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## **AGRITOURISM AS THE BEST FORM OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE**

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The article brings about an analysis of the problem of creating agritourism farmsteads in Poland, in terms of motivation in undertaking entrepreneurial activities by individual farmers and with regard to the stages of realisation of these activities. The farmers' reasons were classified regarding economic motivation, following the criteria of personal and social needs of the population. The actual realisation and market effect of the entrepreneurial activity is shown on the example of the analysis of agritourism's potential in the years 2007–2011. On this basis, it was established that in the Polish countryside agritourism is an innovative form of creating entrepreneurial mindset among individual farmers.

*Key words:* rural tourism, agritourism, entrepreneurship, innovation.

In modern Polish socio-economic conditions, rural tourism became an important area of tourism development. The National Tourism Development Programme, introduced in Poland already in 1997, among its other aims included also creating and promoting the desired brand products of rural tourism. Their development was to depend on the increasing ecological awareness among both the people and the authorities, as well as on the human interest in the condition of natural environment, and nature in general [1]. Whereas the Strategy of Tourism Development 2007–2013, currently in action, foresees further modernisation of Polish tourism within the areas encompassing the development of tourism products and human resources, development of tourism space, and marketing support. In the strategic plan, tourism is treated as an instrument of dealing with unemployment and supporting entrepreneurship [2].

Rural tourism is usually associated with agritourism, where the development of tourism is identified with complex undertakings realised in rural hiking areas and aimed at creating leisure facilities in individual farmsteads. Most important of these undertakings lead to the realisation of entrepreneurial attitudes of the farmers who decide to develop their own business activity and establish agritourism farms.

The aim of this article is to present the key issues connected with the individual farmers' activities directed at undertaking business actions. Its main focus is set on the theoretical basis of entrepreneurship, innovation, and motivation of activities directed at creating agritourism farms. In the pursuit of outlining the market effect of farmers' actions, an attempt was made to diagnose the potential of Polish agritourism in the years 2007–2011.

1. The meaning of entrepreneurship in agritourism

Maciej Drzewiecki defines agritourism as a form of leisure, realised in rural farming areas, based on accommodation and recreational activity, connected with a farmstead and its natural, productive and services-related environment [3]. The interest in agritourism is created mainly among the population of big cities. In spite of the fact that nowadays tourists expect to enjoy their rest time in high comfort, there still exists a number of comfortably-off tourists who expect less and express the need to take their leisure within the native environment. Therefore, agritourism is a form of spending one's free time in a way alternative to mass tourism. Contact with the natural environment brings about a possibility to get to know the qualities of its various forms as well as the tradition and culture of a given region. In this aspect, fulfilling the diverse expectations of tourists seeking leisure as well as searching for some interesting ways of spending free time, induces entrepreneurial attitudes in farmers.

Entrepreneurship is understood as an idea which is supposed to lead to meaningful changes in business activities. In agritourism this could be a way of thinking that prevails among farmers and is directed towards solving economic problems, and that gives people the right to create and transform economy as the initiators of actions and not just as passive contractors. According to Peter F. Drucker, entrepreneurship is a quality or a way of behaviour of a given person, that amounts to: readiness and ability to undertake and solve new problems in a creative way, capacity to make use of coming chances and coincidences, and flexibility in getting used to the changing economic conditions [4]. Another way of understanding entrepreneurship was proposed by Joseph A. Schumpeter. By him, the idea is treated as one of the production factors, parallel to work, land and capital, that makes the realisation of productive process possible. Schumpeter claims that entrepreneurship is the ability and capacity to organise production factors and manage them as well as to establish new areas of activity based either on innovation or its creative copying. As innovations, he treats introducing new products, finding new markets, or bringing in new organisational patterns [4]. The notions of entrepreneurship and innovation are treated as complementary. According to Philip Kotler, innovation refers to every good which is perceived as new [4], while Ricky W. Griffin states that innovation is an activity of organisations, directed towards managing and inducing the employees' creativity [4].

In agritourism, entrepreneurship can therefore be understood as a social process of creating and utilising possibilities, where people use economic resources in a rational manner, with a great probability of gaining success. Whereas according to Wiesław Adamczyk, the very sense of entrepreneurship could be defined as a process of rational activities characterised by the following phases: 1) innovative idea; 2) motivation; 3) means of realisation; 4) realisation; 5) market effect [4].

## 2. The reasons of individual farmers to create agritourism farms

The innovative idea to create agritourism farms, treated as places of accommodation for individual tourists, is in some way a result of farmers' deliberate activity attributed to broadly understood entrepreneurship [4]. At the basis of premeditated activities lie the senses that cause impressions and are related to the perception of phenomena and processes which influence both the ability to function within the society and the human personality [5]. Personality determines human actions, and that leads to the realisation of the desired goals. These goals come from any relationship between man and his natural

and social environment. Different kinds of these relationships in the language of economy are described as needs. Therefore, it is possible to draw a conclusion that at the basis of classification of the farmers' reasons to create agritourism farms lie the farmers' needs that depend on individual expectations [4].

