

## Agritourism – part of rural tourism

Ing. Ivona Ďuričová\*

Ing. Ivan Masár\*\*

*NPPC – Research Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics, Bratislava SR*

*(NPPC – Výskumný ústav ekonomiky poľnohospodárstva a potravinárstva, Bratislava SR)*

E-mail: ivona.duricova@nppc.sk\* ; ivan.masar@nppc.sk\*\*

**Citation:** Ďuričová, I., Masár, I. (2021). Agritourism – part of rural tourism. *Ikonomika i upravljenie na selskoto stopanstvo*, 66(4), 59-66 (Bg).

### Abstract

Tourism and agritourism are important sectors for rural areas as they provide possibilities to sustainable economic development. Tourism directly supports various jobs creation for all age categories of rural residents whereby mitigate rural depopulation. Moreover, it claims from people the different level of skills and provides flexible working time. Inseparable part of rural tourism constitutes agritourism that provides to farmers a supplementary income and to rural residents the job opportunities and business options.

**Key words:** agritourism; rural tourism; rural areas

## Агротуризмът – част от селския туризъм

Инж. Ивона Журичова\*

Инж. Иван Масар\*\*

*NPPC – Изследователски институт по икономика на земеделието и храните, Братислава, Словакия Република*

E-mail: ivona.duricova@nppc.sk\* ; ivan.masar@nppc.sk\*\*

Туризмът и агротуризмът са важни сектори за селските райони, тъй като предоставят възможности за устойчиво икономическо развитие. Туризмът пряко подпомага създаването на разнообразни работни места за всички възрастови категории – жители на селските райони, като по този начин намалява обезлюдяването на тези райони. Освен това се изискват различни нива на умения на хората и се осигурява гъвкаво работно време. Неразделна част от селския туризъм представлява агротуризмът, който предоставя на фермерите допълнителен доход, а на жителите на селските райони – възможности за работа и бизнес.

**Ключови думи:** агротуризм; селски туризъм; селски райони

Tourism development in rural areas promotes construction of transport infrastructure, civil amenities and engagement of local communities into accompanying tourist activities and services provision. Generally, more favorable economic conditions in the world, increasing purchasing power of consumers in many countries, continuing globalization, reducing travel costs, easier accessibility to travel services through mod-

ern information and communication technologies, regular travel links, better transport mobility, enlarging supply of services, interest of elder people in travelling, adjusting trips to specific demands of travelers etc. promote tourism development worldwide. By contrast, climate changes, state regulations mitigating environmental impacts, terrorist threats, virus concern negatively influence tourism progress.

## **Methodology**

Main target is the identification of accommodation facilities numbers and beds available in Slovakia and Czech Republic for rural tourism and agritourism needs. Both countries have predominantly rural character, common history and very favorable conditions for agritourism development. We compared Slovakia and Czech Republic from number of available beds point of view in rural areas and calculated average beds per capita in both countries. From available statistical data related to accommodation facilities sourced in Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and Czech Statistical Office we selected suitable for spending holiday in countryside and compared their development. Meantime there are not available data about financial resources spend on accommodation in rural areas or on farms.

## **Rural tourism**

In past time, it becomes popular to spend holiday outside large tourist destinations. Growing interest in rural holiday and start of modern rural tourism dated since 1970s (Stříbrná, 2005). Actual virus threat will probably support such a holiday alternate because people would have larger interest to spend holiday in countryside or on farm with lower accommodation capacities and smaller tourist concentration.

Rural tourism often incorporated into green tourism, according to Konečný (2013) this type of tourism would fill the sustainable concept and represent particular option towards its mass form. Green tourism we can incorporate to “soft tourism” that tries to minimize negative impacts on environment and community and actively contribute to natural and cultural heritage protection. Rural tourism with its elements (agritourism, eco-tourism ...) is potential to dynamic development of less known and less explored rural areas by tourists.

## **Agritourism**

Agritourism constitutes active holiday pattern linking agriculture and tourism. In many coun-

tries there are agritourism associations with the aims such as development support of this tourism pattern, promotion of agritourism on domestic and foreign markets, increase quality of provided services on farms, education/training owners and farm employees, defend interests of agritourism services providers, rural infrastructure improvement, quality criteria determination, classification and certification of agritourism providers.

