Different Kinds of Tourism in the Countryside

Growing Rural Tourism
Agrotourism is an alternative form of tourism and sustainable way of agriculture at the same time. It is rapidly developing in the Baltic Sea region. It focuses on the specifics of local agricultural, nature management, traditional rural way of life, and creating an economic background for development of nature-friendly methods of farming. Some countries, such as Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland are the pioneers in this sphere. The others- Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia- are actively adopting their experiences and trying to be integrated in this system, enter the existing organizations and create their own. Rural tourism development in Russia is currently in its initial stage. The most advanced areas in North-West Russia are the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions.

Rural tourism has become quite popular in the Baltic Sea region over the past years. It is largely connected to a rather negative attitude to the farming practices that developed in the countries of Northern and Western Europe caused by excessive use of chemicals, disturbance of natural landscapes, and a sharp increase of ecosystem load. This, along with economic stagnation, led to unemployment, lowering of living standards and outflow of the population from rural areas. Developing the so-called farm tourism became one of the ways to revive rural settlements and maintain an adequate employment level. The European Charter for Rural Areas prepared by Council of Europe offers guidelines for rural tourism as a way of diversifying agricultural land use towards alternative forms, one of which being rural tourism. The document states (Council of Europe, 1996: 15-16).

1. Parties should take all necessary legal, fiscal and administrative measures to develop tourism in rural areas in general and agricultural tourism in particular, taking account of the carrying capacity of the areas concerned. In particular this can be done by encouraging the provision of rural hostels and by ensuring that farmers who offer tourist accommodation on their farm in addition to their agricultural activities are encouraged to do so.

2. In implementing this policy, parties should aim for a balance between the indispensable development of tourism, the protection of nature and the potential offered by existing infrastructures and services by maintaining the quality of the landscape and the environment and preserving traditional architecture and materials.”
According to UNEP, income from world rural tourism in 2006 amounted to over $150 billion, which is close to one-third of total tourism receipts (Makarenko, 2007). By estimation of the European Union Council of Tourism Development in Europe there are 200,000 farm and country tourism operators in Europe that offer over 2 million beds, give employment for 500,000 people and provide annual turnover of 26 billion euro (Makarenko, 2007). Statistical survey shows that 35% of EU urban dwellers prefer to spend their holidays in rural areas. Their share is particularly high in the Netherlands – 49% (Biblioteka turisma, 2010).

**From Adventures to Ecotourism and Agriculture**

Agrotourism is one of the sustainable forms of land use in rural areas. In the western part of the Baltic Sea region it is most commonly referred to as “agro-tourism” or “farm tourism”, in the eastern part “village tourism” or “rural tourism”. The place of rural tourism in the system of such definitions as leisure-tourism-recreation is somewhere inside the “leisure travel” zone, defined by C.M. Hall and S.J. Page (1999) (Figure 10.1).

Rural tourism and agrotourism are almost synonyms. If by “rural tourism” we usually refer to tourism and recreation activities undertaken in rural areas and the arena for that is the whole countryside, for agrotourism the main component would be the agro-landscape. Jansen-Verbeke and Nijmegen (1990) used even more precise specification as “directly connected with the agrarian environment, agrarian products or agrarian stays”.

Agrotourism is considered to be an alternative tourism due to its “individual oriented” approach and as an “alternative” ratio to the “mass tourism” which got a lot of criticism during the last decade. There could be both sustainable and unsustainable forms of agrotourism, though the sphere of our interest lies in the “sustainable zone” similar to the alternative tourism (AT) (Figure 10.2). We could not, however, completely agree with Butler’s approach according to which ecotourism is placed between sustainable and unsustainable practices, since the main principle of ecotourism is sustainability.

