

DETERMINANTS OF DEVELOPMENT OF FARM TOURISM IN COMMUNES OF THE WIEPRZA RIVER BASIN

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Abstract

The subject of this study was the analysis of determinants and functioning of farm tourism in the communes of the Wieprza River basin. There was performed the analysis of determinants of farm tourism development in the area of communes located in the Wieprza River basin and characteristics of functioning of farm tourism in agritourism farms in the studied area along with the analysis of selected features of tourist traffic on the basis of field research that had been carried out.

Key words: Wieprza, agritourism, communes, farm tourism

INTRODUCTION

Agritourism constitutes one of tourism kinds rated among types of alternative tourism (Drzewiecki 2010, Kowalczyk 2000, Oppermann 1995, Pałka 2009, Roberts and Hall 2001, Szwichenberg 2000, Wojciechowska 2011). According to Drzewiecki (2010) agritourism is a kind of leisure taking place in the rural areas of farm character with the accommodation base and recreational activity connected with the agricultural holding or a similar one and its surrounding (agricultural, productive and service). A special role is played in its development by areas of the landscape changed only to a slight extent as a result of man's activity located in considerable isolation from strongly urbanized and industrialized regions. The investigations referring to agritourism have long tradition in Poland. There are a lot of studies referring to different determinants of agritourism development and a lot of works in different scale (Bernacka et al. 2009, Cichowska and Klimek 2011, Kubal and Mika 2012, Polucha and Žukovskis 2010, Przezbórska 2005, Sokół 2012, Tschirschnitz

2011). The most of works concerns local and regional scale of agritourism development. The rural places are the natural base for the development of farm tourism while active agricultural holdings constitute a material base as they function in the areas of precious values of natural environment and low level of the environment pollution. The location in isolation from other areas of mass touristic penetration is also important. One of such regions is the area of Polish seaside river basins.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE PAPER. RESEARCH METHOD

The analysis of functioning of farm tourism in the communes located in the area of the Wieprza River basin was carried out in this study. There was performed the characteristics of determinants of the farm tourism development in the studied area based on the traits of the existing tourist values and the material base for the development of agritourism in the studied area. The characteristics of tourist traffic in agritourism farms of the studied area was performed in the second part of the study on the basis of the survey that had been carried out.

LOCATION OF THE STUDIED AREA. CHARACTERISTICS OF TOURISTIC ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE REGION

The region of the Wieprza basin covers the area of 2,173 km². The examined terrain is located within the borders of the following four physiographic mesoregions: Słowińskie Coast, Sławieńska Plain, Polanowska Upland and Bytów Lakeland. In administrative division, the area is located within borders of communes belonging to Sławieński and Słupski District (Fig. 1) and to historic Pomeranian region. The touristic attractiveness of the studied area first of all results from its tourist geographical location and is connected with its natural values. The Wieprza River constitutes the main dominant feature of the landscape. The source area of the Wieprza River is created by the chain of lakes not far from the place Wałdowo. The length of the river in its midstream is 114.8 km, however in the axis of the valley is 101.8 km. Natural value of the area results from its location in the southern part in the lakeland district which results in high lake index, considerable variety of terrain configuration due to the location within the range of the terminal moraine of the Baltic last glacial period and high level of forestation rate of the studied region. The central and the bottom parts of the Wieprza Valley are situated within the landscape of the coast which results in considerable slope of the bottom of the valley and smaller degree of diversification of terrain configuration. Besides the natural values, a very important element of touristic attractiveness of the area are anthropogenic values. They are mostly located in the main places of the region: Darłowo, Krag, Sławno, Miastko. These are first of all single monuments of sacral architecture from the gothic period and several gothic castles as well as renaissance ones. The areas of the greatest touristic attractiveness of the studied region is Darłowo due to the best accommodation on the studied area and valuable monuments: the Castle of King Eric functioning as the museum, St. Gertrude's Church and High Gate. Jarosławiec also is of great tour-

