

AGRITOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND TOURISM PRODUCT COST - A REVIEW

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Abstract

Based on the data of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, as well as publications of scholars from different countries, the present paper presents the role of agritourism as a field of activity and as an activity generating additional income and diversifying risks for agricultural entities. The selection of the appropriate method of calculating the cost of the agritourism product has been identified by the authors as an acute problem in the field of agritourism services. The insufficient level of research with respect to the issue of accounting and cost calculation related to the implementation of agritourism activities by agricultural entities, imposes the need to develop and apply some methodological instructions for accounting and cost calculation of agritourism products.

Key words: agritourism, costs, managerial accounting, agritourism product, Travel Cost Method

INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of Moldova, agriculture has made a significant contribution to rural development in terms of employment, but also to the formation of the regional gross

domestic product for decades. Currently, however, there is a decline in the contribution of agriculture, forestry and fishing to GDP (Figure 1).

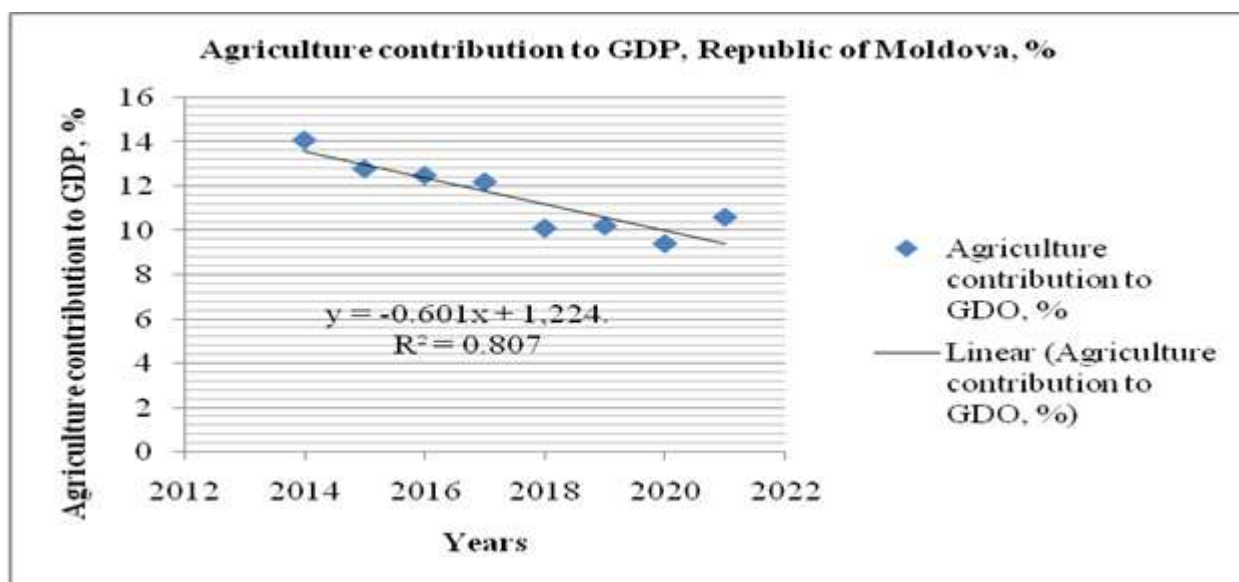


Fig. 1. The share of agriculture, forestry and fishing in GDP during 2014-2021, %
Source: developed by authors based on NBS data [13].

Among the determining factors of the created situation, we can mention:

-the continuous increase in prices for agricultural inputs, which favors the disparity

of agricultural prices in relation to other fields of activity;

-cost competition with agricultural producers from other countries. Thanks to subsidies, farmers from other countries record lower

production costs, which gives them competitive advantages in relation to farmers from the Republic of Moldova.

Within the stated context, farmers from the Republic of Moldova must diversify their activities, in order to reduce the risks specific to agricultural businesses.

These activities would allow them to earn additional income besides the one from agricultural activities. The active promotion of agritourism activities would contribute, to some extent, to the development of the rural economy, which is affected by both, economic and social factors: lack of investment; underdeveloped infrastructure, high rate of migration; negative demographic processes, etc.

