



Baltic
Country
Holidays
countryholidays.lv



PROJECT

Heritage based agritourism product
development in Latvia - Lithuania
AGRIHERITAGE, LLI65

ACTIVITIES, RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

20.03.2017 – 19.03.2019



Interreg
Latvija-Lietuva

European Regional Development Fund



EUROPEAN UNION



PROJECT GOALS:

The goal of this project is to build and promote a sustainable cross-border heritage based agritourism product that is available throughout the programme territory in Latvia and Lithuania, thus preserving cultural heritage, developing and promoting products and services based on the heritage, and facilitating an increase of the numbers of tourists in the region. The cornerstone for the project are farms that maintain inherited farming, fishing, craftsmanship and food manufacturing and processing traditions.

PROJECT RESULTS

1. The heritage agritourism product with 50 farms in LV and 50 farms in LT linked in 10 tour itineraries.
2. Knowledge support to heritage agritourism farms (product criteria, a set of 3 handbooks, informative seminars, product accreditation).
3. A promotional and marketing campaign.

The total budget of this project is 235 881 Eur, out of which the amount of funding from the European Regional Development Fund is 200 499 Eur.

Due to participation, co-operation and personal interest of the farmers we have successfully implemented in practice the concept of "Go Rural. Agritourism", developed the heritage agritourism products, organized "Open Days in the Latvia and Lithuania".



LIVE DISCUSSIONS



DIALOGUE WITH POLICYMAKERS



INVOLVEMENT OF MASS MEDIA IN PUBLICITY OF THE PROJECT



HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARM INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM



CONTENTS

1 The definition and concept of historical agritourism heritage	2
A brief history of farming in Latvia and Lithuania	2
The target audience for the project	3
2 “Go Rural. Agritourism” concept	4
3 Go Rural. Agritourism” product’s market demand and supply	5
Demand	5
The offer	9
4 Implementation and promotion of “Go Rural.	
Heritage agritourism” concept	17
Identity formation	17
Open days in Latvia and Lithuania	17
Souvenirs	22
5 Communication and public activities	23
Info training seminars	23
Participation in fairs	24
collaboration with mass media	25
6 Information technology upgrades in www.celotajs.lv and	
www.atostogoskaime.lt	25
Data base of the heritage agritourism farms	25
Digital versions of the tour routes	25
7 Printed materials	26
Handbooks	26
Map „Heritage agritourism”	27
„Heritage agritourism”, tour manual for foreign market	27
Postcards	28



THE DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF HISTORICAL AGRITOURISM HERITAGE



These farms are linked to tourism routes, encouraging people to travel and to spend more time in the Latvian and Lithuanian countryside. ”

The aim of this project is to make traditional country tourism more attractive to travellers and to demonstrate the historical agritourism heritage, and this involves farms that uphold inherited farming, fishing, crafts, food production and food processing traditions. The emphasis has been on farms that are ready to provide interesting information to tourists so that they can learn about and experience the cultural heritage of agriculture and crafts via tourist services. These farms are linked to tourism routes, encouraging people to travel and to spend more time in the Latvian and Lithuanian countryside. Tourism is usually of a seasonal nature, with the greatest numbers of travellers between June and October, but such activities and expansion of the range of products would allow farms to maintain an average flow of tourists throughout the year.



The offer of agro-tourism and historical heritage involves farms that are open to visitors, interactive museums, private collections and other places where people can learn about life in the countryside and the historical heritage that is linked to agriculture. Visitors will learn about manufacturing processes from start to finish. This can involve modern farms which offer visitors a look at their work and their history. The aspect of historical heritage also includes the effects of all kinds of eras and cultures – those that have left tracks in present-day lives in the countryside and agricultural work.

Agricultural heritage in terms of this project includes not just traditionally Latvian or Lithuanian influences. The concept is border, making it possible to use the potential of traditions among other nations and cultures that are alive in present-day Latvia and Lithuania. The main thing is to show that these values have passed through eras and generations and that they are still important today as an ability to interest and attract tourists to agritourism in the countryside.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FARMING IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIAS

FARMING – The oldest crop in our territory is barley and the oldest vegetables are turnips and cabbages. Tomatoes were the last crop to be planted and they only became important for trading in the early 20th century. During the 14th and 15th centuries, noble estates began to produce foodstuffs for the market and the selection of types of crops began in the 19th century. Then, agrarian reforms were implemented in Latvia and Lithuania in the early 20th century, with new farms being established. After the Soviet occupation, collective farms were established.

LIVESTOCK BREEDING – Beginning in the 13th century, livestock breeding became the second most important activity after farming. The aim was to provide people with food (beef, mutton, pork, milk, butter), to ensure pulling power (horses and bulls), to obtain wool for clothing and to raise horses for military needs. Beekeeping was an important secondary sector.

FISHING – Traditions and stories about fishing in the sea, lakes and largest rivers are still popular. During the age of noblemen, fishermen paid fees by providing sprats and herring. During the 19th century, fishermen established co-operatives and invented new fishing equipment so that more fish could be caught.

Fruit orchards – This is an area which began its rapid development in the 19th century. Baronial estates were schools for Latvian and Lithuanian farmers and gardeners, the gardens of which were used to produce apples, cherries, plums, pears, red currants, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries and even grapes, peaches and apricots.

CRAFTSMANSHIP – Until the 9th century, farmers made tools for household life and work themselves. During the 19th century, small industrial factories were established at estates and in cities. The flourishing of the industry in the 20th century led to a decline in craftsmanship, but handmade items and ancient skills are once again respected today



The concept is border, making it possible to use the potential of traditions among other nations and cultures that are alive in present-day Latvia and Lithuania. ”



THE TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THE PROJECT

1) Agritourism farms, farmers and countryside tourism farms that can offer agricultural heritage and traditions to tourists. The size of each farm makes no difference. The emphasis is on high-quality and interesting offers that are based on tangible and intangible traditions. There are all kinds of communications channels, including direct communications, as well as organisations in the sector that can address owners of farms about this issue.

2) Society and tourists, mostly local residents, but also foreigners – families with children, senior citizens, groups from companies, groups of friends and travellers in Latvia and Lithuania. These are the main target audiences and the potential users of this product. They must be interested in objective and true information about the product and its opportunities and benefits. Here, again, all possible forms of communications are to be used – the electronic environment, the social media, print outlets, TV, radio and the homepages of local governments.



“GO RURAL. AGRITOURISM” CONCEPT



“

*“Go Rural Agritourism”
tourism products offer the
return to the authentic, to the
„genuine””*

„Go Rural. Agritourism” invites tourists to get to know and enjoy life of the countryside deeper and more properly, at the same time giving opportunity to the local inhabitants to use the countryside lifestyle and the main occupation of the farm as tourism resources. The farms are motivated to take part in the rural tourism because of the social and economic benefit – there is work for senior and junior members of the family, good collaboration of the local inhabitants, cheered up the social activity in the surroundings, and the life into the countryside becomes more interesting. The tourism gives extra income and helps to maintain traditions and link with the countryside lifestyle. Substantially communication with the tourists increases self-respect of one’s work and strengthens identity, because of evaluation of the guests and visitors. In the concept of “Go Rural. Agritourism” all



Foto: This farm produces real Lettigalian beer. You can help to brew and taste it, and you will hear all about how beer has traditionally been brewed in Latgale.

Foto: The Romnesa restaurant in Lithuania offers an exhibition of old culinary tools and equipment, also offering an educational programme on baking spit cakes.

these aspects are taken into account.

“Go Rural Agritourism” tourism products offer the return to the authentic, to the „genuine”. It is communication with the local people by getting to know the local social and cultural heritage and especially nowadays life and work in the countryside. There are small family businesses with the farmer and owner in the centre – with his story, personality and product. The slogan for historical agritourism heritage is “I Manufacture Today, But I Know how it was Done in the Past!”

