

THE IMPACT OF AGROTOURISM ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION UTJECAJ AGROTOURIZMA NA POLJOPRIVREDNU PROIZVODNJU

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SAŽETAK

Agroturizam, kao selektivni oblik turizma koji se odvija unutar obiteljskog poljoprivrednog gospodarstva, predstavlja specifičan oblik poslovanja koji ima višestruki utjecaj na socioekonomske odnose i prostor u kojem se realizira, dakle, ruralni prostor. U radu se kroz analizu sekundarnih izvora te iz podataka dobivenih primarnim istraživanjem nastoji dobiti odgovor na pitanje koliko agroturizam utječe na povećanje poljoprivredne proizvodnje u regiji. Primarno istraživanje provedeno je u Istarskoj županiji, našoj najrazvijenijoj turističkoj regiji, u kojoj se ovaj oblik turizma najranije počeo razvijati i koja ima najveći broj agroturističkih gospodarstava u Hrvatskoj. Istraživanje je provedeno metodom intervjua tijekom kolovoza 2002. godine na uzorku od 43 agroturistička gospodarstava. Na osnovi dobivenih rezultata može se zaključiti da razvoj agroturističke djelatnosti nema većeg izravnog utjecaja na povećanje poljoprivredne proizvodnje unutar samih agroturističkih gospodarstava. Također, vlasnici agroturističkih gospodarstava u sljedećih nekoliko godina ne planiraju značajnije proširiti poljoprivrednu proizvodnju. Sve veći broj specijaliziranih poljoprivrednih proizvođača, kao što su posebice proizvođači vina i pršuta, zatim rakija, meda i ostalih poljoprivrednih proizvoda, ne može se dovesti u izravnu vezu s razvojem agroturističke djelatnosti.

SUMMARY

Agrotourism as a selective form of tourism which take place within the family farm represents a specific form of business with the multiple impacts on the socio-economic relation and the space in rural areas. Through the analysis of secondary source or desk research and information obtained by primary research the paper is seeks to get the answer on the question does agrotourism have impact on the increase of agricultural production in the region where is taking place. A primary research was carried out in Istrian County, our most developed tourist region, as well as region where agrotourism first starts to develop and where is the largest number of agrotourism households in Croatia. Research was carrying out by method of interview during August of the year 2002 on the sample of 43 agrotourism households. According to the obtained results it could be concluded that the development of agrotourism activities have not significant influence on the increase of agricultural production within agrotourism households. Moreover, the owners of agrotourism households in the next few years are not planning, significantly, to increase the agricultural production. Increasing number of specialized agricultural producers, particularly the producers of wines and prosciutto, then brandy, honey and others agricultural products can not be directly related with the development of agrotourism.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty among farmers appears to be a chronic problem in Western Europe [10] as well as in Croatia. In EU diversification and pluri-activity are promoted by agricultural policies as possible survival strategies for farmers. Tourism is suggesting as a possible strategies for generating of additional amount of income for family farms. According to Roberts and Hall (2001) tourism in rural areas makes up 10 to 20% of all tourism activity and every year 23% of European holidaymakers choose the countryside as a holiday destination [15]. Proposal for a Council decision on Community strategic guidelines for Rural Development (2007-2013) emphasised that tourism, crafts and the provision of rural amenities are growth sector in many regions and offer opportunities both for on-farm diversification and the development of micro-businesses in the broader rural economy [14]. According to the European Commission, Directorate-General for agriculture, rural development monitoring data system CAP-IDIM in 2001 there were 5,556 approved applications for diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative incomes of which 1,682 were for agrotourism (30%) for EU 15. In 2002 there were 10,529 approved applications of which 7% (762) were for agrotourism and in 2003 there were 28,042 approved application of which for agrotourism were 4% or 1,249 [16]. Furthermore, in the literature, diversification has been extensively studied and presented as a possible solution for extending farming income basis [10].

