

Journal of Rural and Community Development

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Citation:

Potočnik Slavič, I. (2014). Farm tourism in Slovenia: Mosaic structure and future prospects. *The Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 9(3), 280–294.



Publisher: Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Editor: Dr. Doug Ramsey

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Farm Tourism in Slovenia: Mosaic Structure and Future Prospects

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Abstract

Over the last decade, diversification in farm tourism has been an important development opportunity for farms in Slovenia, especially smaller ones. Farm tourism is registered as a supplementary activity on the farm. A qualitative analysis (98 households) showed a mosaic structure of the farm tourism business. The results obtained confirmed that farm tourism is a two-way system: some farms are entering and some are leaving the business. Our survey focused on identifying the reasons behind both directions. Financial and economic reasons are most important for farmers starting up farm tourism. The survey indicated several reasons for leaving farm tourism. A more intensive orientation of farm tourism can lead to specialization and high-quality service provision, but there are also indications that it can divert farms away from farm tourism and towards the abandonment of farming. These decisions were correlated with the profile of the farm tourism households (based on demographic and economic criteria and an assessment of future prospects).

Keywords: farm tourism, farm income diversification, rural tourism, rural areas, Slovenia

1.0 Introduction

A reflection on Slovene rural areas and their opportunities for tourism development reveals evident contradictions.

1. Slovene rural areas have good, even very good opportunities for postmodern tourism development.

Natural and cultural features of Slovenian rural areas offer a solid basis for the development of postmodern tourism development. Contemporary trends in tourism are surprisingly in accordance with the existing and potential spatial structure of Slovene rural areas: Slovene landscapes are heterogeneous over a small territory, which tourists increasingly prefer over standardization, uniformization, mass production, constant repetitions of *déjà vu*, etc. (Kos, 2000).

2. Contemporary representations of tourism development in Slovene rural areas are frequently simplified and idealized.

Based on previous research on Slovenian rural areas (Klemenčič et al., 2008; Lampič et al., 2011) we can confirm that the population interviewed evaluate the development of tourism in rural areas or/and development of farm tourism as an exceptionally important development opportunity. For rural/farm-tourism development, which in the Slovenian case is mostly performed as a supplementary economic activity by particular families/households, age and socioeconomic

structure are most important: if they are not suitable, then any planning of rural/farm-tourism activity becomes illusory.

3. Debates on tourism development opportunities are frequently marked by irrational expectations.

As in various other countries (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Woods, 2011), in Slovenia, too, tourism has been identified as an economic sector which could essentially restructure rural development. Given the abandonment of agriculture and the economic and environmental problems of manufacturing, tourism appears to be the sector that could save rural areas from demographic, economic, and environmental decline. This idea has been greeted favourably by the media and among politicians, perhaps due also to the fact that the entire Slovenian national territory (20,256 km², 2 million inhabitants) is defined as “rural” according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) methodology at the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) 3 level. Critical doubts have been voiced mainly by academics, arguing that “these forecasts are exaggerated” (Klemenčič, 2000, p. 34) when one is considering the objective and subjective conditions for tourism development.

This study seeks to build upon earlier work (Klemenčič et al., 2008; Potočnik Slavič, 2011; Lampič et al., 2011) that highlighted the vitality and development potential of Slovene rural areas. Over the last decade, diversification in farm tourism has been an important development opportunity for farms in Slovenia, especially smaller ones. This paper explores the question as to whether farm tourism leads towards the de- or re-peasantization (Brandth & Haugen, 2011) of rural areas. Or in other words, does farmers’ engagement in tourism lead to the eventual abandonment or to the strengthening of farming in Slovene rural areas?

2.0 Farm Diversification in Farm Tourism: Re- or De-peasantization?

Due to agricultural restructuring in Europe, which was strongly influenced by the European Union common agricultural policy (CAP) support of multifunctional agriculture and by market liberalization, farmers have incentives to become more entrepreneurial (Morgan et al., 2009). Financial and market conditions for farmers have changed, leading to greater scope and motivation (whether imposed or self-generated) than had previously been possible or necessary for farmers to reorganize and to develop new market and business configurations. Agricultural multifunctionality within the rural development paradigm lends itself most readily to small and medium-sized family farms. Under the increasing pressure to diversify, farms are facing the dilemma of whether to participate in farm tourism. “Today, small scale farm tourism is in the process of becoming an important activity that is expected to promote employment, vitality and the sustainability of rural communities” (Hall et al., 2003; Kneafsey, 2000; quoted in Brandth & Haugen, 2011, p. 35).

Farm tourism is not new to rural areas. Traditionally, hosting guests was part of common rural hospitality and not necessarily a professional business. But the process of commoditization, the scope and variety of activities and the increased demands on the hosting role are new (Brandth & Haugen, 2011).

