

Research Article

Agritourism: a source for socio-economic transformation in developing economies

Promise Zvavahera¹, Farai Chigora²

1. IBSUniversity, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; 2. Africa University, Zimbabwe

This conceptual paper uses an expansive literature review on agritourism as a source for socio-economic transformation in developing economies and extrapolates the findings to Zimbabwe. With exceptional natural resources coupled with deeply rooted cultural heritage and unique opportunities presented by agritourism prospects, offer Zimbabwe invaluable chances at fostering sustainable growth within farming communities. However, though there are substantial agritourism attractions within the country little effort is placed upon advertising these attractions resulting in insufficient literature on such versatile prospects. Research suggests that higher socio-economic status, improved access to food within households, and reduced vulnerability can lead to beneficial outcomes. Consequently, it is crucial for agricultural communities to be inclusive and considerate of their social circumstances, physical environments, and cultural heritage. To facilitate future progress, farmers should promote the expansion of agritourism, thus accommodating evolving demands. The paper proposes a transformative model based on location, funding, product quality, marketing techniques, infrastructure, and legislative support as catalysts toward viable agritourism.

Corresponding authors: Promise Zvavahera, promisetzvavahera@gmail.com; Farai Chigora, fchigora@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Around the world, agritourism is gaining momentum and showing enormous promise. According to van Zyl and Merwe (2021; Chase, 2020), agritourism is the practice of inviting guests to an agricultural operation with the goal of purchasing farm goods and having fun. It combines chances for outdoor recreation, agricultural education, and agricultural recreation (Barbieri, 2014). It allows visitors to experience rural life, participate in farming tasks, and learn about agricultural practices. Travelers are keen to learn about rural life and the products that draw it, and this form of tourism has been rapidly growing throughout the world. As a result of this new development, farmers must diversify their operations to attract more customers and improve their socio-economic standing (Lak and Khairabadi, 2022).

Due to its wealth of natural resources and diverse agricultural landscapes, Zimbabwe offers a significant opportunity for the growth of agritourism (Chikuta and Makacha, 2016). Despite the fact that agritourism has the potential to enhance the lives of farming communities and provide job opportunities for the local population in Zimbabwe, its economic relevance has only been substantially investigated in that country. In order to compete with established tourist enterprises, agritourism farmers must develop and take part in a variety of on-farm plans and initiatives involving all the significant players. In order to critically evaluate the potential of agritourism as a source for socio-economic transformation and its implications for policy and practice, this paper conducted a thorough literature analysis.

2. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this paper presupposes that sustainable agritourism should consider factors such as location, funding, product quality, marketing techniques, infrastructure, and legislative support (see Figure 1). The linkages and interdependencies between the different elements are shown by the arrows. The core of the idea is agritourism, which is basically the goal of providing visitors with a pleasurable and instructive experience while engaging in sustainable agriculture and improving local lives. Farmers are ensured favourable returns on their investments once all of these are in place.



Figure 1. Model for agritourism transformation

2.1. Location

The location needs to be carefully considered in order to draw tourists. Accessibility and closeness to necessary amenities like highways and refreshments, among others, may entice visitors. It is essential to provide stunning scenery in undeveloped areas. Safety for visitors, parking, accommodation, restrooms, dining areas, and entertainment facilities are necessities. Tourists would want to stay longer in such serene locations, away from the clamour and distractions of city life, provided these fundamental components are available. Chigora et al. (2020), who stated that local residents increase the location's attraction by providing indigenous foods and beverages, lovely homesteads, and a distinct traditional dress code, concur with this. This further suggests that culture is essential in ensuring that tourists have a thorough understanding of rural living.

2.2. Funding

Financial resources are necessary for agritourism to prosper and endure (Badulescu et al., 2015). Most agritourism initiatives need financial support from banks, partner companies, and the government. Fruit picking, hayrides, wine tasting, and farm-to-table eating are some examples of these activities. For these enterprises, infrastructure investments are required, including those for farming equipment, kitchens for preparing food, marketing, and transportation. Additionally, in order to cover all of their costs, including those for maintaining the farm or ranch, agritourism businesses must be able to effectively

manage their funds. For instance, upkeep expenses for infrastructure, fences, irrigation systems, and other equipment are ongoing and necessitate continuous investment. Funding is one of the key elements in the model.

In order to attract visitors to their farms and ranches, agritourism businesses must invest in marketing, which entails allocating funds for activities like website development and advertising. The ability to access financial resources can also give agritourism businesses the freedom to expand their product lines and invest in new businesses (Radović et al., 2020). For instance, a farm that has traditionally focused on fruit picking may opt to invest in the development of a brand-new activity like a petting zoo or a farm-to-table restaurant. If agritourism businesses have the financial means to invest in new endeavours, they can remain competitive in a market that is continuously changing. The success of agritourism businesses depends on the availability of financial resources. These funds are necessary to cover ongoing costs such as personnel salaries and maintenance, as well as to pay infrastructure upkeep, marketing, and new projects.