With regard to their nature, the reasons of individual farmers' activity could be divided into 1) personal reasons that determine actions leading to obtaining only one's own gains, and 2) social reasons that are related to actions of a person who is motivated by the wellbeing of society as well as by the views and judgements of others (table 1).

Table 1.

Personal and social reasons of entrepreneurial actions of individual farmers\*

REASONS FOR ACTIVITY	
PERSONAL	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gaining income from off-farm activities.</li> <li>➤ Economic stabilisation.</li> <li>➤ Social prestige.</li> <li>➤ Utilising free work resources and unoccupied space in a farmstead.</li> <li>➤ Sustaining a farmstead by utilising agricultural products in agritourism.</li> <li>➤ Changing the way and the conditions of life.</li> <li>➤ Gaining entrepreneurial experience.</li> <li>➤ Securing the sense of freedom and independence.</li> <li>➤ Personal development.</li> <li>➤ Multi-professionalism – professions different to a farmer, develop in reaction to the tourists' needs.</li> <li>➤ Breaking away from a certain scheme of the usual farmer's work, realising personal dreams, self-fulfilment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Preventing desolation of the countryside.</li> <li>➤ Creating new job opportunities.</li> <li>➤ Developing local initiatives and the activity of rural communities.</li> <li>➤ Betterment of local infrastructure.</li> <li>➤ Preserving the rural cultural heritage and natural landscape.</li> <li>➤ Improving aesthetic appearance of the countryside, contact with other cultural patters, personal development of the rural population.</li> <li>➤ Development of folk art and handicraft.</li> <li>➤ Protection of natural environment through promoting such forms of tourism that are economically productive, socially responsible and environment friendly.</li> <li>➤ Undertaking nature and landscape friendly tourism activities.</li> <li>➤ Sustaining landscape's integrity, cultural values, and attractiveness of the locality and the area.</li> </ul>

\* Source: Author's own study based on Rubinkiewicz A., *Agroturystyka jako czynnik rozwoju przedsiębiorczości na wsi*, [in:] *Ekonomia, Technika, Zarządzanie* (Ed. Waław Gierulski), *Zeszyt Naukowy 33*, Politechnika Świętokrzyska, Kielce 2005, p. 233–238.

Taking into account rural economic conditions, the main reason to undertake agritourism is the desire for income from off-farm activities. It is due to the fact that loses of the farmers' income at the break of the 20th century forced the rural population to look for new ways of earning the living [4]. The second known reason is the problem of unemployment within rural areas. In this case obtaining income from agritourism activities also becomes an alternative. Moreover, the diverse social processes such as preventing desolation of the countryside, sustaining farmsteads, protecting cultural heritage, or improving the aesthetic

appearance of villages can become the reasons for creating entrepreneurial attitudes among farmers. It needs to be noted that personal and social reasons for the farmers' activity directed at developing their entrepreneurial attitudes can be simultaneously considered from the point of view of the benefits gained from agritourism by regions, villages, farmers and also the tourists.

3. The means of realisation, the realisation and the market effect – or the potential of Polish agritourism in the years 2007–2011

From the point of view of the process of rational entrepreneurial activities, it is also important to consider the means of realisation of the undertaken agritourism projects. In accordance with the theory of economy, firstly the material means should be taken into account, that is the natural resources as well as the objects which are a result of human activity. Secondly – there are also non-material means, such as passing on knowledge, providing entertainment or services.

The means of realisation, the realisation and the market effect of Polish individual farmers' investment projects are easy to assess, even from the point of view of the agritourism potential established in the years 2007–2011. Therefore, the key figures used in this research characterise the number of people working in farming, individual buildings given into service in the countryside, the number of agritourism lodgings, and because of the expected market effect – also the income of self-employed farmers (table 2).

On the basis of the data presented in Table 2, it could be concluded that in the years 2007–2011 the potential of Polish agritourism fluctuated. Number of the self-employed working in individual farmsteads increased by 12,7% (from 1 967 thousand persons in 2007 to 2 216,2 thousand persons in 2011). Also, there should be noted a downward trend in the decline in the number of individual farms buildings completed – a decrease of 51,1 % in 2011 compared to 2007 (from 5 473 buildings in 2007 to 7 852 buildings in 2011).

In spite of that, from 2007 to 2011 there was a growth in the number of agritourism lodgings [4], reflected in the number of agritourism buildings and the number of beds (an increase in the number of buildings by 43% and in the number of beds by 44,8 %)

The market effect in terms of improved well-being measured by gross disposable income is, however, limited. In the years 2007–2011, the gross disposable income of self-employed farmers working in individual farmsteads increased only by 16,3 %. Compared with a slightly higher increase in gross disposable income of self-employed individual farmers working off-farm (an increase of 18,4 %), the result induces one to believe that there still exist some under-utilized entrepreneurial opportunities for farmers in the Polish countryside.