Therefore, farm tourism (as argued by Busby & Rendle, 2000; quoted in Garrod, 2011) explicitly recognizes that the farming context, involving a much wider range of tourism services, is generally taking a more integrated approach to delivering them. As such it may be regarded as a part of the change in the

European model of agricultural development from productivism towards sustainability and functionality (Ploeg, 2008), and it has received important attention in rural/agricultural politics and economics in the last ten years.

In conceptualizing the process of farm tourism development in Slovenia, we draw on the findings of Ploeg (2008, 2010). He argues that re-peasantization is one of three trends within European rural development (along with industrial and entrepreneurial modes of agricultural development where specialization is prominent; Brandth & Haugen, 2011). According to Ploeg (2010), re-peasantization is an endogenous and local process. It is characterized by three elements that are relevant to our survey:

1. Use of the farm resource base (the farm's own resource base can be diversified and combined to produce new products);
2. Autonomy (strengthening the farm's resource base without making them dependent upon financial and industrial capital); and
3. Adding value (increased at the farm level and also in the sector as a whole because it progresses through the creation of new, additional income; Brandth & Haugen, 2011).

This paper emphasizes the farm, farmer, and geographical context. The farm and its ecological structure and processes are strongly influenced by the farmer (Darnhofer, 2009). Economics also play a larger role, as farmers need to ensure both the short-term and the long-term economic survival of their farm. Therefore, the contemporary mode of farm tourism development in Slovenia is a two-way system: some farms are entering (re-peasantization) and some are leaving the business (de-peasantization).

3.0 Materials and Methods

Since the majority of Slovenian farmers (altogether approx. 75,000) are unable to make a living solely from agriculture, pluriactivity has always been a common characteristic of Slovenian agriculture. Analyses (Cunder, 2006) indicate that fewer than 20% of farms in Slovenia are full-time, and the rest combine agriculture with other on- or off-farm income sources.

In Slovenia, farm tourism must be registered as a supplementary activity on the farm; it is regulated and inspected by the government. We selected our sample from the official Register of Supplementary Activities provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (2011). In making our selection, we took into account several criteria: geographical representation, variety of tourism services offered by farm tourism, and the volume of business. Additionally, we drew on our knowledge and rural networks to choose possible cases (98 farms). We focused on small-scale tourism activities based on family farms. The latter can be defined as those farms whose labour force is provided mostly by family members, and are owner-managed. These are distinct from corporate-owned or cooperative farms regarding their market integration (especially the labour market) and regarding their management goal. Indeed, on family farms short-term profit-seeking behaviour tends to be mitigated by a long-term commitment to farming as a way of life. Maintaining family farms is an important aspect of rural development policy, as these farms play an important role in local communities, rural economies, civic institutions and in maintaining the cultural landscape (Darnhofer, 2009).

But family farms are also a pertinent object of study because they have proven their resilience: many have been handed down from one generation to the next, often for 200 years or more. As such they have persevered despite major political

upheavals as well as drastic economic and policy changes, technological change and change in their cultural role. It is widely recognized that family farms, in their management decisions, do not necessarily follow the logic of mainstream economics. This is due to a range of factors, such as tight interlinkages between family and the farm (labour, living, and working space), social norms, etc. (Darnhofer, 2009).

All the farms selected were visited, where we administered a semi-structured questionnaire with the farm-owner or other member of the farm household in 2010. The questionnaire took from 30 minutes to 2.5 hours to complete and was focused on several questions:

- The demographic structure of the farm which registered farm tourism: number of household members that are involved in farm tourism, their age and vocational structure, current or past (when members are retired) job, potential hired labour force;
- The framework of farm tourism registration: the year registered, assistance with and reason for registration, problems with registration, administration and legal regulations;
- The size and contemporary operation of farm tourism: number of beds, seats, visitors, involvement in farm tourism (hours per week), major marketing channels for their products/services, modes of promotion, special courses attended, relevant problems;
- The farm networks: involvement of household members in various clubs and associations, inclusion in trademark, individual or joint representation on the market; and
- Future prospects of farm tourism: sources of investments (past, future), plans for the future.

The questionnaire provided us with representative, accurate and important quantitative and qualitative primary data that enabled further analysis, which is presented in this paper. The empirical work was further composed of 15 interviews with selected farmers (in 2011 and 2012). In the interviews, selected issues were highlighted (the most important factors that shaped the decision for farm tourism, changes in family life-cycle due to farm tourism, future orientations). We took this approach since the farmer and his family's viewpoint is crucial in the study of farm tourism development. The paper provides some quotations from these interviews to illustrate the issues clearly.

Additionally, several interviews were carried out with farm advisers, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry, etc., who were selected based on their knowledge and practical experience with farm tourism.