Besides visits of nature and countryside, the agritourism offers relationship to agricultural activities, machinery and animal buildings. Incentive factors to spend holiday on farm are cleaner air, nature, less stress, leisure compared to hurried urban life, desire for non-traditional activities, aspiration to experience life on farm, see rural events and taste local gastronomy. Advantages of agritourism is avoid of mass tourism, decentralization of accommodation facilities and environment conservation. Wang (2006) says the agritourism is supported and promoted as useful response tool to social and economic challenges that facing rural areas affected by downturn of traditional agriculture. According to Kosmaczewski (2008) success of agritourism depends on farm owner's initiative but also a possibility to receive financial support for business, public community infrastructure and active engagement of local administration. Holiday on farm contributes to farms conservation and regional mission. Agritourism expects a new type of farmer in rural areas (Van der Ploeg, 2018). This type of tourism offers to interested persons a possibility to spend holiday on farm including accommodation and board, recognition of life on agricultural enterprise. It constitutes symbiosis of active holiday on farm with relaxation in nature and rural atmosphere learning. Visitors become familiar with working activities on farm and they can try them (e.g. crops seeding, harvesting, irrigation, bread baking ...). Obviously, tourists attend also non-traditional leisure activities (e.g. horse riding, carriage riding, tractor riding ...) or visit historical monuments, participate in music events, fishing, working with wooden materials, forest fruits picking ...). Visitors can receive information about foods origin, animal welfare, animal health control, animal nutrition, environmental

responsibility of agricultural producers. Naturally, guests on farms taste regional meals made from their own ecological products and foods. Das and Rainey (2010) say that visits on farm for shorter or longer time-period provide combination of relax, education and active involvement in agricultural activities and life on farm. Children can see live livestock or can play on playground.

Agritourism creates an addition income to farmers beyond main activity – agricultural husbandry. Guests cover accommodation and board costs but they spend money also on purchases of food products processed on farms (e.g. jams, cheeses, jelly, honey, wine). Such business activities diversification compensates lower farmer's income during periods of low agricultural products selling prices. Agricultural production on farm provides plant and animal products not only for own catering establishment to farm workers but also for guests and for local hospitality industry.

### Growing importance of agritourism

Significance of agritourism will rise in coming months in connection with several factors

such as Covid-19 disease threat, requirement to encourage rural areas development, necessity to release visitors' pressure on most visited tourist destinations, desirability to distribute visitors through whole calendar year and environmental burdens reduction in tourist overcrowding regions. Already before pandemics, some governments stimulated employees to spend holidays on domestic territory through financial allowances or holiday vouchers.

### Comparison of agritourism of Czech Republic and Slovakia

Beginning of agritourism in Czech Republic refers to the year 1993 when first 15 farms are willing and capable to invite guests. Next year 51 farm facilities involved in agritourism and accommodated 800 tourists (Ryglová, 2003). Conditions of dynamic agritourism development were established in previous decades by rather widespread life style – to spend holidays in own cottages and huts located in rural surroundings.

Currently the rural tourism develops as part of whole tourism system in the Czech Republic and

Table 1. Share of particular landscape type in Czech Republic by counties (in %)

Region	Rural landscape I with minimum assumptions to tourism	Rural landscape II with average assumptions to tourism	Rural landscape III with very favourable assumptions to tourism	Mountain landscape	In total (%)
Stredočeský	23.2	37.1	31.3	0	91.6
Juhočeský	0.4	29.7	45.6	20.4	96.1
Plzeňský	0	40.3	34.3	20.7	95.3
Karlovarský	5.6	4.3	44.8	38	92.7
Ústecký	27	9.7	23.2	18.6	78.5
Liberecký	0	0.7	46.5	34.2	81.4
Královohradecký	9.6	28	32.3	12	81.9
Pardubický	9.5	28.5	40.4	12.6	91
Vysočina	0.8	57	33	6.7	97.5
Juhomoravský	14.4	41.1	33.2	0.7	89.4
Olomoucký	19.2	21.9	33	18.8	92.9
Zlínský	5.6	19.1	31	31.3	87
Moravskoslezský	4.2	18.6	32.8	21.5	77.1

Source: <https://www.svazvta.cz/homepage/26-03-19/strategie-rozvoje-venkovskeho-cestovniho-ruchu-v-cr-2018-2025>

simultaneously it supports generation of specific regional products of the tourism and creates conditions for marketing and human resources development. Czech Rural Tourism and Agritourism Association closely cooperates with Ministry of Agriculture on agritourism activities development at national and regional levels. Supply of agritourism namely accommodation, boarding, regional products, crafts, experience programs etc. is competitive only if fulfil expected standard services quality. From Table 1 result that majority of regions in Czech Republic has good and very good conditions to rural tourism and agritourism development. From total area 78 866 km<sup>2</sup> around 89% is suitable and usable to rural tourism activities.

