

## Research Article

Christelle Charlien van Zyl\*, Peet van der Merwe

# The motives of South African farmers for offering agri-tourism

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opag-2021-0036>

received March 19, 2021; accepted May 6, 2021

**Abstract:** Agri-tourism, which involves tourists visiting working farms for entertainment and learning, has become more popular over the years. This paper focuses on the supply side of agri-tourism and investigates the motives that South African farmers have for offering agri-tourism activities and attractions on their farm. Based on a study with 557 respondents from all nine provinces of South Africa, 148 respondents indicated that they were currently offering some form of agri-tourism. The results identified the most popular agri-tourism activities and attractions as farm stay/accommodation, hunting, hiking/nature trails, and wildlife viewing and photography. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted, which identified two factors, namely, preservation of culture and heritage and economic advantages. Based on the mean values, economic advantages were the main reason why farmers decided to offer agri-tourism activities and attractions.

**Keywords:** agri-tourism motivations, agri-tourism, South Africa, farmers, agri-tourism activities/attractions

## 1 Introduction

Agri-tourism is described by different researchers [1,2] as the amalgamation of the tourism and agriculture industries. Torres and Momsen [3] state that the relationship between these two industries is highly complex and multifaceted. According to Karthik and Gajanand [4], agri-tourism allows a tourist to visit an agricultural setting or a working farm, whereas Malkanthi and Routry [5] are of the opinion that agri-tourism is used by farmers

as a strategy to contribute and enhance agricultural development on their farm; in some cases, they even use it as a way to promote sustainable rural development. Tew and Barbieri [6] describe agri-tourism as nearly any activity or attraction that allows for research or leisure in an agricultural setting.

Some of the first forms of agri-tourism in the world were found in the United States of America (US) and Italy. This type of tourism gained popularity in the 1920s in the US, when travelling became more common [7]. Although the term “agri-tourism” is relatively new in the US, learning about agriculture and celebrating harvests by visiting farms and ranches is a long-standing tradition. In the late 1800s, as the US became increasingly urbanised, families living in cities would visit farms or ranches to escape city life and learn about farming and rural life [8]. Italy is considered another excellent example of implementing agri-tourism. When farms were abandoned from the 1950s to 1970s, the country passed the Agriturismo law in 1985 to encourage and support farm stay in rural areas [7].

In South Africa, the first form of agri-tourism consisted of visits to game farms/ranches in the early 1950s. This was followed by visits to ostrich farms in the Oudtshoorn region for ostrich racing and riding, which became quite a popular activity in the 1960s. The next type of agri-tourism (and maybe one of South Africa’s most popular agri-tourism products) was wine tourism, which involved tourists visiting wine estates for wine tasting; this originated in the early 1970s [9].

Today, agriculture and tourism are two of South Africa’s main contributors to its gross domestic product (GDP) and part of the vital economic sectors in the country, together with the mining service, transport, manufacturing, and energy production industries [10]. In 2019, the tourism industry accounted for 2.9% of the GDP (and indirectly, 8.6%), whereas the agriculture industry’s contribution was 1.88% of the country’s GDP [11,12]. Therefore, both sectors are important.

Although a few agri-tourism products in South Africa can be traced back to the 1960s, it is still a relatively new tourism product for the country [9]; when investigating

\* **Corresponding author: Christelle Charlien van Zyl**, School for Tourism Management, North-West University, Potchefstroom, 2520, North West Province, South Africa, e-mail: [christellecvanzyl@gmail.com](mailto:christellecvanzyl@gmail.com)

**Peet van der Merwe:** School for Tourism Management, North-West University, Potchefstroom, 2520, North West Province, South Africa

previous research on the topic, the literature review retrieved only a handful of studies, conducted in specific areas, for example, in the Mopani District, Limpopo [13], the Western Cape [14], the Stellenbosch wine routes [15], an agri-festival in South Africa [16], and a general study on the size and scope of agri-tourism in South Africa [9].

As limited work was conducted in the past [17], more research in this regard is needed to grow agri-tourism further and, more important, assist current product owners as well as new entries into the market with valuable information to improve and better develop this sector of the tourism industry. Therefore, the problem that this research wants to address is to fill the void in knowledge on why agri-tourism is offered by South African farmers; in other words, what their motives are.

## 2 Literature review

This literature review of the study consists of three sections, namely, the background to agri-tourism, advantages and disadvantages of agri-tourism, and previous research on the motives of farmers for hosting agri-tourism on their land.

### 2.1 Background to agri-tourism

Although there is no universal definition of agri-tourism yet, many researchers came forward with definitions thereof. A chronological flow of these definitions is presented as follows:

2015: Bwana et al. [18] describe agri-tourism as a synonym for farm tourism or agriculture tourism, where the key is the interaction between the agricultural producer, the farm products, and the tourist. According to Mastroianni et al. [19], only a farmer can perform agri-tourism.

2016: Petroman et al. [20] refer to agri-tourism as an activity that focuses on both agriculture and tourism.

2017: Rong-Da Liang [21] is of the opinion that agri-tourism is a special type of tourism that is combined with agricultural products. Lupi et al. [22] point out that agri-tourism is part of rural tourism.

2018: Fleischer et al. [23] divide agri-tourism into agriculturally based recreational activities; agricultural education; and rural-based, outdoor recreation and hospitality services.

2020: Canovi and Lyon [24] maintain that agri-tourism is a farm-related activity that is based on a working farm for the purpose of entertainment or education.

2021: Quella et al. [25] state that agri-tourism includes (but is not limited to) both core and peripheral agri-tourism activities that take place on a farm within the five categories of agri-tourism (education, direct sales, entertainment, outdoor recreation, and hospitality).

From the above definitions, it is deduced that agri-tourism includes activities provided in an agricultural setting (whether they are leisure-, education-, agricultural produce-, or adventure-oriented) and mainly within a rural setting. To better understand the position of agri-tourism within the larger tourism industry, no better explanation can be provided than that of Wearing and Neil [26]. The authors divided the tourism industry into mass tourism and alternative tourism. As perceived from its name, mass tourism includes vast numbers of tourists visiting an area; the marketers are thus going for more feet. The areas include cities, beachfronts, amusement parks, and other places where the sustainability of tourism is dependent on the number of feet passing through [26,27].

