

ROLES OF AGRITOURISM IN UPBRINGING AND EDUCATING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Abstract. *Agritourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism practised in rural areas. It fulfils a number of functions, including economic, social, health-related and educational one. Agritourism offer is addressed to all age and social groups. Among children and youth agritourism above all serves an educational and training purpose. In these two processes agritourism farms within the All-Polish Network of Educational Homesteads are particularly important. Educational programmes implemented as part of “Educational Homesteads” are held in the forms of educational and practical classes. The subjects of the classes addressed to children and youth include issues related to regional history and tradition, environment protection, ecology, plant and animal breeding, cuisine, (herbal) medicine, geography, geology and the educational cycle entitled vanishing professions.*

Keywords: *agritourism, education, upbringing, educational homestead, children, youth.*

Introduction

Tourism according to the terminology of the United Nations World Tourism Organization is “all activities of people who travel and for leisure, business or other reasons continuously stay for up to one year outside of their everyday environment, with the exception of trips whose main purpose is economic activity remunerated in the visited town” (Kurek, 2008: 12). Tourism is a widespread phenomenon fulfilling a range of functions. Individual forms and types of tourism cause certain effects on participants in the tourist traffic. For example: Therapeutic tourism shapes health-promoting behaviour making it possible to combine leisure with different kinds of health and beauty treatments (Boruszczak, 2010). Dark tourism influences its participants in the way that puts educational and cognitive functions together and is a form of paying tribute and commemorating human tragedies (Płomiński & Bakota, 2017). Religious and pilgrimage tourism allows for combining the sacred with cognitive and educational elements (Panasiuk, 2011). Ecotourism raises awareness among its participants of threats posed by tourism to the natural environment (Zaręba,

2006). It is also agritourism which falls within this vast array of positive impact on participants of the tourist traffic. It performs a number of functions including economic, social, health and education-related, and its offer is addressed to all age and social groups.

Materials and methods

The aim of this paper is to present the role of agritourism in upbringing and educating children and youth. The area of research has covered the territory of the Republic of Poland. The source basis for preparation of this work has been printed sources and reference books related to tourism, especially to rural tourism and agritourism. As part of preparation of this study the following research methods have been used: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction and a comparative method. The paper addresses research issues which have been put forward in the following questions:

1. What role do “Educational Homesteads” play in educating children and youth?
2. What educational programmes intended for children and youth are implemented on agritourism farms?

Results and discussion

The development of agritourism in Europe, and especially in the European Union states and the countries associated with it, is connected with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy from the early 1990s. In 1992 on the initiative of the then Commissioner for Agriculture Ray MacSharry a package of changes was introduced, which, among other things, was to diversify agricultural areas towards creating non-agricultural jobs (alternative sources of income for the rural population which was to prevent the process of depopulation of rural areas), for example through establishing agritourism and forest farms (Tomczak, 2009). It must be emphasized that the development of agritourism is not only a European but a universal trend noticeable in all regions of the world (Yang, 2012; Veeck et al., 2006). Agritourism is a special form of rural tourism. Agritourism on farms is treated as an activity bringing income other than that coming from plant and livestock production. As part of agritourism farms educational services are provided through the so-called “Educational Homesteads”. In Poland, in the second decade of the 21st century there were on average about 9,000 (annually) agricultural farms offering tourist services. Out of this number approximately 3 % of agritourism farms participated in the project of “Educational Homesteads”.

An educational homestead is a project carried out by country dwellers in rural areas, where at least the two learning objectives from the following are pursued:

- education in the field of crop production;
- education in the field of livestock production;
- education in the field of agricultural processing;
- education in the field of ecological and consumer awareness;
- education in the field of material cultural heritage of rural areas, traditional professions, crafts and folk art (Małolepszy et al., 2017).

A facility should have livestock or agricultural crops to be presented to groups of children and youth entertained as part of school programmes or to be made available as a tourist attraction to families with children and adults travelling individually. It should have conditions to carry out educational activities, including at least one roofed room for conducting classes and toilets for the participants of these classes (Raciborski, 2011).

In order to facilitate the activity of Educational Homesteads the All-Polish Network of Educational Homesteads was established, run by the Centre for Agricultural Consulting in Brwinów, branch in Kraków. The network serves to popularize the idea of education on the farm and to promote the activity of educational farms. The participants in the Network have their offer promoted in the all-Polish internet system and obtain consulting and training assistance and also the opportunity for mutual exchange of experiences.

