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# Aims & Scope

*Tourism Today* serves as an international, scholarly, and refereed journal aiming to promote and enhance research in the fields of tourism and hospitality. The journal is published by the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Cyprus and is intended for readers in the scholarly community who deal with the tourism and hospitality industries, as well as professionals in the industry. *Tourism Today* provides a platform for debate and dissemination of research findings, new research areas and techniques, conceptual developments, and articles with practical application to any tourism or hospitality industry segment. Besides research papers, the journal welcomes book reviews, conference reports, case studies, research notes and commentaries.

# Aims & Scope

The scope of the journal is international and all papers submitted are subject to strict double blind peer review by its Editorial Board and by international reviewers. The journal features conceptual and empirical papers, and editorial policy is to invite the submission of manuscripts from academics, researchers and industry practitioners. The Editorial Board will be looking particularly for articles about new trends and developments within the field of tourism and hospitality, and the application of new ideas and developments that are likely to affect tourism and hospitality in the future. The journal also welcomes submission of manuscripts in areas that may not be directly tourism-based but cover a topic that is of interest to researchers, educators and practitioners in the fields of tourism and hospitality.

Decisions regarding publication of submitted manuscripts are based on the recommendations of members of the Editorial Board and other qualified reviewers in an anonymous review process. Submitted articles are evaluated on their appropriateness, significance, clarity of presentation and conceptual adequacy. Negative reviews are made available to authors. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of the Editorial Board of *Tourism Today* or of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management.

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# Social tourism and social agriculture for sustainable development

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## ABSTRACT

In very recent years, after many decades of support to agriculture and rural society, the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) have fostered its second pillar of Rural Development Policy, including rural tourism. The farms can actually broaden and reground their activities, enlarging their boundaries toward the production of market and non-market goods and services, re-positioning farm resources (workforce, structures) in extra corporate uses, out of the farm boundaries, within the surrounding territory. Farmers have the opportunity to maintain their activities by means of contemporarily producing commodities, services and non-commodities to be used by the entire society. Agriculture and the rural society will be able also to introduce new forms of products in its organizational and social patterns. That is, the ability to include also the production of social tourism within capabilities of farms and rural areas. The presence of less wealthy tourists in rural areas and in farms will contribute to ensure further revenues to farming and relaxation to a larger segment of tourism market, de-season ability and de-crowding of mainstream tourism resorts. Rural Tourism needs to consider smartly the sustainable hospitality and the introduction of social goals should be a good pace in the direction of a Sustainable Rural Tourism pattern.

**Keywords:** social tourism, social agriculture, convergence, multifunctionality

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid increase in global demand for tourism over the past decades has been urged by the rise in living standards, caused both by growing wealth and air travel lowering tariffs. The importance of tourism is not just about the money visitors spend on travel, accommodation, leisure activities or buying souvenirs, but the overall industry stimulates the participation and collaboration of communities, tourists, national and local governments, local suppliers and businesses throughout a more or less extended and complicated supply chain. For this, the main International Organizations of Tourism have for many years claimed for sustainability principles in order to avoid social and economic spatial asymmetries caused by the unequal geographical distribution of costs and benefits. Moreover, both the political statement of agricultural 'multifunctionality' and the terrific increase of rural tourism offer the opportunity

to study and implement sustainable and more integrated models of tourism, also considering important social goals. A better spread of tourism benefits in the territory is today more feasible than in the past, with the consequent maintenance of social cohesion in rural, less favorable or peripheral areas and some decongestion in urban areas. In this sense, social tourism should encounter social agriculture, benefiting the less favored components of the society.

This essay aims at illustrating some interactions between productive and social aspects both in agriculture and in tourism that are actually intertwined and potentially useful for enhancing socioeconomic sustainability. The paper is organized as follows: paragraph 2 illustrates the necessity to better profit from the ‘multifunctionality’ of agriculture as well as any other industry, paragraph 3 considers the literature on sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism. Thus, paragraph 4 exposes the importance of the right to holiday, both in the sense of a social achievement and as an economic opportunity for selected tourist destinations. Paragraph 5 gives a possible political perspective and some conclusive considerations are reported in the final paragraph 6.