Alternative tourism (Figure 1), on the other hand, is tourism whose purpose is to be consistent with natural, social, and community values and allows both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences [26]. Agri-tourism fits into this category, as can be seen in Figure 1.

The agri-tourism sector of the tourism industry can be interpreted visually, as shown in Figure 2. Once the amalgamation takes place and the tourism and agriculture industries are combined, agri-tourism can be viewed from the demand or supply side. This study will investigate the supply side, as the focus is on why (motive) farmers (suppliers) offer agri-tourism. Bernardo et al. [28] divided agri-tourism products and services that farmers can provide on their farm into five distinct categories. These categories include outdoor recreation, educational experiences, entertainment, hospitality services, and on-farm direct sales.

Many researchers have identified innovation as a key element towards agri-tourism [29,30]. Innovation can be described as adding a new or significantly improved product to a business [31] and might not mean the same to each agri-tourism farm owner [30]. While the importance of innovating has grown in recent years, Dudić et al. [32] describe it as crucial to any business.

Innovation can also be added through agricultural technology [29]. The improvement of agricultural technology innovation can also contribute to rural economic development and therefore also to agri-tourism. Farmers have the opportunity to make use of external sources of innovation by working with other entities. Examples of areas in which innovation can be implemented within the

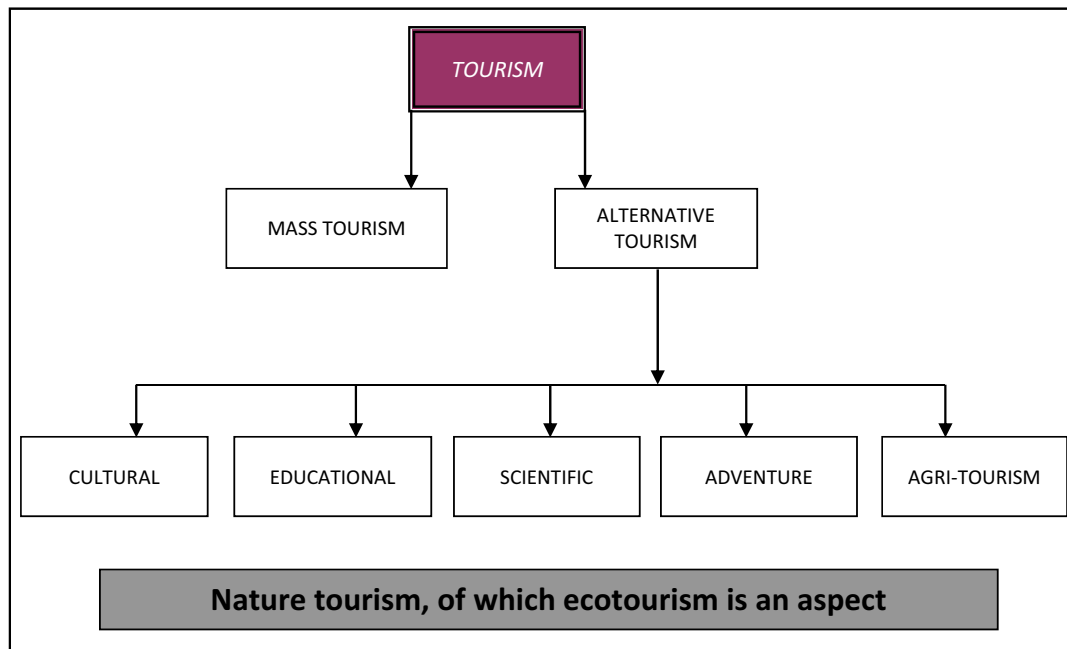


Figure 1: Alternative tourism [26].

agri-tourism sector include adventure, education, and artistic farms [33].

## 2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of offering agri-tourism

There are several advantages for farmers/producers to offer agri-tourism on a farm. Researchers identified the

following advantages: the opportunity to generate an additional income (through the tourism products); the opportunity to expand farming operations to include more activities; the opportunity to inform tourists/visitors of the agriculture industry and farm-life and thus educate them at the same time; the opportunity to introduce an alternative use for agricultural land that is not currently in use; the opportunity to create awareness of the farmer's agricultural products; the opportunity to develop a new business enterprise; and agri-tourism

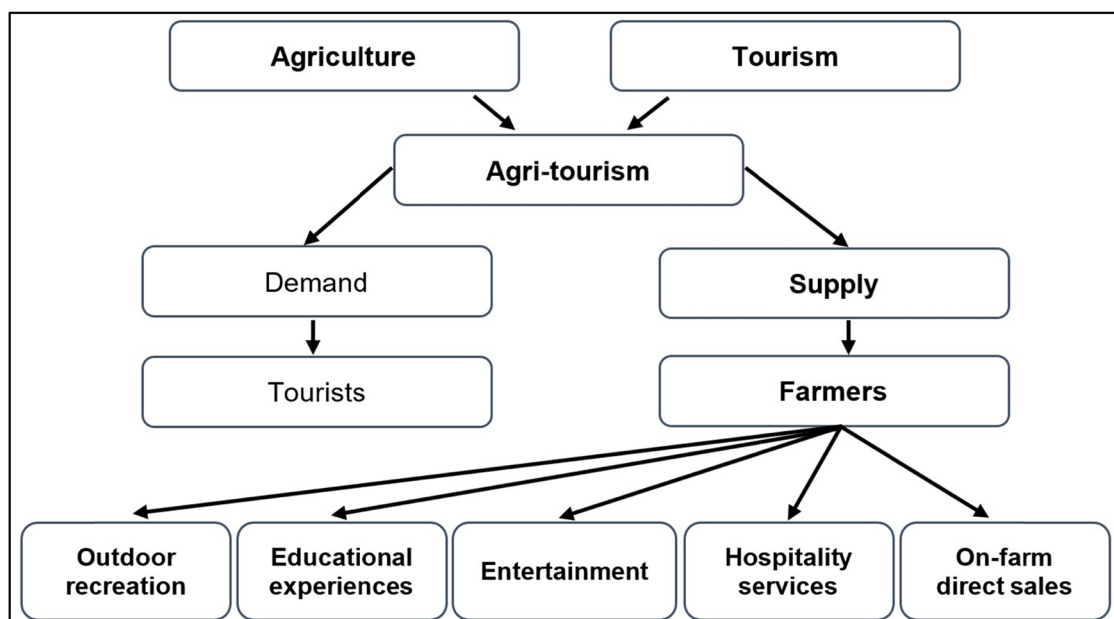


Figure 2: The demand and supply side of agri-tourism [28].

can assist the farmer in creating long-term sustainability for the farm as a business enterprise [5,13,28,34–40].