4.0 Farm Tourism in Slovenia: Some Insights into the Mosaic Structure

There are two available official sources which provide data on farm tourism in Slovenia.

1. Data on accommodation capacities and tourist visits by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), which are systematically and continually gathered and published annually.
2. The Register of Supplementary Activities on the Farm, which has a different character: it is renewed daily at the administrative unit (LAU-

1 level) as each application is approved. It provides information on the type and size of registered activity, basic identifying data on the operator and farm, etc.

There are some discrepancies between the two sources (i.e. number of registered farm tourism entities), but by drawing on both we can gain some insights into the issues relating to farm tourism.

According to the Register of Supplementary Activities on the Farm, in 2011 farms registered the following farm tourism services:

- Gastronomy services: 371 farms provide accommodation and food (some with full board, others with half board); 412 offer food and beverages mostly during the weekends, 125 offer services in wine cellars, 35 offer home-produced items just several days per year, and 6 operate as alpine chalets;
- In parallel with the above, farms can also decide to register non-gastronomy services, such as hosting visits to the farm and its surroundings (93), renting picnic spots (72) and sports equipment (34), providing horseback riding (57) and horse-drawn wagon or carriage rides for visitors (44), operating ski lifts (5), or presenting farm work (86).

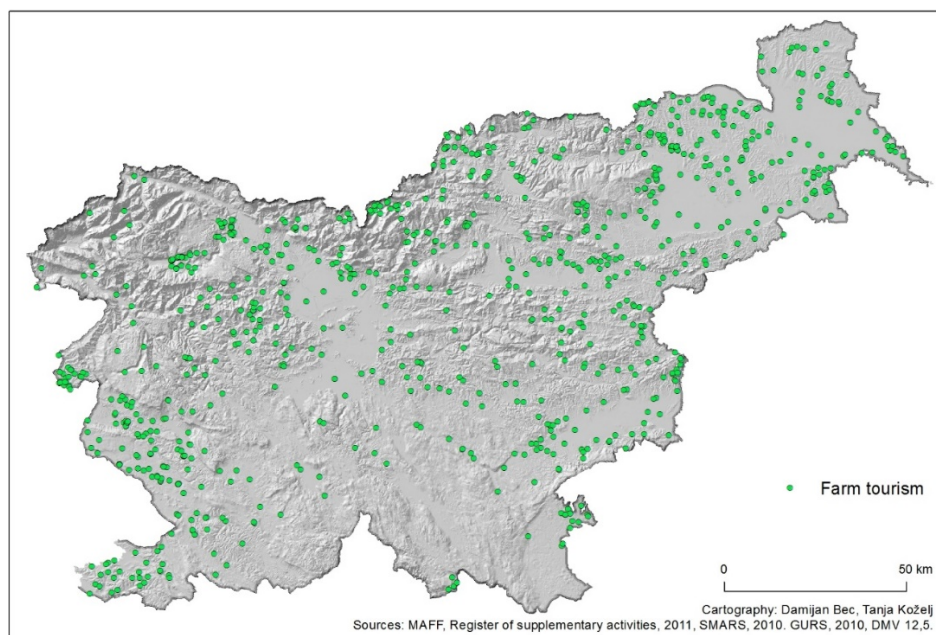
The number of beds and rooms on tourist farms is regulated (Regulation on type, size, and terms for performing supplementary activity on the farm, 2005). It allows up to 30 beds and requires that one third of the food that is offered on the tourist farm be provided by the farm, one third bought from farms in the neighbourhood, and up to one third purchased on the market. Farms that offer food and beverages (412 units in 2011) registered 20,634 seats; in the wine cellars there were 6,041 seats (each unit may have up to 60 seats; Regulation on type, size and terms for performing supplementary activity on the farm, 2005); there were 2,510 seats for “osmica” (“eights”—a tradition whereby farms may sell their products directly to the public for eight days in the year), 701 camping sites, and 111 seats in alpine chalets.

The spatial distribution of farm tourism services is quite uneven:

- Concentration of farm tourism services is evident in recognized, attractive and accessible tourist areas, i.e. alpine and pre-alpine, wine-growing and spa regions (the Goriška Brda region, the Vipava Valley, the Karst and the littoral hinterland in the western and south-western part of the country, and the sub-Pannonian area in the eastern and north-eastern part), the areas around metropolitan and regional centres (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Novo mesto, etc.);
- Lower density is evident in the Dinaric karst region (the interior southern part) and urban areas (basins, alpine- and pre-alpine valleys with the concentration of built-up areas, communication systems, etc.).