Trying to find similarities between the different nature-oriented types of tourism David A. Fennel (2003) says that “Alternative Tourism includes, for example, rural or farm tourism, where a large portion of the touristic experience is founded upon the cultural milieu” of the farms. Ecotourism, on the other side, is more dependent upon nature and natural resources, which is the the main motivation for travelling. The description of Ecotourism by David A. Fennell and Ross K. Dowling (2003), who argues that it “is seen as ecologically and socially responsible, and as fostering environmental appreciation and awareness. It is based on the enjoyment of nature with minimal environmental impact”, fits well into agrotourism too. But one could go further and affirm that if speaking about ecotourism we bear in mind nature, cul-
ture and education (and the importance of each of these three components is in the same order) - the socio-cultural influence is not of less importance then the nature and even sometimes plays the leading role as far as the “hosts”/owners of the farm are concerned.

Moreover, the interaction between tourists and nature mostly happens through these “hosts”. In ecotourism the education is mostly directed towards information, whereas in agrotourism education is provided through active involvement of the guest/tourists into the day-to-day life of the inhabitants of the countryside, including participation in cultural and traditional village-events, obtaining crafts skills etc. “The educational elements of ecotourism, which enhances understanding of nature environments and ecological processes, distinguishes it from adventure travel and sightseeing…” (Fennell and Dowling, 2003). The same could be said about agrotourism. Rural tourism is more predictable and safe compared to adventure tourism.

So, even if rural tourism differs from ecotourism, socio-cultural tourism, adventure and events tourism it has some common features with them (Figure 10.3). It is a separate type of tourism but it includes some features and activities inherent to ecotourism, socio-cultural tourism and adventure tourism.

The Wide Content of Rural Tourism
Agrotourism consists of services provided by the farm: accommodation, meal, entertainments and other activities dependent on the possibilities of the farm and clients’ demands. To provide that kind of services the following components are required:

- Attractive landscape,
- Farm/mansion house (as accommodation and activity facility),
- Farmland (plot of land attached to a house),
- Subsidiary plot,
- Landlord (farmer),
- Guests (agrotourists),
- Others (domestic animal buildings, garages, camping grounds, apiary, vegetable garden, agricultural fields, pastures, forestry areas etc.)

Moreover, agrotourism is not just accommodation of the tourists in the mansion house, but the functioning the whole set of functioning infrastructure such as proper transport communication between settlements, places for entertainment, natural or historical and cultural sights, information centers, restaurants, cafés, taverns, handicrafts workshops etc. Besides, the guest in the agrotourism is “guest” and he/she demands “home” (“family”) comfort and personal attitude.

The agro-industrial complex and agrotourism activities are interconnected. Agrotourism activities depend on the peculiarities of the agro-sphere developed in the territory (Figure 10.4).

The rural area itself gives a wide range of opportunities for the interesting and active leisure, such as picnicking, herbs, berries and mushroom picking, hunting, cycling, fishing, swimming, canoeing, campaigning, animal and bird watching, hiking, biking, nature studying, photography; By its term the farm as tourist accommodation facility opens the following options:

- gastronomic tourism;
- buying souvenirs;
• cooking;
• conservation (juice, jam etc.);
• spa treatments including sauna baths;
• participation in the rural life style etc.

**Agrotourism May Contribute to Economic, Social and Environmental Development**

The role of agrotourism for sustainable development of the Baltic Sea region could be viewed at three regional levels: economic, social and environmental.

Economically the image of the BSR rural area as nature-oriented with a wide range of activities (including accommodation) will increase the number of tourists in the region with the purpose of agrotourism, as will the number of days tourists stay (on average 3-5 days). This will improve the economy of the farmers and local communities in general with limited investments.

Constant improvement of service quality and the development of small and medium-size business through the introduction of environmental management will improve the quality of tourism. As the tourism industry has a multiplier effect in the economy, it will contribute to the development of other sectors of the economy in the region and promote a balanced development of the region in general. A new attitude towards agriculture has already developed and the process is going on. With increasing employment (first of all for women) in rural areas; the continuous migration from rural to urban areas could be halted; additionally, the visual environment of farms and villages will improve.

