

УДК

АГРОТУРИСТИЧНІ ФЕРМИ – АЛЬТЕРНАТИВНА БАЗА РОЗМІЩЕННЯ ДЛЯ ЄВРО-2012

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Польща та Україна прийматимуть чемпіонат Європи з футболу у 2012 році. Передбачається, що у самій лише Варшаві не вистачатиме від 10 до 15 тис. ліжкомісць. Один з варіантів вирішення проблеми – спорудження нових готелів, але сумнівною залишається рентабельність цих готелів після чемпіонату. Часткове вирішення потреби в розміщенні туристів полягає у використанні існуючої бази агротуризму. Агротуризм – відпочинковий туризм, який передбачає використання сільського (фермерського) господарства. Розрізняють дві базові форми агротуризму: винаймання помешкання з обслуговуванням безпосередньо в межах фермерського господарства або розміщення на нічліг з самообслуговуванням на землях, які знаходяться в межах даного господарства, наприклад в кемпінгах та наметах. У агротуризмі фермерське господарство становить одночасно нічліжну базу та головний предмет інтересу для туриста.

Розглянуто питання використання однієї із альтернативних баз розміщення – агро туристичних ферм, проаналізовано переваги цього виду розміщення. Основну увагу сконцентровано на природному ландшафтному парку “Долина Барич”, який розташований на межі двох воєводств – Велькопольського та Дольношльонського. Столиці цих воєводств (Познань і Вроцлав) прийматимуть матчі чемпіонату. Представлено результати дослідження, об’єктом якого стали фермерські господарства, розташовані в межах ландшафтного парку „Долина Барич”. Досліджувались дані господарства на предмет визначення наступних параметрів: забезпеченість території ліжкомісцями, географія туристів, що користаються послугами цих господарств, діапазон послуг, що пропонуються туристам, цінова політика, обізнаність власників агро осель про туристичні можливості краю.

Обґрунтовано необхідність та перспективи використання агротуристичних господарств досліджуваної території для розміщення фанатів під час проведення Євро- 2012.

Ключові слова: агротуристичні господарства, природний ландшафтний парк „Долина Барич”, споживачі послуг, власники агроосель, база розміщення, Євро-2012.

Poland and Ukraine will co-host the UEFA European Football Championship in 2012. The head of Tourist Institution, Dr Krzysztof Łopaciński, has forecasted that for the EURO 2012, and just in Warsaw alone, there could shortage of between 10 and 15 thousand lodging places; Wrocław and Trójmiasto could also experience the same problem. Presumably, in the cities, during the Championship, businessmen and tourists not interested in this sport event will simply postpone their visits to cities, where stadiums are located, or even avoid in the whole of Poland. This is in itself is a well-known phenomenon. But this is, of course, just a presumption, and no plans should be placed on it. Besides, in such an event, there will be freed places rather in the high standard complexes that are sort-after, above all, by foreigners. However, for the average Polish tourist, the most important are three-star and below hotels.

Today, in the whole country, we have some 60 thousand places in hotels, of which 18 thousand are found in four and five star hotels, 25 in three star hotels, and a mere 17 thousand in one and two star hotels.²⁴ This number will gather for of beds for the footballers, state dignitaries, and activists, however, for the common football fans, for sure, there will be shortage... Of course, it is possible to build new hotels – however, what about their profitability after the EURO?

Agrotouristic farms could constitute alternative lodging base, especially for the not so well-to-do tourists. According to Wiatrak (2003) [5], in 2002, in Poland, there were more than 6500 of such farms, however, there were more than 53000 lodging places in total!

Besides, the expenditures incurred by the football fans in these farms will bring rational economic benefits to the Polish citizens, and not, as a rule, to hotel owners, of which whom most of them are foreigners. What is more, the natural and cultural assets of the Polish countryside could encourage tourists – fans, who under normal conditions would never have taken advantage of this specific accommodation base, to regularly visit the Polish countryside.

Countryside tourism is no new phenomenon. The famous definitions: „holiday in the country”, „vacations under the pear-tree”, or, even, „trips to summer-resorts” have, for a long time, been associated with visits to the countryside, to the family, friends or farmers. This type of tourism is becoming more and more popular form of spending free time, including, holiday by different social groups.

The essence of this form of tourism is the reciprocation, mutual influence, cooperation, curiosity in the self and own affairs; its domain: expanse, guaranteeing intimacy with nature and ease of movement, limiting contacts with anonymous crowds and offering opportunity of individual contact with other village population, as well as with other tourists, conducive for exercising sport in fresh air etc [5].

