

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

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an interesting article which covers a wide range of aspects of the use of an agritourism as a developmental innovation in developing countries. As written it is essentially descriptive and although posing many of the problems and potential for agritourism development, the fundamental questions relating to how to do this and who should do this, are relatively ignored. For example, Figure 1 a 'model for agritourism transformation' indicates the component parts of how it can be developed; however many of these components are either not available or not sufficiently developed in most developing countries to enable and sustain such initiatives. Further comments can be made:

First, not all countries are at the same levels of development and this is a common feature of many developing countries. This can be illustrated by looking at the components of the model and reflecting these in some developing countries as diverse as China, Cameroon, Namibia and The Gambia. In most countries both developed and developing, agritourism remains a niche development opportunity and often not prioritised by governments.

Second, if agritourism is sometimes 'transformational' why not give some examples of its economic significance and impact on social/community change? In the article there is no statistical data to substantiate many claims made for agritourism as 'growing momentum and showing enormous potential.'

Third, the European Union is not a region of developing countries! To use this as a comparator to provide guidelines for agritourism development is not useful as the EU already has in place the various inputs available in Figure 1.

Fourth, the country examples provided by the authors are interesting yet seem only to reflect the existence of established farms and agricultural organisations. The use of agritourism is a useful and welcome addition to the core business; however, how can it be made more inclusive and incorporate many of small farms and often subsistence farm operations? There is a considerable literature on Pro Poor Tourism which is not referenced in the article and which is certainly relevant to any discussion of alleviating poverty in many developing countries.

Although interesting, to qualify as an article of academic merit this submission could be improved by avoiding generalisations and unsubstantiated advocacy, more statistical and comparative data and a recognition that although developing countries exhibit common problems, the intensity of these varies and developmental approaches need to fit particular country profiles. For example, despite the many agritourism advantages in Zimbabwe, why have they not been developed? Applying the components of the Figure 1 model would provide illustrations of the barriers that have to be overcome to support developments of agritourism. In a general context, how should agritourism initiatives should be



developed and by whom?