The quality of life is improved by the development of infrastructure and related industries, crucial for the local population. The infrastructure includes transportation, communications, domestic and social ("soft") infrastructure (health facilities, information centers, clubs, etc.) and is used to satisfy the needs of local population and the economy. A great number in the local population will be motivated to have better education through their involvement into the tourism activities. Private businesses will be started up.

Agrotourism development supports historical cultures and traditions in the region and the revitalization of the traditional handicrafts. By that it also serves the protection of the historical heritage of the region.

The development of agrotourism demands proper ecological conditions. The population where tourism activities are planned realize the necessity to protect nature and the landscape.

Improving environmental conditions and promoting sustainable development is possible through monitoring, development of environmental management and ecotourism, development of ecological trails in sustainable environmental management, sharing of experiences and technologies through international projects, and the active participation of NGOs and universities and other institutions of environmental education.

Well managed agrotourism will require less material resources per unit of product value and will result in “softening” of the external impact on the environment.
Environmental education takes place during excursions to nature and entertainment with close interaction with nature. Agrotourism could relieve overcrowded tourist destinations from overpopulation, when the distribution of tourists becomes more even in the area.

Rural Tourism in the Baltic Sea Region

Three Types of Countries
In the Baltic Sea region it is possible to distinguish three types of countries with different level of agrotourism development: Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland are the pioneers in this sphere. Secondly, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia are actively adopting their experience and trying to be integrated in this system, enter the existing organizations and create their own ones. Thirdly, rural tourism development in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine is still in its initial stage of development with Kaliningrad and St Petersburg areas being the most developed so far.

Germany, Finland, Sweden and Denmark
The leader among the Baltic Sea countries in receiving tourists is Germany. There are about 20 000 farmsteads in the country and the German Agricultural Society (DLG) has been established. Around 1400 hosts in the entire country of Germany are awarded with the quality label of the DLG: “Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof“ (“farm holiday”), “Urlaub auf dem Winzerhof“ (“vineyard holiday”) and “Landurlaub“ (“countryside holiday”) (Bauernhof Urlaub Deutschland, 2010).

In Finland a holiday in small rural houses for 2 to 8 people is popular. The houses are equipped with everything necessary in relation to their size and desired living standard. This provides an opportunity for a comfortable holiday at a nice place close to, for instance, a pure lake having all kinds of amenities available (microwave, TV, etc.). This branch of tourism is a well-organized industry that offers services both to domestic and foreign tourists (Tourism Business No 6, 1998). Not only individual farm owners but also big players enter the service market. One of them is Lomarengas Ab Ltd, Finnish Country Holidays, which offers more than 4,000 classified holiday cottages with a minimum rent for one week (500-2000 euro) (Kommedschi. Otdich i Finlandij, 2010)

As an example it is possible to withdraw the “Green Triangle” - it is a tourist zone that unites 13 communes from Turku, along both sides of the historic road Härkäti, and to Hämë. “Straw gallery”, “Atelier of jewels and stones”, and “Sculpture park” located here are evidence of sound cultural traditions and lively creativeness. “Black” sauna and golf courses, motor tracks and horse-riding “compete” here. Tourists can choose between accommodation standards from “a five-star farm” to a space outdoors under a shed” (Tourismitjeskij Katalog, 2001).

In Sweden rural tourism is also popular. There are about 500 farmsteads in Sweden (2002), which serve approximately 170,000 tourists annually. A holiday in Swedish rural areas is attractive among foreign tourists mostly to Danes, Norwegians and Germans. For example, in the catalogue of rural tourism in the Swedish southeastern province of Blekinge there are 38 accommodation units, plenty of restaurants, museums and sights, small shops, service sector institutions, information and leisure centres. Some farms are also equipped to provide health resort treatments (Rural tourism Blekinge, 2000).

The catalogues of Danish tour operators has a rural tourism (agrotourism) section which provide holidays on Danish farms. A specialized agency is ready to find a suitable offer for a rural holiday (Birschakov, 1999).

