Sustainable Agritourism in South Africa

Agritourism South Africa
NPO 175-957 promotes tourism that is economically sustainable, socially equitable, environmentally friendly and culturally authentically South African!
Someone else is going to do it?
Agricultural debt increased from R36,4 billion in 2005 to R145 billion in 2016 to maintain food production and security. (ADS)
What is Agritourism?

Agritourism is a commercial business at a working farm or agricultural operation conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner.

- Educational services provided by farmers e.g. bread making; cheese making; olive picking
- Nature reserve on farmers land
- Accommodation/Camping Fields
- Activities e.g. Hiking, Cycling; Fishing
- Farm Animal Touch Farms
- Game Farms
- Direct sales to tourists of produce
- Historic farms (cultural)
FARMING
noun. [farm-ing]
The art of losing money while working 400 hours a month to feed people who think you are trying to kill them.
Traditional Agriculture

- Farmers grow and sell their farm produce at wholesale prices.
- However, in order to earn additional income, farmers are turning to tourism as an additional source of income; diversify their risk and to build their brand.
- Sustainable Agriculture - Big business versus small farmers?
- Factors to consider
  - What is the impact Agritourists are going to have on the farming land?
  - What is the impact Agritourists are going to have on farming ethics?
  - What is the cost/benefit ratio?
Sustainable Agritourism

Benefits

- Provides additional income
- Appreciates in value
- Efficiently uses underutilized resources
- Preserves farmland
- Share agricultural heritage and rural lifestyle with visitors
- Maintains family attention and interest
- Provides an opportunity to meet people
- Provides a chance to play a role in community activities
- Promotes the agriculture industry
Once you carry your own water, you will learn the value of every drop.
Sustainable Agritourism

- Worth thinking about:
  - While Tourism continues to grow in SA, Agriculture, particularly small to medium size farms, struggle
  - Misunderstanding of what Agritourism in SA is
  - Rural signage problematic
  - Provides low financial return, at least in the beginning
  - Interferes with farming operations
  - Hard Work
  - Adds workload to family members
  - Demands constant attention
  - Lack of privacy
  - Requires you to be upbeat, available & attentive
  - Involves risk and liability - Does the farm liability policy cover the Agritourism enterprise, or are they excluded as a separate business?
Responsible Environmental and Business Practices in Agritourism

- **Waste Management:**
  - Biodegradable detergents
  - Green waste is compensated
  - Recycling measures for waste

- **Water Management:**
  - Water saving fittings e.g. aerators that are fitted to taps
  - Grey water that is re-used for the garden
  - Reduced flush cisterns in toilets
  - Jugs of water rather than bottled water
SEPTIC TANK
NO FOREIGN
WASTE/OBJECTS
Thankyou...
Responsible Environmental and Business Practices in Tourism

- Responsible business practice:
  - On-the-job training or Skills development plan
  - Staff employed from local communities
  - Support for local community initiatives
  - Support for local producers

- Energy Management:
  - Lights are switched off when not in use
  - Energy saving light bulbs are used
  - Solar/wind or heat pumps
Examples of Sustainable Agritourism that work

- Botswana’s Department of Tourism is accepting applications to licence tourism accommodation on farms, but only legally licensed working farms that allocate 15% of the farm’s entire area would qualify. When the farm does not continue with its farming activities, the licence is revoked.

- Agritourism in Zanzibar is well established with the Spice route being a major attraction for tourists who want to learn about the many types of spices grown on farms.

- Agritourism models in Italy, Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

- A few farmers in Ghana have named a restaurant “Farmers Pride Restaurant” based on the American concept of celebrating local, healthy, fresh and traditional products in a family atmosphere. In the menu of the restaurant you will find traditional Ghanaian dishes made with local products, paying attention to food quality and environmental sustainability.
What would help Agritourism become Sustainable?

