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## Agritourism in the professionalization of agricultural students

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### Abstract

In this article the authors examine the agritourism as one of the effective ways of agricultural students' professionalization. They have presented the definition of agritourism and developed the basic model of it in professionalization of agricultural students. As the largest and highly dynamic sectors of the global economy agritourism is seen as a prime direction of development of the agrarian sector of the economy, able to make a sufficient contribution to the regional budget as a separate line. At the same time the authors underline its role in familiarizing to the traditions, habits and national peculiarities of the given region. The article considers the conditions under which the agritourism can become a key factor in the success and brand of the region. It includes some directions of activities having connected with agritourism which can help the future specialists in their profession and cross-cultural communication. Participation of students in planning tourism can contribute to building a successful program that improve their professional habits. Such participation is helpful and should be included in starting any kind of a tourism program. The main task of these activities are aimed to the future perspectives of agritourism worldwide; to establish an agreed-upon definition of agritourism; to build a networking platform for scientists and practitioners; and finally, to promote agritourism unambiguously as a specific type of rural tourism.

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### Keywords

Agritourism, agriculture, tourism, students, profession.

## Introduction

Agritourism, as it is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm. Agritourism has different definitions in different parts of the world, and sometimes refers specifically to farm stays. Elsewhere, agritourism includes a wide variety of activities used in the sphere of agriculture. In our paper we rely on the definition “agritourism” as a kind of tourism connected with tourists’ visiting of a farm for rest, education and active participations in its activities given by domestic and foreign researchers [Dubinicheva, Sovetov, 2009; American Farm Bureau Federation, 2004; Ryan, DeBord, McClellan, 2006].

Student professionalization is a process of self-education and self-consciousness development that includes professionally important personal qualities, as well as organization of value-motivational attitude towards future profession.

## Main part

In Yakutsk State Agricultural Academy the focus is on making the educational process as close to practical work of the students as possible, so that students even from the first year could master professional skills in normal working conditions. Only by doing so, as we think, it is possible to put into practice those general and professional competences, which are assimilated during the new generation Federal State Educational Standard implementation.

Our main research goal in the experimental reserve of FSBEI HE “Yakutsk SAA” was the study attempt of agritourism development on current educational base that is located on a giant territory few kilometers away from the capital of Republic.

Our goals were:

- to study agritourism itself (theoretical too), as a special type of vacation that is connected to practical acquaintance with life activities and livelihoods of local people;
- to study the possibilities of tourism development in the places of Sakha Republic (Yakutia) where there is no real possibility to build tourist infrastructure objects fast;
- to make a development business plan of agritourism in this experimental reserve “Tabsylyn” and model all the possible activities that can interest the tourists.

During the study of the research subject, the following methods were used:

- Visit to the research place and study of the real conditions;
- Working with the documents and study of the experience in this field;
- Summary of the acquired materials;
- Designing of the business plan of agritourism in the experimental reserve “Tabsylyn”.

Actuality of this research is that on the territory of Yakutsk there is no agritourism organized that might have been made on the base of our reserve. The matter is that the reserve, despite being close to the capital of the Republic with all the organized (including tourist) infrastructure, preserved the unique Yakut nature; taiga terrain is perfectly preserved, there are conditions for livestock breeding. Lake with the rich fish stocks is in close vicinity.

Agritourism is a new business area in the field of tourism and modern agriculture with a great potential. It is important to note that this type of tourism does not need huge investments unlike the other types of tourism. Some researchers connect agritourism with the development of culture’s spheres and formation of region’s brand [Pashkus, Bulina, 2014]. Such approach can help the future specialists to join the native culture and communicate with the representatives of other nationalities.

On a modern development level: agritourism, first of all, is a rural tourism. It is a vacation in the village, where people can forget their problems and partially go away from the civilization. If they want, they also can combine calm unhurried repose with rural labor. Some people associate agritourism with downshifting in the sense of rejection from all the benefits of civilization. That is not right. Agritourists can have all the necessary benefits that are possible in rural conditions e.g. access to the Internet, satellite TV, mobile communication.

It is necessary to say that in our Academy there are studies on a sufficiently high theoretical level that are dealing with the issues and problems of the tourism development in Republic e.g. the part of the thesis work of YSAA associate professor, PhD candidate of agricultural science E.D. Alekseev [Alekseev, 2009]. In the article “Ethos of Yakutia in Russia and abroad” associate professor, PhD candidate of philosophy V.P. Starostin gave his own opinion on the reputation of our Republic and suggested some ideas of marketing and PR-image of Yakutia in Russian and international TV space. That time few types of tourism that does not need huge investments were proposed [Starostin, 2010, 120]. The article from our professors “Problems and experience of agricultural education continuity” in the journal “Sovremennyyi uchenyi [Modern scientist]” is dedicated to the various aspects of practicality, and agriculture, school and university integration experience [Alekseeva, Koryakina, 2017, 308].

