

## THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE TOURIST FARM IN RURAL AREA OF THE WESTERN DEVELOPMENT REGION

VĂDUVA LOREDANA\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Michael I of Romania" from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Romania*

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: loredana\_heber@yahoo.com

**Abstract:** *The main activity of a farm has been in the past the breeding and exploitation of animals that can be sold as processing products for processing, lately this has not been enough due to the globalization and industrialization of farm operations. Farmers struggling to survive have had to face the choice of leaving the field of activity, exploiting animals or discovering new uses for existing resources, here farm tourism, agrotourism, due to the benefits it brings by playing a complementary role, primary farm or additional enterprise. Farm tourism activities as alternative activities in rural areas, can contribute to the rebirth of farms by increasing sales of products or services, due to the preferences of agrotourists for leisure, events held on the farm, zootechnical activities through contact and interaction with animals but diversified farmers the activity must pay particular attention to the protection of visitors, the provision of animal welfare and human health in order to reduce the transmission of specific diseases to animals and humans.*

**Key words:** rural area, farm, farm tourism, types

### INTRODUCTION

In rural areas, rural services are services for agriculture (services for the supply of certified seeds, supply and application of chemicals, conditioning and storage of cereals, conditioning and storage of certified seeds, cereals and oilseeds, agricultural and financial consultancy, land improvement and irrigation, agricultural leasing, marketing in agriculture, mechanization, chemicalization and phytosanitary protection, professional development, design and research, plant protection, breeding and selection in animal husbandry, sanitary-veterinary, agricultural unions, transport, capitalization of agricultural products) and for farmers and their families (sewerage, water distribution, education, energy and gas for household consumption, post office, health, telephony, public transport).[1,7,10].

The appearance of agrotourism and tourism at the agricultural, zootechnical or horticultural farm, in the Romanian rural area in general and in Western Region in special, brought some novelties in the field of services, in general, and of rural services, in particular:

- much of the rural services mentioned above disappeared with the liberalization of agriculture;
- new types of rural services have emerged specific to these new forms of niche rural tourism:
- public catering;
- accommodation, at the pension or farm;
- research in agrotourism, farm tourism;
- consultancy in agrotourism and farm tourism;
- educational, financial, Internet, leasing activities;
- marketing in agrotourism and farm tourism;
- professional development in agrotourism and farm tourism;
- transport and recovery of products obtained on the farm.

Agrotourism is defined, in Romanian language dictionaries, as "a form of tourism in which accommodation and meals are provided in rural household, farms" [17].

The literature does not attest to the exact time when it went from farm tourism to agrotourism [8,14,15], but it is generally accepted that the latter is over 100 years old in some countries of the world. The natural question is: what is the connection between agriculture and its branches and agrotourism and farm tourism. From a zonal point of view, the challenge of agrotourism is to define whether and how it falls within the local zonal laws and regulations for agriculture [11,13]. Does agrotourism mean agriculture or tourism? Is it a business? Does the locality want to encourage or discourage the diversification of agriculture and the development of agrotourism? These uncertainties, combined with the growth of the agritourism industry, have led many states and governments to clarify how their zoning laws apply to agritourism with definitions, exceptions and specific conditions for agrotourism land uses [3,4,9].

Some researchers [2,5] have grouped agrotourism activities into five broad categories:

- direct marketing - food produced on the farm, “pick with your own hand”, picking pumpkins, floral products, “cut your own Christmas tree”, stand sales;
- educational tourism - school trip, farm work experience, winery tour, farm tour;
- farm fun - haunted house, special event, festival, cornfield maze, mini zoo, hay cart ride;
- accommodation at the agro-zootechnical farm - accommodation with breakfast, wedding, picnic, reception, vacation [16];
- outdoor recreation at the agro-technical farm - care of the favorite animal, observation and recognition of breeds and species of animals and birds, fishing, hunting, identification of plant species, participation in farm activities.

It is proposed for agrotourism or farm tourism by several researchers [7,12] a definition in which the terms agricultural location, entertainment, farm and education are key elements, in which agrotourism includes directed or authentic agro-zootechnical activities [6] and in which the activities offered in the non-functional farms are not considered agritourism activities and in which the agricultural locations used as scene are not part of the agritourism.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The basic activity of an agro-zootechnical farm has always been the cultivation of land or the raising of animals which can be sold as goods to a consumer or as goods for further processing. However, in recent years, plant and animal production costs have risen and commodity prices have fallen. This has been enough to put major financial pressure on most farms that need to find new ways to survive globalization and industrialization. Taking into account these aspects, using the known methods of analysis in this scientific approach, we researched the place and role of the tourist farm in the area of the Western Development Region of Romania, to discover new uses for surplus resources on farms through farm tourism activities specific to agrotourism and farm tourism. We also carried out an analysis of agritourism with its forms and products of rural tourism to see which of them are artificial and do not belong to the rural environment studied to help us organize and classify them

## RESEARCH RESULTS

It is known that the types of agrotourism or farm tourism vary drastically depending on:

- type of farm - agricultural, livestock, horticultural, fish, hunting, processing;
- available land and spaces;
- how much of the business goes to the agrotourism market and is an alternative activity.

