

FARM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN FARM TOURISM FROM TIMIS COUNTY

PETROMAN I.¹, STEFANOVIC M.², PETROMAN CORNELIA¹, PANTEA M.³, MARIN
DIANA¹, CIOLAC RAMONA¹, TURC BOGDAN¹, FRAIU GIANINA¹

¹ *Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Timisoara, Agricultural
Management Faculty, Romania*

² *University of Kragujevac, Serbia*

³ *West University, Timisoara, Romania*

Abstract: *To promote agro-tourist farms in Timis County is required development of management strategies either medium or long term, aimed at enhancement of agro products which act as brands of vegetable or animal agro-tourist farms. For this purpose it is necessary to apply a set of decisions and actions related to individualization of means and determining the resources needed to achieve medium and long term objectives of the farm, in order to gain a competitive advantage.*

Key words: *strategy, management, agro-tourism, farm*

INTRODUCTION

Economic and social development involves the increase of economic activities that already operate over a certain area through new technologies, structures, activities, and labour organisations aiming at improving and increasing the products and services already provided and at initiating new economic activities. Economic development has a positive impact on the social sphere because creating new jobs, increasing the level of professional training, and carrying out interactive activities for the staff are beneficial for the social development of the entire community. Economic and social progress is possible only within an efficient legal frame that regulates the contracts between the different economic and social actors. The legal frame of the agritourism activity aims at enhancing and protecting this type of activity, at promoting studies and research in the field, at regulating the relationships between customers and product and service providers and the duties of the actors in the field of tourism industry towards the environment and the State.

Agritourism activities play a crucial role in the economic and social progress and in the increase of life quality if we take into account their contribution to a more efficient use of human, material, and financial resources, to the satisfaction of the people's exigencies in general, to the enhancement of the growth, renewal, and diversification of the material goods, to the assurance of the conditions that facilitate the processes of distribution and consumption, the increase of economic and social efficiency, the more efficient use of labour time and of leisure, the assurance of better conditions for professional, cultural, and scientific training of the members of society, the assurance of conditions for the raise of health state of the population.

The factors that affect tourism circulation in the rural area are economic, psychological, demographic, natural, political, and conjectural.

In the rural area, besides agritourism, there are also other activities such as the processing of agricultural raw materials, trade, transports, etc., that have a positive impact on the rural communities and that participate in assuring complementary incomes and a higher degree of labour force use.

Conducting agritourism activities is a starting point for a higher economic level and for the new perspectives of economic improvement in the rural area. This activity should

be encouraged to protect and valorise natural, historical, and cultural heritage that make up the core of tourism interest.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to develop and promote agritourism, we have developed some branded agritourism products for an agritourism farm that wishes to diversify its activities and attract larger numbers of tourists.

RESEARCH RESULTS

To develop strategies in agritourism, we need to take the following steps in the **design of a branded agritourism product** (Figure 1):

- **Analysing the concrete situation of the agritourism farm**, which supposes the comparison of past and present strategies in relation to the goal to see if they meet present conditions and, if the case, maintain, correct, or change them; in this case, we compare performances after applying the present strategy to see if the results meet the expectations; to carry on such an analysis on an agritourism farm, we need to use a system of indicators, such as:
 - Degree of profitability of the agritourism farm and if there is a need to diversify it;
 - Elimination of credits as quick as possible;
 - Diversity the type of activities.
- **Examining the perspectives of development of the agritourism farm**, which can be done based on the conclusions of the analysis of the current situation of the agritourism farm as well as of the analysis of the outer and inner factors aiming at establishing a set of medium- and long-term goals.

Analysing the outer environment should be done through both the prism of the **general outer environment** expressing the general economic conditions related to political, social, economic, and technological trends affecting directly the activity of the agritourism farm, and the prism of the **competitive outer environment** including the competitors, the customers, and the suppliers. After carrying out the analysis of the outer environment, the agritourism farm is able to establish medium- and long-term goals. The conclusions of the analysis of the inner environment allow the agritourism farm to establish opportunities and weak points of the activity to be included in a wider research, i.e. a SWOT analysis of the agritourism farm.