The aim of the paper is to examine the impact of agrotourism on agriculture. In Croatia terms of agrotourism and rural tourism are not clearly defined, and that is not specifically in the case of Croatia. Other country also has not distinguished these two terms. So for the purpose of this paper it is used definition of OECD (1994) [12]. According to this definition agrotourism or farm tourism is a part of rural tourism. Rural tourism is divided on agrotourism, ecotourism, adventurous tourism and countryside tourism. Agrotourism is closely defined as tourism activity organised on the farm and by the farmers, while other segments of rural tourism might be but there usually not organised by farmers' then by other subjects who are out of touch with agricultural activity [12], [4],

[7], [3] and [6].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of this paper some results of other authors, that researched this topic, and other secondary resources were used. Additionally were used the data obtained by primary research. Primary research was carried out in August in 2002 by the method of interview. In survey 43 agrotourism households from Istrian County participated. Istrian County is our most developed tourist region, as well as region where agrotourism first start to develop and where is the largest number of agrotourism households in Croatia. Each interview lasted about two to three hours. In the paper only part of the obtained data and reached conclusions were presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is clear that rural tourism is based on rural amenities, but according to some authors it is not clear how this relates to agriculture. Fleischer and Tchetchik (2002, 2006) in their paper ask themselves if these interrelationships are of mutual benefit, in the sense that while rural tourism provides the farmer with auxiliary funding to continue his/her agricultural activity, the latter is an important or even necessary component of rural tourism? And do active farms with rural tourism enjoy economies to scope and run their businesses more efficiently than firms with only a single activity? According to them potential benefits can accrue to a farmer running a tourist business from visitor's willingness to pay more for accommodations on active farms and from more efficient use of labour and capital. They also found that the active farm does not have any value for the visitors. However, on the production side, farmers seem to benefit from the existence of an active farm. A firm producing agricultural goods and tourism services appears to use its production factors more efficiently in producing tourism firms managed by non-farmers. Other important finding is the effect a concentration of tourist activities in the region. They found that visitors are willing to pay a higher price for a firm located in a region that is rich in tourist attractions. Additionally, a firm located in such a region demonstrates a higher productivity level. Since this attribute is external to the firm, it means that tourism firms enjoy positive externalities and concentration of them creates a synergetic affect [5] and [6].

Busby and Rendle (2000) claim that the link between farm tourism (agrotourism) and agriculture is getting weaker. They found that farmers, who got engaged in tourism on their farms as an alternative source of income to agriculture, slowly divorced themselves from agricultural activities. With this transition the active farm is no longer a necessary component [2].

Vanslebrouck and others (2005) claim that the landscape value of farmland consists of the benefits derived from the scenic beauty of rural landscape, such as open fields, orchards, and herds of livestock grazing in meadows. They found considerable empirical support for the hypothesis that information on agricultural activities and their environmental attributes are associated with rental prices of rural tourist accommodation. Amenities from agriculture (such as the permanent grassland) have a positive influence on rental prices. In general, they show that agricultural activities perceived as non-polluting, such as meadows and, to a lesser extent, horticulture (mainly fruit and flowers) play a role in the appreciation of rural landscapes. They also conclude that those farmers' efforts to maintain rural landscapes are positively valued by citizens in general and rural tourists in particular. They prove that rural development policies promoting protection or creation of landscape amenities by farmers are socially valued and acceptable [17].

According to Huylenbroeck and others (2006) in the paper Synergies between Farming and Rural Tourism the link between agriculture and tourism is twofold. On the one hand farming and farm activities may contribute to the attractiveness of rural areas and therefore influence the demand for rural tourism in a certain area. On the other hand, farmers can also profit from increasing rural tourism through farm diversification either directly through supplying accommodation to tourists or indirectly through the higher demand for farm and/or regional food products. In these ways rural tourism may contribute to diversification and strengthening of the income basis of farm activities in rural areas [8].

Polovitz and others (2001) found that in general, there are three sets of reasons for farmers to be in agrotourism: social, economic and externally influenced reasons. They also claim that recreation and tourism are social businesses. And because of that farm recreation providers must have an understanding of way people recreate, particularly if they want to stay in business in such a specialized market. Providers must also have good interpersonal skills to make agrotourism businesses successful [13].