Compared to Czech Republic the Slovak Republic has total area by 37.8% lesser and 86% of them have rural pattern. There are more than 2 900 villages and towns in Slovakia from which 2 300 are located in attractive nature areas and therefore suitable to rural tourism and agritourism.

Based on sample survey of 406 Slovak villages that participated in Village Renewal Programme it was found that average accommodation capacity per village constitutes 55 beds. Among ac-

commodation facilities especially prevail holiday cottages, holiday chalets and lodging-houses. Directly in villages there are located approximately 38% accommodation facilities and rest are in surroundings (within cadaster of village). Slovak Republic has two regions that have expressively rural pattern meaning that more than a half of population lives in villages, namely Banska Bystrica region (52.2%) and Nitra region (51.3%). Five Slovak counties belong to other rural regions with 15–49% share of villages.

Currently it is not available a methodology or statistics that will exactly mapped rural tourism data. Although it is not possible to accurately quantify development, recent practices show great potential of rural tourism for the future. Regarding very similar rural pattern of Czech Republic and Slovakia we explored and compared available statistical data concerning accommodation facilities, number of beds and their utilization, visitor arrivals and overnight stays.

Since 2014 number of accommodation facilities increased by 35.2% in Slovakia and by 4.1% in Czech Republic. Largest share according to categories comprised apartment hotels along with tourist hostels, cottage camps and other accommodation facilities.

Table 2. Number of accommodation facilities in Czech Republic

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Index 2019/2014
Accommodation facilities in Czech Republic, of it:	9 013	9 163	9 168	9 007	9 426	9 383	104.11
hotels	2 482	2 586	2 572	2 540	2 653	2 626	105.80
apartment hotels	3 351	3 406	3 450	3 427	3 624	3 610	107.73
campsites	513	516	510	515	566	567	110.53
tourist hostels, cottage camps and other accommodation facilities	2 667	2 655	2 636	2 525	2 583	2 580	96.74
<b>Number of accommodation facilities in Slovakia</b>							
Accommodation facilities in Slovak Republic, of it:	3 318	3 724	3 489	3 495	4 007	4 487	135.23
hotels	632	657	657	655	673	725	114.72
apartment hotels	756	852	818	816	926	1 006	133.07
campsites	65	63	58	61	57	56	86.15
tourist hostels, cottage camps and other accommodation facilities	1 865	2 152	1 956	1 963	2 351	2 700	144.77

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Number of accommodation facilities in Czech Republic and Slovakia increased during period 2014–2018 by 4.6% and by 20.7% respectively.

Number of short and long trips to Slovak countryside during the period 2013–2018 increased twofold and it grew significantly trips to moun-

Table 3. Population and number of beds in accommodation facilities in Czech Republic and Slovakia

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Population ('000) in Czech Republic	10 524	10 542	10 565	10 589	10 626
Number of beds in accommodation facilities in Czech Republic	710 381	715 014	716 563	715 540	741 235
Number of beds per 1000 habitants in Czech Republic	68	68	68	68	70
Population ('000) in Slovakia	5 421	5 426	5 435	5 443	5 450
Number of beds in accommodation facilities in Slovak Republic	183 404	189 634	183 903	185 771	190 773
Number of beds per 1000 habitants in Slovak Republic	34	35	34	34	35

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, own calculations.

Table 4. Number of habitants per one accommodation facility in Czech Republic and Slovakia

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Index 2018/2014
Number of habitants per one accommodation facility in Czech Republic	1 168	1 151	1 152	1 176	1 127	96.54
Number of habitants per one accommodation facility in Slovak Republic	1 634	1 457	1 558	1 557	1 360	83.25

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Table 5. Number of short trips and long trips in Slovak Republic

Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of short trips in Slovak Republic by type of destination						
Countryside	611 823	789 906	890 011	893 824	1 262 108	1 285 825
Mountains, mountain-ranges, highlands	778 857	744 502	857 904	1 240 714	1 302 184	1 270 880
Number of long trips in Slovak Republic by type of destination						
Countryside	235 839	253 367	322 051	498 735	614 613	487 576
Mountains, mountain-ranges, highlands	619 424	463 341	583 043	625 946	599 621	647 661
Number of short trips in Slovak Republic by main purpose						
agritourism	91 957	93 256	101 222	284 445	311 735	173 956
Number of long trips in Slovak Republic by main purpose						
agritourism	36 577	24 297	53 626	59 139	140 307	78 116

Source: Basic indicators of holiday and business trips, Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

Notes: Number of short trips lasting up to 3 days; number of long trips – visitor spend at least 4 nights in a row but trip did not exceed 12-months period.

tains, mountain ranges and highlands. Similarly it rose interest in agritourism, especially in the year 2017.