istic attractiveness due to its seaside location and proper accommodation infrastructure. Krań and Polanów and their surrounding belong to other attractive areas in the northern part of the studied region. They are characterized by great height differences of the terrain, high forestation rates and numerous objects of material culture – the castle in Krań, Święta Góra Polanowska and other monuments of Polanów. The regions of Korzybie, Barwino, Barcino and Obłęż on Wysoczyzna Polanowska are first of all attractive due to forestation and considerable height differences. Apart from mentioned above terrains such places as: Sianów, Sławno, Malechowo, Sycewice, Trzebielino, Miastko and their surrounding are also fascinating as far as the examined features are concerned. The least attractive terrains are in border regions of the Wieprza basin discussed in the study. These are mostly regions deprived of scoring tourist attractions, with plain landscape and in most part woodless. These areas can be found in the northern part of Postomino commune, north and west part of Słupsk commune, south and west part of Kobylnica commune and central part of



Fig. 1. The communes located in the Wieprza basin

Source: Own study based on maps.geoportals.gov.pl/webclient/ access on 09/11/2012

Polanów commune. Farm tourism in the area of communes of the Wieprza basin has been developed since the 90' of the 20th century. The exact identification of the quantity state of agritourism farms and agritourism accommodation on the studied area is difficult due to the fact that not all objects are registered in the official registers of accommodation objects. Statistics of the Main Statistical Office were used for the analysis of the quantity state and distribution of the agritourism objects in this study.

According to the data of the Institute of Tourism from 2007 in the communes of the Wieprza River basin there were 86 all-year agritourism objects offering 949 accommodation places (Table 1). The number of seasonal agritourism objects was by 53.5% smaller and it amounted to 40 objects which had at their disposal 570 accommodation places. The greatest number of seasonal agritourism objects had Postomino commune (30) and Darłowo commune (8). Single objects of this type were in communes of Sianów and Dębica Kaszubska. According to the Institute of Tourism in communes of Kołczygłowy and Sławno there were no agritourism objects.

The number of accommodation places in seasonal agricultural objects in Postomino commune amounted to 412, in Darłowo commune 115, in Sianów commune 30, however in Dębica Kaszubska commune there were 4 accommodation places (Table 1). The prevailing number of seasonal agritourism objects in the communes of Postomino and Darłowo is partly the effect of their seaside location and connected with it accommodation development subordinated to recreational function.

In order to characterize the agritourism on the studied area there was performed field study in form of the surveys carried out among guests of agritourism farms. The survey was carried out in agricultural farms of the Wieprza River basin in the period from 15th July 2012 till 25th August 2012. Due to difficulties which were caused by the owners of agritourism farms only 201 filled questionnaires were obtained out of the research.

According to Kowalczyk „Tourist traffic is the social phenomenon which is connected with physical, temporal migration of people from their permanent place of residence to other places which creates particular demand for services and goods, revealing during the journey and while staying beyond their permanent place of residence” (Kowalczyk 2000, p. 33).

Determination of the scale of tourist traffic in agritourism objects is not possible because of the fact that lots of agricultural objects owners do not keep systematic record of guests and provided accommodation. On the basis of data concerning the number of beds provided totally in all communes of the region of the Wieprza River basin it may be stated that the most often visited commune in 2012 was Darłowo one with 524,964 tourists, which constituted 45.3% of all accommodation places provided in the communes of the studied region. The second as far as the number of offered beds is concerned was Postomino commune (273,335). In the remaining communes of the studied region fewer number of accommodation places was provided in Słupsk commune (33,564), Polanów (11,326), Kepice (3,382), Sianów (2,245), Miastko (2,112), Kobylnica (1,463), Malechowo (1,411), Tuchomie (1,359), Dębica Kaszubska (569). In communes of Sławno and Trzebielino there was no record on provided accommodation. It results from the obtained data that in com-

