

## MARKETING POLICIES FOR AGRITURISM

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### Abstract

*The Romanian rural tourist activity is based on the village as element of rural space micro-universe. Offering the Romanian village as a tourist product, it must analyze every aspect of environment and must considered the most original and attractive element to be assembled as a product. Making and offering good tourist products is easier with a marketing approach.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism, village, agriturismo, rural tourism, strategy, marketing, policies.*

### Practical data

Approached in a national economically perspective, the Romanian tourism must become a priority. Valorizing tourist potential process must be realized concordant to international and especially European touristy movements and tendencies. The agriturismo is a special type of tourism that valorizes not only the landscapes but also mostly the traditional village life.

The general agriturismo policy must be conduct in some major direction:

- The Romanian natural, historical, cultural resources must be best used, assuring their protection and the environmental protection and conserving their quality.
- The physical tourist planning and the services level quality must be increased as to assure a high tourists' satisfaction.
- The generally infrastructure must be extended and modernized as to assure the easy access of national and international tourists.
- The dimension and the quality of human resources must be developed.

Considered as a special tourist shape that is practiced in rural environment and is based on accommodation, food&beverage, leisure and other services assured in rural space. This kind of tourism realizes a superior natural and anthrop resources' valorizing and contributes to rural population livelihood increasing.

In World Tourism Organizations' conception, the rural tourism includes any manage and organized tourist activity in rural space by local population, valorizing the local tourist resources (natural, cultural and historical, human) including tourist structures, like guest-house, or tourism farms.

Based on this definition, tourist specialists consider the following rural tourism features:

- This kind of tourist activities are localized on rural space
- The tourist product assembling process is based on rural world features (open space, nature contact, tradition etc.)
- Rural infrastructure conservation process (from building and territorial planning process point of view)
- Traditional family life' evolution (as to conserve the rural way of life)
- Diversity of rural tourism presence (considering rural and economic environment, history and settlement).

In a rural tourism marketing approach, it must know and understand the market and it must satisfy the tourists' needs.

The **marketing mix** in this domain means to offer desired tourist products, on a corresponding price, by appropriate distribution channels, informing and communicate with the tourist people. But who are the customers of rural tourism products and what are their needs? Generally, this type of products are addressing to old peoples or to traditional families, with little children which want to play in a quit atmosphere, to see the animals and to understand how it obtain traditional meal.

The **agritourist product** or the **rural touristy product** can be assembled going from the natural resources and the specified anthropically resources (culture, history, traditions etc.). In marketing terms, a tourist product is create going from demand and supply limits.

New product' inception, development and introduction is a difficult process that must corresponding with market-target segment' needs. Finding and selecting the most proper market-target segments is the key of successful rural tourist product' sales.

The rural tourist product policy' elements can be the following:

- Natural factors (geographically laying, relief, landscape, vegetation, fauna, climate etc.).
- Generally human existence and activity' factors (language, out-look, customs, tradition, culture, religion, art, politics, economics etc.

- Generally infrastructure (transportation, communication, road net, energy and water alimentation net etc.
- Touristy equipments (specify infrastructure, bed&breakfast offering farms or even full board, equitation equipment, fishing, golf etc.).
- Human elements (work, attitude etc.).

The Romanian village oneself is a tourist product, because its based on a large range of natural and cultural resources, has a large range of tourist facilities, has unique features (people, culture, traditions, handicrafts, history etc.).

As a tourist destination, the Romanian village can be choose for landscape, traditions, folklore, climate, meal quality etc.

The **rural tourist product' price policy** must concord with market tendencies, especially in international tourists case.

Cost, demand and competition are the same factors that influence the price' level, but in the rural tourism can intervenc other specific aspects.

In international tourism practice, prices for tourism services are established agreed with national currency cost for services and every tourist' money spending possibility. Even for the farmers the services' cost is relatively law (because the tourists are housed on there's farms, the food is obtained in there's stead, the entertainment is offered mostly with there's way – riding horses, fishing etc.), the prices must cover the environmental purity, the unique landscape, the handicrafts, the wilderness of some isolated places (like Danube Delta), the old and specify tradition and custom. Especially the external tourists are disposed to pay a high price for a product that, finally, means for them, an anti-stress therapy.

