism unit	MOTIVATION	EXPECTATIONS - depending on the profile unit
Students on holiday	Teaching Purpose Recreation if the visit is organized	Fun interaction with animals. Fruit collection. Riding. Fishing	Recreation. Educational purposes if the visit is organized by school	Fun. Riding. Fishing
Students on holiday	Recreation. Accumulation of knowledge. Clean air	Acceptable housing conditions. Access activities agricultural. Time for other activities walking(cycling,)	Recreation. Knowledge accumulation. Clean Air	Acceptable housing conditions.. Time for other activities walking (cycling,)
Persons employed on vacation	Recreation. Relax and rest in fresh air. Living new experiences	Quality housing conditions. Views and information on farm operation. Performing various activities. Tasting final products of the farm	Recreation. Relax and rest in fresh air. Living new experiences	Quality housing conditions. Performing various activities
Persons employed or students in weekend	Recreation and leisure	Walking in a clean environment and activities that can not practice in urban areas (walks, visits, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, etc.)	Recreation and leisure	Walking in a clean environment and activities that can not practice in urban areas (walks, visits, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, etc.)
Retirees	Recreation. Leisure. Living new experiences	Quality housing conditions. Views and information on farm operation. Attracting performing various activities. Tasting the final product of the farm	Recreation. Leisure. Treatments	Quality housing conditions. Attracting performing various activities
Persons with special financial possibility	Views and information on how to obtain these products	Tasting these products green. Treatment with these products	Fresh air. Leisure. Recreation. Living new experiences	Desire to know the rural traditions, culture, nature
scientists			Explore some natural areas (caves, nature)	The discovery of "new". Research
Persons with disabilities			Recreation. Leisure. relaxation	Adequate housing conditions of these categories of customers

Table 1.1 Clients profile, motivations and expectations - agrotourism versus rural tourism

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the supply of products and tourism services in rural areas, adaptation to the motivations and expectations of customers, makes synthetic the following distinction between two concepts:

- rural tourism - accommodation in tourist pension, meals, various activities (sports, cultural, educational, craft, hiking);
- agrotourism - accommodation on the farm, farm table, farm visits, the sale of agricultural and food products.

They must answer the need customers to discover the products of the region, in a pleasant way to spend free time to relax in a pastoral atmosphere, to integrate into the countryside (landscape, inhabitants, customs, etc.).

Certainly, in addition, the difference between the two concepts is given by tourist activities incorporated, respectively: recreational activities, educational activities, etc.

All these elements of the tender, takes the form of tourism products / Agro, and the following characteristics (Table 1.2):

	Objective	Target clientele	Details and comments	Activities involved in achievement of the objective
<b>Produsul turistic rural</b>				
1	Pedagogical purpose "Pension pedagogical"	For students on vacation	Activities based on knowledge of customs and traditions of the area. You can enroll in school camps seasonal cycle	Visits to the memorial, museums, botanical gardens
2	Accumulation of new knowledge "House of discovery"	For all ages	Discovering the countryside, trips in the neighborhood, exploring the wild places, nature observation, photography	Hiking, climbing, tourist
3	Arrival "Hotel stay"	For all ages	Allow tourists to relax and visit surrounding pension	Accommodation, meals, coaches, photos, fishing, hunting
<b>Agro product</b>				
1	Pedagogical purpose "Farm pedagogical" eg **: riding courses, pedestrian walks, training	For children and adolescents	educational activities aimed at explaining different aspects of agricultural life. You can enroll in school camps seasonal cycle.	Educational tours and accommodation on the farm
2	Accumulation of new knowledge "discovery farm"	For all ages	Discovery rural, agricultural activities, the manufacturing methods of agricultural production by providing a person visits the company specialized in holding	Visits and coaches (wine tastings, primary products made in the farm - fresh milk, fruit just picked, etc.).

3	Arrival "Farm stay"	For all ages	Allow tourists to stay on the farm over to visit and / or perform specific activities proposed by the host.	Accommodation, involvement in the production of farm
4	Tasting products "Farm to dining and tasting"	For all ages	Farmers have a dining room which serves products and processed products derived from farm, office and accommodation on the farm together.	meals, train, visiting farm
5	Presentation, tasting and selling products "Farm products with direct sales"	For all ages	Sales center offering products that consumers purchase directly from the farm.	Reception work, farm visits, information on production activity

Table 1.2 Touristic/agrotouristic products supply characteristics

## CONCLUSIONS

Also, to a point, customer typology is similar. Most tourists seek first to discover the authenticity of the countryside, and the other to get in touch with special people in their natural environment. Elements that make the difference, however, are motivation and expectations of the clientele. Evaluation for two types of tourism is difficult given the variety of clients (unique people) and different perceptions on the quality of a product or service.

However, we emphasize the following: rural tourism potential customers are lovers of nature and the "specific" areas.

They want to know: the village, people, customs, traditions, local cuisine, the purpose of relaxation or knowledge;

Agrotourism potential customers looking for natural agricultural products or crafts. They want to know: how to make farming, trades and crafts workshops (farriers, carpentry, quarrying), folklore, popular gastronomy, etc.

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