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AGRICULTURE PRACTICE AS SUPPORT FOR AGRO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT THE FAMILY FARMS¹⁴

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Abstract: *Serbia has on disposal great potentials for the popularisation and further development of agro-tourism. From the aspect of family farms, its' access to agro-tourism provides strengthening of farm sustainability throughout the gaining of additional incomes and full labour involvement of household members. The paper goal is to present the effects of utilization of production capacities and possibilities of certain farm in one segment of agricultural production towards the agro-tourism, as well as their contribution to the growth of total farm incomes. Specifically, in paper is presented the impact and economic effect of substituting the tomato supply channels used for agro-tourism activities on the farm, by the establishment of its own production in greenhouse. According to methodological approach, analysis of economic effects is based on the calculation of indicative cost price of the produced products at the farm. From the given example it*

¹⁴ Paper is a part of research funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

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could be seen that the organization of individual production lines, or several number of related agricultural production lines at the farm, with additional realization of gained final products (fresh and processed) through the agro-tourism, could offer multiple positive effects on the strengthening of farm sustainability.

Key words: *agro-tourism, family farm, tomato and tomato products, cost price, Serbia.*

Introduction

Maintaining the sustainable development of certain business as its necessity requires the constant widening of offered products and services that could cover as large as possible spectrum of human needs and desires. Tourism also represents economic activity that behaves under mentioned matrix.

Although there is no unique definition of agro-tourism, one is sure, it relies on available local natural resources, human capital and cultural-historical heritage. This is a form of tourism that globally appeared and has been rapidly developed within the last several decades. It is usually practiced in poorly populated rural areas and settlements, mostly at the family farms, offering to visitor the specific and exclusive experiences of primal way of living, framed by raw but clean local environment and tradition. It usually, but not necessarily, linked to agricultural activities and spending the time at certain farm (Dorobantu, Nistoreanu, 2012; Ana, 2017).

Although, there are no specific data related to global agro-tourism capacities and economic trends. Its potential could be reconsidered throughout the basic economic facts linked to rural tourism, which covers from 12-30% of worldwide tourism industry. For example, in Europe, during the previous two decades its growth is more intense than the growth of complete sector (up to 15% compared to 5% in annual growth rate), (Ivolga, Shakhramanian, 2019).

As agro-tourism mostly targets the rural areas, according the OECD method they could be defined as by localities with population density below 150 inhabitants per km² (Dijkstra, Poelman, 2014). Moreover, recently developed typology for rural regions enables global comparability. It considers three new types of rural regions with diverse attributes, hot issues and policy needs, such are: a) rural areas within the functional urban areas; b) rural areas close to functional urban areas; and c) remote rural areas (OECD, 2018).

Agro-tourism includes visit to operating farms in order to entertain, enjoy the time and nature, relax, pick up specific knowledge or be active in farm activities. This is an intersection of tourism, agriculture and local natural resources. It offers traditional food products and meals, contact with domestic and certain wild animals, approaching to old cooking recipes, demonstration of local tradition and customs, involvement in agricultural activities, u-picking, etc. Engaged visitors could enjoy available touristic offer at the farm

from a few hours to several days (ORCA, 2010).

Nowadays, establishment of requested socio-economic, political, environmental and other circumstances for proper tourism advancement is among the crucial factors that will provide stability and sustainability of rural territories' evolution. It should involve the most of rural population initiating the growth of agro-food production, better competitiveness and competition of agro-producers, reduction of social tensions and boosting the overall sustainability of certain rural area, etc. (Ivolga, Erokhin, 2013).

As main part of agriculture, farm sustainability should be observed in line with sustainability of agricultural production, i.e. integration of activities from plant and animal production at predefined location that will ensure food security, preserve and advanced environment, optimally use non-renewable resources at or around the farm, trigger the income growth and upgrade the life conditions of all farm and local community members (Velten et al., 2015). At the other side, considering that 30 to 50% of income in rural regions derives from non-agricultural activities (Đekić, Jovanović, 2009), stabilization and growth of farm income could be also provoked by introduction and diversification of non-agricultural activities at the farm or in its close surrounding, such are: practicing of old crafts, production of processed agri-products for selling, rural tourism, trade, making of handicrafts, offering of certain services typical for urban areas, etc. (Zekić et al., 2016). Widely reconsidered, towards the attraction of visitors, it could involve several farms or even whole rural settlement around certain activity, as are touristic guiding into the cultural, historical or natural landmarks, all year or seasonal organization of specific recreation programs (horse riding, mushrooms, herbs or berries picking, walking, biking or hitchhiking, etc.), organization of cultural and trade (rural fairs and thematic manifestations) events, etc.

