

# ICT and agritourism in Czech Republic

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**Annotation:** Tourism is regarded as the world's future. Agritourism is a unique symbiosis of agriculture and tourism. Based on extensive analysis of the state agritourism in the Czech Republic, it was found that information on agritourism facilities is very diverse and disorderly, lacking a specialized portal for agro-tourism. Agritourism facilities in the Czech Republic is several thousand, but most of them have non-quality web sites, or none at all. It should be ensured that entrepreneurs in the agritourism (farmers) had knowledge easily and with minimum cost to present their own small farm on the web, such as using Web content management system (WCMS). It is proposed the new portal solution, which according to the principles of Web 2.0 will provide greater information sharing among the partners in the field of agri-tourism.

**Key words:** ICT, web 2.0, WCM, Agritourism, Regional development

## 1 Introduction

Tourism is regarded as the world's future. The tourism in the European Union is one of the largest economic activities with great potential for further growth. In our country is also becoming an increasingly important factor in the development of the economy.

Agritourism is a unique symbiosis of agriculture and tourism. At the same time, the farm provides additional, often non-negligible income. Agritourism allows agricultural businesses to implement part of its own plant or livestock without unnecessary intermediate directly on the farm, such as the sale of food and food raw materials, guest farms [8].

Agritourism is a specific form of local tourism. It allows candidates stay in the agricultural farms and get comfortable with the practical life in the countryside. Visitors can participate in various agricultural activities and learn the traditional rural activities. They can use some of the frequently offered additional services (horse riding, fishing, cycling, etc.).

At present, the supply of rural tourism in the Czech Republic, deals with more than a thousand businesses with a total capacity of several tens of thousands of beds. Agritourism and rural tourism with us deals with several organizations such as ECEAT (European Center for Eco-Agro Tourism). The Union of rural tourism, which is a voluntary, non-professional association of entrepreneurs in rural tourism and other supporters, mandates the Government of the certified farms in the so-called "National system of certification of environmentally friendly tourism services." He is currently in the Czech Republic 120 certified objects.

In the next few years can be expected to further develop agri-tourism. Many people already agritourism gives precedence over traditional holiday by the sea. Using new information and communication technologies (ICT) can

extend the awareness of agri-tourism opportunities and to create web environment for the involvement of the small farms in the supply of tourism opportunities.

## 2 Objective of work and methodology

The aim is to analyze the current state of use of ICT in the field of agritourism in the Czech Republic. The selected micro-regions were examined what information is on web (portals region, sub-catalogs) and what farms use to promote their activity in practice (other media: regional press, Zlaté page print ad, a tourist center).

Within the selected regions was collected information on individual objects, which are involved in agro-tourism (farms, ranches, houses, riding school, open-air museums, etc.). Were recorded following specific information:

- Coordinates (width, height), address, phone, photo, link to the web,
- Characteristics of the services offered: for how many people, the period of operation, availability of transport, meals,
- Follow-up services and options in the vicinity: cycling, attractions of the surroundings, etc.

Based on the results of the analysis is designed to create a new interactive mapping portal, which will use web 2.0 technology to support the development of agri-tourism.

## 3 Results

In 2008, the state of agri-tourism has been identified in the Czech Republic. In the first phase (March – December 2008) to ensure the 118 sub-analysis of several tens of micro-

regions and the Czech Republic and was obtained a database of characteristic data about 459 agri-tourism facilities. In the second phase (October – December 2008) it was 112 the sub-analysis and was obtained data on other 365 objects.

The results can be presented by distinguishing four levels: national, regional, micro-regions and agri-tourism objects, ie. farm.

### 3.1 National level

Portal aimed at tourism in the Czech Republic is a large number, but a specialized portal for agro-tourism in the Czech Republic is not yet. The government agency CzechTourism [www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com) Portal provides information in several languages on tourism opportunities in the Czech Republic. When entering the words “agritourism” appears only 10 references to the farm, which are involved in agro-tourism. Better results may be obtained from the portal [www.kudyznudy.cz](http://www.kudyznudy.cz) that frame of Czech Tourism. You can search by type of activity (eg, stay on the farm) and by region.

The Association operates a rural tourism portal [www.prazdninyavenkove.cz/](http://www.prazdninyavenkove.cz/). According to the operator sites are selected accommodation facilities to cope with a sense of “Holiday in the countryside”. Can be found rural estates, cozy cottage with secluded garden and forest camps. Most rural accommodation facilities offered meets the standards of rural tourism Association, approved by the Ministry for Regional Development.

Further information can be found in specialized travel agencies, such as <http://www.nafarmu.cz>, <http://www.eecat.travel/fx/cz/>, <http://www.atc.cz>. Some deal with agro-tourism not only in the Czech Republic, but their scope extends to the countries of the European Union.

