AGROTOURISM IN THE CARAS-SEVERIN COUNTRYSIDE

AGROTURISMUL ÎN SPAŢIUL RURAL CĂRĂŞAN

MONICA OGARLACI[1], ELENA TONEA[2], DINA LUŢ[1]

[1] Christian University "Dimitrie Cantemir" Timisoara, Department of Tourism and Commercial Management, Timisoara, Romania
monicaogarlaci@yahoo.com
[2] Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Timişoara, Agricultural Management Faculty, Timisoara, Romania

Abstract: *The opportunity to spend a holiday in nature, the hospitality in accommodation, the traditional cuisine, the rural holidays that offers charm vacation at this the countryside, rural tourism and agrotourism make our country to be appreciated and wanted. The offer of this countryside, represent a valuable tourism potential and can play an important role in economic development of the county. Trough agrotourism development in Caras-Severin, is offered a viable alternative for rural development of this county, the reorganization of economical life, social and cultural barriers.*

Key words*: rural tourism, agrotourism, touristic potential, rural area, tourism market*

THE ORETICAL ASPECTS OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM

Rural tourism and agrotourism are notions that for many means the same thing but the sphere of rural tourism has such broad coverage: the rural tourism is a concept that covers touristic activity performed and managed by the local population and based on local natural and human potential in while the agrotourism is a particular form of rural tourism, including tourism activity itself: hotel, hostel, tourist traffic, running programs, additional basic services and economic activity, usually agriculture, practiced by the hosts of tourists (productive activities of obtaining and processing of agricultural products in the household and their trade to tourists, or to business networks and also the way leisure time), both forms of tourism are practice without disturbing the natural balance of an area. Between

agrotourism and other rural industries, there is an interdependence that determines the development of their tourism practice (pottery, gardening, berry growing and processing, fishing, etc..), and this in turn creates new opportunities to develop a that. Agrotourism represents a real chance for the local economy, this creating the main motivation in training and development of initiatives, some traditional activities that have been ignored for a long time: crafts, local artwork to satisfy tourists.

AGROTOURISTIC POTENTIAL OF CARAS-SEVERIN

One of the areas with a high rural tourism potential area is represented by Caras-Severin County. Located in the south-west of Romania, Caras-Severin County covers an area of 8514 square kilometers (3.6% of the country, ranks third in size among the counties), the county residence is Resita an industrial city, includes 2 cities, 6 towns, 69 communes with 188 villages.

In Caras Severin are found all three forms of landscape, but predominantly mountainous occupying 65% of the territory, represented by the Banat Mountains, Tarcu Mountains, Godeanu Mountains and Cerna Mountains , therefore it can be considered as a county of mountain. Because of natural setting of the relief forms, Caras-Severin has a wide variety of natural landscapes, here is a rich tourism potential and well represented both in the urban and rural environments, which makes this administrative unit to be considered a valuable tourist destination on national and European level.

Cerna valley and the peaks Small Domogled and Large Domogled (1106 m), includes the oldest forest reserve in the country, founded in 1932, on an area of 2000 ha the reservation protects rare plant species, including black pine of Banat, white Carthusian a specific cave fauna, butterflies, horned viper, the bat and the tortoise. Through her richness and originality, the animal world is represented by a variety of species. Here are found the majority of species of a cynegetical interest. The rich water area analyzed provides conditions for fishing in : the Cerna, affluents of the right side of Timis river, the two Bistre, Upper Bârzava, Caras, Nera, accumulation lakes and Danube Clisura. Vast territories across the county, with a special landscape value, were declared natural reservation, some of them have been integrated into national parks or natural park perimeter: the natural reservation, Bigar "the natural reservation. Caras Gorge", the reservation

natural keys of Gârlişte, the natural reservation 'Nera-Beusnita "the natural reservation" Domogled "the natural reservation" Narcissus Valley meadows of Sebes "the natural reservation" Nera springs "the natural reservation" Ciclova Valley "the natural reservation" Great Valley ".

Caras-Severin is an ethnographic-folk still living area, the Romanian people here who live with Serbo-Croatian, Saxons, Hungarians, is the the creator of a specific art that fits in the overall unity of Romanian popular culture.

In terms of demographic key the main characteristic of the mountain area of Caras-Severin is on one hand relatively high degree of popular part of the mountain, and on the other hand, a high density per household. This density indicates the presence of several generations in the household, in the simultaneous coexistence of grandparents, parents and children. This shows the high potential of rural areas to achieve such economic activities, most foods can be produced in villages. The population of the mountain has a socio-professional structure and specific behaviour of people with ancient traditions of archaic culture and morality unaltered, this population is the keeper and furthers valuable culture and traditions.

