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The impact of farmers engagement into tourism on farm life in Tyrol

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Abstract:

Holidays on farm have had a significant impact on the economic structure of mountain farms in Austria. The activities started with the upcoming mass tourism in the 1960s, not yet as a special segment but in the frame of private B&B offers. During the 1980s a specialised product “holiday on farm” was developed and institutionalised as an association.

The aim of the paper is to describe the nature and amount of changes this new economic activity has brought to the farm. The analysis covers the different periods in the development from the beginnings to present day.

Most significant impacts on farms are found in the following fields:

- Investments into the household were effected earlier than in other farms as tourism required a certain infrastructure.
- Involvement in tourism introduced the use of new communication technologies earlier than on other farms
- Tourism provides for the first time cash income for farm wives. This has influenced the gender relations and roles on the farms
- Tourism provides possibilities to separate living quarters of different generations on the farms
- The socio-cultural interaction with guests, mostly from an urban background, resulted in significant changes of the world view, often especially of the younger generation.
- Tourism impacted on the appreciation of farm products, influencing also consumption patterns of the farm members

These impacts are analysed according to changes in the relations of gender and generation. It is apparent that the activities of holidays on farms are to a large extent female dominated. They mark the first broad wave of commercialisation of female-work in agriculture.

The paper provides an empirical case study on development of farm holidays in the province of Tyrol, Austria, based on a context analysis of the major regional agricultural newspaper, the “Tiroler Bauernzeitung” covering the period from 1966 to today. Besides this view on the general development, the provincial association “Urlaub am Bauernhof” (holidays on farm) is analysed in detail by a number of interviews with various stakeholders and the analysis of relevant internal documents

Introduction

The paper provides a closer look into the concept of “Holiday on Farm” in Tyrol - one of the nine provinces of Austria. The engagement in tourism activities is one of the major sources of additional income for mountain farmers by on farm activities. As of today about one third of all 15.000 farms within Tyrol are offering accommodation to tourists. The economic contribution to the farms income is substantial and tourism is considered, as one of the backbones for the survival of many farms. Especially in marginalized production areas offering holidays on farm is a prime factor of stabilisation of agriculture. The professional engagement into tourism also improves the image of farming in the wider society of a tourist country like Tyrol.

The activities started with the upcoming mass tourism in the 1960s; at that time not as a special segment but in the frame of private bed and breakfast (B&B) offers. During the 1980s a specialised product “Holiday on Farm” was developed and institutionalised as an association. The basic objective of the association “Holiday on Farm” is the establishment and development of an effective organisation that enables the member farms to overcome limiting factors in policy, market and territorial contexts and valorise enabling factors in these domains.

The aim of this paper is to describe the nature and amount of changes this new economic activity has brought to farms. The paper covers the different periods in the development from the beginnings to the present day.

We explore how the engagement in tourism changed the standard of living for the farming family. The focus is on changes concerning investments, the relation between different family members, the uptake of new technologies and the value of farm-made products. We assume that farm women who earn the money from offering accommodation have a greater say in how to invest the money and will direct it more towards the household than into the agricultural operations. The changes of relations between family members are supposed not to be restricted to the farming couple, but extend to relations so between the generations, essentially impacting farm succession. New technologies concern in this respect mainly information technology. As tourism is a very innovative sector we want to see consequences of internet use, introduced by offering holidays on farm, on the farm enterprise. Finally we suppose that there is an influence of the demand of tourist for farm products on the valorisation and consumption of these products by the farm family.

The paper starts with a short description of the methods and the material used. This is followed by the analysis which provides first an overview over the general lines in the historical development of contextual factors for agriculture and tourism engagement of farmers since the Second World War. Four particular fields highlight the impact of holidays on selected features of farm life: investments, gender and generation, the adoption of new communication technologies and the valorisation of the farm products. The paper concludes with a summary of the impacts of the activity on the economic and especially social resilience of farms.

Methods and material

A content analysis of the major farmers’ weekly regional newspaper called “Tiroler Bauernzeitung” (“Tyrolean farmers’ newspaper”) from the year 1966 onward until 2007 provides the basic overall macro scale development of tourism activities on Tyrolean farms. This newspaper is issued by the “Bauernbund” which is the agricultural wing of the dominating conservative political party in Tyrol. A supplement to each issue called “Landwirtschaftliche Blätter” (“agricultural pages”) covers information issued by the Chamber of Agriculture which is the legal representative of farmers’ interests.