Latvia, Poland and Lithuania
In early 1990s there were only 20 Latvian farmstead owners engaged in rural tourism. In 2002 there were over 180 of them. The most active entrepreneurs joined into the rural tourism association Lauku ceļotājs (“Rural tourist”). Information on rural tourism is available in catalogues and on the Internet. However, the list of activities is not very long. Some local governments support actively those entrepreneurs, who develop this sector. Tax policy is also liberal to them (Blumental, 2010).

According to the Ministry of agriculture there are 10,000 farms welcoming tourists in Poland and their occupancy rate reaches 80%. According to the data provided by the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy, 80% of Polish farmlands is not polluted with harmful heavy metals (Oleszek et al 2010). This is a significant argument in favor of choosing a rural holiday.
Mazuria, a picturesque land of lakes and forests in Poland, offers over 55 beds on agrotourism farms. Guests can take part in field works along with host families, go fishing or hunting, ride a bicycle in the surroundings, and gather berries or mushrooms.

Poland is a member of the European Center for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism (ECEAT) which operates actively across the country. The organization’s activities are aimed at supporting organic farming through ecotourism development. ECEAT-Poland offers various forms of accommodation on organic farms across the country. Furthermore, the organization represents the international foundation ECEAT, established in Amsterdam and cooperating with 23 ECEAT member countries (Lopata, 2010). This cooperation provides opportunities for Polish farmers to welcome foreign tourists, and for Polish tourists to have a holiday on a farm abroad. Some farmers managed to improve the economic outcomes of their activities considerably after having changed to ecologically clean (organic) farming. Tourists, who buy food from them during their holiday, often become regular customers.

It is important to distinguish between farms, where lands are cultivated with traditional methods, i.e. use of chemicals, and organic (ecologically clean) farms that meet ECEAT criteria. Organic farms apply ecological methods without any use of fertilizers or pesticides and 50% of food products offered to tourists are produced on the farm. Moreover, it is expected that these farms pay particular attention to the protection of the environment by saving water and energy, practices sorting of waste fractions and invest in the introduction of clean technologies. These farms usually also commit themselves to the use of natural local material, keep traditions, and invest in farm development. ECEAT provides training for those farmers who want to engage in organic farming. If a farm meets the standards of the Polish Association of Organic Farming (PTRE) or the Association of Ecological Food Producers (Ekoland) it can become a participant of the ECEAT-Poland ecotourism programme.

Abundance and diverse nature of some Lithuanian regions in addition to cultural heritage sites create favorable conditions for development of rural tourism in this country. These services become more and more popular among urban dwellers. Rural tourism develops into a satellite business for villages and gives opportunity to get 30-40% revenue. It is a significant field of tourism development in the region.

In Lithuania with the population of 3 million people about 680 farmsteads have been officially registered. About 30% of them are annually renovated. In 2006 there were 189,1 thousand agrotourists in Lithuania, which is 36,8% more than in 2005 (130 thousand people). It is notable that this kind of tourism is popular in autumn and winter as well. Thus, in December 2006 more than 16,000 guests spent their holidays in rural farmsteads, which is 34,2% more than the year before.

Many farms presented in catalogues offer their services in organizing conferences and seminars. However, lodging conditions in the places willing to offer these services are not adequate to the standards and investments are needed. Consumers of these services are holiday-makers from CIS countries. Rural residents are not ready to receive tourists because of lack of practice (language and communication barriers) and business skills (Augulavitje, 2000).

Researchers of Klaipeda University held a survey “Ecological farming and rural tourism as alternative activities for rural population in Western Lithuania”. It
showed that Klaipeda and Silute have the most favourable conditions for rural tourism (Eidukeviciene 2001).

The catalogue “Holiday in rural Lithuania 2001” contains 29 rural tourism establishments. 21 of them are in Klaipeda, 1 is in Kretinga and 7 are in Silute. In the catalogue the establishments are referred to the following types of rural tourism: 39% ethnographic, 15% modern with ethnographic elements, 23% modern, 23% other types.