Since the year 2014 number of domestic and foreign visitors in accommodation facilities as well as their overnight stays in Czech Republic and Slovakia has increased (Tables 6, 7).

Net rate of bed occupancy in hotels and similar accommodation facilities in the period 2014–18 around Slovak Republic was lower compared

to the average of the EU or Czech Republic. Good news is that net rate of bed occupancy has increased on an annual basis.

Although rural tourism develops since 1990s it did not reach whole potential yet. Rural tourism in Czech Republic and Slovakia has definitely large development opportunities in the future. There is missing explicit transparent legislative and statistical registration on national and regional level. Tourism development is impossible with-

Table 6. Visitors and overnight stays in accommodation facilities in Czech Republic

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Index 2019/2014
Total accommodation facilities	9 013	9 163	9 168	9 007	9426	9 383	104,1
Total visitors	15 587 076	17 195 550	18 388 853	20 000 561	21 247 150	21 998 366	141,1
Domestic visitors	7 491 191	8 488 637	9 067 413	9 840 093	10 635 756	11 107 866	148,3
Foreign visitors	8 095 885	8 706 913	9 321 440	10 160 468	10 611 394	10 890 500	134,5
Total overnight stays	42 946 929	47 093 906	49 696 957	53 219 395	55 513 922	57 024 767	132,8
Overnight stays of domestic visitors	20 836 817	23 807 391	25 428 808	26 962 382	28 753 901	29 844 204	143,2
Overnight stays of foreign visitors	22 110 112	23 286 515	24 268 149	26 257 013	26 760 021	27 180 563	122,9

Source: Czech Statistical Office.

Table 7. Visitors and overnight stays in accommodation facilities in Slovak Republic

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Index 2019/2014
Total accommodation facilities	3 318	3 724	3 489	3 495	4 007	4 487	135.2
Total visitors	3 727 710	4 330 249	5 023 629	5 375 475	5 596 407	6 432 934	172.6
Domestic visitors	2 252 693	2 609 056	2 996 620	3 213 091	3 340 380	3 957 840	175.7
Foreign visitors	1 475 017	1 721 193	2 027 009	2 162 384	2 256 027	2 475 094	167.8
Total overnight stays	10 900 434	12 350 080	14 138 420	14 936 766	15 515 083	17 703 695	162.4
Overnight stays of domestic visitors	6 995 966	7 893 672	8 993 087	9 507 435	9 818 699	11 452 830	163.7
Overnight stays of foreign visitors	3904468	4456408	5145333	5 429 331	5 696 384	6 250 865	160.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

out high quality level of provided services, state and private promotion, investments, human resources, legislative and economic measures.

Important task in tourism field also comprises local governments because rural tourism including agritourism means higher income for municipalities, opportunity for new jobs, revitalization of municipalities and advancement of population standard of living. Evidence from Europe suggests that support of rural tourism and agritourism depends on general policy and approach. Rural tourism and agritourism have different development levels within respective municipalities and areas of Slovakia. Beyond Bratislava the most visited regions are situated in Zilina, Presov and Banska Bystrica. At present on web page

<https://www.ubytovanienaslovensku.eu/agroturistika> there are 538 accommodation facilities (holiday-homes, guest-houses, country-houses, apartments) for agritourism purpose in different Slovak regions.

