



Agritourism Routes: Shaping Sustainability

Agricultural Economics Services: Macro and Resource Economics

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DISCLAIMER:

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SA	South Africa

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to contribute to South African route agritourism literature to enable greater adoption of agritourism. Agritourism presents an economic diversification strategy for agriculture and a vehicle to promote rural development. Agritourism offers benefits for production of food and employment, preserving local culture and protecting environmental assets.

The development of route tourism presents an opportunity to sustainably grow South Africa's agritourism, leveraging the strengths of collective marketing of offerings. Clustering tourism activities provide benefits of the expansion of agritourism markets and average length of stay; offering wider variety of activities and distributing economic benefits across a larger spatial area.

Since little is known on the potential application and success of applying route tourism to agritourism in South Africa, this exploratory study aims to contribute to route agritourism literature, to greater adoption thereof. The study's specific objectives are to identify factors motivating decision to start an agritourism business as a diversification strategy and factors that determine success of route agritourism.

The study adopted a mixed method approach combining desktop literature review, internal information from the recent Flyover Project (WCDoA, 2018) and an online survey.

The key findings from the online survey on levels of awareness, knowledge, barriers and motivating factors are presented in the chapters that follow. The survey is attached as Appendix 1.

The research findings confirm that farmers acknowledge the benefits of agritourism. Farmers are interested in diversifying their operations and increasing revenue by expanding their operations to include agritourism but face numerous challenges. Whilst respondents perceive route tourism as an opportunity to leverage agritourism, more research and awareness is required.

1. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector is a key driver of South Africa's (SA) economy given its forward and backward linkages to other sectors. After prolonged growth in South Africa's agricultural economy, recent years have been synonymous with a volatile environment due to changing climatic conditions and macroeconomic variations (BFAP, 2018). This is particularly true for the Western Cape which has been suffering from three successive drought years, impacting both the farming sector as well as other agri processing industries and have resulted in wide-spread job-losses. Indeed, even though the agricultural sector only contributes to 4% of the regional economy, it employs around 10% of the entire labour force in the Province. Furthermore, the value of agricultural and agri processing exports make up 52% of total exports from the Western Cape to the rest of the world (Pienaar & Boonzaaier, 2018).

According to Vink and van Rooyen (2009) agriculture plays an important role in rural areas, contributing to GDP and serving as a link to the tourism sector. The SA tourism sector has shown resilience in a challenging economy by generating over 40 000 net new jobs in 2017 with 1 in 23 people directly employed in tourism in 2017 (STATSSA, 2018). As acknowledged in the State of the Nation Address (Ramaphosa, 2018) the tourism sector has incredible job creation potential, considered as a catalyst to create both local employment and revive small towns. Agritourism is seen as a niche tourism product offered to local and international tourists (Rogerson, 2014); (Marais, 2014).

The concept of agritourism is not new and continues to grow (Busby & Rendle, 2000) yet empirical research is still limited. Globally the concept of agritourism was established in the early twentieth century (McKenzie & Wysocki, 2002; Wicks & Merrett, 2003). Unfortunately, not much is known about the contribution of agritourism to the economy as it is mostly missing in the National Accounting Framework, and therefore not included in GDP calculations. Few studies have been done on agritourism in SA despite a wealth of tourism research with most studies done on wine tourism (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014). Agritourism is defined as "any activity in which a visitor contemplates farm landscape or participates in an agriculture process for recreation, leisure" (Tew & Barbieri, 2012:216) or educational purposes (Gill Arroyo, et al., 2013) not readily available in urbanised areas (Rogerson and Rogerson (2014b). Van Niekerk (2013) and Nowers (2007) found that the value and role of agritourism is recognised in SA's local economic development policy and supported by various studies on this topic (Hatley, 2009;

Linde, 2001; Mnguni, 2010; Mugadza, 2005; Nowers, 2007; Nowers, et al., 2002 and Speirs, 2003). Agritourism also offers farmers additional income to improve profitability and diversify income (Barbieri, 2010); (Van Niekerk, 2013); has positive benefits for production of food, fibre and employment (Das & Rainey, 2010); (Ecker, et al., 2010) as well as preserving local culture, maintaining biodiversity and other environmental assets for society at large (Barbieri, 2010). The leading South African agritourism studies identified by Rogerson and Rogerson (2014) are studies on the growth and establishment of the Western Cape wine tourism sector by Ferreira & Muller (2013), (Bruwer, 2003) and (Nowers, 2002). It is proposed that agritourism presents an economic diversification strategy for agriculture and a vehicle to promote rural development. One of the only official statistics of the value of agritourism in South Africa is from the outdated 2007 Census of Commercial Agriculture (STATSSA, 2007) and a breakdown is given in Table 1 below. The Western Cape has the highest income from agritourism of R45.7 million which is 25% of the total of R181.5 million in the country.