However, the different forms of tourism practiced in rural areas can be divided into three basic groups:

- farm tourism with direct sales of dairy products, fruit preserves, bee products, fresh agricultural products and other organic products directly to consumers, often together with other offers of agrotourism directly from the farm, attractive because they are artisanal, natural or organic products - in a word, “produced from (the) country”;

- recreational and event farm tourism: this type of tourism includes activities directly dependent on the specific atmosphere of the farm, horse riding, hiking and less dependent on the farm itself;

- educational and experience farm tourism: tourists pay for a first-hand experience and the more familiar visitors are with the farm and the farmer's family, the more inclined they are to buy farm products. Forms of farm tourism of this type are:

- accommodation with breakfast;
- illustrative dinner for the concept - from fork to fork;
- fruit picking and wine tasting in a vineyard;
- demonstration of cooking and preparation of products;
- agricultural trip;
- the tourist package meant to offer guests a “live” education at the farm marketed as a tourist destination;
- one-day educational camp;
- farm tour for families and schoolchildren.

Agrotourism on the farm in turn can attract large categories of visitors:

- elderly people nostalgic about agropastoral life.
- national visitors eager to rebuild their family tree;
- international visitors interested in the agricultural history of the country or region in which the farm is located.

From a business point of view, farm tourism can play three basic roles for the farmer as a farm:

- complementary, tourism and traditional agriculture offer relatively equal profits to the farmer;
- primary, farm tourism occupies the center of attention in a farm through wholesale trade;
- additional, farm tourism supports the main role of the farm: the production of goods generates most of the income, while tourism provides additional income from the farm tour, sales of products and services for groups of farm tourists.

These different levels of involvement make farm tourism and agritourism an attractive opportunity for farmers, because the cost and scope of the investment can vary dramatically. In addition, as in the case of ecotourism, which involves the marketing of conserved natural habitats, for eco-friendly travel, agrotourism operations tend to be small-scale, with a relatively small impact on the area. This means that most farmers looking to enter the tourism business do not have to worry about the large number of visitors that could affect their area, as farm tourism gives farmers the opportunity to educate visitors about their way of life and to share their agro-zootechnical knowledge.

Specialists in marketing, marketing's management usually refers to "products" and "services", but in agricultural tourism, farm, village, country, niche forms of rural tourism these terms are complemented by the following "experience", "adventure" and "weightlessness". Each of the latter terms helps to explain the experiences of the rural tourist, where a wide variety of products, services, experiences and adventures are offered. An analysis of agritourism and farm tourism with their forms and rural tourism products shows that some of them are rural or agricultural and others are "artificial" and do not belong to rural areas. It is therefore necessary to organize and classify rural and agro-tourism products and services on the farm so that rural and agro-tourism products and services can be grouped into the following clusters:

- "real" agrotourism: observation of manufacturing processes, participation in manufacturing processes, mini-zoos, educational tours on foot or on horseback - tour of agricultural crops, tour of vegetable crops, tour of shrubs and fruit trees, tour of zootechnical farms;
- accommodation on the farm: accommodation with breakfast, accommodation in agro-hotel / motel, sleeping in hay/barn/shed, accommodation in "self-service" beds, stay on the farm, sheepfold, dwelling;
- entertainment: agro-zootechnical excursions, mazes in corn and soybean fields, visiting gardens and parks, measuring sheep, leading herds;
- ethnography: historical/old farms, festivals and popular family celebrations, museums of folk art and agriculture, animal husbandry, historical villages, living in a village with a certain agro-pastoral characteristic;
- gastronomy: farm, restaurant;
- recreation: pastoral/religious holidays, farm holidays, weekends;
- sports: horse riding, next generation games, walking, fishing, walking, sports that require large spaces, animal restraint;
- therapy and health-related products: special diets with donkey's milk, goat's milk, hippotherapy, drug therapy based on plant and animal extracts;
- direct sale: "pick with your hand" type sale, direct sale of farm products, sale in farm store.

