



THE AGRITOURISM POTENTIAL OF IAȘI COUNTY: RESOURCES AND DIRECTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dincu Ana-Mariana¹, Imbrea Ilinca Merima², Petcov Andreea Adriana², Sîrbu Corina¹, Văduva Loredana¹

¹University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara, Faculty of Management and Rural Tourism, Timisoara

²University of Life Sciences "King Mihai I" from Timisoara, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Technologies

Abstract: The study tracks the evolution of agritourism activity in Iași County between 2015 and 2024, based on statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. The analysis highlights the dynamics of agritourism accommodation structures, changes in existing and operational accommodation capacity, as well as trends in tourist arrivals and overnight stays, differentiated by residence category. Based on this information, a SWOT analysis was carried out, highlighting both the strengths—the diversity of rural resources, proximity to urban centers, and rich local traditions—and the current vulnerabilities, generated by poor infrastructure, seasonality, and insufficient promotion of tourism offerings. Finally, strategic directions are proposed for the sustainable development of agritourism in Iași County, focused on diversifying services, increasing professional quality, digitizing promotion, and the integrated valorization of traditional products in the regional tourism circuit.

• Introduction

Located in the northeast of Romania, within the Northeast Development Region, Iași County has significant agrotourism potential, resulting from the diversity of natural resources, the richness of local traditions, and its proximity to a major urban center, which facilitates accessibility and mobility for tourists.

With its diverse natural resources, unique demographics, and economic potential focused on agriculture and traditions, Iași County offers a favorable environment for the development of agritourism.

Although the development of this sector is currently in a consolidation phase, statistical trends show a gradual increase in interest in agritourism accommodation and activities associated with the rural environment.

• Material and method

The study is based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of statistical and documentary data relating to agritourism activity in Iași County between 2015 and 2024. To substantiate the scientific approach, data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, through the Tempo-Online platform, was used, referring to the number of agritourism accommodation structures, existing and operational accommodation capacity, as well as the evolution of tourist arrivals and overnight stays.

• Results and discussions

The agrotourism potential of Iași County is largely determined by the existence and exploitation of both natural and man-made tourist resources. The diversity of the natural environment, combined with the cultural and historical heritage, provides the conditions for the development of a variety of tourist products capable of attracting tourists from both Romania and abroad.

An analysis of the evolution of agritourism in Iași County provides a clear picture of how this sector has developed in recent years, highlighting both positive trends and challenges encountered.

The available statistical data reflect the dynamics of tourist accommodation structures, arrivals, and overnight stays in rural areas, as well as changes in tourist behavior. The figure below shows the evolution of tourist accommodation structures in Iași County, as follows:

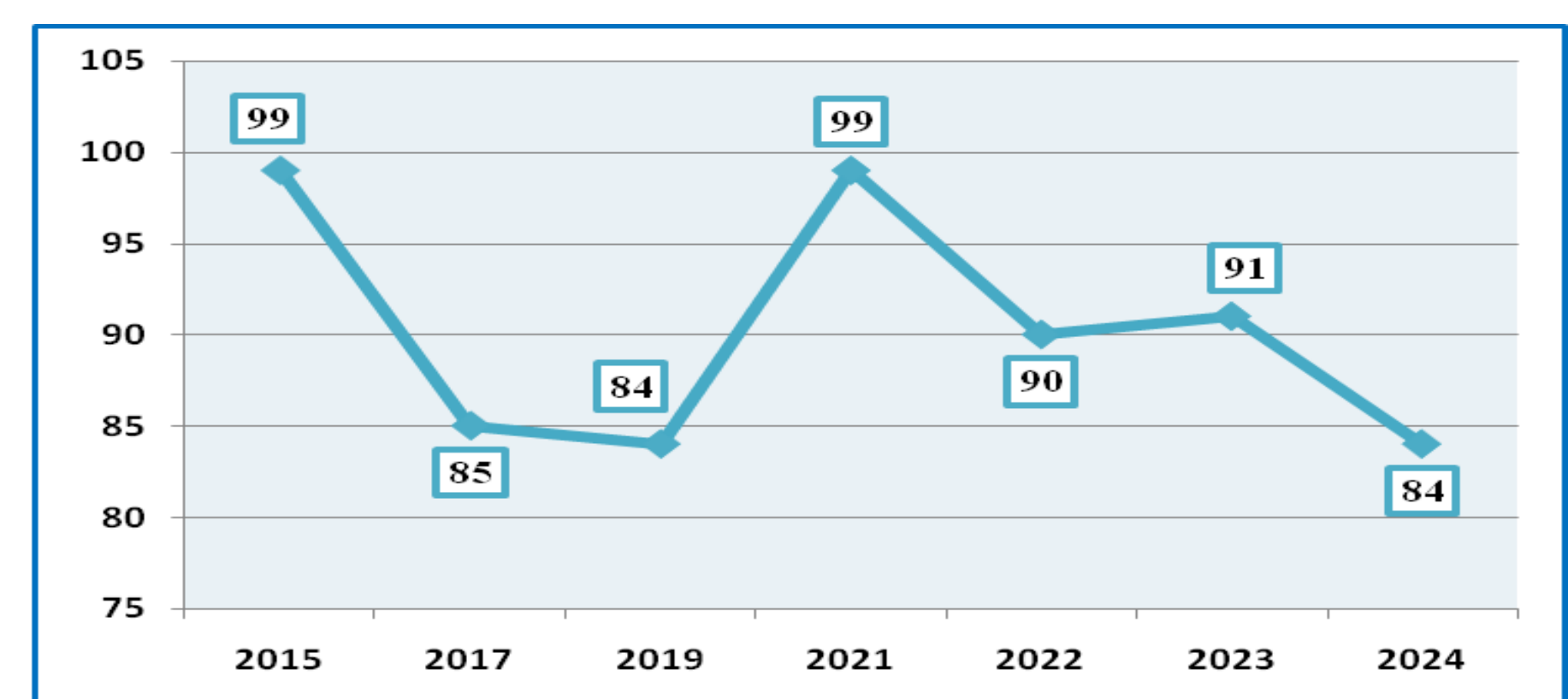


Figure 1. Evolution of tourist accommodation structures in Iași County, 2015-2024

In order to accurately capture the dynamics of rural tourism in the Northeast Region, it is useful to analyze the evolution of agritourism guesthouses at the county level. The table below shows how each county in the region contributed to the consolidation and expansion of this tourism segment between 2015 and 2024.

Table 1.

Evolution of the number of agrotourism guesthouses in the North-East Region¹
-number-

Specification	2015	2017	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
North-East Region	321	451	458	488	489	481	477
Bacău	36	36	39	45	42	28	29
Botoșani	2	3	2	2	2	3	3
Iași	12	14	19	20	16	14	14
Neamț	133	162	152	154	153	152	156
Suceava	129	225	235	257	263	271	263
Vaslui	9	11	11	10	13	13	12

The statistical data in the table above show that, in the North-East Region, the number of agritourism guesthouses increased from 321 in 2015 to a maximum of 489 in 2022, followed by a slight decrease to 477 in 2024. This trend confirms the expansion of the sector during the period analyzed, but also a certain instability in recent years.

• Conclusions

Agritourism in Iași County is undergoing a process of consolidation, reflected in the increase in the number of tourist accommodation structures and accommodation capacity between 2015 and 2023. Although 2024 saw a slight decline, the long-term trend confirms the growing interest in this type of tourism.

Agritourism guesthouses represent the key segment of rural tourism, showing positive growth until 2021, followed by stagnation. This dynamic highlights the need for support policies and continuous investment to ensure the sustainable development of the sector.