The agricultural specialist portals like [www.agris.cz](http://www.agris.cz), you can find various articles related to agri-tourism.

International agro specialized portals such as French [www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com](http://www.bienvenue-a-la-ferme.com), brings far more comprehensive look at the possibilities of agri-tourism in the country.

### 3.2 Regional level

The Czech Republic is divided into 13 regions and the capital city of Prague. Many interesting information on the activities in these regions has <http://www.risy.cz/> portal -



Fig. 1 Administrative division of the Czech Republic and detailed micro-analysis

Regional Information Service (RIS), administered by the Center for Regional Development Czech Republic.

Each region has its official site, but no does not directly agro-tourism. Eg. Portal Central Bohemia Central Bohemia, the [www.kr-stredocesky.cz](http://www.kr-stredocesky.cz), find a single mention or reference devoted agroturistice. The only thing the visitor can learn here, is the further development of tourism in Central Bohemia.

The regional information centre for agriculture and rural development are not agro-tourism. Only [www.kis-stredocesky.cz](http://www.kis-stredocesky.cz) provides several references to various objects and Agro providing accommodation facilities, but most information is more historical nature.

### 3.3 Micro-regions level

Micro-regions purpose is communities. The level of agri-tourism in the micro-regions is different, and its support is very different. There are a number of web site, which are narrowly focused on issues of the region, such as at <http://www.posazavi.com> find links to many interesting tourist options in Posázaví. The situation is best documented in the micro authentic communication of five respondents from different regions of the Czech Republic [see Figure 1].

1. Vltavotynsko (Southern Bohemia): “From the analysis of information sources that the microregion Vltavotýnsko in terms of agri-tourism is mainly dedicated to horse riding. Availability of information in particular on the local information sources easily obstructed and it is necessary to further explore these web pages. Drawback is also found inconsistencies in the information within one information source, and graphical and / or information.”[5].
2. Kdynsko (Pilsen Region): Region with a rich history and strategic location in the Czech-Bavarian border is interesting for tourists with many natural and cultural monuments, and has an attractive potential for the development of agri-tourism. Advantages of this region, but have not yet been sufficiently exploited, and for his full recovery, there are significant reserves. Fast-growing industry is currently hippoturistika. After viewing the web promotion of the region and other promotional material must state that there are in this large reserve, and both offer, as well as promotion is in many buildings and systematic enough. “[1]
3. Teplicko (Ústí nad Labem): “The region is rather industrial region, but elements of agriculture can be found here. The dominance of industry in the region, however, does not preclude the possibilities of agri-tourism. There are several in the district of Teplice. Unfortunately, it is not easy to determine, through the Internet for details. Potential candidates from the ranks of ordinary computer users, unless they have enough patience to search in the Internet, find almost nothing. There is a page where a summary would be agritourism opportunities in the district of Teplice, and unfortunately often do not work or links to the various agro tourist interesting places. Disappointing, the traditional Gold page. “[9]

4. Zdarsko (Highland): “Search for information about agritourism Žd’árské is to look like a needle in a haystack. Only aggregate information in a brochure on the horse stations. If the agroturistice information in this region appears, is fragmented and the majority are part of another kind of offer (accommodation, tourism, recreation, etc.). It should be a total of complicated search through links to various tourist sites and information. Even less information is at the urban sites, which focus primarily on the links mentioned in the tourist and accommodation portal, offering the best private accommodation. “[4]
5. Slovacko (Southern Moravia): “Web sites provide enough general information on agritourism, only a few objects is your site to regional sites are listed only the address and telephone connections. They also provide general information tourist information centres. From my own experience I know that in many objects is very difficult to obtain contact information without personal visits. For more agritourism development would be appropriate comprehensive database targets the basic characteristics of agri-tourism and better information in other media (eg television, radio, magazines, etc.). “[7]

**3.4 Objects agrotourism**

Agri-tourism facilities in the Czech Republic are several thousand. Most of them are not involved in the Association of rural tourism (www.svazvt.cz), which brings together the 130 entrepreneurs, which is about 5% of the total number of entrepreneurs in rural tourism. From the investigation indicates that approximately 1 / 3 of objects has developed web pages very well. Eg. MoraviaNorth Region increased from 44 evaluated web settlements received good evaluation of 15 objects [3]. Roughly 1 / 3 of objects involved in the agro-tourism has its own web presentation (eg Rakovnik it was found that only 9 objects from 14 has its own web site, in the region of Prachatice only five out of 11 objects has its own web site).