In addition to benefits it offers the tourists, agrotourism offers other benefits. It constitutes an addition source of income for the farmers. Development of this form of tourism would have huge influence on the promoting the region, gearing the countryside towards improvement of services, broadening the views and knowledge of the population living on the countryside and opening to the outside world. Agrotourism stimulates enterprise spirit among farmers, promotes investments in infrastructure on the countryside, growth of trade and increase in population rural [4].

Case study – „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park area. The area covering 10 communes, which, for the requirement of the article has been termed „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park, was selected for detailed analysis, since, at least, in part, this form of protection of nature is administered by each of these communes. The featured area is situated on the border of two provinces – Wielkopolska and Dolnośląska. Since the two provincial capitals (Poznan and Wrocław) will organize matches in the EURO 2012, it is particularly predisposed to become an outing base for the football fans (figure). In addition, the park area is characterized by very high tourist attraction potential, which could encourage tourists – football fans to remain in this place somewhat longer ...

In 2004 some 22 agrotouristic farms were researched, of which 19 were subjected to a thorough inventory. Milicz commune is the clear front-runner here, where more than 63% of the structures are concentrated here, the next positions are occupied by the following communes: Przygodzice (18%), Twardogóra (9%), and Krośnice and Trzebnica (5% each); 45% of the structures are associated with the Rural Tourism Association in the „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park, the association has been in operation since 1999.

²⁴ <http://www.tur-info.pl>

All the farms in total have 168 accommodation places, each farm having between two and 20 accommodation places, the average number of accommodation places per object is slightly less than 8; the owners, on average, rent out 3 rooms (from 1 to 7). The Polish Federation of Rural Tourism rated five objects as „Hospitable Farms” – 4 have first category, one – standard. Which is interesting is that more than 80% of the guesthouse owners took courses or trainings courses in how to attend guests, and this is very beneficial.

Almost 32% of the guesthouse owners have been lived in their locality from birth, the remaining has lived, on average, for some 13 years. On average, agrotouristic activities started appearing in 1998, however, the longest existing structure came into existence in 1984, while the most recent was set up in 2003; it should be added here that agrotourism is expanding all the time (for example, in 2006, three new structures were erected). The same trend as found all over Poland is seen here – more and more of the people managing agrotouristic farms come from cities, mainly from the biggest ones.

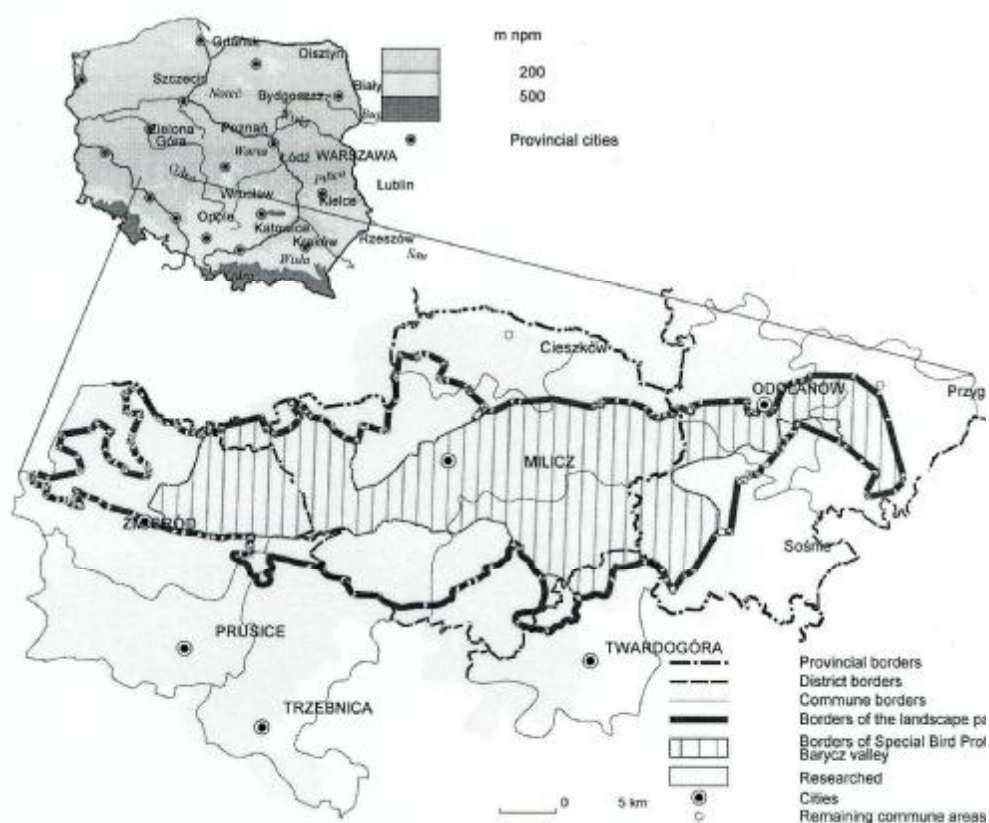


Figure. Situation of featured area on the background of Polish administrative borders