Agri-tourism also offers advantages to the local communities, namely new employment opportunities that can lead to economic development in the local communities; the upgrading of local facilities and services, as more people travel to the area; diversification of the local economy by providing a new source of income; and an alternative form of tourism that tourists can enjoy locally [5,13,28,34–40].

Myer and De Crom [13] researched the possible benefits of offering agri-tourism on a farm from the viewpoint of the tourist, as well as the farmer and the local community. The data revealed the following benefits (in order of importance): education of the tourist; more exposure for the farmer; acquiring additional income; boosting local tourist attractions; adding value to products; and generating recognition for farmers.

There are, however, also disadvantages to the offering of agri-tourism that are influenced by both the agriculture and tourism industries. Saayman [41] and Saayman [42] listed the following challenges that farmers can face when offering agri-tourism on their farms: the tourism industry can be seasonal and, frequently, weather-dependent; if a tourism product is the only source of income, a sudden closure may lead to significant financial challenges; there is a risk of overdevelopment when natural resources become exhausted; the issue of employing “outsiders” when there are already local communities waiting for job opportunities; tourists bring a risk of pollution (e.g., noise, air, water, and visual and/or improper waste disposal); and the possibility of conflict between the farmer and the tourist.

Different researchers [9,13,43] identified other challenges that farmers might face when offering agri-tourism, namely the need to pay the high liability insurance for tourists visiting the farm; the cost of damages that tourists may cause to the farmer’s farm, land, animals, equipment, and more; the disturbance of day-to-day farming activities; and possible antisocial behaviour such as crime.

## 2.3 Previous research on motives of farmers for offering agri-tourism

Phelan and Sharpley [44] indicate that research on agri-tourism, specifically motives for offering agri-tourism on a farm, has grown significantly. Previous research regarding the motives for offering agri-tourism on farms includes that of [45–50].

The motives of farmers or ranchers for diversifying the business to include agri-tourism activities and attractions in the state of Montana in the United States (US) were researched by Nickerson et al. [45]. The results list the top five motives as an additional income, an opportunity to fully use their resources, fluctuations in agricultural income, employment for family members, and because it is an interest/hobby of theirs.

An attitudinal study in England was conducted by Sharpley and Vass [46], based on tourism, farming, and diversification. The study found that farmers’ attitudes towards the following three reasons were positive, therefore there are motives for agri-tourism: it is important to diversify their farm business for long-term financial security; it provides the best opportunity for generating extra income; and it is the only choice available for diversification.

Ollenburg and Buckley [47] investigated the reasons why farmers started tourism enterprises in Australia. The study identified five distinct categories, namely economic needs, such as an additional income and lots of money; family considerations, such as opportunities for their children to live and work on the farm; social aspects, such as educating tourists and meeting interesting people; the desire for independence, such as having one’s own career and working on the farm (rather than off-farm); and a provision for retirements, such as spare time after retiring or a retirement income.

In a study undertaken in Canada, Barbieri [48] investigated the motives behind agri-tourism and other farm enterprise developments. The study identified four different entrepreneurial goals, namely firm profitability, market-related, family-related, and personal goals. The five most important motives identified by the research were to generate additional income, continue farming, enhance personal/family quality of life, increase/diversify the market, and generate revenues from existing resources.

While analysing agri-tourism as a part of rural development in Italy, Santucci [50] identified several motives as to why farmers have to diversify their farms’ activities by offering tourism. These motives are listed in the literature as making full use of assets for a family member to engage in agri-tourism activities and to create job opportunities.

A follow-up study by Cassia et al. [51], conducted two years later in Italy, identified five motives, namely an economic motive; a personal and family motive; a tangible rural heritage preservation and enhancement motive; an agri-food heritage preservation and enhancement motive; and a rural way of life heritage preservation

and enhancement motive. The study found that the most important one was the personal and family motive, followed by the rural way of life heritage preservation and enhancement, and tangible rural heritage preservation and enhancement motives. The least important one was the economic motive.

Schilling et al. [49] investigated the economic benefits of agri-tourism in New Jersey (US) and identified three motives of farmers for offering agri-tourism. Other than the normal one, namely, to generate potential additional revenue, the researchers identified entrepreneurship, to employ family on the farm, and the desire for an agrarian lifestyle.

Several motivations for implementing agri-tourism on a farm were identified by LaPan and Barbieri [52]; they concluded that agri-tourism is driven by a complex set of goals that include a variety of motivations. This includes economic motives (increased revenue), market motives (to provide a better service to current clients), and individual or family motives (to enjoy a rural lifestyle).

In a recent study on agri-tourism in Vermont (USA), Chase et al. [53] found that building goodwill in the community was a key motivation for farmers to develop agri-tourism on their farms. Other important motivations identified include increasing revenue, educating the public on agriculture, and enjoying social interactions with the public.

From the work of the various researchers above, this literature study identified the motives of farmers who incorporate agri-tourism on their land. The question to be answered is why South African farmers incorporate it on their land; are the reasons the same or will this research be able to identify different motives?

## 3 Method of research

This section discusses the study area, the process of collecting the data (description of the questionnaire used), and a discussion on how the data were handled and analysed.

### 3.1 Study area

A quantitative research approach was followed through a standardised questionnaire. The research population for this research was farmers from all nine provinces of South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal; Mpumalanga; Limpopo;

Gauteng; North West; Free State; Eastern Cape; Northern Cape; Western Cape). Figure 3 is a map of South Africa that also illustrates the nine provinces as well as the capital cities of each province.