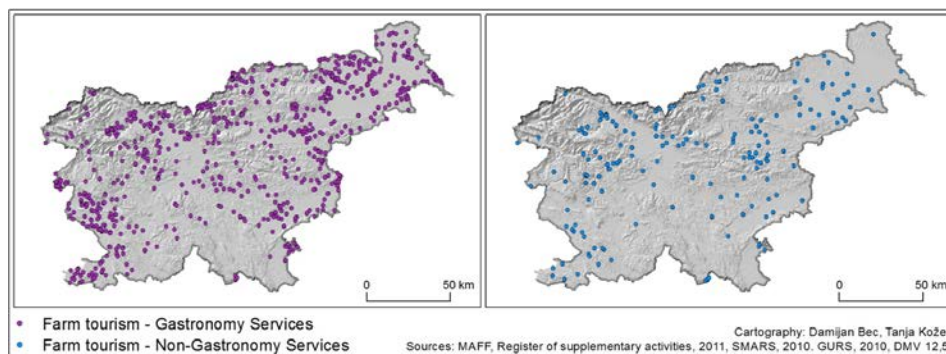
The spatial distribution of farm tourism differs significantly from the spatial distribution of other tourist accommodation capacities in Slovenia and indicates the specific nature of this type of tourism. Farm tourism is usually located in areas with a lower level of tourism development, where there is less competition from other types of tourism, but it also reflects the absence of other tourist facilities, which consequently causes problems in attracting and retaining tourist visits. Altogether, the Register recorded 1,359 activities in the tourism sector on 897 farm households (on average each farm registered 1.5 tourism services; see Figures 1–3).

Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of Farms with Registered Farm Tourism Services in Slovenia.



Source: MAFF, Register of supplementary activities, 2011; SMARS, 2010; GURS, 2010; DMV 12.5.

Figures 2-3: Spatial distribution of farms with registered farm tourism: gastronomy and non-gastronomy services in Slovenia.



Source: MAFF, Register of supplementary activities, 2011; SMARS, 2010; GURS, 2010; DMV 12.5.

Since farm tourism development has been increased in the last 15 years, especially after supportive measures from the Integrated Village Renewal Programme, the introduction of wine routes and the Rural Development Programme (after EU integration in 2004), in recent years there has been an evident transition on the national level from “accommodation investments” into non-gastronomy farm tourism services (demonstration of various kinds of farm work, rental of sports equipment and picnic spots, farm visits, etc.), which has contributed to the development of rural tourism infrastructure.

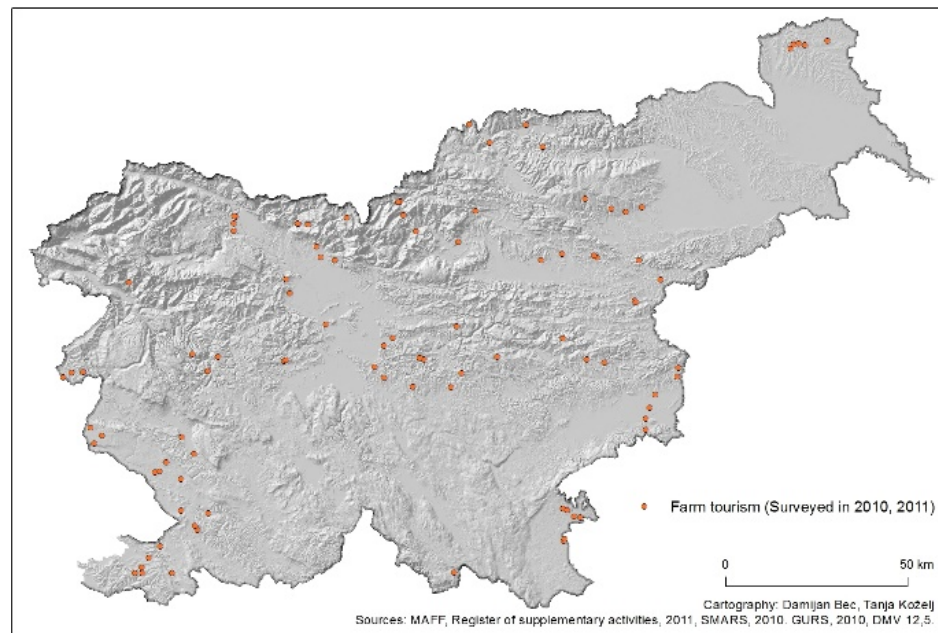
The share of farm tourism in Slovenia in comparison to the whole tourism sector is quite modest: it offers 3.68% of all beds (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije [SORS], 2012) and accounted for 1.16% of all tourist visits (SORS, 2012). In 2010 farm tourism with accommodation facilities recorded 34,814 tourist visits (SORS, 2012) with 83,143 overnight stays: an average stay of 2.4 days, concentrated mainly in summer. These dynamics do not fit with the dynamics of

tourist visits due to other farm tourism services; there is also a justified doubt that all visits are being registered. The average occupancy rate of farm tourism accommodation is unfavourable when compared to other tourist accommodation facilities in Slovenia. Only in the summer period does this value range between 15 and 20%, while throughout the other months it fails to achieve even a modest 10%. Usually foreign tourists (mostly from Germany, Italy, Austria, France, Belgium, Croatia, UK, Israel, Czech Republic, etc.) spend more days at farm tourism places than residents of Slovenia. In general, all the indicators presented above point to a mosaic structure of the farm tourism business.

