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**AGRITOURISM AS A PERSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION
FOR RURAL TERRITORIES OF WEST SIBERIA ***

The article discusses the role and the importance of agritourism in sustainable development of rural territories. The related regulations are reviewed. The description of the actual conditions for agritourism development in West Siberia is given. Special attention is paid to the identification of agritourism potential of the South West Siberia.

Keywords: agritourism; rural areas; development potential; West Siberia.

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**АГРОТУРИЗМ ЯК ПЕРСПЕКТИВНИЙ НАПРЯМОК РОЗВИТКУ
СІЛЬСЬКИХ ТЕРИТОРІЙ В ЗАХІДНОМУ СИБІРУ**

У статті розглянуто роль і значення агротуризму в сталому розвитку сільських територій. Виконано огляд відповідних нормативних актів. Надано опис фактичних умов для розвитку агротуризму в регіонах Західного Сибіру. Особливу увагу приділено виявленню та використанню агротуристичного потенціалу на півдні Західного Сибіру.

Ключові слова: агротуризм; сільські території; потенціал розвитку; Західний Сибір. Форм. 2. Рис. 1. Літ. 10.

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**АГРОТУРИЗМ КАК ПЕРСПЕКТИВНОЕ НАПРАВЛЕНИЕ
РАЗВИТИЯ СЕЛЬСКИХ ТЕРРИТОРИЙ В ЗАПАДНОЙ СИБИРИ**

В статье рассмотрены роль и значение агротуризма в устойчивом развитии сельских территорий. Выполнен обзор соответствующих нормативных актов. Дано описание фактических условий для развития агротуризма в регионах Западной Сибири. Особое внимание уделено выявлению и использованию агротуристического потенциала на юге Западной Сибири.

Ключевые слова: агротуризм; сельские территории; потенциал развития; Западная Сибирь.

Introduction. In many rural areas of Russian Federation that have social, cultural, recreational and environmental potentials, one of the promising innovative directions for their sustainable development could be the development of agritourism which provides employment for rural population and allows reducing migration and avoid other negative social and environmental after-effects in rural areas.

Present research is dedicated to the determination of the role of agritourism in the development of rural areas and identification of its promising trends in West Siberia, having its practical value for professionals as well as might be interesting for wider audience, too.

The review of recent publications on the topic. Theoretical and applied aspects of agritourism development in rural areas are considered by J. Eckert (2015), K. Ehrlich (2015), V.A. Kundius and V.V. Chermyanina (2011), B. Muhi and D.V. Jovanovic (2012), O.V. Shumakova et al. (2013), S.K. Volkov (2012) and others. Meanwhile the

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method for determining the potential attractiveness for tourists of certain rural areas in a region, problems of their development and other important aspects of the topic are insufficiently studied and thus remain unresolved.

The goal of the research is to develop practical recommendations on the development of agritourism in West Siberia by identifying tourism potential of rural areas in the region.

Key research findings. Problems of rural development are typical for European countries and most of former Soviet republics, including Russia. The international experience shows that nonagricultural activities in rural areas, particularly agritourism, helps reduce the social tension by creating alternative employment and developing rural territories in general.

The world practice demonstrates that first agritourism has been designed to stimulate domestic tourism flows and was intended to support countrymen. Agricultural tourism in many countries has become a large sector of the tourism industry, focused on the use of various rural, natural, cultural, historical and other resources to create an integrated tourism product.

In Europe agritourism development has started about 40–50 years ago. Today agritourism is much bigger than just agrostates. It also covers active, green tourism, tourist routes, events, traditions, cuisine and other aspects (United Nations Development Programme in Belarus, 25.11.2014).

According to K. Ehrlich (2015) at the national or regional level, strong organizations specializing in rural or agritourism exist in France, Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom. Italy also has an excellent agritourism framework development.

The largest rural tourism markets in Europe belong to France, Germany, Austria, Great Britain and Italy, which together make up over 77% of the total market of European rural tourism. Today in Europe, the most famous are the rural tourist destinations of France (Gites de France), Austria and Germany (Urlaub am Baurenhof) and Italy (Village Tour) (Muhi and Jovanovic, 2012).

