

MARKETING MANAGEMENT IN FARM TOURISM

PETROMAN CORNELIA*¹, VĂDUVA LOREDANA¹, PETROMAN IOAN²

¹Banat'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: c_petroman@yahoo.com

Abstract: Improving marketing management in farm tourism consists in determining activities, developing new activities, implementing marketing programs designed to achieve business objectives in farm tourism, because it is characterized by specific elements of products and services that farms face. Farmers, tour operators and local governments need to know the preferences of consumers of farm products and services in order to implement those specific activities on farms, as the trade rules for tangible products are equally valid for intangible services and promotion requires more effective ways, consumer loyalty through direct farm sales, advertising for specific activities, and advertising campaigns focused on specific farm events. Achieving the objectives involves improving marketing management, regardless of the strategy followed, because any tourist farm owner must promote their products and services in known ways, although farmers are tempted to present their products/services by selling them directly, considering that if farm tourists they are satisfied they will come back again.

Key words: farm, tourism, management, marketing, consumers

INTRODUCTION

The appearance of agritourism and farm tourism in the Romanian rural area brought some novelties in the field of services in general and rural in particular: much of the rural services disappeared with the liberalization of agriculture and new services specific to new forms of rural tourism appeared. niche, farm food, farm accommodation or boarding house, farm tourism research, consulting, educational, financial activities, farm tourism and agritourism marketing, capitalization of farm products and services [14,15, 18,21]. Marketing management in the case of agritourism farm tourism consists in determining the specific activities that are well promoted to contribute to: [7,8,19,20]

- development of new farm, educational, recreational and leisure activities;
- implementation of marketing programs to stimulate sales
- coordination of marketing programs designed to achieve business objectives in farm agritourism;
- focusing on strategic marketing, in formulating goals and means to achieve;
- planning the specific activities of the agritourism farm, a necessary measure to achieve the objectives. [1,2,22]

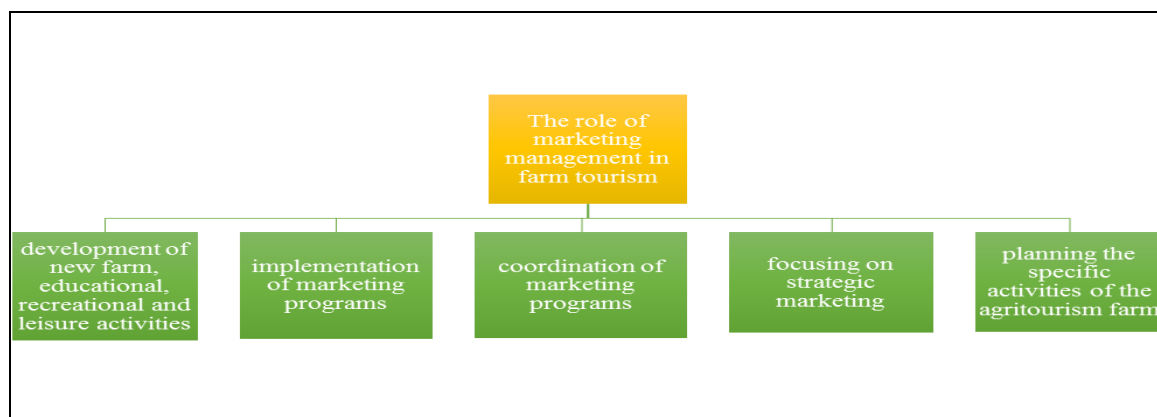


Figure 1. The role of marketing management in farm tourism

Farm agritourism is characterized by specific elements, which represent the problems faced by agritourism farms, in the development of products/ brands and recreational and leisure services, as it is shown in Figure 2. [6,11,16,17]