5.0 Findings

Based on data provided by the Register of Supplementary Activities on Farms (2011) there were 3,610 farms with 7,878 registered on-farm activities. 36.5% of activities are related to agricultural and forestry mechanization, 19.5% to processing, and 17.3% to tourism. The number of registered farm tourism services has tripled in the period 2004–2011. The very intensive dynamics of the last decade (supported by funding from national, EU, and municipality budgets) are slowly subsiding.

Figure 4: Surveyed farms with registered farm tourism.



Source: MAFF, Register of supplementary activities, 2011; SMARS, 2010; GURS, 2010; DMV 12.5.

The mosaic structure of the farm tourism business was also observed in a qualitative analysis (98 households in 2011; see Figure 4). When selecting the representative farms, we considered two main criteria: the inclusion of different farm tourism units (accommodation, food and beverages, wine cellars, other additional services, etc.) and sound regional representation. Regionally, some rural areas were either over- or under-represented, but we managed to gain a broader insight by conducting interviews in under-represented rural areas. Additionally, we looked for farms that registered farm tourism in different periods, whose owners belonged to various age groups, etc.

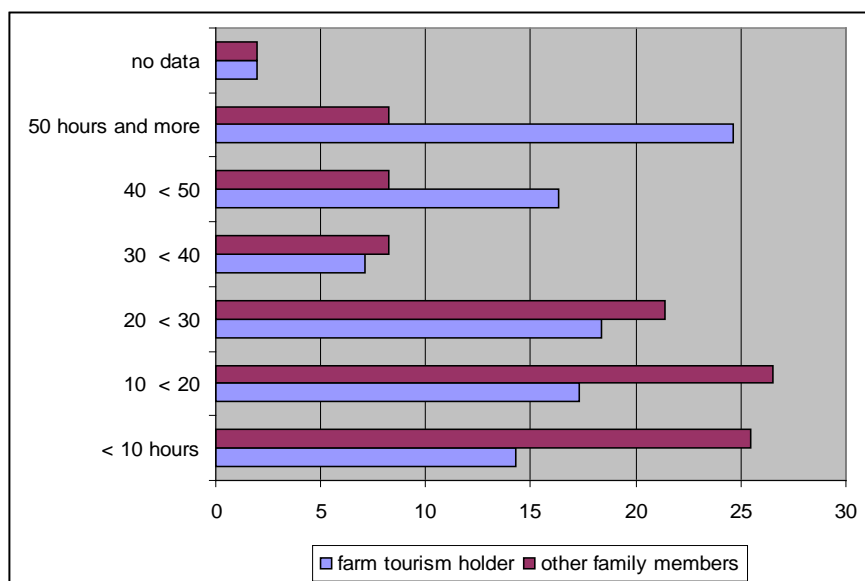
The questionnaire offered several options for reasons that the farmer decided to diversify by offering farm tourism; respondents usually indicated two. The

leading ones were (a) the possibility to attain a higher income (76.5% of all responses), (b) the usage of available agricultural products (30.6%), (c) farm tourism brought a challenge and innovation (28.6%), or (d) they followed the family tradition (27.6%). One female noted:

I was born and raised on this farm. I have been a farm woman all my life, I finished primary school. I am used to all kinds of work. This is the life I know, I like it and I would not change it. ...At the moment we have 30 cows (15 milking) and rent several plots of land in the neighbourhood. In the past we also grew potatoes, later on onions, etc. But what directed me to farm tourism were the visitors in the village... they would come to see our church, ossuary, rural museum, participate in events ... and they would just come to our courtyard asking for food and beverages. Consequently, we transformed an additional empty building into a dining room with 50 seats (and registered farm tourism in 2011), with a properly equipped kitchenette (personal communication, June 17, 2011; female, aged 52, seven members in the farm household, one is getting married and will relocate).

Regarding the involvement of family members in farm tourism services, our survey confirmed that if the farm tourism becomes “a real business”, it is seen as an activity which includes the majority of household members. On 35 surveyed tourist farms (35.7% of all included) two persons were actively involved in farm tourism services, 27.6% farms involved three family members, 19.4% included four members, and 17.3% farms just one person. Due to the specific nature of farm tourism services, the engagement does not occupy the majority of family members every day; their participation has more of a weekend and seasonal character. A quarter of operators spend 50 or more hours per week involved in farm tourism services. The overall involvement of the whole farm household is comparable with regular employment (see Figure 5). Nearly 60% of farms indicated that they are overburdened (at least during the season or during weekends).

