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## STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF AGRITOURISM IN POLAND AND THE UKRAINE

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### Abstract

**Purpose.** The aim of the article is to present the state and prospects of development of rural tourism in Poland and the Ukraine.

**Method.** The analysis included data taken from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Central Statistical Office, the Institute of Tourism as well as domestic and foreign literature.

**Findings.** In 1993, there were around one thousand agritourism farms in Poland, while in 2012, their number increased to 7.6 thousand which represents 0.5% of the total number of agritourism farms in Poland. Country dwellers are increasingly interested in economic activities within the range of rural tourism and propose offers suiting the diverse needs of tourists. At the same time, tourists are deeply interested in spending their free time in the countryside.

**Research limitations and conclusions.** As research studies of many authors show, tourists value the charms of the countryside, i.e. peace, tranquillity and possibilities to make social relationships. However, they expect high-quality services and infrastructure as well as a rich offer of free time animation. Ukraine has great potential for multifunctional rural development and the development of agritourism.

**Practical implications.** Presentation of the most important directions of development regarding rural tourism in Poland and the Ukraine.

**Originality.** The article presents status and developmental trends of agritourism in Poland and the Ukraine.

**Type of paper.** Research article.

**Keywords:** tourism, agritourism, development, Poland, the Ukraine.

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## **Introduction**

Farm tourism has a long tradition. In its initial phase of development, it was considered a great holiday place for the wealthiest classes. Trips and stays in rural areas were known amongst European aristocracy. Horseback riding, fishing, hunting and tasting good country cuisine were signs of good behaviour. What is more, having a summer-residence located in rural areas was proof of the owner's high-class. The tradition of holiday stays in the countryside goes back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the past, such stays were mainly visits to the residences of family and friends residences in rural areas, as well as "resorts", which were attended by wealthy urban dwellers, mainly the intelligence. At present, farm tourism, as an organized and legally sanctioned tourism form, has started to take on more commercialized forms. This includes renting holiday homes, organizing meals and providing a variety of related services. In such a form, agritourism allows farm families to obtain an additional source of income, which is especially important in the current difficult situation of Polish agriculture. Moreover, it creates new opportunities for development of rural spaces, agricultural buildings and local infrastructure.

The current status of farm tourism in Poland is significantly different from the level of its development in other Western European countries, although there has been a significant increase in the number of farms providing services in this field in recent years. In 1993, there were around 1 thousand agritourism farms in Poland [Data 2005], when in 2012 their number increased to 7.6 thousand [Agriculture 2013], which represents only 0.5% of the total number of agritourism farms in Poland [as in 2014] (for comparison – in Great Britain – 10.0%, in Austria – 8.0%).

## **Aim, material and research methods**

The aim of the article is to present state and development prospects of rural tourism in Poland and the Ukraine. Analysis included data taken from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Central Statistical Office, the Institute of Tourism as well as domestic and foreign literature.

## **Rural tourism and agritourism in literature**

Tourism is a complex phenomenon. It can be assessed with respect to many aspects of human life [Marques 2006]. Thanks to it, people get to know the world, regenerate and can shape their personality [McGehee 2007]. Tourism is also an economic activity, which consists in providing tourist services.

For travellers, tourism offers accommodation, gastronomic and transportation services [Roman 2015b]. Due to its multidimensional character, tourism is subject to research conducted by various sciences [Kurek 2011].

