ASPECTS OF AGRITOURISM MANAGEMENT IN MALOPOLSKA VOIVODESHIP

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ABSTRACT: In the article the authors present some issues connected with different aspects of agritourism management in Malopolska Voivodeship. There are different institutions in this region which manage this development. Among them there are: agritourism associations, Agricultural Advisory Centre, the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture, local authorities in districts. Agritourism development is managed by these institutions in a different way. Implementation of union funds is managed by Regional Office of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture in Cracow. Next, promotion management mainly consists of different activities of agritourism associations. Agricultural Advisory Centre organizes agritourism training courses for farmers who want to set up agritourism farm.

KEY WORDS: agritourism, management, marketing, institution, Malopolska Voivodeship

1. THE ESSENCE OF AGRITOURISM

In Poland, agritourism is defined as the form of rural tourism which is organized by farmer within the farm limit. It is treated as an additional income for farmers, out of agricultural income. Nowadays there are almost 9000 agritourism farms here, the most function in Malopolska Voivodeship. There are many determinants of agritourism development. It is based on the qualities of the natural and cultural environment [Kot, 2005]. Next, agritourism should be based on the principles of sustainable development of rural areas. An important issue for farmers, their families and the local community, besides the incomes of the farmers, is maintaining fundamental aspects of conservation of the natural environment.

Agritourism offers basic services, as night and food services for its guests. Moreover, it offers recreational services which task is to ensure tourists spending their leisure time in an interesting way. Among such services can be: bonfire organization,

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sports equipment rental, britzka rides, sleigh ride, playground for children, mushroom picking, and so on. One of the most essential factors of agritourism development concerns different aspects of management, which play very important role in this process. There are institutions which organize agritourism services promotion, which train farmers, and obtain union funds for undertaking of agritourism.

It is very important to use marketing in providing agritourism farm. Owner of such agritourism accommodation should be taught how to run his firm successfully. Besides, farmer ought to know all elements of marketing - mix. Rules of promotion, its different forms (fairs, catalogues, internet, public relation, additional promotion) should be obvious for him. Marketing is an enterprise related to the management of a highly customer-oriented company, where the basis for making decisions includes as follows [Sikora 1999]:

- knowledge of the market (recognizing customers’ need and interests, competition, other socio-economic and cultural factor);
- active influence on the market (development of promotion and marketing);
- elaborating a consistent market strategy (including product development, prices, communication with the market, distribution).

2. AIM, RANGE AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the article is presentation different issues related to agritourism management in Malopolska Voivodeship. In the theoretical part of the article the authors present the most important institutions in this region which play important role in agritourism management. In empirical part, results of researches conducted among 365 farmers providing agritourism services are shown. These researches were conducted by means of questionnaire, and they were connected with aspects of agritourism management in respondents’ opinions.

3. AGRITOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

Poland consists of sixteen voivodeship. In Malopolska Voivodeship there are absolutely the most agritourism farms in Poland – 1590. It is over 500 more than next Podkarpackie Voivodeship with 1074 agritourism farms (table 1). As Ewa Tyran [2003] says, the development of farm tourism in Poland is seen as an important factor in the on-going restructuring process of rural areas. This has also been recognized by the European Union, which has in recent years allocated substantial outlays from the Sapard fund and later, after Poland’s integration with the EU - structural funds.

Agritourism services refer to providing and developing tourist services for the guests staying in agritourism farm. The agritourism is a form of holidays based on accommodation and catering in the house of a farmer. It has been already mentioned, that the guests’ stay includes various entertainment activities offered by the farm-owners. Recreation is defined as sport for everyone, practising different forms of sport activity without striving to reach maximal performance; recreation is a healthy lifestyle, fitness and health promotion [Piątczak, 2002]. The essence of recreation is not to gain profits but to provide enjoyment, which means entertainment activities. There
is a new form of agritourism, too. It has been becoming popular from some years. It’s ecoagritourism. It is a kind of agritourism which is characteristic of cultivation soil and produce food by means of organic methods (in farms which possess certificate or being in the course of conversion [Zaręba, 2006]. The Agriculture Advisory Centre in Brwinów made efforts to achieve to form all - Poland base of ecoagritourism farms. This base is being formed free for farmers and is provided on the Internets’ side: www.eko.radom.com.pl. Nowadays their base consists of 158 ecoagritourism farms (table 2).