### 3.2 Data collection procedures

A standard questionnaire was designed for this quantitative research. The questionnaire consisted of four sections, but for this study, only the results from Section A and a part of Section B were to be used in order to create a profile of the respondents (farmers) who answered the questionnaires; the researchers wanted to understand the main agri-tourism activities and attractions currently offered on farms and the motives for implementing these activities and attractions. The questionnaire was developed based on the work of Barbieri and Tew [55], Brown and Hershey [56], and Statistics South Africa [57]. The four sections were as follows:

- (A) The first section was aimed at gathering information about the farmer and his or her farm. Basic demographic questions were included in order to understand the profile of the respondents, for example, gender, year of birth, and level of education. Other questions were tailored to understand the profile of a farmer with regard to the farm setup.
- (B) The second section only focused on agri-tourism activities. First, a basic question was asked to identify the number of years the farmer has been offering agri-tourism. Next, farmers were asked about their motives for offering agri-tourism. Based on the 47 agri-tourism activities and attractions provided, farmers were asked to indicate what activities/attractions they were offering and what they planned to offer within the next five years.
- (C) This section identified different marketing elements used by the respondents.
- (D) The last section was based on three open questions about the expansions that respondents are planning for the future, how they would suggest improvement and growth for agri-tourism, and any other suggestions.

For the selection of respondents from the population, a non-probability sampling method, more specifically a convenience (non-probability) sampling, was used. Two different platforms were used to collect the data: First, an e-questionnaire was sent to members of different agricultural organisations such as Agri-SA and their provincial affiliations. There were approximately 80 questionnaires





**Figure 3:** A map of South Africa [54].

collected through this method, also known as computer-administered data collection. Second, questionnaires were distributed by the researcher among the respondents at agricultural events across South Africa. Different organisations involved in the development and management of agriculture in South Africa assisted with this distribution, including the largest agricultural event, the annual NAMPO Harvest Day (2018). Approximately 480 questionnaires were collected through this method.

In the end, a total of 557 useable questionnaires were received, of which only 148 respondents indicated that they were offering agri-tourism activities and attractions on their farms. This resulted in 26.6% of the respondents. The 148 respondents hosting agri-tourism on their land were used for the data analysis of this study.

### 3.3 Data handling and analysis

Data were exported to Microsoft® Office Excel 2016, in which graphs and charts were created in order to visually understand the basic findings of the data. Next, the data were analysed by using the SPSS software version 22.0

(Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which allows for more complex findings. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed in order to understand the motives that drove farmers to implement agri-tourism on their farms. Table 1 lists the two factors identified with 62.9% of the variance explained.

To establish whether the analysed data are acceptable for an EFA, Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to confirm the patterned relationships, as  $p$  should be smaller than 0.05 [58]. For these data, Bartlett's test indicated that the value of  $p$  is 0.000, which confirmed that factor analysis of satisfactory degree should be used, supported by the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure (KMO) of sampling adequacy, to determine if the sampling was adequate. An adequate sample has a KMO value larger than 0.50 [58]. For this study, the KMO value was 0.866. Based on the two factors identified, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) values were between 0.863 and 0.901, indicating that the internal consistencies were “good” ( $\alpha > 0.8$ ) and “excellent” ( $\alpha > 0.9$ ) [59]. Table 1 also identifies the mean values (ranging from 2.6287 to 3.1919 based on a five-point Likert scale) and the values of the inter-item correlations (ranging from 0.472 to 0.645). These results

**Table 1:** Factor analysis: motives for offering agri-tourism

Motives for offering agri-tourism	Factor 1	Factor 2
	Preservation of culture and heritage	Economic advantages
To preserve the rural heritage and traditions	0.914	
To preserve natural resources and ecosystems	0.854	
To preserve the farm and farmland	0.819	
To share the agricultural heritage and rural lifestyles with visitors	0.803	
To educate the visitors and public about agriculture	0.821	
To provide quality local products		0.416
To generate an additional income		0.916
To diversify farming activities		0.830
To use the farm's resources to its fullest potential		0.565
To provide job opportunities for family members/relatives		0.554
To provide job opportunities for the local community		0.531
To provide recreational activities for visitors		0.500
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>0.901</b>	<b>0.863</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.6287</b>	<b>3.1919</b>
<b>Inter-item correlation</b>	<b>0.645</b>	<b>0.472</b>

Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Rotation method: Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation.

Total variance explained: 62.903%.

indicate that the EFA is acceptable and can be used to interpret the results.

farmers were male. Farmers in the Caribbean are also described as mainly older (above 50) and male [61]. Thirty-one percent (31.7%) of the respondents who were offering agri-tourism

## 4 Results and discussion

The results section is divided into the characteristics of the respondents (their demographic profile), the preferred activities provided, and the motives for offering agri-tourism on farms.

### 4.1 Characteristics of the respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 148 respondents who indicated that they are offering some form of agri-tourism on their farm are illustrated in Table 2. The questionnaire was mainly submitted to the farmer/farm owner/farm manager to complete. As the agriculture industry is still mainly male-dominated [60], most of the respondents (farmers) in this survey were male (87.7%) and between the ages of 40 and 59 (44.2%); 50.3% of the respondents obtained a diploma or degree, and 26.2% were fifth generation (or more) farmers on the land. The profile of the respondents of this study is similar to the profile of farmers in Canada in terms of age, education, and multigenerational characteristics [48], except that 68.8% Canadian

**Table 2:** Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Number	Valid percentage (%)
Gender ( <i>n</i> = 146)		
Male	128	87.7
Female	18	12.2
Age ( <i>n</i> = 120)		
Below 25	15	12.5
25–39	28	23.3
40–59	53	44.2
Above 60	24	20.0
Education ( <i>n</i> = 143)		
No school	1	0.7
Matric/Grade 12	34	23.8
Diploma, degree	72	50.3
Post-graduate	29	20.3
Professional	7	4.9
Generation farmer ( <i>n</i> = 141)		
First	28	19.9
Second	24	17.0
Third	26	18.4
Fourth	26	18.4
Fifth or more	37	26.2
Member of tourism association ( <i>n</i> = 142)		
Yes	45	31.7
No	96	67.6

on their farms indicated that they form part of a tourism association.