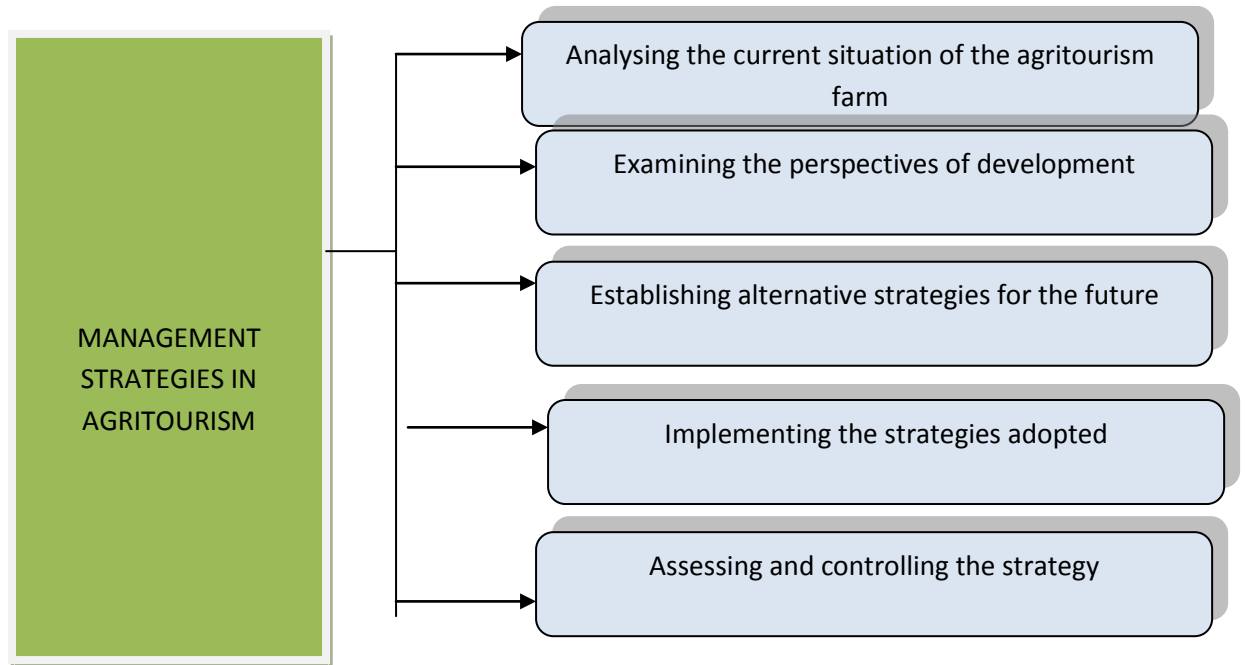


Figure 1. Management strategies in agritourism

We have carried out such a SWOT analysis on the sheep farm in Săcălaz, Timiș County, Romania (Figure 2), a farm that wishes to diversify its activities by turning into an agritourism animal farm, and identified its strengths and weaknesses, and its opportunities and risks.

The sheep raising and breeding sector in Western Romania, in general, and in the Timiș County, in particular, has undergone deep mutations. Recovering this sector is obvious in the increasing trend in sheep and sheep meat and milk figures in the studied area, in the efforts to modernise and diversify the activities carried out by the sheep farm in Săcălaz.

One of the strengths of the sheep sector is that there is, in the Timiș County, a strong tradition of dairy sheep products consumption as well as in obtaining traditional products from sheep meat and milk depending on the seasonal character of the market.



Figure 2. The sheep farm in Săcălaz, Timiș County, Romania

The **strengths** of the sheep farm in Săcălaz are as follows:

- The location of the farm at a short distance from a great urban centre (Timișoara – the Dacia Greenmarket, where the farmer markets his dairy products);
- A long-lasting tradition of traditional farm dairy products consumption (white cheese, fermented cheeses from sheep's milk, cheese in sheep's stomach, demi-boiled cheeses, etc.);
- The existence of exceeding accommodation (due to buildings being constructed) and opportunities to provide food from the farm's own resources;
- Opportunities of diversifying sheep meat preparations over the entire year and not only on traditional celebrations;
- The farm's own production with low inputs;
- Availability of labour force at low price (provided by the six family members);
- Purchasing grains at low production price due to the farm's own cultivated lands;
- Opportunity of producing traditional products depending on the season (preserves, jams, cheese, meat, etc.);
- Farm products at low costs, which is important for low-income consumers visiting the farm;
- Availability of a wide range of products (mutton, pork, poultry, fish – the last one from the close-by pond);
- High opportunities for producing biological products.

Weaknesses:

- Low income levels of the consumers of products and services provided by the farm;
- Low level of knowledge and professional competencies of the providers of agritourism farm products and services;
- Too little concern for ethnic contribution to the agritourism farm's products and services;
- Low quality of swine and poultry shelters;
- Limited facilities for the preservation of fresh products quality;
- Low facilities and handling practices of animal manure;
- High costs for waste transportation.