- Financing alternatives/Financial Support e.g. Italy, Botswana
- Consistent Agritourism signage
- South African Tourism should include an Agritourism section on their website
- South African Tourism should develop guidelines on quality standards & facility development for all Agritourism businesses
- Both farmers’ groups and tourism bodies should assist in the lobbying of government & business to assist farmers with Agritourism
- Farmers in different areas need to work together to promote regional Agritourism destinations, particularly in remote areas. A tourist is not going to drive 300 kilometres to visit one farm
What actions would make Agritourism sustainable?

- Schools/teachers need to ensure that their scholars include a visit to a farm every year to see farmers in action and to provide children with the opportunity to learn about food.
- Active support from Farming Co-operatives.
- Courses need to be offered by the tourism grading council for Agritourism operator accreditation.
- Courses need to be offered by the South African Tourism Associations to assist farmers who want to enter the Agritourism industry.
- An Agritourism day - focus on the farmer - needs to be included annually in the Department of Agriculture’s and South African Tourism’s program of events.
- Education...Education...Public....Farmers...Media.
What would make the difference to a consumer?

- Meeting the farmer and his family
- Small touches e.g. homemade soap, spring water bottled on the farm...
- A glass of wine/drink on arrival
- Information on where to go and what to do in an information book in the bedroom
- Garden or relaxation outdoor space
- Cleanliness
- Individual names for each bedroom/cottage
- Safe parking and Secure premises
- Attention to detail
- Local food
Sustainable Agritourism - what next?

- SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM SHOULD INCLUDE AN AGRITOURISM SECTION ON THEIR WEBSITE - THE FOCUS MUST NOT JUST BE ON WINE TOURISM
- SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM SHOULD DEVELOP GUIDELINES ON QUALITY STANDARDS & FACILITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL AGRITOURISM BUSINESSES
- BOTH FARMERS’ GROUPS AND TOURISM BODIES SHOULD ASSIST IN THE LOBBYING OF GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS TO ASSIST FARMERS WITH AGRITOURISM
- FARMERS IN DIFFERENT AREAS NEED TO WORK TOGETHER TO PROMOTE REGIONAL AGRITOURISM DESTINATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN REMOTE AREAS. A TOURIST IS NOT GOING TO DRIVE 300 KILOMETRES TO VISIT ONE FARM.
Best Practise in Agritourism

- To attract visitors to rural areas away from major cities to increase employment
- To increase the income of our farming communities
- To help stop the migration of people to the major cities
- To enhance community pride and rejuvenate regional culture
- To enhance the quality of life of rural communities and create opportunities
- To reduce the impact of seasonality on rural communities
- To support our Agriculture industry
“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

-Mahatma Gandhi
The first step: Sustainable Tourism - do your Homework!

- Agritourism South Africa promotes tourism that is economically sustainable, socially equitable, environmentally friendly and culturally authentically South African.

- Transportation - carbon footprint - drive as opposed to fly e.g. United Airlines has a carbon calculator

- Eco-friendly environments - investigate certification claims and do not believe everything you read!

- The most important in SA, is the Social Impact of Sustainable Tourism
The Human Factor

- What is the impact on the Local People
- Is Local Staff used in tourism establishments/attractions
- Is the money kept within the community or is the tourism establishment owned by an international company?
- Do tourism businesses support environmental or educational projects?
- Can travelers learn from the locals and vice versa?
- Carbon footprint is important, but what about “hand print”? Do you interact with the community?
- Is the art/gifts made by the local community
- What relationship have you created with the local community?
Guiding principles of Agritourism South Africa

- Assisting farmers to educate tourists on the practice of sustainable farming
- Building Environmental Awareness, including awareness of the importance of Biodiversity (Media)
- Empowering farm staff through tourism and entrepreneurship training (SETA’s)
- Explaining to tourists the different farming ethics around farming methods, for example, organic farming
- Making local farm fresh products available for sale directly to Agritourists
- Share agricultural heritage with visitors
- Improve relationships between farmers and the local communities
- Assisting farmers with their Marketing (Who/Why/When/Where) and social media campaigns
www.agritourismsouthafrica.com

- Website
- Board/Signage
- Sticker