Province	Income Value in Rand ('000)
Eastern Cape	8 474
Free State	5 237
Gauteng	13 032
KwaZulu-Natal	25 767
Limpopo	41 159
Mpumalanga	15 067
North West	16 669
Northern Cape	10 44 1
Western Cape	45 730
South Africa	181 576

Table 1: The value of income from agritourism in South Africa

Source: STATSSA, 2007

The development of route tourism presents an important opportunity to grow SA's agritourism sector as route tourism is considered to be the best way to achieve sustainability in travel and tourism (Rogerson, 2007).

Broadly speaking, sustainability conceptually comprises of integrating three dimensions: socio-cultural, environmental and economic (Lozano, 2008) as well as understanding and acting upon the interconnections between them

(Giovanni & Fabietti, 2014). In a sustainable agricultural context, the socio-cultural dimension, for the purposes of this study, refers to improved quality of life (Valdivia & Barbieri, 2014), perceptions of agritourism (Bock, et al., 2011), resilience, equity (Bacon, et al., 2012) and strengthened social networks (Privitera, 2010); the environmental dimension refers to the protection of the natural environment by minimising environmental impacts whilst using resources efficiently; and the economic dimension refers to long-term profitability (Nabil, 2016).

Route tourism is defined as the clustering of tourism activities to provide benefits of the expansion of agritourism markets and average length of stay, offering wider variety of activities and distributing economic benefits across a larger spatial area. The collective marketing and linking of smaller tourism centres as one tourism destination is a critical component of South African route tourism (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Donaldson, 2007). Meyer (2004) identified several factors for successful route tourism development, including but not limited to: cooperation networks, regional thinking and leadership; product development, infrastructure; community participation, micro-enterprise development and innovation; information and promotion.

Since very little is known on the potential application and success of applying route tourism to agritourism, the study aims to contribute to SA route agritourism literature to enable greater adoption of agritourism.

The study's specific objectives are to identify:

- factors motivating decision to start an agritourism business as a diversification strategy and entrepreneurial innovation activity,
- factors that determine success of route agritourism and
- what could assist in creating an enabling environment that incentivise wider adoption of agritourism.

Some of the limitations of this study was the low response rate to the online survey, but sufficient inferences can be drawn from the responses received.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed method approach combining desktop literature review, internal information from the recent Flyover Project (WCDoA, 2018) and an online survey. The desktop literature review was conducted to determine key questions to include in survey and sequence of questions. The online questionnaire was reviewed by one academic expert in route tourism and an agritourism professional. Inputs were included in final version of online survey and provided as Appendix 1.

The online survey was distributed to Agritourism South Africa members' newsletter email list serve of 721 subscribers. Agritourism South Africa is a member-based, non-profit organisation aimed to support agritourism entrepreneurs and businesses (mostly farmers) to build successful agritourism businesses.

The web link of the online survey was sent to all Agritourism South Africa members' in the January and February 2019 newsletters and the link remained active for 8 weeks from 16 January to 14 March 2019. Due to low response rate a friendly reminder was sent to all subscribers to improve response rate. Routes such as the West Coast Way, Franschhoek Tram, Rooibos Route, Open Africa, Cape Camino, Cape Whale Coast Route and Robertson Wine Route were also consulted and invited to participate in the survey. Despite the best efforts of the research team, a low response rate was only 2.5%. Regardless, the captured responses will be analysed in combination of the changes witnessed from the Flyover Project.

3. RESULTS

The key findings from the online survey on levels of awareness, knowledge, barriers and motivating factors are presented as part of this exploratory study. The survey is attached as Appendix 1.

The research findings confirm that farmers acknowledge the benefits of agritourism. Farmers are interested in diversifying their operations and increasing revenue by expanding their operations to include agritourism but face numerous challenges. Whilst respondents perceive route tourism as an opportunity to leverage agritourism, more research and awareness is required.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the types of business respondents are involved in. Over 50% of survey respondents are involved in agricultural operations falling outside of the categories listed in the survey. These were stated to include rooibos, mixed small scale farming, cut flowers, Lucerne, alpaca herding and fibre processing, publishing, restaurants, accommodation and distilleries.