2.3. Product Quality

The quality of the services and products provided at the location has a significant impact on the venture's success. Visitors should be able to take pleasure in the peaceful settings as well as have access to high-quality agricultural services and products, such as farm-to-table dining, fresh produce, and animal husbandry, among others. If the products are to be more desirable, they must be authentic, developed locally, and produced sustainably (Filda et al., 2020). Visitors can learn more about the connections between sustainable agriculture and the methods utilised to produce farm goods. According to a study by Mutsikiwa, Zvavahera, and Pasipanodya (2020), travelers evaluate the quality of their vacation based on the services, commodities, attractions, accessibility, and infrastructure. With reference to Figure 1, quality products entice customers to have repeated visits and make referrals.

2.4. Marketing Strategies

Marketing is an effective method for luring visitors to the centre. Marketing strategies including public relations, online marketing, advertising, traditional media, and social media may help promote the website and its offerings. The special features of the agritourism location, including its educational and recreational offerings, its picturesque surroundings, and the standard of its commodities, should be emphasised in the marketing efforts. In light of this, brand awareness is a crucial sign of how well consumers are aware of a brand. The consumer may be able to retrieve this information quickly and effortlessly from memory (Chigora et al., 2020; O'Guinn, Allen and Semenik, 2009). Therefore, without marketing, it may be difficult to develop and grow agritourism in farming communities. This could be one of the reasons why there is a dearth of literature about this promising enterprise, particularly in Zimbabwe.

2.5. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is important because it provides tourists with enjoyable and worthwhile experiences. With the utilisation of good routes, buildings, Wi-Fi, roads, and online payment systems, customers will be able to reach a site simply and receive high-quality service and goods all in one place. According to Mutsikiwa, Zvavahera, and Pasipanodya (2020), visitors of all ages and skill levels ought to be able to use the infrastructure and experience comfort in the well-maintained environment.

2.6. Policy Support

Governments and regulatory authorities play a significant role in developing the legal framework required for the countries' agritourism business to prosper and grow. Grants, financial aid from agritourism businesses to farmers, and tax advantages are all potential types of policy. Laws may include zoning regulations, health and safety requirements, and environmental rules to ensure the viability of agritourism and the environment. Agritourism has been proposed as a different strategy, particularly in Zimbabwe, to aid local economies in recovering from the severe economic crisis that has afflicted the populace (Haggblade et al., 2010; Tew and Barbieri, 2012).

Policy-makers, academics, and governments have recently focused attention on agritourism as a tactic for the sustainable development of rural areas (Sonnino, 2003). According to McGehee (2007) and Barbieri (2013), agritourism provides advantages such as the potential for surplus income, decreased investment needs, utilisation of already-existing resources, limited impact on the environment, and recognition of cultural heritage. The next section examines prosperous agritourism businesses from all around the world, including examples from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Zimbabwe can benefit from these lessons as well.

3. Agritourism Trends Around the World

In the European Union, rural towns struggle structurally with access to necessities, a lack of employment opportunities, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of trained personnel. The brain drain is adding to the burden of the already disadvantaged communities as a result of this underinvestment. Through the value chain, agritourism is believed to have the ability to build smart towns and provide prosperous jobs for the local communities and beyond. The farming communities have the chance to develop unique value chains like the bio-economy, renewable energy, and circular economy by providing a variety of tourism products that can promote growth by generating jobs for local communities (EAFRD, 2013). Due to the impact that agriculture has on communal life, the EU has developed initiatives to support it (Bacsi and Szálteleki, 2022).

European agritourism is rapidly growing as farmers are supplying tourists with high-quality goods and services (Slavic and Schmitz, 2013). The European Union (EU) has supported farmers' efforts in agritourism through finance, regulation, capacity building, and upgrading, leading to lucrative enterprises (Brandth and Haugen, 2011). The Multi-annual Financial Framework of the EU includes a number of financial schemes that support tourism in rural areas during the years 2021–2027. The most relevant EU financial programs to support the establishment, operation, and growth of agritourism within member states are the Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which are all part of the second pillar of rural development.

Because agritourism cannot compete with hotels and other similar businesses, agritourism is viewed in Europe as an ancillary to the primary tourism industry. Agritourism is concentrated on a particular type of offering, primarily young families with children, youngsters going with their school, groups of friends, and urban people looking out for rural origins (Cigale, Lampi and Potonik, 2012) and Dubois and Schmitz (2012). Agritourism is increasingly diverse and complements traditional tourism in France with activities that are well-liked in farming communities, like festivals (Marsat, 2012). In Italy and the United States of America, where agritourism was originally introduced in the 1920s when travel had become more widely used, farmers still participate in celebrations of harvests and achievements today (van Zyl and van der Merwe, 2004).

This extensive approach has contributed to the growth and success of this kind of tourism (Akwii, and Kruszewski, 2021). Now that people may sell agricultural goods and related services to tourists, remote farmers can improve their revenue.

Agritourism was recognised in Italy in 1985 in conformity with the Italian Framework Law (Italian Framework Law. Discipline of Agritourism. No. 730 of 5 December 1985). It is now being managed in accordance with Law No. 96 of February 20, 2006 (Discipline of Agritourism No. 730 of December 5, 1985), following evaluations. By allowing visitors to their farms and removing any potential obstacles posed by local land use laws that might forbid such businesses in farming communities, Act 143 seeks to provide a minimum level of support for agritourism businesses across the state and enable farms to diversify their services and sources of income. Vermont, which has a policy on agritourism, legislation relating to the industry was passed.