Rural tourism development experiences of Sweden and Finland, having similar climate and nature, is particularly useful for the northern regions of Northwest Federal District of Russia (NWFD). For residents of the Kaliningrad region of NWFD, experiences of Germany and Poland and to some extent of Lithuania and Latvia are more relevant since Kaliningrad region shares its history as well as its natural and geographical characteristics with these more southern and coastal-near countries.

**Developing Agrotourism in North-West Russia**

**North-West Russia**

Rural tourism development in Russia is currently in its initial stage. That is why it is still not possible to find the organized statistic data for this type of tourism. Rural tourism can be referred more modestly to as “rural hospitality”. It is, probably, even more correct from historic point of view, as Russian people always have been distinguished by their hospitality (Platnova, 2012).

North-West Federal District of Russia consists of 11 administrative units where the following tourism development zones are outlined.

- “The Heart of Russia”: the Leningrad, Pskov, Novgorod regions,
- “The Russian North”: the Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Vologda regions, the Republic of Komi, the Republic of Karelia, the Nenets Autonomous District,
- “The Baltic coast”: the Kaliningrad region,
- St.-Petersburg.

The overall area is of the North-West Federal District of Russia is 1,687,000 km². The population is 14,600,000 (including St.-Petersburg - 4,700,000). According to the survey held within the framework of the project «North-West Russia: New Windows on Russia» the annual number of tourists visiting the region is 10-12 million. Rural tourism is one of the priorities for development of the region.

The main prerequisites of rural tourism development in this vast territory situated in various climate zones and with differing levels of urbanization are diverse unique landscapes that are not affected by urbanization, intensive agricultural production or other similar activities. At the same time there are limitations for tourism and agrotourism development such as the high sensitivity of many ecosystems in Russia to antropogenic influence, their fragility in districts attractive to tourists due to their “wild” nature or aboriginal household patterns.

**Conditions for Tourism Development**

Factors influencing agrotourism development can be divided into two groups: physical and geographic factors and social and economic factors. The list of resources offered by Cubb and Cubb (Cubb and Cubb, 1981) (Fennell and Dowling, 2003) for recreation in the nature can be extended, adapted and referred to as physical and geographic factors of rural tourism development in Northwest Russia (Table 10.1).

**Social and Economic Factors**

Another reason for the development of modern rural tourism is the agricultural crisis. Farming is replaced by agribusiness, and mechanization and modernizing change rural reality to a great extent. In many European rural regions agriculture actually stopped being the most important form of land use and activity of rural communities. (Vidy-turizma, 2010)

Therefore, even though physico-geographic characteristics are significant, rural tourism development is also directly dependent on social and economic conditions. Table 10.2 shows the examination of these factors in the Northwestern region of Russia.