## **BACKGROUND: MULTIFUNCTIONAL INDUSTRIES**

Since recent decades the developed economies realized an increasing concern about the nexus between human activities and the environment, considering more deeply many new emerging viewpoints. Every economic activity produces one or more main intentional output and some unintentional others. Depending on circumstances, many of these are perceived as negative or positive socioeconomic externalities (Arrow, 1970).

In the present global confrontation among Countries which actually claim for opposite development models, the Western society deeply revolutionized the role of agriculture (FAO, 1995; 2013), ceasing the long period of exclusive market support, choosing the way of encouraging the social, cultural and environmental objectives for rural communities and farming (EC, 2008) in a sustainable perspective. Notwithstanding the statement of a sustainable agriculture, replacing a too strong market competition, the future role of farming is still fuzzy. The entire society, e. g. policy makers and consumers, has charged farmers with new social, cultural and environmental goals, though stating not to reduce the public support to farmland and continuing to maintain focus on the productive main role of agriculture. Nevertheless, facing the factual relative fading of market goals in comparison to the increasing emphasis for non-market ones, the western farming professional organizations and unions have been afraid of reducing farmland to a museum activity. Some authors fear the definitive missing with competitive markets (Amadei, Segré, 2007), reducing farmers in a limbo with a subsequent diminishing entrepreneurial capacity. Yet, the challenge for farmers is more complicated and intriguing, as they are today facing—after the first definition of technological convergence by Rosenberg (1963)—an industry convergence (Weaver, 2007), that is an actual issue also in peripheral sectors like agriculture, especially in the use of new

media (Corinto, Curzi, 2010; Corinto, Musotti, 2012). Thus, the powering convergence of tourism and agribusiness will be seriously considered by future policies and programs.

In very recent years, after many decades of 'blind' support to agriculture and rural society, the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) fostered its second pillar of Rural Development Policy, in comparison to Agricultural Markets Support, the traditional first pillar of the European public intervention (EC, 2006). The EU has gradually diminished its focus on productivity and enhanced that on immaterial objectives. The modern goal for agriculture, namely 'multifunctionality', includes all goods and services produced by farming activities. The concept was introduced in 1993 by the European Council for Agricultural Law (CEDR, 1999), and fast entered a large debate about the social and economic role of agriculture. Three years before, the Cork Declaration of the European Commission entitled 'A living countryside' (EC, 1996), already expressed the aims of the European Commission to consider agriculture as a real interface between people and the environment. By this way, farmers can actually behave for the exploitation and maintenance of natural and social resources, folkloric traditions, landscape and the countryside.

The most accepted definition of multifunctional agriculture indicates the production of food and fibers jointly to environmental amenities, agricultural tourism, safety and food quality, landscape management, preservation of biodiversity, cultural heritage and farming traditions (OECD, 2001; Van Huylenbroeck et al., 2007). Moreover, the academic Italian debate on this topic has produced an original definition of 'rural' multifunctionality (Aimone et al., 2006). This latter is particularly fascinating because considers the 'local' integration with other economic sectors and the all society. That is to say a holistic point of view for agriculture itself. Therefore, the today economically weakened primary sector can surprisingly play an important social role with more power than in the past.

The farms can actually broaden and reground their activities, enlarging their boundaries toward the joint production of market and non-market goods and services, re-positioning resources (workforce, structures) in extra farm uses, out of their boundaries, within the surrounding territory, thus grasping new opportunities to maintain at least current revenues and assets.

Within this framework, tourism can play a positive alliance with agriculture in producing private and public goods. The result should be the broader opening of the consumer's allocation leisure time market for farmers.

In few next years, agriculture will face new challenges, as the 2013 might be a round point in the long history of the Common Agricultural Policy. Agriculture for fifty year has been asked to feed people, but that was not all. The CAP has been a policy on landscapes, employment, environment, climate change and biodiversity. Still, after the adoption of Europe 2020 strategy (EC 2010a), together with the rest of the society agriculture will better contribute to undertake the road to green, sustainable, smart and inclusive growth.



Today, the intervention instruments are structured in two complementary pillars, with annual direct payments and market measures making up the first one, and multi-annual rural development measures the second one (EC 2010b). Thus, agriculture is still a fundamental part of the European economy and the all society requests high quality, competitive and reliable raw material inputs, as well as in non-food sectors. Rural activities, from tourism, transport, to local and public services are yet important for the European society. As the tourism policy itself is characterized by a 'crossing nature' and a large number of other European policies have a direct or indirect impact on it, including the Rural Development Policy (EC 2010b), the converging nexus between tourism and agriculture should effectively match, becoming an operational issue.

