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**What do customers look for?**

<b>Friendliness of staff</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Activities at business</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Farm animals</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Barns &amp; Historic Buildings</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Restaurant or Snack Bar</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Gift shop</b>	<b>16%</b>

Kuehn, D., Hilchey, D. *New York State's 1999 Agritourism Business Study.*

New York: Oxford University Press; 2004. J Agric Econ. The selected variables permit the phenomenon to be measured, in relation to the goals set. Landscape conservation is evaluated by considering the indicators from L1 to L4 in Additional file 1: Table S1. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2011.02.005. Economics, Management, Society and Institutions and are grateful to anonymous reviewers for their feedback and commentary. Authors could get a financial contribution from Department of Economics, Management, Society and Institutions, University of Molise (public University). [Shown in parenthesis [...]] until 4 significant figures. 2in a non-linear model such as Logit, the marginal effects of the variables are not constant but vary according to the value assumed by the whole of the explanatory variables. The landscape quality is the necessary basis for productive activities, such as agriculture and tourism. Evenness expresses a normalized measurement of the Shannon's Index of diversity and is given by  $J = H/H_{max}$ , with  $H_{max} = \ln N$ . He has been involved in drafting the whole manuscript and references too. Therefore agritourisms, by increasing the efficiency of irrigation practices, help actively to solve the described problems, both from a technical and managerial point of view, as well by choosing cropping systems better suited to the characteristics of the different agro-climatic areas. J Sustain Tour. Rural tourism in Israel. 2004;44:285-300. 96(2006). For this reason, environmental performances have been highlighted by analyzing only features and production systems of the farms. European Commission, Brussels/EEA, European Environment Agency. This aspect is found with the same and high level of significance in the remaining altitude areas, which confirms the centrality of the role of energy in terms of strategies directed toward natural resources conservation. In the inner hills, the most significant variables are the greater species diversity of animal breeds (B2), the highest quota of energy produced by renewable sources (E) and, above all, the marked reduction of fertilized surface areas (I3). NG, Kim K, Jennings GR. Milano: McGraw-Hill; 2010. Agri-environmental indicators: for sustainable agriculture in Europe, European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC). Moreover, "the agricultural activity of the farm and not its tourism activities, must be predominant" (Sidali 2011). 2006;22:117-128. The phantom of (agri)tourism and agriculture symbiosis? [Google Scholar] Santucci FM. What is rural tourism? Patterns of development in tourist accommodation enterprises on farms in England and Wales. For a "Piece of Bread"? [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] OECD. Most EU countries, however, equate agritourism with other forms of rural tourism (Marcotte et al. [Google Scholar] Kizos T, Iosifides T. In this sense, the agritourism can be considered a mix of agriculture and tourism. In summary, agritourism takes up an exclusively Italian characteristic within the European rural tourism scene due to the particular regulatory legislation that plays a key role in agritourism from three points of view: economic, social and environmental. Theoretically, the organizational model of agritourism is consistent with the environmental sustainability paradigm (Mastronardi and Cipollina 2009) because agritourism leads to an optimal level of external effects (pollution) on a social level, that is Pareto-efficient. Agro-biodiversity conservation in Europe: ethical issue. Paris: OECD Publications; 1998. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Lane B. doi: 10.1300/J064v27n01\_06. Post-fordism: a reader. 2007, which bring a clear advantage on a social level (Abler 2003; Deuffic and Candau 2006). On a normative level, the EU makes generic reference to agritourism as a form of holiday, which is carried out in rural areas. Sevilla, ES: Edición Digital @tres, S.L.L., pp 33-54 Hall DR, Roberts L, Mitchell M. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Negri V. Assessing the sustainability of agritourism in the US: a comparison between agritourism and other farm entrepreneurial ventures. Report: 7/02. Centre for Rural Research (CRR), Trondheim/Daugstad K, Rønningen K, Skar B. It varies from 0 (only one type present) to 1 (perfect evenness between types, with  $\pi = 1/N$ ). Biodiversity conservation (indicators from B1 to B4) is represented by the number of plant and animal varieties, by the biological surface area and the farmland falling in protected areas. 