The tourism business in the Philippines is booming, and the country is looking into the possibility of agritourism as a replacement. The country has shown interest by ranking among the top eight agritourism destinations worldwide. Agritourism has a lot of benefits, including social benefits, economic growth, and the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage (Cultural and Society, 2013). The majority of the population in Japan preferred sight and surroundings on their domestic journeys, according to a survey done there in 2021. Stakeholders view rice planting, harvesting outings, and culinary tours as crucial agritourism facilitators. Agritourism-related farms in Taiwan showed an increase in farm income, which aided in the prosperity of the family, according to a study by Chang, Mishra, and Lee (2019). The family members preferred working on the farm over working outside. Additionally, employing locals would be a way to raise households' socio-economic position (Runganga and Mhaka, 2021). In Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, the contributions of smallholder farmers to agriculture are decreasing, which has an effect on the contribution of agritourism to economic growth. The potential for agritourism has emerged in each of the three nations as a result of consumers' increasing demand for leisure time and declining pricing for agricultural goods.

3.1. Africa

Several African countries have actively pushed agritourism. South Africa, Kenya, Morocco, and Tanzania are a few of the well-known nations that have successfully generated agritourism goods and experiences. These nations provide a wide range of activities, such as farm tours, agricultural festivals, wine tours, cooking classes, and eco-lodges on working farms. Agritourism has a lot of potential to grow in Africa because of the continent's diversity in agricultural landscapes and richness of natural resources. Africa's numerous governments and regions have quite different agritourism policies and some of them are not effective to drive agritourism to sustainable and profitable enterprises. According to Rogerson and Rogerson (2014), agritourism has the potential to assist many African nations to diversify their economies, enhance rural development, and increase farmer income. Local governments, tourism boards, and farmers must work together to promote their regions' agricultural sectors and draw tourists. Agritourism needs to work well with communities in order to succeed. By incorporating local farmers, craftspeople, and citizens, agritourism projects aim to empower communities, uphold traditional practices, and create sustainable livelihoods. In a number of African countries, community-based tourism approaches are being used to ensure that the benefits of agritourism reach local populations. Agritourism in Africa faces a variety of challenges despite its potential. These challenges include insufficient funding, poor infrastructure on the farms'

locations, ineffective marketing and promotion, and a lack of awareness among potential tourists. It is crucial to address these problems if agritourism is to thrive across the continent.

3.2. The Case of Kenya

Kenya is noted for its diverse agricultural sector. Agritourism is a special opportunity for travelers to explore the nation's rich agricultural heritage and participate in rural farm activities. According to Kipkorir, Nzomo and Gogo (2002), Kenyan agritourism largely focuses on demonstrating diverse agricultural methods, such as crop production, livestock husbandry, dairy farming, and gardening. Visitors can take part in activities including picking fruit, visiting tea or coffee plantations, feeding animals, milking cows, and discovering traditional farming practices (Agayi and Gündüz, 2020). In particular, during COVID-19, agritourism developed into a substitute for traditional tourism (Adom, Atabek and Gouthami, 2021). The Central and Rift Valley tea and coffee districts, the flower farms around Naivasha, and the agricultural farms in outlying places like Laikipia and Nanyuki are just a few of the major agritourism destinations in Kenya (Kipkorir, Nzomo and Gogo, 2022). Visitors have the chance to enjoy Kenya's natural beauty and wildlife while also learning about agriculture at these locations.

The Kenyan government has taken steps to encourage agritourism as a way to diversify the tourism industry and aid regional farmers because it recognises the potential of the industry (Khanal, Honey and Omobitan, 2019). Infrastructure development, agritourism site accessibility, and training for farmers on hospitality and tourism-related services have all been prioritised. Agritourism has boosted the worth and dignity of the indigenous population in Kenya, resulting in better living conditions. As a result of changing tastes, destructive lifestyles, drug abuse, prostitution, and other factors, farming communities lament the erosion of their traditional customs (Kipkorir, Nzomo and Gogo, 2022). Conflicts between people and wildlife have also increased as a result of farmers encroaching on nearby forests as a result of the expansion of agritourism through infrastructure development. It is good that agritourism has helped to combat poverty and unemployment. Zimbabwe is given hope by Kenya as an example.

3.3. The Case of Tanzania

Tanzania's burgeoning agritourism industry has enormous promise. Tanzania, like Kenya, offers a rich agricultural terrain, and agritourism lets travelers experience the local farming and way of life in the countryside. The majority of towns depend on regional tourism for their income (Anderson, 2018). According to Epaphra and Mwakalasya (2017), agritourism in Tanzania typically focuses on excursions to coffee and tea plantations, spice farms, fruit orchards, and vegetable farms. In addition to learning about conventional farming operations and cultural customs, tourists get the chance to participate in activities including harvesting, processing, and tasting agricultural goods.