Most often, the guesthouse owners came to know of the possibilities of receiving tourists from the Advisory Center for Agriculture – these are mainly district consultant team – 23% of those surveyed, although the other indices (Agrotourism Association, press, media and friends) attained very similar indices – around 20% each. Maybe, this form of tourism precisely owes its popularity to such widely conducted information campaign.

Unfortunately, the guesthouse owners have almost zero the knowledge on tourist attractions, to be found in the vicinity. They are able to name only the very general qualities, as a rule, the natural qualities. According to them, the forests constitute the highest attraction (89%), followed immediately by ponds (86%). 21% of those surveyed pointed to the presence of reserves, while ornitho-fauna natural resources, and clean air each had 16%. However, 42% of the surveyed pointed to places of historical heritage – nevertheless, no concrete object was specified. Most likely, this results from the fact that only 1/3 of the guesthouse owners are indigenous residents of a given locality (though, of course, this does not justify this type of attitude). It might seem that the fans would not be interested in this type of knowledge – however, if we intend to have them in a given area for a longer time – they should be encouraged in some way,! After all, they would not be aware, at most, of how attractive a given area would be...

On the issue of where the tourists come from, according to those surveyed as many as 80% of them come from Wrocław. Of the remaining 20% the positions were as follows Katowice (37%), Wałbrzych (26%), Warsaw (21%), Poznan (16%), Ostrów Wielkopolski, (11%) Kalisz, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Leszno, Rawicz and Wschowa (had less than 10%). From the above presentation it results that they are, first of all, rather tourists from the neighboring regions. EURO 2012 could contribute to an increase in the average radius from where the tourists come from.

In total, during the whole of the tourist season (between May and September) some 700 tourists are received in all the structures, this gives an average of 37 tourists per farm. During the off-season period, some 300 tourists come here, giving an average of 16 tourists per object. These are not knock-out numbers – the football fans could considerably increase the number of guests received at agrotouristic farms.

The proportion of the guest was as follows: family with children (63%), individual tourists (to 52%); next in line is elderly individuals (32%) and social groups (21%). This index for the surveyed area somewhat differ from the data from the whole of Poland – it is worth noting the very big percentage of individual tourists, who travel here more often, in order to admire the features of Barycz Valley landscape and nature.

As many as 69% of the objects received foreign tourists, most often single individuals (72% of the objects), in case of the remaining objects they constitute up to 30% of the total number of guests. The guests, more often, come from Germany (93% of the surveyed farms), followed by Holland and Austria (each with 21%), then Britain (14%); in addition, the participants also mentioned the following countries as the origin of their guests: France, Norway, USA, Ukraine, Spain and Macedonia. Decisively, the greater part of the Germany tourists are, first of all, individuals with polish roots, and, more often, with roots precisely in these areas – this, however, is the generation of those born after the Second World War. In contrast to the other fragments of the so-called Recovered Lands, there is relatively less number of sentimental tourists; this is, most probably, due to the border character of Barycz Valley, and big number of polish nationals living under German authorities. Consequently, as can be seen, guesthouse owners from the surveyed region have a lot of experience, also, in attending to foreign tourists. Therefore, the agrotouristic base may serve not just the polish fans alone!

As concerning the range of services offered, the one most often chosen by tourists is *ex aequo* with only accommodation, accommodation plus meal (37%); accommodation with full board has the lowest percent (26%).

As many as 79% of the objects are managed by the family, in 16% of the farms there is outside help, however, in only one structure employed someone to attend to the guests. Both of these features, family run and zero employees, are seen in the other regions of Poland. Of course, during the European Championships as well as when flooded with guests, it is possible to employ members of the local society, and this, of course, increase the rational benefits of receiving tourists – football fans more.