Table 1

The number of agritourism objects in the Wieprza basin communes

Commune	Number of all-year accomodation objects	Number of seasonal accomodation objects	Number of all-year accomodation places	Number of seasonal accomodation places
Darłowo	4	8	53	115
Dębica Kaszubska	6	1	32	4
Kępice	4	0	52	0
Kobylnica	2	0	26	0
Kołczygłowy	0	0	0	0
Malechowo	3	0	34	0
Miastko	17	0	196	0
Polanów	11	0	103	9
Postomino	13	30	179	412
Sianów	16	1	194	30
Sławno	0	0	0	0
Słupsk	7	0	54	0
Trzebielino	2	0	22	0
Tuchomie	1	0	4	0
Total	86	40	949	570

Source: own study based on the Statistics of the Main Statistical Office 2012, www.stat.gov.pl access on 15/10/2013

munes of Darłowo and Postomino there was up to 69% of all provided accommodation places in the communes of the studied region of the Wieprza River basin. It is worth mentioning that these are communes in which there are places with a very well developed tourist function subordinated to realization of recreational function. One of the most important elements of the intensity of tourism analysis is identification of motives of taking up tourist activity. (Przeclawski 1997). They are one of the factors which co-determine the behaviour of tourists. Among motives connected with the wish to depart to a particular place may be mentioned: a motive for getting to know the culture, a motive for getting to know nature and a motive for getting to know social life (Przeclawski 1997).

The survey shows that the main reason of visiting the agricultural farm is the need to rest far from the noise of the city (Fig. 2). This motive was mentioned by 36.6% of the questioned tourists. Further about 25.0% of the respondents were motivated by the direct contact with nature and about 20.6% of the people taking part in a survey

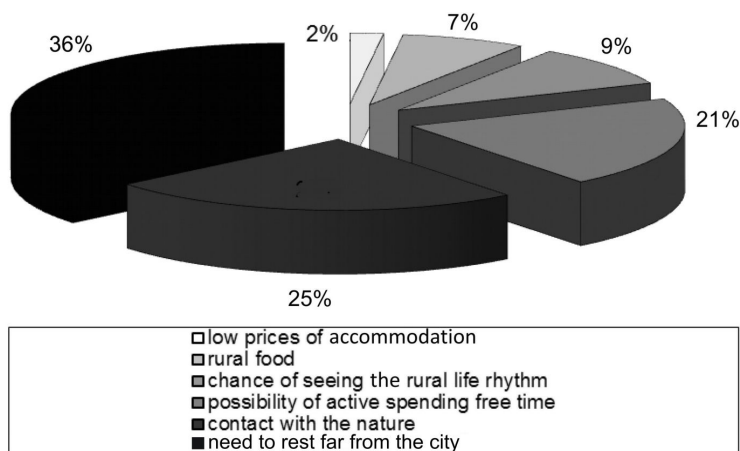


Fig. 2. Main motives of visiting the agricultural farms of the Wieprza River basin
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

decided to stay in the agritourism farm due to the possibility to spend time in an active way. Besides for 9% of the questioned tourists coming to the agritourism farm was the chance to get to know rural life and in some way to take part actively in the rhythm of farm life. The rest of the motives of coming to agritourism accommodation and farms were mentioned more rarely 7.2% – rural food and 1.7% – low costs of accommodation. Similar reasons of coming to agritourism farms can be found with authors carrying out survey in other areas – communes of Lębork district (Parzych 2010), in Lubuskie Province (Uglis and Krysińska 2012), in Lubelskie Province (Zawadka 2012). However, in the survey carried out for the region of Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province (Cichowska and Klimek 2011) and the Narew National Park (Sokół 2012) the price was mentioned most often as the main motive for coming to the agritourism farm.