Farm tourism is observed in rural areas and includes, apart from farm tourism, health, forest and so-called “plot” tourism. The latter is associated with tourist enclaves (estates of holiday home plots, guest houses and second homes) which change the development of a given agricultural and agro-service area to a tourist-oriented one [Clarke 1999] [Clarke, 1999b]. However, counting them amongst tourism is problematic, as in the case of sanatoriums and health resorts which may also be located in towns classified as villages [Roman 2015a]. The essence of farm tourism is determined by the following features [Ollenburg, Buckley 2007]:

- it takes place in areas of real villages, i.e. where buildings, land use planning and activities of their dwellers are dominated by agriculture,
- it provides peace, tranquillity and unlimited contact with nature,
- it utilizes local resources (social, natural, cultural) on a rational basis,
- it is characterized by a small scale of undertaking (a small number of hotels and restaurants) so that the initial agricultural function is not dominated by tourism,
- it is based on an existing building (allows using a free housing base, adaptation of old mills, stables, barns, etc.) and labour force (surplus of labour force is well-managed).

A condition for classifying tourism as farm tourism is not the existence of a farm, while this condition is necessary for agritourism, which can be defined as follows:

- a relaxation form taking place in rural areas of agricultural nature based on an accommodation base and recreational activities associated with a given farm and its surroundings (natural, manufacturing, service) [Drzewiecki 1995],
- a tourism type which is carried out in rural areas with the use of vacant residential rooms and – after adaptation - farmers' outbuildings and the production as well as services of their respective owners [Dębniowska, Tkaczuk 1997],
- a farm tourism form associated with agriculture; the farm offers accommodation and the main tourist attraction for a potential tourist [Zaręba 2006],
- a tourism type associated with a stay at a farm; it is related to various forms of leisure and tourist services provided within the area of the farm [Sikora 1999].

According to M. Sznajder and L. Przebórskiej [2006], there are three features that distinguish agritourism from conventional tourism:

- the possibility to meet human needs related to practical participation in the food production process, rural family life and rural societies,

- the possibility to meet human cognitive needs in the range of agricultural production and ethnography,
- the possibility to meet such emotional needs as a desire for direct contact with pets, animal and vegetable products, processed products, a desire for a rural idyll life associated with the atmosphere of peace and quiet.

Agritourism which lacks the cognitive element, eliminates a human's emotional needs, focused solely on leisure, recreation and fun is little different from a conventional tourism form [Oppermann 1996].

The term "agritourism" was introduced into our vocabulary in the early 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, agritourism developed intensively as a result of changes taking place not only in agriculture but also in the whole of economy. Available results of research entitle us to make the statement that country dwellers are increasingly interested in economic activities in the range of farm tourism and make custom offers adjusted to tourists' needs (e.g. organic farms, horse riding, winter and summer school programs, handicraft workshops). Moreover, tourists are deeply interested in spending their relaxation time in the countryside. As the studies of many authors has shown, tourists value the charms of the countryside i.e. peace, tranquillity and possibilities to make social relations. However, they expect high-quality services and infrastructure as well as a rich offer of free time animation. Some tourists expect that farms will provide them with the possibility to contact agriculture (crops, tillage works, animals).

### **Agritourism in Poland in the years 1990 – 2015**

Tourist services are among the most popular types of non-agricultural activities undertaken by country dwellers. The development of farm tourism, including agritourism, is of special meaning for particular farms. It influences the increase in demand for tourist resorts, maintains folklore, forces new investments. It constitutes a form of activity that contributes to the development of entrepreneurship, competitiveness and an economic boom in rural areas. Moreover, it allows stimulating the activity of local environments and cooperation as part of joint projects. As a consequence, it has positive impact on improving the quality of life among country dwellers.

Analysis of the number of agritourism farms in Poland is difficult to conduct due to the availability and accuracy of data. The earliest research done by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development shows that in Poland, in 1990, there were 590 agritourism farms, and by 1993, their number increased to 1,000. The Central Statistical Office had published data on agritourism lodgings since 1998. It differed significantly from the data collected by agricultural advisory centres. According to the CSO, in 1998,

