
STUDY ON THE EVOLUTION OF SEASONALITY IN AGRI- TOURISM, BY REGIONS OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: *Tourist activity, in general, is influenced by seasonality phenomenon, which means that the company's marketing policy must adapt supply to the specific needs of consumers, no matter the time of year. However, the services demand have identified opportunities in tourism, while implicit threats. It is therefore necessary to analyze the material, financial, technical and managerial aspects of agro pension. These resources illustrates the possibility of upgrading the capacity of existing accommodation. In the study we used as indicators the number of arrivals and the number of overnight stays in agro hostels in Romania, by region, for 2010 and 2014, by months, thus obtaining data on the influence of seasonality. We concluded that agri-tourism records the highest number of tourists in summer (July-September), but in some regions it begins to develop in winter also. The only region with almost permanent activity is Bucharest-Ilfov, which has the lowest number of rural locations.*

Keywords: agri-tourism, seasonality, services demand and offer

JEL Classifications: L8, O2;

LITERATURE REVIEW

Starting from the idea of negative events that may occur in agro business, Steger and Antes (1991) have defined as "possible interference or failure

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events that lead to business goals and the occurrence of adverse effects" (Glaesser D., *Crisis management in the tourism industry*, Elsevier, 2006). Such an adverse event can be considered as a collection of individual events in the stable transformation of a critical situation. For this reason, tourism begins to practice crisis management, addressing situations relating to imminent risks that can not be measured or insured. Crisis prevention requires proactive anticipation of negative events, consisting of precautions against crises and measures to avoid crises. These types of measures, in practice, a certain future time, can be used one after another or concomitantly. Precautionary measures aim to reduce the amount of damage, the operative crisis plans and risk policy. The objective of avoiding the crisis involves taking measures to prevent its development by identifying potential causes of the crisis.

As mentioned general elements on crisis management, further touristic sector will be analyzed through the presentation, classification and description of the participating units, investigating also the possible negative events that may occur in this sector, their effects and possible measures to prevent and / or avoidance.

In the literature, the determinants of tourism activity are classified by numerous criteria; relevant to this study is the classification by duration of their actions in time, ie:

a) *Permanent acting factors - increased leisure time:*

- Income change,
- Demographic movement etc.

b) *Seasonal factors - the seasons:*

- Structure of school / university year;
- Work in agriculture.

c) *Contextual factors - economic crises, political:*

- Armed conflicts;
- Natural disasters;
- Weather conditions etc.

Seasonality in agritourism is influenced, in addition to natural conditions, by the nature of services and stiffness stocked supply. The main thing is to focus seasonality in demand at certain times of the year, being overloaded technical and material, and labor.

Considering the above mentioned factors must also set the motivations that appear in agro business . The specific reasons developed in agritourism business are shown from several points of view (Nistoreanu P., M. Gheres

Manualul lucratorilor din gospodaria agrotistica , Universitaria Publishing House, Craiova, 2007 , pp 37-39) , according to stakeholders , namely :

I. Motivations for tourists:

- The prices are lower, providing low-income population the opportunity of leisure, rest in the rural lanscape
- Enables discovery of nature by urban dwellers, the occupations of farming (sheep shearing, milking cows, riding horses), folklore and traditions firsthand familiarity with the life of the country inhabitants.
- Variety comfort and best hosting conditions allow tourists to choose the most convenient in terms of desires, the level of culture, of their resources.
- The percentage quite high in rural areas of rural tourism allows tourists moving at a convenient distance.

II. Motivations for farms:

- Revenues from agritourism farmers go directly to families, thus achieving a short economic multiplier factor, income is a way of capitalization and modernization of agricultural holdings
- Agritourism increase employment farm jobs, work at home system development, as a way to increase rural employment, increase their incomes.
- Provision of tourism services in farms will require improving existing living space, material supplies it with elements of modern civilization (toilet, running water, sanitation, relief), thus achieving a higher level of comfort.

III. Motivations for local rural community:

- Agritourism generate income for the local community directly
- Agritourism helps prevent degradation of environmental conservation.
- Determine improving living standards, infrastructure development, beautifying communities.
- Helps avoid spending significant public funds for infrastructure.

IV. Motivations for the region:

- Agritourism supports efforts to retain earnings from tourism in the region
- Helps prevent social tensions, reduce the differences between the developed regions and the preservation of local traditions
- Provides a better understanding and interregional cooperation.