Thus, we come to a conclusion that the highest level of rural tourism development has been reached in the Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions, and the Republic of Karelia. It became possible due to favourable physical and geographic as well as social and economic con-
Table 10.1. Physiographic factors influencing agrotourism development in North-West Russia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and economic factors of rural tourism development</th>
<th>Examination of North-West Russia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small- and medium-scale farms capable of receiving tourists</td>
<td>At present every fourth resident of NWFD lives in rural area. Almost half of agricultural products is produced on farms and private auxiliary plots. About 300 rural households specialize in receiving tourists. In over 1000 settlements people are willing to start receiving tourists in their rural houses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of traditional activities</td>
<td>Ethnic settlements (Russian, Pomorian, Karelian, Nenets, Lappish and Komi), northern folk crafts centres in Kargopol, Velikiy Ustuyg, Kholmogory, Kirishi, etc. People belonging to indigenous ethnic groups (Vepsians, Votes, Izhory, Ingrians) live in the territory and preserve traditional way of life and crafts. Main traditional folk crafts are weaving, embroidery, lace making, Velikoustyugskaya niello, carving and birch bark painting, bone carving, ornamental metal working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourable institutional conditions for development of small and medium-sized business in rural areas</td>
<td>In the Federal special purpose programme “Social development until 2010” the objective of developing agrotourism is stated (section 3.6). “Establishing a territorial network of information and consulting centres, promoting agrotourism, and training for rural population on organizing non-agricultural activities for alternative employment in rural areas” are planned. A Law of the Kaliningrad region “On tourist activities in the Kaliningrad region” (regulation and promotion of rural and ecological tourism) is in place. NGOs have been established with the aim of rural tourism development (public association of farmstead owners has been established to coordinate development of rural tourism in the Republic of Karelia, “Rural tourism club” in the Leningrad region)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and entertainment events</td>
<td>There are tourist products “New Year on the Mill on the Chernaya river”, “Christmas and in the green forest” (Luga district), “New Year with an ostrich” (Vyborg district), participation in Ivan Kupala Day celebrations (Feast of St. John the Baptist), development of tourist routes in historic villages, visiting wild geese staging area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained human resource (household owners), having knowledge of basics of hospitality</td>
<td>In the Leningrad region the programme “School of rural tourism” has been established (work with rural population, information centres’ staff, and officials involved in the agroindustrial sector, environmental protection and tourism). Regular seminars “Rural tourism development” are organized and involve visiting functioning guest houses, owners share their experiences, a number of Russian editions aimed at hospitality skills training were published. “Organization of rural tourism” published in 2003 in Kaliningrad is one of them. Study visits to Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Irelands are organized to explore successful experiences of rural tourism development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of additional kinds of tourism (sports, cultural and cognitive, adventure, and ecological tourism).</td>
<td>NW Russia has a substantial potential for development of sightseeing and cognitive tourism, ethnic and event tourism. Cultural heritage is represented by archeological sites, ethnic settlements, ancient towns, craft villages, famous architectural ensembles, cult objects, old family estates. Abundant natural resources of the region provide the necessary prerequisites for development of water, sports, recreation tourism, adventure (hunting, fishing, rafting, boating, catamaranning, etc.) youth tourism, “weekend getaways”, development of cruise routes and cycling routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of associated activities</td>
<td>Deer breeding, vegetable farming, flax growing, dairy cattle husbandry, pig breeding, poultry breeding, butter-making. Developing traditional activities is of particular significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourable social environment safe for tourists</td>
<td>Standard requirements to rural houses used for tourist accommodation and requirements to services rendered in this kind of accommodation establishments (the Leningrad region) have been developed; Principles and guidelines for rendering tourist services have been defined (the Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions, the Republic of Karelia); Recommendations for organizing rural tourism have been elaborated (the Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions, the Republic of Karelia); A catalogue of rural farms capable of receiving guests has been made (the Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions, the Republic of Karelia); Training manuals on rural tourism have been developed (the Kaliningrad and Leningrad regions, the Republic of Karelia); Tourist information centres have been established. The centres provide information about rural holiday options (the network of tourism information centres in the Leningrad region, Tourism information centre in the Kaliningrad region).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical and geographic factors for the development of rural tourism

| Geographic location | The area occupies northern and western territories of European Russia. The district has access to the Baltic and Barents seas, part of it is washed by the waters of the Arctic ocean. An ancient “Trade route from the Varagians to the Greeks”, where Novgorodian Rus emerged, spread along the district’s rivers and lakes. St. Petersburg is deemed to be the cultural capital of Russia. The district borders Finland, Norway, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.

The area has good transport connections: a well-developed net of railway and automobile roads, air connection, navigation, and ferries.

| Climate and weather | The climate is moderately continental, and on the coast it is marine. Bioclimatic conditions of the area are diverse. In the west they are comfortable (cold-temperate winters and warm summers), while in the north winters are severe and summers are temperately warm.

| Topography and landforms | Landscapes are quite diverse: from marine on the Baltic coast (in the Kaliningrad region) to mountain in Karelia and the Kola Peninsula. It provides conditions for development of various kinds of tourism: mountain tourism, rock climbing, rafting, hiking, equestrian tourism, recreational, ecological and rural tourism.