The coffee fields in the Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions, the spice farms in Zanzibar, and the agricultural districts in the southern highlands, such as Iringa and Mbeya, are among major agritourism attractions in Tanzania. Visitors get the opportunity to learn about the agricultural processes and interact with local farmers in these areas. According to Magigi and Ramadhani (2013), the Tanzanian government has recognised the potential of agritourism as a way to advance rural development, boost the tourism industry, and better local communities' standard of living. Infrastructure has been developed, farmers have received training in hospitality and tourism-related activities, and associations between farmers

and tour operators have been formed. According to the Sustainable Development Goals, conservation agriculture has resulted from agritourism (Kahimba et al., 2014).

3.4. The Case of Morocco

In Morocco, agritourism is a booming industry that is attracting more domestic and foreign visitors. Morocco is a desirable location for agritourism due to its unique agricultural environment and traditional farming methods. Visits to organic farms, hands-on experience with traditional farming techniques, taking part in harvest events, and education on regional agricultural products are all common components of Moroccan agritourism (Jczmyk, 2014). Visitors can interact with farmers, visit rural areas, and fully experience the nation's agricultural legacy. Agritourism will enhance the socio-economic standing of communities and farmers in Morocco, where agriculture has historically provided 33% of all jobs and approximately 12% of the country's GDP (European Training Foundation, 2021).

The lush plains of the Saiss region, the palm trees in the Draa Valley, the wineries in the Meknes, and the olive groves in the Rif Mountains are a few well-liked agritourism locations in Morocco (Khalil, 2009). These areas give visitors the chance to see Morocco's diverse agricultural landscape and experience rural life. The Moroccan government has acted to encourage the growth of agritourism after seeing the industry's potential. Agritourism has been promoted, rural infrastructure has been improved, and training and capacity building for farmers and local communities have all been implemented as initiatives.

3.6. The Case of South Africa

Agritourism started to take shape in South Africa around the 1950s when farmers concentrated mostly on ostrich farming. The farmers and locals eventually watched ostrich racing as a result of this (Grillini et al., 2022). An example of a success story is South Africa, where the private sector support sparked the nation's rapid growth in agritourism, where both tourism and agriculture contribute to the GDP of the nation. With a focus on pursuits including photography, farm stays, trekking, animal viewing, and hunting, agritourism has grown in popularity over time (van Zyl and van der Merwe, 2021). Farmers in South Africa who are prepared to commit time to agritourism, treat it like a business rather than a side project, and have a working knowledge of the market are the key factors in its success.

Farmers in South Africa may also be eligible for loans from banks supported by the Government. In South Africa, agritourism is viewed as a method to spread out financial risk and give farmers a voice. It has the potential to keep improving local communities' quality of life by providing employment and farmers also get income through tourists. However, it is difficult to compare different nations since South African farmers operate within diverse frameworks and settings.

3.7. The Zimbabwean Context

According to Poultona et al. (2002), one of Zimbabwe's main economic sectors, agriculture makes a considerable contribution to employment, food production, and export revenue. Maize, tobacco, cotton, wheat, soybeans, sugarcane, coffee, tea, and numerous horticultural crops, such as vegetables, fruits, and flowers are the main crops farmed in Zimbabwe. The raising of cattle, goats, sheep, and fowl for meat, milk, eggs, and other products is another common practice in livestock farming. In rural areas, small-scale subsistence farming is extremely important since it allows farmers to grow commodities for both their own consumption and local markets (Runganga and Mhaka, 2021). Agritourism can thrive in Zimbabwe due to the

favorable environment, climate, topography, and agricultural methods all having an impact on the nation's agricultural activities. Afforestation, conservation efforts, and sustainable agriculture techniques are all being promoted. However, the nation is experiencing less rain, and the seasons have also shifted as a result of the consequences of climate change. Because rainfall in Zimbabwe is sporadic, irrigation is essential to the country's crops. In especially arid places, irrigation plans, and reservoirs have been designed to sustain crop production all year round. All these activities require finding which is one of the elements of the model (see Figure 1). Agritourism was found to be a feasible option in a study conducted by Chikuta and Makacha (2016) because some resources are already present on a number of farms. The same authors pleaded for the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism, and Hospitality Industry to boost agritourism through legislation and financial support.

Agritourism is not a new concept, and industrialised economies highly value it. This kind of tourism is thriving in the many of countries throughout the world (Grillini, Sacchi, Chase, Taylor, van Zyl, Van Der Merwe, Streifeneder and Fischer, 2022). Despite this, there is a dearth of research on agritourism in developing countries, particularly Zimbabwe (Chikuta and Makacha, 2016). Agritourism, in the opinion of some experts, has the ability to promote socio-economic development for farming communities in Zimbabwe and other nations, which would subsequently aid in the growth of rural areas. According to Chikuta and Makacha's (2016) research, agritourism may be a viable alternative to conventional tourism in Zimbabwe, but it is still a relatively new concept that has not yet attained general popularity.