Farmers and their households have a choice in how they use their skills to earn business, with farmers being able to focus on traditional commodity production, agro-zootechnical resources to produce other goods and services, and business activities outside the farm, compared to their agricultural activities. Farms can generate income by engaging in commercial activities other than agro-zootechnical production and in agricultural activities independent of the production of goods, activities called diversification of agro-zootechnical farms, ranging from agrotourism and farm tourism to the supply of forest products or the sale of agro-zootechnical products on farmers' markets. Farmers may also own off-farm businesses, which, however, face fluctuating economic conditions but any agrotourism farm is characterized by:

- physical resources related to land, climate models, farm, historical resources, additional attractions and local infrastructure roads, local transport, traffic, parking, road signs, accommodation and dining.
- financial resources: current financial resources, costs of operating the agrotourism farm, access to capital, upper limit of expenditures, upper limit of risk;
- operational and managerial assets: strengths and weaknesses of the owner interpersonal skills, marketing skills, specific knowledge of animal production management, gardening, local history, special skills such as riding, strengths and weaknesses of the farmer's family, resources of neighbors and community, farm personality and farm activities

- the personal skills of the farmer: kindness, communication, culture, energy, experience, insistence, management, sensitivity, sociability and vigor;

- human resources: family and employees, management team, neighbors, official representatives of the authorities, representatives of business and tourism associations as well as other local enterprises.

The demand and supply of recreational activities on farms have increased in recent decades, as have the prospects for the future, due to the benefits they bring to farmers and visitors. Despite this increase, an avalanche of names, agrotourism, agritourism farm, farm tourism, farm visit, are used alternatively to describe this activity. Such inconsistency reflects a lack of branding that diminishes the effectiveness of marketing and hinders stakeholder collaboration. In order to assess the memorable character, the distinctive character, the degree of relevance and the degree of flexibility of eight typical names associated with farm recreation among farmers and visitors, we distinguish in rural areas the following types of activities and, implicitly, types of tourist farms. recreation, entertainment and agricultural education:

- 10 types depending on the memorable character: agriculture on the farm, cultivation of the land, processing of raw materials, fun and relaxation, travel and events, connection with nature and the countryside, education and awareness, practical experience, entertainment for family and children, name brand (agrotourism, agro-tourism, farm visit), fresh farm and local products, farm and outdoor recreation;

- 8 types of activities/farms depending on the degree and distinctive character: agristraction - from agriculture and entertainment, agritourism, agrotourism, agro-tourism, agricultural tourism, farm tourism, rural tourism, farm visit;

- 7 types of activities/farms depending on the flexibility degree: practical experiences, farming landscape observation, educational opportunities, farm hospitality, outdoor recreation, farm-related recreation, direct sales;

- 6 types of activities/farms depending on the degree of relevance: the mixture of agriculture and tourism, appreciation of local farms, experimentation with lifestyle and farm activities, information about agriculture, dissatisfaction with the term "agrotourism" (none, an interesting way of saying "farm visit"), recreation and fun on farm land.

All these types of activities make it very difficult to identify the type of agrotourism farm with activities mainly recreation, entertainment and agricultural education because agritourism or farm tourism may include other agro-zootechnical activities, visitors can perform horticultural activities but most common and attractive activity of this kind is contact with animals in a mini zoo. However, this concept covers other activities in which people can come into direct or indirect contact with animals: centers for education in the spirit of love for nature, the corner of the little naturalist at school, animal nurseries, agricultural exhibitions, animal friendship farms, zoos, housekeepers, mini-farms, wildlife parks, pet shops, wildlife sanctuaries.

In agrotourism farms, the most common are centers for education in the spirit of love for nature, animal nurseries, agricultural exhibitions, animal-friendly farms, mini-zoos and mini-farms. Visitors may come into direct (feeding, caring, caressing) or indirect (observed) contact with animals. The impact of this type of activity is all the greater as the children lived longer in the city and did not have contact with the rural environment during the holidays. In the case of these activities, the farmer must pay special attention to the following aspects: ensuring specific facilities, ensuring animal welfare, warnings to visitors, routes of transmission of animal diseases to humans, animal hygiene, shelter and visitors, responsibilities of the person deals with animals.

## CONCLUSIONS

The types of farm tourism vary depending on the type of farm, the land and space available and how much of the business goes to the agrotourism market and represents an alternative activity but the different forms of tourism practiced in rural areas can be divided into tourism at farm with direct sales, farm tourism for recreation and event and farm tourism educational and experience, because consumers of this type of niche tourism pay a first-hand experience and the more familiar visitors are with the farm and the farmer's family, with the more inclined they are to buy the products and services offered by the farm.

