

FARMSTEAD TOURISM: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN VOJVODINA

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Abstract

Farmstead tourism is a special form of rural tourism, which represents a well-developed, promoted and popular rural tourist product, both on the domestic and international tourist markets. Farmstead tourism is characteristic for the area of Vojvodina, and its development requires a connection with agriculture, the preservation of cultural and historical heritage, as well as an authentic gastronomic offer. The aim of the work is to present the importance of farmstead tourism for the development of rural tourism in the area of AP Vojvodina, as well as to present examples of good practice, i.e. farms with the longest tradition and best results in tourism.

Key words: rural tourism, farmstead tourism, development, agriculture, AP Vojvodina.

Introduction

There are numerous advantages for the development of rural tourism in the Republic of Serbia, among which the great geographical diversity of the landscape is particularly significant, from the Pannonian Plain, which is located in the northern part of Serbia, through the hilly and mountainous regions in central Serbia, to the typically mountainous area in the south of Serbia, which together enables the development of a diverse tourist offer (Vuković, Subić, 2019). In the area of the Pannonian Plain, in Vojvodina, there are good conditions for the development of farmstead tourism, as a special form of rural tourism, which is directly related to the cultural and historical heritage of this area, as well as to agriculture.

Rural tourism is the most heterogeneous type of tourism considering that, according to the results of previous research, there are over 50 different forms of this tourism (Radović, 2015). Farmstead tourism is a special form of rural tourism, which represents a well-developed, promoted and popular rural tourist product, both on the domestic and international tourist markets. Through farmstead tourism, it is possible to sell agricultural and food products at higher prices than in traditional markets, but also to sell products of old crafts and handicrafts. Together, this enables the creation of new jobs and the valorization of women's

work in rural households, the provision of additional income to residents of rural areas, as well as overall rural development (Radović, 2018).

The word "szallas – farmhouse" is of Hungarian origin, and it means an agricultural farm with an organized economic yard (for agricultural production), built residential and production facilities, fenced with wire or a hedge (Gavrić, 1994). Farmsteads are a kind of urban and architectural entity that has survived for hundreds of years. The traditional specific values of the farmstead are its appearance, household, cuisine and way of life. In the past, the farmsteads were without water, electricity and with old traditional furniture (Košić, 2012).

Essentially, a farmstead is best defined by three essential elements: work, housing and field, i.e. the absence of any of them "negates the concept of a farm" (Gajinov, 1994, p. 203). Farmstead represent a special way of life and economic management that is characteristic of agricultural production in Vojvodina. Observing throughout history the number of farmsteads and the number of inhabitants on them, we can state that the production of livestock and agricultural products that they achieved was very important for the supply of the cities in the vicinity of which they were locate. With the intensification of agricultural production, farmsteads began to lose their importance (Košić et al., 2013).

Farmsteads began to be built in the area of Vojvodina in the middle of the 18th century, and most of them were built in the second half of the 19th century, as well as in the first decades of the 20th century. Before the First World War, there were about 11,000 farmsteads in the area of Vojvodina. The most numerous were in Bačka and northern and central Banat (Stojanov, 1994). Today, a small number of farmsteads are in operation. According to (Subić, 1994), the disappearance of farmsteads is conditioned by demographic factors, as well as economic reforms that occurred after the Second World War. The disappearance of farmsteads is conditioned by the characteristics of the modern way of life, as well as the urbanization of society. Of the remaining farmsteads, many have been turned into real tourist oases (Pejanović, 2013).

The revitalization of farmsteads, in order to develop tourism, can have multiple positive effects. Positive effects can be: economic, demographic, ecological, cultural, infrastructural, communal, stimulating for the development of economic activities related to tourism (Dragičević, 2007). In order to develop rural tourism, it is necessary to provide the traditional features that tourists expect in rural areas, namely: regional features of traditional architecture, traditional interior decoration, traditional garden with agricultural holdings, organic agricultural production, regional gastronomic and eno-gastronomic offer, as and traditional togetherness in the tourist performance of farmers engaged in rural tourism (Kušen, 2007). We believe that all of the above is particularly important for the development of farmstead tourism.