Most of rural farms are situated on plains. The agriculture specializes in production of vegetables, potatoes, and flax, dairy cattle husbandry, pig, poultry and deer breeding. Butter production is well-developed.

| Surface materials | Soil structures are diverse: from podzolic and peatbog in the north to soddy slightly-podzolic on noncalcerous moraine and brown forest soils in the west. The district is rich in minerals. Granite, marble, iron and colour ores, bauxite, wolfram, molybdenum and others are extracted. 90% of the world’s amber are centred in the Kaliningrad region.

| Water | North-West Russia differs from the rest of the territory in increased number of water bodies and has the highest number of lakes. Most lakes are situated in Karelia and the Russian Plain. There are over 7 thousand lakes. The extensive net of rivers (Neva, Svir, Pechora, Mezen, Onega, Northern Dvina) connected by navigation canals (Volgo-Baltijskij and Belomorsko-Baltijskij) provides conditions for development of water tourism and cruise tourism with possibilities to make stops in rural households.

Special place of the Baltic Sea coast, the Curonian and Vistula lagoons allows to combine rural and recreational (health resort) tourism.

| Vegetation | Large part of the area is covered with forests rich in berries (blueberries, raspberries, foxberries, bilberries, cranberries, blackberries) and mushrooms (yellow boletus, honey mushroom, cep, aspen mushroom, brown cap boletus). The following natural zones are represented: tundra, forest-tundra, taiga, mixed coniferous-broad-leaved forests. There are also small areas of broad-leaved forests in the Kaliningrad region which is the westernmost zone of Europe where they grow.

| Fauna | There are plenty of sanctuaries and nature reserves in the district. There are 6 national parks. Forests are rich in fur animals, pine forest and wader birds. Hunting, fishing, and deer breeding are traditional activities of the local population.

| Ecological conditions | Ecological condition of the environment is relatively steady. This is a favourable factor for rural and ecological tourism development. Exceptions are local polluted areas around large cities or industrial hubs.

Programmes for rural tourism in these regions have been developed, catalogues of rural estates are published (Figure 10.6), standards for receiving tourists and rendering services developed, associations of agrofarmers and rural tourism information centres established.

The level of rural tourism development in the Novgorod, Pskov, and Vologda regions may be defined as middle and lower middle. Weak integration processes, lack of a single regulating authority, fragmented character of the rendered services, and weak support by local authorities are the factors determining this state of rural tourism. The Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions, the Republic of Komi and the Nenets Autonomous District have less favourable climatic conditions and are remote potential clients and, therefore, are regions with a low level of rural tourism development. Ecological and adventure tourism is more developed in these regions.
Recommendations for the Agrotourism Development in the North-West Russia

In the sphere of administration: to support the organizations dealing with agrotourism, including small private enterprises (guides, small guest-houses' owners etc.), NGOs etc., elaboration of programmes of agrotourism development and financial support from the government at all levels; formation of a data-base of agrotourism farms, lands and resources;

From the organizational point of view: to support construction/renovation and market entry for the new farmers converting their activities into agrotourism, to develop the concept on involvement of the new areas into the agrotourism activities by development of the infrastructure (for instance, on the development of the tourism potential of the Vistula spit); development of associations and chains of agrotourism enterprises.

In the sphere of education and research: to improve the regional system of education, retraining and life-long learning for the tourism industry (with special accent on ecological and sustainable tourism, especially in the rural areas and for the whole families; to provide research in the sphere of agrotourism, ecological and sustainable tourism; to organize international work-shops on exchange of experience in the sphere of agrotourism; to increase the ecological education of the local population; best-practice dissemination; explore and make an inventory of agrotourism resources (similar to other tourism resources);

In the sphere of marketing: to create the “nature-oriented” image of the North-West Russia in media; to open municipal agrotourism information centers; to support the creation of tour-operators “specialized” on agrotourism; to promote North-West Russia in the whole Baltic Sea region tourism market;

In the ecological sphere: to provide nature protection and nature preservation measures. Special attention should be paid to the unique natural objects.