**Tab. 1.** Number of agritourism farms in Poland in the years 1990–2015

Year	Agritourism farms	Accommodation	Data Source
1990	590	No data	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
1993	1000	No data	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
1998	608	5509	Central Statistical Office
1999	775	7172	Central Statistical Office
2000	808	8133	Central Statistical Office
2001	1073	11188	Central Statistical Office
2002	6543	53216	Institute of Tourism
2003	3323	32885	Institute of Tourism
2004	4052	40635	Institute of Tourism
2005	6550	64075	Institute of Tourism
2006	7214	70300	Institute of Tourism
2007	8790	87144	Institute of Tourism
2009	5473	57095	Central Statistical Office
2010	7692	82750	Central Statistical Office
2011	7852	82694	Central Statistical Office
2012	7644	80923	Central Statistical Office
2013	7802	No data	Central Statistical Office
2014	8016	No data	Central Statistical Office
2015	7700	No data	Central Statistical Office

**Source:** Own research based on data taken from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Central Statistical Office and the Institute of Tourism.

there were 608 facilities providing agritourism services. In subsequent years, their number increased. Data concerning the year 2001 was the last to be presented by the CSO related to the status of agritourism in Poland. At that time, there were 1,073 agritourism farms. In the years 2002-2007, research studies on the number of agritourism farms were conducted by the Institute of Tourism, which initially used the information obtained from agricultural advisory centres (in 2002) and later, until 2007, various municipal offices. According to the calculations made by the Institute of Tourism, based on the information obtained from agricultural advisory centres, in 2002, there were 6,543 operating agritourism farms in Poland. The following year, thanks to the information obtained from municipal offices, that number was stated at only 3,323. The data for 2007 was the last data published by the Institute of Tourism which no longer performs this type of re-

search. In 2008, studies on the number of agritourism farms were not conducted. The studies were resumed by the CSO in 2009. The number of agritourism farms increased [Agricultural 2013] systematically and amounted to 7,644 in 2012.

According to data from 2013, there were 7,802 operating farm tourism facilities. The share of farms in the structure of tourist accommodation in 2012 was 7.2%, while in 2013, it increased to 8.2%. In the case of the number of beds at farm houses, they accounted for 1.9% in 2013 [Accommodation, 2013]. According to data of the Central Statistical Office in 2014, they increased the number of tourists. In the first half of 2014, this number increased by 7.6% compared to previous year (first half of 2013) [Accommodation 2013, 2014].

The location of agritourism accommodation in Poland was diverse in terms of territory. Data on this issue is presented in Table 2.

The data presented in Table 2 shows that the highest number of agritourism farms was in the following voivodeships: Lesser Poland, Subcarpathia, Warmia and Mazury, Lower Silesia and Pomerania. One of the main

**Tab. 2.** Agritourism farms in Poland according to voivodeships in 2012

<b>Voivodeship</b>	<b>Agritourism farms</b>	<b>Accommodation</b>
Lower Silesia	625	7357
Kujawy and Pomerania	255	3070
Lublin	440	3734
Lubusz	103	1041
Łódź	166	1757
Lesser Poland	1326	15964
Mazowsze	346	3445
Subcarpathia	912	7890
Opole	114	1214
Pomerania	614	6994
Silesia	384	4930
Świętokrzyskie	287	2627
Warmia-Masuria	713	6849
Greater Poland	414	4647
West Pomeranian	361	3860
Poland	7644	80923

**Source:** own research based on Tourism in 2012. CSO 2013. Online: [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl) (28. 03. 2014).

reasons for this situation is the stunning attractiveness of these regions. What is more, not without significance is the fact that Subcarpathia and Warmia and Mazury are characterized by high levels of unemployment and low income rates of its residents. That is why there is an increased interest in additional sources of income such as agro-tourism services.

Agritourism farms are located in Poland in highly dispersed locations. Map 1 shows their location.



**Fig. 1.** Agritourism farms in Poland

**Source:** [Bednarek-Szczepańska 2015, p. 48].

There is considerable variation in the number of agritourism farms within the local scale. Most facilities occur in mountainous areas (southern part of Poland) and in the northern part of the country (Pomorze, Warmia and Mazury).