Between the development of rural areas, especially agrotourism, and the development of agriculture, that is, the production of agricultural and food products, there is a mutual connection (feed back). The authors (Jeločnik et al., 2020) conclude that agricultural farms that have their own production of

agricultural and food products, which they market through the agro-tourism offer, in this way initiate an increase, i.e. stabilization of income, and thus the sustainability of the agricultural farm's profits. We are of the opinion that the above conclusion is of particular importance for the development of farmstead tourism.

Rural, as well as farmstead tourism, is a form of rural entrepreneurship that can initiate the development of rural economies and the growth of the employment rate of the rural population, given that it is a labor-intensive activity. Its impact on the development of rural economies is derived from the multiplicative impact of tourism on the development of the economy. In order to develop farmstead tourism, it is necessary to develop authentic tourist content based on tradition, as well as adequate promotion of this tourist product and quality sales channels (Radović et al., 2015). Also, for the purpose of development, in the coming period, more significant financial support from the state is needed in order to affirm farmsteads and develop rural tourism, and thus rural development in the area of AP Vojvodina (Pejanović et al., 2014).

Methodology

The aim of the work is to present the importance of farmstead tourism for the development of rural tourism in the area of AP Vojvodina, as well as to show examples of good practice, i.e. farmsteads with the longest tradition and best results in tourism. The paper uses a field research, descriptive method, as well as an analysis and synthesis method.

Research results - examples of good practice

Based on the results of field research, authentic Vojvodina farmsteads are presented in this chapter, which have the longest tradition in tourism, but are also the most famous on the tourist market, i.e. record the highest number of visits and overnight stays by tourists.

Farstead 137

Farmstead 137 is the first farmstead that opened its doors to tourists, and represents the first tourist farmstead in the area of Vojvodina. Farmstead got its name from the postal code, it is located in Čenej, a village 10 km from Novi Sad. The first tourists arrived at this farmstead in 1998, and since then it has been working continuously and developing its specific tourist offer. The founder and owner of the first tourist farmstead in Vojvodina, Aleksandar Samardžija, believes that the most important thing for modern tourists is the silence and peace they find on farmsteads. It is extremely important that the catering offer includes traditional food from this area – „*salash food*“, and it is also necessary to respect the "*salash customs of life*". Then the effect is guaranteed for both domestic and foreign guests, i.e. the quality of the farmstead tourism offer is achieved.

Agricultural activity – The development of tourism took place in parallel with the development of agriculture, as the basis and essence of farmstead tourism. For

years, the income from the tourist activity was invested in the expansion of the property, which today covers 10 hectares, of which 7 hectares are cultivated. The farmstead produces fruits, vegetables, but also soybeans, wheat, corn, barley, etc. In this way, fresh food for catering, as well as food for domestic animals, is provided from its own agricultural production.



1. 2. 3.

The layout of the house in which there are accommodation facilities, on the farmstead there is a „đeram“ and numerous domestic animals

Source: Photo, G. Mulić

Tourist activity – Farmstead 137 has 12 double rooms, each with its own bathroom. Three rooms are located in the former "biroška", i.e. a house where people lived who helped the owners with agricultural work. The remaining accommodation facilities were built on the area where the pigsty and the chicken coop used to be. In almost all rooms there are clay stoves, which are fired with solid fuel and which give the space a special homely atmosphere. In addition to the breath of the past, modern technology is also present here, because solar panels are used to heat the water, which reduce electricity consumption in the summer. There is a TV set in every room, and the entire farm is covered by the Internet.