Table 1. Number of agritourism farms in Poland in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voivodeship</th>
<th>Number of agritourism farms</th>
<th>Voivodeship</th>
<th>Number of agritourism farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dolnośląskie</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>Podkarpackie</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kujawsko-Pomorskie</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>Podlaskie</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubelskie</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>Pomorskie</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubuskie</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Słaskie</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Łódzkie</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Świętokrzyskie</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Małopolskie</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>Warmińsko – Mazurskie</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazowieckie</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>Wielkopolskie</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opolskie</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Zachodniopomorskie</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 8790 agritourism farms


Table 2. Number of ecoagritourism farms in individual voivodeship in Poland in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voivodeship</th>
<th>Number of ecoagritourism farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dolnośląskie</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kujawsko – pomorskie</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lubelskie</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lubuskie</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>łódzkie</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>małopolskie</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mazowieckie</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opolskie</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>podkarpackie</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>podlaskie</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pomorskie</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śląskie</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>świętokrzyskie</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warmińsko – mazurskie</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wielkopolskie</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zachodniopomorskie</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 167 ecoagritourism farms

Agritourism is a popular form of rural tourism in Malopolska Voivodeship. In this region of Poland there are many factors which determine development of agritourism services. There is here interesting cultural heritage, many attractive tourism values. Among the chances favouring agritourism development in this region are the following [Żmija, 1999]: natural and landscape qualities; substantial house resources in the rural areas; cultural and historic heritage; price competitiveness; growing interest of urban population in spending free time such way.

In Malopolska Voivodeship there are different institutions which manage of agritourism development. There are some agritourism associations which support this process. Local authorities in individual districts do the same. Besides, Agency for Restructuring and Modernization and Agricultural Advisory Centres also help farmer in providing their agritouristic services by obtaining union funds.

The Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture was established in 1994 with the aim of supporting the agriculture and rural development. The Agency has been designated by the Government of the Republic of Poland to perform the role of an accredited paying agency. It manages the implementation of instruments co-financed from the European Union budget and provides aid from national funds. The Agency, as the performer of agricultural policy, cooperates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. At the same time, Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture is under supervision of the Ministry of Finance within the scope of managing public funds.

The Agency, among others manages agritourism by obtaining union funds. The maximum level of financial assistance granted to a beneficiary may amount to 50% of qualified costs. At the same time the maximum amount of financial assistance granted within the task, during realization of the program, to one beneficiary and one farm cannot exceed 100 000 PLN. It means that [Niedziółka, 2005]: one beneficiary may obtain assistance amounting to not more than 100 000 PLN during realization of the programme; Owners, co-owners and members of the household applying for co-financing of projects realized within one farm may obtain assistance in the amount not exceeding 100 000 PLN in total during realization of the programme. Before entering the European Union funds for agritourism development came from Programme Sapard. In the years 2004-2006 they came from Sectoral Operational Programme “Restructuring and modernisation of the food sector and rural development 2004-2006”.

Nowadays, the Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 enables the continuation of the modernisation and development process of Polish food and rural areas launched in the previous years. It is a programme that, according to the EU intention, complements the Common Agricultural Policy. Under EAFRD, which finances the RDP in this period, Poland received EUR 13.2 million that together with the national funds constitute a total budget in the amount of EUR 17,2 billion.

The Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 was adopted by the European Commission at the meeting of the Rural Development Committee on 24 and 25 July 2007. In its Axis 3 Improvement of the quality of life in rural areas and
diversification of rural economy: Diversification of economic activities; Creation and development of micro-enterprises; Basic services for rural population and economy; Village renewal

In Activity 1: Diversification of economic activities there is possibility to obtain funds for agritourism. Besides of Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture in Malopolska Voivodeship the most important role in agritourism management play agritourism associations. The most known are: “The Galician Hospitable Farms” based in Cracow, and “The Association of Tourism and Agritourism of Mountainous Regions” in Nowy Sącz. Agritourism.

