

Countryside bounty farms – how to involve agriculture in rural tourism



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Latvian Country Tourism Association “Lauku ceļotājs”

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Latvian Country Tourism Association



Legal form: NGO (owns a Ltd. company for commercial activities)

Founded: 1993

Members: ~300 (rural tourism entrepreneurs)

Staff: ~10



Operating with:

- Accommodations:
 - country houses
 - guest houses
 - cottages
 - campsites
 - castles
 - country hotels
- Farmsteads, open for visitors
- Active tourism

2000 → RT is not just a bed

Environment – is the main selling point of RT

- “Green Certificate” eco-label
- “Green Holidays” brand
- Changing the way of thinking of providers and customers



Activity specialization – answers and stimulates the demand

- Fishing, skiing, riding, parties, seminars, wellness, for kids...

Rural life – is an important part of RT product

- “Countryside Bounty” network and brand



Types of Countryside Bounty



Animal farms



Mushroom growers



Craftsmen



Biological and health farms



Growers of decorative plants



Growers of food products



Fish farms and fishermen



Food producers



Country kitchens



Sauna



Countryside Bounty product minimum criteria

- working farm or an individual practicing crafts, engaged in agricultural production or other traditionally rural activities
- open for visitors
- reliable contact details published (e.g., telephone, e-mail, web site)
- relevant conditions and infrastructure to take visitors (e.g., demonstration/tasting room or site, parking, etc.)
- clear visiting arrangements (visiting times, prices, languages, etc.)



Who are the Countryside Bounty clientele?

- Local families with children
- Parties – weddings, birthdays, special celebration
- School groups, kindergarten groups
- Byers – purchasing specific products
- Tourists touring the country/region - stopping by
- Individual foreign tourists – interested in local life
- Foreign tourist groups – seniors, special interest groups, farmers



Marketing the Countryside Bounty

- Announcement of the concept Country-wide!
- Press releases – positive message, something new!
- Internet
- Brochures for the country
- Regional brochures
- Sites included into the tour design
- Media and travel agent fam-trips – combining RT accommodations with CB farms – product tasting



Step further - Latvian Heritage tourism product



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Project “Promoting the use of cultural heritage in service design of
rural tourism”



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Heritage concept

Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past, which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.

Council of Europe Convention on cultural values of the society

AUTHENTICITY + LIVING TODAY!



Latvian Heritage sign - how it works?



- **Criteria** in 4 areas: architecture, food, traditional celebrations, crafts.
- **Commission** – independent experts in Latvian culture and heritage, the Ministry of Culture, relevant state organisations and NGOs. Participates in on site inspections, meets 2 times a year to assess Latvian Heritage candidates.
- **Who can apply?** - individuals and rural SMEs open for visitors, offering interactive product based on Latvian traditional values
- **Marketing and promotion** - certificate and sign in premises, brand promotion in national and LC campaigns

Country House “Dzirnupes” – Latvian traditional lifestyle



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The Brasla pub – Latvian food



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Latvian Heritage sign awarded to 12 candidates on May10, 2013

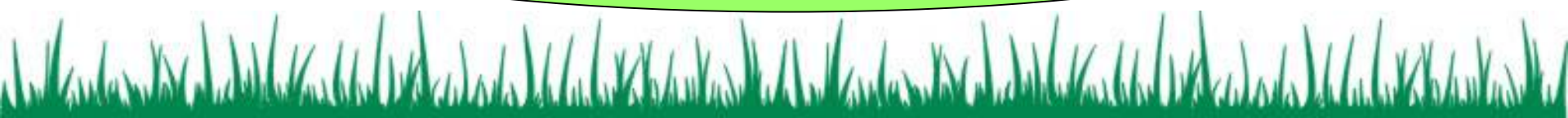


How sustainable are the Countryside Bounty and Latvian Heritage concepts?

- Public funding needed to develop the concept and promote it!
- EU programmes – project justification is complicated and funding does not come easy
- Local government / ministries support the concept, but lack the funds

What happened with CB in LV?

IT IS SUSTAINABLE !
because it is demanded and
maintains the unique identity of
Latvian RT



Let's live and experience our traditions



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