“Enjoy the countryside: Historical Agritourism Heritage”.

Products related to the project include:

- Various accommodations at farms and fishery operations;
- Farm activities, including viewing of animals, farm work, learning about country lifestyles, etc.;
- Tasting and purchase of local products while learning about culinary traditions;
- Traditional arts and crafts.

Goal of the “Go Rural. Agritourism” concept is to join appropriate suppliers of services under a common “roof”, give

to the product identity and recognition, as well as make the product more easily accessible for tourists. Abroad “Go Rural.Agritourism” concept is well-known therefore these products are interesting not only for the local market, but also for the foreign tourists.



„GO RURAL. AGRITOURISM” PRODUCT’S MARKET DEMAND AND SUPPLY

During the Project was studied the perspective market by making tourist inquiries and interviews thus establishing product groups and their target groups in the market. During exhibitions was gathered information about tour operators and organizations potentially interested into the product. In order to clear up compliance between demand and supply, we made inquiry of the farmers.

DEMAND

Tourist poll

Part of the project was a survey of tourists to learn about the sustainability of historical agritourism heritage and areas that require development. The survey was conducted at exhibitions in which we participated, as well as on Facebook, with 1003 replies in Latvia and Lithuania.

● Historical agritourism heritage farms that are open to visitors

Historical agritourism heritage means farms, interactive museums, private collections that are open to visitors and offer information about the economic history of the countryside, as well as the development of various sectors of agriculture from their origins and up to the present day.

Latvia

Target groups for historical agritourism heritage are mostly families with children (40% of respondents), as well as groups of friends (29%) who most often travel in Latvia two to five times per year (63% of respondents) by car. Couples spend less time at farms, while families with children stay there longer. Important for open farms are groups of tourists, mostly group visits from Latvia or neighbouring countries.

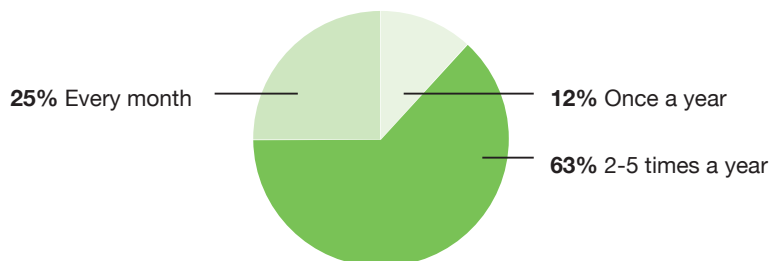
More than one-half of respondents said that they spent

nights at accommodations during their travels, while 20% said that they have not, because they have only taken part in day trips. 11% of respondents said that they spend nights with friends or relatives, and another 11% said that they always choose a country tourism accommodation. 24% said that they choose the accommodation on the basis of the route, with 23% preferring guesthouses, 18% looking for campsites, and 16% wishing to stay at separate weekend homes or flats.

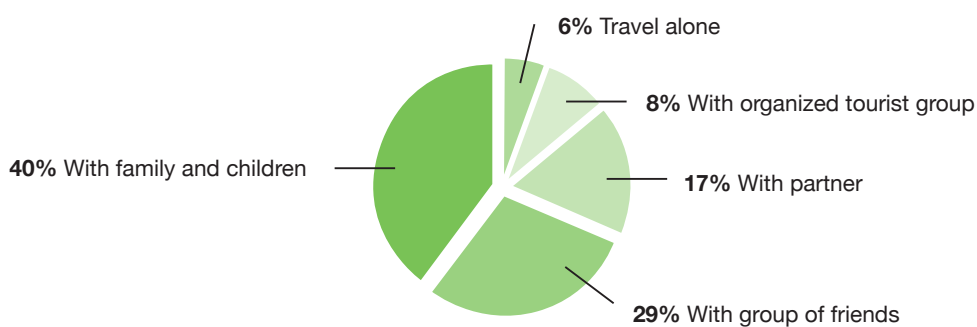
We asked respondents about the kinds of activities that they would enjoy during their travels, and the five most popular answers were a master class on baking bread (55%), learning about arts and crafts (54%), cheesemaking (54%), smoking fish (47%) and brewing beer (35%). Far fewer respondents said that they want to take part in farm work such as baling hay (16%), grinding and milling grain (15%), or just watching from the side-lines and not taking part at all (15%).

Asked about what else they enjoy, respondents said that they like to visit natural, cultural and historical monuments, take part in active leisure (biking, boating, etc.), and enjoy things that make them feel good. We also asked about big farms, which often are not open to tourism. 48% of our respondents said that they have visited such a farm at least once to see what it does, 44% said that they have never done that but would like to, and 8% said that this is of no interest to them. This shows that big farms should become involved in country tourism, if only by offering open house services once a year for those who are interested.

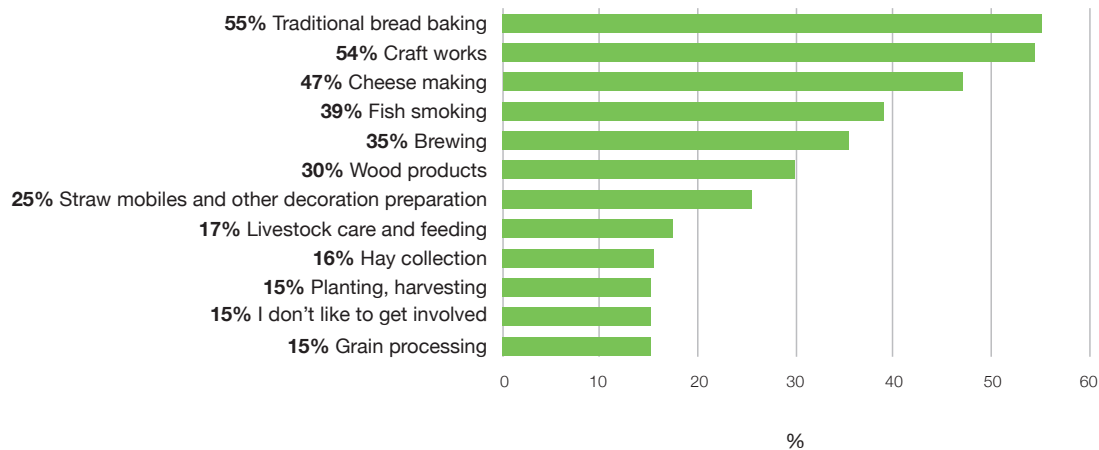
HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL IN LATVIA?