Regarding agriculture, the changes in the national economy after 1989 had echoes in rural agricultural of Caras-Severin area. The Caras-Severin are has a structure that is unfavourable to efficient agriculture land. Of the total county area, 851,974 ha of agricultural area is 47% or 399,620 hectares, of which 127,240 hectares of arable land, 182,839 ha of natural pastures, hayfields 75,990 ha, 1222 ha of vineyards, orchards, 2,329 hectares. Forests occupy an area of 382,019 ha, representing 45% of the county, ranking him second place in the country, each inhabitant being awarded to 1 ha of forest. The arable land has a small share in the total of agricultural fund, which proves that no benefits are brought by agriculture, being practiced only for household survival.

Geographical configuration of the county offers ideal conditions for development and consolidation of many types and forms of tourism. Thus, Caras-Severin territory occurs the following types and forms of tourism: the physical and mental rest and recreation, health tourism which is dominated by the existence of the valuable Herculane resorts, mountain tourism, which is practiced in the resorts: Semenic and Muntele Mic , Crivaia, Trei Ape, Poiana Marului, which facilitates the hiking and winter sports, ecotourism in the three national parks and dozens of protected natural areas, cultural

tourism, which has more sub forms present due to the diversity of cultural property: cultural-historical, religious and pilgrimage, ethnographic museum, memorial, rural tourism and agrotourism, which is practiced in villages of the mountain area, hilly tall, the industrial tourism, capitalizing on technological heritage very rich and valuable of the area, fishing tourism and hunting, drawing on the fish stock in lakes, rivers and hunting fund courses of plateau and mountain area, weekend tourism, which has grown stronger in recent years due to reduced income of the potential tourists; scientific and meetings tourism, congresses, business, running mostly in Resita and Caransebes Baile Herculane Crivaia-Văliug, ethnic tourism - multiethnic and multi-space, due to the large number of caves speleology, adventure tourism with a variety the sub forms. As can be observed quantitative and qualitative dimensions of tourism offer caused shaping, development and consolidation of several types and forms of tourism, among them the agrotourism. In Caras - Severin, agrotourism could become one of the priority branches of the economy, it is necessary to make a brief analysis to determine the main priorities for rural tourism development and agrotourism. For agrotourism, the quality of provision is particularly important, and the offer of Caras-Severin area, is a valuable touristic potential and can play an important role in economic development of the county.

Agrotourism was established through the promotion of rural settlements with ethnographic values, cultural and the natural scenic, considered tourist villages. Thus, agrotourism is defined by: tourist villages as rural settlements with pitoresque landscape, well established, located in an unpolluted environment, preserving the traditions and a rich history, which functions outside the political-administrative, social, economic and cultural , they also seasonally or throughout the year have the function of receiving and hosting tourists to spend a holiday for an indefinite period. Determining the types of tourist villages and towns, is to reveal specific grouping in several basic types, to promote in each locality:

- touristic villages of handicraft and artistic creation;
- landscape and climate villages ;
- interest in hunting and fishing villages;
- villages for winter sports.

Among these categories of listed villages are founded the villages in

thecountyofCaras-Severin: Binis village is known as the pottery centre since the eighteenth century. In the interwar period, all the villagers practiced the occupation of the pottery, there is now in Binis only one potter. Pottery from Binis are made of quality material, waterproof, without being treated in a special way, are decorated with simple reasons, of ancient tradition of the prepared colors made with earth and iron oxides. Typical reasons are: strings, kiss, , the pine tree stylized.

Ocna de Fier is located near Bocsa, the tourist objectives here we mention: Orthodox Church built between 1815-1816 and renovated in 1888, in this shrine is the "Gospel of" printed in Vienna in 1780 and "Gospel Book" printed in Sibiu in 1859, Mineralogical Museum of Constantin Gruescu aesthetic iron. Traditions that are still here, are: "Făşangul"-is a Lenten holiday related to quitting, not a specific date, another usually is "Mătcălăul" or "Însurăţitul", takes place after the second week after Easter, on Tuesday.

Dognecea benefit of the beautiful landscapes because the mountainterrain is covered with oak forest, and the area is crossed by Caras river along with its tributaries, and here are also located two lakes. Following the studies concluded, the climate here is comparable to the resort Herculane, having the same number of negative ions.

Garana, lies on Semenic foothills and is surrounded by virgin forests. The architecture of the village gives him a special air, here the houses are whitewashed and window frames are painted green, a tradition from the „pemi" of who lived here. The air here is rich in ozone and ultraviolet light, and also there is a sculpture park. Every year takes place the Gărâna jazz festival which attracts thousands of music lovers. In mid-October Gărâna hosts an annual celebration called, Kierwei wich is a traditional harvest celebration held by the German community in the area.

Eftimie Murgu (Rudaria), here is the mulinologic complex on Rudaria Valley, which seems a huge and ancient old museum of technology, is the most large mulinologic park in southeasternEurope. Currently there are 22 mills bucket, located at a distance of3 km. On the territory of the locality is located Rudari Keys Reserve, which covers an area of 250 ha, is a complex that protects the geological formations, landforms, flora and fauna species.