The guesthouse owners are striving to diversify the types of recreational activities offered to their guests in the farms, more often, by organizing camp-fires (74% of those surveyed), and hiring out bicycles (68%); in addition, they organize trips (42%) and offer horse-riding recreations (32%). It should be noted that these are hardly sophisticated propositions; they are designed for the rather undemanding guests. There is a lack of specialized offers, which could have been of interest, for example, to eco-tourists, fishermen, birdwatchers, professional cyclists etc. However, it seems that this type of offer should completely gather for the needs of the football fans. Although, the guesthouse owner should offer the fan other forms of recreations on the days when the fan's team will not be playing.

Nevertheless, what a pity that there are almost no offers associated with the region – traditional kitchen (the „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park region is the „European Carp capital”!), product associated with the local natural and cultural attractions. However, the tourist is destined to his own initiative – he independently organizes his own time, for example, setting out for a trip with a guide, ornithologists, hunter, fisherman, or renting a kayak. The guesthouse owner does not, in any way, cooperate with the above-mentioned specialists, and water equipment rentals points. On the other hand, most of the guesthouse owners – if a guest so desire – have their own company to offer: they eat, spend the evening, watch television together, etc.

However, in spite of impoverished offer in the area of additional attractions, a significant percent of the tourists often return, not only to the researched area, but also, even, to the farms, in which they have been before. This results, among others, from the fact that part of the tourists taking rests in the farms are holidaymakers, who have been coming here for years and continue to nurture this tradition – the only thing which has changed is the place of accommodation. Furthermore, there is an observed specific bonds created between those renting out guestrooms and their guests – more often than not they are transformed into familiar terms and, even, friendship.

Looking into the motives behind farms opening agrotourism business, the unchallenged motive is the opportunity of making additional income (95% indications). There is also the desire to make use of the existing lodging base and – curiously enough – the desire to make friendly contacts with new people (47%) is also very popular. However, 26% of those surveyed pointed to the existing demand in agrotourism services, while 5% desired, by this way, to attract customers to agricultural products produced in the farm.

As many as 68% of those surveyed think that the local government has shown interest in the development of tourism in the commune, though they are of the opinion that it should come up with greater number of concrete actions, especially in the field of development of tourist base and promotion of the commune; also the technical infrastructure of the researched area needs improvement. The owners of agrotouristic farms also point to the need of the officials to have solid knowledge on the possibilities of securing tourist investment funds from the European funds.

The local governments should, precisely, before the Euro 2012, help promote agrotouristic farms offers to the fans from Poland and abroad. Because, thanks to this specific type of tourists, not just the farms alone, but also other businesses (transport, commercial etc) from a given area, could make additional income.

Taking demographic data into consideration, it can be seen that the owners of the farms are, mainly, men (although, most of all, the women are involved in attending to the tourists), they constitute 53% of those surveyed, with average age of 48 years (ranging from 21 to 79!), with secondary school education (64%). The average price of the services in the structures is as follows:

- accommodation alone – 23.50 zlotys,
- accommodation with one meal – 32 zlotys,
- accommodation with two meals – 40 zlotys,
- accommodation with full board – 54 zlotys.

These prices do not deviate much from the average prices registered in central Poland. However, as can be seen, the prices are very competitive compared to hotels.

Taking the individual features of the catalogues objects into consideration, topology of the agrotouristic farms found in researched area was compiled. J. Wojciechowski (2002) has distinguished 6 types of farms, these are: traditional peasant forms, specialized water and horse-riding recreation areas, former State Farms (PGR), structures associated the National Forests and agrotouristic guesthouses. Only four types of the above-mentioned objects were identified on the commune, in whose administrative area the „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park is situated.

Active agricultural farms, where animals are kept/ cultivation of crops take place, has the highest number of offers. Guestrooms are found in one building together with the living quarters of the farmer, the bathrooms are, unfortunately, shared (some of them shared even with the owners of the structures).

Specialized structures are also fairly many – both those specializing in Horse-riding and fishing tourism. Such farms have separate guests buildings.

Agrotourism in the communes, in whose administrative area the „Barycz Valley” natural landscape park is situated, is fairly developed. Agrotouristic farms constitute almost 30% of all the accommodation base structures – the highest number among all the types found in the researched area; it should here be stressed that they are, first of all, year-round structures. On the other hand – they comprise just slightly more than 5% of all accommodation places. This results, however, from the features of these types of structures – they are not, as a rule, the main source of income of the owners of such guesthouses, but only supplements, complimenting domestic budget. The process of development of agrotouristic farms continues – new buildings are constantly emerging, to a significant extent, the existing association and agricultural counseling centers contribute to this to this end. In spite of the broad knowledge and commitment by the owners (a greater percent participating in trainings and courses), offer by the farms is fairly modest – local amenities, features of the local kitchen, possibility of growth of specialized tourism are not taken advantage of. In addition, the number of rooms in a farm is not optimum – because it is well known that structures with fewer than five rooms are exempted from taxation – in the meantime, on average, 3 chambers are rented in an object. However, on the other hand, such a situation favors comfortable recreation – because, it is very rare for more than two families or groups of holidaymakers to be in the farm at the same time.

