

Potentiality of San Luis, Batangas as an Agritourism Business Destination in the Philippines

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Abstract – Agritourism in the Philippines has a long way to go before it becomes an economy driver of rural communities however, might work in the country since farming is an integral part of Filipino Culture. In fact, Philippines is considered as the top 8th agritourism destination of the world. This study aimed to determine the potentiality of San Luis, Batangas as an Agritourism business destination in Batangas Province. Specifically, it described the Agritourism business in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added farm products, identify the problems in the development of Agritourism business; test the significant difference in the problems encountered when grouped according to respondents and proposed a development plan in order for San Luis, Batangas to be a potential Agri-Tourism destination. The research used descriptive method using documentary analysis and questionnaire as data gathering instrument. Farmers, teachers and local government officials were the respondents of the study with weighted mean and ANOVA as statistical tools. It was found out that agritourism business in San Luis, Batangas has potential in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added farm products, there are problems encountered in the development of Agritourism business such as lack of business training and development plans was proposed to help improve the agritourism business in San Luis, Batangas.

Keywords – Agritourism Business, Agritourism Potentiality, Development Plan

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, tourism and agriculture are both large industries which make significant contributions to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The agricultural sector in the Philippines employs close to 32 percent of the population and contributes approximately 14 percent of national GDP [1]. The possible

combinations of these two major industries create a relatively new sector called agritourism.

Agritourism is any business conducted by a farmer for the enjoyment or education of the public, to promote the products of the farm and to generate additional farm income [2]. Moreover, according to the Department of Tourism Administrative code of 1987, Agri-tourism also referred to as “farm tourism” is a form of tourism activity conducted in a rural farm area which may consist of nurturing farm animals, planting, harvesting and processing of farm products. It covers attractions, activities, services and amenities as well as other resources of the area to promote an appreciation of the local culture, heritage and traditions through personal contact with the local people [3].

Agritourism in the Philippines has a long way to go before it becomes an economy driver of rural communities however; it has a big possibility to prosper in the country since farming is an integral part of Filipino Culture. In fact, Philippines is considered as the top 8th agritourism destination of the world [4] which is the evidence of the countries diversified and unique agritourism features.

In this country, Batangas, is considered one of the potential Agritourism sites of the Philippines due to rich natural resources and can surely take an active part in shaping the Agritourism development in the country. Furthermore, San Luis, just like the other towns in Batangas has potential agritourism features to offer but quite silent and slower in its development. It has 93% of a Total Land Area that was characterized by thick forest and numerous springs that is devoted to agriculture because of its productive loam perfect for crops. In fact, farmers are considered as the biggest group in terms of occupation type and Agribusiness establishments is on the top list of its major industries [5].

At present, agritourism is not yet known in this town and far left behind by other agritourism site of Batangas but rich in agricultural resources and hardworking

farmers. Since farmers recognized their needs and desires to diversify their products and supplement their incomes, agritourism can help to provide them opportunity to increase the potential of their capacity to increase on farm sales of value added products and services.

In line with this, the researcher conducted this study to be able to realize if San Luis can take an active part in the development of agritourism on its own place in terms of its agricultural resources and possible agritourism activities that may be suited to the place. Furthermore, the researcher would like to know how it will be possible for San Luis to become a key player in the growth of Agritourism business in the province of Batangas. Moreover, the researcher as a resident of San Luis had the intention to do this study as a legacy of imparting benefits to the welfare of the researcher's co-residents. This movement can be an initial step in the development of business program beneficial to the entire community. In addition to, the researcher aimed to accomplish this study as part of the requirements being a student of Masters in International Hospitality Management Program. Finally, this will improve the researcher's career as a college instructor and as a person.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the potentiality of San Luis, Batangas as an Agritourism business destination in Batangas Province.

Specifically, it described the Agritourism business of San Luis, Batangas in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added farm products; identified the problems in the development of Agritourism business; test the significant difference on the problems encountered when grouped according to respondents and proposed a development plan in to improve the Agritourism in San Luis, Batangas

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher chose to apply descriptive method of research to determine the research question and utilized various research tools to assist in the gathering of data. This approach will best resolve the researcher's main objective of assessing the potentiality of San Luis, Batangas to become an Agritourism business destination in the province.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were grouped into three classes; from the municipality officials and barangay captains, head officers of farmers' association and school

teachers. 16 of them were the municipality officials of San Luis including the mayor, vice mayor and councilors; the agriculture officers and the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinators handling the tourism sector; 26 of them are the barangay captains down to the 10 head officers of registered barangay farmers' association, 10 were from selected residents of San Luis who are public school head teachers from primary to secondary.

