

Agrotourism as a way to develop rural areas of Rostov region, Russia

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Abstract. This paper examines one type of tourism: agrotourism (rural). This research will analyze the development of agrotourism and determine the prospects for its continued growth in the Rostov region, Russia. The authors use a range of scientific research methods, including the analysis of regulatory and legal documents, scientific, analytical, and other materials, as well as the method of systematic generalization and data analysis. These methods allow them to identify the specifics of agritourism, its role in the development of tourism and rural areas, the potential for agritourism in the Rostov region, and to determine the prospects for its development in the region. The research materials can be used for further agritourism research, tourism master planning, and the development of a compelling tourist offer and the attractiveness of rural areas in the Rostov region, Russia.

1 Introduction

Tourism is the act of traveling to other countries, regions, and places for recreation, with the explicit purpose of improving one's cognitive abilities, health, spirituality, business, or other objectives. Tourism offers travelers a wide range of services and possibilities during their trips. Russia will undoubtedly develop different types of domestic tourism. Agrotourism is currently one of the most important types of tourism. It is a priority area of tourism.

Agrotourism (rural) is a distinct form of ecological tourism. It has the unique ability to attract a steady stream of tourists to the countryside, elevate the standard of living for rural residents, and become a lucrative source of income for local farmers and a driving force behind the economy of rural settlements. The essence of agritourism is clearly expressed in its functions. First and foremost, it serves an economic function because it generates profit. Modern man needs to escape the urban rhythm. Agritourism offers this escape. It allows people to connect with nature, ecology, natural products, cultural values, and the history of the village. This connection is beneficial for the mind, body, and spirit. It is an ecological, health-improving, cultural, and cognitive experience. Thirdly, agritourism is an educational experience. It allows visitors to enjoy a relaxing trip in the countryside, while also gaining insight into the region's history, culture, and traditional ways of life. Furthermore,

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agritourism serves a social function, facilitating communication between different social groups.

It is a fact that in our country this type of tourism is less developed than in such European countries as Spain, Italy, and France. Rural tourism accounts for less than 1.5% of all travel in Russia. The situation will change. Agritourism will become a noticeable trend in Russian tourism. Our country has huge potential for this type of tourism. Tourists can collect mushrooms and berries in the forest, take walks, go hunting, fish, ride horses, take care of domestic animals, and participate in the harvest. There is so much more they can do!

This paper proves that agritourism in the Rostov region will attract a large flow of tourists, thereby developing rural areas, generating profits for rural residents, and creating opportunities for agro-entrepreneurs.

2 Discussion

The history of the emergence and development of agritourism goes back centuries. Even the Romans made trips to the vicinity of Rome to their villas. In scientific literature there are numerous researches of this issue. However, we can be stated that despite the long history of existence in this research there is still no clear and basic definition of the term “agritourism”. In our research we will take as a theoretical basis the works of the following scientists: Kazemina A., Hultman M., Mostaghel R. [2] believe that since agrotourism is understood as a tourist's travel to unpolluted ecologically clean areas, eating ecological natural products, this type of tourism is a subspecies of ecological tourism.

Degtyaryova T., Shcherbakova N., Kalinina N., Shitova E. determine the importance of rural tourism for the development of tourism in the Rostov region, identify prospects and problems in its development, offer a number of recommendations for its development [3].

Kazmina L., Makarenko V., Provotorina V., taking the experience of Serbia as a basis, express the opinion that rural tourism is a progressive type of tourism because it is focused on a healthy lifestyle, environmental cleanliness and cultural and educational perception [4].

Phillip S., Hunter C., & Blackstock K. [5], identifying in their research the key characteristics of agritourism offer its original typology consisting of five subspecies.

Forbord M., Schermer M., Griebmair K. [6], considering agritourism as a special form of rural tourism, the authors describe the history of agritourism, its current state in specific European countries. The researchers conclude that from the very beginning of its history, agritourism was an activity associated with a specific farm, in some cases with state regulation and consisted of such elements as accommodation, food with local products. Over time, agritourism has become more diverse.