Tourism, being one of the industries that is actively involved in the development of the world economy as a service industry, is dependent on the endowment of nature and the cultural heritage of each society. The Republic of Moldova has a relatively small territory, but it has human, natural, landscape potential, as well as folk traditions for the development of agritourism. Agritourism in the Republic of Moldova has a development potential due to the fact that out of the total area of 3,384.7 thousand ha (situation on January 1, 2019), 2,496.4 thousand ha belong to agricultural land, which accounts for 73.76% (National Bureau of Statistics) [13].

There are many studies that address the issue of management, marketing, business organization, etc. in the field of agritourism. At the same time, the authors have found an insufficiency of the research on the accounting aspects of the costs generated by this field of activity.

At first glance, it would seem that it is very simple, but being viewed as an auxiliary activity of the agricultural farm, agritourism activities involve knowledge regarding the accounting of various types of costs, which are not specific to the agricultural branch.

The importance given to agritourism imposes the need for in-depth research into the particularities of the cost accounting related to an agritourism business.

Providing information on the cost of tourism products represents an important function of

managerial accounting within an agricultural entity, which also has agritourism as an activity. This information allows managers to identify problem areas, exercise control over production costs and substantiate managerial decisions.

The researches carried out allowed the authors to note the lack of fundamental researches in the accounting of internal and receiving agritourism. In this way, this work comes to contribute, to a certain extent, to the solution of this problem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The informational support of this research is represented by studies of authors from abroad in the field of accounting of costs related to agritourism, as well as the national regulations of the Republic of Moldova in the field of accounting.

For the analysis of some data regarding the dynamic evolution of the number of tourists staying and the number of overnight stays in tourism and agritourism guesthouses in the Republic of Moldova, the authors applied the graphic method of representing the statistical data selected by authors from the databases of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic Moldova.

The analysis of conceptual approaches was carried out by the method of comparing different concepts of agritourism, costs related to agritourism, etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The benefits of agritourism for the development of rural localities, but also for the development of agricultural farms, are addressed in multiple specialized studies.

The study carried out by Alexis Kate Turnipseed [22] highlights that agritourism brings economic benefits to farmers, landowners and community members. These are presented in Table 1 in a systematized form.

Table 1. Benefits of agritourism to farmers

Benefits to Farmers	Agritourism contributes to diversifying the offer of agricultural producers and increasing the demand for products, promoting products and direct sales. At the same time, the business generates additional income not by increasing the cultivated areas, but by increasing the income from providing some services. Therefore, objectives are also pursued to prevent the excessive cultivation of lands, thus contributing to their conservation.
Benefits to Agricultural Industry	Agritourism contributes to educating the consumer in the spirit of sustainable consumption and the advantages of promoting the local product together with local traditions. Thus, the attitude and support towards sustainable agricultural businesses are strengthened.
Benefits to Communities and State Economy	The development of agritourism services offers employment opportunities for the rural population, also contributing to local budgets through breakdowns. These untapped reserves must be promoted as actively as possible, to relaunch small businesses. Currently, only wineries combine agritourism with business in the field.
Benefits to the Public	Agritourism offers both, providers and consumers of agritourism services, education for sustainable consumption, education for a responsible management, the chance to experience a way of life in the rural area.

Source: developed by authors based on Turnipseed, (2022) [22], Schilling (2014) [17], Schilling (2012) [18].

The impact of agritourism on local communities in a society in transition is analyzed by Marko D. Petrović et al. on the example of Serbia [16].

The authors of this study have generalized the impact of agritourism on local communities in two ways: negative and positive. At the same time, the authors highlight the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact (page 149).

Kyungmi Kim [10] in the doctoral thesis research highlighted the major positive and negative impacts of tourism (Table 2).