Figure 1: Main type of business of respondents

Rogerson and Rogerson (2014) state that the drivers of growth for agritourism business are related to both demand- and supply-side factors and reflect the causes for entrepreneurial innovation in South Africa.

On the demand side, the expansion of urban areas and stresses associated with urban lifestyles contribute to an increase in the recreational value of the rural landscape and agritourism offerings for urban consumers. Figure 2 shows the widespread nature of agritourism activities across the Western Cape based on the Flyover results. It is clear that agritourism activities largely favour accommodation on farms, as well as activities linked to cellars and wine shops, although slightly decreasing in numbers from 2013 to 2017. The results also show significant increases in outdoor activities such as mountain-biking, picnics, birding, fishing and camping (WCDoA, 2018).



Figure 2: Current agritourism activities

Source: WCDoA, 2018

On the supply side, as a result of financial strains and business risk in the agricultural sector (e.g. poor harvest and low prices (Tew & Barbieri, 2012:216)) farmers have adopted a variety of risk management strategies including lower input use, asset diversification (Vink & van Rooyen, 2009) and agritourism as an opportunity for income diversification (Marais, 2014). The opportunities may be subject to resource challenges and potential future offerings may be less resource intensive. Figure 3 shows a potential decrease in formal accommodation to be potentially traded off with camping options in the future. This confirms the same trend witnessed in Figure 2, whilst the supply of mountain biking and picnic facilities are set to continue to grow in the future. These activities are not particularly resource intensive.

The results from the online survey also suggest some interest in offering night walks and informative talks regarding on-farm fauna and flora was stated. Interest was shown in potentially adding "glamping" accommodation, hot air ballooning and "tabbogan¹" rides.



Figure 3: Current vs future agritourism activities

¹ Emanating from sleds used to traverse snow, a "toboggan" is a bobsled in a halfpipe track used to enjoy a downhill adventure ride

The reasons for showing interest in offering additional activities were stated to include: increasing the number of visitors to the fam, diversify on-farm activities, financial gain and job creation.

The figure below provides an indication of the number of jobs that were created by those that participated in the survey, with over 50% creating 1-5 jobs.



Figure 4: Job creation from Agritourism

Source: Survey

When considering the attitudes to agritourism as shown in Table 2, respondents acknowledge the potential economic benefits of agritourism and opportunities to promote local products and services.

The results show that respondents perceive route tourism and collective marketing to have a positive impact on economic development. However, marketing agritourism offerings may be a challenge as it is an activity outside primary agricultural activities and the required skills and time may not be readily available. The table also displays that there is a lack of awareness or knowledge of certain aspects of the impacts of agritourism and the impacts of route tourism is not common knowledge. Following the statements regarding attitudes towards agritourism, respondents were asked to state challenges; these were listed as follows:

- To create interest in product
- Delivery on expectation
- Understanding markets and tourism standards
- Access to tourism product suppliers
- Staff reliability
- Security on farms
- Red-tape
- Funding for development
- Skills and training
- Extension services for mentoring and coaching
- Marketing resources
- Infrastructure e.g. roads
- "ecotourism" and "accommodation" excluded in the Municipal Properties Act
- Capital
- Time

Capacity building is required to address these challenges that are largely related to product development and marketing, together with a service related approach. Rogerson and Rogerson (2014) propose that there is a need for creating awareness and capacity building for business development in agritourism. These authors recommend that business and networking skills as well as product development and marketing agritourism should form part of Local Economic Development planning (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014). Guidelines for establishing successful tourism routes are explored by Lourens (2007), where the importance of planning, promotion and institutional development is highlighted.

Table 2: Attitudes towards agritourism

Attitude	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disag ree	Strongly Disagree
Information on agritourism options are easy to come by	10%	40%	40%	10%	0%
Agritourism increases revenue	10%	40%	50%	0%	0%
Consumers have major impact on driving demand for agritourism	22%	11%	56%	11%	0%
Agritourism requires too much of farm resources	15%	8%	15%	62%	0%
Route tourism contributes to positive economic impact of agritourism	27%	36%	36%	0%	0%
Government incentives for agritourism are accessible	0%	0%	36%	14%	50%
Agritourism stimulates local economic activity	46%	46%	8%	0%	0%
Clustering tourism activities enable economic development	27%	33%	27%	13%	0%
The impact of agriculture on the environment is exaggerated	6%	19%	31%	31%	13%
Pay-back period for investing in agritourism is too long	17%	17%	25%	33%	8%
Agritourism improves value of land and or buildings	20%	10%	70%	0%	0%
Offering agritourism on your farm leaves you with a good conscience	17%	67%	8%	8%	0%
Agritourism supports local South African products and services	50%	42%	8%	0%	0%
Training and upskilling is needed to have more success in agritourism	22%	56%	11%	11%	0%
Marketing your agritourism offerings are a challenge	40%	40%	0%	20%	0%
There are economic benefits in marketing an agritourism route collectively	27%	55%	18%	0%	0%
Increased visitors to the farm from agritourism will create security risk on farms	7%	20%	27%	40%	7%
Agritourism requires more coordination	31%	23%	46%	0%	0%