RESULTS

Production resources

Results from previous researches shown that the size of farm are closely related with development of agrotourism activity, and that there is a link between size of farm and type of tourist offer on the farm [4]. This are considering in the relation of available labour hours and possibility of realisation of some form of tourist offer. According to the data obtained by survey most of family farms in Istria have between 2,01-5,00ha (27%), and 5,01-10,00ha (26%) of agricultural land. In the third category belongs farms with 20,01-30,00ha (18%) of agricultural land. The share of 14% belongs to farms with less then 2,00 ha, and there is some registered agrotourism households with no agricultural land. The question is if they are agrotourism households at all? The largest agrotourism households have 50ha. If these are compared with our neighbours Italy and Slovenia, the units of land are small. Namely, in Slovenia, according to they Catalogue of association of tourist family farms in 2002, from total number of 161 family farms most

have 10ha and the average is about 26ha. The largest agrotourism household has 200ha [9]. Furthermore research of Ciani (1999) shown that Italy, more exactly Umbria, have larger production fields. Average size of agrotourism household, which also include forest, is 68,5ha, the largest agrotourism household have 110ha and the smallest 2ha. It's important to mention that these farms are in average larger then other family farms, which have in average about 11,7ha [4]. Following this it is the similar in Istria, average agrotourism household have 12,7ha and average family farm in Croatia have 2,59ha according to Agricultural census in 2003. Further more this 2,59ha is on 4,3 units with the average size from 0,11 to 0,5ha [1]. This problem is result of many years of wrong management with agricultural land.

Livestock production in interviewed agrotourism households are in small volume. Most of 43 agrotourism households have poultry (81%), on the second place, according to the rank is pig breeding (65%) but in small volume. From other animals agrotourism households have cows (28%), horses (28%), goats (26%), donkey (19%), sheep's (16%) and rabbit's (16%). From total, 19% of agrotourism households haven't livestock production just animals as pets.

Plant production in agrotourism households are also in small volume. Most of agrotourism households have vegetables (86%), then grapes (79%), wheat (49%), maize (49%), barley (23%) and olives have 19% from interviewed agrotourism households.

Production of food and beverage products in agrotourism households are as follows: brandy are producing in 91% of agrotourism households, then wine in 88%, prosciuttos ham in 81%, sausages in 81%, cheese in 16% and olive oil in 14% of interviewed agrotourism households.