Figure 5: Farm tourism household members and their weekly engagement.



Source: Survey 2010–2012, Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

Another person noted:

I work off the farm in the dairy as sales manager. I married into the farm several decades ago. At the moment, there are eight of us in the household. My husband, a mechanical engineer and a very handy man, decided to stay on the farm when the local firm was closed. We have two children: our daughter attained a university degree in tourism, our son is a computer engineer. They both have partners, we all live in a huge house. Of course, there is also my mother-in-law, who is 88, but sometimes we think she has more sense than any of us! All needlework in our apartments is done by her. And we have a grandchild of six months... My daughter did not want to find an off-farm job, she wanted to stay on the farm. Together with my husband, she is running the farm tourism services. I am a cooking assistant at least eight hours per day during the season, which has now extended from April to late October. We transformed the old barn since it was not used. We produce all the food for ourselves and our guests. All the bricolage and interior furnishings are done by us. You should also see our web page – it is very different and reflects our representation of farm tourism: not quantity, but quality matters. We all participate according to our talents in the village events. But we also take vacations: my husband and I would visit other tourist farms for several days to compare and develop new ideas (personal communication, September 8, 2011; female, aged 55, eight members in the farm household).

Their products and services are sold to different customers (interviewees could choose several answers): the majority are used for the needs of the registered farm tourism activities, but it is also important that they sell them on the farm. From this perspective they are very innovative, although the huge diversity of customers is time-consuming.

Usually the farm tourism household members are involved in clubs and associations: 36.7% of interviewed farms had members that participate in two, a fifth in three, a quarter in three and more, and 17.4% in none. The prevailing pattern consists of participation in four main types of organizations: (1) in cooperatives (mostly by men), (2) in societies for farm women, (3) in specialized organizations (wine- and fruit-growers, stockbreeders, cheese producers, etc.) and (4) in the association of tourist farms in Slovenia (with approx. 790 members in December 2011). This off-farm networking is important for several reasons: for obtaining professional information and advice and sharing experience, but also for farm networking in the broader milieu (gaining new acquaintances and potential customers), and it is also connected with the specifics of each tourist farm and their members (special talents, interests, etc.), which makes each tourist farm “special, unique, different, attractive.” As one farmer indicated:

I run a farm with more than 200 years of tradition. And one day I asked my father: “What can I do better than you, something new that my successor will remember me for?” Father, now in his mid-70s, looked at me seriously and said: “Son, you will think of something!” At that point I started to think about guided tours on our farm. It is the biggest in the

neighbourhood, we have cows, pigs, wild animals, etc., we process meat, milk and we show different stages of our production and processing to our visitors. Every Saturday we organize a farm market in our courtyard. We receive 15,000 visitors annually and we take them around our farm with a tourist “train” (a converted tractor). As I am also active in a local amateur theatre club, I enjoy hosting people and devoting my time to them (personal communication, August 24, 2011; male, 51 years, eight farm household members, additional help from family members and relatives).

The person registered for farm tourism services in our survey was the farmer in 64.3% of cases, a person working off the farm in 18% of cases, and a retired person in 15% of cases. Significantly, the formal education structure of the farm tourism holder is higher than is the case for other farmers in Slovenia. Nearly half had a secondary education, one third had finished some kind of vocational school, and a tenth each had university or primary education, respectively. A certain level of “proper, useful” formal education is a condition when someone registers farm tourism services.

One third of the tourist farms surveyed intend to enlarge their existing services (build another apartment, offer more seating capacity, etc.; see Figure 6) and a quarter intend to expand their farm tourism activities (new services, new foods, more added value on the farm, etc.). Since many of the tourist farms surveyed have been opened in the last ten years and they have just concluded making major investments, it is reasonable that 29% of those interviewed intend to keep to the *status quo*. 6% of tourist farms are considering closing down due mainly to problems with successors, and one tenth are a bit sceptical about future farm tourism development due to the financial crisis, frequent changes in regulations, and declining income. One person commented:

Our family has been involved in farm tourism for the last four years ... and each year we are “better” - also regarding organization ... so at the moment, there is a desire to continue. Of course, I expect that the business will flourish in the future. If I had to make a decision now, I would do the same. I agree that supplementary activity can enhance the farm income. Yes, that is true: but it is not an easy way! I would say: you need to work hard, use your own products as much as possible and also sell them. This value-adding and direct selling will bring additional income and might also enable a living from this for us (personal communication, August 23, 2011; male in his 50s, four family members, offering food and beverages mostly during weekends).