## **Changes in agritourism offers over the last 20 years and directions of development in Poland**

The first offers of agritourism farms that appeared on the market 20 years ago were rather short. They mainly contained characteristics of facilities, including brief information on the family taking care of the farm the location, the farmed animals, rented rooms, catering services, i.e. on-site dining possibilities or eateries, canteens, restaurants, kitchen opening hours as well as prices and dates at which lodgings could be used. Occasionally, tourist attractions such as boat or kayak rides were offered. The range of services at its best.

In time, offers of agritourism lodgings have become richer and include all sorts of tourist attractions. Additional services and attractions offered by service providers are becoming more varied. For example, apart from providing boats, rowing boats, canoes and rafts, the following options are made available:

- joint bonfires,
- horse cart rides,
- demonstration and learning how to bake bread, regional cakes, butter, cheese, traditional methods of gobelin weaving on a loom,
- joint fishing.

Upon guests' request, service providers can also arrange meetings with folk artists, evenings with music and singing, sightseeing tours around the area, joint work on farmlands, in the yard and the apiary. Agritourism farms arrange more educational activities for children, youth, adults and schools, nurseries and people with disabilities [Bogusz and Kmita-Dziasek 2015]. Moreover, various types of workshops (e.g. artistic crafts) are organised.

In recent years, offers of agritourism lodgings have been targeting a specific group of clients. These are lovers of horse riding, sailing, hunters, anglers, artists, families with children and the elderly, mushroom pickers, cyclists, lovers of hiking and cross-country skis, people looking for quiet areas, business groups wishing to combine training sessions with relaxation time. There are farms that offer tennis courts and saunas.

The proposals of accommodation facilities have also changed in the Polish farm tourism. Nowadays, clients can find accommodation not only in conventional farms, but also in regional huts, modern rural homesteads, historic mansions and palaces, holiday homes and apartments located in the most attractive tourist regions. At present, accommodation lodgings are categorized. There are more and more buildings adapted to the needs of disabled people.

Further to the above, changes have also been made to culinary offers. Service providers offer not only usual homemade food but also regional dishes, often forgotten old-traditional meals, rural dishes and healthy home cooking using eco-products.

The success of Polish agritourism consists in its diversity and constant striving to improve the quality of services. What is more, contemporary Polish tourist farms are specialized in certain areas. Service providers recognize the huge diversity in tourists' needs and try to satisfy them.

When analysing years of demographic forecasts of tourism in Poland, a hypothesis can be formulated that by 2020 the number of visitors to rural areas will not change to a significant extent. On the contrary – the occurrence of its periodic fluctuations and a decreasing tendency in countryside tourism can be expected. Farm tourism is most likely to succeed and blossom in domestic market which will maintain its dynamics of development in the future. Basic segments of that market will focus on leisure services offered to families and the elderly as well as children and adolescents. Amongst foreign markets, the most important will be Germany and other countries interested in the western regions of Poland.

### Agritourism in the Ukraine

Regional affiliates of the Union for Promotion of Rural Green Tourism Development in the Ukraine contribute to the promotion of about 3,000 estates with the total capacity of over 30 thousand people regarding the tourism market. At the same time, according to the Ministry of Infrastructure

**Tab. 3.** Distribution of rural tourism estates according to economic regions of the Ukraine, units

Economic region	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Prychornomorskyy	34	112	256	279	287	294	301	308	314	316	326	334
Carpathian	75	231	567	593	612	654	689	703	756	798	876	911
North-Western	12	35	89	101	129	148	169	187	204	238	243	238
Podilsky	19	48	109	121	144	162	193	215	247	263	278	294
Central	14	36	87	94	98	102	108	114	118	123	126	118
Stolychnyy	12	28	69	78	83	94	99	107	114	116	118	123
North-Eastern	8	18	47	51	58	63	69	75	81	87	96	91
Prydniprovsky	6	16	38	41	48	55	59	62	68	71	74	72
Donetsky	3	9	16	18	20	23	25	27	31	38	42	34
Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol	56	214	498	561	574	597	612	634	677	698	712	–

**Source:** The official website of the State Statistics Committee of the Ukraine (2015), “Statistic information”. Online : [www.ukrstat.gov.ua](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua) (12.07.2016).

of the Ukraine, there are about 5 thousand officially registered estates that provide rural tourism services. In order to conduct a more detailed study of rural tourism peculiarities, we analysed the number of tourist enterprises within 10 economic regions of Ukraine.