Figure 5 below illustrates how respondents ranked challenges experienced on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being most important and 5 being least important). Of the ranking options, cost of finance is one of the highest ranking challenges as most respondents state that they would use their own equity for financing agritourism activities with over 90% of respondents' annual turnover being less than R2 million (see Figures 6 and 7). However, Tew and Barbieri (2012) argues that agritourism is a good diversification strategy as it need not require large investment in infrastructure or labour.



Figure 5: Challenges to operate agritourism business



Figure 6: Main source of finance for agritourism business

Source: Survey



Figure 7: Annual turnover of respondents

Figure 8 shows how respondents ranked motivating factors for starting an agritourism business. Despite the challenges experienced in the agritourism space in SA, farmers are interested in increasing their revenue and diversifying their risk.



Figure 8: Factors motivating decision to start agritourism business

Source: Survey

Following the consideration of the motivating factors and challenges associated with agritourism, respondents' stated their main sources of agritourism information as shown in Figure 9 and stated opinions on what is required for the success of route agritourism in SA.



Figure 9: Main sources of agritourism information

Source: Survey

The success factors were stated to include:

- "Vested interest and uneven competition"
- "Cohesion"
- "Access to funding"
- "Supply chains"
- "Business models working well together with existing enterprises"
- "Cooperation to increase access to markets"
- "Joint opportunities"

These factors could be unpacked further in future research with face-to-face engagement.

The stated success factors can be related to tourism literature, where it is argued that efforts should be made to maximise the economic benefit of tourism that can be derived from marketing tourism destinations (Van Niekerk, 2013,; Lourens, 2007). The joint opportunities of collectively marketing agritourism routes encourage increased length of stays to experience the route, resulting in increased overall expenditures, with knock on effects for job creation. The route or destination can be leveraged in terms of marketing expenditure and cooperation in agritourism routes can realise a greater benefit for utilising the services of a route marketer and/or agritourism service provider (as alluded to in Figure 9).

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is proposed that agritourism, given its variation in different contexts, is a sustainable economic diversification strategy for agribusinesses and vehicle to promote rural development. Agritourism speaks to the dimensions of sustainability, however, venturing into the agritourism space is not without challenges. Appropriate skills in product development and marketing are required and as the literature suggests, should be included in local economic development planning. Human resources, funding and time are common constraints mentioned in the literature (Yang, 2012;Sarku, et al., 2016) as reflected in survey responses.

The development of route tourism is considered to be the best way to achieve sustainability in travel and tourism (Rogerson, 2007). The benefits are additional employment and income; expansion of tourism markets and average length of stay; offering wider variety of activities and distribute economic benefits across a larger spatial area. These benefits may extend beyond economic gain to include environmental and socio-cultural benefits (Meyer, 2004).

South African route tourism development in line with global practice has centred around "clustering tourism activities, creating user-friendly signage and easily accessible information offices" (Rogerson, 2007: 5). The clustering of these activities in areas less well known has the potential to "catalyse cooperation amongst communities residing in neighbouring areas using tourism as a vehicle to spur economic development" (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004: 72). The collective marketing and linking of smaller tourism centres as one tourism destination is a critical component of South African route tourism (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Donaldson, 2007). By using collective marketing and marketing agritourism as one tourism destination, route tourism has the potential to scale development of agritourism and address the challenges above.

No studies were found in the literature review on the on potential application and success of applying route tourism to agritourism in South Africa. This study aims to contribute to SA route agritourism body of knowledge to enable greater adoption of agritourism. Greater awareness and capacity building is required.

Following this exploratory study, it is recommended that further research is conducted using randomised, probability sampling to improve response rate and opportunity for statistical analysis.

Face-to-face interviews are recommended for completing surveys in the agricultural sector as very low response rates are achieved with online surveys.

There is scope for further research on support programmes to assist farmers who would like to diversify into agritourism, by building on the guidelines for establishing route tourism in SA as provided by Lourens (2007). Based on the attitudes of respondents, other potential research areas may include the effects of agritourism on the environment, impact on property value the role of government incentives to support agritourism businesses.