So, agro-tourism could serve as type of alternative farm development introduced to stabilize and increase incomes, primarily through better engagement of available farm resources (involving human capital). It associates number of mutually different activities, providing a tool for farmer that induces diversification of its income structure (Schilling et al., 2012). At the same time, it's in function of local community development.

Serbia has very good potentials for agro-tourism developments. They are based on existence of almost 630 thousands family farms (SORS, 2013), where more than 445 thousands are registered (RST, 2020), so technically each farm that have on disposal at least one spare room and couple beds could be in service of tourism. Some previous estimation considers that 85% of Serbian territory has attributes of rural areas. This territory settles 55% of entire national contingent of population (Bogdanov, 2007). In other words, rural areas spread at almost 66 thousands km², involving around 3.9 thousand rural settlements, with average population density of more than 63 inhabitants/km². (Vuković, 2019). Further it has unpolluted nature, mild climate, rich biodiversity and well appearance and dispersion of geographical features (rivers, lakes, hills and mountains,

etc.). Its development is supported by several national, regional (IPARD II program) or local financial, material and non-material measures.

Further development of agro-tourism is burdened by several limitations, mostly linked to developmental issues of rural areas. Primarily, it's limited by intensive depopulation process in rural areas and migration to urban areas (elderly holdings, or farms with couple members are not strongly interested in organization of touristic activities, while they could not easily find trained external labor). Rural areas and villages are under the higher pressure of physical and social infrastructure backwardness (bad condition, small capacities or lack of water supply and sewage systems, roads, electrification, IT and communication facilities, medical care, etc.), what usually rejects the modern tourists (mostly, they request at least the basic infrastructural, but not the camping conditions). Although there is some level of public supporting measures for investments in agro-tourism, administratively they are out of range for the most of farms (particularly IPARD measures), or their amount is not enough for proper household equipping. Besides, as average farm is economically too weak, approaching to commercial credits most often does not represent adequate solution (banks rigidity towards the farm needs and possibilities). So, there could appear certain gap between farm abilities and visitors expectations. In addition, level of touristic education and service skills of farm members, used marketing approach, lack or hardly visible touristic information, etc. are against visitors attracting.

At the other hand, tourism development in rural areas could initiate certain affections to environment, such are destruction of natural resources by presence of increased number of visitors, careless behave of local population or inadequate building and implementation of infrastructural elements and touristic facilities, etc. (Tasic, 2018).

As was previously mentioned, there are several benefits that arise with introduction of agro-tourism activities and services at the farm. By diversification of its portfolio of activities (in line with or out of agricultural production), farm is in position to gain additional profit influencing the long-term farm stability and sustainability. Moreover, through touristic offer farm is in position to upgrade the valorisation of previously produced agro products or services (e.g. selling of food products at the farm gate, through greenmarkets or retail are less profitable in compare to their selling throughout the served meals to farm guests). Externally, farm supports the welfare of the wider community (advance the image of the local community, employ the local labour, affects the reduction of migration processes, especially of youth and female population, empowers the local budget, etc.) or it supports "silent" national export (by hosting of foreign tourists).

The main goal of the paper is recognized in reconsideration of economic effects of additional employment of certain farm production capacities towards the valorisation of produced final products through the farm touristic offer.

Methodological approach

Methodological approach assumes the analysis of the results arisen from the application of calculations based on indicative cost price of certain products. All presented data were initially collected throughout the direct interview with the owner of the agro-touristic capacities “salash”, i.e. the holder of the registered family farm during the 2019. Besides, formal logical control and creation of pre-defined paper structure and paper context, as well as all derived conclusions are consulted by the use of appropriate scientific and practical literature, and other data sources. In line to better understanding of written paper, all results are tabularly presented, while better comparability of gained results are assured by the presentation of all values in EUR.