Given that the nation's economy is predominately focused on agriculture, it has access to vast expanses of land for farming, and it has a favourable climate, this might be a lucrative undertaking (Sanderson and Pierre Le, 2017). To fully embrace agritourism, some farmers have begun offering farm stays and guesthouses to tourists. These lodgings provide guests the ability to participate in farming-related activities, see farming processes, and immerse themselves in the agricultural way of life. As a result, organic farming practices and permaculture projects have increased in Zimbabwe, attracting tourists who are curious about sustainable agricultural practices. Programs and workshops on sustainable agriculture, organic farming, sustainable food production, and other topics are offered by some farms and rural areas.

Agritourism initiatives are commonly recognised as being unique and alluring due to the high quality of the nation's natural resources and its different regional cultural traditions (Arru et al., 2019). Integrating local cultural values, social structures, environments, economies, and identities is crucial to fostering sustainable agritourism in farming communities. If agritourism is successfully promoted, developed, and carried out, it has the potential to contribute to ongoing rural development (Wijijayanti et al., 2023). Zimbabwe lays a lot of emphasis on domestic tourism development, and agritourism can play a critical. Local communities actively engage in extending invitations, exhibiting their agricultural practices, and exchanging cultural experiences. Agritourism programs aim to support local communities by presenting economic opportunities and safeguarding their cultural heritage.

A growing number of agricultural festivals (field days) and events are held in Zimbabwe, giving tourists the chance to speak with farmers, participate in local traditions, and pay respect to the country's agricultural heritage. These festivals usually feature exhibitions, agricultural displays, culinary markets, and cultural performances. This has allowed farmers to improve their income, which has boosted regional economies. However, the Zimbabwean agritourism business faces challenges similar to those faced by many other African countries, such as a lack of infrastructure, inadequate marketing and promotion,

a lack of funding, and the need for capacity building. These challenges must be overcome for the nation's agritourism sector to grow sustainably. The benefits of tourism are covered in the next section.

4. Benefits of Agritourism

Agritourism creates new cash sources for farmers, which diversifies the local economy. It gives locals employment opportunities in the tourism industries as well as in agricultural pursuits like farming, harvesting, and animal husbandry. In farming areas, this may lower unemployment rates and raise income levels (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014). Additionally, it offers a means of revitalising rural communities through investment and visitor attraction. It promotes entrepreneurship and the growth of small enterprises including, farm stays, farmers' markets, and wine tours. As a result, supporting industries including transportation, lodging, dining, and handicrafts expand, bringing benefits to nearby companies and communities (Jczmyk, 2014).

Traditional farming methods and cultural heritage are preserved, thanks to agritourism (Roman and Grudzie, 2021). Visitors have the chance to discover the background and importance of farming in a community. As a result, local agricultural traditions may be preserved for the foreseeable future with greater pride and admiration. Visitors of all ages can learn something new through agritourism. It enables city inhabitants to rediscover nature, learn about the source of their food, and acquire practical experience with sustainable agricultural methods. This raises awareness of the need to preserve the environment, preserve biodiversity, and promote regional agriculture (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014).

By bringing people together, agritourism promotes community participation. Local farmers, artisans, and citizens frequently work together to promote their wares and traditions, fostering a sense of pride and cohesion among the locals (Paniccia and Leoni, 2019). Festivals, workshops, and farm-to-table dining opportunities encourage contact between residents and guests, fostering cultural exchange and creating bonds between people.

Agritourism promotes environmentally responsible behaviour and sustainable agricultural methods. Organic farming, conservation methods, and the preservation of natural resources are often emphasised in agritourism operations (Muresan et al., 2016; Ammirato et al., 2020). Agritourism promotes the value of appropriate land management, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation, which helps to ensure the community's overall sustainability.

Agritourism serves as a distinctive lure, luring tourists to rural locations that might not generally be thought of as tourist hotspots. It broadens the country's tourism options by drawing foodies, nature lovers, and people looking for real cultural experiences (Jczmyk, 2014). This can raise total tourist numbers, visitor expenditure, and the community's reputation and visibility.

In conclusion, agritourism supports local economies, societies, and cultures. It promotes environmental sustainability, boosts local economies, protects agricultural history, offers educational opportunities, and fortifies ties between neighbours. Communities can build a sustainable and successful future while presenting their distinctive agricultural assets to the rest of the world by embracing agritourism.

5. Agritourism and Sustainable Development Goals

The promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Zimbabwe can be greatly aided through agritourism. The United Nations has created a series of global goals known as the SDGs to address numerous social, economic, and environmental issues.