Flanigan S., Blackstock K., Hunter C. [7], based on the existing experience studying agritourism, the authors consider agritourism from the point of view of service providers and tourists and distinguish three distinctive characteristics of this type of tourism. Agritourism should be carried out on a working farm, with close interaction between tourists and farmers, with tourists gaining experience in agriculture.

Vigliaa G., Abrateb G. [8], conducting an empirical analysis based on the experience of five countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Spain), the authors confirm that agritourism is a special type of rural tourism that includes involving tourists in agricultural activities.

Anamai Damnet, Danupon Sangnak , Aunchistha Poo-Udom [9] as a result of their research, the authors conclude that agritourism can contribute to the realization of sustainable development goal of rural Thailand.

Emmanuel Ndhlovu, Kaitano Dube [10], presenting a review of viewpoints considering the relationship between sustainable development and agrarian tourism, the authors confirm that this type of tourism not only reduces the negative impact on the environment, but also has possibilities for socio-economic development. In their research, they use the term “agritourism” to refer to a farm that provides tourism services within the farm, making it possible for tourists to directly or indirectly engage in and enjoy agricultural activities.

3 Materials and methods

Studying agritourism (rural) in the Rostov region should take into account the need for the development of this type of tourism and regional characteristics, as well as the theoretical methodology of studying this issue in general. To determine the possibility of agritourism (rural tourism) development in the Rostov region in this research the authors use such methods as: analysis of scientific, analytical, regulatory and legal documents and other materials, data obtained, the method of system generalization and SWOT-analysis method.

The results of research in the field of agritourism (rural tourism) in different countries of the world are used in the work. In the scientific literature there is a variety of approaches to understanding agritourism. Having analyzed a number of foreign and Russian authors, we can conclude that some authors distinguish agritourism as a type of rural tourism, as presented in Figure 1, others - ecological tourism.

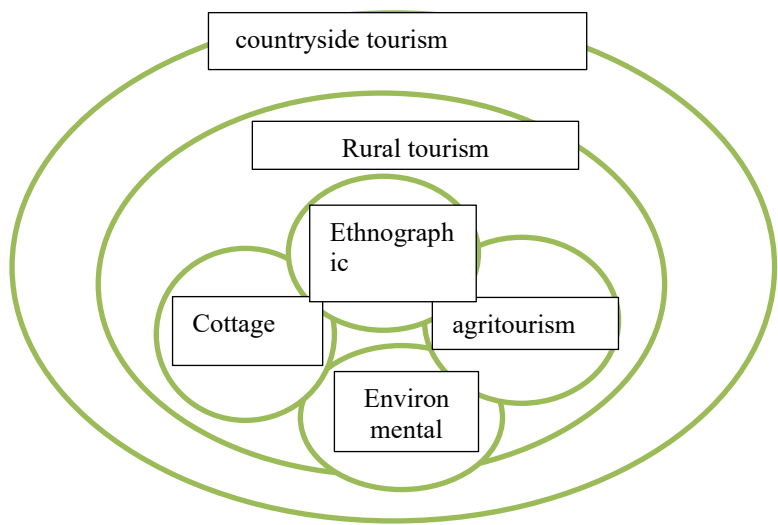


Fig. 1. Sub-species of rural tourism

In Russia, such types of tourism as “ecological tourism”, “rural tourism” have legal regulation, it confirms the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation №2129-r of 20.09.2019 “On the strategy of tourism development in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2035”. In which it is indicated that, “rural tourism” is a type of tourism, which involves temporary accommodation of tourists in rural areas for the purpose of recreation and (or) participation in agricultural work without material benefit to the tourist; “ecological tourism” - activities to organize travel, including all forms of nature tourism, in which the main motivation of tourists is to observe and join nature in an effort to preserve it [11]. In 2021, agritourism was added to the national project (NP) “Tourism and Hospitality Industry”. At the same time, after Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, signed the Federal