Results and discussion

In paper focus is one family farm, organized in form of “salash”¹⁸, located in South Banat Region. Farm is primarily oriented to agro-tourism. Four generations live on the farm, where the members from three generations are able to work (totally eight persons).

The core farm business is represented by running of restaurant (up to the 25 seats inside and 25 seats on the deck). Additionally, they are renting accommodation facilities (4 double rooms equipped in rural style). Besides, they have on disposal land complex and side buildings that could be in function of agricultural production and food processing.

In average, on daily basis farm serves 75 complete meals (i.e. soup, main dish, salad and dessert), the most of them within the period late spring to mid-autumn, where the usual guests come from same region. For that purposes, it supply with fresh products from local producers and green market, or out the season from the retail in closest city.

In order to better utilize available labour potentials during the year and to upgrade the supply of certain agro and food products, that will induce the better profitability, farmer is planning to invest in two green-houses (0.05 ha each) and start with vegetable production. On that way he would be able to produce his own vegetable that will be realized through the restaurant. In each greenhouse annually will be organized two cycles of veggie production (crop rotation of mostly used plants as are tomato, cucumbers, peppers, lettuce, onion, etc.). If farm is short with some vegetables farmer will continue with ordinary way of supplying or it will be adequately substituted, while in period it has certain surpluses over the restaurant needs it will sell them directly at farm gate to interested visitors. Veggie that could be saved and used in longer period will be put under conservation (processing), and later cashed through food production or selling at the farm gate. In paper, through the short calculation will be elaborated the case of tomato supply channel substitution and its influence on farm development.

¹⁸ It represents typical Pannonian traditional farm, with large economic autonomy. It involves living and producing part of property, where living house is usually set in the mid of possessed land complex. It disposes with several animal species, many auxiliary facilities that serves for organization of different types of agricultural production and processing, direct access to fresh water, etc. It could be, but not necessarily remote from urban centres. In western countries its synonym could be found in ranch.

In next table (Table 1.), at annual level is calculated the gross profit reached by the use of usual way of tomato (fresh and processed) supply and selling (through the meals in restaurant).

In restaurant, the tomato is used as fresh (usually for salads) or processed (as juice or more less like pelati for meals preparation). Experience shows that for traditionally served meal to average guest is needed around 200 gr of fresh and around 50 gr of processed tomato. In order to provide working autonomy of farm restaurant, but not in way that will endanger health security of prepared food, first class fresh tomato is purchased weekly, while processed one at monthly basis. They are stored in cold or dry storage. By supply and storing procedures, farm is strictly adhering to the principle of zero waste. According to food price list of restaurant, part of selling meals prices (revenues) that belongs just to fresh and processed tomato are estimated (all other costs as a labour, oil, spaces, cheese, meat, other veggies, water, energy, part of desired profit, etc. are deducted from the price of served meal).

According to gained results, it could be seen that reselling of tomato through the traditional meals is very profitable for farmer. Besides, earning power is much higher for the selling of fresh tomato.

Table 1. Profitability of tomato re-selling through agro-tourism activities, annually, in EUR

Element	Farm needs (in kg or l)	Average purchasing price per unit of measure (in EUR)	Value of supplied products (in EUR)	Average selling price per unit of measure (in EUR)	Value of sold products (in EUR)	Gross profit gained from tomato in meals (in EUR)	Efficiency ratio
0	1	2	1x2=3	4	1x4=5	5-3=6	5/3=7
Fresh tomato	5,475	0.5	2,737.5	3.7	20,257.5	17,520.0	7.4
Processed tomato	1,370	1.1	1,507.0	2.4	3,288.0	1,781.0	2.2
Total	-	-	4,244.5	-	23,545.5	19,301.0	5.5

Source: Authors' calculation based on IAE, 2019.