The restaurant, which is located in the house, the summer garden, and the closed glass hall are used for catering purposes. The hall is most often used for holding seminars and other gatherings, and it was built on the space where there used to be a parking lot for agricultural machinery. Culinary specialties that are most sought after by guests at this farmstead are: veal knuckles, veal perkelt, ajmokac, schnenokle, and on Sundays rinflajš, as well as other Vojvodina specialties. The specificity is that in many dishes, instead of rice, barley is used, as a local grain, so that sataras with barley is also on offer.



4. 5. 6.

Dining room and bedrooms with antique furniture.

Source: Photo G. Mulić

There is a stable with 26 horses on the farmstead, and a riding school is also organized. The school is accessible daily, first of all, to the children, because the coach lives on the farm. Equestrian tournaments, dog shows, etc. are often organized here. Numerous tourist facilities, high-quality catering offer, as well as accommodation facilities, are responsible for the prestigious position of this farmstead on the tourist market during almost three decades of its existence.

Majkin and Cvetni Farmstead

Ethnopark "Majkin Farmstead" is about three kilometers from Palić, it covers 30 hectares and includes two farmsteads: Majkin and Cvetni. Majkin farmstead and Cvetni farmstead are owned by the Gabrić family. This family has been cultivating a special tourist product based on agricultural production for two decades. Through tourism, they successfully market the agricultural products of small producers from the surrounding area. The idea of the owner of this farmstead is to enable tourists to try the best agricultural products from the wider area in one place. The whole family, three adult children and parents, decided to stay on the farmstead and continue the tradition of their ancestors. One son graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture in Novi Sad and is in charge of the development of agriculture, while the other son successfully manages tourism.



7.



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10.

View of the house on Majkina farmstead and on Cvetni, a farmstead, fishpond and numerous domestic animals are located on the farmsteads

Source: Photo Photo: G. Radović

Agricultural activity – Until 1998, agricultural production was mainly based on animal husbandry, but then it was redirected to fruit growing. Today, apple and plum plantations dominate, and the owners have developed vegetable and arable farming. Half of the food for the needs of tourism is produced independently. Animal husbandry is also represented on the farmstead, mango trees are grown, and every autumn the famous pig slaughterhouse – „disnotor“, is organized here, which is extremely interesting for tourists.



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14.

View of the dining room, antique clay stove and original sink at „Majkin farmstead“, and picture gallery at „Cvetni farmstead“

Source: Photo G. Radović

Tourist activity – Farmsteads are categorized and have the First category of service quality. „Cvetni farmstead“, which is only 50 meters away from „Majkin farmstead“, was built for the purpose of tourism and within it there are accommodation facilities. The farmstead has 15 comfortable rooms, each of which is air-conditioned and has a bathroom. At „Cvetni farmstead“ there is also a dining room for breakfast, a reception, a TV room, a meeting room, a sauna, a mini gym, and a swimming pool. Art colonies are also organized here, so there is also a gallery with about 300 paintings, and workshops of old crafts are also organized. There is also a mini stable at „Cvetni farmstead“, where guests can ride horses, ride a horse-drawn carriage or sleigh, and the youngest can ride ponies. Within the ethno park there is also a children's playground, a golf, volleyball and mini-soccer field, as well as a souvenir shop.

On „Majkin farmstead“ there is a restaurant of local cuisine, which can accommodate up to 500 people. The specialties of the house are apple wine and apple ajvar. There is a fishpond on „Majkin farmstead“ which is only used for sport fishing, which means that all fish caught must be returned. Capital specimens of carp, grass carp, catfish, perch, crucian carp and pike are raised here. On „Majkin farmstead“ there is also a typical country yard with geese, ducks, turkeys and poultry.

In „Majkin farmstead“ and „Cvetni farmstead“ a good connection between agriculture and tourism was achieved, and numerous high-quality tourist facilities were developed. The local cuisine restaurant offers dishes according to the owner's grandmother's recipe, i.e. dishes that represent the tradition in the gastronomy of this farmstead and area.