## LITERATURE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM/RURAL TOURISM

Today, the travel and tourism industry is seemingly considered as a near no cost fostering factor for employment and well-being, offering near 'no limit' opportunities for the global economic development and capable of promoting all communities, the richest and the poorest ones, both in Western and Eastern Countries. On the other hand, the tourism and travel industry is considered as a nearly perfect instrument suitable to achieve sustainable development, being a feasible tool for both exploiting natural resources and protecting them. Often, the tourism literature shows an unquestioning acceptance of this optimistic vision, with many supporters believing the industry can easily contribute to national development and to foreign exchange earnings with less consideration about impacts on society and the environment. On the contrary travel and tourism industry shows evident social implications, land use competition, competing allocation of labor, thus originating several social and ethical considerations.

Near thirty years ago, in discussing models in tourism planning, Getz (1986) reported the tourism policy had evolved in three stages since World War II. After the emphasis on initial travel facilitation and then of its promotion, the third period recognized tourism as an industry during the 1960s, within which a great interest of tourism planning has arisen. In fact, Getz affirmed:

'More recently, considerable reaction to the biases of tourism planning has been voiced, ranging from discussion of limits to growth to advocacy of alternative planning models' (p. 21).

The claim for limits to growth has been particular strong in that historical period of questioning on the necessity to recognize the existence of intrinsic resource limits to an infinite socioeconomic development.

Reporting a literature review, Getz (1986) said that many alternative planning methods have been proposed, but the most intriguing—for the aim of this essay—is the necessity to assure the control of social benefits to host communities as well as the requirement of a community based control and forward-looking planning. In this sense, Murphy (1983) offered an interesting

perspective, viewing tourism ecologically as a community industry, as tourism thrives on a community's resources, it must not simply exploit resources for its own development without considering what can be returned back to the entire community.

In few years from the issue of the cited literature, the concept of sustainable development spread the worldwide after the Rio Conference (UNCED, 1992a) and the door to sustainable tourism definition was opened up as well. Today, sustainability is a seemingly well accepted concept, even though the gap between theoretical acquisition in literature and practical implementation is still large.

The concept of 'sustainable tourism' arose in the Alpine region of Europe by Austrian, French, German and Italian academics and conservationists and tourism professionals (OECD, 1994). The concept has often been named also as 'green tourism', 'responsible tourism', 'post-industrial tourism', 'meta-tourism' and 'alternative tourism' or many others. In any case, it was a necessary answer to the stressing problems of mass tourism in the Alps and the Mediterranean region. The definition matches with the planning goals exposed by Getz, because the concept of sustainable tourism can be:

'[...] described as a system of long term tourism planning which is friendly towards the long term well-being of communities and habitats, the visitor, and the tourist industry' (OECD, 1994, p. 33).

Thus, the sustainable tourism does envisage a triangular relationship in the tourism equation, identifying at least three categories of players: communities and habitats, visitors, and tourist industry. The unplanned mass tourism, often gives too much market power to only one part of the triangle, because the industry can actually dominates decision making, to the damage of all rest parties, causing eventual resort's overcrowding and deterioration. On the opposite, the 'sustainability' concept must give symmetric power and knowledge to each party, resulting in careful, slow optimization of each other's goals and objectives. The fundamental base of the sustainability is the need for a limit of the tourism activities which must be strongly considered as a concern by local tourism planning agencies.

After the review on the definition of Sustainable Tourism, here following I briefly approach the definition of Rural Sustainable Tourism.

The necessity for a definition of Rural Tourism is not very old, but the definition for 'rurality' is an old issue faced by geographers, sociologists, economists and planners for many years and with many different points of view. Within the wide debate on rurality, three major discussion points have arisen: '(i) population density and size of settlements; (ii) land use, and its dominance by agriculture and forestry; (iii) "traditional" social structures and issues of community identity and heritage' (OECD, 1994, p. 9). Yet, definitions differ at all in diverse Countries because of the varying national meanings of 'rural tourism', and many asymmetries divide Western and Eastern Countries, firstly because agriculture models are fundamentally different, as well as the overall conditions in rural areas, and not secondarily