Assuming the establishment of its own veggie production in two greenhouses (0.05 ha each) build at the farm (one production cycle of tomato annually per each greenhouse, or total tomato production at 0.1 ha per year), by self-supply farmer is in situation to decrease the entering price of fresh tomato from the aspect of agro-tourism business. Additionally, certain quantities of fresh tomato will be processed into the tomato juice by traditional recipe, and further used in meals preparation. In line to farm needs, all surplus of fresh tomato will be sold to farm visitors at the farm gate as properly packed fresh or processed product. As vegetable production at the farm is ecologically oriented, with strict

use of GAP principles, periodically are done laboratory analyses of water used for irrigation, soil and fruits. Produced tomato is separated in II quality classes, where difference is mostly contained in size or unusual shape of fruits. Second class is dominantly used for processing (juice production).

In next tables (Table 2., 3. and 4.) is presented a production structure of fresh tomato, as well as calculation of indicative cost price of fresh tomato and tomato juice produced at the farm.

Table 2. Production structure of the fresh tomato produced at the farm during the one year, in kg

Element	Quantity
Total production (I and II class)	11,750 kg
I class tomato (85%) – total	9,985 kg
I class tomato – fresh consummation through meals	5,475 kg
I class tomato – sold as fresh to visitors at the farm gate	2,535 kg
I class tomato – processed into the tomato juice	1,975 kg
II class (15%) – processed into the tomato juice	1,765 kg

Source: Authors' calculation based on IAE, 2019.

Table 3. Average cost price of fresh tomato produced in greenhouse (0,1 ha) at the farm, in EUR

Costs	Quantity	UM	Price per UM (in EUR)	Total (EUR/10 are)
Seeds and seedlings production	2,500	seed and seedling	0.34	850.0
Manure	10	T	12.8	128.0
Fertilizers				95.0
Pesticides				6.5
Binder	7.5	Hank	1.4	10.5
Mulch foil (strips)	1,200	M	0.09	108.0
Laboratory analyses	1	Set	213.7	213.7
Manipulative baskets (multi-use)	200	Pcs	0.21	42.0
One-row single-use baskets (5 kg)	510	Pcs	0.08	40.8
Single use drip-tape	1,200.0	M	0.04	48.0
Costs of mechanization				232.9
Costs of irrigation				123.1
Engaged labour				275.0
Costs of marketing				35.0
Other variable costs				57.7
Fixed costs				453.2
Total costs of fresh tomato production				2,719.4
Indicative cost price of fresh tomato (for 1 kg)				0.23

Source: Authors' calculation based on IAE, 2019.

The most of the inputs linked to tomato production are purchased in local agricultural pharmacy. Used manure comes from cattle farms located in close

surrounding. Manipulative baskets (plastic) are used for manipulation under tomato at farm (picking, storing, internal transport, etc.), while regular wooden baskets are in function of tomato selling at the farm gate. Costs of mechanization involve spent energy (farm dispose with all needed mechanization), while costs of irrigation involve spent energy and water (draw-well is located near the greenhouses. Farm use drip system operated by the low-pressure pump). Costs of engaged labour represent gross wages of internal and external labour (depending on part of the season, for veggie production farm employees up to three seasonal workers at part-time basis). Costs of marketing involve costs of flyer printing. Fixed costs covers part of depreciation of used equipment, production facilities and tools, part of property and other state and local taxes, part of utility costs generated at the farm, etc. Achieved indicative cost price for produced tomato is quite lower (for almost 2.2 times) than previously gained purchasing price.

Table 4. Average cost price of tomato juice produced at the farm, in EUR

Costs	Quantity	UM	Price per UM (in EUR)	Total (in EUR)
Fresh tomato	3,740	kg	0.23	860.2
Salt	28	kg	0.32	9.0
Sugar	56	kg	0.56	31.4
Hot peppers	374	pcs	0.08	29.9
Fresh basil bouquet	187	pcs	0.21	39.3
Glass bottle with stopper (1 l)	1,350	pcs	0.11	148.5
Costs of electric energy				112.2
Engaged labour				479.5
Other variable costs				42.5
Fixed costs				175.2
Total costs of tomato juice production				1,927.7
Indicative cost price of tomato juice (for bottle of 1 l)				1.03

Source: Authors' calculation based on IAE, 2019.