Regarding the tourist-service consumer, seasonality phenomenon may have implications for psychological or economic risks appear imminent congestion of the season: congestion on the roads and accommodation, prolonged

waiting time in case of provision of services, prices and tariffs high. All this affects the tourist mood, reducing the effects of holiday entertainment.

Focusing seasonal demands acting directly or indirectly on other sectors of the economy such as: transport, food, agriculture, trade, generating negative effects on quality of services or products offered, but also on seasonal employment of labor.

For Romania, the country with temperate climate, identifies three types of localities with seasonal variations:

1. Places annual single season (seaside), where the offer optimum quality meets once a year with a limited duration (May to September).
2. Places with two annual seasons (mountain places), they meet consumer demands biannual: winter white practice of tourism and recreation or summer hiking.
3. Places with activity quasi-permanent.

METHODOLOGY

The basic principle of the concept of economic efficiency of tourism enterprises aimed at maximizing results not only based on the use of a given amount of resources but also compatibility of competitive tourism market mechanisms, profits and profitability, with the requirement to maximize the welfare of the individual (tourist) and to ensure social equity (Gh. Zaman, Marinela Geamănu, *Eficiența economică*, Romania de maine Foundation Publishing, Romania, Bucharest, 2006, p. 9).

From the methodological point of view, economic analysis is carried out as for other economic activities, but in tourism, because tourism product is the result of a set of specific activities, the indicator system and method of calculation and analysis of economic efficiency differs by gender service (Bârsan M., Stefan S., *Analiza economico-financiară în comerț și turism*, Didactic and Pedagogic Publishing, Bucharest, 2013, p.145)

To analyze the effects of seasonality in agritourism industry is necessary to know the frequency of requests for services during a calendar year, ie oscillations while the volume and intensity of visitor flows in different places with agritourism accommodation structures.

In the following analysis we considered the 8 regions of Romania, to observe seasonal concentration of tourists on the agritourism offer and existing landforms. The reference period was 2010-2014 and statistical indicators used in the dynamic analysis were:

- *The number of arrivals of tourists in rural locations in Romania, by region, by month.*
- *The number of nights spent by tourists in rural locations in Romania, by region, by month.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agritourism is a more recent concept in the EU, with reference to various forms of tourism which are directly related to agricultural activities and / or specific constructions have purposes other than agriculture. This specific form of rural tourism is supported by smallholders from country- usually as a secondary activity - remaining activities in their household, so the main occupation and source of income.

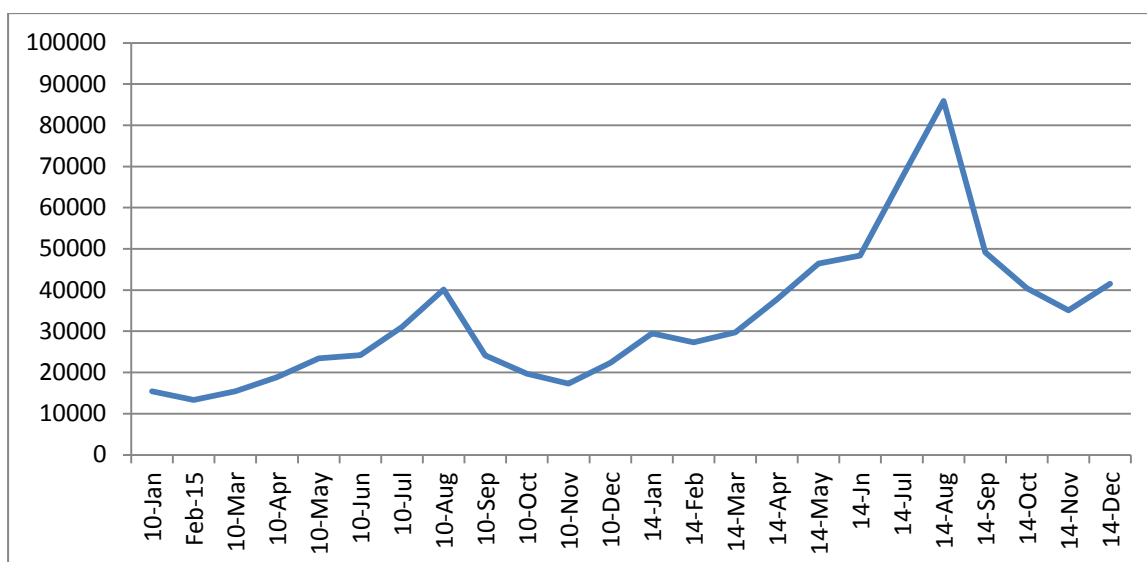
During the post-accession to the European Union, Romania has benefited from structural funds through the National Rural Development Plan, Measure 313 "Encouragement of tourism activities" which is part of Axis III - "*Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy*". The public is related to Measure 313: 544 222 774 Euros, being used only 6.5% of funds (Matei F. D- Study on absorption of European funds in Romania, for Measure 313, SEA - Practical Application of Science, Volume II , Issue 2 (4) / 2014), the approval of 679 projects aimed at the establishment or upgrading of tourist reception with accommodation and projects envisioned recreational activities. (Annual Report of progress on the implementation of the RDP in 2012). With all this support, rural tourism infrastructure with small accommodation (rural locations and rural tourism) has not reached a satisfactory level of development, especially in terms of quality, the market demand both nationally and internationally .