The farmers practice all kind of price strategies, going from the tourist type (family man, businessman, stranger etc.):

- Set or fixed prices (when tourists receive a minimal set of basic services: transport, accommodation, food, some entertainment activities, like riding horses, fishing etc.)
- High level of prices (based on exclusive offer or on reduced competition)
- Low level of prices (fallowing the product' attraction increasing)
- Different levels of prices (considering the product' life cycle stage, the seasonality, the product range complexity).

The **rural tourist product' distribution policy** must be proper to the product' specify and customers' profile.

Distribution involves the “movement” of products in all stages of development – from resource procurement to final sales.

Intermediaries make the tourist product “movement” efficient and effective and in tourism they go by tour-operators and travel agencies names.

Generally, a tourist product is “manufactured” by tour-operators, going from all kind of basic services: transport, accommodation, bed&breakfast, leisure etc.

Further, this product is sale even by this tour-operator, even by travel agencies, positioned as retailer on the channel of distribution.

The channel of distribution is the “route” taken by a tourist product and its title as it moves from the tour-operators to the ultimate consumer. In agriturism or rural tourism, all kind of channels can be met. When the rural product is sold to the tourists directly by the farmers its about a direct channel.

This situation is met when the tourists find them selves the destination, from a friend, from Internet sites (when the farms are presented on a site) or simply, when they travel and find a certain place they like.

When this kind of products are sold by a single supplier, the distribution is indirectly short, and when is sold by least two agencies, is a long indirectly distribution.

The rural products’ distribution involves both strategic and tactical decisions.

When its Developed distribution strategy, marketers are guided by overall criteria:

- Market coverage (the longer the channel of distribution, the grater the market coverage; thus if the size of potential market for a product is very large, a large number of intermediaries is desirable)

- Channel control (when intermediaries gain title to a product, they can do almost anything they want with it; the tour-operators must ensure that the product does not fall into hand of intermediaries whose image does not match the tour operators or services suppliers’ goals)

- Costs (intermediaries are specialists that perform the function of distribution more efficiently and effectively than farmers or services suppliers could).

Because of its unique specificity, and of the farmers’ limited financial resources, the distribution of rural tourist products can be realized by specialized tour-operators, by reservation net with the local authorities support.

**The promotion policy** for rural tourism product fallows to increase consumers attention, to inform the potential tourists about the rural tourism product, to influence demand.

On this area, it must be communicate:

- Picturesque landscapes
- Unique touristy experience
- A good price/quality rapport
- Our people and country unique features: natural resources, natural tourist attraction diversity (mountains, sea, beaches, rivers, caves etc.), geography, history, religion, culture, folklore and tradition, handicrafts, security etc.

The communication tools are the following:

- Advertising, used to inform, to persuade, to remind about some products. Can be used testimonials, slice-of-life or fantasy messages, as to show the proper and beautiful world of vacation.

- Advertising messages can be transmitted especially by National or International Media Channels (Discovery, Travel, National Geographic, papers or journals etc.), or by printed materials (brochures, flyers, catalogues).

- Sales promotion (special offer, low level prices etc.).

- Public Relations, promotional activity that aims to communicate a favorable image (specially of the country like tourist destination). Public Relations activities are directed toward many important groups, called publics as to inform and to impress these types of publics (opinion leaders, government, economic organizations, intermediaries, news media, customers etc.), mostly on special occasions like documentation visits, anniversaries, inaugurations etc.

- Events, like trade shows, workshops, exhibitions, fairs etc., to rural tourism offer' popularize purpose.

A good communication program must put tourists' imagination at work, must underline the unique offer, must persuade the tourists as to by such a tourist product and to visit the farm, and to be satisfied and pleased about this kind of vacation, the landscapes' beauty and purity, the hosts' kindness.

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