Law No. 318-FZ “On Amendments to the Federal Law ‘On the Fundamentals of Tourism Activities in the Russian Federation’, ‘rural (agrarian) tourism’ as an official concept was fixed in the legislation. According to the paper [1] it is “tourism, providing visits to rural areas, small towns with a population of up to thirty thousand people, in order to have holidays, familiarization with the traditional way of life, familiarization with the activities of agricultural producers and (or) participation in agricultural work without material gain with the possibility of providing services for temporary accommodation, leisure activities, excursions and other services” [12]. This definition specifies: agritourism must necessarily be associated with agricultural business. In addition, agritourism should become a tool for promoting agricultural products and brand.

As the statistics of early bookings on the portal “Welcome Times” in the summer of 2024 shows, the top destinations by volume of tourist flow remains unchanged compared to last year. It includes Moscow and the Moscow Region, St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, Stavropol Krai, Krasnodar Krai, Tatarstan and Crimea. Excursions, beach and health-improving types of recreation, vacation in country hotels and ecotourism are the most popular. Event gastro- and ethno- tours, relaxation tours, as well as agrotourism are gaining popularity [13].

Having legally received the status of tourism, agrotourism also acquires the status of “priority direction of tourism” and, accordingly, receives state support. During the implementation of the Federal Project (FP) “Development of rural tourism”, starting from 2022 all farmers can participate in the competition for grants for the development of agritourism up to 10 million rubles. Thus, in 2023, 500 million rubles were allocated to farms for grants, and in 2024 - 700 million rubles.

Rostov region has great possibilities for the development of agrotourism due to its rich natural resource potential, a large number of villages and farms, peasant farmsteads, Don cuisine and folklore.

The amount of grants for the Don projects for the development of rural tourism, which were selected by the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, for two years amounted to 39.5 million rubles.

According to preliminary data, a total of about 2,700 tourists visited the tourist attractions in 2023.

From 2022 to 2023, ten rural farms of Rostov region participated in the competition for the grant “Agrotourism”. Half of them became winners, they are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Agricultural farms of the Rostov region - winners of the grant “Agrotourism”

Agriculture	Location	Events
“Bio-Khutor Petrovsky” (IE head of private farm N.A. Shchepetieva)	Petrovsky village, Neklinovsky District, Rostov Region	For tourists: a tour of the farm, two master classes. One of them is a handmade handmade artisan bread according to a traditional recipe. The second master class: making an amulet “bag of plenty”, which symbolizes prosperity in the house. Regional festival of gastronomic and rural tourism “Khutor Fest”.
“Molchanov's Winery” (IE of the head of private farm Molchanov N.V.)	Krasnodonsky village, Volgodonsky District	Program for tourists: excursion to vineyards, story about the peculiarities of growing grapes on the Don river, sabrage, excursion to the fields of lavender, excursion to the winery for a tour with degorzhage
“Sarkel Estate” IE Gubin I.V.,	“Sarkel Estate” is located on the	The program for tourists: excursions to vineyards, history of viticulture and

head of private farm Gubin.	shore of the Tsimlyansky reservoir in the village of Sarkel	winemaking, tasting of local products (wine and cheese), excursion to Sarkel Castle, rafting and fishing. Farmers are planning accommodation infrastructure, a Cossack-style glamping site and four pitches with engineering infrastructure for caravanners (tourists arriving in motorhomes), tent sites will be created and a single sanitary facility will be created.
“Vinabani ”IE of the head of the farm Khimichev Yu.	Rostov region, Malaya Martynovka	Group and individual excursions to the vineyards and winery. You can order an accompanying lunch/dinner with dishes based on authentic recipes of Don Cossacks. The highlight of the program is tasting of samples from several lines.
ООО Elbuzd	Azov district, Elbuzd village,	Program for tourists: wine tours of the Elbuzd VHF, combined tours (vineyard + trip to Rostov-on-Don or Azov), wine tasting, buying wine as a gift, souvenir.