There is information available on farms – the association of agrotourism has published a special leaflet and participates in different tourist as well as agricultural trade fairs, for example, Tour Salon or Polagra-Farm in Poznan; promotion also takes place in the Internet,

and Tourist Information desk in Milicz. Some of the farms structures distribute their own leaflets.

Agrotouristic base is fairly strongly concentrated in space – as much as 63% of the centers are situated in Milicz commune; in five communes not even one-agrotouristic farm was recorded. However, a positive trend is shaping up – of the three newly emerging structures noted in 2006 only one was found in Milicz commune.

In spite of significant similarities to agrotourism in other regions of Poland (especially the central region), a number of characteristic features were noted. Firstly, there is a significant percent of individual tourists, who rarely appear in agrotouristic farms; they are, first of all, individuals who practice special tourism. In addition, almost 70% of the accommodation owners have, at one time or another, received foreigners in their houses – they were mainly people with Polish roots, however, as opposed to other regions of Poland – these are people who were born after the Second World War. Also another surprising thing is the very high ratio of the guesthouse owners, who have participated in different types of trainings (almost 80%), however – as from observation – they are not in a position to put acquired theoretical knowledge into practice.

In conclusion – agrotouristic farms of the featured area, for sure, may serve as accommodation base during EURO 2012.

Different tourists take advantage of agrotouristic farms offers. Most often, the main factors determining the choice of holidays on the countryside are often:

- reasonable prices,
- high recreational qualities,
- possibility of contact with nature,
- possibility of contact with other people,
- good accommodations outfits,
- recreation tailored to the needs of the tourist [2].

Tourists – fans, could also take some of these factors, mainly reasonable prices and good accommodation outfits, into consideration. Such type of consumer of tourist services is not a typical agrotourism consumer, but an „average tourist”, in reality, does not exist, it is only some statistical fiction. The most important is to orientate one’s business towards „somebody”, that is towards a specific group of consumers. Contrary to gathering for „all”, gathering for „someone” creates chances and opportunities to better adapt tourist product to the requirements of the consumers, easier development of activity plan in the field of agrotourism as well as directing limited material and financial resources, time and efforts of the members of a farmer family on the part of tourist market, which guarantees profits from sales, hence, consequently, enables effective and efficient managing of tourist activities [3].

There is still some time left before European Championships. The owners of agrotouristic farms should make use of this remaining time to appropriately adapt their offers to the requirements of the fans of EURO 2012. Accommodation in the farms will have mutual benefits: for the owners of the accommodation quarter – additional earnings (EURO will be just before the peak season), and for the fans – pleasant and inexpensive recreation.

Agrotourism is often seen as a means of recreation for the less well-to-do. However, this is not true, rural tourism and agrotourism have, recently, become more and more a resilient tourist service sector. Customers are expecting high quality services in form of accommodation, food, interesting attractions and customer care. For the modern agrotourist, providing lodging place and food is no longer enough [1].

There are new agrotouristic farms in which accommodation, full board and additional attractions are offered every year. We are hopeful that during the EURO 2012 they will be sufficient of all the interested parties.

There is already a website, where one can book accommodation during EURO 2012 (<http://www.accommodationi2012.republika.pl>) – this is an initiative worth of praise, which will, for sure, be beneficial for both the tourists and the owners of the quarters.

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AGROTOURISTIC FARMS – AN ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION BASE FOR EURO 2012

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Poland and Ukraine will co-host the UEFA European Football Championship in 2012. Agrotouristic farms could constitute alternative to hotels lodging base. The research is devoted to the area which is situated on the border of two provinces – Wielkopolska and Dolnoslaska – natural landscape park “Barycz Valley”. This area is characterized by very high tourist attraction potential which could encourage tourists – football fans to remain in this place longer. The research was held to learn about the number of accommodation places available in the area, knowledge of the guesthouse owners on tourist attractions, services offered, prices etc.

Key words: agrotouristic farms, guesthouse owners, accommodation base, European Football Championship in 2012, natural landscape park “Barycz Valley”.

*Стаття надійшла до редколегії 21.02.2008
Прийнята до друку 22.06.2008*