

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM BY DEVELOPING NEW AND AUTHENTIC TOURISM PRODUCTS**

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### **Abstract**

Due to growing saturation and competitiveness on tourism market as well as ecological awareness of an individual, certain destinations strive towards creating and offering as acceptable as possible tourist products which are sustainable and unique at the same time, aiming to attract as many as possible contemporary tourist consumers.

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to define the possibilities and limitations in the development of the new and recognizable, authentic tourist products from the point of view of agrotourism farms' owners, who present one of the factors in sustainable and competitive development of rural tourism.

**Methodology** – Aiming to gather the primary data, we conducted a research including 13 agrotourism farms' owners, out of 58 owners running their businesses in the regions of Slavonia, Baranja and Srijem. The primary data were gathered by the use of a semi-structured questionnaire whereby the analysis employed standard scientific methods.

**Findings (obtained results)** – The paper offers an overview of the rural tourism offer based on authenticity and authentic products, as an important tool for reinforcing the competitive and sustainable development of rural tourism destinations. The obtained empirical results show the farms' owners require a multi-sectorial support for a continuous follow-up of consumers' trends, needs, desires and preferences to be able to create and implement the new, authentic and recognizable rural products, which will ultimately lead to multiple benefits and a more sustainable and more competitive development of businesses and of the tourist destination as a whole.

**Contribution** – Our findings contribute to a better understanding of the specific added value of creation of the new, authentic products, aiming to offer a sustainable economy in its full sense.

**Keywords** rural tourism, sustainable development, new tourist product, authentic tourist product, rural tourism destination, Slavonija, Baranja and Srijem.

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