This resulted in a total number of 125 articles. The number of articles was growing steadily until 2000 but seem to decrease since. A shift of the placement of the articles within the paper could be observed: While until 2000 articles were placed on the special page designated for women’s affairs since 2000 the placement was shifted to economic affairs and to the information pages of the Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftliche Blätter)

This aspect supposedly shows a change of image: While holidays on farm formerly were regarded a purely farm wife domain, it is now rated a service and product of the entire farm enterprise. In the same period the entire image of the newspaper changed from a traditional, conservative, religion and agronomic technical related newspaper to a economic and business oriented newspaper on the one side, while new contents e.g. education, learning and personal-development emerged on the other side.

Table 1: Quantitative assessment of the articles dealing with holidays on farm

Period	Number of articles	Placement in the “Bauernzeitung”
1966 – 1970	7	section for female farmers
1971 – 1980	19	section for female farmers
1981 – 1990	31	section for female farmers
1991 – 2000	40	section for female farmers
2001 - 2007	28	section for economic and tourism affairs and information in the “Landwirtschaftliche Blätter” (“agricultural pages”)
total	125	

(own compilation)

The second major source of information on the development of holidays on farm resulted from a case study on the association “Urlaub am Bauernhof” (“Holiday on Farm”) in Tyrol, conducted in the frame of the EU-funded 6th framework project COFAMI (Encouraging Collective Farmer Marketing Initiatives). This research project aims to identify the social, economic, cultural and political factors that limit/enable the formation and development of collective marketing initiatives. The case study included 18 narrative semi structured interviews and an analysis of documents provided by the association. Each of the interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. All interviews were also recorded on minidisk. The selection of interview partners included different groups of stakeholders (members, functionaries and leading employees of the association, functionaries of the Chamber of Agriculture, the Chamber of Commerce, the regional tourism marketing board and politicians).

The information derived from the articles and the interviews was interpreted according to four thematic fields:

- investment patterns
- gender and generation
- adoption of communication technologies
- valorisation of farm products

For the general development as well as for each of these thematic fields timelines were developed putting together the results of the analysis of articles and of interviews. These timelines serve as the base for the following descriptions.

General Timeline of changing agricultural and tourism contexts

A historical analysis of Austrian agriculture after the Second World War can distinguish three distinct phases of development.

a) *The modernisation phase – from post war to 1988*

After the Second World War major efforts of restructuring agriculture were undertaken. These modernisation measures were largely supported by the financial aid available through the Marshall plan. Modernisation was characterised by the commercialisation of the before largely subsistence dominated production structures. This led to the well known processes of mechanisation, rationalisation and specialisation. The modernisation led to the substitution of labour by machinery. The discharge of agricultural labour was highly appreciated by the growing industries. In contrast to lowland in mountainous areas with steep hills only part of the work can be mechanised. Therefore due to topographic conditions the modernisation paradigm, was questioned in Austria earlier than in other European countries as the limits of modernisation were reached earlier. Already in the late 1980s, the then federal minister of agriculture Josef Riegler introduced a counter concept with what he called an eco-social agricultural policy (“*ökosoziale Agrarpolitik*”). In this respect *eco* refers to both, “economic” and “ecologic” as “*a way back from a dead end road of agricultural policy*” (Riegler, 1988). He referred to agrarian values like small structures, responsibility and participation as well as social and ecological actions as foundations of a modern and future oriented policy for the entire society.

b) *The preparation of Austrian’s accession to the European Union 1995 - from 1988 to 1995*

The “eco-social agricultural policy” has guided the entire preparation phase of Austria’s accession to the European Union (EU) in 1995, a period when the ministry was led by the later EU-agricultural commissioner Franz Fischler. During this time the ministry promoted diversification of income and quality production like direct marketing, organic agriculture and engagement in tourism. Also the before regulated market of agricultural products was liberalised. The support system was gradually shifted from a product based support to payments for the preservation of cultural landscape, which was in the beginning not easy for farmers and led partly to a spirit of resignation (Rieder 2000).

c) *Entrepreneurial professionalisation (1996 – today)*

This shift from support for production to support for protection e.g. landscape management has been increased since after the accession to the European Union in 1995. As of today the payments from the environmental programme constitute a major part of the farm income especially in mountain regions (Darnhofer & Schermer 2006). In order to retain a considerable share of income out of production related activities and to achieve consumer feedback, farmers started to engage more professional in entrepreneurial activities (Schermer 1999). Direct marketing activities were extended and professionalized. As the volumes from small farms in mountain areas were limited more and more also collective endeavours became prominent.