2006;58(3):235-248. He has given final approval of the version to be published. Tilburg: ECNC; 2000. The plant and animal variety indicates the size relative to a set (richness) and is expressed by the Margalef Index given by  $M = (N - 1) / \ln C$ , where N is the number of types (cultivar or animal breeds) present and C a measurement of the set, such as the cultivated surface area or the number of heads raised, expressed in Livestock Unit (LU). The indicator which refers to the production of energy by alternative sources (E) expresses the quota of energy produced by renewable sources present within the farm, while the indicator which regards to the certification systems (C) indicates the number of non-conventional certificates, which the farm uses, according to type and purpose. Indicators from I1 to I6 highlight the intensity of use of inputs: in particular, I6 expresses the quantity of plant protection products associated with its degree of toxicity and the quantity of nitrogen used in food processing. [Google Scholar] Oppermann M. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] van der Ploeg JD, Roep D. 2006;19:563-595. Area rurale e configurazioni turistiche. VG has carried out the abstract, introduction and conclusions. 2005;26:335-346. Integrated rural tourism: concepts and practice. The economic side of agritourism: business performance and competitive factors. Envisioning upland futures: stakeholder responses to scenarios for Europe's mountain landscapes. At last (c) the tests applied to assess the fitness of the model may give good or bad results, according to the more or less explicative power of the variables included in the matrix, therefore some of them may be excluded or not from the model. The farm panel analysed is made up of slightly more than 11,200 farms, accounted for in 2011; 372 of these practiced agritourism along with ordinary agricultural practices of cultivation and/or livestock farming. [Google Scholar] OECD. Multifunctionality: a framework for policy analysis. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Marcotte P, Bourdeau L, Doyon M. A Greek case study. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Dimara E, Skuras D. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is the representativeness of lowland ecosystems in the Italian panorama of protected areas that have greater tourism attractiveness. J Sustain Agric. [Google Scholar] IEC, European Commission (2007) Rural Development Policy. Velasco A, Campion Cerro AM, Hernandez Mogollon JM (2012) Aproximación al concepto de agroturismo a través del análisis de la legislación española en materia de agroturismo, V jornadas de investigación en turismo. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Oppermann M. The agritourisms show a lesser intensity of use of inputs as to water resources (I1 and I2), which expresses a more controlled pressure on natural resources. It may be useful to remember that agriculture is often accused of creating significant harm to water resources, both in terms of quality, contributing to the pollution of surface waters, groundwater and soil. The use of water for productive purposes can generate negative effects on the environment that result in depletion of the aquifer, increased soil erosion, salinization of soils, gushing of wetlands, which causes, as a consequence, the destruction of natural habitats. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Daugstad K, Ringdal S, Rønningen K, Skar B (2002) Agriculture and cultural heritage: a state of the art, report on research based knowledge. Econometric theory and methods. Aldershot: Ashgate; 2003. This occurs when the touristic demand pays close attention to the principles of sustainable performances, to quality products and to those which are of low environmental impact (Negri 2005). Br J Econ Manag Trade. 20% of the agritourism farms only offer lodging, while 36% combine overnight stays and food service and 50% of them offer, together with lodging, at least one service such as horseback riding, hiking, naturalistic observation, sports (mountain biking, trekking), didactic activities. The second difference in terms of importance regards the low incidence of agritourisms falling in protected areas (B4). 2006;25(3):59-67. 2008;35(2):402-426. In: Sidali KL, Spiller A, Schulze B (Eds) Food, agri-culture and tourism. 1995;34(1):63-67. [Google Scholar] Esposti R (2006) Agriturismo al bivio? Milano: Francoangeli; 2011. 2003;1:8-17. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Seminar: "Rural Social Exclusion and Governance". Department of Economics, Management, Society and Institutions, University of Molise, Campobasso, Italy Find articles by Luigi Mastronardi Department of Economics, Management, Society and Institutions, University of Molise, Campobasso, Italy Find articles by Alfonso Scardera Received 2015 Apr 28; Accepted 2015 Sep 18. Copyright © Mastronardi et al. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Giaccio V, Mastronardi L (2011) Le performance delle aziende agrarie con e senza agriturismo: un confronto con i dati RICA. doi: 10.1016/S0261-5177(09)00034-4. 2007, in particular for rural marginal areas (Dimara and Skuras 1999), or in areas where the environmental and cultural heritage are strongly appreciated by tourists (Garrod et al. Springer Science and Business Media, Berlin/Slee B, Farr H, Snowden P. As regards the environmental performances, empirical analysis, mostly case studies, highlight that agritourism can produce both positive and negative effects on the environment and on the socio-economic context in which it is developed (Daugstad et al. A benefit segmentation of tourists in rural areas: a Scottish perspective. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2003.11.016. This occurs because in Italian legislation, agritourism is an activity "connected" to agriculture and this condition guarantees the concurrence between the benefits of agricultural and tourism activity, at least on a farm level (Belletti 2010). In Italy, agritourism is already a consolidated phenomenon and represents the most radical product innovation that has ever concerned national agriculture (Esposti 2012, 2006). The economic impact of alternative types of rural tourism. On the second hand, the data analysis was performed both on national sample and on sample sections according to the altitude of the farms. doi: 10.1007/s10806-004-3084-3. 2006;22:67-81. Re-conceptualising rural resources as countryside capital: the case of rural tourism. Agrirregioneuropea, 5:28-30. [Google Scholar] Inea, (Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria) Misurare la sostenibilità. Crop diversity is expressed by the index of evenness, which is a measure of the degree of diversity in a mosaic (landscape or cultivation composition in this specific case), and derives from the Shannon-Weaver Index expressed by  $H = - \sum \pi_i \cdot \ln \pi_i$ , for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, N$ , where  $\pi_i$  is the fraction occupied by each type of cultivation and N is the number of types. Gender and motivation for agritourism entrepreneurship. Wallingford: CAB; 2001. Because of such characteristics, the agritourisms in this area present similarities with those located in the lowlands. 2003; Roberts and Hall 2001) and finds its basis in the new models of consumption (Amin 1994) and enjoyment of rural areas (Ray 2003). In any case, rural tourism is a complex and vastly differentiated phenomenon (Prochot 2005) the effect of which depends on the characteristics of each individual territory and the manner in which the public and the private actors set up the relationships between tourism products and local resources (Pacciani 2011). In literature, the meaning of agritourism is rather controversial (Colon and Bissix 2005; Guerrero Velasco et al. However, without having pretensions to statistically appreciate the agritourism sector in Italy, the sufficient diffusion within the FADN sample and, above all, a distribution of the FADN agritourisms altogether analogous to the national panorama (Fig. 2), allows some interesting considerations to be made regarding the environmental performances of the activities tied to tourism in rural Italian areas. The territorial distribution of the entire FADN sample shows that 44% of the agritourisms are located in the northern regions, while 23% are located in central Italy and 33% in the south. Methods and results. Cultural rural tourism: evidence from Canada. 2007;9(4):347-370. doi: 10.1080/14616680701647527. 2010;31:754-758. [Google Scholar] ISTAT (Italian National Institute of Statistics) Le aziende agrituristiche in Italia. Holidays on the farm: a case study of german hosts and guests. As to this, it is useful to recall that farming has a very important role in the conservation of natural resources and in landscape conservation. doi: 10.1080/13608740601155443. Metodi, approcci e strumenti. At the beginning (a) our sample was divided in two subsamples, one formed by the farms with agritourism and the other by the farms without agritourism. The analysis of the data was carried out on two levels: (a) national, regarding the entire national sample of the FADN Data Bank, and (b) by altitude zones, distinguishing between lowlands, coastal hills, inner hills and mountains. 2007;28(1):280-289. Multifunctional agriculture, a new paradigm for european agriculture and rural development: 37-54. [Google Scholar] Fleischer A, Pizam A. Indicatori per l'agricoltura italiana. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Wascher DM. [Google Scholar] Barbieri C. Interpreting sustainable development through agritourism in Southern Tuscany. The marginal contributions express the connected variations of the probability of observation of the dependent variable for each unitary variation of the independent variables and therefore the relative importance of the variable. If this is indeed the case, farm-based agritourism also promotes the most effective policies to support these initiatives, or, on the contrary, upon those that are most useful in strengthening this aspect. The environmental performances of agritourisms can be seen as the result of a farm diversification process aimed towards the development of environment-based services (Barbieri 2013). Plan Rev. In a way, the remuneration deriving from their offer of services and tourism activities is a reward for the activities aiming toward the conservation of biodiversity, the guarantee of ecosystem services and those regarding landscape preservation. 2005;27:91-112. Agritourism is an inherently territorial activity, really connected to the specific territory, in terms of environmental diversity, architectural texture, cultural and social wealth. [Google Scholar] Amin A. 2015). Importance and need for rural development instruments under the CAP: a survey of farmers' attitudes in marginal areas of Greece. 