## 4.2 Popular agri-tourism activities and attractions

Forty-seven (47) agri-tourism activities and attractions were identified and used in the research; in the results, each type of activity and attraction was presented at least once. Based on the work of Bernardo et al. [28], the five categories that agri-tourism activities and attractions can be divided into are outdoor recreation, educational experiences, entertainment, hospitality services, and on-farm direct sales. The same activity categories were used for this study.

Table 3 lists the top activities and attractions in each of the five categories of agri-tourism of this study. The most popular agri-tourism activities and attractions offered in South Africa that were identified in this study are farm stay/accommodation; hunting; hiking trails/nature trails; wildlife viewing and photography; cycling; farm tours;

fishing; bird watching; wedding and special events on farms; picnicking; camping; social events; animal rides; restaurants; mountain climbing; water activities; and off-road vehicles driving/4 × 4 routes, thereby falling under the categories of outdoor recreation and hospitality services.

## 4.3 Motives for hosting agri-tourism

Based on the twelve constructs tested in the questionnaire to determine motives [5,6,49,55] of farmers to offer agri-tourism on their farms, the following two factors are presented:

The first factor (Factor 1) was named *preservation of culture and heritage*. It includes constructs such as *to preserve the rural heritage and traditions; to preserve natural resources and ecosystems; to preserve the farm and farmland; to share the agricultural heritage and rural life-style with visitors; and to educate the visitors and public about agriculture*. The mean value of this factor is 2.6287, making it the least important factor of the two.

This preservation factor is supported by the research of LaPan and Barbieri [52], who found in their study on the role of agri-tourism in heritage preservation that preserving rural heritage was the most important motive for offering tangible heritage preservation on an agri-tourism farm. Many researchers have identified education as a core element in agri-tourism and include education when defining any form of agri-tourism [36,62,63]. Chase et al. [53] agreed that both educating the public on the agricultural industry and building goodwill with the community were essential motives for the farmers when developing agri-tourism. It was not the case with this research, although education was one of the constructs under this factor.

The second factor (Factor 2), *economic advantages*, includes constructs such as *to provide quality local products; to generate an additional income; to diversify farming activities; to use farm resources to its fullest potential; to provide job opportunities for family members/relatives; to provide job opportunities for local communities; and to provide recreational activities for visitors*. The mean value of this factor is 3.1919, which is the highest factor of the two, thus making it the most important factor for South African farmers to offer agri-tourism on their farms.

According to Flanigan et al. [64], the financial or economic motive is one of the most important motives for offering agri-tourism; different researchers support this finding [65–67]. Both farm resources (tangible) and

**Table 3:** Agri-tourism activities and attractions

Agri-tourism activities/attractions	Number of farmers offering ( <i>n</i> = 148)
Outdoor recreation	
Hunting	85
Hiking trails/nature trails	51
Wildlife viewing and photography	49
Cycling	44
Fishing	35
Bird watching	34
Picnicking	30
Educational experiences	
Farm tours	44
Historical memorials	13
Food and beverage pairing	11
Entertainment	
Concerts	14
Barn dance	12
Hospitality service	
Farm stay/accommodation	101
Wedding and special event on farms	34
Social events	27
On-farm direct sales	
Roadside stands/farm stalls	14
U-pick operations	12



human resources (job opportunities) were identified by Hung et al. [68] as essential to any agri-tourism farm. Choo and Park [69] identified agri-tourism as one of the most popular alternatives to the use of farm resources for more revenue. Economic motives and personal and family motives (to provide job opportunities for family members/relatives) were separated by Cassia et al. [51]; their study found personal and family motives to be the most important and economic motives the least important in Italy. This research concurs with previous work by Nickerson et al. [45] and LaPan and Barbieri [52], who identified *an increase in revenue* as the most important motive of farmers for hosting agri-tourism.

#### 4.4 Discussion

Based on the two factors identified, the most important motive of farmers was an *economic advantage* (mean value: 3.1919); as they say in South Africa, “If it pays, it stays.” Farmers in South Africa must use their resources (farms) to their fullest potential to generate income, as they face a number of challenges, including a low level of education and skills among workers (especially among farmworkers), a lack of access to credit, globalisation challenges, the impacts of climate change, water problems (both drought and flooding), and the basic risk and vulnerability of the farmers and their workers [69]. This is supported by Nickerson et al. [45] who identified the same economic advantages as motives for farmers to offer agri-tourism in Montana (USA). Similar motives were found in Australia by Ollenburg and Buckley [47] as an additional income was necessary when considering family as well.

Based on these challenges, farmers need an additional income source and respondents indicated that agri-tourism had been considered as this source. It is, however, important to note that not all farms are suitable for agri-tourism. There are two decisive aspects: first, the location of the land, in other words, the distance from the source market; and second, possible products and activities [70]. Location is critical in tourism product development [71,72]. If farms are too far from the source market, this might not work; if they are situated nearer (2–3 h drive) to the big cities or towns, it increases the chance of success, especially if situated next to important routes that travellers use to travel through South Africa or close to other important tourism products (e.g., a national park). Farmers must also be able to provide the tourist with a product [73,74].

## 5 Conclusion

Agri-tourism offers a variety of advantages to farmers who host agri-tourism on their farm, namely economic benefits, job creation, community upliftment, and preservation. This study was conducted to fill the void on reasons why farmers in South Africa offer agri-tourism on their land. The two motives were revenue generation (economic) and preservation of culture and heritage. The research found similar motives to those previously identified in different countries, of which economic reasons were the most commonly found motive. This confirms that the motives of farmers for hosting agri-tourism are similar in different countries (preservation of culture and heritage, education, economical/revenue generation, and diversify farming activities). Therefore, one can say that the situation on farms is similar and that farmers experience similar problems, of which the most important one is revenue generation. This research contribution lies in the following: first, this is the first study of its kind conducted in South Africa; second, the study identified for the first time the motives of South African farmers for offering agri-tourism; and last, the essential agri-tourism activities were pinned down.