Evaluation of rural tourism in the Ukraine shows that each region of the country is characterized by its special direction of development. Simultaneously, the most popular rural tourism is in traditional regions of the Carpathians and Azov Sea, where it is concentrated around 90% of rural tourist estates. The leading position belongs to the Carpathian region, which includes Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, Lviv and Chernyivetska counties.

**Tab. 4.** Types of leisure activities within the rural tourism in the Carpathian economic region

No.	Types of leisure activities	Months of the year											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Rafting in mountain rivers	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Bicycle tourism	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
3	Mountain bike	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
4	Ski trips	+	+										+
5	Skiing, snowboarding	+	+	+									+
6	Hiking	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
7	Excursions	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8	Camping	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
9	Picnics	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
10	Orienteering	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
11	Winter orienteering (skiing)	+	+										+
12	Mountain climbing	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
13	Paragliding				+	+	+	+	+	+	-		
14	Riding	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
15	Bird watching							+	+	+	-	-	-
16	Observation of animals	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+
17	Gathering berries	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
18	Gathering mushrooms						+	+	+	+	-	-	-
19	Collection of medicinal herbs	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
20	Swimming pools	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-
21	Licensed hunting									+	+	+	+
22	Fishing							+	+	+	-	-	-
23	Photo hunting	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+

**Source:** [Zinko, Horishevsky, Petrishyn 2008, p. 12].

Main attractions include skiing and the opportunity to celebrate the New Year and Christmas holidays in the winter, surrounded by beautiful landscapes, fresh air, and mountain rivers in the summer.

In the Carpathian economic region, the dominating size of the rural tourism farms is from 2 to 4 rooms for guests, which can simultaneously accommodate 5-10 tourists. The main type rooms for guests are double rooms. Common features of rural tourism in the Carpathian economic region based on the possibility of combining rest in rural tourism farms with sport and ecological tourism. Tourism opportunities of the villages in the Carpathian economic region, according to season, is presented in Table 4.

If we consider the intensity and the seasonal nature of tourism in the region, we can also clearly distinguish several characteristic areas. The highest differences are in highland and foothill areas.

The most active flat terrains are visited in the summer. This is the time of holidays and vacation, recreation for children and students, as well as the "peak" of weekend recreation. At this time, the most involved bases of rural tourism are in lowland areas of the region [Zaburanna 2012]. The second maximum attendance of these areas accounted for transitional seasons: spring and autumn. Spring is due to the revival of suburban rural tourism after a work week – the revival of interest in traditional rural leisure (harvesting berries and mushrooms). However, the mountainous areas of the region have two pronounced attendance "peaks". The first falls in the winter when visitors of the Carpathian region are attracted by ski slopes, Christmas rituals, cheerful folk festivals, the true beauty of winter, which nobody can feel in cities. The second runs from the second decade of June to end of August – a period of mass holidays and mountaineering activities (walking, cycling and horse), cognitive ecotourism trips, just rest in the middle of the green Carpathian landscapes. Popular tourist services in the Carpathian economic region are related to cuisine, festivals (evenings, folk ceremonies). Health saunas with herbal teas, winter activities from skiing to sleigh rides are significantly widespread. All rural areas of the Carpathian region are popular due to gathering berries and mushrooms as well as qualified tourism (hiking, horseback riding). Each area of the Carpathian economic region has its own specialty of tourist services in rural tourism.