These organizations management in agritourism is seen in common promotion, especially in common tourism fairs organization. They both belong to national organization Polish Federation of Country Tourism "Hospitable Farms". It has over 600 farms which have been standardized and the three suns represent the highest standard. The mark of a stork - the Federation logo is a guarantee that the system of standardization and the services provided by farmers has been certified.

These farms in the polish countryside offer a chance of having not only a restful holiday but also an active one. Whatever you like doing, whether it is sailing or rowing, angling or hunting, skiing or sledging, sightseeing or simply walking in beautiful forests, you will find a farm suiting your needs. Most farms will have available bicycles and various types of boats for hire. Riding and sometimes playing tennis is also available. The Agricultural Advisory Centre is the next important institution in agritourism management. It’s a public body with a legal personality. It was established due to the transformation of the National Advisory Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development. The mission of the Centre is to raise agricultural incomes, enhance the market competitiveness of agricultural holdings, support the sustainable development of rural areas and raise professional qualifications of agricultural advisers, agricultural school teachers and other rural inhabitants.

The Centre organizes professional trainings and an advisory service for nationwide agricultural advisory centre staff, teachers, farmers and other rural inhabitants concerning: agritourism support; local communities projects; rural cultural heritage; local product promotion; non-agricultural enterprises run by farmer.

The Agricultural Advisory Centre co-operates with agricultural advisory centres, scientific research institutions, government and local government institutions, farmers' organizations and other organizations which work for the development of the countryside and agriculture.

5. RESULTS OF RESEARCHES

Researches focused on the aspects of agritourism management in Malopolska Voivodeship have been conducted among 365 farmers who provided agritourism farms in this region. To begin with, the Authors acquainted with the influence of the local self-government management of agritourism services in individual districts. The results are presented in table 3. Next, the intention of the authors was the acquaintance with the fact of number of associated agritourism farms and benefits from it. It turned out, that over half of examined agritourism farms is associated in agritourism associations.
Table 3. Agritourism management by local authorities in examined district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The impact of local self-government on the development of agritourism</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>% of the number of districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Including: Participation in fairs</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet advertising</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of leaflets</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of informational materials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trips to agritourism farms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of tourist and recreation infrastructure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building technical infrastructure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of training courses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding agritourism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of various events</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding outdoor events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of cultural heritage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of agritourism farmsteads</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining the cleanliness of the natural environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study, based on own research.

The results showed that associated agritourism farms benefit from its membership in these organizations, mainly in promotion, and in courses and training, too. In the group of associated farmers there are more people thinking of making use of EU funds for agritourism in the future than in the group of examined non-associated owners of agritourism farms.

The most important advantageous coming from its membership is promotion (table 4).

Table 4. Best aspects of agritourism management of associations in respondents’ opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of answer</th>
<th>Number of answers</th>
<th>Number of answers for 100 agritourism farms associated (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common trips to tourism fairs</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange of experience</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of region promotion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of agritourism extended</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common events</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departures to other agritourism farms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of advantageous</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study, based on own research.
Examined agritourism farms’ owners were asked to say which institution best supports agritourism development in their districts. More than half answers related to Agriculture Advisory Centre (table 5).

Table 5. Institutions best manage agritourism development in respondents’ opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>% of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Advisory Centre</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agritourism association</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Agriculture</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study, based on own research.

365 examined agritourism farms’ owners expect further help from different institutions in the future. Most of respondents expect it from local authorities and Agriculture Advisory Centre. There were 738 answers, all in all. They related mainly promotion in different forms and training courses (table 6).

Table 6. Institutions, from which respondents expect further good management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agritourism Advisory Centre</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agritourism association</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Agriculture</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>738</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study, based on own research.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Agritourism development in Malopolska Voivodeship is determined, among other by institutional management. There are different forms of management. Such forms depend on any institution. For example, the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture manages agritourism development by union funds implementation. Agritourism management by Agricultural Advisory Centre is obviously seen in organization agritourism training courses. Next, agritourism services are managed by agritourism associations in promotion organization. Mainly, it is connected with trips organization for fairs.
Researches showed that there are many different aspects of agritourism management in Malopolska Voivodeship. Most of them concern promotion, training courses and obtaining union funds.

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