**3.5 The proposed solution in terms of ICT**

Based on the analysis of the team focuses on two distinctive levels: at their own facilities and agri-tourism at national level.

**The draft resolution for objects agritourism**

It should be ensured that entrepreneurs in the agri-tourism (farmers) had knowledge that can be easily and cost to present their own small farm on the web. Examples of solutions can be use WCM (Web Content Management) system of WordPress, which allows relatively easy to create a website. More detail [2].

As is clear from the analysis, it is very difficult to find using search engines website farms. We recommend to use technology optimizing existing web pages for search engines so-called SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and adjusted according to the site.



Fig. 2 Presentation of the farm in WCM WordPress

**The draft resolution on the national level**

The current ICT allows the establishment of non-agro-tourism portal for the communication platform for both users and operators of agri-tourism, which will be centrally concentrated all available information in the field and links to other useful sites.

Authors are preparing the implementation of non-commerce mapping portal for the promotion of agritourism in the Czech Republic (agroturistika.czu.cz). Custom programming solutions using web 2.0 technologies such as Google Maps. Samples of the prepared solution is in Figure 3 and 4.



Fig. No. 3 Map portal - objects agrotourism



Fig. No. 4 Map portal - link to search the farm



We expect that it will be possible to use the so-called long tail effect [6]. This will promote its own tourism, both easier map navigation object Interest in the region, as well as better information about individual objects. Each candidate will have the opportunity on the basis of multi-user system to add data of its own object in a database. After verifying the accuracy of the building included in the mapping portal.

## 4 Discussion

In the field of tourism in the Czech Republic there are too many players and summarized the results obtained in 1200 from the page background is very difficult. Search agritourism objects is quite complicated, such as the transition from one region to another. The potential client must itself seek information and contacts for operators who are engaged in agro-tourism, or must go to a travel agency, but there is not even sure that will find exactly what you seek.

For information on agritourism in a region can get, but sometimes quite complex search different accommodation pages. Farm, farms, guest houses and ranches in rural areas also offer varying degrees in the agro-tourism, agro-tourism in some consider only accommodation on the farm (farm), where appropriate, opportunities for children to play with pets, some have a horse, elsewhere, it is possible to participate and work on the farm and live on good food grown or produced (eg, goat cheese).

Unlike Western Europe, where tourism has been largely popular with people of all ages, in the Czech Republic is the area of tourism is a marginal issue. Can we believe what is the cause. One of the options, why Czechs didn't prefer this sector is that the Czech man is very close to the countryside, also owned recreational property in the country is a matter of routine.

Agrotourism is optimal for smaller farms, allowing them to obtain additional funds in the place of business. At present, offers the following services business around thousand beds with a capacity of about ten thousand. The Czech Republic has some regions as ideal for agritourism. Sumava with vast forests and clean air, South Bohemia with the large network of ponds and many natural monuments, South Moravia with a warmer climate, a typical Moravian folklore and tourist facilities and the Highlands with clean air and the amount of forests.

Information on the number of tourists who are for this type of tourism in the Czech Republic decide to statistically tracking. According to the Association of rural tourism ([www.svazvt.cz](http://www.svazvt.cz)) are registered each year about 100 thousand. overnight stays and 32 500 visitors. The whole sector of rural tourism tipu numbers of 10–20x higher. This number is only about 1% of the total number of foreign tourists, who in 2008 visited the Czech Republic. A major problem is that the farm owners themselves, and objects to seek their places much more visible and present it at [www](http://www).

It should be emphasized and the importance of civic activities, such as the Local Action Group Rakovnicko (MAS), which is the appellant, the first horse trails in the region and seeks to promote the involvement of farmers in agri-tourism.

The development of more farms to rural tourism lacks enough money and experience. In the future, however, expected that the development of agri-tourism will be supported by financial resources, mainly from EU funds. The aim will be to steer economic development in this area closer to sustainable development.

## 5 Conclusions

Agritourism, as one of the options business in the country, is gaining increasing worldwide popularity. This trend is gradually promoted in the Czech Republic. Agritourism and village tourism, helping to tackle some of the problems of rural areas, such as unemployment, the maintenance of cultural landscape features, reduce the migration of rural population, etc.

Promotion of agritourism, information on objects is very diverse and disorderly. It prepared a new portal solution, which will promote greater information sharing among the partners in the field of agritourism. The use of so-called long tail effect for small farmers. This site should allow the easy option for the client in the search for suitable premises and operators (farmers) should be able to easily input data on accommodation, etc.

According to the information obtained can be assumed that the number agritourism farms will grow in the Czech Republic that will still achieve a better standard and that its guests will be in addition to local visitors and foreign visitors not only from Europe but also around the world. This intention should be to promote quality use of ICT.

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