An important agritourism stop will include a tour, horseback riding and lunch at a farm specializing in Chianina cattle, grains and saffron known as "the gold of San Gimignano". Most of Italy's farms include a culinary component as a means of extra income, and many include farm-based lodging as part of their offer. France is known for their wine production, and visiting several wineries would be a very interesting component unique to the region and often new to visitors (Eckert, 2015).

In Finland, the emphasis is put on outdoor activities like fishing, various cycling trips along the banks of rivers and lakes. In Slovakia, Hungary and Poland educational agritourism is popular among tourists who want to learn more about local customs and culture and visit various natural landmarks, such as large lakes or national parks (Volkov, 2013).

In Western European countries and the United States green agritourism is more common. Vacationers lead a way of life of rural residents, while getting acquainted with the peculiarities of culture of the people living in the territory, with their dances and songs, study habits through personal involvement in agricultural labor, local holidays and festivals.

Rural tourism in Russia is not so well developed and popular as in European countries, despite its considerable potential. Domestic and foreign experts in tourism

businesses are predicting this direction of tourism in Russia to have unprecedented success (Kundius and Chermyanina, 2013). Rural tourism is actively developing in some regions of Russian Federation: Vladimir, Ivanovo, Moscow, Tver, Tula and Yaroslavl regions. Today the potential of touristic and recreational resources seems to be no less important than the potential of raw materials, as the specialization in tourism services production provides cash flow, expands the application area for labor, encourages the development of many key sectors of the economy.

Tourism development is to improve infrastructure, sightseeing and architecture, to preserve the environment etc. Therefore, tourism industry should be considered as an important factor of socioeconomic development of rural areas (Shumakova et al., 2013).

The successful development of agritourism in Russia requires an appropriate legal framework. Currently different strategic documents, which define the main directions in tourism development, agricultural policy and rural areas are adopted.

However, it should be emphasized that there is no clearly-worded state policy in agritourism at the national level in Russia. In the regions, the main approaches are formulated in local policy documents, and some attempts on the implementation of certain agritouristic investment projects are being made at the municipal level. It should be noted that regulations and standards applicable in the recreation and hospitality industry can not be mechanically transferred to small-family hospitality in villages due to the specific nature of the latter.

The development of specialized legal and regulatory documents in the field of agritourism at the federal and regional levels is an essential prerequisite for successful development of this tourism sector in Russian Federation.

The legal basis for conducting rural tourism activities in Russia is represented 9 legislative documents, including two federal programs ("Development of tourism in Russian Federation" and "Development of domestic tourism in Russian Federation (2011–2018)"), as well as the Strategy of tourist development in Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 (31.05.2014, # 941-r).

The key geographical peculiarity of the South West Siberia is the presence of 4 distinct natural and climatic zones.

The North of West Siberia is covered by taiga forests with a fairly harsh climate, which explains the poor development of agriculture. At the same time absolute inaccessibility of these places helps to keep the Nature here almost primeval.

The north-steppe zone of West Siberia is characterized by a more mild climate as compared to northern areas. A distinctive feature of this natural-climatic zone is the large number of small lakes and rivers suitable for fish breeding. Lakes of the northern forest-steppe zone are the only habitat of pelicans in Siberia. The presence of extensive pastures and watering favors helps the development of animal husbandry.

The south-steppe zone of West Siberia is a vast space free from continuous forests, which are substituted here by separate pegs. The climate is favorable for crops cultivation, the same area concentrates almost all the production of vegetables and greens.

The steppe zone is an area completely free of forests. Low rainfall and dry climate necessitated the use of agricultural land reclamation activities. Flora and fauna

of this climatic zone is relatively poor, but this is compensated by cultivated agriculture.

One of the largest regions in the South West Siberia is Omsk region. It has a common border with the Republic of Kazakhstan, and it covers an area comparable to the territory of such countries as Greece, Iceland and Bulgaria.

As a basis for the development of rural tourism in Omsk region there are 305 large and medium-sized agricultural enterprises, as well as 1309 peasant (farm) enterprises (omsk.gks.ru, 2015). The region has well developed crop and animal husbandry, with unique farms breeding ostrich and reindeer.