The motives identified also raise a number of questions for future research. How can farm resources be redirected towards agri-tourism activities and attractions? What type of agri-tourism activities or attractions generate the most income? How should natural resources be preserved through agri-tourism? What type of recreational activities would tourists be interested in on a farm?

This research contribution lies in the following: first, this is the first study of its kind conducted in South Africa; second, the study identified for the first time the motives of South African agri-tourism products. As agri-tourism research is still relatively new in South Africa and research is limited to South African case studies, this research presents the starting point for agri-tourism literature in South Africa that future researchers can build on to create a better understanding of agri-tourism in the country.

It is recommended that if there is an old farmhouse or stables that can be transformed into accommodation, this is a plus. Wildlife, beautiful nature, or a working farm will further contribute to the possible products that can be developed. The key product and activities from this study are listed in Table 3, which farmers can now use to see whether they will be able to host agri-tourism successfully.

It is also advisable to obtain professional help, as farmers are familiar with farming, but tourism is a

completely different industry in which service product development and experience are key aspects of success. This might be one of the essential reasons why farmers sometimes struggle to develop tourism products on their land [1,74].

**Acknowledgments:** We gratefully acknowledge multiple South African agricultural organisations for their assistance in promoting this research, including AgriSA and their provincial affiliations, TAU South Africa, and Potatoes South Africa.

**Funding information:** Funding was received from NWU TREES to assist with the distribution of questionnaires.

**Conflict of interest:** The authors state no conflict of interest.

**Data availability statement:** The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available in the Boloka Institutional Repository, [https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/33095/Van%20Zyl\\_CC\\_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://repository.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/33095/Van%20Zyl_CC_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

## References

- [1] Moraru RA, Ungureanu G, Bodescu D, Donosa D. Motivations and challenges for entrepreneurs in agritourism. *Agron Ser Sci Res/Lucrari Stiintifice Ser Agron*. 2016;59(1):267–73.
- [2] Weaver DB. Tourism and the elusive paradigm of sustainable development. In: Lew AA, Hall CM, Williams AM, editors. *A companion to tourism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd; 2004. p. 510–21
- [3] Torres RM, Momsen JH. Introduction. In: Torres RM, Momsen JH, editors. *Tourism and agriculture: new geographies of consumption, production and rural restructuring*. New York: Routledge; 2011. p. 1–9
- [4] Karthik D, Gajanand P. Agri-tourism – an overview; 2017. Available from: [https://www.biotecharticles.com/PDF\\_Articles/Agri\\_toutism\\_BA\\_4135.pdf](https://www.biotecharticles.com/PDF_Articles/Agri_toutism_BA_4135.pdf)
- [5] Malkanthi S, Routry J. Potential for agritourism development: evedance from Sri Lanka. *J Agric Sci*. 2011;6(1):45–57. doi: 10.4038/jas.v6i1.3812.
- [6] Tew C, Barbieri C. The perceived benefits of agritourism: the provider's perspective. *Tour Manag*. 2012;33(1):215–24. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2011.02.005.
- [7] Walden J, Webb A, Hobbs D, Hepler K. A three-year action plan for the promotion of agritourism in the state of Colorado. Colorado: Walden Mills Group. (Cultural, heritage and agri-tourism strategic plan); 2013. Available from: <https://www.colorado.com/sites/default/master/files/HAGPLANFINAL.pdf>
- [8] Chase LC, Stewart M, Schilling B, Smith B, Walk M. Agritourism: toward a conceptual framework for industry analysis. *J Agric Food Syst Commun Dev*. 2018;8(1):13–9. doi: 10.5304/jafscd.2018.081.016.
- [9] Van Zyl CC. The size and scope of agri-tourism in South Africa. Master's degree. Potchefstroom: North-West University; 2019.
- [10] Tibane E, editor. *Pocket guide to South Africa 2015/16*. 13th ed. Pretoria: Government Communications and Information System (GCIS); 2016. Available from: [https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/PocketGuide15-16SA\\_foreword.pdf](https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/resourcecentre/pocketguide/PocketGuide15-16SA_foreword.pdf)
- [11] Plecher H. South Africa: distribution of gross domestic product (GDP) across economic sectors from 2009 to 2019; 2020. Available from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/371233/south-africa-gdp-distribution-across-economic-sectors/>
- [12] South Africa. Tourism sector recovery plan, COVID-19 response; 2020. Available from: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/covid-19/countries/3992-south-africa-tourism-sector-recovery-plan-covid-19-response-august-2020-request-for-comments/file.html>
- [13] Myer S, De Crom E. Agritourism activities in the Mopani District municipality, Limpopo province, South Africa: perceptions and opportunities. *TD: J Transdis Res South Afr*. 2013;9(2):295–308.
- [14] Van Niekerk C. The benefits of agritourism: two case studies in the Western Cape. Master's degree. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University; 2013.
- [15] Ferreira SL, Muller R. Innovating the wine tourism product: food-and-wine pairing in Stellenbosch wine routes. *Afr J Phys Health Edu Recreat Dance*. 2013;19(Suppl 3):72–85. doi: 10.4314/AJPHRD.V19I0.
- [16] Fourie M. Factors influencing visitor loyalty at an agri-festival in South Africa. Master's degree. Potchefstroom: North-West University; 2014.
- [17] Jęczynek A, Ugliś J, Graja-Zwolińska S, Maćkowiak M, Spychała A, Sikora J. Research note: economic benefits of agritourism development in Poland: an empirical study. *Tour Econ*. 2015;21(5):1120–6.
- [18] Bwana M, Olima WH, Andika D, Agong SG, Hayombe P. Agritourism: potential socio-economic impacts in Kisumu County. *IOSR J Humanities Soc Sci*. 2015;20(3):78–88. doi: 10.9790/0837-20377888.
- [19] Mastronardi L, Giaccio V, Giannelli A, Scardera A. Is agri-tourism eco-friendly? A comparison between agritourisms and other farms in Italy using farm accountancy data network dataset. *SpringerPlus*. 2015;4(1):1–12. doi: 10.1186/s40064-015-1353-4.
- [20] Petroman I, Varga M, Constantin EC, Petroman C, Momir B, Turc B, et al. Agritourism: an educational tool for the students with agro-food profile. *Proc Econ Financ*. 2016;39(1):83–7. doi: 10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30244-1.
- [21] Rong-Da Liang A. Considering the role of agritourism co-creation from a service-dominant logic perspective. *Tour Manag*. 2017;61:354–67. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2017.02.002.
- [22] Lupi C, Giaccio V, Mastronardi L, Giannelli A, Scardera A. Exploring the features of agritourism and its contribution to rural development in Italy. *Land Use Policy*. 2017;64(1):383–90. doi: 10.1016/j.landusepol.2007.03.002.
- [23] Fleischer A, Tchetchik A, Bar-Nahum Z, Talev E. Is agriculture important to agritourism? The agritourism attraction market in Israel. *Eur Rev Agric Econ*. 2018;45(2):273–96. doi: 10.1093/erae/jbx039.