An Educational Homestead is a proposal to learn about and experience a farmer's work in direct contact with the everyday rhythm of the farm, range of colours, shapes, sounds, smells and tastes of the country. The offer includes active shows and workshops, engaging both children and adults in the activities, mostly during one-day visits. A very interesting educational offer has been presented by the agritourism farm „Ostoją Dworska, W gościnie u Chłopa Świętokrzyskiego” [“Manor Shelter, Visting a Peasant from Świętokrzyskie Region] - an Educational Homestead in Leśnica in the commune of Małogoszcz (province of Świętokrzyskie). The offer is implemented throughout the school year and the summer holiday period and covers the following topics:

- in September, “Tree a man's benefactor for ages”;
- in October, “Pickling cabbage, traditions, rituals and customs”;
- in November, “Old customs and habits on the St.Martin's, St. Catherine's, St. Andrew's day”;
- in December, “Cultivating old traditions of Christmas”, St. Nicholas' Day in the Manor Shelter;
- in January, “Winter trackers in the Manor Shelter learning proper feeding of animals”;

- in February, “Be eco by playing with an eco toy, make it yourself with natural and recycled materials;
- in March and April, “Amphibians from our neighbourhood”, “Cultivating old traditions of Easter”, “Earth Day in the Manor Shelter entitled “You can protect the landscape when shopping”;
- in May, “Honey gift of nature - man's benefactor for ages”;
- in June, “Assessing the landscape, learning and protecting the picture of our Little Homeland”;
- throughout the year, “The image of the country woven with fragrant hay”, “Cultural landscape as a spectrum of natural and cultural values”.

The implementation of educational services on a farm creates new benefits for a farmer, including the possibility of obtaining additional income; promoting farm products; incentive and attracting new customers to direct purchases; the pleasure of working with people, mainly children and school youth (Kmita-Dziasek, 2011).

Table 1 Number of educational homesteads in Poland by provinces (2017)

	Province	Number of homesteads	Selected educational programmes
1.	dolnośląskie [Lower Silesia]	29	History of bee-keeping; Spice herbs of Polish cuisine; Organic cultivation of plants; Vanishing professions - blacksmithing; Handmade paper decorated with herbs; Ecology on a daily basis.
2.	kujawsko-pomorskie [Kuyavia-Pomerania]	9	Healthy food and lifestyle; From grain to loaf; How people travelled when there were no cars; Eco-culinary workshops: goose feast.
3.	lubelskie	11	How oil was beaten in the olden days, The language of horses, the language of people - communication is possible; Warniki, pielmieni, maultaschen or time for pierogi!; Making things in an eco-style – do it yourself; Secrets of honey; Traditional and healthy cuisine -vegetables playing the lead role.
4.	lubuskie	7	Medicinal herb and fruit tinctures; Ecology at home and in the homestead; Regional cuisine - traditional, borderland, German, Polish; Classes in folk and artistic handicraft, From milk to cheese - cheese-making workshops.
5.	łódzkie	10	How do windmills and mills work?; How long have trees been growing?; Vanishing professions - wickerwork; Food storage in the old village; Biology of the pond and the river; Children's duties in an old village of Łowicz region (making twine, hygiene in the countryside).

6.	małopolskie [Lesser Poland]	25	The olden days, Workshops in old methods of baking bread and traditional pies in the bread oven; Eco-friendly garden - fresh food from the garden; Good knowledge of herbs, Herbs in dishes; Health-promoting properties of herbal plants.
7.	mazowieckie [Mazovia]	24	Culinary traditions in Kurpie region; Agriculture and activities on a farm, The importance of bees in nature and for people; Protecting the natural environment around us.
8.	opolskie	12	Hotel for insects; The secrets of a drop of honey; Renewable energy sources and energy-efficient life; Tradition is worth knowing - vanishing professions.
9.	podkarpackie [Subcarpathia]	15	The pot is not so black as it is painted. Ecology and environmental protection - protecting nature; Horse in olden times and now, Burning grass as degradation of life.
10.	podlaskie	10	Countryside game - travel following fox tracks; House in the country; Exercise is health and happiness; In one day "Towards history and nature".
11.	pomorskie [Pomerania]	20	Educational activities in the forest maze, including bread baking; Vegetables and their use; Regional lesson of Kaszuby region, Toys in the village - workshops in making toys of hay and straw mats; the rural Olympics, Meeting with history and nature of Kaszuby region.
12.	śląskie [Silesia]	16	Learning about the activity of the farm and the ostrich farm; What animals talk about, Life of peasants - 19th century village; Old country gardens; Light blue gold or the history of flax; Cooked in hot water - workshops in making country egg pasta.
13.	świętokrzyskie	17	Vanishing professions: blacksmithing and artistic metalwork; The world of fish on the farm of Mr and Mrs Guz - from eggs to large fish; Animal husbandry in the manor and park complexes on the territory of Poland; Mushrooms in a hundred ways; Healthy soil and field - health at home and on the table.
14.	warmińsko-mazurskie [Warmia and Masuria]	14	Herbs closed in glass; Art workshops with elements of ecology and recycling; Gardening workshop - My garden in a pot; How flats and houses were heated in the olden days - furnaces and tile making in Mazuria; Food produced on an organic farm; From sheep to cap – where wool comes from.
15.	wielkopolskie [Greater Poland]	12	Life in the country homestead; Fields and its benefits; Little zoo: curiosities about animals on our farm, their origin and habits; Home use of herbs - tinctures, teas, juices, vinegars, macerates and incense; Medicinal properties of vegetables and fruit; Wickerwork - folk art.
16.	zachodniopomorskie [Western Pomerania]	7	In the land of bees; Bee-keeping and bee products; Colourful apiary on a farm; Herb and edible garden; Wild herbs and fruit.