These general development phases in agriculture were also determining the nature of the engagement of farmers into tourism activities. Also the development of the engagement of farmers in tourism can be divided into three phases which show a considerable overlap with the agricultural development phases.

a) *Participation in the emerging mass tourism (1960 – 1975)*

After the Second World War the rapid growth of economy especially in Germany (often dubbed as German “*Wirtschaftswunder*”, e.g. economic-wonder”) led to the first wave of mass tourism. The Alps were the closest destination for summer as well as winter tourism. This led to an increasing demand for accommodation. As already argued above, the modernisation of agriculture led to a discharge of agricultural labour, thus providing empty room capacities on farms. But the tourism sector provided also other attractive fields of activity for farmers, especially in the agricultural slack periods during winter, like employment as skiing instructors, as personnel in ski lifts or in the gastronomy. Also the provision of fields for tourism activities during wintertime (as skiing slopes and for cross country skiing runs) started to become an additional source of income. The farmers representatives in the Chamber of Agriculture started to provide guidance and support to facilitate tourism activities. From

1970 onward they published a brochure listing all farms which were offering accommodation to tourists. It contained over 1.000 addresses of farms who offered rooms for guests. The Chamber also assisted with drawing up model contracts between farmers and tourist enterprises for the use of agricultural areas as skiing slopes and cross country runs. When the limits of modernisation became apparent, the agricultural incomes in mountain regions started to lag behind those in more advantaged regions. Tourism was welcomed as an additional source of income slowing the decrease of farms. As the demand outstripped the supply, farmers were able to make money with little investment offering cheap accommodation. The local and regional tourist offices however became more and more reluctant to sent tourist to farms because the standard was rather low and tourists complained bad smells, noise, dirt etc.

b) Farmers adaptation to a “buyers market” (1975 -1990)

During the second half of the 1970s the tourism market changed profoundly. For summer tourism beach destinations, first in the mediterranean countries and later world wide, started to compete with hiking in the Alps. Farmers had to react to this and invested into offering a competitive infrastructure. Investments were made to improve the standard of accommodation. But it became soon apparent that aside of improved standard farms had the potential to create a distinct offer. In this situation the Chamber of Agriculture started to support the establishment of an association “Holiday on Farm”, formally founded in 1984. This association saw its major task in building networks with the regional tourism industry and to assist farmers to develop a competitive offer. “Holiday on Farm” became more and more a distinct product with a uniform label and brand. “Holiday on Farm” changed its position from a low-price product to i quality-tourism with high price, but adequate service value.

c) The phase of professionalisation – from 1990 to today

In the beginning of the 1990s the number of overnight stays in Austria experienced its peak and is declining since (Meixner 2006). The decline is more pronounced in summer than in winter. Farmers tried to compensate this decline by professionalisation of the product offered. The field of improvement changed from investments into the “hardware” (standard of rooms, sanitary facilities etc.) to the “software” (e.g. special services for handicapped, breakfast with farm products, horse riding etc.). This required constant adaptation and learning and led to a selection of farms. Also the use of modern communication technologies created a new barrier for many of those who had started the business in the 60s or 70s. In recent years the development of human capital has become an essential theme. Investments in the own personal development (e.g. in form of education, learning and training and building of the own personality) are seen important potentials for the success of the “enterprise” holidays on farm. Therefore with professionalisation the number of farms offering accommodation decreased.

The association “Holiday on Farm” started to introduce a quality assurance system by awarding member farms with one to four “flowers”. They also promoted specialisation and the creation of regional associations to bundle the capacities.

The impact of offering accommodation on selected features of farm development

Investments

Diversification into different fields of activities e.g. in production and service increase the stability and resilience of farms, especially when the modernisation path is coming to an end (van der Ploegh *et al* 2000). In the Tyrolean Alps offering accommodation to tourists opened up new possibilities from the 19960 onwards. The individual investment strategies differed: some farmers specialised on tourism and invested more into this sector than in farming. There the farm operation serves as a necessary base for holidays on farm. Other farmers integrate tourism activities into farm live but they give priority to agricultural production.

In general tourism and especially holidays on farm resulted in modernisation of the entire farm, as a consequence the standard of living of the farm families increased. The timeline shows a tendency from investments into the “*hardware*” e.g. agricultural implements, sanitary infrastructure, standard of room interior etc. to “*software*” like skills, personality building and health awareness.