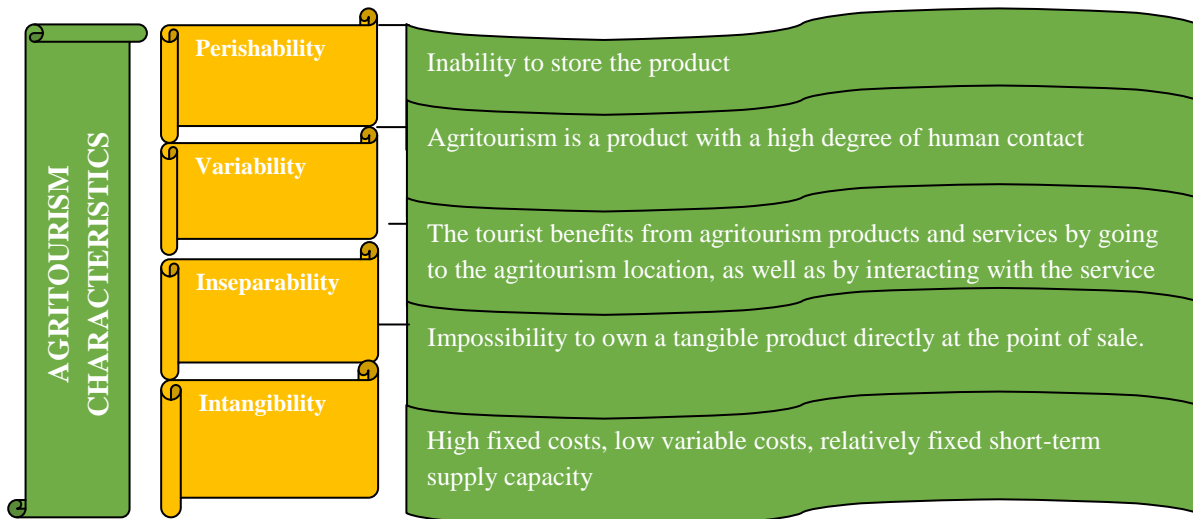


Figure 2. The specific elements of agritourism on the farm

Farmers, tourism operators and local administrations need to know exactly a variety of aspects, the preferences of consumers of farm agritourism services, the information held by the tourism consumer and market segmentation. [3,10,12,20]

- the characteristics of the tourism consumer;
- the requirements and preferences of consumers for the various recreational and leisure activities at the farm;
- the place, time and manner in which the farm tourist visiting the agritourism farm wishes to spend his free time and what activities he wants to practice, specific to the farm, cultural educational, recreational and leisure, fun, hunting and equestrian hunting.[4,5,9,13]

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of this scientific approach was that through perfecting the marketing mix to identify, anticipate and meet the requirements of farm agritourism consumers, in order to obtain an economic profit for the farmer by meeting the requirements of farm visitors and tourists.

The research used specific methods used in marketing to promote products and services offered by agritourism farms, as it is found that marketers in the market face difficulties in distribution. In order to reduce these inconveniences, we propose concrete solutions in order to find some methods in order to establish a balance between the following elements:

- the balance between the demand for agritourism/farm capacities, accommodation, food, recreation and short-term leisure;
- the elaboration of long-term farm brands, which should customize the agritourism farms through the offered activities;
- establishing strategic directions to improve the economic activity of farms by obtaining income from alternative production activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Because in the specialized literature regarding the marketing mix, the theory of the four Ps, or components of the marketing mix was elaborated: product, promotion (communication), price and place (place) in the case of farm agritourism, we consider that other elements within the services promoted by the tourist farms:

- the process of delivering agritourism services to the animal farm which involves, ensuring quality agritourism services, the availability of the farmer in resolving the complaints of farm tourists and the effective participation of the farmer with tourists in herd activities, milking sheep, swine slaughter and riding;

- the method of ensuring easy access to the agritourism services offered by the animal farm, the transport of farm tourists, the means of communication, relations with the visiting public and offering surprise activities on the farm: "picking with your hand", caring for your favorite animal with traditional means of transport;

- the actors involved on the agritourism market on the animal or vegetable farm, the tourism consumers on the farm, the loyal visitors and customers, the qualified staff from the farm tourism industry, the farmer and the family with whom they establish direct relations.

We believe that these marketing activities mainly mean handling:

- product/brand, farm service;
- the price of the product/brand, the service offered by the farm;
- of the distribution (place);
- promotion on the agritourism market;
- of people, meaning the target audience, which means adding an additional "P" to people, farm tourists, visitors or "people".

It turns out that handling in this case means in the case of new activities in agritourism farms, the control of all sales marketing tools, manipulation of tools to maximize market impact, increase demand for some farm products that customize it and maximize profit. To achieve these goals, farm products/brands and services must meet the agritourism needs of farm visitors and tourists from the moment of arrival and until departure, because the material elements that make them up are:

- a heritage of natural and technological resources that make up the basic physical environment and that will produce an interest for visitors: historic agritourism farms, where animal breeds and hybrids were formed, haunted farms, sought after by students and young people and farms that produce in an ecological system healthy products.

- the elements of infrastructure or traditional equipment that generate, the motivation to spend free time on the farm, the demand for tourism on the farm and which contribute decisively to meeting the unique needs of the country, village, farm.

- the access facilities are in relation to the means of transport, and the communication routes, chosen to reach the destination;

The trade rules for tangible products are equally valid for products of farm brands or farm tourism services, which are considered "intangible products". We can appreciate that the agritourist products of the farm can be evaluated according to a series of characteristics, in order to become the brands of the farm, which should give it personality and be desired by the consumers:

- the quality of the products/brands, the recreational and leisure services offered, the traditional food and drinks, the possibility of the tourists to know the production technology, the participation in obtaining them, the consumption and the possibility to buy and the facility to know other visitors or tourists.