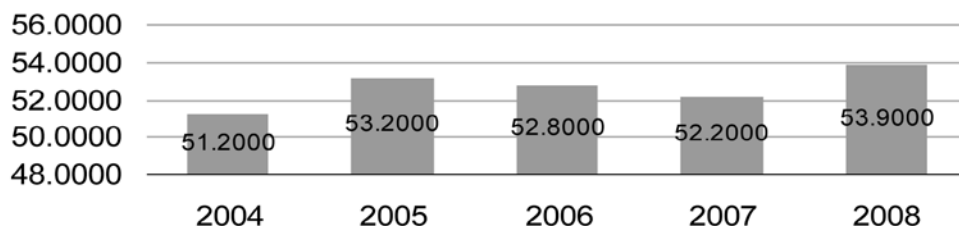
because national agricultural policies do differ a lot in goals and objectives. The rural life (and thus the Rural Policy) in a Western Country can be very far from that in an Eastern one.

Considering the OECD Countries, we can accept that Rural Tourism could be a suitable concept both for development and conservation (OECD, 1994). Rurality is an idea generally connected with low population densities and open space, with small scale settlements, generally of fewer than 10.000 inhabitants, just to give a threshold. Agriculture and forestry are the predominant activities and natural areas are diffused, local communities tend towards traditionalism. Government and regional policies lean towards conservation rather than radical or rapid change. Therefore, we can consider that Rural Tourism is to be located in rural areas and must be built upon small scale enterprise, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, traditional societies and traditional practices and connected with local families and local controlled communities (Scott et al. 2007). The obvious consequence is that it should be 'sustainable', intending that its development has to sustain the special rural character of an area, and also that its development should be sustainable in its use of resources. In other words Rural Tourism can be a feasible tool for conservation and sustainability, because it well represents the complex feature of rural environment, economy, and history of local places.

## **A SOCIAL CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY: THE RIGHT TO HOLIDAYS**

Not all people, and not everywhere, benefit of a vacation period in a week, month or year even though, during the past decades, leisure time has become a fundamental moment during the year for many families or individuals. Holidays can assure people the opportunity to take a break from their usual environment or allow to discover other aspects of their own country or other countries around the world. Tourism actually contributes to bringing people from different cultures closer and fostering mutual respect among different populations.

Considering the period from 2004 to 2008, the percentage of the EU population (aged 15 or more) that made at least one holiday trip of at least four overnight stays was just over 50%, and reached 53.9% in 2008 (Figure 1). The differences among Member States are very high. Not considering the kind of tourist destinations, the share of the population that made at least one holiday trip of 4 nights or more in 2008 ranged from 7.1% in Bulgaria to 77.9% in Luxembourg and 89.7% in Cyprus. In Southern Countries and Countries with important seaside tourism destinations, domestic trips are the main choice for vacation. In Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Romania and Croatia, more than 75% of people who went on holidays in 2008 only made trips within their country of residence.

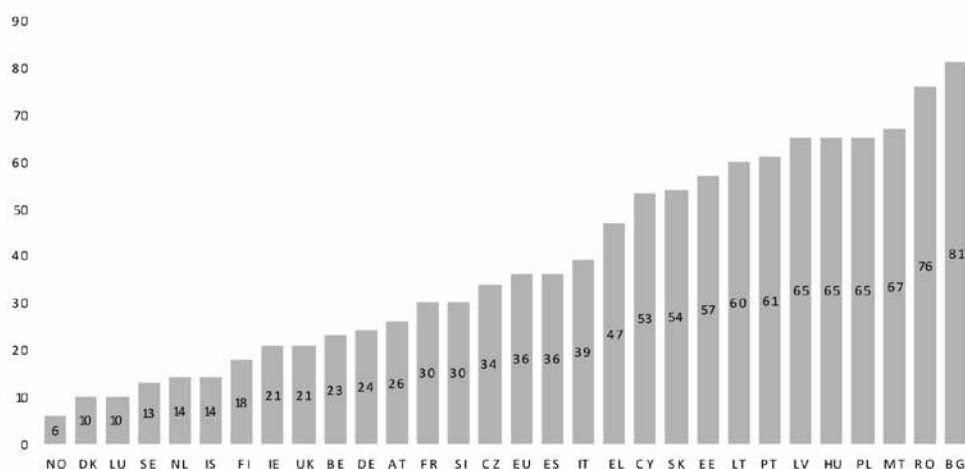
**Figure 1: Participation in tourism, EU-27, 2004-2008\*.**

Source: Eurostat, Tourism Statistics. EC (2009).