Table 2. The major positive and negative impacts of tourism

	IMPACT	
	POZITIVE	NEGATIVE
ECONOMIC	Provides employment opportunities in rural areas. Generates supply of foreign exchange. Increases income and gross national product (GNP). Improves rural infrastructure, facilities and services.	Causes inflation of land value. Raising prices on food and other products. Frequent seasonal employment.
SOCIAL	Creates favorable image of the countryside. Provides recreational facilities for residents, as well as tourists. Facilitates the process of modernization. Provides opportunities for additional education.	Creates resentment and antagonism related to dramatic differences in wealth. Invites moral degradation resulting in increasing crime, prostitution, social conflicts, etc. Causes conflicts in traditional societies and values.
CULTURAL	Encourages pride in local arts, crafts and cultural expression. Preserves cultural heritage.	Loss of spiritual and cultural sense due to excessive global commercialization of products. Abandonment of indigenous culture and adapting to modern, generally accepted parameters.
ENVIRONMENTAL	Justifies environmental protection and improvement. Encourages education on value of nature-based tourism.	Fosters water and air pollution and solid waste. Disrupts flora and fauna species

Source: Kim, K. (2002), pag. 38. [9].

Some studies highlight the long-term impact of agritourism, which is still insufficiently studied as mentioned Stanciu M. et al. (2022), [20], Nicolova M. and Pavlov (2021) [15]. Thus, Sumin Kim et al. support the hypothesis that the agritourism experience significantly alters consumer spending patterns in the food categories of grains, vegetables, fruits, meat and fish (Kim et al., 2002) [9].

Schilling, B. J. (2012) [18] reviews the context of the growth rate of agritourism in the US. The researchers have systematized only the positive impact of agritourism on: farmers; visitors to the farms and communities where they are located. There are also studies that demonstrate that the

demand for rural tourism and agritourism is also dependent on the characteristics of the landscape associated with agricultural activities.

In the correct establishment of the costs related to agritourism activities, an important role belongs to the clarification of the concept, in order to identify the related costs. Agritourism is a form of tourism that takes place in the rural area, capitalizing on local tourism resources (natural, cultural, human) such as tourism facilities and equipment, including guesthouses and agritourism farms or local gastronomic points [20].

As the economist Ceaușu Felicia (2011) [1] mentions, agritourism represents „the form of tourism, practiced in the rural environment, based on the provision, within the peasant household, of the following services: accommodation, meals, leisure and others. Unlike rural tourism, agritourism involves: accommodation in a peasant household (guesthouse, etc.); consumption of agricultural products from the respective household; participation to a greater or lesser extent in specific agricultural activities” (Ceasu, F., 2011) [1].

Agritourism, unlike rural tourism, does not involve the practice of all tourism activities that take place in the rural area. It is closely connected with the life of the rural household, as the agri-guesthouse is the main tourism attraction. Agritourism, being mostly addressed to individual tourists, families or small groups, „... does not need a developed accommodation and food base, it can successfully develop using the existing housing of rural households, as well as recreational spaces within the individual household”(Miron V et al., 2015) [12].

We conclude that the concept of agritourism has multiple definitions, but not all of them reflect its specificity, and some even contradict it. Therefore, in this study, agritourism is defined by the authors as a specific type of tourism, which involves temporary trips (tours) of citizens from the Republic of Moldova and outside the Republic of Moldova from their permanent place of residence in the rural environment (including abroad the country of residence)

for health, educational, professional, business, religious and other purposes without engaging in income-generating activities at the place of temporary residence (accommodation).

At the same time, we note that an agritourism business operates on a specialized market - the agritourism market, which should be understood as a system of relations between producers of agritourism services and agricultural products, on the one hand, and consumers of an agritourism product, on the other hand, by establishing a system of intermediate prices (transfer prices) and final prices.

Agritourism services present certain particularities, as they are the result of the activities of an economic entity (limited liability company, joint stock company, etc.) or of a household, farm, carried out on the agritourism market, that aims at satisfying the needs of a tourist in the organization and realization of a tour or some of its components.

In this context, we can delimit the services of the agritourism activity into: *main* (food, accommodation) and *additional*. The additional ones, in turn, can be: *general*, meaning services specific to the tourism market and, *specialized*, which are characteristic only for the agritourism market (for example, visiting the fields of lavender, collecting strawberries and other berries; collecting grapes and fruits (cherries, sour cherries), fishing, etc.). Nowadays, the agricultural sector of the Republic of Moldova can provide a diversified range of organic food products, and by practicing agritourism, farmers can make better use of the agricultural products obtained in their households. We would like to mention that the information provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova is not presented separately for agritourism - but jointly for tourism and agritourism guesthouses.