- the quality of the raw material from which the durable goods are made, the handmade wooden furniture, the hemp bed linen, barks with peasant motifs and possibilities for tissue learning.

- size and design of products/brands and services: size of rooms, portions of food, possibility to serve from the farm pantry.

- packaging of local products/brands offered for sale: wicker baskets, cloth bags, reed braids, wooden or ceramic pots.

Price formation, in the case of products/brands or services offered by the farm, is the result of economic, geographical, motivational and political factors, but for those who wish, a promotional price can be set if they participate in some farm activities, educational, recreational or recreational activities such as: sheep grazing, animal care and feeding, hay gathering, horseback riding. The price of farm products/brands and farm services has a number of features, seasonality, differing depending on time, location/farm with specific space, experience, notoriety depending on the level of training of the farmer, socio-professional category of to the farm visitor or tourist, the inflation of demand costs which gives them an inflationary character and the independence between the supply-demand ratio. Consumers of such services consider that the price is affordable if they can see how the product is obtained, can taste or take samples to take home.

We consider that the price of an agritourism product offered by the farm represents an economic indicator that together with the costs of goods sold and the profit obtained, also gives the purchasing power of farm tourism consumers, creates an additional source of income and will use the surplus area from the farm. However, the tourism products and services offered by the farms must correspond to the range of consumers who visit the farm but also contribute to helping the farm to achieve the proposed objectives, because not only the characteristics of the product or the promotional marketing actions to which consumers react are important their price, which is why the price must be integrated into the general strategy of holdings.

The prices level charged is a strategic element for the agro-zootechnical farm because the accessibility of the product depends on it and is closely related to the seasonal nature of the farm activity. Farms can set prices based on cost, demand, or competition, and can choose the following strategic options: low-priced, moderate-priced, and high-priced strategies. Differentiation can be made according to the degree of price mobility, correlated with the life cycle of the farm agritourism product with the seasonality of demand. We consider that by practicing an adequate pricing strategy and correlated with consumer demand, or it can influence the purchase of the product as a brand of the farm but farmers must be concerned with the development of branded products/services taking into account the prices that consumers can offer this form of tourism on the farm and applied by market competition.

The placement of farm products/brands and services includes activities that facilitate the distribution of products and services to the final consumer, at the time and place where they request it, as well as the flows that these activities generate. In the case of the farm agritourism product/service, the placement does not include intermediaries, distribution costs, being consumed on the farm by tourists. The concept of placement falls into the category of the 4 P's (product, price, placement, promotion), within the marketing mix, which brings together a set of relatively heterogeneous organizational, economic and technical activities, designed to direct product flows in optimal conditions both for companies producing goods and for final users. The placement in the case of rural and farm tourism is the place where it is marketed but an important aspect that influences the economic success derived from the tourist activities of an agro-zootechnical farm is

represented by the image of the service marketing point, professional training of the staff involved and the perception that consumers will have.

One of the most important goals of tourism operators is to promote profit maximization, which can only be achieved through a dynamic marketing service, the use of farm advertising and personalized services, sales directly, the marketing of efficient sales and the organization of on-farm events that will attract tourism consumers to the farm. In addition to the methods presented above, we also propose for the promotion of the agritourism product/service type of farm brand and more efficient ones:

- loyalty of farm tourists and visitors by selling directly from the farm by promoting by word of mouth;

- advertising for specific activities from the farm;

- carrying out advertising campaigns focused on specific events;

- participation in tourism fairs with farm brand products/services.

In order to achieve the objectives, regardless of the strategy followed, any owner of farm agritourism products must promote the products in one of the ways presented above, although farmers are tempted to present farm activities and direct sales, considering that if farm tourists are satisfied they will come back and bring other consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

Farmers, tourism operators and local governments need to know the preferences of consumers of farm tourism services, information held by the tourism consumer and market segmentation in order to implement in farms according to the requirements of tourists those activities that become specific farm brands. In addition to the four components of the marketing mix, in the case of farm agritourism, other elements must be included in the recreational and leisure services, the service delivery process, the method of facilitated access to farm activities of all actors from agritourism market. The commercial rules for tangible farm products are equally valid for the farm product, brand or farm service, which are considered intangible, as they include accommodation, food, farm-related activities and educational, recreational and leisure activities. The prices creation for these farm products and services is the result of the action of economic, geographical, motivational and political factors, but for loyal tourists, a promotional price can be set if they participate in farm activities. Practicing an appropriate pricing strategy and correlated with consumer demand, can extend the life cycle of the product or can influence the purchase but the placement includes all activities that facilitate distribution. In addition to the known means of promotion for farm-brand agritourism products/services, more efficient ways of selling are proposed, by attracting tourists and selling directly from the farm, advertising the specific activities of the farm and conducting advertising campaigns focused on specific events.

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