Therefore , this analysis compares the number of arrivals and overnight stays in agro hostels in Romania , regions and their dynamics in the reference period is shown below.

To study the seasonality in tourism, was considered the total arrivals in agro hostels in Romania , for each month in 2010 and 2014. The indicator oscillation is shown in Fig . no. 1:

Figure 1

The number of arrivals in agro hostels in Romania



Source: Data processing Tempo Online (National Statistical Yearbook of Romania)

From Fig. Nr. 1 it follows that the interest in this new form of tourism (rural tourism) is expanding, tourists heading to rural interest, the popular customs and traditions, crafts, culinary arts festivals in one region or another of Romania. It can be seen that from 2010 to 2014 period agro concentration of demand has not changed, the month with the highest number of arrivals still remains August . Also, there is a tendency for recovery of this indicator during winter holidays (December). As stagnation in the number of tourists arriving there may be mentioned February and May as the months that follow the winter holidays or Easter.

In the following, the previous indicator (arrivals of tourists in rural locations) will be reviewed by the 8 development regions of Romania. The month with the highest number of tourist arrivals has already been established, it is important to analyze what parts of the country they turn their attention during holiday periods. This statistical regions will be shown for 2010 and 2014 in Table no. 1

Table 1

The number of arrivals in agro hostels in Romania, by region of Romania

Period	NV	CENTRE	NE	SE	SOUTH-MUNTENIA	BUC - IF	SV	V
2010								
<i>Jan</i>	2151	5714	4083	860	1626	72	375	518
<i>Feb</i>	1844	4075	3386	825	1613	89	621	886
<i>Mar</i>	2398	4564	4123	1012	1622	93	477	1139
<i>Apr</i>	2921	5494	5113	1158	1981	73	785	129
<i>May</i>	3434	7438	5828	1515	2492	106	1118	1480
<i>Jun</i>	4019	7428	5925	1589	2524	91	1012	1599
<i>Jul</i>	4434	9419	7968	2625	3061	57	1351	2105
<i>Aug</i>	5569	11327	11102	3902	3274	55	1868	3018
<i>Sept</i>	3586	6729	6412	1659	2438	54	1216	2009
<i>Oct</i>	2832	5804	5318	1269	1948	59	887	1615
<i>Nov</i>	2516	4900	4747	1176	1701	82	681	1476
<i>Dec</i>	2757	7673	6389	1209	2206	41	561	1482
2014								
<i>Jan</i>	4988	11923	5946	976	2500	86	1377	1663
<i>Feb</i>	4300	10578	5007	1064	2695	129	1814	1753
<i>Mar</i>	4431	10684	6239	1070	3111	163	1927	2072
<i>Apr</i>	5850	13482	8473	135	4052	184	199	235