### **Summary and conclusions**

1. The first offers of agritourism farms that appeared on the market 20 years ago were rather short and included accommodation and food. In time, offers of agritourism lodgings have become richer and include all sorts of tourist attractions.

2. The success of Polish agritourism consists in its diversity and the constant strive to improve the quality of services. Service providers recognize the huge diversity of tourists' needs and try to satisfy them.
3. When analysing years of demographic forecasts for tourism in Poland, a hypothesis can be formulated that by 2020, the number of visitors to rural areas will not change to a significant extent. On the contrary – the occurrence of its periodic fluctuations and a tendency to decrease in countryside tourism can be expected. Farm tourism is most likely to succeed and blossom in the domestic market which will maintain its dynamics of development in the future. Basic segments of that market will focus on leisure services offered to families and the elderly as well as children and adolescents. Amongst foreign markets, the most important will be Germany and other countries interested in the western regions of Poland.
4. The Ukraine has great potential for multifunctional rural development and the development of rural tourism. In the application of effective methods and mechanisms to encourage their development, the Ukraine can claim significant improvement in its socio-economic status.
5. At the same time, development of rural tourism in all regions of the Ukraine is complicated by several circumstances, the main one being insufficient popularization of rural tourism in the Ukraine both on domestic and foreign markets. Often, information on existing rural tourism farms does not reach the consumer due to lack of money for transmission. The second problem – imperfection of legal framework and lack of technical, organizational, informational and financial support for rural tourism farms by the state. Practical implementation of state policy in the field of support for rural tourism today, as during previous years, is mainly declarative, and state target financing of rural tourism at the national and regional levels is virtually absent.
6. The third problem is the lack of innovation and research on the development of rural tourism. Innovation and scientific support of rural tourism will promote the creation of new original tourism products, integrated use and conservation of the natural environment and cultural heritage, patriotic education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, strengthening the international authority of the Ukraine as a touristic country.

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## STAN I PERSPEKTYWY ROZWOJU AGROTURYSTYKI W POLSCE I NA UKRAINIE

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### Abstrakt

**Cel.** Celem artykułu było przedstawienie stanu i perspektyw rozwoju agroturystyki w Polsce i na Ukrainie.

**Metoda.** W opracowaniu uwzględniono dane statystyczne pochodzące z Ministerstwa Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi, Głównego Urzędu Statystycznego, Instytutu Turystyki oraz literatury krajowej i zagranicznej.

**Wyniki.** W 1993 roku w Polsce istniało około tysiąca gospodarstw agroturystycznych, natomiast w 2012 roku ich liczba wzrosła do 7,6 tys., co stanowi 0,5% ogólnej liczby gospodarstw agroturystycznych w Polsce. Mieszkańcy wsi są coraz bardziej zainteresowani działalnością gospodarczą w zakresie prowadzenia gospodarstw agroturystycznych i ofertami odpowiadającymi zróżnicowanym potrzebom turystów. Jednocześnie turyści są głęboko zainteresowani spędzaniem wolnego czasu na wsi.

**Ograniczenia badań i wnioski.** Jak pokazują badania wielu autorów, turyści doceniają uroki wsi, tj. spokój, cisza, możliwości nawiązywania relacji społecznych. Jednak oczekują wysokiej jakości usług, a także bogatej oferty animacji czasu wolnego. Ukraina ma ogromny potencjał w zakresie wielofunkcyjnego rozwoju obszarów wiejskich i rozwoju agroturystyki.

**Implikacje praktyczne.** Prezentacja najważniejszych kierunków rozwoju agroturystyki w Polsce i na Ukrainie.

**Oryginalność.** W artykule przedstawiono stan i perspektyw rozwoju agroturystyki w Polsce i na Ukrainie.

**Rodzaj pracy:** artykuł naukowy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka, agroturystyka, rozwój, Polska, Ukraina.