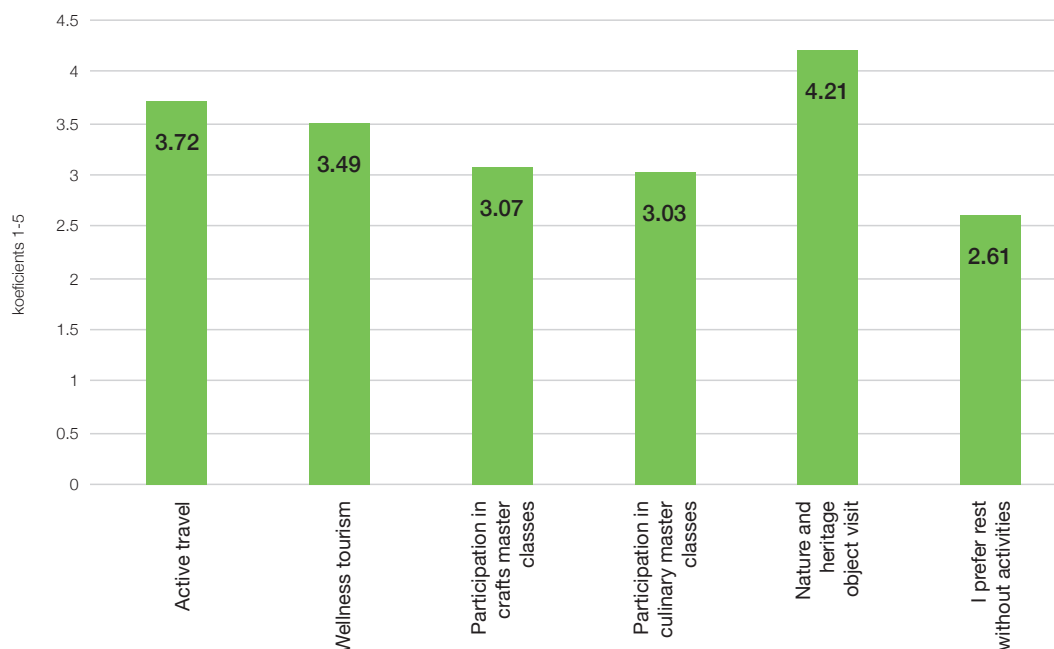
HOW DO YOU USUALLY TRAVELL



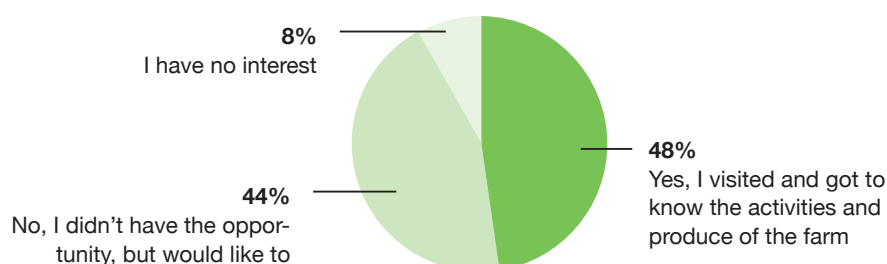
ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN DURING TRIP IN LATVIA



WHICH ACTIVITIES DO YOU PREFER DURING YOUR TRIP IN LATVIA?



HAVE YOU VISITED LARGE FARM IN LATVIA IN THE LAST YEAR?



Lithuania

We conducted a similar survey in Lithuania, with 500 respondents. Like Latvians, 66.3% of respondents said that travel two to five times a year, most often for two or three days (56.6%). 45.7% said that they travel with families and children 24.5% do so with groups of friends, and 22.4% travel with a partner. This latter option was indicated most often by people aged 18-25 and 46-60.

Respondents said that the main reason why they travel is that they want to learn about their homeland (71.8%) and the fact that there are no long distances in Lithuania (69.8%). Others said that they wanted to visit new places (61.7%). As was the case in Latvia, also Lithuanian respondents said that they sometimes spend nights at farms (39.9%), while 23.9% said that they do not, because they only take day trips. 16.1% choose different accommodations.

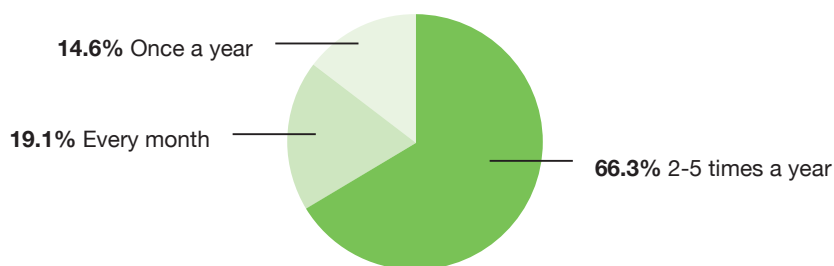
Most respondents said that they prefer active leisure (71%) and well-being tourism (62.8%), with just 26.3% saying that they like to be involved in farm work. When travelling with children, Lithuanians most often choose to visit playgrounds (39.7%) or take part in educational activities related to arts and crafts, etc. (36.2%).

When it comes to large farms, 48.8% of respondents said that they have never visited one, but would like to do so. 27.2% said that they have visited a large farm, and 24.3% said that they are not interested in this.

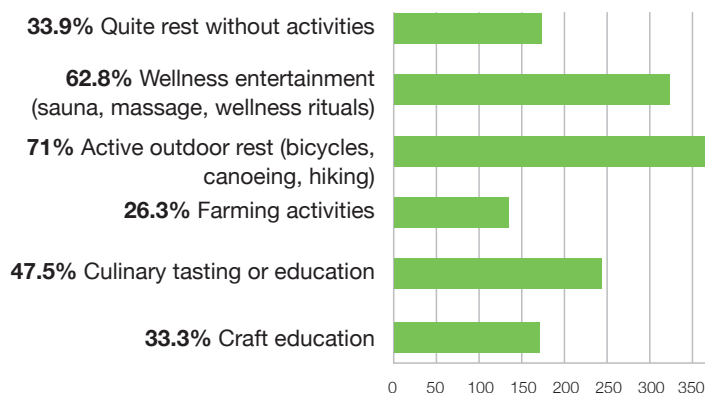
“

Respondents said that the main reason why they travel is that they want to learn about their homeland and the fact that there are no long distances in Lithuania ”

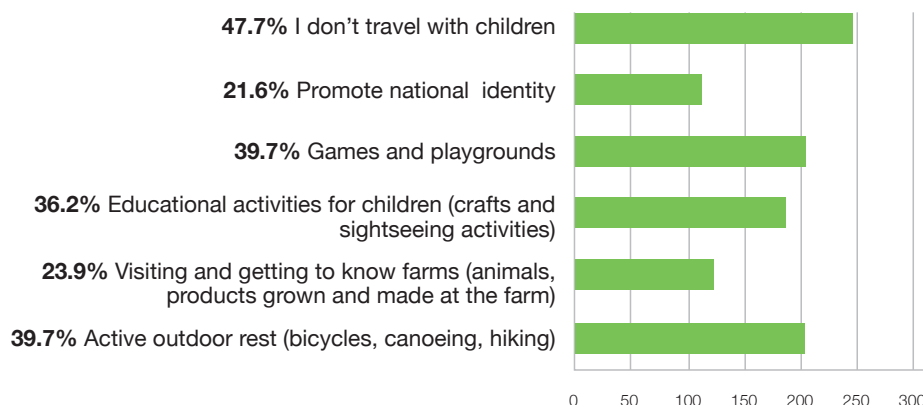
FREQUENCY OF TRAVEL IN LITHUANIA?



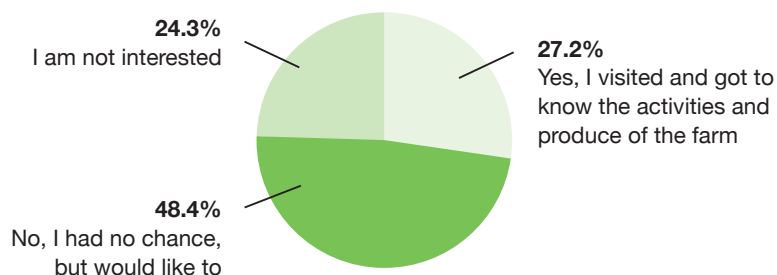
ACTIVITIES SOUGHT WHILE TRAVELLING IN LITHUANIA?



PREFERRED ACTIVITIES WHILE TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN?



ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION HAVE YOU VISITED LARGE FARM IN THE LAST YEAR?



THE OFFER

A survey of farmers

We conducted online and telephone interviews with farmers to see whether they want to open their agritourism farm to visitors. We asked what kinds of services they provide and what should be developed further. We surveyed 119 historical agritourism heritage stakeholders, 50 in Lithuania and 69 in Latvia.

Latvia

According to the data provided by the owners in Latvia, the most common number of visitors is up to 250 during season, the larger number, up to 13 000 are in very popular heritage agritourism sights.