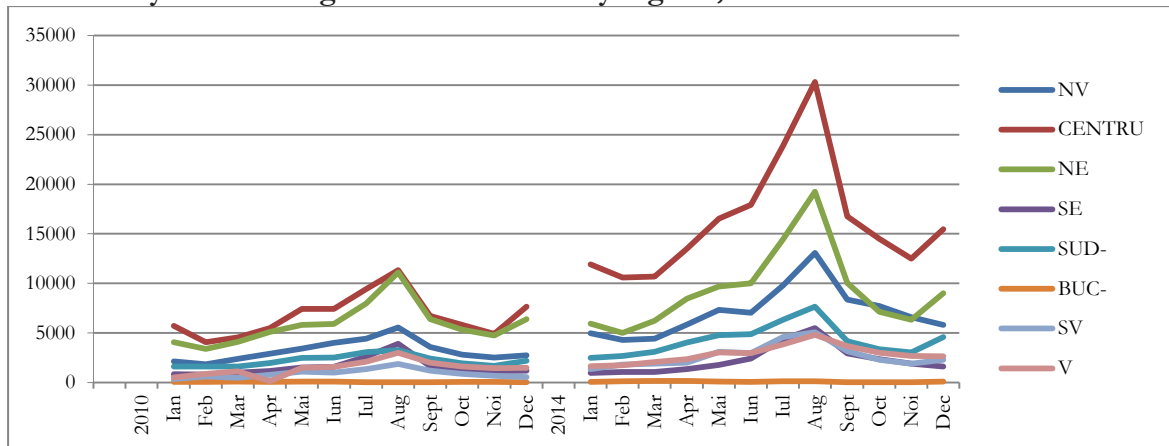
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<i>May</i>	7347	16533	9676	179 6	4801	116	311 8	303 0
<i>Jun</i>	7056	17925	1001 6	244 1	4897	72	296 8	296 9
<i>Jul</i>	9781	23864	1443 7	436 8	6322	134	457 6	385 0
<i>Aug</i>	1307 5	30326	1925 4	548 8	7668	141	508 0	483 3
<i>Sept</i>	8352	16766	1004 7	293 7	4163	44	317 2	367 7
<i>Oct</i>	7714	14497	7127	236 8	3361	48	228 8	302 1
<i>Nov</i>	6607	12499	6346	192 2	3057	44	191 2	267 2
<i>Dec</i>	5817	15457	9027	161 4	4579	92	230 8	265 8

Source: Data processing Tempo Online (National Statistical Yearbook of Romania)

In Table no. 1 can see that both in 2010 and 2014 , the regions of interest for agritourism are Center for mountaineering , Northeast religious and cultural tourism and Northwest , recreational tourism . On the other hand, the lowest number of tourists arriving stands agro hostels in Bucharest-Ilfov region , where the number of rural locations is much lower , followed by South-West Oltenia , West and South East , which notes coastal tourism. The data in the table above have been translated into a graph (Fig . No. 2) to compare the differences between regions created for 2010 and 2014 .

Figure 2

Dynamics of agro hostels arrivals by region , 2010 and 2014



Source: Data processing Tempo Online (National Statistical Yearbook of Romania)

It is seen from Figure nr . 2 that in 2010 , the number of arrivals coincided agro hostels and its dynamics in some regions , especially in Central and North- East that are most relevant to tourism. But in 2014 , the dynamics are preserved , they vary in the same direction , but the number of arrivals in the central region is significantly higher than in the Northeast . One of the factors determining the absorption of structural funds, which we mentioned earlier, a large percentage of which are directed to the Central region .

Regarding the number of overnight stays of tourists in rural locations , can be seen from Table no. 2 that tourists preferred regions remain in the same position :

Table 2

Number of overnight stays in hostels agritourism , development regions of Romania

Period	NV	CENTRE	NE	SE	SOUTH-MUNTENIA	BUC-IF	SV	V
2010								
<i>Jan</i>	4141	13074	7781	1877	3047	103	677	1044
<i>Feb</i>	3728	9585	5974	1678	3329	128	1165	1563
<i>Mar</i>	4213	10149	6989	1683	3668	117	1192	1971
<i>Apr</i>	5168	12363	9649	1901	3843	161	1356	2766
<i>May</i>	6242	16365	9910	2678	3845	143	2186	3117
<i>Jun</i>	7779	16979	10714	3474	3691	114	2759	2924
<i>Jul</i>	10515	23351	14575	6404	5393	108	3967	4417
<i>Aug</i>	12282	30234	21690	13415	5860	129	4332	5525
<i>Sept</i>	6610	15739	11209	3520	3665	82	2747	3325
<i>Oct</i>	5319	11864	8998	2300	3549	121	2316	2922
<i>Nov</i>	4790	9493	7861	2401	3375	201	2131	2755
<i>Dec</i>	5301	18308	12371	2510	3903	93	2185	2849
2014								
<i>Jan</i>	9215	26430	9766	1443	3991	158	2271	2654