2005;18:3-25. Tour manag Perspectives. Developing agritourism in nova scotia: issues and challenges. Traditional production systems required multipurpose animals, which, although less productive than high-output breeds, may contain valuable functional traits. 1996;23:86-102. [Google Scholar] Mastronardi L, Cipollina M. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Colton JW, Bissix G. Agriculture as an upholder of cultural heritage? [Google Scholar] van Huylenbroeck G, Vandermeulen V, Mettepenningen E, Verspecht A (2007) Multifunctionality of agriculture: a review of definitions, evidence and instruments, living reviews in landscape research, 1:1-43. doi: 10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00061-0. Agrirregioneuropea 26:83-86. The dichotomous structure of the dependent variable (presence or absence of agritourism at the farm) has a propensity for an assessment method based on Binary Response Model Regression. The online version of this article (doi:10.1186/s40064-015-1353-4) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users. Keywords: Agritourism, Farm, Environmental performances, Italy This paper analyses the connection between agritourism and environment, by comparing the environmental performances of agritourisms with non-agritourism farms. Paris: OECD Publications; 2001. In agriculture, production of renewable energy is a possibility of integration of farmers' income and an opportunity to diversify productive activities. In fact, agritourism can only be performed by the farmer and his family members (Law no. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Nickerson N, Black R, McCool S. Marketing delle destinazioni turistiche. As is known, the FADN (Farm Accountancy Data Network) sample was created to represent the technical and economic operation of the farms in the European Union and certainly not to study the behavior of certain economic sectors, including agritourism that, therefore, cannot be described with statistical rigor by the accounting network. 2003;30:307-322. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Koutsouris A, Gidarakou I, Grava F, Michailidis A. 2008;35(2):316-337. These policies also deal with the problems of efficiency and practicality involving complex inter-related topics of economic, social and environmental policies. In conclusion, the data as analysed in this study suggests that the policies underlying agritourism in Italy are achieving their goals. LM conceived of the study. In Italy, agritourism is considered an agricultural activity and can only be performed by a farmer. In 2011, the farms authorized to carry out agritourism activities were slightly more than 20,000 units (about 2% of the total) (ISTAT 2012). All authors read and approved the final manuscript. The authors acknowledge the contribution of University of Molise, Dpt. doi: 10.1177/004728759503400108. 2013;213(2):252-270. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] MacDonald R, Jolliffe L. Rural tourism and recreation: principles to practice. Tour Manag. 2001;40(1):19-26. AS has given substantial contribution to acquisition of data. [Google Scholar] Deuffic P, Candau J. [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Saxena G, Clark G, Oliver T, Ilbery B. doi: 10.1016/S0143-6228(01)00010-8. Organic farming can reduce the negative effects of intensive agriculture and may offer a possible answer to the concerns about the environmental impact and the efficiency of primary sector. The analysis of the agritourisms broken down by altitude areas (lowlands, coastal hills, inner hills, and mountains; Additional file 4: Table S4) confirms the majority of these tendencies, but it also highlights others that did not emerge in the global analysis. The agritourisms located in lowlands present differences analogous to the national situation as to the zootechnical variety (B2), which represents the most relevant positive contribution, and production of energy by renewable sources (E). [CrossRef] [Google Scholar] Sonnino R. 2012; Lane 1994) and, consequently, its aims seem unclear, as does the relationship that ties this activity to working farms. This relationship often refers to farms as physical rather than financial entities in which agriculture and/or livestock farming are regularly practiced (Kizos and Iosifides 2007; Sonnino 2004; Tew and Barbieri 2012). In every case, literature is unanimous in considering agritourism as a key factor for local development (Slee et al. Technical Report Series. Economia agro-alimentare XV. Meanwhile amongst specialized farms, the practice of agritourism is more common in those with arboral crops and herbivore livestock farming. The beginning step (Fig. 1a) goes through the comparison of environmental performances of farms with and without agritourism activities. Prof Geogr. Linking local gastronomy and rural tourism: Interdisciplinary perspectives: 2-24. Multifunctionality and rural development: the actual situation in Europe. doi: 10.1007/s10806-006-9010-0. 2013;3:77-102. [Google Scholar] Walford N. Farming and landscape management: how French farmers are coping with the ecologization of their activities. For analysis of the results, only the indicators with confidence intervals greater than 90% (p

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