Hosts indicate that most often agriheritage products are selected by organized tourist groups (34%), families with children (23%) or travellers alone (19%). Traditionally, the largest number of visitors came from Latvia, followed by

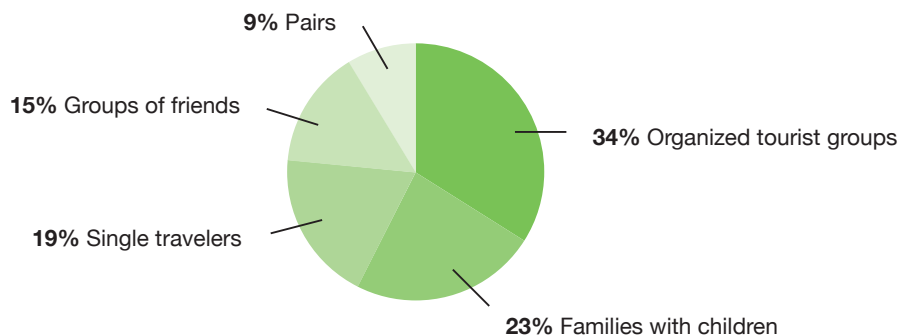
Lithuania, Germany, Estonia and Russia.

When asked what the tourists would do during the visit, the owners stated that the most demanded activities were the acquisition of a specific trade or skill, participation in craft and traditional cooking master classes, as well as a visit to the collection displayed on the farm.

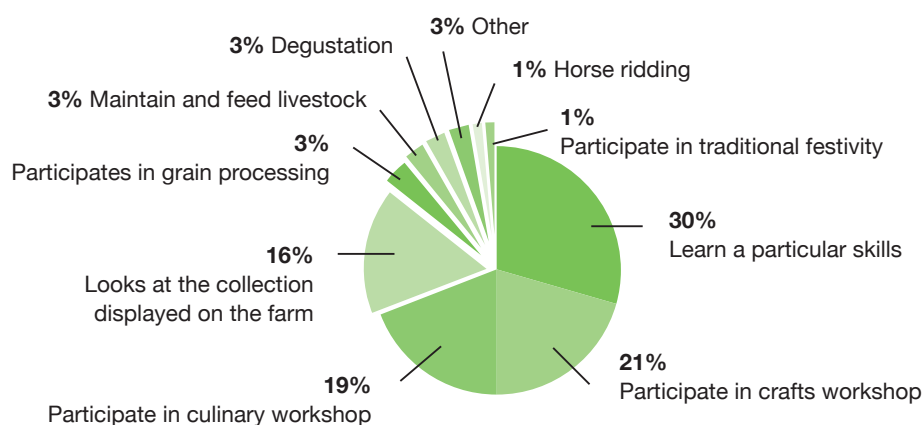
According to the owners, a large part (42%) have prepared a specific excursion program, 33% offer a master class or a creative workshop and 21% work more like an exposition, offering a look at the collected old tools, machinery etc.

In view of the survey data, we can conclude that visitors on certain farms will often become aware thanks to recommendations of friends and relatives, from the marketing activities of local tourist information centres and the farm's own website or social network accounts. According to the owners, marketing materials (maps, guides, etc.) issued by "Lauku celotājs" also play a big role.

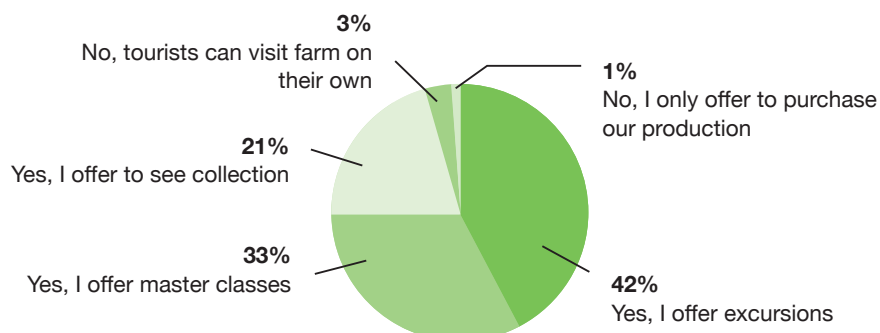
GROUPS OF CLIENTS THAT MOST OFTEN CHOOSE HERITAGE AGRITOURISM PRODUCTS?



ACTIVITIES THAT TOURISTS CHOOSE IN HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARMS IN LATVIA



DO YOU OFFER HERITAGE AGRITOURISM PRODUCTS FOR YOUR TOURISTS IN LATVIA?



Lithuania

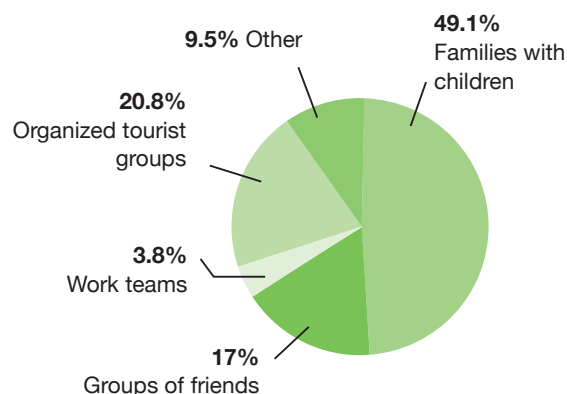
Lithuanian agritourism farmers say that the most frequent guests include families (49%), organised groups of tourists (20.8%) and groups of friends (17%). Interestingly, 86.8% of the surveyed service providers said that the main source of information for the guests is their homepages and social networks. 34% said that they use marketing services offered by the Lithuanian Country Tourism Association, while 22.6% said that they learn about the most important activities from recommendations made by other travellers.

As is the case in Latvia, Lithuanian agritourism farmers say that the most popular activities are culinary master

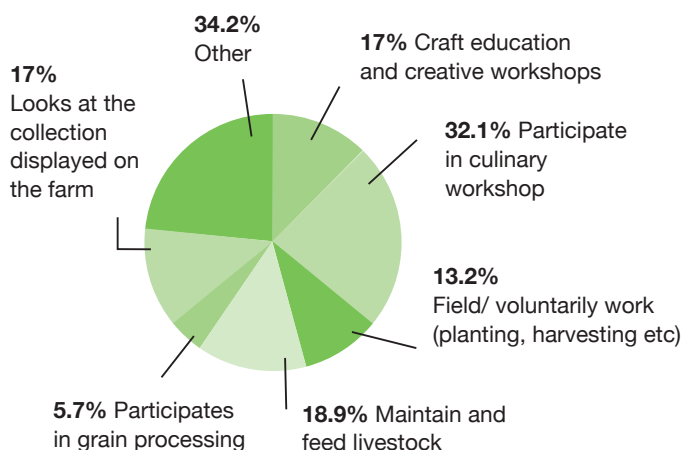
classes, craftsmanship workshops and other activities such as horseback riding, barefoot paths, gardens of lavender. In both countries, few people want to take part in farm work. Owner say that the main goals of their visitors include educational events (26.6%), tasting and purchase of products (15.2%), as well as leisure and active tourism (13.3%).

58% of farmers in Lithuania said that they have special educational programmes for visitors, 15% offer tours, and 13% say that they have no special offers, which means that tourists can look at and learn about the farms on their own.

