Book Review

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Agritourism for Sustainable Development Reflections from Emerging African Economies
by: Brighton Nyagadza, Farai Chigora and Azizul Hassan (Editors)
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In recent years, agritourism has gained prominence as a transformative approach that intertwines agriculture with tourism, fostering sustainable development in rural areas. In an era where sustainable development is more critical than ever, the exploration of agritourism offers a compelling framework for fostering a more sustainable future. The urgent need for innovative tourism practices especially in emerging economies such as those in Africa, underscores the importance of integrating sustainable methodologies that minimise resource consumption and environmental impact.

The book "Agritourism for sustainable development – Reflections from emerging African economies" delves into these themes, examining the empirical studies and practical applications of agritourism through the lens of African emerging economies. Additionally, the book offers a comprehensive exploration of this innovative paradigm, highlighting its potential to revitalise local economies while promoting environmental stewardship and cultural heritage. The specific volume brings together contributions from various scholars and practitioners, who share insights into their experience and best practices.

By examining case studies from around the globe, this work not only illustrates the opportunities within the agritourism sector, but also addresses the challenges that must be navigated to create a sustainable future. As the demand for meaningful localised experiences continues to grow, this timely volume, serves as an essential resource for understanding the vital role agritourism plays in fostering sustainable development in contemporary society and particular in the African continent (Zvavahera and Chigora, 2023)

The book presents an in-depth exploration of agritourism, focusing on the complexities and opportunities surrounding its development within the African continent. Each chapter examines both economic and non-economic aspects of agritourism, creating a comprehensive understanding of its role in rural development (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014).

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The initial chapters (1–3), lay the groundwork by defining agritourism and its potential for economic and social development in the African continent. Chapter 3, "Re-branding the African Continent through Agritourism" illustrates the capacity of agritourism to reshape perceptions of Africa, highlighting its rich agricultural heritage and diverse landscapes, as valuable tourist attractions. Contrasting economic motivations with cultural appreciation set a robust economic framework for understanding agritourism's implications. The chapter examines how the continent's rich agricultural heritage and favourable climate can serve as key attractions for tourists, showcasing the potential of agritourism. It also presents a compelling case for revitalising farming as a viable career choice, especially for the younger generation. Focusing on Nigeria, the study showcases concrete examples of agritourism's impact on local economies, emphasising the benefits of increased employment and job creation. The first chapters, (1–3), serve as crucial resources for academics and practitioners alike, providing valuable insights into the methodologies and theoretical foundations needed to navigate the complexities of sustainable agritourism.

Chapters 4 and 5, on agritourism and social media marketing, offer a comprehensive analysis of the potential and challenges faced by agritourism operators in Zimbabwe. Chapter 4 illustrates how social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, serve as effective marketing tools, allowing for direct communication and customer engagement despite obstacles, such as poor technical skills and infrastructure. The application of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), model, provides a structured approach for enhancing social media strategies. Chapter 5 explores the prospects and challenges of developing sustainable agritourism in the southeast of Zimbabwe, specifically around commercial agro – sugar farms. It addresses the underutilisation of tourism resources in the region, despite significant socio-economic benefits associated with agritourism.

Chapters 6 and 7, further explore the role of mobile technology in social change and the ethical considerations in digital marketing. These chapters highlight the need for ethical practices in social media marketing and underscore the importance of supportive policies for sustainable agritourism development, providing valuable insights for stakeholders in the industry.

Chapter 8 highlights the challenges faced by rural communities due to unsustainable agricultural practices and advocates for the adoption of agritourism and innovative technologies as viable economic alternatives. Chapter 9 emphasises the role of digital technologies in promoting sustainable agritourism, identifying critical success factors like, farmer education and funding. Chapter 10 discusses the potential of sustainable agritourism in re-branding Zimbabwe, identifying organisational support and effective marketing as key success factors. Meanwhile, Chapter 11 explores stakeholder perspectives in Angola, highlighting collaboration and community engagement as essential for agritourism growth.

Chapter 12 analyses Corporate Social Responsibility s integration with agritourism, linking the two, to Zimbabwe's economic ambitions and sustainable development goals. The specific chapter underscores the need for collaborative efforts among governments stake holders and communities, to leverage agritourism and technology for sustainable rural development (Baipai et al., 2023). It offers actionable insights into policy-making and strategic planning, contributing valuable knowledge to the discourse on agritourism in less developed contexts. Moreover, these discussions, underscore the importance of

ethical practices and community engagement in creating sustainable agritourism initiatives that benefit both businesses and local populations.

Chapter 13 emphasises the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in agritourism, highlighting its benefits and challenges. Despite the positive correlation between technology usage and agritourism development, issues like high infrastructure costs and digital literacy remain barriers. Chapter 14 underscores the potential of digital technologies to diversify rural economies, aligning with sustainable development goals (SDGs) while addressing farmers needs for innovation. Chapter 15 discusses the effectiveness of agritourism in Zimbabwe, revealing that many fall short on usability and marketing effectiveness, thus necessitating improvements.

Chapter 16 advocates for agricultural tourism as a sustainable development strategy, asserting that it can significantly benefit rural economies amidst challenges such as infrastructure deficits. The last chapters, Chapters 17 and 18 propose a conceptual framework linking corporate social responsibility (CSR), to sustainable agritourism development, suggesting strategic (CSR) initiatives can enhance community well-being. Chapter 18 introduces flood recession agriculture, emphasising its dual role in providing both agritourism and recreational opportunities in the Zambezi Valley. Both chapters advocate for innovative solutions and strategic collaborations to unlock the agritourism potential in Zimbabwe, fostering economic and social development.

Conclusion

Overall, this book serves as a crucial resource for scholars, practitioners and policy makers interested in agritourism. It successfully connects theoretical concepts with practical applications while emphasising the importance of sustainable practices, technology adoption and ethical marketing. The collective insights provided, make significant contributions to the discussion of agritourism as a catalyst for rural development and sustainable growth in Africa.

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