



Sustainability in Agritourism

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What Is Sustainability?

Development Oriented

• “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UNWCED, 1987)

Triple Bottom Line

• Sustainability is practiced most effectively in the dimensions of society, the economy, and the environment, with sustainability needing to be achieved in each dimension for a society to become sustainable overall

Strong Vs. Weak

- Weak Sustainability: The duty of sustainability is to allow for the perpetual preservation of the quality of life, not any single resource.
- Strong Sustainability: The next generation should inherit a stock of environmental assets that is not less than the stock the previous generation inherited and enjoyed

What Is Agritourism?

“A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner”
(National Agricultural Law Center)

Common Agritourism Practices

Education

Tours and Exhibits

Outdoor Recreation

Biking, Hunting, Shooting

Entertainment

Concerts, Fairs, Weddings

Direct Sales

Farm Stands, Wineries, U-Pick

Agritourism & Sustainability

Economic Sustainability

Governments have historically used agritourism as a means of economic development and financial diversification in underdeveloped or failing rural communities.

64.9%

Income over \$59k
(Barbieri, 2012)

The Italian and Chinese governments both sponsored programs incentivizing agritourism as a means of rural economic development
(Sonnino, 2004) (Yang, 2012).

68.5%

Average Increase in Farm Profits
(Barbieri, 2012)

The USDA promotes agritourism as an income diversification opportunity for farms.

38

Number of Farm Employees
(Barbieri, 2012)

Social Sustainability

State-sponsored agritourism projects in China encouraged rural residents to restore historical temples and antique buildings. Communities also held festivals celebrating rural culture.

Barbieri (2012) found that American agritourism operations are more likely to preserve or restore historical buildings.

“We use the money raised from tourism to restore the old temple of the village”

Interview quote from Yang (2012)

Environmental Sustainability

Agritourism farms pay greater attention to environmental matters compared to non-agritourism farms
(Mastronardi et al, 2015).

In China, the presence of agritourism in a rural village incentivized residents to plant flowers in front of their homes and funded a waste collection center, reducing litter in the village
(Yang, 2012).

In the United States, agritourism farms are more likely to incorporate certain sustainable environmental practices compared to non-agritourism farms
(Barbieri, 2012).

“I have used the subsidies of the EU to green the environment at my farm. I created a patch of woodland with a hiking trail, and now I want to put some benches along the side, so tourists can rest and watch the animals. Those who come to the countryside search for certain values, that’s why I . . . invest in nature”

Interview quote from Sonnino (2004)

Tourism & Sustainable Development

Established Support

The United Nations (UN) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) present tourism as a means for sustainable economic development in developing countries.

“Promote the formulation of environmentally sound and culturally sensitive tourism programmes as a strategy for sustainable development of urban and rural settlements and as a way of decentralizing urban development and reducing discrepancies among regions”
UN Agenda 21

Conclusions

Agritourism is a largely non-extractive industry that has been promoted by the United Nations as a means of sustainable development in developing countries.

Government support of agritourism operators has allowed underdeveloped rural communities to flourish in Italy and China.

In the United States, agritourism operations outperform other farm diversification methods in terms of revenue and employment.

Agritourism promotes the restoration of historical buildings and cultural landmarks through increased revenues and interest in rural cultures.

Agritourism incentivizes conservation practices such as planting of wooded areas and reduction of littering.

Bock Program Agritourism publications

Maria Kalaitzandonakes, Brenna Ellison, Jessica Guarino, Renata Endres, Bryan Endres, *Pumpkin Patches during the Pandemic: How Agritourism Operations in Illinois are Coping with Covid-19* (2020).

Jessica Guarino, Renata Endres, Tyler Swanson and Bryan Endres. “It’s Pumpkin Patch Season and Agritourism is Booming—But What Exactly is Agritourism?.” (2021).