On the basis of the analysis of specialist literature and the study of the potential of Polish agritourism in the years 2007–2011 it is demonstrated that the agritourism is an innovative form of creating entrepreneurial attitudes among individual farmers. The conclusion of these observations could be expressed through the following findings:

1) Development of agritourism in Poland is a part of the development of tourism products, following the Tourism Development Strategy 2007–2013.

2) Entrepreneurship is a social process in which the residents of rural areas, by developing agritourism farmsteads, gain opportunities that lead to success.

3) Creation of agritourism farmsteads by individual farmers is a process of rational actions motivated by personal and social benefits.

4) Increase in the number of self-employed individual farmers creates potential possibilities of increasing the network of services for tourists interested in agritourism.

5) Decline in the number of farm buildings given into service, observed in the years 2007-2011, is not directly reflected in the observed increase in the number of lodgings, which may indicate low capital resources of the farmers, and thus the use of previously owned properties in the agritourism activity.

6) Benefits gained by the farmers by earning income from agritourism farmsteads' management demonstrate the changing nature of work in rural areas.

Finally, it can therefore be concluded that agritourism is the leading form of business carried out by individual farmers in the Polish countryside.

Table 2

The potential of Polish agritourism in the years 2007–2011\*

SPECIFICATION	YEARS				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Employers and the self-employed working in farming, in individual farmsteads (in thousands)	1 967,0	1 967,0	1 967,0	2 216,2	2 216,2
Buildings of individual farmsteads given into service (in absolute figures)	9 299,0	5 560,0	4 517,0	4 390,0	4 545,0
Number of agritourism loggings: (in absolute figures)					
➤ buildings	no data	no data	5 473,0	7 692,0	7 852,0
➤ number of beds	no data	no data	57 095,0	82 750,0	82 694,0
Gross disposable income of the self-employed farmers: (in millions of zloty)					
➤ working in agriculture in individual farmsteads	39 484,0	40 397,0	41 589,0	44 727,0	45 911,0
➤ working off-farm in individual farmsteads	214 156,0	225 876,0	242 901,0	251 522,0	253 555,0

\* Source: Author's own study based on Turystyka w 2009 r., Departament Badań

Społecznych, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2010, p. 38; Turystyka w 2010 r., Departament Badań Społecznych i Warunków Życia, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2011, p. 47; Turystyka w 2011 r., Departament Badań Społecznych i Warunków Życia, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2012, p. 50; Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa 2009, Departament Rolnictwa, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2010, p. 115, s. 128; Rocznik Statystyczny Rolnictwa 2012, Departament Rolnictwa, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 2013, p. 147, p. 161; Rachunki narodowe według sektorów i podsektorów instytucjonalnych w latach 2007–2010. Studia i analizy statystyczne, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Departament Rachunków Narodowych, Warszawa 2012, p. 160, p. 211, p. 262, p. 313, Rocznik Statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2012, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Zakład Wydawnictw Statystycznych, Warszawa 2012, p. 706.

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## **АГРОТУРИСТИКА ЯК ФОРМА ПІДПРИЄМНИЦТВА В ПОЛЬСЬКОМУ СЕЛІ**

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Розглянуто питання створення агротуристичних господарств у Польщі з точки зору мотивації подібного роду підприємницької діяльності для індивідуальних господарств, а також етапів реалізації цього виду діяльності. Представлено класифікацію мотивації в економічному аспекті згідно з критерієм задоволення індивідуальних і масових потреб населення. Власне процес реалізації, а також ринковий ефект подібної діяльності показані на прикладі аналізу агротуристичного потенціалу в 2007–2011 роках, на основі якого можна з упевненістю припустити, що агротуризм в польському селі є інноваційною формою створення основ підприємництва для індивідуальних господарств.

*Ключові слова:* сільський туризм, агротуризм, підприємництво, інновація.

## **АГРОТУРИСТИКА КАК ФОРМА ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСТВА В ПОЛЬСКОЙ ДЕРЕВНЕ**

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Рассмотрен вопрос создания агротуристических хозяйств в Польше с точки зрения мотивации подобного рода предпринимательской деятельности для индивидуальных хозяйств, а также этапов реализации данного вида деятельности. Представлена классификация мотивации в экономическом аспекте в соответствии с критерием удовлетворения индивидуальных и массовых потребностей населения. Сам процесс реализации, а также рыночный эффект подобной деятельности показаны на примере анализа агротуристического потенциала в 2007–2011 годах, на основе которого можно с уверенностью предположить, что агротуризм в польской деревне является инновационной формой создания основ предпринимательства для индивидуальных хозяйств.

*Ключевые слова:* сельский туризм, агротуризм, предпринимательство, инновация.