The data in figure 2 indicate a general trend of increasing indicators, which characterize the situation in the field of rural tourism and agritourism in the Republic of Moldova in the recent years, except for the years 2019-2020, when as a result of the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the

number of tourists staying in tourism and agritourism guesthouses in the Republic of Moldova decreased.

Only a few agri-guesthouses from the Republic of Moldova have been included in the international tourism circuit: Eco Resort „Butuceni”, „Casa din luncă” guesthouse, „Hanul lui Hanganu” guesthouse, "Casa verde" guesthouse, „Vila roz” guesthouse, „Fata Morgana” guesthouse.

The activity of tourism entities, represented by tour operators and travel agencies, consists in the formation, promotion and sale of a tourism product. Economists G. Stănciulescu and G. Țigu (1999) [21] define the tourism product as „the set of material goods and services able to satisfy the tourism needs of a person between the moment of departure and the moment of arrival at the place of departure”.

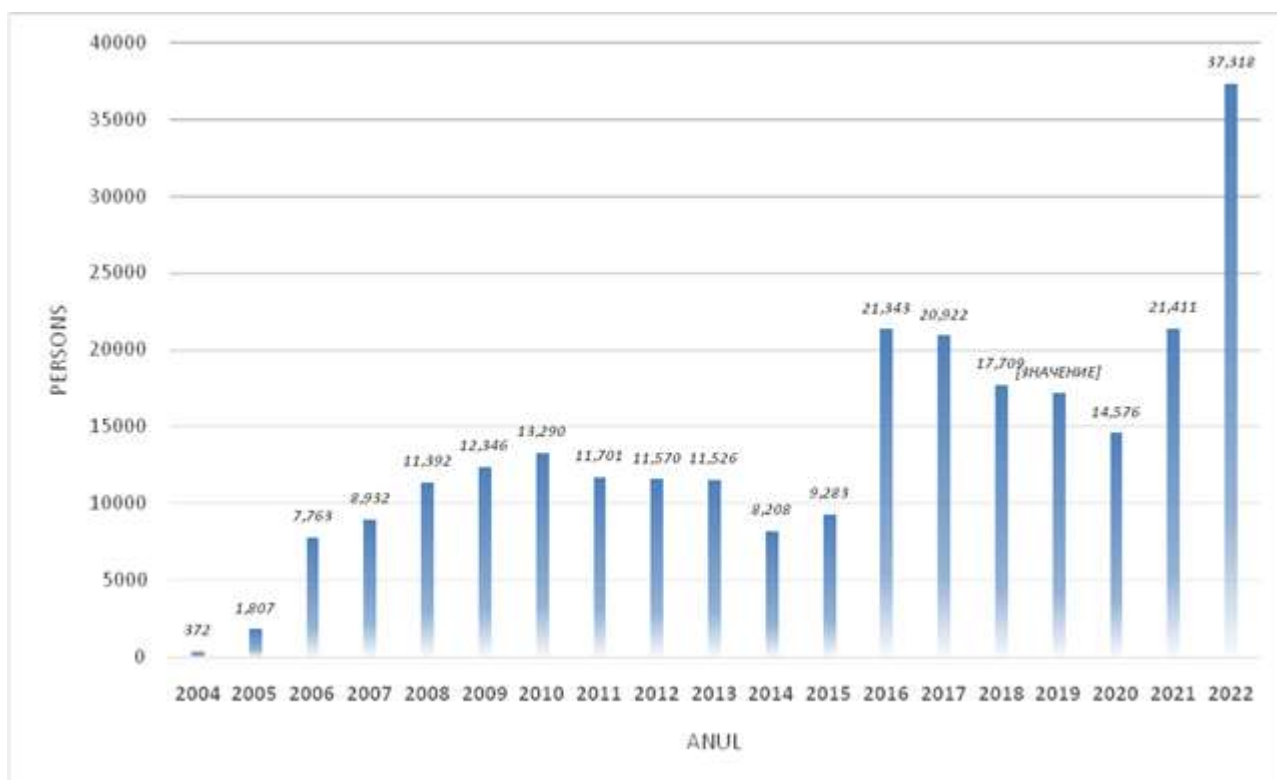


Fig. 2. The dynamics of the number of tourist stays and the number of overnight stays in tourism and agritourism guesthouses in the Republic of Moldova, 2004-2022

Source: developed by authors based on NBS data [13].