It is important to pay special attention to “ecological tourism” infrastructure development. For example, when constructing bicycle roads’ net some of the tourist routes should be more ecological (as ecological means of transportation will be used). Construction of wharfs at the Baltic Sea coasts at the Curonian and Vistula lagoons, and the Gulf of Finland will open nature objects not accessible by land for tourism.

In the sphere of finance, the financing of all these ideas should be supported from federal, regional and municipal sources as well as from sources of tourism companies interested in the development of the domestic and incoming tourism; the support of the agrotourism projects for instance through the Cross Border Cooperation Programme within European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013.

Therefore, for NW Russia the next step in the development of rural tourism and territories suitable for it is the elaboration of common standards, and an integrated set of catalogues, and the establishment of a common authority for rural tourism promotion in Northwest Russia aimed at creating a common information space in the Baltic Sea region.

Agrotourism in the Kaliningrad Region of Russian Federation.

The main accommodation facilities in agrotourism are country estates. Currently there are about 60 (400 beds) of those in the Kaliningrad region. They are distributed unevenly, mainly in coastal area, in Polessk and Nesterovsk districts (Vyshtenets lake) (Figure 10.7). They accommodate 1,500 holiday-makers annually (according to expert assessment the number is even around 4,500 tourists annually) (Otdel Turisma, 2010). Prevalent are internal
tourists and visitors from other Russian regions (Moscow and the Moscow region, St.-Petersburg and the Leningrad region), as well as German residents.

In the summer of 2005 the Kaliningrad State University organized a poll to investigate the possibilities of agrotourism development in the area. In the diagram the answers on the question on the most preferred activities at the farm are presented (Figure 10.8). The analysis of the results indicates that women prefer the picking of the berries and mushrooms, and men – prefer above all fishing.

Here are the most interesting examples, of agrotourism in the Kaliningrad region.

Guests staying in “Zaeza” peasant farm (Nesterov district, village Ozerki) can take part in agricultural works, take care of animals, go mushrooming and berry picking, or enjoy homemade delicacies in addition to communicating with animals, getting to know how to use agricultural tools and machinery, or how to grow ecologically clean products.

“Flora world” estate museum (Gurjevsk district, village Egorjevskoe) is unique in its home “botanic garden”, where guests can look at an extensive collection of berry and ornamental crops, have advice on growing technologies or expansion of best berry varieties. The estate offers one-day tour, catering service included (buffet, barbecue) (Travel catalogue for tourism in Kaliningrad Region, 2009).

“Klyuken” country estate (Zelenogradsk district) is a child leisure centre. Children get unique opportunity of intense language training in addition to having outdoor rest and entertainment, and learn horse riding. Foreign native-speaking students are engaged in training. Catering is provided with ecologically clean products bought from the neighbouring farms. The hostess can share old Russian recipes for Russian stove.

The most sustainable form of agrotourism is the agropark. An agropark is a sustainable form of tourism in a rural area, comprising a territory with special mode of land use (with nature conservation functions prioritized). Several agrofarms have accommodation of rural recreants, and agrocentres with an extensive network of social sphere institutions and maintenance facilities.


June


World Economic Outlook, WEO 2010. IMF projected change July.


Chapter 10


Augulyaviche, I.B. 2000. Perspektivy razvitiya turizma na territorii Mariyampolskogo uza Litvy (monografiya.)


Blumental, M. Turbiznes vtyyanet latviyskoe selo?


Here is my village! 2009. Travel catalogue / Commission for tourism and regional contacts of Administration of the Kaliningrad region.


Kottedgy. Otdyk v Finlyandii,

Lopata, J. Ecological tourism to organic farms as a tool to help small farmers make a sometimes difficult transition from conventional agriculture to ecological agriculture


Platonova, U.V. Selskoe gosteprimstvo – dopolnitelniy dohod v selskiy mesnosti.


Turisticheskoe osvoenie Skandinavii prodolzhaetsya. 1998. In: Turisticheskij biznes, №6, s. 34-35

Chapter 11