<i>Feb</i>	7601	20786	8765	1717	4577	295	3019	288 5
<i>Mar</i>	8185	21808	9572	1647	5256	312	3309	346 3
<i>Apr</i>	1099 8	27604	1543 7	2037	7057	290	3669	426 1
<i>May</i>	1386 4	33915	1537 7	2697	8220	120	5161	592 0
<i>Jun</i>	1440 8	38339	1722 9	4417	8776	73	5971	613 9
<i>Jul</i>	1854 5	53992	2868 3	8634	12140	140	8613	869 8
<i>Aug</i>	2562 5	69882	3622 7	1157 3	12607	150	1028 5	982 7
<i>Sept</i>	1555 1	35675	1753 0	4704	7534	50	7075	666 5
<i>Oct</i>	1432 1	30847	1231 3	3526	6126	50	5111	570 7
<i>Nov</i>	1177 7	25424	1168 6	2848	6652	45	4018	470 2
<i>Dec</i>	1258 3	36401	1736 2	2406	9175	100	5074	511 1

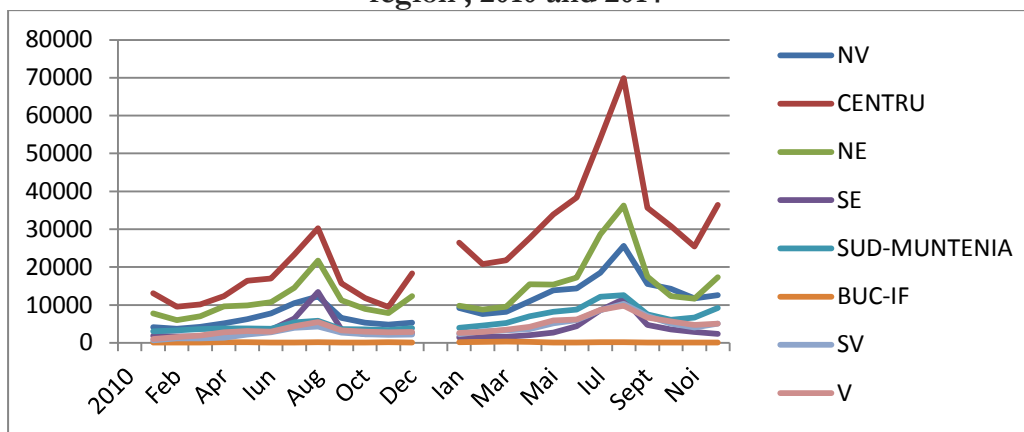
Source: Data processing Tempo Online (National Statistical Yearbook of Romania)

Regarding the influence factor - seasonality - in agritourism regions can be classified as :

- Regions with a single annual season : Southwest , because the only period in which no increase is from July to September
- Regions with two annual seasons : here can be employed which, in addition to the summer growths in winter. These regions are : Central, North East , North West.
- Regions with quasi-permanent activity : Bucharest -Ilfov , South- Muntenia , West and South East.

This dynamic of indicator can also be seen in Figure No. 3:

Figure 3
Dynamics of the number of overnight stays in hostels agritourism , by region , 2010 and 2014



Source: Data processing Tempo Online (National Statistical Yearbook of Romania)

We note also that in 2010, the three regions (South-West, South-Muntenia and West) evolved in the same direction, with approximately the same number of overnight stays in hostels agritourism. But in 2014, there is an increase in the summer for all those regions. Thus, in 2014, the only quasi-permanent active region is Bucharest-Ilfov.

Seasonality is reflected, on the one hand, incomplete tables below material and technical base and workforce, negatively affecting costs and quality of tourism services, the return on investment, profitability, and on the other hand the low level of satisfaction thus affecting consumer needs and developing tourist traffic.

For the analysis we chose regionalization seasonality, as a principle of geography, because the analysis is more efficient for capturing territories of their particularities in terms of agritourism activity and its dynamics.

Among the measures to mitigate the seasonality in Romania we can mention the following:

- Diversification and development of programs and services offer (attracting new areas in the tourist circuit design further improve leisure services)
- Practicing different prices depending on the stage of the season
- Provide facilities
- Intensify efforts Promotional
- Consumer involvement in Benefit

- Application booking system time to adjust to the demands of the offer tourists
- Organisational measures

In studies that follow, the intention is to separate regions counties to analyze which of these contribute effectively to increasing consumer interest for a specific region and which are significant attractions for them.

Also in a study that will follow it, will be taken into account seasonality indices analysis is an econometric dynamic impact.

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