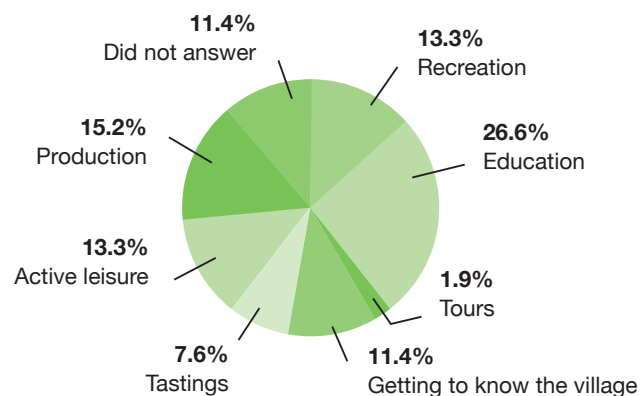
CUSTOMER GROUPS MOST FREQUENTLY VISITING THE HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARMS IN LITHUANIA



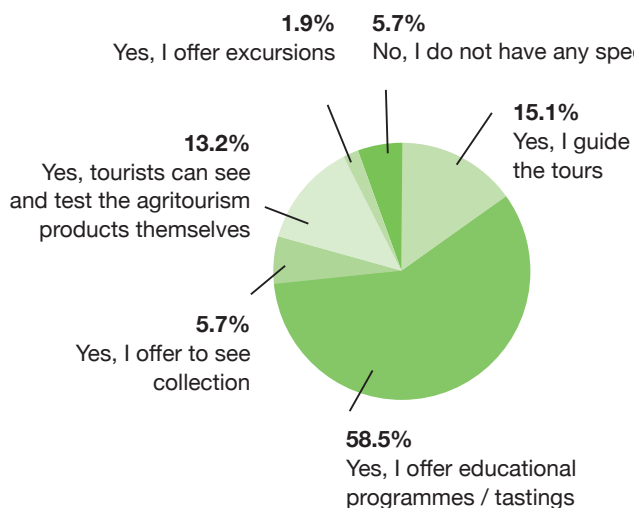
ACTIVITIES OFFERED TO THE VISITORS IN HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARMS IN LITHUANIA (%)



THE MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES FOR GUESTS, AS INDICATED BY RESPONDENTS (%)

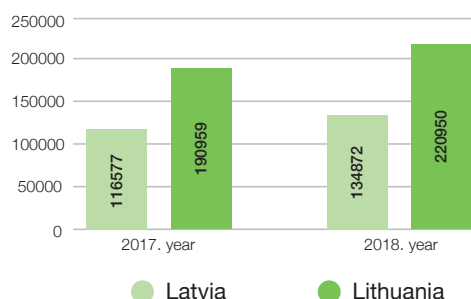


DO YOU OFFER HERITAGE AGRITOURISM PRODUCTS FOR YOUR VISITORS?



In 2017 and 2018, project partners surveyed agritourism farmers in Latvia and Lithuania to learn about visitor numbers and to track changes. The number of visitors to agritourism farms has increased year by year, which can be attributed to open house days, as well as the distribution of marketing materials about specific topics. Travel agents, too, are interested in including such products in their tours.

NUMBER OF VISITORS IN HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARM



● PRODUCING COUNTRYSIDE FARMS THAT ARE OPENED TO THE VISITORS

More and more farms in the countryside of Latvia have opened the door to visitors and adjusted their daily life to the needs of tourism. Thus the farm is promoted and gains loyalty of a potential customer of the product, as well as has possibility to sell its production at home.

TURAJDAS

Certified organic farm: herbal teas, honey

Season: January – December

For whom: groups – max 25 persons

Duration of the programme: 2 hours

Languages: LV, RU, LT

Address: "Turaidas" Dunalka, Dunalkas pag., Durbes nov., LV – 3452, Latvia

Distance from Riga: 199km

www.manteja.lv



Turaidas is one of the smallest organic farms in Latvia, with 2.4 ha of land. The farm produces herbal teas using lemon balm, raspberry, tansy, alchemilla, Plantago major, linden and other. The farm also has beehives to produce honey. The farm products are sold on site. The lady of the house also makes woven fences and she can offer a master class as an optional program.

PROGRAMME:

- Meet the hosts, general introduction to Turaidas farm.
- Presentation – the hostess explains about the herbs that are collected in a large basket while guests are seated around the room and tasting the herbal teas.



- Tea production facility, explanation of the processes.
- Tasting fresh water from the well in the yard.
- A tour of the apiary with a demonstration of the bee keeper's work.
- Tasting of different sorts of honey.



PANEKELPIAI VILLAGE

Open farm

Season: May-September

For whom: individuals and groups (school groups)

Duration of the programme: 1.5-2 hours

Languages: LT, EN

Address: Panekelpių village. 1, Skėmiai Eldership.,
Radviliškis District. LT-82300, Lithuania

Distance from Vilnius: 155km

www.panekelpiai.lt

Panekelpiai village (Panekelpių kaimas) is a farmstead belonging to a family farm. It provides educational activities about crops produced in the farm: rape, barley, wheat, beans, peas, mustard, sugar beets. The farm has spaces for events, recreation and provides accommodation services. The size of the farm is 1 900 ha.

PROGRAMME:

The educational programme presents the grain growing process, the day-to-day life of a modern farmer, interactive workshops in which participants can press rapeseed oil, take a look around the farm, learn to distinguish cereals and try their hand at using agricultural machinery.



● OVERNIGHT STAY AND SERVICES

In the farms there are offered overnight stay places of different kinds and services. Farmers have provided entertainment for children by allowing them to caress and feed domestic animals; looking into some product's making process; by telling stories about the farm and its inhabitants. Adults sometimes feel like trying some of the field work. Some farms offer also programs for corporate and entertainment activities.

MIĶELIS

hotel&restaurant

Open: January – December

Address: „Miķelis”, Uzvara, Gailīšu pag.,
Bauskas nov., LV – 3931, Latvia

Distance from Riga: 80km

www.mikelis.lv

Standing on the bank of the Mūsa river, Miķelis is a place where the ancient and ethnic is intermingled with the contemporary and creative. Guests can see the largest private collection of exclusive automobiles and farm tractors in the Baltics, and an authentic farmstead from the turn of 19th–20th centuries.



18 family and DBL rooms – bright, comfortable, and with picturesque views over the surrounding fields.



the restaurant “Miķelis” offers traditional and modern Latvian cuisine.

FACILITIES:

- coffee-house with a summer terrace, a small fireplace room for gatherings of up to 20 people and a banquet hall for up to 60 people. Seminars, presentations, parties and weddings can be organised here;
- a campsite;



- boats for river rides and a well-appointed place for swimming;
- a bathhouse with an outdoor terrace by the river;
- on the top floor of the bathhouse there is a DBL room. Extra beds can be arranged;
- a spacious outdoor playground for kids in good visibility from the terrace of the coffee-house, with a swing, slides, a merry-go-round and a sand pit, and children's bicycles.

SENOSIOS GEGUŽINĒS ŪKIS

Homestead

Accepts guests: January – December

Address: Beržės St. 4, Gegužinė Village,
Palomenė Eldership, Kaišiadorys District, Lithuania

Distance from Vilnius: 84km

www.senojigeguzine.lt

Homestead Senosios Gegužinės ūkis is one of the homesteads in the Gegužinė Village that has been mentioned in written sources since the 15th century. The homestead was built using archival material, preserving the forms and details that are typical of Western Aukštaitija while also fully equipping the building with modern materials and engineering systems. The homestead hosts various cultural events dedicated to fostering and promoting the national identity and promulgating professional art. Guests can stay in cosy rooms and become acquainted with farm life and the animals living there.



The homestead has eight double, triple and quadruple rooms with private toilets and showers that can sleep a total of 30 people.



There is a spacious kitchen with a traditional bread oven; the homestead hosts arrange meals by request.



SERVICES:

- Fully equipped for seminars;
- Aukštaitija's sauna;
- Kayaking trips on the Neris, Širvinta and Musė;
- Hiking routes in the Gegužinė pine forest;
- On-site exhibition, cultural events and architectural/ethnographic workshops run by the hosts;
- Guests can see traditional Lithuanian breeds of horses and sheep and learn about the special requirements and conditions for keeping them.

● TRADITIONAL SKILLS

Meals for tourists are prepared from products that are grown in the farm or in the neighbourhood; tourists are allowed to eat berries and fruits in the garden. The hostess offers possibility to participate in preparation of some of the dishes – cheese making, bread or pastry baking, fish smoking etc.