\* Note: (1) Share of the population aged 15 or over that made at least one holiday trip of 4 nights or more during the reference year; (2) EU-27 excluding BG, CY, LU, MT, RO, SE, SK (incomplete or unreliable data).

Today, another important tourism pattern belongs to the so-called ‘ageing society’. In fact, because people remain healthy longer, it should mean that the tourists aged 65 or more will become an important segment for the tourism market in the future.

As we have above shown, the participation in tourism in the European Union is relatively constant during time, but data on not participating are impressive. In the context of the statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC in EC, 2009), the share of households that cannot afford to pay for one week of annual holiday away from home during a year rises to more than one in three. The data for the most recent year for which data for all Member States are available, namely the reference year 2007, are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Share of Households Unable to Afford 1 Week Annual Holiday Away from Home, 2007.**

Source: Eurostat, Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). EC (2009).

Nevertheless, in Europe since 1936 the Geneva International Convention (ILO, 2005) recognizes the workers have the right of a paid time holidays and for the first time, the term 'Social Tourism' has been used in an international conference, while in 1996 the Montreal Declaration has been adopted in sight of 'a humanistic and social vision of the tourism' (UNDPI, 1989).

In the present evolution of western societies' context, considering both the demand and the supply sides, agriculture and tourism have many points of contiguity about best practices to be adopted in sustainability (environment, culture, leisure and society). Otherwise, agriculture and tourism actually face the necessity to adopt both socio-economic and ethical choices and share collaboration instead of performing competition for the use of land and allocation of consumers' leisure time.

The fast change of the western societies' patterns, since the post WWII till now, has determined that some phenomena such as those related to leisure time became 'power factors' instead of remaining residual forces in causing social, cultural and economic changes. Moreover, the new potentiality of agricultural tourism can actually create a closer contiguity between tourism and agriculture.

Since many years (OECD, 1994, p.5), clearly realized this topic:

'For many years a number of rural areas have been beset by population loss and declining services. These problems are now exacerbated by changes that have brought job losses and falling income to the farm sector.

'In contrast to this downturn, tourism has blossomed into a prosperous, fast-growing activity, and has indeed turned out to be a significant factor for economic growth in the countries in which it has developed.

'It was therefore important to determine whether tourism's growth potential could be harnessed as a strategy for rural development, in particular by drawing upon resurgent interest in the countryside, its traditional way of life, and landscapes and the architectural heritage, referred to as amenities.'

Nowadays, the political interest focuses on the necessity to foster the enhancement of tourism industry, encouraging an extension of the tourist season by means of the promotion of social tourism (EC, 2010a). Agricultural tourism can actually promote the beneficial presence of "social tourists" in countryside.

## **THE MARRIAGE OF SOCIAL TOURISM AND SOCIAL AGRICULTURE**

Social tourism was born following the necessity of a major solidarity and allowing to have leisure time and make tourism also for weaker segments of society. Today it encompasses all those activities that are free and 'freeing', allowing to make women and men completely realized both in individual maturity and in civil participation (Tonini, 2010). Thus, social tourism helps people to improve self-consciousness, re-discover life values, and self-enrichment due to profound knowledge of other people, lands and cultures by means of techniques of cultural entertainment and hospitality. The power of tourism in innovating

economic and cultural systems should be joined to the rural society's capacity in maintaining territorial equilibrium, social values, matching sustainable and durable models of farming and land managing. The Travel and Tourism industry can play the overwhelming role of 'His Majesty the Tourism' (Tonini, 2010), whom all has to be devoted to. Contrarily, the role of tourism in social relationships is an important topic for discussion from many point of views, including ethics.

The fundamental, political and more elaborated guide-lines of ethical behavior have been stated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The document is based on a well-balanced equilibrium between utilitarian and deontological principles. The 1948 Declaration built a well worldwide recognized framework that encompasses different cultures, religions and ideologies and thus is the 'contractual' landmark mainly recognized at the international level. The ethic vision about human behavior needs that people make choices preferring altruistic to selfish behaviors and this topic has been considered also in studies and research within economics (Axelrod, 1984).