Didja Hornjakov Farmstead

Didja Hornjak's farmstead is three kilometers from Sombor. The farmhouse was built in 1901, and has been owned by the Hornjak family since 1929. The touristic name of this farmstead is in memory of the owner's grandfather, or "dida" as Bunjevci say, who bought this farmstead and left it to his descendants as an inheritance. Thanks to the owner's love for the traditional farming way of life, persistence and continuous financial investments in the restoration of the farmstead, today the farmstead has kept its original appearance, but at the same

time it can offer guests modern comfort. Today, almost all groups of tourists who visit the cultural and historical sights of Sombor come to this farmstead to get to know the former way of life and work on it. According to the owners, their wish was to preserve the history and culture of the farming lifestyle for themselves, but also to show it to tourists. They succeeded in this because, in more than two decades, as long as they have been engaged in tourism, they have hosted tourists from all five continents.

Agricultural activity – The main activity on the farmstead was agriculture, and since 2010, the owners have decided to engage in tourism as well. Today, the agricultural activity is a platform for tourism, both in terms of supplying the necessary foodstuffs, and in terms of financing, because they cannot yet earn enough funds from tourism as is necessary for the continuous restoration of farmsteads. The Hornjak family cultivates about 100 hectares of land, of which 10 hectares are in the immediate vicinity of the farmstead. They are engaged in agriculture, cattle breeding, and raise sheep, pigs, ducks, geese, turkeys and numerous poultry on the farmstead. Vegetable growing is a function of the required amount of products for tourist activity.



15.



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18.

Designation of the category of tourist services, the view of the house from the street, the gonk and the economic courtyard

Source: Photo Photo: G. Radović

Tourist activity – Farmstead is categorized and has the First category of service quality. The farmhouse has accommodation capacity of five beds, i.e. two rooms, which have separate bathrooms. The owners do not plan to increase the accommodation capacity, as this would damage the authenticity of the farmstead. Central heating has been introduced, and the boiler is heated by soybean straw. The tourist season on the farmstead lasts throughout the year, but each visit must be announced in advance. Guests are provided services on a full board basis, and the price includes everything that is offered outside of regular meals (fresh fruit, homemade brandy, juices,...). The hostess prepares the food herself, the traditional food of this area is on offer: pork soup, rinfleish, sauces, fashir, stuffed duck, fried chicken, as well as poppy seed or cherry strudel, ...



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Dining room, accommodation facilities, ethnic setting in the dining room and in the museum

Source: Photo G. Radović

In the restaurant, in addition to enjoying the food, tourists can also stay in an interior enriched with an ethnic setting, including two dolls dressed in a festive Bunjevac costume. Guests can also see the many animals that are on the farmstead, but also visit the souvenir shop or get involved in the work of the workshop of old crafts. In addition to woodcarving, painting of old pepper tiles is also taught here, as well as bottle making, tinkering, a craft that has almost disappeared in the villages of Vojvodina. Tourists can also learn how to embroider, and the hostess wants to get a small weaving loom. Pre-school children from Sombor and its surroundings also learn the techniques of traditional crafts here, which represents the special educational value of this farmstead.

The quality tourist offer of Dido Hornjak's farmstead, the love and dedication of the hosts to their work and to each guest, which is especially important in rural tourism, are responsible for the fact that this tourist facility has had a prestigious position on the tourist market of Vojvodina and Serbia for more than two decades.

Conclusion

Farmstead tourism is a form of rural tourism that has been successfully developing in the area of AP Vojvodina since the 90s of the 20th century. Today, it is the Vojvodina rural tourism product that has the highest demand on the market. The paper presents three farmsteads with the longest tradition in tourism. On the farmsteads, whose offer was the subject of analysis in this paper, tourism develops on the platform and in parallel with agricultural production. We believe that the reason for the increasing demand of modern tourists for this form of tourism is the peace they find there, as well as numerous interesting tourist facilities, but, above all, high-quality and authentic local food, which is mostly prepared from ingredients produced on the farmstead itself or in close surroundings.

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