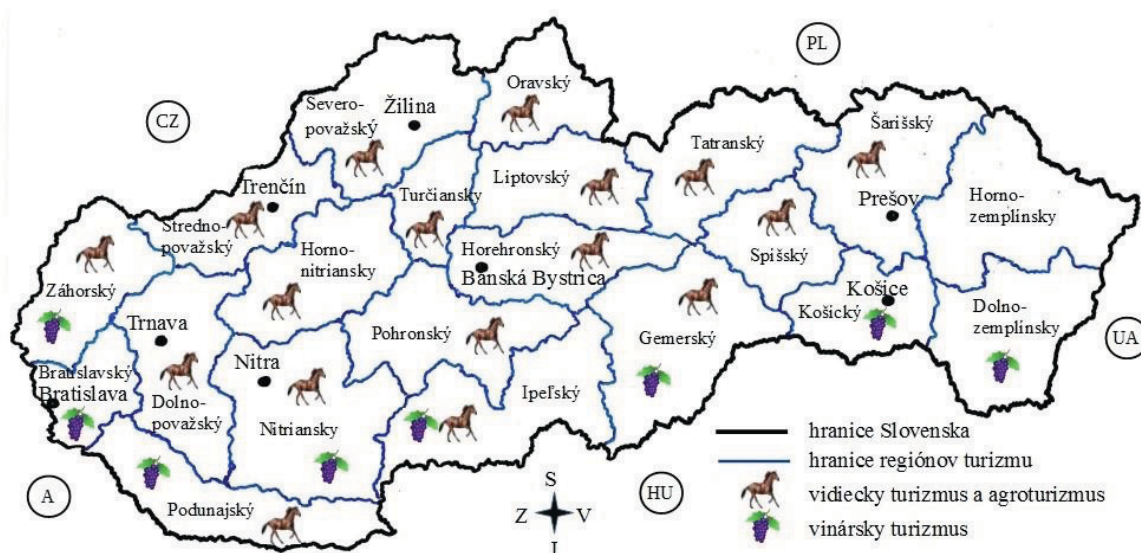
### Conclusions

Camps, holiday-homes settlements and tourist hostels are very sought-after in South and Central Bohemia as well as South Moravia or Bohemia Forest. Multiple municipalities in Slovak Republic and Czech Republic dispose of attractive services supply and prospective development possibilities but meanwhile there are visited by lesser tourists and recording low utilization of accom-

Table 8. Net rate of bed occupancy in hotels and similar accommodation facilities

Years	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Index 2018/2014
Czech Republic	35.20	36.20	46.50	49.90	50.00	142.05
Slovak Republic	27.20	29.50	32.91	34.18	34.21	125.77
Average of the EU	43.67	45.65	47.13	48.33	49.01	112.23

Source: Eurostat.



— borders of Slovakia; — borders of tourist regions; picture of horse = rural tourism and agritourism; picture of grape = wine tourism

Fig. 1. Rural tourism, agritourism and wine tourism in regions of Slovakia

Source: Kerekes, J.: Rural tourism and agritourism in touristic regions, 2019, e-source, [www.1000knih.sk](http://www.1000knih.sk)

modation facilities. In order to use these possibilities it is necessary to reconstruct or build tourist attractions and accommodation facilities and promote them sufficiently to the public.

Situation in the field of tourism promotion in Czech Republic and Slovakia is similar. Czech tourism agency which operates under Ministry of local development responded to negative impact of worldwide pandemic Covid-19 on tourism through new campaign “World Bohemia” with the aim to promote tourism also in less known areas and support tourism equally across whole country.

Slovak government see potential in targeted support of small and middle-sized family business in tourism. For projects funding it uses sources of rural development program. Paradoxically, current complicated epidemical situation is opening preconditions for rural tourism and domestic agritourism restarting and widening of opportunities to discovery less known countryside. Planned tax exemption to agritourism operators in rural areas could support this type of accommodation.

## References

- Das, B. R., & Rainey, D. V. (2010). Agritourism in the Arkansas delta byways: Assessing the economic impacts. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(3), 265-280.
- Konečný, O. (2013). Agritourism and rural tourism in Czech Republic. 1st edition, Brno: Mendelova University. ISBN 978-80-7375-738-0.
- Kosmaczewska, J. (2008). The relationship between development of agritourism in Poland and local community potential. *Studies in Physical Culture & Tourism*, 15(2).
- McKinsey & Company. (2017). Coping with success—Managing overcrowding in tourism destinations. London.
- OECD, U. (2011). Climate change and tourism policy in OECD countries. *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, 9, 12-17.
- Peeters, P. et al. (2018). Research for TRAN Committee - Over tourism: impact and possible policy responses, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.
- Ryglová, K. (2003). Tourism. Brno- Černá pole: B.I.B.S, a. s., 2003. ISBN 80-86575-92-
- Stříbrná, M. (2005). Venkovská turistika a agroturistika. Profi Press, Praha.
- Sznajder, M.-Przezbórska, L.-Scrimgeour, F. (2009). Agrotourism. 1st edition, Wallingford: CABI, 2009. ISBN 978-1-84593-482-8.
- Van der Ploeg, J. D. (2018). *The new peasantries: rural development in times of globalization*. Routledge.
- Wang, Y. C. (2006). The new form and model of development of rural tourism in China. *Tourism Tribune*, 21(4), 6-8.