From Table 1 we see that the project of the first farm, “Bio-Khutor Petrovsky”, is aimed at expanding the infrastructure for visiting the agro-tourist cluster and getting acquainted with the production of organic products, four other Don enterprises are representatives of wine tourism, IE of the head of KFH Molchanov N. V. in Martynovsky district (two years in a row), “Estate Sarkel” - IE of the head of KFH Gubin I.V. (Tsimlyansky district). V. in Martynovsky district (two years in a row), “Estate Sarkel” - IE head of private farm Gubin I.V. (Tsimlyansky district), “Vinabani” - IE head of private farm Khimichev Y.N. (Martynovsky district), ООО “Elbuzd” (Azovsky district) are aimed at popularization of grape growing and revival of Don winemaking.

Today the most popular type of agritourism in the whole territory of Russia, including the Rostov region, is considered wine tourism. And not without reason. Winemakers and winegrowers began to invite tourists, much earlier than the moment when the term “rural tourism” was fixed at the legislative level. Rostov region has a special place on the Russian wine map. The history of the Don winegrowing and winemaking has already two thousand years. The centers of winemaking in Rostov region historically were Razdorskaya and Tsimlyanskaya, Melikhovskaya and Kumshatskaya, Zolotovskaya and Konstantinovskaya villages. According to the data as of the beginning of 2024, there are sixteen licensed producers of wine products in the region. In addition, previously listed, they include: “Chateau Vedeneyev” (Myasnikovsky district), ‘Dacha Serdyuk’ (Novocherkassk), ‘Voza Liman’ (Neklinovsky district), ‘Vinodelnya Kantina’ (Azovsky district), ‘Vina Arpachina’ (Bagaevsky district, st. Manychkaya), “Villa Zvezda” (farm Malaya Martynovka, Martynovsky district), “Winery Verednikov” (farm Vedernikov, Konstantinovsky district), “Tsimlyanskies Vina” (Tsimlyansk) and others.

When developing a new tourist product, it is necessary to have an idea who will be a potential consumer. According to Rosselkhozbank analysts, the average agritourist is a family tourist aged 28 to 45, with higher education and an income of 150-300 thousand rubles per family, living in the city. Such a tourist prefers to go to agrotourism for one or two days, preferably on weekends. These people seek to spend quiet time in the clean air in a picturesque place, eat ecological products, immerse themselves in rural life, visit a nature reserve, winery, etc. (Fig. 2).

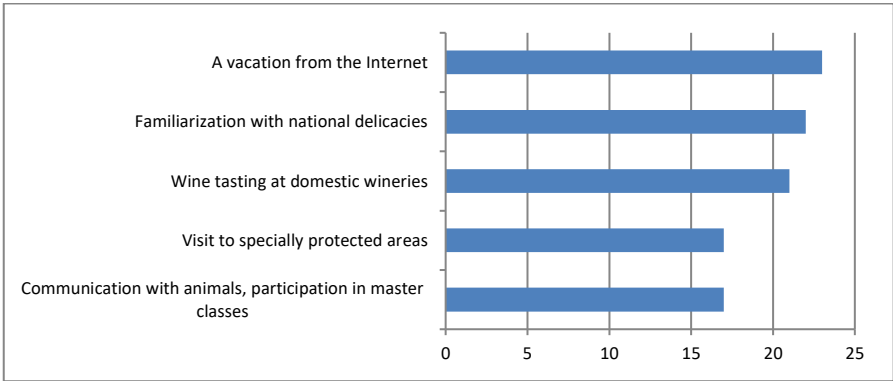


Fig. 2. What attracts tourists to agritourism

In order to understand how to attract a particular generation to tourism and what kind of tourism products they need, the authors analyzed the generational theory, which was outlined in 1991 by William Strauss and Neil Howe in the book “Generations: A History of America's Future”. “Generational theory” is “a description of the time cycles in history and their associated characteristics, also the views of people born in certain chronological intervals. Knowledge of the theory will be a useful tool for communication with coworkers, parents, or children” [14].