Agritourism is a unique phenomenon that is developing practically all over the world. Agritourism in Europe has 200 years of history. It is considered that rural tourism originates from the first half of XIX century, but the brisk growth was in the second half of XX. At this time, in France the first association of agritourists was made. After 10 years, in Italy, the National association of agriculture and tourism named “Agritourist” appeared. From that moment, agritourism associations have been actively spreading in many European countries.

Italy, Spain, Poland, Norway, Belarus those are countries acknowledging the increasing attractiveness of agritourism and boldly implementing this type of a recreation in their countries. In Russia this branch of tourism is still in developing state, not least due to the severe decline of agriculture and heavy expenses necessary for building renovation and making living conditions for tourists.

Today, seasonal tours are the most promising choice in Republic. Due to poorly developed weekend tours in Republic, this segment of the market is unfilled and untapped. Rural tourism or agritourism is not fully developed as well. Only 5% of companies are working on the routes that are within Republic. Potential competitors do not offer such routes, so there is an opportunity to promote new tourist product on the market [Koryakina, 2016, 101].

What makes agritourism attractive? We think that agritourism has some benefits which have to be emphasized: first, people can get some privacy and relax, be free from their social status and related restrictions; second, the opportunity to get into the history and national peculiarities of life style of a specific country, get to know the folklore and traditions.

From our perspective, “Tabsylyn” reserve of our Academy is ready to become a unique base for agritourism development in our Republic.

Major part of the experimental reserve “Tabsylyn” territory is located on a far west territory that is subordinate to administration of Yakutsk and on the territory of state forest resource of Gornyy district. Entire territory of reserve occupies the left bank of the Kenkeme River. The area is 40 km away from Yakutsk on the federal highway. The area length from west to east is 30 km; from south to north is 17 km. Total area of “Tabsylyn” is 49684,4 ha. There are good conditions for horse and reindeer breeding.

By the results of this research we concluded that this type of tourism can interest possible tourists and generate profits at minimum cost in the short term. Expected results from the implementation of this type of rural tourism:

- increased tourist inflow to Republic;
- increased revenue for Academy budget;
- increased realization of ecologically clean production (sometimes made by tourists), including from Yakut national kitchen;
- realization of dairy and meat products (kumis, byppakh, curd, sour cream etc.) made by students of 19.03.04 specialization “Technology of production and organization of catering”.

Involving students to rural tourism on the base of reserve “Tabsylyn” could help them improve their English, which is important and necessary for this area of business. Russia’s current policy is aimed at the cooperation with foreign countries that is why today it is impossible to provide future specialists of any profile without the ability to communicate in language of foreign business partner and socio-cultural knowledge of his country. Participation in agritourism opens up great possibilities for student’s mindset formation from concrete material of their profession, directly related to practical work [ibid].

## Conclusion

We think that experimental reserve of Academy – “Tabsylyn” has the necessary resources for agritourism development. Agritourism has great potential and, at this time, it is an affordable type of tourism development in the conditions of Yakutia.

Thus, participation of students in planning tourism can contribute to building a successful program that improves their professional habits. Such participation is helpful and should be included in starting any kind of a tourism program. The main task of these activities are aimed to the future perspectives of agritourism worldwide; to establish an agreed-upon definition of agritourism; to build a networking platform for scientists and practitioners; and finally, to promote agritourism unambiguously as a specific type of rural tourism.

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*prakticheskoi konferentsii s mezhdunarodnym uchastiem* [The image of the country / region as a strategy of integration of Russia and the Asia-Pacific in the 21st century. Materials of the All-Russian scientific-practical conference with international participation]. Ulan-Ude.

## **Агротуризм в профессионализации студентов сельскохозяйственных специальностей**

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### **Аннотация**

Авторы рассматривают агротуризм как один из эффективных способов профессионализации студентов сельскохозяйственных специальностей. Они представили определение агротуризма и разработали его базовую модель в профессионализации студентов. Как крупнейший и динамично развивающийся сектор мировой экономики, агротуризм рассматривается как основное направление для развития аграрного сектора экономики, способного внести в региональный бюджет достаточный вклад. В статье рассматриваются условия, при которых агротуризм может стать ключевым фактором успеха и бренда региона. Он включает некоторые направления деятельности, связанные с агротуризмом, которые могут помочь будущим специалистам в их профессии и межкультурной коммуникации. Участие студентов в планировании туризма может помочь созданию успешной программы, улучшающей их профессиональные навыки. Основная задача этих мероприятий направлена на будущее агротуризма во всем мире; установить единое определение агротуризма; создать сетевую платформу для ученых и практиков; и, наконец, содействовать развитию агротуризма.

### **Для цитирования в научных исследованиях**

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### **Ключевые слова**

Агротуризм, сельское хозяйство, студенты, профессионализация, педагогика.

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