The region has an advantageous position to the development of nature and educational tourism, which to some extent is already being used by local entrepreneurs. This is proved by the presence of 153 functional agritouristic projects in Omsk region, including recreation camps, guest rooms and houses in rural areas; and also a variety of travel itineraries (omsk-turinfo.ru, 2015). At the same time, according to our estimates, the region's potential for further development of educational green tourism is used by approximately 10–20%. This assessment is based on the following facts:

- no more than 15 out of 73 unique natural and geological objects in the region are involved in tourism activities;

- 31 travel itineraries are being actualized on the territory of the Omsk region, only 6 of which are related to local socio-cultural ethnicity and ethnic group crafts. That said the Omsk region is home for more than 120 nationalities, the most numerous of them are: Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Germans, Kazakhs, Tatars, Latvians. Most of them live compactly in national villages, mountain villages and preserve their cultural and historical features that can serve as objects for the development of new travel itineraries.

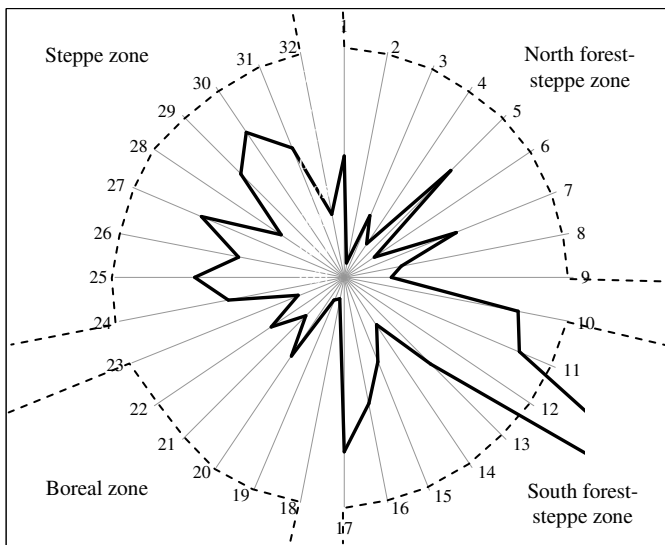
- Omsk region has a great cultural and historical potential, which includes hundreds of cultural sites dating back several thousand years before the time of Siberia's official exploration. In addition, there are dozens of historical monuments in the region in each municipal district, which are of great interest not only for city tourists but also for locals.

All of these facts indicate there is a potential for agritourism development in West Siberia. In order to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the abovementioned factors the authors proposed a methodology for assessment of agritourism potential in rural areas. The purpose of this methodology is the comparative assessment of potential opportunities for agritourism development in various rural areas.

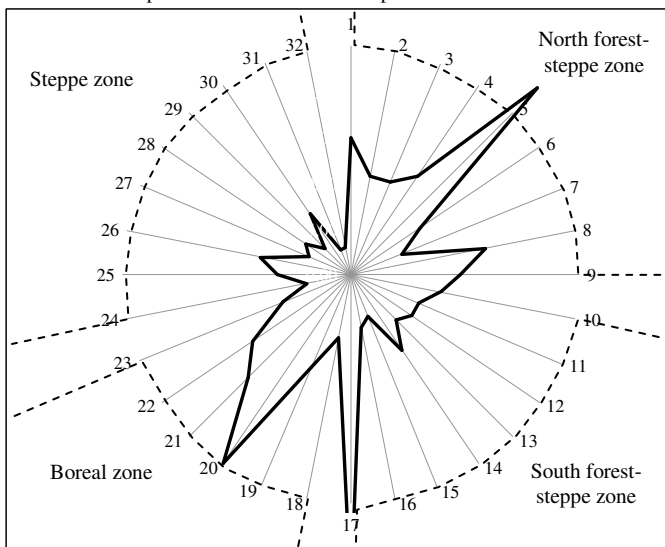
The author's methodology includes the following stages:

- 1) to quantify various aspects of agritourism potential of the area;
- 2) to perform a comprehensive assessment of agritourism potential of rural territories on the basis of the integral index calculation;
- 3) to conduct a comparative evaluation and classification of rural territories depending on potential opportunities for agritourism development;
- 4) to identify priority areas for agritourism development in certain rural areas.