CAUNĪTES

Country House; Bread baking workshop

Season: January – December

For whom: individuals (min. 2 pers.)

or groups (min. 8 – max. 15)

Duration of the programme: 2.5 hours

Languages: LV, EN

Address: "Caunītes", Cenu pag., Ozolnieku nov.,
LV – 3018, Latvia

Distance from Rīga: 40km

www.caunites.lv



Bread baking is one of the most honoured traditional skills in Latvia. We bake bread from rye, wheat, buckwheat and barley. Both finely ground flour and wholemeal flour is used. Today, there is great interest in old recipes, bread baking methods and the use of organic ingredients as many families are opting for a healthy lifestyle. Caunītes country house keeps Latvian traditions alive and demonstrates them to visitors. The house is designed and decorated in the traditional Latvian style and exudes an authentic ambience while having modern facilities. Under the guidance of the hostess, visitors will bake their own loaf of sweet and sour bread in a wood-fired bread oven.

PROGRAMME:

- Meet the hostess, introduction to Caunītes country house.
- Bread baking workshop. Making bread loaves from a previously prepared dough. When the loaves are ready, the hostess will put them in the oven.
- Lunch while the bread is baking – a traditional meal of soup and bread.
- Taking the bread out of the oven. Guests will get their own loaves to take with them.

ŠUŠVĒ FARMSTEAD

Beekeeper's farm

Season: January - December

For whom: individuals (min. 2 pers.) or

groups (min. 10 – max. 15)

Duration of the programme: 2 hours

Languages: LT, EN, PL, RU

Address: Plinkaišis Village, Krakės Eldership,
Kėdainiai District., Lithuania

Distance from Vilnius: 167 km

www.sodybasusve.lt

Šušvė farmstead is situated on the bank of the River Šušvė, in the Pašušvys landscape reserve. The master of the farmstead is a beekeeper and producer of the old Lithuanian noble beverage – mead. Cognitive mead and honey tastings are organised. Visitors can also buy various bee products, natural wax candles, and several types of mead.

PROGRAMME:

The educational tasting programme 'Mead was running in the river...' presents the history of the oldest Lithuanian alcoholic beverage, its consumption traditions, and the peculiarities of its production.

The educational programme 'Hard work of a bee' is held during the season only. Participants of this programme visit the apiary, learn about the life of bees, beekeeping implements, and the beehive. Visitors are given a lesson on honey extraction and invited to taste it.



● CRAFT SKILLS

Several heritage agritourism farms are able to master some of the craft skills - harness making, weaving, barrel making, and others that have traditionally been useful in the countryside.

ARTISTIC VILLAGE

Traditional arts centre

Season: January - December

For whom: groups (max. 20)

Duration of the programme: 2 hours

Languages: LT, EN

Address: Žvejų st. 2, Bebrusų Village, Luokė Eldership, Molėtai District, Lithuania

Distance from Vilnius: 65 km

www.meniskaskaimas.lt

The traditional crafts centre 'Artistic village' was founded in 2008. To preserve and popularise traditional black ceramics, yearly seminars of black ceramics are organised. Developing cultural and educational activities, the crafts centre organises creative camps for children, educational programmes, and ceramics exhibitions.



PROGRAMMES:

- During the clay modelling programme, visitors can take a look at three different traditional wood-fired kilns: a black kiln, a starter ceramics kiln and a furnace, and make themselves a traditional jar.
- During the candle-making programme, participants can learn about beekeeping, the function of a candle in our ancestors' times and nowadays, and make themselves a candle from genuine beeswax.
- During the sash-weaving programme, the meaning of a sash is revealed, participants can weave excellent book-marks themselves, following the example of an authentic Lithuanian sash characteristic to the Aukštaitija Region (Highlands of Lithuania).
- Participants of the wool felting programme learn about Lithuanian sheep breeds, types of wool, and felt products and they are invited to felt, rinse, shape and bring home an original warm picture.

AIVARS UŠPELIS

Potter

Season: May – October

For whom: groups (min. 4 – max. 40)

Duration of the programme: 1 – 1.5 hours

Languages: LV, RU, Latgalian

Address: "Dzyndrys", Garkalni, Maltas pag., Rēzeknes nov., Latvia

Distance from Rīga: 240 km

http://www.celotajs.lv/en/e/aivars_ustpelis

The attractive potter is a member of the "Pūdnīku skūla" (the pottery school) – a group of Latvian ceramists and followers of the popular master of ceramics Ēvalds Vasiļevskis. The pottery school members exchange experience and skills between themselves to maintain the tradition of Latgale pottery. The ceramics workshop "Malny Wylky" (the black wolves) offers a look at traditional pottery work, including a foot-powered potter's wheel and a firing pit that uses fire-wood and the smoke technique. Visitors can try their hand at pottery themselves. The workshop also has a collection



of antique irons and farm objects that have come from the nearby area. There is also an exhibition of paintings by Vēsma Ušpele, the ceramist's wife. Ceramic works and paintings can be purchased.

PROGRAMME:

- Demonstration of making a clay pot on the potter's wheel.
- Explanation of the firing pit and the firing process.
- Seeing the collection of ceramics and paintings.



IMPLEMENTATION AND PROMOTION OF “GO RURAL. HERITAGE AGRITOURISM” CONCEPT

During the Project several marketing activities were carried out to implement the “Go Rural. Heritage Agritourism” concept.

IDENTITY FORMATION



Symbol of the campaign is a rooster, because it is a main character in a farmstead, “the host”, it is a gorgeous and a proud domestic bird. Rooster as logo is used in all the materials and activities of the campaign.



OPEN DAYS IN LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

The aim of the “Open days “ event was to popularise the countryside, its products and services, and the ability to encourage residents of small towns and big cities to visit the countryside so as to learn about people’s lives there, enjoy country goodies, find farms that sell locally produced products, and to enjoy activities and emotions that relate to the countryside in Latvia and Lithuania.

In 2017 and 2018 the emphasis was on farms that were open to tourists, as well as places where people could learn about and experience agricultural processes from their origins to modern manufacturing, demonstrations and master classes to talk about the use of ancient heritage today (fish smoking, baking bread, pottery, etc.).

This helped to promote co-operation and contacts among those who are in the sector - country tourism service providers, farmers, NGOs, craftspeople, tourism information centres, etc.

“

the emphasis was on farms where people could learn about and experience agricultural processes from their origins to modern manufacturing”

A map was produced to popularise the event. It showed participants in the programme, their contact information and the offers that each of them made. The maps were distributed at the Kalnciema Street market in Latvia, Statoil petrol stations tourism information centres, seminars and presentations organised by the two associations, etc. Posters were put up at partnership institutions, schools, tourism information centres and near the participants in the programme. Farmers distributed information via their own channels. To reach a broader target audience and create interest, the project had a homepage with information about what each farm offers. There were also attempts to motivate tourists via a photo competition and a section of recommendations.

The Open days homepages in 2017 and 2018: <https://www.celotajs.lv/lv/conf/180504-ADL> and <https://www.celotajs.lv/lv/conf/170527-ADL>

Brief videos were also produced to popularise the project in Latvia:

On arts and crafts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wFleMJKVbU>

Enjoy the tasty countryside: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=62&v=swDQOz4xG7s

Enjoy the countryside: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=62&v=swDQOz4xG7s



The farmers who took part in the project were surveyed afterward. In 2017, Latvian and Lithuanian country tourism farms joined together -- more than 190 in all, with 120 in Latvia and 71 from Lithuania. 116 farms in Latvia provided responses which showed that the trend is that there were very uneven visits to farms, from 0 to as many as 250 visitors. The average number of visitors in 2017 was the same as in 2016 - 26 visitors per farm in 2016 and 27 in 2017. 3,117 people visited farms in Latvia, mostly families (65%), groups of friends (31%), as well as individual visitors (4%).