Besides the strengths and weaknesses mentioned above, the SWOT analysis also pointed the size of necessary changes that will strengthen the farm's competitive position on both local and regional markets. There are opportunities in all the points of the marketing chain for the improvement of competitiveness of productivity and production quality. At farm level, the opportunities for the improvement of efficiency and quality should be searched for mainly in a better genetic material and in better feeding and rearing practices. Investments, either from the farm's own resources or from investment support, made in the livestock, in animal shelters, and in feed handling, in buildings for tourist accommodation will have a positive impact on production and productivity. The sheep production sector is characterised by a series of parallel chains of meat, milk and dairy products supply that have developed together with the production and/or sale method.

Opportunities:

- Improving the efficiency of the fodder through consultancy and training concerning the best feeding plans, the production and storage of the fodder, as well as the monitoring of the productivity;

- Improving the quality of sheep production through consultancy and training for the family members (through courses at local level organised by the chambers of agriculture on hygiene conditions and procedures);
- Opportunities of changing the destination of exceeding areas (for the accommodation and food offered to the tourists);
- Attendance by the family members of training courses on agritourism;
- Managing the fishing pond and diversifying the production by rearing two generations of duck;
- Organising educational and entertaining activities on the farm (sale exhibition, horse-riding, angling, tours in a hay cart in summer-autumn, tours in a horse-pulled sleigh in winter, etc.);
- Tourists' participation in the production of traditional products (sheep milking and turning the sheep's milk into cheese, fruit picking and preparing preserves, assessing milk production in the traditional system, etc.);
- Improving waste management through a programme of investments and regulation standards;
- Opportunities for the sale at the gate of the farm of exceeding products that are not consumed at the agritourism farm.

Risks:

- The outburst of epidemics if sanitary and veterinary standards concerning animal wellbeing and farm bio security are not observed;
- The negative impact of tourists that can result in a decrease of animal production caused by stress;
- The increase of the trend to consume low-fat products (in traditional products, dairy products have a high content of fat).

CONCLUSIONS

No matter the type of farm – vegetal or animal – when we wish to diversify farm activities we need to focus on **determining and establishing future strategic alternatives and to compare them** and to develop, based on the goals established, the final management strategy; **implementing the strategy** that involves the practical application of the strategy adopted through both the development of functional strategies (cost strategies, strategies concerning human resources, production strategies, market strategies, etc.) and their action on organisational factors, i.e. implementing technical and organisational measures concerning the institutionalisation of the strategy; and the **assessment and control of the strategy** when we analyse and monitor, through operative controls, the components of the strategies that do not operate properly or that obstruct the strategy. In such cases, we need to take measures and eliminate them.

Going through the five stages aims at ensuring the success of management activities in agritourism no matter the area, applicable on any farm, and resulting in high economic efficiency.

REFERENCES

1. **ADAM, K. L.** (2004). Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism Business Management Guide
2. **ADAM, KATHERINE L.** (2004). Entertainment Farming and Agri-Tourism Business Management Guide. National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service
3. **ALECU I.N., MARIAN C.**, (2006), Agroturism și marketing agroturistic, Editura Ceres, București
4. **CRĂCIUN S.**, (1997), Agroturism – organizare și eficiență, Editura Mirton, Timișoara
5. **GLĂVAN V.**, (2003), Turism rural, agroturism, turism durabil, ecoturism, Editura Economică, București
6. **PETROMAN CORNELIA, PETROMAN I., BĂLAN IOANA, MARIN DIANA, TRIȘCĂU I.**, (2009), Cultural compoment of the Timis County (Romania).Tudományos mozaik 6 Kotet Harmadik resz, Kalocsa, Ungaria
7. **PETROMAN I., PETROMAN CORNELIA, POPESCU JANINA, TRISCĂU I., MARIN DIANA**, (2010), National policies in the field of agritourism, Agriculture and Countryside of climate Change and Recession, Vol 5, Hodmezovararhely, Ungaria
8. **STANCIU S.M., ANDREEA FEHER, TABĂRĂ-AMÂNAR G.C.**, Rights, obligations and penalties of the participants in tourism activities due the new law of tourism, Lucrări Științifice, Facultatea de Management Agricol, ISSN: 1453-1410 Seria I Vol XIII (3) 2011, Pag. 267 – 272, Simpozionul Științific Internațional „Managementul dezvoltării rurale durabile” 20 mai 2011, USAMVB Timișoara, 2011