- [24] Canovi M, Lyon A. Family-centred motivations for agritourism diversification: the case of the Langhe Region, Italy. *Tour Plan Dev.* 2020;17(6):591–610. doi: 10.1080/21568316.2019.1650104.
- [25] Quella L, Chase L, Wang W, Conner D, Hollas C, Leff P, et al. Agritourism and on-farm direct sales interviews: report of qualitative findings; 2021. Available from: [https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Vermont-Agritourism-Collaborative/US\\_Interview\\_Report.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Vermont-Agritourism-Collaborative/US_Interview_Report.pdf)
- [26] Wearing S, Neil J. *Ecotourism: impacts, potentials and possibilities*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann; 1999.
- [27] Page SJ, Dowling RK. *Ecotourism*. Harlow: Prentice Hall; 2002.
- [28] Bernardo D, Valentin L, Leatherman J. Agritourism: if we build it, will they come. Paper presented at Risk and Profit Conference; 2002 Aug 19–20; Manhattan, Kansas. Manhattan: AgManager Info; 2004. Available from: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.512.1330&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- [29] Liu Y, Ji D, Zhang L, An J, Sun W. Rural financial development impacts on agricultural technology innovation: evidence from China. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021;18(3):1110–27. doi: 10.3390/ijerph18031110.
- [30] Roman M, Roman M, Prus P. Innovations in agritourism: evidence from a region in Poland. *Sustainability*. 2020;12:4858–79. doi: 10.3390/su12124858.
- [31] Gukushu MC. A critical assessment of innovation as a determinant of tourism competitiveness. PhD thesis. Potchefstroom: North-West University; 2018.
- [32] Dudić Z, Dudić B, Mirković V. An important determinant of the success of innovations – the commercialization of innovations. In: Aleksić VS, editor. *Proceedings of the 4th International Scientific Conference on contemporary issues in economic, business and management*; 2016 Nov 9–10; Kragujevac, The Republic of Serbia. Belgrade: PRESSIA ltd; 2016. p. 21–8.
- [33] Khanal AR, Mishra AK. Agritourism and off-farm work: survival strategies for small farms. *Agric Econ*. 2014;45(Suppl):65–76. doi: 10.1111/agec.12130.
- [34] Balamurugan A, Kannan R, Nagarajan SK. Rural tourism development constraints and possibilities with a special reference to Agri-Tourism: a case study on Cashew agri-tourism destination – Rajendrapattinam Village in Vriddachalam Taluk of Cuddalore Districts, Tamil Nadu. In: Manhas PS, editor. *Sustainable and Responsible tourism: trends, practices and case*. New Delhi: PHI Learning Private Limited; 2012. p. 42–53
- [35] Jensen KL, Bruch Leffew M, Menard RJ, English BC. Analysis of factors influencing agritourism businesses perceptions about expansion. *J Food Distrib Res*. 2014;45(2):118–34.
- [36] Pittman HM. Planting the seeds for a new industry in Arkansas: Agritourism. An Agricultural Law Research Article. *The National Agricultural Law Center*; 2006. Available from: <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/publication/view/pittman-planting-the-seeds-for-a-new-industry-in-arkansas-agritourism-national-aglaw-center-publications-2006/>
- [37] Privitera D. Factors of development of competitiveness: the case of organic-agritourism. *Proceedings of the 113th EAAE Seminar: the Role of Knowledge, Innovation and Human Capital in Multifunctional Agriculture and Territorial Rural Development*, December 9–11, 2009. Belgrade, Republic of Serbia: European Association of Agricultural Economists; 2009.
- [38] Saayman M, Snyman JA. *Entrepreneurship: tourism style*. Potchefstroom: Leisure C Publications; 2005.
- [39] Schilling BJ, Marxen LJ, Heinrich HH, Brooks FJ. *The opportunity for agritourism development in New Jersey*. New Brunswick: Food Policy Institute; 2006.
- [40] Van Zyl C, Saayman M. Determining the size and scope of agri-tourism in South Africa. In: Maurer C, Siller HJ, editors. *Proceedings of the 7th ISCONTOUR 2019 Tourism Research Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Student Conference in Tourism Research*; Innsbruck, Austria. Norderstedt: BoD – Books on Demand; 2019 Apr 13–14. p. 187–98
- [41] Saayman M. *Hospitality, leisure and tourism management*. Potchefstroom: Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies; 2009.
- [42] Saayman M, editor. *En route with tourism: an introductory text*. 4th ed. Claremont: Juta & Company Ltd; 2013.
- [43] Sharpley R, Sharpley J. *Rural tourism. An introduction*. London: International Thomson Business Press; 1997.
- [44] Phelan C, Sharpley R. Exploring agritourism entrepreneurship in the U.K. *Tour Plan Dev*. 2011;8(2):121–36. doi: 10.1080/21568316.2011.573912.
- [45] Nickerson NP, Black RJ, McCool SF. Agritourism: motivations behind farm/ranch business diversification. *J Travel Res*. 2001;40(1):19–26.
- [46] Sharpley R, Vass A. Tourism, farming and diversification: an attitudinal study. *Tour Manag*. 2006;27(5):1040–52. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2005.10.025.
- [47] Ollenburger C, Buckley R. Stated economic and social motivations of farm tourism operators. *J Travel Res*. 2007;45(4):444–52. doi: 10.1177/0047287507299574.
- [48] Barbieri C. An importance-performance analysis of the motivations behind agritourism and other farm enterprise developments in Canada. *J Rural Commun Dev*. 2010;5(1–2):1–20. ISSN: 1712-8277.
- [49] Schilling BJ, Sullivan KP, Komar SJ. Examining the economic benefits of agritourism: the case of New Jersey. *J Agric Food Syst Commun Dev*. 2012;3(1):199–214. doi: 10.5304/jafscd.2012.031.011.
- [50] Santucci FM. Agritourism for rural development in Italy, evolution, situation and perspectives. *J Econ Manag Trade*. 2013;3(3):186–200.
- [51] Cassia F, Bruni A, Magno F. Heritage preservation: is it a motivation for agritourism entrepreneurship? *Proceedings of the 27th Annual Sinergie Conference*; Campobasso, Italy; 2015 Jul 9–10. p. 565–74
- [52] LaPan C, Barbieri C. The role of agritourism in heritage preservation. *Curr Issues Tour*. 2014;17(8):666–73. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2013.849667.
- [53] Chase L, Wang W, Bartlett R, Conner D, Quella L, Hollas C. Agritourism and on-farm direct sales survey: results from Vermont; 2021. Available from: <https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Vermont-Tourism-Research-Center/survey/Vermont-Agritourism-Survey-Report-012021.pdf>
- [54] Orange Smile. South Africa. Provinces map of South Africa; 2021. Available from: [https://www.orangesmile.com/common/img\\_country\\_maps\\_provinces/south-africa-map-provinces-0.jpg](https://www.orangesmile.com/common/img_country_maps_provinces/south-africa-map-provinces-0.jpg)