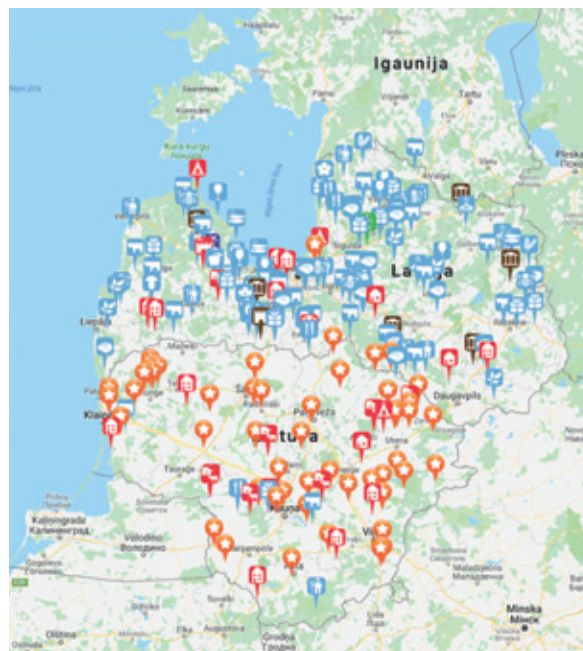
1,750 people took part in Lithuania, and data were received from 58 farms. The number of visitors ranged between 0 and 380, and the average number of visitors at each farm was 30. Most of the visitors were families (50%) and groups of friends (19%).

“

The number of participants has increased year by year. In 2018, 205 farms in Latvia and Lithuania took part, which was a record.”

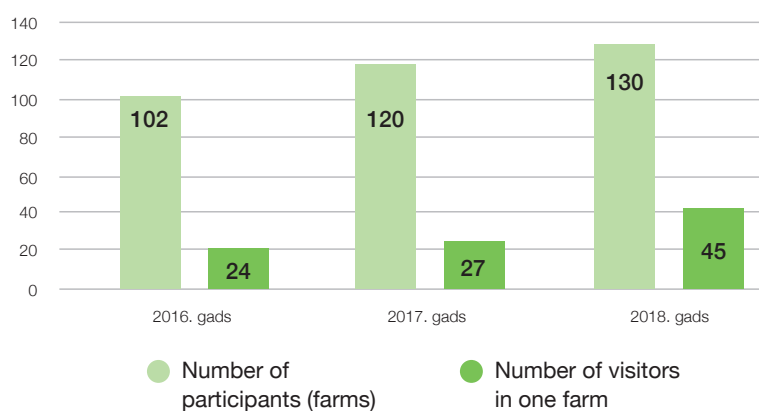
The number of participants has increased year by year. In 2018, 205 farms in Latvia and Lithuania took part, which was a record. 130 companies opened their doors in Latvia and 75 did so in Lithuania

Responses about the project were received from 124 Latvian farms, showing that they were visited far more often in 2018 than was the case in previous years. 5,822 visitors visited farms (2,479 in 2016 and 3,117 in 2017). The average per farm was 45 (24 in 2016 and 26 in 2017).



Map: Open days in Latvia and Lithuania participants in year 2018

NUMBER OF ACTION PARTICIPANTS AND VISITORS IN LATVIA (2016 -2018)



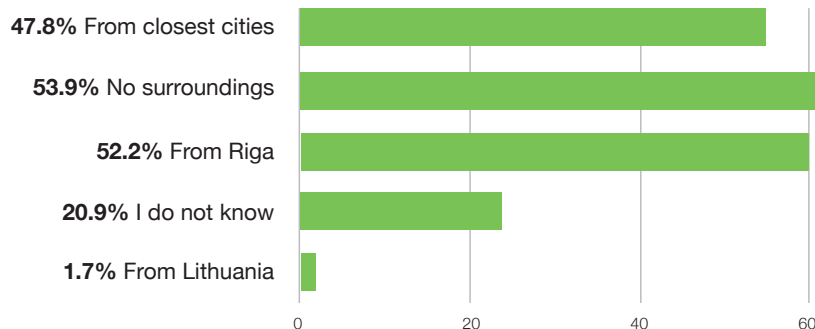
TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS IN ACTION IN LATVIA



Uneven numbers of visits occurred in 2018, ranging from 0 to 890, but in general terms, the number of visitors improved. Last year no visitors visited 29 farms, while in 2018 there were only 12. Several of those participants admitted that they had not promoted the project, which was the reason why there were no visitors. Also of importance is the capacity of farms in terms of receiving visitors. Several farmers complained that there were too many potential visitors, which meant that some had to be turned away. The project in 2018 lasted for three days, from May 4-6, and most participants took part on May 4 and 5, with a few accepting travellers the next day. Another trend was that visitors tended to appear without warning even though farmers had asked them to contact the farm in advance. We are thankful for the understanding of farmers and their readiness to receive such “sudden” guests. Respondents also said that visitors were more prepared for the visit than in other years, visiting farms on the basis of a pre-defined route and visiting several of them during the course of one day.



FROM WHERE WERE YOUR VISITORS



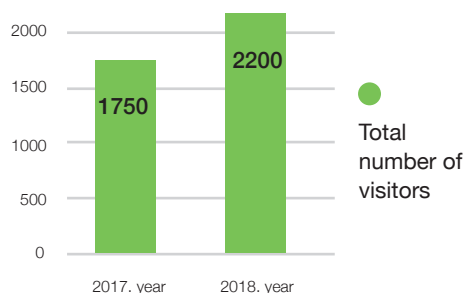
Most of the visitors were families and groups of friends, followed by groups of schoolchildren, work colleagues and individual visitors.

Feedback was received from 72 farms in Lithuania, with visitor numbers in 2018 ranging from 0 to 400 and the average per farm being 31. Most visitors were family members, friends and schoolchildren.

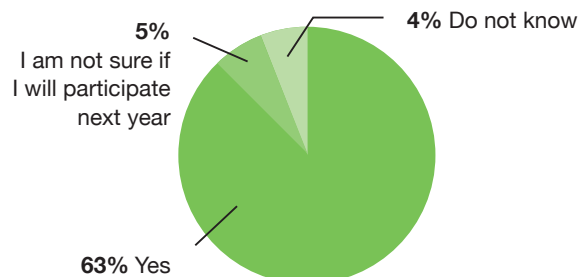


Farmers in both countries say that visitors are mostly interested in activities in which they can take part -- candle-making, arts and crafts, as well as educational and practical activities. Many visitors said that this is a great way of learning about farms. Always popular are places that offer a chance to look at animals and to taste various products.

NUMBER OF VISITORS IN "OPEN DAYS" IN LITHUANIA IN 2017 - 2018 YEAR

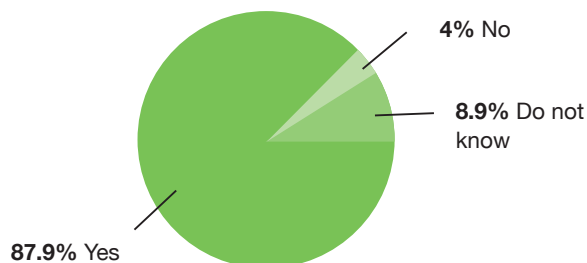


DO YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE IN NEXT ACTION "OPEN DAYS" IN LITHUANIA?





WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN SIMILAR ACTIONS IN LITHUANIA?

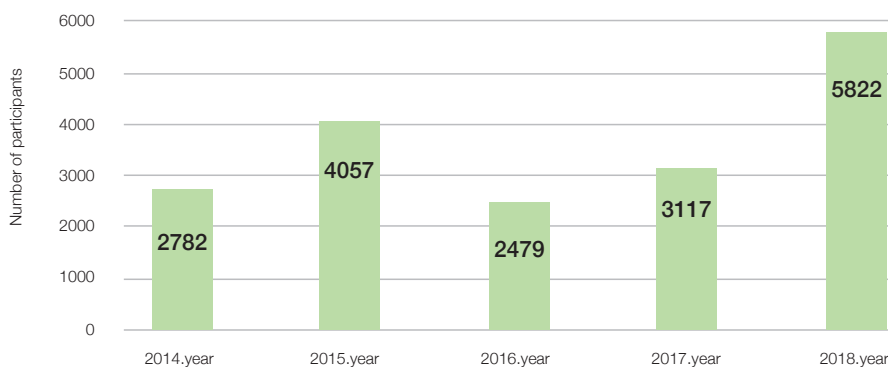


“

It is positive that farmers are prepared to take part in similar activities during the next year.”