An educational programme usually lasts from one, two to a few hours. An offer may assume an all-day stay, covering sports and recreation activities, outdoor activities and catering services (Kmita-Dziasek, 2011)

Education in the field of crop production

Education on a farm is based on direct participation in diverse, agricultural and economic activities depending on the season. An important factor is the cycle of visits to the farm for the same group of students – in spring children can learn to prepare the ground for growing in the garden, plant seeds. During the next visits to the farm they can observe plants growing until the harvest (Kmita-Dziasek, 2011). In this learning path there are, among others, educational classes within the scope of farming: production of compost, fertilizing, ploughing, harrowing, sowing grains (sowing grains by hand), planting potatoes, harvest, crop of potatoes and beets, recognizing types of cereal crops, treatments, traditional and modern farming methods; within the scope of gardening: recognizing vegetables, herbs, pickling cabbage and cucumbers; agriculture: exhibition of agricultural machinery and equipment, an overview of methods of their use.

Education in the field of livestock production

An essential part of this educational path is direct contact with animals. Children and school youth should be provided with knowledge of every animal on the farm. In addition, they should have the opportunity to experience the immediate presence of animals on the farm by watching, stroking, listening to the sounds, and learning about smells. Watching activities related to work with livestock, among others feeding, tidying up, milking, cleaning. Activities consist of learning about animal life, including their use and life functions, breeding systems, e.g. of horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats; learning about the breeds of animals. Visiting livestock housing, e.g. henhouse, stable, cowshed, barn. Learning about the tools and equipment necessary for livestock production. An educational programme in the field of livestock production should be adapted to the age of children and youth (Kmita-Dziasek, 2011).

Education in the field of agricultural processing

The path refers to the organization of processing workshops and demonstrations, including dairy products, meat, cereals and seasonal fruits and vegetables. In classes children and youth complete the way from the production and collection of raw materials to the final product. They learn about different

methods of processing a product, gain experience in production, up to the final product. An example educational path in the subject “From grain to loaf” consists in carrying out the following activities: “discussion of the types of cereals, description of tools and machines for cropping of the field, threshing cereals, grinding cereals, preparing dough for bread, forming breads by children, history ovens - baking formed pieces of dough.”

Education in the field of ecological and consumer awareness

Ecology, environmental protection and consumer awareness occupy a very important place in the programmes of Educational Homesteads. During educational activities conducted on agritourism farms children learn about the importance of ecology and environmental protection in human life. They learn responsibility for the condition of nature as a common good. The specificity of an agritourism farm helps to understand a lot of aspects related to ecology. Some behaviour on the farms is naturally environmentally friendly, e.g. waste management (e.g. feeding animals organic waste, composting organic matter), efficient water management (e.g. the use of rain for watering the garden). Educational activities on the farm build awareness of the origin and nutritional value of farm products, teach how to distinguish natural products from highly processed industrial ones and shape consumer habits. An example path promoting ecology is an educational programme entitled “Renewable energy sources and energy saving life” implemented in the Demonstration Ecological Farm “Ekostyl.” Participants in the activities gain knowledge on environmental management, especially related to the use of renewable energy and other environmentally friendly solutions which make a positive impact on the environment (Wnęk, 2016).

Education in the field of material cultural heritage of rural areas, traditional professions, crafts and folk art

Educational classes are conducted by the hosts, who, by sharing their passion with the participants, not only show the process of creating crafts, but also provide knowledge of regional education and daily life of a farmer for a better understanding of the country and to inspire respect for human work. An example path of material culture heritage of rural areas is presented by E. Kmita-Dziasek, on the example of an agritourism farm “Pod Skalką” in Przybynów, province of Silesia, where a “Mini-Heritage Park of the Jurassic Village” was created, where activities entitled “Rescuing from oblivion” are conducted. The heritage park consists of a homestead with an original farm cottage from the turn of the 19th and 20th century, equipped with old utensils of

daily use, stove, household tools, agricultural machinery, and illustrates the life of fathers, grandparents and great-grandparents, retaining a memory of a piece of history and tradition. During the activities in the homestead students learn about the most important traditions associated with the life in the country (Kmita-Dziasek, 2015).

Conclusion

An important role in the implementation of rural tourism is played by agritourism. On some agritourism farms the programme of “Educational Homesteads” is carried out. For children and school youth, activities implemented as part of “Educational Homesteads” serve an educational function. An Educational Homestead is a proposal to learn about and experience a farmer's work in direct contact with the everyday rhythm of the farm, range of colours, shapes, sounds, smells and tastes of the country. It is worth mentioning that this offer is mainly addressed to children and school youth from cities and small-town communities. As part of Educational Homesteads educational paths are carried out in the field of plant production, livestock production, agricultural processing, ecological and consumer awareness, and in the field of material cultural heritage of rural areas, traditional professions, crafts and folk art.

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