The Civil Code of the Republic of Moldova No. 1107 of 06.06.2002, with subsequent amendments in force from 01.03.2019, defines the notion of a *package of travel services (package)* in the sense of a tourism product, which represents a combination of at least two types of different travel services intended for the same trip or holiday [2]. Defining the tourism product concept is important for determining the composition of costs.

For the effective carrying out of the tourism activity, including agritourism, truthful information about the composition of the costs of a tourism product is necessary, and as

a result, the correct calculation of the cost of the tourism product. The research carried out by the authors allowed us to find that, currently, tourism entities, including agritourism ones, have a problem related to the lack of information on the costs that serve as a basis for determining the cost of the tourism product, and as a result, for the erroneous assessment of the financial situation of the agritourism entity. The situation is also complicated by the fact that, currently, there is a lack of branch methodical instruction regarding cost accounting and the calculation of the cost of the tourism product in the tourism activity.

Thus, in the authors' opinion, one of the solutions to the problems of accounting for production costs and calculating the cost of the tourism product can be the elaboration and approval in the manner established by the legislation of the Methodical instruction regarding the accounting of production costs and calculation of the cost of tourism products, taking into account their particularities based on the *Guide regarding the accounting of production costs and calculation of the cost of products and services* (Guide, 2013) [7] and comments regarding the application of the provisions of the National Accounting Standards (NAS, 2013) [14] for the tourism activity.

To calculate the cost of a tourism product, it is very important to correctly set the calculation objects. Calculation objects or the so-called cost carriers are presented as a type of product, the cost of which must be calculated. For example, in the case of a group tour, the cost of serving the group of tourists comes up as the object of calculation, while in the case of an individual tour - the cost of serving a single tourist.

Cost accounting is conditioned by the method of calculating the cost of manufactured products or provided services. In most cases, the accounting of production costs for the production of a tourism product is organized according to the order method, where the object of calculation is a separate order for the production of a certain tourism product or a group of typical tourism products. Sometimes, the cumulation of orders for tourism products, which can be cumulated according to certain characteristics (geographical direction, season, etc.) can act as an object of calculation. The mandatory condition for applying the order method for calculating the cost of a tourism product is the opening of orders. After opening the order for a type of a tourism product, all primary documentation must be drawn up with the mandatory indication of the order code. At the end of the order fulfillment, the order is closed.

Further, we will approach a traditional way of grouping and assigning production costs to the unit cost of the tourism product (package). Thus, the price of a tourism product (package)

is influenced by the number of included services: some tourists are offered to choose from a range of services or they are offered a package with the whole set of services included (all inclusive). In the category of basic tourism services, according to the national tourism legislation of the Republic of Moldova, are included the following (Law 352/2007) [11]: transport, accommodation, food, excursions and leisure services. These tourism services are registered within the tourism entity as direct or apportionable costs. An important cost element is represented by transport services: „tourism transport, in most of cases, is used for the travel of tourists in space in order to satisfy the needs related to the tourism stay, being, as a rule, a basic component alongside accommodation, food, excursions and leisure within the tourism product”(Durovich A., 2005) [4].

As a rule, transport has a considerable weight in the price structure of the tourism product. Depending on the duration of the tour, the distance and the means of transport used, the weight of transport varies from 20% to 60% of the total cost of the tourism package. At the same time, sometimes, tourism packages may not include the price of transporting tourists to and from the destination. In some situations, tourists prefer a more sustainable transport – the bicycle. If we refer to agritourism, in most cases tourists prefer to travel with their own means of transport, for this reason its share in the cost of the agritourism product is insignificant. Thus, the *“Transport costs”* calculation item includes the cost of travel to the host country (air travel, rail travel, bus, sea ship, etc.), the transportation of tourists from the place of departure to the airport, from the airport to the hotel or to another place of residence, transportation costs for excursion services in the case of bus tours, etc. Only those costs that are mandatory in the tour program are included here.