- [55] Barbieri C, Tew C. A preliminary assessment of agritourism in Missouri. Columbia: University of Missouri & Missouri Department of Agriculture; 2009. Available from: <https://agrimissouri.com/pdf/agritourismsurvey.pdf>
- [56] Brown L, Hershey C. Wisconsin agritourism survey report. Madison: University of Wisconsin Extension Center for Community & Economic Development; 2012. p. 2012. Available from: <https://crawford.extension.wisc.edu/files/2010/05/2012-WI-Agritourism-Survey.pdf>
- [57] Statistics South Africa. Agriculture Survey 2012 (Preliminary). (P1101); 2013. Available from: <http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/P1101/P11012012.pdf>
- [58] Yong AG, Pearce S. A beginner's guide to factor analysis: focusing on exploratory factor analysis. *Tutor Quant Methods Psychol.* 2013;9(2):79–94. doi: 10.20982/tqmp.09.2.p079.
- [59] Jain S, Angural V. Use of Cronbach's alpha in dental research. *Med Res Chron.* 2017;4(3):285–91. ISSN: 2394-3971.
- [60] Shisler RC, Sbicca J. Agriculture as carework: the contradictions of performing femininity in a male-dominated occupation. *Soc Nat Resour.* 2019;32(8):875–92. doi: 10.1080/08941920.2019.1597234.
- [61] Thomas A, Moore A, Edwards M. Feeding island dreams: exploring the relationship between food security and agritourism in the Caribbean. *Isl Stud J.* 2018;13(2):145–62. doi: 10.24043/isj.66.
- [62] Arroyo CG, Barbieri C, Rich SR. Defining agritourism: a comparative study of stakeholders' perceptions in Missouri and North Carolina. *Tour Manag.* 2013;37:39–47. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2012.12.007.
- [63] Irshad H. Rural tourism – an overview. Canada: Rural Development Division, Government of Alberta; 2010.
- [64] Flanigan S, Blackstock K, Hunter C. Generating public and private benefits through understanding what drives different types of agritourism. *J Rural Stud.* 2015;41(1):129–41. doi: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2015.08.002.
- [65] Busby G, Rendle S. The transition from tourism on farms to farm tourism. *Tour Manag.* 2000;21(6):635–42. doi: 10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00011-X.
- [66] Getz D, Carlsen J. Characteristics and goals of family and owner-operated businesses in the rural tourism and hospitality sectors. *Tour Manag.* 2000;21(6):547–60. doi: 10.1016/S0261-5177(00)00004-2.
- [67] Weaver DB, Fennell DA. The vacation farm sector in Saskatchewan: a profile of operations. *Tour Manag.* 1997;18(6):357–65. doi: 10.1016/S0261-5177(97)00039-3.
- [68] Hung W-T, Ding H-Y, Lin S-T. Determinants of performance for agritourism farms: an alternative approach. *Curr Issues Tour.* 2016;19(13):1281–7. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2015.1037254.
- [69] Choo H, Park D-B. The role of agritourism farms' characteristics on the performance: a case study of agritourism farm in South Korea. *Int J Hospitality Tour Adm.* 2020;1–14. doi: 10.1080/15256480.2020.1769520.
- [70] Sadowski A, Wojcieszak MM. Geographic differentiation of agritourism activities in Poland vs. cultural and natural attractiveness of destinations at district level. *PLoS One.* 2019;14(9):e0222576. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0222576.
- [71] Enright MJ, Newton J. Determinants of tourism destination competitiveness in Asia Pacific: comprehensiveness and universality. *J Travel Res.* 2005;43(4):339–50. doi: 10.1177/0047287505274647.
- [72] Ramsey D, Malcolm CD. The importance of location and scale in rural and small town tourism product development: the case of the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, Manitoba, Canada. *Can Geog/Le Géog Canadien.* 2018;62(2):250–65. doi: 10.1111/cag.12409.
- [73] Colton JW, Bissix G. Developing agritourism in Nova Scotia: Issues and challenges. *J Sustain Agric.* 2005;27(1):91–112. doi: 10.1300/J064v27n01\_06.
- [74] Phillip S, Hunter C, Blackstock K. A typology for defining agritourism. *Tour Manag.* 2010;31(6):754–8. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.001.