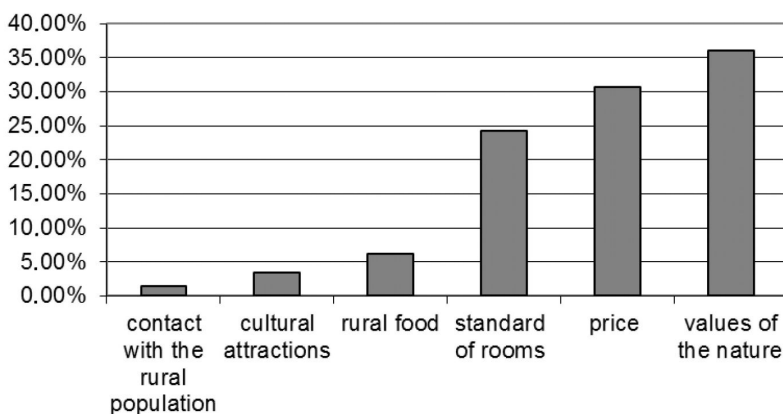


Fig. 3. Motives of choosing a particular agritourism farm of the Wieprza River basin in tourists' opinion
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

While choosing a particular agritourism farm as a travel destination tourists considered the values of nature of the region (36%) and later the price of stay and standard of rooms (Fig. 3).

In the studied population almost 80% of respondents had earlier agritourism experience and for 20% it was the first visit to the agritourism farm. It results from the survey, that 62.1% of the questioned people, who earlier used that type of departure, practiced it once a year, 24.2% more seldom than once a year, but 13.7% twice a year or more often (Fig. 4). About 24% of the questioned people always chose the same agritourism farm, 32% only sometimes but 44% of farm tourists chose each time a different agritourism farm for their stay.

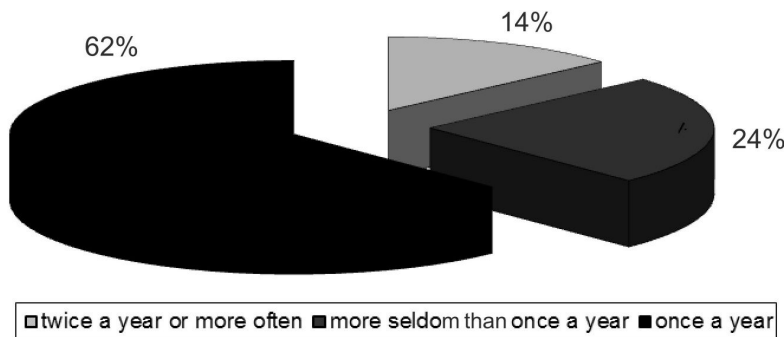


Fig. 4. Earlier agrotourism experience of the tourists visiting the farms in the Wieprza basin
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

The carried out survey revealed that 69% of tourists decided to stay in the agritourism farm with a family, 17% took a partner with them but 13% went with friends. Only 1% of the questioned people practiced agritourism alone (Fig. 5). Similar results were obtained by Uglis and Krysińska (2012), Sokół (2012), Zawadka (2012), Cichowska (2011).

It results from the carried out survey, that a car was a most popular mean of transportation used by respondents while travelling to the agritourism farm. About 86%

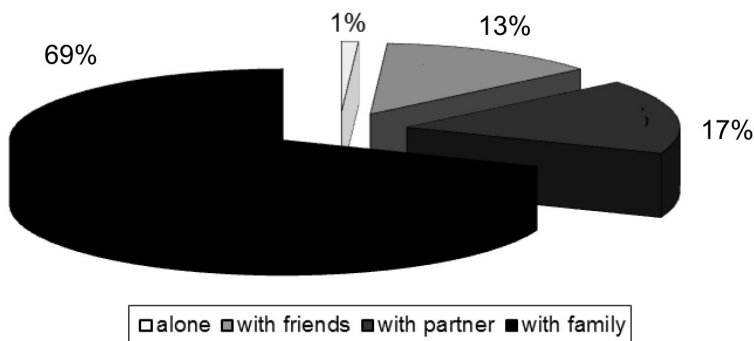


Fig. 5. Structure of participants of tourist arrivals in research population
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

of the examined people reached a chosen farm by car. Due to the objective limitations resulting from the availability of other means of transportation fewer people used trains (10%) and buses (4%).