Depending on the type of transport used to transport tourists, the price of a tourism product changes. Usually, a package of tourism services is calculated for a group of tourists, but there are also individual tours. The number of tourists in a group tour plays an important role, as the more people

participate in the trip, the cheaper the tour cost for one tourist is.

Accommodation represents the next stage after transport, in the organization and development of the tourism service. Accommodation is part of the hospitality industry, which provides the necessary comfort to tourists during their travels. In the case of agritourism, tourists are accommodated in peasant households, tourist guesthouses, etc. Accommodation services aim, through its content, to create the conditions and comfort for tourist accommodation and recreation. The volume, structure and quality of accommodation services depend on the type of accommodation units, such as: hotels, motels, villas, tourism and agritourism guesthouses, rest houses, tourism stops, etc.

In many accommodation units, activities providing cultural-artistic and leisure services are organized. The organization and carrying out of such activities suppose the existence of adequate facilities for spending time and recreation of tourists: swimming pools, saunas, gyms, sports fields, etc., as well as staff trained to guide tourists. Some agritourism guesthouses provide conditions for cultural-artistic events, such as folklore festivals, meetings, meetings with personalities of art and culture, shows, exhibitions and others.

The „*Accommodation costs*” calculation item is calculated based on the room rental price, which depends on the hotel class, the season of arrival, the number of people, the number of nights of stay, etc. As accommodation units can serve: hotels, motels, guesthouses, cabins, villas, campsites, etc.

In the context of the development of tourism services, an important place belongs to tourism food services. The close dependence between public catering and tourism activity is highlighted by their association in a sector called the hospitality industry. Thus, the economist Shmatko (2005) [19] defines the hospitality industry as „a set of activities that involves sheltering and providing food to people outside the area of permanent residence”.

Within agritourism, the agritourism guesthouse can be placed in citizens' homes or in independent buildings and provides in specially designed spaces both, accommodation for tourists, conditions for preparing and serving meals, as well as the possibility of participating in household, craft, cultural and relaxation activities. The agritourism meal is based on traditional cuisine and the products are natural, mainly from the household's own production or from authorized producers in the region. The important thing is that the accommodation prices at agritourism guesthouses are lower than those practiced in hotels. In the Republic of Moldova, agritourism guesthouses can be of the following categories: 1, 2 and 3 stars. In most cases, the accommodation and meal services in agritourism are provided by members of a family (the farmer's family). In the case of an agritourism guesthouse with an accommodation capacity of 5 rooms and more, additional staff is required.

The „*Food costs*” calculation item is calculated according to the tourism type. In most cases, breakfast is included in the price of accommodation services. In some cases, however, breakfast, lunch and dinner are paid separately from the price of accommodation services.

Travelers need someone to accompany them in unfamiliar places, provide them with information and introduce them to the points of interest in the tourism destination. The excursion for tourists, as presented in the specialized literature, represents a moment of intellectual satisfaction, and for the guide is seen as a very complex creative process (Dolzhenko G., 2008) [3]. In the case of agritourism, these services may include accompanying and guiding services on certain scenic routes, initiation into traditional crafts, attendance at some activities, which refer to traditional customs of the household, locality or area.

The „*Costs for excursions*” calculation item includes only those costs for excursions that are provided for in the mandatory tour schedule. Usually these are 2-3 excursions, and it is indicated that, if desired, a tourist can pay for additional excursions on the spot.

These services, as a rule, do not require large investments, but they are well appreciated by tourists due to the active spending of free time, which increases the degree of satisfaction after consuming these services.