Investments in essential infrastructure on the farm

With the upcoming of mass-tourism the necessary infrastructure had to be provided. Gradually the farmers provided special rooms for accommodation of tourists, while in the beginning the rooms of former farmhands were adapted and especially in the peak season, family members, mostly the children, had to leave their rooms and to sleep in the hay (sometimes accompanied by the guest-children as a holiday-adventure).

In this period guests were still satisfied with this low standard as they were looking for cheap accommodation. When their expectations rose the first step was upgrading of sanitary conditions. Before accommodation was offered, many farm-families were washing themselves with water from a well with running cold water outside the house. Therefore the first investments made from the income out of tourism were besides investments in farm implements the improvement of the sanitary situation.

First bathrooms with hot and cold water were established on each floor, but not yet in the rooms. In 1967 the Chamber of Agriculture started a campaign concerning profitability and investment-calculations for holidays on farm. The motto was: “*Holiday on Farm*” is not everywhere profitable it depends also on the infrastructure in the region” With the increase of mass tourism public infrastructure like roads and communication facilities like telephone connections were provided.

Investments in structures for privacy and improved standard of living for the farm family

From 1977 to 1985 subsidised agrarian investment credits (out of the post war Marshall Plan) were provided for farm modernisation and especially for investments into holidays on farm. From 1970 onward the advisory system recommended the provision of apartments instead of bed and breakfast, mainly to reduce labour requirements. It later proved also to enhance privacy for the farm family as guests were not occupying their living rooms for breakfast and during rainy days any more. Moreover these apartments provided possibilities of separate living quarters in the course of farm succession (see also below). Later also farms offering bed and breakfast furnished separate rooms for their guests. It proved to be essential for children growing up on farms offering accommodation, that the recreational spaces of the guests are separated from the family. Where this had not been followed in the course of farm succession holidays on farms were stopped again.

On farms usually the investment into improvements of living space is rather neglected as compared with improvements of the production facilities. In an article the following statement was raised: “*If an agricultural implement is damaged it will be replaced immediately, if household machinery is damaged a long discussion follows, before it can be replaced!*” With the money from offering accommodation going to hands of the women they could also demand more strongly the direction of the investment. One interview partner (a high ranking regional politician) recalled that his mother after a successful tourist season would tell the father whether he could buy a new implement. Farm kitchens had to be adapted to a modern standard as the farm wife had to provide breakfast to the tourists. Besides well furnished rooms with self contained sanitary facilities tourists expected more and more an adequate appearance of the entire farm with flowers in front of the windows and well tended surroundings. Farms offering holidays on farm and especially those going for quality as members of the association were constantly improving their “product”. Of course the entire farm family benefited from these improvements. With each modernisation of the guest’s rooms, also the rooms of the family improved. Also new investments into wellness infrastructure, like sauna, swimming pools etc. were raising the living standard of the family.

Finally recently the importance to invest into the own personal growth (e.g. wellness, health awareness and personality-building) became apparent. The farm families offering holidays on farm were also among the first to go for holidays themselves. The slogan: “*successful out of ones own power*” characterises this change of image.

Gender and Generation

The motto of the modernised agricultural society was: “*A person, who does not earn money, has no value in the society.*” Before tourism came to the farms, it was very difficult to assess female labour. This was an essential problem for the self-esteem of farm women. The engagement in offering on farm accommodation to tourists was right from the beginning perceived as a woman’s activity. It has been the first major factor for economising female labour on the farm. Later the direct marketing affairs were also initially allocated in the female domain. There are a number of significant influences on the division of labour between men and women on the farm, but also between generations and on the farm organisation as such.

In the beginning there was a big irritation how to handle the labour-intensive activities involved in providing accommodation. A number of articles deal with the economics of tourism activities and with the labour requirements. As a result in the 1970s the farms began to offer accommodation not only in the form of bed and breakfast but made also apartments available. Apart from the labour saving effect apartments also provided more flexibility in dealing with generation conflicts. On the small structured farms in the Tyrolean Alps the “multiple-generation-family” was (and still is) a traditional form of living. This form of living was often flawed with generation conflicts. Especially the use of a common kitchen created lots of tensions, most often between the young farm wife and her mother in law. The apartments made temporarily separate living quarters either for the young or for the old farmer generation available, which eased considerably these tensions. Support schemes for the modification of houses to accommodate apartments were developed especial from 1990 onwards. At the same time individualism became an essential theme in the newspaper articles, especially for the young farmer families.