Some tourist farms are headed towards more large-scale forms of tourism business:

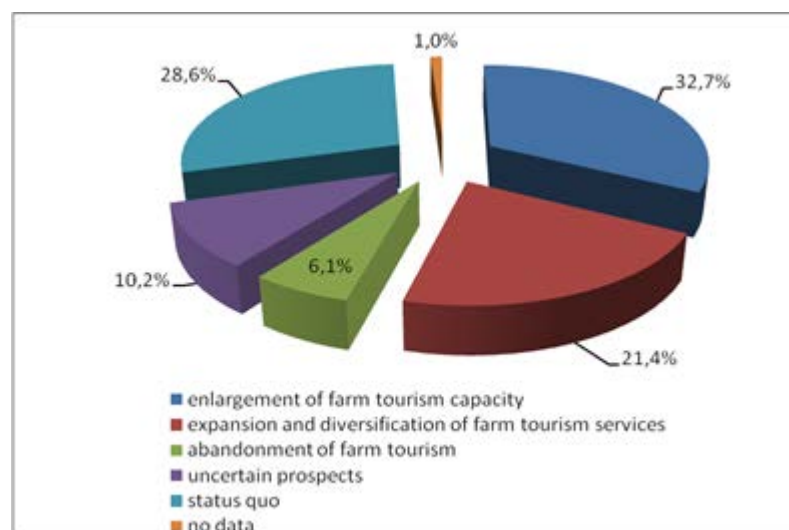
- a) they are becoming more entrepreneurial: as more visitors come and diverse services are offered, they need to hire a non-farm labour force, step by step they exceed the income regulations defined for farm tourism and consequently they can register “tourism as an individual entrepreneur”, and agriculture becomes less important (de-peasantization);
- b) several tourist farms are also intensifying tourism services, but they still want to maintain a farm: only large (multi-generational

households) and well-organized farm households can manage this task (re-peasantization);

Several tourist farms intend to close down due to the uncertain future of farm tourism development (market decline, family problems, other income options). One interviewee expressed his concern:

The position of farms in Slovenia is bad, and getting even worse! If the big farms in Western Europe cannot cope, how will we with our Slovenian farms? Small and fragmented farms. Supplementary activities ... yes, they do slightly increase income, but they bring a lot of additional work. And worries! There is not proper support available for farmers ... I am overburdened by this administrative work ... (personal communication, September 8, 2011; male in his 40s, four family members, one of the daughters is in tourism vocational school, farm tourism is combined with organic farming)

Figure 6: Farm tourism (Surveyed) – Future Prospects.



Source: Survey 2010–2012, Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

The results obtained confirmed that farm tourism is a two-way system: some farms are entering and some are leaving the business. Our survey was focused on identifying the reasons for both directions. Financial and economic reasons are most often why farmers start up farm tourism. The survey indicated several reasons for leaving farm tourism.

Our survey indicated that farm tourism services could be associated with three “Rs”:

- rationality (prudent use of available material and non-material farm resources);
- remuneration (the development of farm tourism services over the last 15 years shows quite profitable economic activity);
- risk (although farm tourism is recognized as a market niche there are several important factors, i.e. seasonality, huge dependence on the farm’s human capital, accessibility, market trends, regulation changes, etc., that need to be taken into consideration).

One of the farmers added:

One third of income is obtained from animal husbandry, one third from forests, and one third from tourism. This is our advantage ... we are very resilient, easily adaptable if circumstances change... (personal communication, June 17, 2012; female in her 50s, three farm household members at the moment, son will take over the farm, farm tourism with accommodation in a less favourable area for agriculture).

6.0 Comments

Rural areas of Slovenia have become a high quality living environment due to several important factors:

- The attractiveness of the landscape, with its mosaic geographical heterogeneity;
- A land structure which has been mostly preserved even from the Middle Ages (an average farm size of 6.4 ha of UAA fragmented in several plots, 64% of the national territory covered by forest, 80% of the territory is defined as LFA); and
- The vitality of rural areas (functional settlements of lower centrality in rural areas as an outcome of polycentric development from the 1970s and more recent administrative reform with 211 municipalities).

Slovenia was bypassed by the era of rapid urbanization; as a result of this lag in economic development it has paradoxically found itself in the post-industrial period in a relatively favourable situation: dispersed settlement is in fact irrational from an economic perspective, but very favourable from the perspective of quality of life. Only an inhabited landscape enables tourism as an economic activity, which is essentially a new developmental factor in a society. Therefore, the tourism services offered have to adapt to more and more dynamic, diverse, and individualized lifestyles (as opposed to the “classic” one-sided and mass tourism of the past), and this is usually associated with rural areas (Urry, 1995). The latter also offer development opportunities for farm tourism.