Recreational services in agritourism represent the forms of active rest, which are offered by agritourism guesthouses, which take place in nature or in properly designed spaces, in order to restore physical and mental tone. Ensuring a good quality tourism product in agritourism can only be conceived in the conditions where the leisure was thought and designed by the organizers, as an integral part of the tourism stay. Leisure, in the view of local scholars Glavan, V., Rusu, V., and Platon, N. (2004) [6], represents „the set of means, equipment, events and activities offered by accommodation units or tour-operating tourism agencies, in localities, resorts or tourism areas, able to provide tourists with a state of good mood, pleasure or relaxation, to leave a good impression and memory”. Depending on the natural, cultural and folklore environment of the region, as forms of leisure offered by peasant households or other categories of entities that can be practiced in agritourism are the following: hiking and outdoor activities; sport hunting and fishing; water sports on local rivers and lakes; horse riding and carriage ride; harvesting the fruit in rural areas; cultural and entertainment activities organized by the artistic collectives of the visited tourism region; making crafts together with folk craftsmen, etc. Activities such as walking, nature watching, camping, barbecuing, etc. could not be organized without the farm's land and ecosystem.

Natural areas are often the focus of leisure trips (e.g. parks, gardens, lakes, agricultural lands, etc.), but the valorization of their services in tourism services is not evaluated. In this context, nature-based tourism is not only a socio-economic activity that brings income and other benefits to local communities, but also plays an important role in understanding natural heritage, obtaining public support and funding for preservation. Some researchers associate tourism with leisure activities that take place in natural

areas, and its main components are visitors and experiences in nature (Fredman, P., et al., 2010) [5]. These experiences can be different and include a variety of outdoor activities.

The funds to be allocated for the development of natural resources can be estimated more realistically if their economic value is determined first. As a consequence, some methods have been developed to determine the economic value of natural resource functions that currently have no market value. The contribution of natural resources is not taken into account when evaluating gross domestic product (GDP). Thus, forest ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration and air filtration are not valued, considering that many of the benefits that natural capital provides are "free" and can be ignored in the pursuit of economic growth. This assumption leads to irreversible losses as natural capital stocks disappear or diminish. Due to insufficient attention from institutional and political structures, the health of ecosystems around the world is deteriorating and together with it, their capacity to support well-being and sustainable economic growth decreases.

Traditionally, the value or contribution of natural capital is not considered in the decision-making process, even at the business level. Even when considered, decisions are limited to moral arguments or based on an incomplete understanding of organizational relationships with natural capital. Meanwhile, accounting will enable the collection and systematization of information on stocks and flows of natural resources and their evolution over time. In this context, accounting is an important foundation that helps to better manage natural capital both, for the agricultural enterprise itself, as well as a resource for humanity. The global community recognizes that natural capital accounting should be the basis for social and economic decision-making, as well as potentially help avoid environmental degradation and associated economic crises in the future.

In managing an agritourism business, the travel cost method would be useful to assess the benefits of ecosystem services, such as outdoor recreation.

The travel cost method uses willingness to pay approaches relevant for estimation of the economic value of a leisure property. Willingness to pay is reflected by the travel costs, time costs and visit-related expenses incurred by individuals to visit a recreation site. The Travel Cost Method (TCM) is considered as one of the most suitable methods for evaluating the leisure and tourism functions of farms. The main stated advantage is that it is based on human observations. TCM is considered the oldest method of environmental resource valuation and is based on the assumption that a part of the travel costs in the area is the value of the area. Thus, the more tourists will appreciate the agritourism area (for example: Orheiul Vechi), the more tourists will be willing to pay a higher cost.

In addition to the cost elements described above, there may be other cost elements, namely: medical care, treatment for disease prevention purposes, document completion, recreational activities, insurance services during the stay, etc. Thus, the nomenclature, composition and method of cost accounting, calculation items, period and methods of calculating the cost of tourism products are established in the accounting policies of the entity, which carries out agritourism activities. In addition to the direct or apportionable costs in the tourism activity, indirect production costs are also recorded, which include costs related to the service and management of agritourism activities, which cannot be directly attributed to the cost of the agritourism product and are apportioned according to the basis of selected distribution. The analysis of the practice of some tourism entities allows us to reveal the following nomenclature of indirect production costs related to agritourism services: costs for organizing a tourism group; costs regarding the repair and maintenance of fixed assets intended for the provision of tourism services; amortization of fixed assets and intangible assets intended for the provision of tourism services; the wear and tear of low-value and short-lived objects intended for the provision of tourism services; remunerations calculated for the administrative and service staff of the

subdivisions providing tourism services; costs related to delegation, staff training, etc.