About the agriculture-ethics relation, the FAO Panel of Eminent Experts on Ethics and Agriculture (FAO, 2007, p. 10) has stated that:

'Ethics require that people go beyond self-interest to care for others. The Panel has agreed in its earlier sessions that the major avenue to this is through contractarian ethics, which combines duty-based and utilitarian approaches. Ethics may be approached through the agreement of rationally self-interested and socially responsible individuals on guidelines for social interaction and governance.'

The main ethical issues on food production and farming are substantially two. The first concerns with the promotion of sufficient production and distribution of food in order to assure everyone the sufficient food access. The other ones pertain to policy measures ensuring the ecological sustainability of food production, including fishing and forest managing (FAO, 2007). Moreover, since many decades CAP has embraced these guide-lines, including sustainability in its own goals (EC, 2006).

Within the ethics-tourism relations, the guidelines are delineated by the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted in Santiago de Chile (WTO, 1999), that recalls the Manila Declaration on World Tourism (UN, 1982), the Rio Conference (UNCED, 1992a) and the Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992b).

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism has stated the right to tourism and free movement of tourists, defining in ten articles the following principles:

1. Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies;
2. Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfillment;
3. Tourism, a factor of sustainable development;
4. Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement;
5. Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities;

6. Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development;
7. Right to tourism;
8. Liberty of tourist movements;
9. Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry;
10. Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

It is quite evident that the shadow aim of the Code is to favor free and spontaneous contacts among men and women of different worldwide cultures and styles of life. Tourism is to be considered a vital force for peace, friendship enhancement and reciprocal comprehension of different populations.

As above mentioned, the concept of agricultural multifunctionality can be considered respectively to farms and rural areas but it could be further extended encompassing all activities within a territory. This extended agro-territorial perspective has been defined referring to all potential activities of farms which actually or potentially interact with local available resources and industries in a territory (Alfano and Cersosimo, 2009).

Within all those external activities, farms can perform a wide range of social activities such as recreative, cultural, educational and accommodation services, that is, environment education centers, kindergartens, wellness and health centers managing, disadvantaged persons hosting and social cooperatives or enterprises. Social tourism can actually be a service produced by agriculture in order to match the goals as delineated by international and national organizations and policy makers and contemporarily contribute to sustain farm revenues.

In Italy, the Tourism Code (GU, 2011) reserve the art. 28 to the topic of social tourism, introducing 'vacation grants' as a tool for solidarity intervention in favor of weak and low-income people, contemporarily matching the goal of de-seasonality of tourism flows and decongestion of most crowded tourism areas.

By an holistic point of view, sustainable agriculture and sustainable tourism should be strong allied as well as social tourism and social agriculture in a sustainable governance of land and contribute to social durability of local communities.

## CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

A strong alliance between Travel and Tourism and Agriculture is possible and then should be favorable in many regions of the world. Sometimes, the two industries are actually competitors for land use and recently in Western Countries also for tourists acquisition due to the boom of agriculture tourism in many tourism destinations.

Travel and Tourism need to use natural resources and landscapes for tourism purposes, often not completely considering the un-substitutable role of farmers in producing quality of tourism resort landscapes. Furthermore, a necessity of nature authenticity and naive relational tourism

is growing. Agriculture has with no doubt transformed original natural resources into means of production, economically exploited often following high intensive conditions. Nevertheless, for selected segments of tourists, rural areas are still the realm of authenticity, landscape, and well-being, at least in comparison to urban style of life and urban living people's perception.

Since some decades, the rural tourism has faced an actual boom, not everywhere but in some part of Europe and largely in Italy, particularly in some suitable regions. Agriculture has already demonstrated its attitude to enlarge its sphere of competence, responding very well to social pressure for public goods production and becoming a real multifunctional activity. Nowadays, the importance of producing non-commodities is still increasing in comparison to fading necessity of bulk productions of food and fibers.

Agriculture and the rural society will be able also to introduce new forms of products in its organizational and social patterns. That is, the ability to include also the production of social tourism within capabilities of farms and rural areas.

The presence of less wealthy tourists in rural areas and in farms will contribute to ensure further revenues to farming and relaxation to a larger segment of tourism market, de-season ability and de-crowding of mainstream tourism resorts. Rural Tourism needs to consider smartly the sustainable hospitality and the introduction of social goals should be a good pace in the direction of a Sustainable Rural Tourism pattern.

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