According to the researchers, every quarter of a century a generation is born that has its own habits, distinctive character traits and peculiarities that set them apart from others and are further repeated in future generations. In accordance with this theory, there is a classification of these generations, presented in Fig. 3.

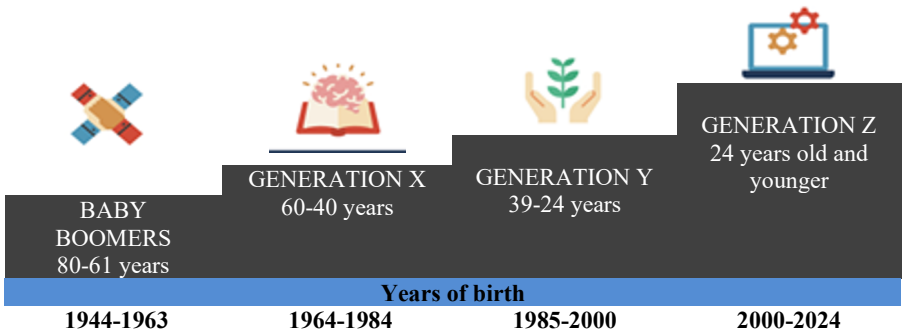


Fig. 3. Classification of generations

What kind of goods, products or services to buy, each consumer decides for himself. Every person strives to satisfy his needs, to give himself pleasure. Knowing and understanding the needs of potential consumers is the key to business success. It is necessary to constantly conduct research, starting from the planning stage of production and implementation of products or services, ending with the analysis of their quality to identify consumer preferences.

Tourism, like no other sector of the economy depends on the impression made on the consumer. Therefore, it is very important to find an approach to each market segment. Therefore, studying consumer preferences on the basis of “Generational Theory” is considered it is reasonable.

Today marketers often target generations X, Y and Z as the main solvent audience. According to Rosstat data, in the total population of Russia generation X is 28.7%, Y - 20.5%, Z - 16.3% [15].

If the basics of “Generation Theory” are put into the basis of studying consumer preferences, it is possible to identify specific preferences of a certain age group of people who grew up in conditionally identical conditions. This will make it possible to significantly simplify the process of developing new goods or services.

Let us consider the possibility of studying consumer preferences with the help of the “Theory of Generations” applied to tourism.

Let's consider the general characteristic of each generation:

For generation “Z” there are no restrictions and templates, stable views and principles. From a very young age, this generation receives large amounts of information. Zoomers cannot do in everyday life without the use of various gadgets, show a keen interest in various technologies. The main emphasis of advertising campaigns for Zoomers is on environmental friendliness, healthy image and improvement of the nature around us.

Generation “Y” is Russia's first digital generation, which has easily mastered new technologies. They are genuinely interested in aligning their values with those of their future employer. Millennials are adherents of a healthy lifestyle, engaged in self-discovery for most of their lives, value technology, are optimists and humanists.

Generation X people are individualists and pragmatists, highly valuing material values, and often pursue their goals without regard for the opinions and emotions of others. Modern technology has emerged in the process of X's maturation. They actively use e-mail and have an account in at least one social network.

4 Results

Rostov Oblast is a large agricultural region of Russia. In agricultural production - one thousand two hundred agricultural organizations, about 8 thousand peasant (farmer) farms and individual entrepreneurs engaged in agriculture, fish farming and fishing, as well as about 545 thousand individual subsidiary farms.

Based on the research, the authors systematized the strengths and weaknesses, along with threats and possibilities of agritourism development in the Rostov region (Table 2).