SDG 1: No Poverty: Agritourism may provide farming communities opportunities to make money, reducing poverty and improving quality of life. By attracting tourists to their farms and rural communities, local farmers and towns can increase their revenue through lodging, guided tours, and the sale of commodities. Agritourism can develop moral farming practices and increase food security, advancing **SDG 2: Zero Hunger**. Agritourism destinations give visitors the chance to learn about organic farming, conventional agricultural practices, and local food production. This information exchange can help improve farming methods, increase crop yields, and reduce the rates of hunger and malnutrition. **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Agritourism creates jobs, particularly in rural areas where employment opportunities may be few. Numerous businesses, including hospitality, travel and transportation, and handicrafts, can benefit from its job-creating potential. By diversifying the local economy, agritourism promotes economic growth and improves livelihoods. In keeping with **SDG 12 on responsible production and consumption**, agritourism promotes sustainable and moral practices in both agriculture and tourism. It encourages the use of organic farming methods, the preservation of biodiversity, and moral waste management. By promoting local food consumption, agritourism reduces the carbon footprint caused by a long-distance shipment of goods. Agritourism can aid in efforts to adapt to and reduce climate change. **SDG 13: Climate Action:** By incorporating sustainable agricultural methods including agroforestry, water conservation, and the use of renewable energy, agritourism destinations can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Agritourism also has the potential to inform visitors about the importance of conservation and living sustainably. Agritourism helps to preserve and promote biodiversity by showcasing the numerous natural resources found in rural regions, which is a component of **SDG 15: Life on Land**.

Visitors can pick up information on employing sustainable land management practices and conserving wildlife, and native plants. Agritourism offers financial incentives for protecting natural places, which helps to conserve ecosystems and preserve animals. **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals:** Agritourism promotes cooperation among various stakeholders, including farmers, local communities, governmental organisations, and tourism organisations. Through the creation of partnerships, it can more effectively achieve sustainable development goals by leveraging resources, expertise, and knowledge.

5. Lessons Learnt

Success stories from Asia, Europe, and Africa have taught us some valuable lessons. For farmers, tourism regulatory agencies, funders, and the government, these lessons are important. Given that agritourism has shown to be successful in Africa and elsewhere, financial institutions may also start conversations about helping farmers in this area.

Government policy will go a long way toward recognising agritourism as a cornerstone for the socio-economic liberation of farming and surrounding rural communities. The development of infrastructure, such as accommodation, roads, and product value addition, is dependent on financial support, among other things. In the event that the government and banking institutions fail to help, farmers must pool their resources and assist each other.

Agritourism is still an emerging concept (in its infancy) and there is limited literature in this area in Zimbabwe and other developing nations. Marketing strategies are critical to support this noble cause. This brings awareness to the existence of this form of tourism. If well supported, agritourism has the capacity to improve the socio-economic status of farming communities and surrounding communities through job creation.

The main benefit of agritourism is that it promotes sustainable agriculture by using contemporary farming techniques. Communities benefit from thriving and fulfilling lives thanks to socio-economic, technical, and environmental progress. Agritourism, therefore, promotes sustainable development. The promotion of sustainable agriculture, rural development, poverty reduction, education, and responsible consumption, as well as the promotion of connections between urban and rural areas, as well as the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, are all ways that agritourism can promote multiple SDGs.

Overall, Zimbabwean agritourism may help achieve a variety of SDGs, including reducing poverty, guaranteeing food security, promoting sustainable agriculture, encouraging decent labour and consumption, battling climate change, protecting biodiversity, and establishing partnerships for sustainable development. By promoting these goals, agritourism can contribute to the general development and prosperity of communities in Zimbabwe.

6. Implications to Practice and Policy

Zimbabwe's agritourism industry has a promising future as the nation grows its tourism industry and promotes sustainable farming practices. Zimbabwe's agrarian economy and long agricultural culture provide a solid foundation for the growth of agritourism. By incorporating agricultural experiences with traditional tourism offers, the country may be able to diversify its tourism economy and attract a wider range of tourists. Agritourism is a tool that farmers can use to showcase and market their value-added agricultural products. Visitors can sample and purchase locally produced foods, beverages, crafts, and other agricultural products, generating additional income for farmers and encouraging agricultural entrepreneurship.

By increasing experiential learning opportunities and agricultural research through collaboration with academic institutions and research groups, agritourism can aid in funding agriculturally-related educational programs and research. Zimbabwe is renowned for the diversity of its animal species and its pristine landscapes. Agritourism can be combined with ecotourism and wildlife conservation programs to create synergies between agriculture, tourism, and environmental preservation. Visitors can participate in programs for wildlife protection and learn about sustainable farming practices.

For agritourism to be successful, appropriate legislation and regulations must be put in place. Regulations for environmental sustainability, infrastructure development, safety requirements, and land usage should be provided by the government. Well-defined laws can foster an environment that is favorable for agritourism businesses to thrive while ensuring the conservation of natural and cultural resources. It is important to keep in mind that the successful implementation of agritourism policies in Zimbabwe requires careful consideration of local contexts, stakeholder involvement, and ongoing evaluation to resolve any potential concerns and maximise the benefits for all parties involved. Collaboration between government agencies, regional groups, businesses, and tourism organisations is essential for the growth and marketing of agritourism. Policies that foster public-private partnerships, encourage community involvement, and facilitate market linkages can increase the overall feasibility and sustainability of agritourism initiatives.

