

TYPES OF CONSUMERS OF AGROTURISM

PETROMAN CORNELIA¹, BRAD IOAN¹, MARIN SORIN¹, PETROMAN IOAN¹,
IOSIM IASMINA¹, FIRU ADRIAN¹, MARIN DIANA*¹

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

*Corresponding author's e-mail: diana_rachiciu@yahoo.com

***Abstract.** Agrotourism, considered being a subcategory of classical tourism, is practiced in rural areas with agrotouristic vocation and consists from the movement of agrotourism consumers, families with middle-income and children to cultural attractions, away from their residence places, the purpose of movement being the accumulation of information and experiences, which to meet the needs of visitors to these rural locations. Consumers of this form of tourism feel good in the rural area, because they have the opportunity to experience products picked with their hand, finding a healthy food, an authentic culture, the joy of spending free time in nature in an environment less polluted. Classification of agrotourism consumers' types is made based on the area of residence, from demographic, social, behavioral, personal, criteria and by other criteria.*

Key words: *agrotourism, types of consumers, classification criteria*

INTRODUCTION

The term agrotourism and consumer types for the products offered appeared in order to describe any type of activity that is based on the relationship between agriculture and tourism, in this regard being identified with agrarian tourism, agricultural tourism, farm tourism or a industrial tourism subset called rural tourism, which includes also rural agro-food markets outside the standard circuit, non-profit tours with agro-zootechnic and other leisure activities and hospitality in rural area. Regardless of the area in which it develops or practices, agrotourism as a subcategory of classical tourism is considered a subset of the cultural tourism with which it interacts or of rural tourism and has as effect a series of social changes that depend on the following factors: the type of agrotourism practiced and the country of residence of the agrotourists [3,8].

The agrotourist farm open to various types of agrotourism consumers eager of fun and education, is an economic unit that generates additional income by promoting specific agricultural products as an alternative to improving the income and the economic potential viability of small farms and rural communities, and a means of supporting the local economy [1,5].

The culture, as it is defined in the specialized works consists, from: traditional culture (interpretative arts, patrimony, art galleries), the people's way of life from an area (beliefs, gastronomy, clothing, language, traditions) their products (architecture, hospitality, objects, archaic agricultural inventory). All these aspects allow us to consider this subcategory as classic tourism, agrotourism and cultural tourism, as forms of tourism characterized by four dimensions [4,7]:

- historical and contemporary (time);
- interpretative (type);
- contextual or noncontextual (displacement);
- general or particular (purpose).

For these reasons, a number of authors [5] considers that the term cultural tourism can be applicable to each of the dimensions presented above and all at the same time, but their diversity requires them to be treated isolated as separate forms of tourism. If are analyzed the activities offered to agrotourism consumers, it is found that the most popular regardless of the type of consumers are the tours of the farms and their visit, followed by

the walk between the different grain crops and enjoyment of the traditional cuisine, the hand-crafted drink and the small shopping.

The agrotourism consumer has the following features:

- belongs to a higher socio-professional category;
- is a knower of what will experience or the conditions in which he or she will spend the leisure at the farm;
- is eager to rediscover and relive life in the country;
- has a high level of education and culture, showing a high coefficient of elasticity compared to the price/quality ratio of the services offered at the farm;
- show high preference for farm accommodation, in order to contact with people and enjoy their kindness and hospitality;
- prefer local cuisine and ingredients traditional prepared;

The agrotourism consumer differs from other types of consumers by the way of:

- choosing the destination;
- loyalty to the host;
- experience as a visitor to the agrotourist farm;
- motivation.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this scientific approach, we have analyzed the types of agrotourism consumers and of the factors that influence their consumption behavior, because it is different depending on the tourist's motivation, given by the extrinsic socio-cultural factors like the family, the reference group and the origin environment because the modern society, which creates the feeling of alienation towards the community, job and the environment, determine to the agrotourism consumers to seek the authentic in rural environment.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The main agrotourist persons are adolescents, amateurs of activities in nature, amateurs of watching animals in their natural environment, fans of festivals, community celebrations, lovers of fun agriculture or recreational, those eager to relive unique experiences in rural area and to consume healthy foods entering in contact with the host community. Forecasting studies have identified a number of determinants, demographic, economic, political and technological factors, which should be taken into account if it is wanted gaining new niches and new types of agrotourism consumers. Apart from these factors, we will also take into account the parameters of development, such as globalization, through which knowing and keeping the cultural and environmental issues. According to the geographical criteria we distinguish the following types of agrotourism consumers:

- local,, who are living at a relatively small distance from the agrotourist farm;
- regional, come from the urban area and travel to the farm with different means of transport by rail, car or line buses;
- nationals who, besides farm leisure, also have to enjoy other leisure packages;
- internationals, an important category and adder of high income for farmers especially in the off-season.

Demographic considerations allow the segmentation of the market according to several criteria regarding the for agrotourism consumers:

- the education of consumers of agrotourism activities, meeting elderly school-age consumers, students of different specialties, families with children and retired people with lower incomes;

- the size of the family of consumers distinguishing the single parent family, seeking recreational and educational opportunities, to spend as much time as possible with their own children;
- the occupation of agrotourism consumers is related with the activities carried out on the farm;
- sex influences the types of consumers, women being more concerned with recreational activities on the farm, preparing juices, compotes, cooking;
- the income of agrotourism consumers is classified at the average level, with a stratification depending on the activities carried out at the farm. Agrotourists interested in culture invest more in their leisure stay.

Social criteria allow us to identify the following types of agrotourism consumers according to:

- the social class, only families in the middle class allow themselves to contract packages at agrotourist farms and retirees with higher incomes;
- the personality of the agrotourist consumer can be identified by taking into account the five factors of their personality and their traits: kindness, conscientiousness, openness to the new, extraversion and emotional instability [2]. The agrotourist person should be an open person, curious person who wants to have new experiences while he is on vacation in the farm.
- the agrotourist's lifestyle has three dimensions: values, tastes and behaviors, each dimension being characterized by several indicators [11];

Behavioral criteria allow us to classify types of agrotourism consumers taking into account the following criteria: attitude, knowledge of farm life, how to use the services offered by the farm, the type of response to the services provided by the host. Because agrotourists come into contact with the farm owner, they are often satisfied with the services offered, coming back to the farm on different occasions depending on the season and the fresh products offered for consumption [9,10].

Personal considerations allow to the agrotourist farmer's owner to adapt to the needs of agrotourism consumers by personalizing some of the services offered. Other criteria may also be taken to highlight the traits of agrotourism consumers such as leisure time and consumer profile. Because agrotourists have free time, they focus on recreational and fun activities in nature, accommodating at the agrotourist farm that offers them these opportunities: reduced holiday price, healthy food, sometimes prepared by tourists, opportunities to buy fresh products, reliving some moments of life from rural

CONCLUSIONS

In order to increase the number of agrotourists visiting the farm, the farmer has the obligation to correctly identify the market segments and types of agrotourism consumers, taking into account the criteria of a geographical, demographic, social, behavioural and individual nature. The farmer according to the type of agrotourism consumer must offer him everything that is lacking in its home environment: recreational-fun activities, activities that require physical effort, gather with your hand, interaction with animals from the farm, equitation, unique learning experience, accommodation and meals depending on the needs of those visiting the farm.

Types of agrotourism consumers can be characterized as persons with occupations related to the basic activity from the farm or not, a high level of education, a high social and economic status, eager for knowledge and training, who have sufficient free time to learn certain farm-specific occupations.

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