

1st World Congress on Agritourism

7-9 November 2018
Bozen/Bolzano, South Tyrol (Italy)



Introduction

Agritourism offers farmers the possibility of diversifying and generating additional income through on-farm touristic activities in order to help supplementing their low agricultural income. This helps to maintain the viability of active farms and rural communities. The more general understanding of agritourism states that agritourism activities support and promote agricultural resources, traditions and culture. Following this line of thought, agritourism results to be a successful example of sustainable tourism that has gained importance over the years.

The congress focusses on agritourism which is carried out on a functioning working-farm. The agricultural activities are predominant over the touristic ones and take place in a predominantly unaltered agricultural environment. Agritourism is characterised by human interaction which means a familiar and/or direct contact between the hosting household and its members and the guest.

However, regulations and definitions of what this *authentic* agritourism is and how it distinguishes itself from other forms of rural tourism are yet missing. An incomplete, misleading picture or a general misunderstanding of what is regarded as agritourism makes it difficult to assure a goal-oriented promotion, or to implement a strategic marketing and to conduct research in a coherent way.

During the congress scientists, practitioners, associations, businesses and other stakeholders involved in the ambit will discuss agritourism's challenges, opportunities and limitations with the aim to leverage and safeguard an effective development of this sector. The combination of international expertise and the existing treasure trove of experiences in agritourism that is available on the hosting territory offers an important added value to this World Congress.

Objectives

- To hold the first world congress on agritourism with regular recurrence for scientists, stakeholders, public and private institutions as well as entrepreneurs and lobby associations.
- To develop two platforms: one for the presentation and discussion of scientific knowledge reflecting the current state of art, practical needs and entrepreneurial challenges; the other one for stakeholders to analyze, discuss and promote agritourism activities.
- To provide a white paper with a harmonized EU – and international definition based on commonly agreed key characteristics of agritourism activities of an authentic and sustainable touristic stay on a farm.
- The publication of the congress proceedings and a selection of contributions in a special issue of a scientific journal.



Key questions of the congress

- **Definition, characteristics, types and variety of agritourism** compared to other forms of rural tourism: what defines and characterises agritourism and what does not?
- **International comparison** of the variety of agritourism offers on farms and good practices: What can we learn from others?
- **The future of rural areas:** can agritourism contribute to the prevention of rural migration and does it secure on-farm livelihood? What is the regional, economic impact of agritourism and what are the economic multiplier effects?
- **Marketing and promotion strategies:** what are promising guidelines, professional online offers, websites etc.?
- **Emerging trends and innovative offers:** how to deal with social agriculture and agritourism? How to adequately and actively integrate the guest in agricultural traditions?
- **Binding and non-binding directives and legislation,** income, tax and spatial planning-related issues: who regulates what?
- **European promotion, marketing and research platform** of agritourism: What are the requirements for its establishment? How can we harmonize the sector to unambiguously develop and promote it?
- **The perspective of entrepreneurs:** what are their challenges and opportunities? How can they reach new markets?
- **Statistical overview, recording and monitoring** of the sector: what is the state of art of the agritourism phenomenon on a national and international level and what are specific characteristics? How to approach harmonized international standards and comparable data, to monitor the evolution of the sector and its structural characteristics?
- **Subsidies and financial support:** how do the governments support the development of agritourism?
- **Political recommendations:** what policies do we need to introduce and to foster agritourism?