Table 2. SWOT-analysis of agrotourism in the Rostov region

S: favorable geographical location, favorable climatic conditions, rich natural resource potential, agriculture, support at the state level	W: underdeveloped agritourism infrastructure (few accommodation facilities, poor quality of communication and roads), shortage of personnel, lack of agritourism promotion program in Rostov region
O: socio-economic development of rural areas, growth of employment, development of agrotourism infrastructure through construction of accommodation facilities, support for small businesses, preservation of folklore and local customs, handicrafts, rural way of life, reduction of outflow of young people from rural areas, improvement of living standards of rural residents, development of event tourism.	T: environmental disaster, competitive advantages of other areas of Russia, decrease in income of tourists, decrease in employment and income of tourism workers

Table 2 clearly shows that the Rostov region has significant competitive advantages in the field of agro-tourism. Rural farms must actively participate in state support projects to neutralize their weaknesses and improve the tourism infrastructure. It is indisputable that the sustainable development of rural settlements is contingent upon the availability of good roads. Heads of rural settlements and regional administrative bodies must pay attention to this. It is their responsibility to monitor the condition of the road fund.

Furthermore, a single Internet portal must be created for all those interested in agrotourism. Entrepreneurs in the Rostov region can list their businesses and tours here, and tourists can choose and book tours. Similar portals already exist, but they only cover wine tourism and do not include a full list of wineries. It's clear that modern youth was born with a phone in their hands and is not motivated to work in agriculture. The authors of this research assert that a special program should be developed to promote agritourism and patriotic education for the younger generation. Table 3 lists the 12 agrarian colleges, technical schools, and 3 universities in the Rostov region.

Table 3: Agrarian educational institutions of the Rostov region

Name of educational institution	Location
Proletarsk Agrarian Technological College	Proletarsk
Karginsky agrarian-technological technical school	Bokovsky district, Karginskaya st.
Morozovsky agro-industrial technical school	Morozovsky district, Ozerny settlement
Mityakinsky Agrotechnological and Nutrition College	Tarasovsky district, Mityakinskaya st.
Oktyabrsky Agrarian Technological College	Oktyabrsky District, Kachkan settlement
Zimovnikovsky agricultural technical school named after P.A. Babaevsky.	Zimovniki District, Zimovniki settlement
Kazan Agrarian Technical Vocational School	Verkhnedonskiy raion, Kazanskaya st.
Zernograd Agrotechnological College	Zernograd
Konstantinovsky technical school of agro-technologies and management	Konstantinovsk
Millerovsky technical school of agro-industrial technologies and management	Millerovo
Salsky Agrarian and Technical College	Salsky district, Giant settlement
Pukhlyakovsky agro-industrial technical college	Pukhlyakovskaya st.
Don State Agrarian University	Persianovsky, Oktyabrsky district
Don State Technical University	Rostov-on-Don
Azov-Black Sea Engineering Institute - Zernograd branch of Don State Agrarian University	Zernograd

According to this special program, for instance, students of listed agrarian educational institutions in the course of their studies should undergo practical training in the agro-industrial complex, and students of other universities of the Rostov region will be able to immerse themselves in the agrarian sphere for two weeks. This will make it possible for young people not only to have holidays and get an idea of agriculture, but also to gain practical experience in this sphere.

5 Conclusions

The research conducted by the authors contributes to the study of agrotourism. In particular, it confirms that Rostov region has a significant potential for the development of agrotourism, this type of tourism is a promising direction for the development of tourism in rural areas.

Recently there has been a rapid growth in the development of agrotourism. Agrotourism in modern conditions has all chances to become a new popular type of tourism, as well as a way of development of rural areas of the region, because it will contribute to the increase of employment of the population, in addition, will contribute to the patriotic education of young people. The proposed recommendations can be applied in practice, which predetermines their practical significance.

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