Apart from introducing labour saving forms of accommodation the division of labour between men and women changed with increasingly men taking part in domestic activities. Especially in the phase of professionalisation - from 1990 onwards - also male farmers started to participate in the work connected with offering holidays on farm; the labour-organisation became based on a functional partnership. Women often work less in farming and increasingly new labour extensive forms of farming (like suckler cow production systems) were taken up. This went along with the increase of part time farming. Although farm holidays increased the financial base of the farms and allowed men to stay on the farm, increasingly small farms could not support a living any more and off farm employment became necessary. With women engaged in tourism the farm had to be adjusted to labour extensive forms. The position of farm wives had changed from the role as housewife and mother in a production household to high motivated female managers and entrepreneurs in mainly service related households.

Holidays on farm offers a working place for female farmers at home which reduces the necessity to look for part time work outside of the farms. The women are able to create their labour-time on their own. Female farmers earn their own income and became more independent in financial affairs from their partners. The new possibilities of creating a self governed economic space for women on farms motivated more young women to marry farmers. The interviews clearly revealed that farms offering holidays on farm have less problems in farm succession. As a number of spouses come from non-agrarian backgrounds there is also an element of innovation attached to this. They often bring in new fresh ideas.

The positive feedback provided by guests results in general also in a more positive attitude of the young generation towards farming which makes succession more likely. On the other hand however if the work organisation is not balanced, farm children might see only the additional labour involved and view the contact with guests not as personal enrichment but as a burden.

Some interview partners however saw a danger for the future, if the farm develops into two distinct enterprises, one run by the farmer and one run by his wife. If the two enterprises become disconnected the USP of “Holiday on Farm” gets lost.

Adoption of communication technologies

Offering holidays on farm requires a certain infrastructure. It was right from the start in the 1960 not only necessary that the farm can be reached all year round by vehicles, but also that there was a telephone to effect or to confirm bookings. The connection to the telephone line was one of the prerequisites for the selection of farms for the pilot trial when establishing the association "Holidays on Farm" around 1978. Around 1990 a fax became obligatory. Those farms who participated in tourism were always among the early adopters of new technologies. Finally the use of e-mail and internet revolutionised the tourism business on farms:

1996 the use of modern communication technologies became a topic. The association formulated the goal of achieving internet use by 50% of the members within five years. This aim was achieved already 1999. In 1998 internet-booking was propagated with the slogan: "With the internet into the Tyrolean farmer's bed" That year the first electronic catalogue for "Holiday on Farm" was presented. 2000 the internet had already developed into an important instrument for marketing. 2006 the use of internet was the most important medium for selling "Holiday on Farm".

By now there are only about three to four members left who do not dispose of a computer with internet. About 20-30% of the members have their own private homepage in addition to that.

This rapid adoption of the new technology was earlier than in general agriculture. The federal ministry of Agriculture started in 1999 to promote PCs for farms by offering subsidised computers. The computer was promoted as being "the agricultural implement of the future". At that time half of the members of "holiday on Farm" were operating their bookings already via internet. This was due to the provision of numerous courses in all districts of the province by the "Department of Formation, Advise and Family" within the provincial Chamber of Agriculture. This department is also in charge of promoting holidays on farm. As the tourism activities were (and are still) largely female dominated it were the farm women who attended the computer courses. Thus, in contradiction to computer use in general society, where young male users were the first adopters, on farms offering holidays it became a domain of the farmers' wives.

Valorisation of farm-products

During the modernisation time the value of on farm processed products decreased with the growing market integration. Farmers offering accommodation felt the processing of farm products as competing with labour invested in attending to tourists. Therefore often at breakfast industrial processed butter and cheese with large amounts of packaging waste prevailed. Farmers increasingly stopped to process raw materials for their own subsistence. For instance cheese making almost vanished during the 1970s. This process has been reverted since with the establishment of farmers markets and farm shops etc. The first counteracting activities can be observed already during the late 1970s and 1980s in the frame of supporting endogenous regional development (Regenärnel & Schmid 1989). Endogenous regional development started as an alternative movement supported by the then socialist government to get a foothold into the conservative dominated rural areas. This was mainstreamed end of the 1980s by Rieglers eco-social agricultural policy.

In 1989 the association "Holiday on Farm" and department for direct marketing in the Chamber of Agriculture in Tyrol started to intensify cooperation. Packaging material was designed with the same appearance as the catalogue for the association. The farmers were encouraged to offer farm-made products to their guests. The idea was to forge synergies as it was assumed that the farm wives offering accommodation would not have time to process farm products, but could buy these products from neighbouring farms. However these co operations did not yet take off.