Like in tomato production, the most of inputs linked to tomato processing are purchased in nearby retail or from local farmers. According to traditional farm recipe for the one litter of concentrated tomato juice it has to be provided 2 kg of fresh tomato and contingent of certain spices. One cycle of juice preparation considers: 20 kg of fresh tomato, 150 gr of salt, 300 gr of sugar, bouquet of fresh basil and 2 hot peppers, or 10 liters of final product. Related to available volume of fresh tomato that has to be processed (Table 2.), there are 187 processing cycles. Processing covers washing of tomato from mechanical dirt, its peeling and cutting, fine chopping in blender and boiling with other ingredients for around 1.5 hours. Later, warm concentrated tomato juice is filling into the sterilized (on heat) bottles, cork and left in a dry storage. At the end, there are 1,870 liters of derived final product. Engaged labour relates to two persons, usually one farm member and one external part-time worker. Fixed costs covers part of depreciation of used equipment and production facilities, share in total sum of taxes and

utility costs, etc. Produced juice is just few percent cheaper than previously supplied one, but its advantage lies in fact that it is much more concentrated (use of less volume of concentrated juice will cause certain level of savings during the meal preparation), it's handmade at the farm and better fits the guests taste.

After the change of previously used supply channel with products produced at the farm, it has to be reconsidered if there is any change in gained gross profit at the farm level (Table 5. and 6.).

Table 5. Profitability of self-produced tomato and tomato juice that is selling trough agro-tourism activities at the farm, annually, in EUR

Element	Produced quantities (in kg or l)	Average cost price per unit of measure (in EUR)	Value of produced products (in EUR)	Average selling price per unit of measure (in EUR)	Value of sold products (in EUR)	Gross profit gained from agro-tourism (in EUR)	Efficiency ratio
0	1	2	1x2=3	4	1x4=5	5-3=6	5/3=7
Fresh tomato – for meals	5,475	0.23	1,259.3	3.7	20,257.5	18,998.2	16.1
Fresh tomato – for selling	2,535	0.23	583.0	0.5	1,267.5	684.5	2.2
Processed tomato – for meals	1,370	1.03	1,411.1	2.4	3,288.0	1,876.9	2.3
Processed tomato – for selling	500	1.03	515.0	1.25	625.0	110.0	1.2
Total	-	-	3,768.4	-	25,438.0	21,669.6	6.8

Source: Authors' calculation based on data from the Tables 1-4.

Table 6. Economic effects of substitution of supply channel with self-production of tomato and tomato products at the farm oriented to agro-tourism, annually, in EUR

Gross profit gained from agro-tourism (in EUR)	Gross profit gained from tomato in meals (in EUR)	Difference
21,669.6	19,301.0	2,368.6

Source: Authors' calculation based on data from the Table 1. and Table 5.

According to data from previous tables, it could be seen that there is positive economic effects of change of farm supply channel with fresh and processed tomato with newly established production of observed products at the farm (in total, gained profit based on tomato realization through agro-tourism is increased for more than 12.4%).

Besides additional gross profit, increased economic efficiency and fully employment of available internal labour, farm is in position to offer the potential guests home-made products previously tasted at the farm restaurant. At that way it could empower guests' complete experience gained at the farm with specific prolongation of their gourmet enjoyment. From the aspect of marketing of farm touristic offer, this will surely have great importance in later boosting of farm image. Additionally, farm could experience further increase in gained profit by cashing of other veggie involved in crop rotation in established green-house production through the agro-tourism offer.

Conclusion

Generally, touristic sector is greatly relies on agro-food products, even more some types of tourism as rural or agro-tourism are symbiotically linked to locally produced and traditional food products and meals. On micro (farm) level, realization of self-produced agro-food products throughout the agro touristic offer usually initiated increase, stabilization and sustainability of farm profits. Observed farm successfully changed the tomato supply channel with establishment of veggie production in greenhouse, boosting the previously gained values of economic parameters, primarily profit, derived from tomato realization through the farm restaurant for more than 12%. Presented program correspond to triple win situation, as besides farm success, certain level of prosperity is directed to rural community (increase in taxes, empower of community image, reduction of local unemployment, etc.) and potential guests (contact with home-made hi-quality agro-food products based on traditional recipe).

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