Caraşova is located right in the Caras Keys, enjoying the natural landscapes of Semenic- National Park- Caras Keys, which covers an area of

about 36,200 ha. Here you can also visit sights protected by law Comarnic Cave, Popovat Cave, Nera Springs, Caras Sprins, Gârlişte Keys, Caras Keys, etc.

Coronini is on the left side of the Danube, in an area of rare beauty, here you can see ruins like Ladislau Castle, Manor Castle, which is a Roman camp, Hole with fly Cave, Hole Chindia Cave; the stone quarry from Alibeg; and the rock Baba Caia. The popular celebration specific of Banat is kept and takes place every year is the St. Elias, the Nedeea.

Through the villages presented above, we can say that rural tourism and agrotourism can be represented in Caras-Severin through the beauty of landscapes, touristic attractions, traditions, celebrations and the activities carried out which attract the tourists.

Thanks to a high agrotourism potential, in Caras-Severin, many agrotouristic pensions are classified or being classified. In the county, are currently representation households, which prove the interest of people for this activity, their desire to work in this area, of which we mention households from Minis, Canicea, Brebu Nou Vîrciorova and Căsoaia. They have the comfort that you can like as a tourist, with specific environments peasant so popular now in Europe. Rural tourism and agrotourism started to be practiced in other places too, but with a slower growth because of insufficient promotion and the poor infrastructure of access.

The accommodation capacity of Caras-Severin county: consists in the following accommodation structure: hotels, hostels, motels,inns, villas, chalets, bungalows, stopovers, tourist houses, camps forand preschool students, boarding houses and agrotourist. In Table 1 we present situation of lodging in agrotouristic places in the county,in the years 2009, 2010.

Table 1

Accommodation capacity situation in agrotourist pensions Caras-Severin County (2009-2010)

Year	Total beds in Caras-Severin county	Accommodation in the agrotouristic pensions	Share in total county
2009	7906	522	6.60
2010	7139	625	8.75

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Romania, Caras-Severin county NIS

We can observe that from the 7906 places available in 2009, in Caras-Severin county, some have closed due to global economic crisis that affected the sector, reaching in 2010 a number of 7139 accommodations per total county. In this context, remarkable, is the increase of the accommodations in the agrotouristic pensions in 2010 than in 2009. Lodging in agrotouristic places is 6.60% in 2009 and 8.75% in 2010 of the total accommodation capacity of Caras-Severin county.

Currently, the Romanian tourism is in a crisis situation, inflation rates and the prices applied made that the traditional hotels and restaurants in tourist resorts are unaffordable for most consumers, on the other hand,the incomes of population are entirely for supply costs, it shows that resources to satisfy the other needs, therefore recreational, are virtually nonexistent. As the output of the the current economic crisis and the real incomes of population increasing, the tourist demand will improve and since that classic tourism will remain quite expensive, will focus far more to other forms of tourism one of them is the agrotourism.

PROPOSED MEASURES TO DEVELOP AGROTOURISM

Thanks to favorable natural conditions, agrotourism it can develop in rural areas of Caras-Severin county, farms can use this potential, if the inhabitants of these areas are moving to this activity. The practice and development of agrotourism in the county of Caras- Severin faces many shortcomings, of them: rural homeswere not built for a eventuality tourist activity , the population is not educated for this activity (in terms of behavior, knowledge of foreign languages, management, organization), lack of adequate infrastructure (telecommunications,sewerage, water and gas, heating network), lack of funds and strategies to develop tourism.

For a successful agrotouristic activity is necessary to eliminate these negative aspects and conduct the agrotourism through: the development of proper infrastructure, create a material base of practicing agrotourism, promoting the Caras-Severin county side tourism potential through participation in the tourism fairs, advertising campaigns,preparation of brochures, publicity of guesthouses and agrotouristic farms, training and the specialization of agrotouristic service provider ,participating in training courses and language, creating programs and funds for financing of regional development projects, linking with the national programs of local interest.

All these can not be achieved without state involvement, through the intervention of local authorities to implement a system of county development, creating the foundations for development agrotourism in the county.

CONCLUSIONS

Caras-Severin's rural areas have a wide variety of cultural values history - folklore, ethnography, traditions, historical artifacts - a special natural environment, a background varied but harmonious , all these are special facets of agrotourism.Caras - Severin county has great possibilities for tourism development in rural areas, the incomes from these activities by renting houses and marketing natural products, or engaging the tourists in agricultural and domestic activities tourists can contribute greatly to the improvement of living and civilization and to maintain youth in rural areas. For agrotouristic activity at county level is necessary to strong support from the local authorities. This assistance must be manifested primarily through infrastructure planning, by organizing training courses for people who want to practice this activity, especially through a system of tax and credit that allows in fact to implement the action. All this creates the effective potential exploitation of the natural and human Caras-Severin villages, with beneficial consequences for the entire economy of the Caras-Severin county.

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