References

- Adom, D., Atabek A. and Gouthami, V. (2021) Agritourism as a preferred traveling trend in boosting rural economies in the post-COVID-19 period: Nexus between agriculture, tourism, art and culture, *Journal of Migration, Culture and Society*, 1(1), 7–19.
- Agayi, C.O. and Gündüz, E. (2020) An Evaluation of Rural Tourism Potential for Rural Development in Kenya, *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 63,35–46.
- Akwii, E. and Kruszewski, S. (2021) *Defining and Regulating Agritourism Trends*; Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School: Royalton, VT, USA, 2021.
- Ammirato, S., Felicetti, A. M., Raso, C., Pansera, B. A. and Violi, A. (2020) Agritourism and sustainability: what we can learn from a systematic literature review. *Sustainability*, 12(22), 9575. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12229575>
- Anderson, W. (2018) Linkages between tourism and agriculture for inclusive development in Tanzania: A value chain perspective. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 1, 10.1108/JHTI-11-2017-0021
- Arru, B. Furesi, R. Madau, F.A. and Pulina, P. (2019) Recreational services provision and farm diversification: a technical efficiency analysis on Italian agritourism. *Sustainability*, 9(2),42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agriculture9020042>
- Bacsı, Z. and Száltekei, P. (2022) Farm Profitability and Agritourism in the EU – Does Size Matter? *Deturope*, 14(2), 152–171.
- Baipai, R., Chikuta, O., Gandiwa, E. and Mutanga, C. N. (2023) A framework for sustainable agritourism development in Zimbabwe. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(1) DOI: [10.1080/23311886.2023.2201025](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2201025)
- Barbieri, C. (2013) Assessing the sustainability of agritourism in the US: a comparison between agritourism and other farm entrepreneurial ventures. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21, 252–270. DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2012.685174
- Barbieri, C. (2014) An activity-based classification of agritourists, Proceedings of the 45th Annual International Conference of Travel and Tourism Research Association, Belgium.
- Brandth, B., and Haugen, M. (2011) Farm diversification into tourism – Implications for social identity? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 27 (1), 35–44.
- Chang, H.-Hao, Mishra, A.K. and Lee, T.-Haw (20219) A supply-side analysis of agritourism: Evidence from farm-level agriculture census data in Taiwan. *Australian Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 63, 521–548.
- Chase, L. (2020) *Agritourism in Vermont*. <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/document/VDTM/benchReseaech2017BenchmarkStudyFullReport.pdf.2.1/2020> 9.
- Chigora, F., Mutambabira, E., Ndlovu, J., Muzurura, J. and Zvavahera, P. (2020) Towards Establishing Zimbabwe Tourism Destination Brand Equity Variables through Sustainable Community Involvement. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(5), 1094–1110.
- Chikuta, O. and Makacha, C. (2016) Agritourism: A Possible Alternative to Zimbabwe's Tourism Product? *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(3), 103–113 DOI: 10.17265/2328-2169/2016.06.001
- Cigale, D. (2012) Farm tourism in the context of Slovenian tourism. In: *Agritourism Between Embeddedness and Internationalization. Proceedings*, 27–32.
- Cultural and Society (2013) *The Rise of Agri-tourism in the Philippines*. <https://www.asia-research.net/the-rise-of-agri-tourism-in-the-philippines/>

- Dubois, C. and Schmitz, S. (2012a) What is the position of agritourism on the Walloon tourist market? In: *Agritourism Between Embeddedness and Internationalization. Proceedings*, 33–43.
- Epaphra, M. and Mwakalasya, A. (2017) Analysis of Foreign Direct Investment, Agricultural Sector and Economic Growth in Tanzania. *Modern Economy*, 8, 111–140. DOI: [10.4236/me.2017.81008](https://doi.org/10.4236/me.2017.81008)
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Regulation (EAFRD). No 1305/2013, Recital 18. 2013. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_tourism.pdf
- European Training Foundation (2021) *The future of skills A case study of the agri-food sector in Morocco*. https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-04/future_of_skills_agri-food_sector_in_morocco.pdf (Accessed: 05 May 2023).
- Filda, R., Norfaridatul, A., Mohammed, B. Bakri, Y. and Ismail, G. (2020) Tourism Service Quality and Tourism Product Availability on the Loyalty of International Tourists. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(12), 959–968.
- Grillini, G., Sacchi, G., Chase, L., Taylor, J., Van Zyl, C.C., Van Der Merwe, P., Streifeneder, T. and Fischer, C. (2022) Qualitative Assessment of Agritourism Development Support Schemes in Italy, the USA and South Africa. *Sustainability*, 14, 7903. Available at <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14137903> (Accessed: 28 May 2023).
- Hagglblade, S., Hazell, P. and Reardon, T. (2010) The rural non-farm economy: Prospects for growth and poverty reduction. *World Development*, 38, 1429–1441. DOI: [10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.06.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2009.06.008)
- Italian Framework Law. Discipline of Agritourism. No. 730 of 5 December 1985. Available online: https://www.tuttocamere.it/files/agricol/1985_730.pdf (accessed on 7 November 2021).
- Italian Law. Discipline of Agritourism. No. 96 of 20 February 2006. Available online: https://www.agriturismi.it/img/LEGGE_20_febbraio_2006.pdf (accessed on 7 November 2021).
- Jęczynek, A., Uglis, J., Graja-Zwolińska, S., Maćkowiak, M., Spychała, A. and Sikora, J. (2014) Research Note: Economic Benefits of Agritourism Development in Poland – An Empirical Study. *Tourism Economics. Fast Track*, 10.5367/te.2014.0391
- Kahimba, E., Mutabazi, K., Tumbo, S., Masuki, K. and Mbungu, W. (2014) Adoption and Scaling-Up of Conservation Agriculture in Tanzania: Case of Arusha and Dodoma Regions. *Natural Resources*, 5, 161–176. DOI: [10.4236/nr.2014.54016](https://doi.org/10.4236/nr.2014.54016).
- Khalil, A. (2009) *Agricultural Landscape Externalities, Agro-Tourism, and Rural Poverty Reduction in Morocco*. 10.1007/978-0-387-72971-8_9.
- Khanal, A., Honey, U. and Omobitan, O. (2019) Diversification through ‘fun in the farm’: analyzing structural factors affecting agritourism in Tennessee. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 23, 1–16. 10.22434/IFAMR2019.0043.
- Kipkorir, N., Nzomo, S. and Gogo, A. (2022) Effects of agritourism development on the local community in Kericho County, Kenya. *Journal of Tourism, Culinary and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), 34–53.
- Lak, A and Khairabadi, O. (2022) Leveraging Agritourism in Rural Areas in Developing Countries: The Case of Iran. *Front. Sustain. Cities*, 4, 863385. DOI: [10.3389/frsc.2022.863385](https://doi.org/10.3389/frsc.2022.863385)
- Magigi, W. and Ramadhani, H. (2013) Enhancing Tourism Industry through Community Participation: A Strategy for Poverty Reduction in Zanzibar, Tanzania. *Journal of Environmental Protection*, 4 (10), 1108–1122. DOI: [10.4236/jep.2013.410127](https://doi.org/10.4236/jep.2013.410127).
- Marsat, J.-B. (2012) Which need of knowledge for designing a regional policy for agritourism, at the junction of two domains? The case of Region Auvergne (France) (pp. 68–83). In *Agritourism Between Embeddedness and*