The literature (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Woods, 2005; Sznajder, 2009, etc.) states that mostly small and medium farms decide to diversify in farm tourism. This holds true for Slovenia as well: official data (Pungartnik, 2010) confirmed that 26.9% of farms 5–10 ha of utilized agricultural area (UAA) in size, and another quarter in the category 10–20 ha of UAA, are involved in the business of farm tourism, offering accommodation, food and beverages. Our survey (98 farms with various farm tourism services) identified several groups of involved farmers: members of the old (traditional) farm generation, small part-time farmers, middle-sized and big part-time farmers, big full-time farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. As their representation, functioning, and future prospects for farm tourism are diverse, it will be an important task for local, regional and national levels to coordinate their interests for the sound further development of farm tourism as an important part of rural tourism.

The contemporary spatial structure of farm tourism in Slovenia is quite complex:

- On the one hand we have a cellular distribution of tourist farms (sporadic tourism services) in several localities;
- but on the other hand, some areas have recognized the capacities, visibility, and power of farm tourism networking among tourist farms as

well as other rural tourism facilities (shaping the tourist landscape where various tourism activities are spatially connected and completed).

Consequently, farm and rural tourism development is outer- and inner-motivated/generated. Outer-generated is mostly present where existing strong tourism flows (attractive water bodies, mineral and thermal springs, etc.) are attractive for foreign investment. The development of tourism infrastructure is therefore comparatively rapid, as it is in the interest of entrepreneurs. Inner-generated farm and rural tourism development usually originates from initiatives of the local population, which are usually under-capitalized. If we want to prepare a rural locality to host tourism, the locality has to be developed in several fields. We consider this type of development to be the most suitable for Slovene rural areas since the growth is organic, based on local potential and limits. What we need is a high level of self-initiative, unity of involved stakeholders and a commitment to common goals (social and organizational capital, a functioning rural web).

Therefore, new approaches are needed which would harmonize the existing landscape diversity and the increasingly more fragmented (individualized) tourism demand. This type of development requires much more than just a copy-paste approach. Making good use of tourism potential is a very demanding task, unable to be realized practically if we still consider farm and rural tourism development in the traditional manner. At the same time, perhaps the development of postmodern (i.e., alternative, more individual) farm and rural tourism does not require massive effort: tourism stakeholders need to follow diversified leisure-time trends carefully, rationally, and promptly (shifts already notable in the new tourism strategy of Slovenia, 2011). These trends include a broad range of options: the permanent repopulation of rural areas with returnees to rural areas in the third period of life (which could not be easily indicated as tourism activity) up to short visits (several hours) to rural areas. These trends go well with the improvements in spatial accessibility, which actually enable a time-effective combination of various activities in the area. These possibilities might be considered as merely potential which is mostly dependent on the innovativeness of stakeholders and their individual actions. But on the other hand, the question of how to manage, organize, sell and govern such heterogeneity and fragmentation represents an important challenge.

Transformation of farms into farm tourism businesses has the characteristics of re-peasantization, in which products are developed mostly from the farm resources. Farm tourism builds upon the farm and on the farmers (their skills and abilities, their lifestyle and representations of farming). In many cases farm tourism has revitalized farms that otherwise might have been abandoned, and farm tourism can operate as a solution for farm household members that have lost their off-farm jobs. Fundamental or strategic change is resisted by many of these farmers on the basis that making changes to existing practices is difficult in technical terms, can be risky in commercial terms, and may require a re-evaluation of the farmers' role and identity (Brandth & Haugen, 2011). For smaller investments, farmers will prefer a bricolage approach. Bricoleurs use resources they are intimately familiar with to address new tasks and challenges and they use resources that are available on the farm. Change is thus enacted by exploiting opportunities through continuous resource combination and recombination (Darnhofer, 2009). From the social point of view, this diversity is important to allow each family member to find activities that correspond to his or her personal preferences and inclinations.

The study examines the nature of farmers' entrepreneurial skills and the conditions for their development by highlighting farm and farm-specific factors

(education, age, gender, farm physical location, etc.) together with relational factors (social relationships, political, cultural, institutional, and commercial conditions). The results describe a range of skills among farmers displaying a complex interaction between personal characteristics, farm type, and local socio-economic and institutional conditions. Farmers' entrepreneurial skills, therefore, are shaped and mobilized by the kind of socio-economic development and by the institutional support that is apparent in rural economies, as well as by personal, locational and physical factors (Morgan et al., 2009). More intensive orientation of farm tourism might lead to specialization and high-quality service provision, but there are also indications that this might divert farms away from farm tourism and towards the abandonment of farming.

Acknowledgements

This survey was undertaken in the framework of the national target research project "Potential of supplementary activities on the farms and entrepreneurship in rural areas 2010–2012" (under the code V5–1014, part of the research programme "Konkurenčnost Slovenije 2006–2013") financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and the Slovenian Research Agency.

Language proof: Jean P. McCollister

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