

Preface

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Originating from the need stressed by several scholars to devote more research to the complex relationship between the local food producers and processors on the one hand and the tourist industry on the other, this book aims to build a bridge between these two realities.

Having practised fruitful research cooperation on farm tourism between the Universities of Göttingen and Bologna for several years, the editors of this book aim to broaden the scope of both the involved universities and the research streams. To this purpose, in December 2009, a conference on “Food, Agri-Culture and Tourism” took place in Göttingen under the aegis of the DIH (Deutsch-Italienische Hochschulzentrum) and the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst). This book comprises the work presented at this event as well as combining further results and best practice case studies from scholars and practitioners from more than eleven universities.

To this purpose, the book has an interdisciplinary approach. Regarding the structure, there are three main sections. The first part is entitled “Farm and rural tourism” and analyzes the tourist sector in many European countries. Stockebrand, Sidali and Spiller compare different communication styles to promote high-quality food in German farm tourism. Regoli, Vittuari and Segrè focus their analysis on the recent evolution of rural and farm tourism in Romania. Finally, Bianchi offers a diachronical overview of agritourism in the context of the common agricultural policy and comments on the Italian law No. 96/2006 which is entirely dedicated to the promotion of agritourism.

As the title already suggests, the second part of the book links the topic of farm and rural tourism with the sector of food and wine. As shown by Canavari et al. farm operators who tailor educational activities for school groups can make an important contribution to improve the nutritional habits of these young farm guests. Dreyer and Müller claim that cooperative marketing can display economic benefits also at a regional level, using the example of the synergies established between tourist

operators and wine makers in the region of Saale-Unstrut. Thus, the challenges posed by the rapidly changing behaviour of customers seem to be well managed by farmers who are eager to try new ways to attract guests and appreciate acting together. Creativity is another important driver of success, as it is shown in the best-practice described by Schätzel, Arens and Schätzel. Buiatti stresses the important role of other intermediaries, such as the Slow Food Association, who mediate between individuals and farmers. The latter in fact often ignore the new sensitivity of customers for a more sustainable and authentic way of food production.

Other strategies for helping farmers to better profile their oeno-gastronomical offer as a unique selling proposition are discussed in section three which is entitled “New avenues of research: online marketing and sensory analysis”. While Gyau and Stringer as well as Fuchs and Höpken show the pros and cons of adopting e-marketing strategies in the farm and rural hospitality industry, Santini, Cavicchi and Canavari as well as Scharf focus on the growing importance of sensory analysis for better identification of market-segments based on their sensory attributes.

Hence, as stressed by Telfer and Wall in 1996 “relationships between tourism and food production can be placed on a continuum ranging from conflict through coexistence to symbiosis”. This book claims, more than 10 years later, that above all rural and farm tourism has proven to be an example of such a symbiotic relationship between tourism and the food industry.

The Editors

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