Farms can generate income by engaging in commercial activities other than agro-zootechnical production and in agricultural activities independent of the production of goods, activities called diversification of agro-zootechnical farms, ranging from agrotourism and farm tourism to the provision of products and services in the agro-zootechnical markets, however, any agrotourism farm from rural areas is characterized by the physical resources it holds, financial resources, operational and managerial assets, the personal skills of the farmer for carrying out farm tourism activities and existing human resources.

Types of farm activities make it difficult to identify the type of agrotourism farm with activities mainly recreation, entertainment and agricultural education because agrotourism or farm tourism may include agro-zootechnical, horticultural, business activities, but the most common and attractive activity is direct or indirect contact with animals. The most requested farm activities are those offered by educational centers in the spirit of love for the environment, animal exhibitions and mini-farms, but the impact of this type of activity is even greater as farm tourists have lived longer in the city and have not contact with the countryside during the holidays.

## REFERENCES

- [1].ADZIG P., VÎRTOSU D., BABA F., PETROMAN I., BRAD I., VĂDUVA LOREDANA, DUMITRESCU CARMEN, PETROMAN CORNELIA, 2018, Judicious placement of small professional farms of cattle in order to avoid the environment pollution, *Journal of Biotechnology*, Vol. 280
- [2].BOLOCAN RODICA, MOMIR B, OCNEAN MONICA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, IANCU TIBERIU, PETROMAN I., MARIN DIANA, CONSTANTIN CLAUDIA ELENA, 2016, Improving Protected Area Management for a Sustainable Tourism, 8th World Conference on Educational Sciences, Madrid, Abstracts Book, 394
- [3].CĂPEȚ V.A., VĂDUVA LOREDANA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, 2021, Business improvement in swine meat processing units, *Lucrări Științifice Management Agricol*, Volume 23 (3)
- [4].CÂNDEA MELINDA, BRAN FLORINA, CIMPOERU IRINA, 2006, Organizarea, amenajarea și dezvoltarea durabilă a spațiului geografic, Editura Universitară, București
- [5].HEBER LOREDANA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, PETROMAN I., BĂLAN IOANA, MARIN DIANA, IVAȘCU GABRIELA, POPOVICI C., 2010, Pork and carcasses quality in swine exploited in family farms. *Animal Science and Biotechnologies*, 43 (2)
- [6].NICHOLSON R.J., 1994, System of storage and disposal of livestock wastes, CAB international
- [7].NUTHAL P.L., 2010, Farm Business Management: The Human Factor, Wallingford-Cambridge: CABI

- [8].**PANDURU ELISABETA BIANCA, HUZĂU G., VADUVA LOREDANA, PETROMAN I.**, 2021, The role of the diversification of farm tourism activities in the sustainable development of areas near animal farms, Quaestus Multidisciplinary Research Journal, No.18, pp. 330-337
- [9].**PETROMAN CORNELIA, PALADE S., PETROMAN I., POPA, DANIELA, ORBOI, MANUELA DORA, PAICU D., HEBER LOREDANA**, 2010, Managerial strategies for the conservation of rurality in rural tourism, Animal Science and Biotechnologies, Volume 43 (2)
- [10].**PETROMAN CORNELIA**, 2015, Tipology of tourism destination, Scientific Papers Animal Science and Biotechnologies 48 (1), pp. 338-342
- [11].**PETROMAN I., MARIN DIANA, PETROMAN CORNELIA**, 2015, Bazele turismului, Editura Eurostampa Timișoara
- [12].**RISTEA I., BOLOCAN RODICA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, IANCU T., MARIN DIANA, PETROMAN I.**, 2018, Implementing measure for the safety of product obtained in agrotourist farms, European Biotechnology Congress, Athens, Greece
- [13].**SHEIN E.**, 2010, Organizational Culture and Leadership. Fourth edition, Jossey Bass, A Willey, Imprint
- [14].**VĂDUVA LOREDANA, PANDURU ELISABETA BIANCA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, ADAMOV TABITA, MARIN DIANA, PETROMAN I.**, 2020, Tourism forms practicable in protected areas, Lucrări Științifice, Seria I. Management Agricol 22(1)
- [15].**VĂDUVA LOREDANA, PETROMAN I.M.**, 2021, Forme alternative de turism, Editura Eurostampa
- [16].**VÎRTOSU D., PANDURU ELISABETA BIANCA, VĂDUVA LOREDANA, MARIN DIANA, PETROMAN CORNELIA, PETROMAN I.**, 2019, Possibilities to improve the management of the exploitation of cattle meat in extensive system, Lucrări Științifice Management Agricol, vol 20 (3)
- [17]. \*\*\* <https://dexonline.ro/>