The analysis of the sources of knowledge concerning the offer of agritourism farms on the studied region allows to make a conclusion that 47.8% of respondents got to know about a possibility to stay in a particular farm from a family or friends, 40.8% of the respondents mentioned the Internet as a source of knowledge of the offer. The information and promotion with the use of the Internet pages has a predominant character among other channels of information distribution concerning a tourist offer. The attention should be paid to the fact that only 12% of the questioned people got the information from a tourist office, from colleagues at work or during the stay near the farm.

Most of the questioned people – because as many as 80.6% – evaluated the standard of their accommodation as good and very good, 18.4% as average but only 1% as bad and very bad. It may prove the owners' great care of the standard of equipment of the material base adapted to the reception of guests in the farm.

While analyzing the tourist activity an interesting issue is the evaluation of its seasonal type. The most important factors influencing the seasonal character of tourist traffic are the weather conditions which determine the greatest tourist activity of the Polish society in a holiday period in the area of the coast. Młynarczyk and Sajko (2002) divide the stay in the agritourism farm taking into consideration its length, as follows:

- short stay – guests who usually stay in the farm up to six days preferring a short rest;
- long stay – guests who stay in the agritourism farm from 7 even to twenty days expecting a great variety of attractions and recreational values and the feeling of comfort;
- tourists coming to the agritourism farm to spend a weekend, first of all for recreational purposes;
- touring tourists coming to a farm for 1-2 days for recreational purposes and in order to practice active tourism.

The survey that was carried out allowed to state that most tourist (46.8%) visited the farm for a period of more than seven days. According to the above mentioned distribution these are guests of long stays. About 37.8% of respondents chose a stay in a period of 6-7 days. The fewer number of tourists were those preferring 1-5 days long departures. Shorter departures were in the interests of 15.4% of tourists, which means that departures lasting 3-5 days were chosen by 12.9% of the questioned people but 1-2 days departures were chosen by 2.5% of tourists.

In the demographic structure of tourists about 53% of respondents were women but 47% were men. The greatest number of people taking part in the survey were respondents at the age of 36-45 (30.8%). These were mostly people who represented families with children, and who wanted to spend their free time in calm and peaceful surrounding far from noisy and polluted cities. The purpose of the visit to the agritourism farm were also educational aspects and the possibility to get to know the rural life among animals and natural environment. The smaller group of people were those at the age of 46-65 (25.4%) and those 25-35 years old (16.9%) who while

staying on a farm expected to rest from the stress of everyday life. People at the age of 18-25 constituted 10.4%, these were mostly group of friends wishing to spend their free time together in the countryside. The smallest percentage of people was recorded for those above 66 years (6.6%). It also has to be stressed that a small number of elderly people among the respondents results from their refusal to take part in the survey. People below 18 years old constituting 10% stayed in the agritourism farms with their parents (Fig. 6).