Internationalization. *Proceedings*.

- McGehee, N. G. (2007) An agritourism systems model: A Weberian perspective. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15, 111–124. DOI: 10.2167/jost634.0
- Muresan, I., Oroian, C., Rashid, R., Arion, F., Porutiu, A., Chiciudean, G., Todea, A., and Ramona, L. (2016) Local residents. Attitude toward Sustainable Rural Tourism Development. *Sustainability*, 8, 100, 10.3390/su8010100.
- Mutsikiwa, M., Zvavahera, P. & Pasipanodya, S. (2020) Brand Experience and Intentions to Stay at Hotels in Zimbabwe: An Application of Khan and Rahman's Hotel Brand Experience Scale, *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(3), 215–230.
- Panicia, P. and Leoni, L. (2019) Co-evolution in Tourism: The case of Albergo Diffuso. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(10), 1216–1243.
- Poultona, C., Davies, R., Matsheb, I. and Ureya, I. (2002) *A review of Zimbabwe's agricultural economic policies: 1980–2000. Institutions and Economic Policies for Pro-poor Agricultural Growth*. Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.
- Radović, G., Petrović, M.D., Bajrami, D.D., Radovanović, M. and Vuković, N. (2020) Can Proper Funding Enhance Sustainable Tourism in Rural Settings? Evidence from a Developing Country. *Sustainability*, 12, 7797. DOI:10.3390/su12187797
- Rogerson, C. and Rogerson, J. (2014) Agritourism and local economic development in South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 26, 10.2478/bog-2014-0047.
- Roman, M., and Grudzień, P. (2021) The essence of agritourism and its profitability during the coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. *Agriculture*, 11(5), 458.
- Runganga, R. and Mhaka, S. (2021) Impact of Agricultural Production on Economic Growth in Zimbabwe. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*.
- Sanderson, A. and Pierre Le, R. (2017) Tourism an Engine of Wealth Creation in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 7(2), 129–137.
- Slavic, I.P. and Schmitz, S. (2013) Farm tourism across Europe. *Europ. Countrys*, 265–274. DOI: 10.2478/euco-2013-0017
- Sonnino, R. (2004) For a “Piece of Bread”? Interpreting Sustainable Development through Agritourism in Southern Tuscany. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 44, 10.1111/j.1467-9523.2004.00276. x
- O'Guinn, T.C., Allen, C.T. and Semenik, R.J. (2009) *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion*. 5th edn , South-Western, Nashville, USA.
- Taylor, J. (2019) *What makes an Agritourism farm in Africa successful?* <https://www.eurac.edu/en/blogs/agriculture/what-makes-an-agritourism-farm-in-africa-successful> [Accessed: 05 May 2023].
- van Zyl, C.C and van der Merwe, P. (2021) The motives of South African farmers for offering agri-tourism. *Open Agriculture*, 6, 537–548.
- Wijijayanti, T., Salleh, N.H.M., Hashim, N.A., Mohd Saukani, M.N. and Abu Bakar, N. (2023) The feasibility of rural tourism in fostering real sustainable development in host communities. *Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 46(1), 336–345. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.46137-1031>

Declarations

Funding: No specific funding was received for this work.

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.