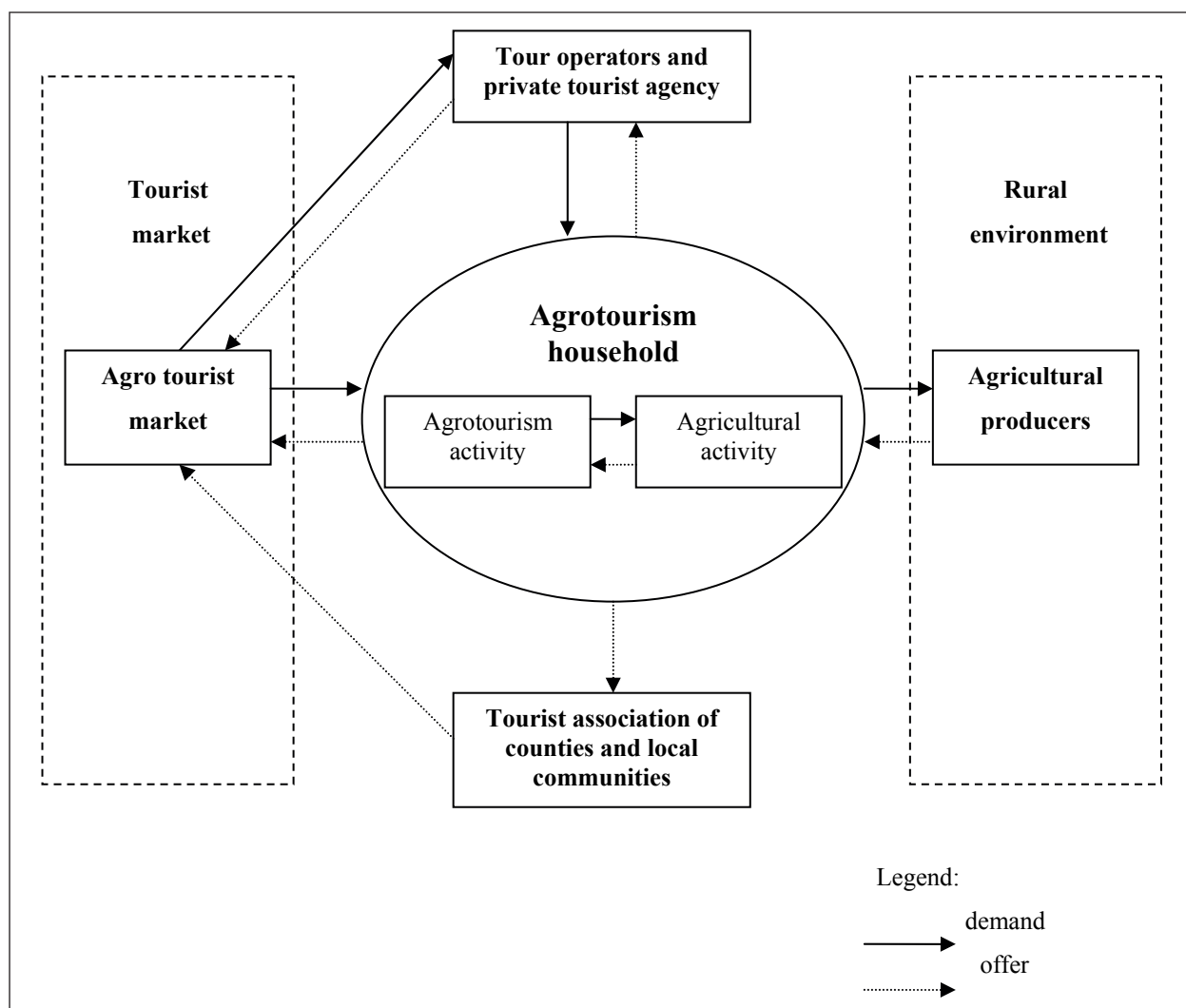


Figure 1. Demand and offer of products and services of agrotourism households

Catering and hospitality capacity of agrotourism households

In interviewed agrotourism households there are in total 166 beds, from which 73 in rooms and 93 in apartments. Most of beds are in double-rooms 47%, then in room with four beds 27%, following the rooms with three beds with the share of 25% and there are only 1% of rooms with one bed. In apartment the situation is as follows: 42% are apartment with four beds, then 22% with five beds, 13% with six beds, 9% with two beds, 8% with seven beds and 6% with three beds. There is no apartment with one bed in the offer.

In catering establishments in rural areas, according to the assessment of Tourist association of Istrian County, in 2002 where capacity for about 6000 visitors. By obtained data from the survey the average agrotourism household has 34 seating capacity indoors, and 30 seating capacity in open space, but most of them have 50 seating capacity in and out of doors.¹

DISCUSSION

On the basis of obtained data and information from visitors and owners of agrotourism households, in short, demand and offer of products and services of agrotourism households can be presented by the following model (figure 1.)

From the model it can be seen that agrotourism household are constituted from two segments, tourist and agricultural. Connections between these two segments are limited by unadapted law regulations (mostly veterinary laws) which demand many registrations and operating permits for each agricultural production. As it can be seen from the model agricultural households have the impact on rural environment, especially on other agricultural producers in the county as a potential market for their products. Other side of the model shows that agricultural households can sell their products and services directly and indirectly throughout tourist associations, tourist agencies or tour operators.

CONCLUSION

According to the data most of agrotourism households haven't significant volume of agricultural production. To the owners' statements, in the very near future, they do not plan to enlarge volume of agricultural production [3]. For now agrotourism, as a selective form of tourism, are developing on the very limited offer that are mostly based on offer of food and beverage. Increasing number of specialized producers of agricultural products in the region can not be related with the development of agrotourism, unless the agrotourism is on the wine roads and if its offer testing of their own wines. Specialized producers of typical regional products (wines, brandy, prosciutto ham, olive oils, honey, truffles and etc.) and offer of this products are the results of changes in the consumer demand in general [11]. Currently the most common situation is that family farms which start with agrotourism activity reduce agricultural production. How to prevent this and why this is happening are the issues that need to be examining in the further researches.

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¹According to the Law of tourist activity, agrotourism households could not have more than 50 seating capacity in and 50 seating capacity out of doors [18] and [19].

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