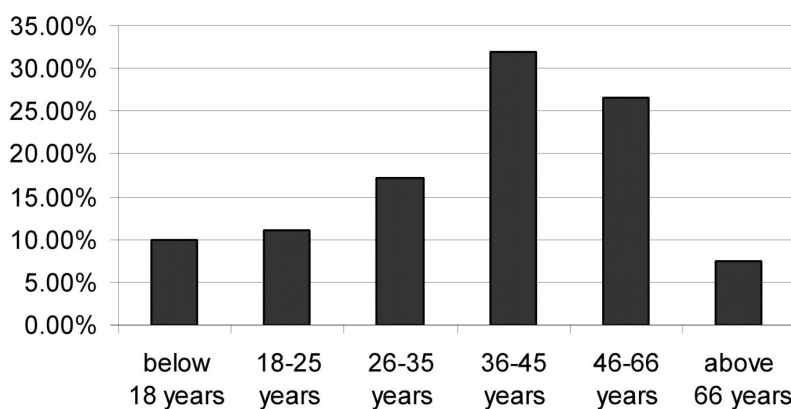


Fig. 6. Demographic structure of tourists in researched population

Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

The analysis of the respondents education structure shows that the greatest group were farm tourists with secondary education (43%) and higher education (30%). They are probably the most numerous receivers of agritourism services because they are curious of the world and open to new cognitive experience. A similar age structure was noticed in their studies by Zawadka (2012), Uglis and Krysińska (2012). However, only 17% of the questioned people had vocational education and primary education (10%) which is connected with smaller tourist mobility of people in this group. Identification of the range of origin of people visiting agritourism farms in a particular region is an interesting issue while analyzing tourist traffic in the studied area. The clients of agritourism farms are usually citizens of strongly urbanized and industrialized areas. The agritourism activity is mostly devoted to tourists coming from average and big cities. The bigger the city, the greater interest of the citizens in agritourism. There are reasons why the citizens of smaller towns considerably more rarely visit agritourism farms. It is caused by the fact that population living in those towns has an easier access to rural areas, these people are usually less wealthy and depend on the agricultural function of their farms in comparison to city population.

The analysis of the origin of tourists in the population included in the survey shows that most people came from the Śląskie (17%) and the Dolnośląskie Provinces (about 20%), further there were such provinces as: Wielkopolskie, Małopolskie and Mazowieckie (Fig. 7). The smallest number of tourists were from the least urbanized provinces of eastern and north-eastern Poland.

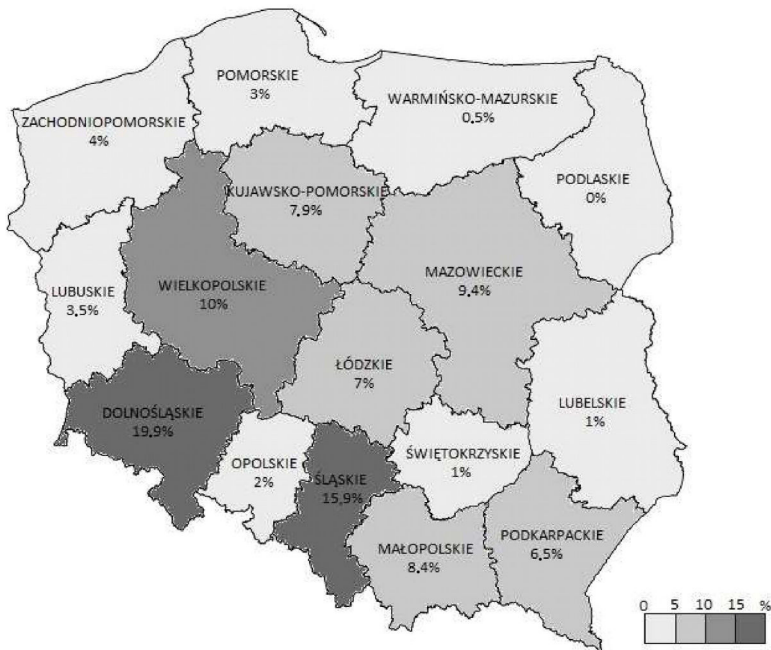


Fig. 7. The origin of the tourists visiting the agrotourism farms in the Wieprza River basin
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

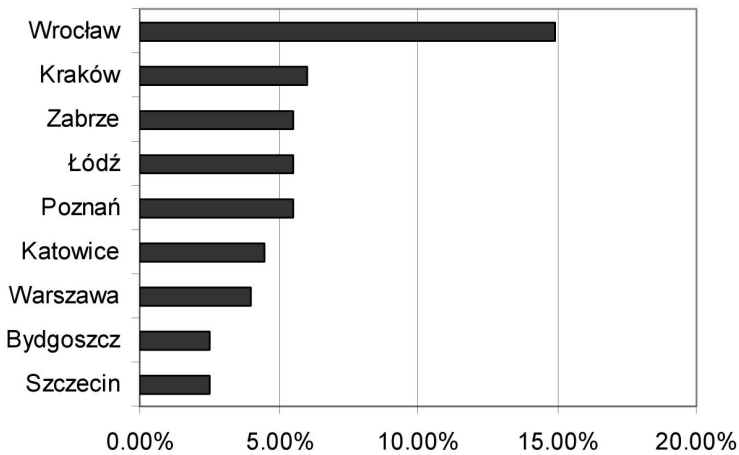


Fig. 8. The main cities of the tourists origin
Source: own study based on the questionnaire survey