It is positive that farmers are prepared to take part in similar activities during the next year. The action has been organised in Latvia since 2014, which means that visitor numbers can be tracked. Good influences include warm weather, weekends and a broad range of offers so that taking part in the project can be merged with other nearby events.

NUMBER OF ACTION “OPEN DAYS” VISITORS IN LATVIA, 2014 - 2018 YEAR



SOUVENIRS

There was developed “Go Rural. Heritage agritourism” souvenir concept. The souvenirs – T-shirts, stickers, badges, bags, aprons, pens, bottle openers, and other practical things.



COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES



INFO TRAINING SEMINARS

We organised six regional seminars in Latvia and Lithuania to talk about the idea of historical agritourism heritage. These were held in Zemgale, Latgale and Kurzeme in Latvia (totally 224 participants) and in Kaunas, Anykščiai and Kedainiai in Lithuania (totally 120 participants). We talked about aspects of the project and things that should be done to involve a greater number of businesses and local residents so as to benefit both the farmers and the tourists. We talked about the project idea, arguing that each farm can have things or stories that would be interesting to tourists. We also discussed the heritage of agricultural traditions, as well as the way in which buildings and tools in the countryside have changed over the centuries. We shared best practices in Latvia, focusing on farms that have a large collection of tools, can demonstrate beekeeping processes, allow people to try to process hemp, etc. Lithuanian colleagues also talked about digital marketing.



PARTICIPATION IN FAIRS

In order to promote heritage agritourism products we participated in several tourism fairs. In Latvia fairs “Lauki ienāk pilsētā 2018” and „Rīga Food 2018”, in Lithuania „Agrobalt 2018” presented heritage agritourism product and tourism materials – postcards, maps and tour manual. Also participated in international fair “Grüne Woche”, which took part in Year 2019 in Germany.

Agrobalt, Lithuania



“Grüne Woche”, Germany



Rīga food, Latvia



Lauki ienāk pilsētā, Latvia



COLLABORATION WITH MASS MEDIA

- During the open house days in Latvia and Lithuania, we organised four media tours, and 95 radio, television, Internet and print media journalists took part;
- We regularly informed the media by sending out news releases and taking part in radio and television broadcasts and series;
- We correlated the publications in the mass media and their partners, finding that there were more than 140 press articles and radio interviews during the course of the project.

Mass media trip



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES IN www.celotajs.lv AND www.atostogoskaime.lt

DATA BASE OF THE HERITAGE AGRITOURISM FARMS

Our database now presents information about more than 100 farms in Latvia and Lithuania in the project territory. Each farm has a general description, specialised texts, a photo gallery, contact information and a notation on the digital map so that the farm could be found more easily. GPS co-ordinates were also offered. People could search for farms on the basis of their names, areas of specialisation or location.

DIGITAL VERSIONS OF THE TOUR ROUTES

You can learn about the historical agritourism heritage along ten routes. You will learn about various areas of agriculture, including farming, fishing, food production and crafts. It takes several days to cover these routes, which are longer and shorter. You can drive a car or bicycle down the routes. They include places to visit, as well as recommended accommodations. The routes are on a Google map, and you can choose destinations that are related to the route. You will find cultural and historical objects, little saloons, accommodations, etc.

Heritage agritourism tour routes:

<https://www.celotajs.lv/lv/c/brand/agriheritage/tours>

<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/lt/atviros-dienos-kaime/lankomi-ukiai/agroturizmas-marsrutai>



PRINTED MATERIALS

HANDBOOKS

„Heritage agritourism. Product marketing”

The handbook “Heritage agritourism. Product marketing.” offers practical marketing advice to tourism stakeholders in terms of introducing and popularising products related to heritage agritourism in the market. The handbook reviews target groups in terms of who and why is interested in the heritage agritourism. We offered ways of marketing and popularising destinations at exhibitions, as well as in partnership with organisations, the media, travel agencies, local governments and tourism information centres. One chapter in the handbook is focused on E-marketing in terms of content, advertising on the Internet, E-mail marketing, social networks, virtual reputations and returns on marketing campaigns. Handbook is available in printed and online pdf version.



„Heritage agritourism. Product criteria”

The handbook “Heritage agritourism. Product criteria” contains general and specialised criteria related to heritage agritourism products, with examples used to explain them. A separate part of the handbook focuses on ways in which agritourism heritage products can be established. It also discusses accreditation in terms of what to do to ensure that the farm is specialised in the area of agricultural heritage and that it has a sign of recognition in terms of specialised pictograms in marketing materials. An addendum to the handbook covers various historical heritage values, as well as modern farms. It offers interviews with manufacturers who explain the preservation of traditional values under present-day circumstances.



„Heritage agritourism. Product development”

The handbook “Heritage agritourism. Product development” informs about opportunities to use heritage in agritourism, helping tourism stakeholders to establish such products. The book includes examples of heritage agritourism and farms. There is advice on organising tours and tastings, demonstrating processes or involving visitors in an interactive programme that must be taken into account when starting to sell products and/or souvenirs. There is also a discussion about necessary infrastructure, along with an historical look at farming and jobs, as well as various interesting facts to use when establishing products.



MAP „HERITAGE AGRITOURISM”

The heritage agritourism map offers information about 102 places in Latvia (Latgale, Kurzeme and Zemgale) and Lithuania (Aukštaitija and Žemaitija). It offers information about typical and regional farming traditions so that travellers can learn about them. The history of farms is very broad, and this map calls on people to visit craftspeople, preparers of local foods and beverages, growers and manufacturers of countryside products, fishermen, farms and agricultural, craftsmanship and fishing museums and collections. The map of Latvia and Lithuania is at a scale of 1:750 000 with 102 objects that are listed. There is information about each location's historical heritage and contact information. The map also marks out ten agritourism routes and offers a brief description of each one. The map is available in English, Latvian, Russian, German and Lithuanian.



„HERITAGE AGRITOURISM”, TOUR MANUAL FOR FOREIGN MARKET

This tour manual is meant for tourism operators, sectoral professionals and travellers. A „Heritage Agritourism” present offers about heritage agritourism offers in Latvia and Lithuania. The handbook has information about farms at which tourists can learn ancient skills and see how farmers work today. There is information about agritourism accommodations, as well as other practical advice on how to organise a trip. The handbook has ten special agritourism routes and five tourism routes related to historical gardens in Latvia and Lithuania.

The handbook has been published in English and German and is meant for tourism operators.



POSTCARDS

We have released a collection of 20 postcards that speak to people lives and traditions at farms - ones that have been preserved and are still important. Each autumn we go mushroom picking, we serve pierogi during holidays, and we collect herbs for teas during the summer. Each postcard has a brief sentence to describe historical agri-tourism heritage: "Old apple trees are romantic at Latvian farms," "The rooster is the boss of a Latvian farm," "Each season in Lithuania has its own colour, so find the one that you like," and "An oasis of peace in Lithuania's countryside."







Lauku Ceļotājs

www.celotajs.lv

Latvian Roural Tourism Association
"Lauku ceļotājs"

Kalneciema street 40, Riga, LV-1046, Latvia

+371 67617600

lauku@celotajs.lv; www.celotajs.lv



facebook.com/laukucelotajs



Lithuanian country tourism association

K. Donelaičio g. 2-201, Kaunas, LT-44213, Lietuva

+370 37400354

www.atostogoskaime.lt



facebook.com/atostogoskaime