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Appendix 1: Online Survey

Agritourism to Diversify Agribusiness

The Western Cape Department of Agriculture and the World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa (WWF-SA) are conducting this survey to get a sense of motivation factors that influence involvement in agritourism and adoption of joint marketing campaigns.

We really do appreciate your feedback as it will directly help support our work in shaping the sustainability of agritourism.

It will take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. All answers remain anonymous

1. Whi	ch of the following applies to your busine	\$ss	
	Wine enterprise		Fruit enterprise
	Dryland crop		Livestock
Other	, please indicate:		
2. Whi	ch agritourism activities do you currently	offer?	
	4 x 4 facilities		Fishing
	Accommodation		Hiking
	Birding		Horse riding
	Camping		Mountain bike
	Cellars & wine shops		Ostrich
	Conference & function venues		Picnics
	Ecotourism		Quad bike
	Farm market		Restaurant
	Farm stall		
Other	, please indicate:		

- 3. Please indicate if agritourism enterprise has created new jobs
- Zero
- 1-5
- >5
- 4. Do you own the farm that caters for the agritourism activity?
- Yes
- No

Other.	please	indicate:
	produce	in alloand.

- 5. What is the size of the farm that caters for agritourism activity (hectares)?_____
- 6. Which agritourism activities would you like to offer and why?

	4 x 4 facilities	Fishing
	Accommodation	Hiking
	Birding	Horse riding
	Camping	Mountain bike
	Cellars & wine shops	Ostrich
	Conference & function venues	Picnics
	Ecotourism	Quad bike
	Farm stall	Restaurant
Ot	her, please list:	

7. Please indicate reason(s) for interest to offer additional activities:

8. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON''T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Information on agritourism options are easy to come by					
Agritourism increases revenue					
Consumers have major impact on driving demand for agritourism					
Agritourism requires too much of farm resources					
Route tourism contributes to positive economic impact of agritourism					
Government incentives for agritourism are accessible					
Agritourism stimulates local economic activity					
Clustering tourism activities enable economic development					
The impact of agriculture on the environment is exaggerated					

Additional comments:

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DON"T KNOW	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Pay-back period for investing in agritourism is too long					
Agritourism improves value of land and or buildings					
Offering in agritourism on your farm leaves you with a good conscience					
Agritourism supports local South African products and services					
Training and upskilling is needed to have more success in agritourism					
Marketing your agritourism offerings are a challenge					
There are economic benefits in marketing an agritourism route collectively					
Farm security is a concern for potential visitors to agritourism establishment					
Agritourism requires more coordination					

Additional comments:

10. What are the most important challenges to run an in agritourism enterprise?

11. Rank the following motivating factors for initiating agritourism activities on a scale of1 to 5 with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

- Reduce business risk
 Better quality of life
 Improve agricultural land productiv
 - Improve agricultural land productivity
 Increase revenue outside primary

Job opportunities

agriculture activities

12. Rank from 1-5 the most important challenges you have experienced on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

- □ Safety
- Red tape
- Cost of finance

- Availability of product to fit your needs
- Lack of information on agritourism

Human resources

13. What factors influence the success of route tourism and joint marketing campaigns?

- 14. Please indicate your main source of information regarding agritourism
- Consultant
- Family/friend
- Web search

- Agritourism service provider
- □ Financier or investor
- Route marketer

Other, please indicate:

- 15. How do you fund your agritourism activities on your farm?
- Debt finance from bank
- Debt finance from other financial institution
- Own equity

Other, please indicate: _____

- 16. What percentage of your average annual turnover is from agritourism?
- **□** 0-5%
- **a** 6-10%
- **□** 10-20%
- **□** 20-50%
- **□** >50%
- 17. What is your annual turnover?
- \Box < R2 million
- □ R2 000 001 R5 million
- □ R5 000 001 R10 million
- □ R10 000 001 R25 million
- \square > R25 million
- 18. Please indicate your gender.
- Male

Female

19. Which age category is applicable to you?

20-24	50-54
30-34	55-59
40-49	60-64
25-29	65-69
35-39	> 74 years

20. What language do you speak at home?

- English
- Afrikaans
- isiXhosa

Other, please indicate:

21. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Please check only one.)

No formal schooling

- Completed primary schooling
- Completed tertiary schooling

Other, please indicate: _____

22. Indicate the town nearest to your (agritourism) location

23. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns?

24. Please provide your email address below if you would like to receive the survey results and follow up communication

END