In order to evaluate the potential for agritourism development we suggest using the following indicators: the presence of unique ethnic groups and folk crafts in a district (K_1); the number of sightseeing attractions in a district (K_2); the share of agricultural producers in a district to the general in a region (K_3).



The potentialities for the development of rural tourism



The potentialities for the development of nature tourism

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 – Bolsherechenskiy | 9 – Tupalinskiy | 17 – Omskiy | 25 – Cherlakskiy |
| 2 – Gorkovskiy | 10 – Azovskiy | 18 – Ust’Ishimskiy | 26 – Novovarshevskiy |
| 3 – Kolosovski | 11 – Isilkulskiy | 19 – Tavriskiy | 27 – Tavricheskiy |
| 4 – Krutinskiy | 12 – Kalachinskiy | 20 – Tarskiy | 28 – Poltavskiy |
| 5 – Muromtsevskiy | 13 – Kormilovskiy | 21 – Bolsheukovskiy | 29 – Russko-Polyanskiy |
| 6 – Nazuvaevskiy | 14 – Lubinskiy | 22 – Znamenskiy | 30 – Odesskiy |
| 7 – Nizhneomskiy | 15 – Maryanovskiy | 23 – Sedelnikovskiy | 31 – Sherbakulskiy |
| 8 – Sargatskiy | 16 – Moskalenskiy | 24 – Okoneshnikovskiy | 32 – Pavlogradskiy |

Figure 1. The benchmark assessment of development potentials for agriculture and nature tourism in the districts of the Omsk region, West Siberia, authors' development

The calculation of the final index of the rural tourism development potential in a district (I_s) was done using the following formula:

$$I_s = (K_1 + K_2) \times K_3. \quad (1)$$

To evaluate the development potential of agritourism the authors proposed to use the following indicators: 1) the number of unique natural and geological objects in a district (P_1); 2) the environmental quality parameter in a district (P_2); 3) the number of active travel itineraries in districts (P_3). The above indicators K_1 and K_2 have a direct impact on the development of agritourism as the elements which satisfy the cognitive needs of tourists, so they should also be taken into account when calculating the totals.

The calculation of the final indicator of the development potential of agritourism in a district (I_p) was done by the following formula:

$$I_p = P_1 + P_2 + P_3 + K_1 + K_2. \quad (2)$$

The comparative assessment of the agritourism development potential in the districts of Omsk region is presented in Figure 1. These data shows the heterogeneous distribution of the potentialities for development of this type of tourism by the districts of the Omsk region, West Siberia.

The data presented in Figure allow us to determine promising directions for the development of various types of agritourism, taking into account the available possibilities.

The most favorable for the development of rural tourism in the region are the South forest-steppe and steppe zones districts. The least attractive for agritourism development are the northern areas. In spite of this, each natural climatic zone still has its own reserves for agritourism development in its various manifestations.

For the development of nature tourism in West Siberia the most favorable districts are the districts of North and North steppe zones, as they have the highest concentration of unique natural and geological features. In addition to that, parts of North zone comprise a large number of archaeological features and other cultural tourist attractions.

Conclusions. The potential for agritourism development in the Omsk region is tremendous. However, a significant part of the solution of many related problems, including high degree of deterioration or deficiency of tourist infrastructure, can be solved only through large capital investment projects for the rehabilitation of communal and transport infrastructure and also through the formation of mechanisms enhance entrepreneurial activity in regional tourism industry.

For the effective development of agritourism the cooperation of authorities, business, a wide range of interested organizations at various levels and local communities is needed. Therefore, we believe that in West Siberia it is possible to form an agritourism cluster, which would unite travel agencies, agricultural producers, cultural and sports facilities, as well as other infrastructural units, the Omsk region.

The development of agritourism in West Siberia will contribute to the formation of innovative tourist products with agricultural production, national color and the unicity of the territory, to ensure economic and social benefits for local population, and overall the sustainable development of rural areas.

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