First also these activities were seen merely as a marketing outlet, an effective alternative to buying in supermarkets, especially for self catering apartment guests. But it was realised soon that the farm product could be used to increase the unique selling proposition of the product "Holiday on Farm". From 1991 onwards guests were invited by the female farmers to watch and participate in the production of farm-made products. In 1994 when the quality assurance system with "flowers" was introduced the offering of farm-made products at breakfast became an essential part of "Holiday on Farm". For breakfast at least three farm-made products from the own farm or from a farm in the

neighbourhood had to be offered. In 1997 the program of “partner farms” was launched. They were supposed to produce products the “Holiday on Farm” member was not able to produce. The aim was also to make these farms available to the guests for visiting. Partly farms also provided lunch packages with farm products to cater for tourists during hikes in the mountains. From 2000 onward also breakfast on the alpine summer farm (where cattle are pastured) is offered to transport the image of a living farm with animals authentically.

The intensive concern with farm products and the positive feedback by the guests increased the valorisation of the own product by the farming family themselves. This was enhanced by the increasing health consciousness. Farmers began to be proud of their products again. A very convincing interview-statement was: “*Now we know again, what we are working for!*” This positive feedback was extended to the new product of “landscape”. The president of the association said in the interview: “Holiday on Farm is the only branch in agriculture who is actively selling landscape”.

Today farm-made products provide a very important multiple- and synergy effect as “ambassadors” for the small scaled farms in the mountains of Tyrol. When the tourists return home after the holidays they carry the farm-made products with them all over the world for their own use or for presents. This effect can be seen as an indirect marketing-function. This does not only work towards the outside, but also towards the local perception of farming. Because of “Holiday on Farm” and direct marketing of farm-made products on the farms, the image of agriculture in the Tyrolean Mountains are more credibly transported.

Conclusions

Offering holidays on farm has had a number of impacts on the standard of living of the farm family in the Tyrolean Alps. However, it has to be noted here that the results and the conclusions presented in this paper are restricted in their significance to Tyrol or at least to the Austrian part of the Alps. The situation of farmers engaged into tourism is completely different in Switzerland let alone the alpine regions of France or Italy.

First of all farm families offering holidays on farms successfully had and have to be in the “avant-garde” of new trends. Tourism is an extremely innovative business. Farms offering accommodation, especially those who are members of the association “Holiday on Farm” were first among the farming population who were confronted with new life styles and consumer expectations. This exposure to the world outside agriculture introduced entrepreneurial thinking much earlier. The professionalisation of tourism offers, especially within the association of “Holiday on Farm” started already before the liberalisation of the markets for agricultural commodities, which was part of the preparation to the EU-accession.

Holidays on farm was creating the first service offered by farmers, something which anticipated the later shift from producing food products to managing cultural landscapes. Moreover the interaction with tourist who come to the Alps largely because of the beautiful landscape, provides a feedback other farmers do not get. Farmers who offer holidays on farm therefore have a very high identification with the landscaping-function of farmers. Holidays on farm offer a possibility for a “direct selling of landscape”, as one interview partner stated. In this respect the tourism activities helped farmers to adapt to the shifts of recent agricultural policy as described above.

The engagement in dealing with new lifestyles and consumption trends has an impacts on the own consumption pattern. Farms offering holidays on farm adapt certain consumption patterns from the tourists. Therefore they are likely to go for holidays themselves, but also to value home made products more than farms that are integrated into “industrialised” production and consumption patterns.

Finally offering holidays on farm makes the farm more resilient, economically but also socially. Economic resilience is increased as the income from tourism is not dependent on growth like in agricultural production. It builds on qualitative improvements rather than on increase of output. Many farms would not be viable without the tourism component, but on the other hand they know that they have to keep up farming in order not to lose the most important assets of their tourism enterprise.

Thus it creates a symbiosis where one cannot thrive without the other. This had a major impact on stabilising the structural change in mountain agriculture.

But the increase of social resilience is probably even more important. By providing the infrastructure to accommodate different generations in separate living quarters, an essential precondition for young farmers to find a spouse was given. The second factor is that holiday on farm offers women a field of activity for themselves. They do not only earn their own money, like women in non-farming households, but they can even act as self employed entrepreneurs. This makes it much more attractive even for women from a non - agrarian background to marry a young farmer. As of today it seems that the continuation of farming is less an economic question than a motivational. Young men and women growing up on farms expect to lead a live comparable to the non-farming friends. With holidays on farm this becomes more likely.

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