The cost of the tourism product (package) represents one of the main economic indicators of the agritourism activity. The choice of the calculation method implies the establishment of the goal pursued with the help of calculation. If we intend to know only the level, in actual sizes, to be able to determine the cost of tourism products, necessary in determining the financial results in financial accounting, we can rely on the traditional methods of calculating costs, namely the order method. If we set the goal of cost leadership, then we must resort to a method that operates with predetermined levels, which establishes deviations in the process of the actual course of activity.

The study carried out on the cost of tourism products showed that it is necessary to modify the calculation method which, at present, does not correspond to the requirements of management accounting, namely: the insufficient use of information on the costs necessary for making managerial decisions, the incorrect calculation of the cost of tourism products, problems in determining the influence of each factor on the cost level of tourism products, etc.

Various methods of calculating the cost of manufactured products or services are presented in the specialized literature, which are grouped according to various classification criteria (Horngren, H., 2007) [8]. After the fullness of production costs included in the cost of manufactured products or provided services, cost calculation methods are divided into calculation *methods of full "absorption-costing" costs* and *partial "direct-costing" costs*.

The *"direct-costing"* method allows us to delimit production costs that vary directly with the volume of production and costs that are maintained at a constant level, regardless of this volume. Thus, deviations in production volume, price, cost and product capacity are tracked, providing a relatively clear picture of the efficiency of the economic entity's operations. The given method gives the possibility to know whether the sales volume is sufficient to cover the fixed production

costs. Thus, only variable production costs form the cost of manufactured products or provided services, since only these are considered to be caused by the production of products or the provision of services.

The survey carried out among tourism entities, including agritourism entities from the Republic of Moldova, demonstrates that these entities use the full cost method when making managerial decisions. Partial costs are very rarely used in the decision-making process, because the way of keeping cost accounting in most tourism entities is not able to provide this type of information, conditioned by the limited knowledge of specialists, as well as the non-use of cost information for making managerial decisions. Accounting, at these tourism entities, processes financial information in accordance with general accounting principles, without tracking and separating variable and constant production costs, which would allow to determine more clearly the production costs directly related to specific tourism products.

According to the *full cost calculation method*, the cost of tourism products includes all production costs incurred during a management period. This allows us to have a vision of all the production costs borne by the entity when forming a tourism product; however, the given method does not take into account an important circumstance, namely the change in the cost of a tourism product in relation to the volume of sales of tourism products. In this context, if a tourism entity increases the volume of sales of tourism products, then the cost of a tourism product decreases, and conversely, if a tourism entity reduces the volume of sales of tourism products, then the cost of a tourism product increases.

It should be noted that, in practice, the entities do not apply pure cost calculation methods, but a mix of methods is observed in relation to various criteria, establishing a relationship of subordination to each other depending on the priority goal pursued by the entity. Thus, the entities that carry out agritourism activities can use the *order calculation method* for the purpose of controlling and analyzing the cost of products, and for making managerial

decisions - the "*direct-costing*" method of *partial costs*.

CONCLUSIONS

Calculation of the cost of tourism products is important and no one can dispute this. However, determining the cost of tourism products should not be the ultimate goal of the accountant. Under the double effect of the increase in the pressure of competition and the growth in the number of tourism products, the agricultural entities that carry out agritourism activities feel the need to know better the cost of tourism products in order to establish the sales prices and the achievable margins for each tourism product. Knowing these data is necessary for making appropriate decisions and following their implementation.

Agritourism is an opportunity for agricultural farms from the Republic of Moldova to diversify their activities and the risks they are exposed to, by generating additional income. In addition to those mentioned, agritourism is necessary for the multifunctional and sustainable development of peasant (farmer) households, contributing to the preservation of the rural landscape and the biodiversity of agricultural ecosystems.

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