During the analysis of the origin of tourists according to their place of residence it was stated that most of questioned people came from such big cities as Wrocław (14.9%), Kraków (6%), Poznań (5.5%) and Łódź (5.5%) (Fig. 8). These results prove the dominance of tourists from big cities who most often visit agritourism accommodation and farms (Parzych 2010, Uglis and Krysińska 2012). It is due to nui-

sance of living in a big city and willingness to escape from noise and pollution, as well as lack of living space and intention to rest from high intensity of life. These factors increase the demand for regeneration of psychophysical strengths in different conditions of natural environment (Knecht 2009). As a result of tiredness of urban population these people choose rest in quiet and peaceful surrounding of the countryside in agritourism farms (Knecht 2009, p. 22).

The analysis of determinants of the farm tourism development in communes of the Wieprza River basin leads to the following conclusions:

1. The scale of tourist development in the scope of communications availability of agritourism accommodation and farms on the studied area is uneven.
2. There is a visible majority of the number of agritourism accommodation and farms in seaside communes, which is connected with big concentration of tourist traffic in seaside places during the tourist season.
3. The agritourism farms in the studied area have mostly seasonal character and are located in the seaside communes of the analysed region of studies.
4. In the demographic structure of visiting people the majority constitute tourists with families in the age group of 36-45 years, coming in their own car to stay for a period of 6-7 days for recreational purposes and looking for peace and quiet, away from noise and nuisance of living in big cities.
5. Tourists visiting agritourism farms on the studied area mostly came from strongly urbanized provinces of southern and central Poland and first of all from big cities.
6. Most people visiting agritourism farms in the communes of the Wieprza River basin systematically takes part in this form of activity and has earlier experience of staying in agritourism farms in other regions of Poland.

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UWARUNKOWANIA ROZWOJU AGROTURYSTYKI W GMINACH DORZECZA WIEPRZY

Streszczenie

Agroturystyka stanowi jedną z form turystyki alternatywnej. Według Drzewieckiego (2010) agroturystyka to wypoczynek na terenach wiejskich o charakterze rolniczym, z bazą noclegową i aktywnością rekreacyjną związaną z gospodarstwem rolnym lub równoważnym i jego otoczeniem (rolniczym, produkcyjnym, usługowym). Szczególną rolę w jej rozwoju odgrywają obszary o krajobrazie w niewielkim stopniu zmienionym na skutek działalności człowieka, położone w znacznej izolacji od regionów silnie zindustrializowanych i zurbanizowanych. Naturalną przestrzenią dla rozwoju agroturystyki są miejscowości wiejskie, a bazę materialną stanowią czynne gospodarstwa rolne funkcjonujące w obszarach o cennych walorach środowiska naturalnego oraz jego niskim stopniu zanieczyszczenia. Istotne znaczenie ma ponadto położenie w izolacji od innych obszarów masowej penetracji turystycznej. Jednym z terenów spełniających te wszystkie warunki jest obszar dorzeczy rzek przymorskich.

W niniejszym opracowaniu dokonano analizy funkcjonowania agroturystyki w gminach położonych na obszarze dorzecza Wieprzy. Opisano również uwarunkowania rozwoju tej formy turystyki na badanym terenie, biorąc pod uwagę charakterystykę istniejących walorów turystycznych oraz bazę materialną. W drugiej części opracowania na podstawie przeprowadzonych badań ankietowych dokonano charakterystyki ruchu turystycznego w gospodarstwach agroturystycznych badanego obszaru, opierając się na głównych cechach turystyki: motywach wyjazdu do gospodarstwa, długości pobytu, wcześniejszych wizytach w gospodarstwach agroturystycznych, strukturze demograficznej turystów oraz ich pochodzeniu.