Instrument

The researcher used a self-made questionnaire wherein the first part contains the documentary analysis of agribusiness in San Luis in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and value added farm products. The second part is the list of problems being encountered in the Development of agritourism in San Luis to be evaluated by the respondents. These were patterned to the objectives of researcher's study.

It is necessary for the researcher to read books and other related studies as sources of information before the accumulation of data in the instrument. Then a sample questionnaire was produced and tested to other town's respondents for further assessment and validation. Upon validation, the instrument was utilized to properly evaluate the status of Agritourism of San Luis.

Procedures

The researcher, upon validating the questionnaire as tool for this research, sought the approval of the mayor of San Luis, Batangas to conduct surveys and interviews among the municipality officials and barangay captains. The researcher also asked for the approval of other municipality officials to view their official records and other related materials needed in this study. The consent of the school principals was also sought to accomplish the same surveys and interviews among public school teachers. The interviews and surveys from the barangay captains and the members of the registered farmers' association were accomplished in the municipality hall after their regular session and some were consulted from their home place.

Data Analysis

To come about with experiential foundation for evaluation analysis of facts, the researcher sought advises and assistance from the statistician and experts in the field of statistics and data analysis. Weighted mean was used to determine the average scores of the participants. To determine the gravity or weight of problems being encountered, a Likert-scale was used. ANOVA was used to determine the significant

difference on the problems encountered when grouped according to respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Agribusiness in San Luis, Batangas

Farming



Figure 1. The Sugarcane Plantation



Figure 2. The extension of Plantation after harvest.

As you enter Calumpang West, you will already see the large plantation of sugar cane shown In Figure 1 and 2. During this time the stems of these canes are still small and waiting for several months before it will be harvested by the workers. This plantation is not solely owned by one person but instead by different corporation. The newly harvested canes were delivered to Calaca and Nasugbu's sugar factories. These sugar plantation is a good place to improve and conduct educational tours on the farming process since the location is along the road or accessible and the process of planting and harvesting is a nonstop cycle here.

Figure 3 shows the tilapia fingerlings and shrimps being fed in the pond of barangay Bagong Tubig. It is a good source of income in San Luis particularly in Barangay Tejero which is the first in rank in the number of fisherman among other barangays in San Luis [5]. Tilapia cage farming in Lake Taal, Batangas contributes to reducing poverty by providing direct employment: for cage farmers and caretakers, for those working in the

lakeside nurseries that supply tilapia seed to the cages, and in fish handling and marketing and fish feed supply [6]. Tilapia and shrimp culture is a good source of business and potential place for provision of workshop and training regarding its operation as another agritourism activities in San Luis.

Fishing



Figure 3 Tilapia fingerlings and shrimp fish pond



Figure 4 Tilapia fish pond

Figure 4 shows another tilapia pond in Bagong Tubig.. Fee fishing as an agritourism activity, is possible in this place due to its healthy harvest. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, commercial tilapia production was advanced by the development of technologies for the breeding of Nile tilapia in floating net enclosures and the production of Nile tilapia in floating cages with feeding. The new technologies were transferred to the private sector for evaluation. In 1988, the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM), began a program to develop an improved strain of tilapia for low-cost sustainable aquaculture with funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and resulted in the production of Genetically Improved Farmed Tilapias (GIFT) [7].

Figure 5 presents the goat and cow ranch in Taliba while Figure 6 shows the organic farm chickens.

Livestock



Figure 5 Goat and cow ranch



Figure 6 Native and Organic Chicken



Figure 7 Piggery farm



Figure 8 San Miguel poultry farm

Figure 7 gives you an idea about a piggery farm being operated in San Isidro as well as the two poultry farm there shown in Figure 8. The talents and skills of many owners and operators in San Luis can contribute

for another source of income or employment which is to provide new farm experiences. These farms are potential site for petting animals, feeding, cow or carabao sleigh and even training out of school youth or interested residents in raising farm animals.

Value Added Product



Figure 9 Bamboo made chicken cages

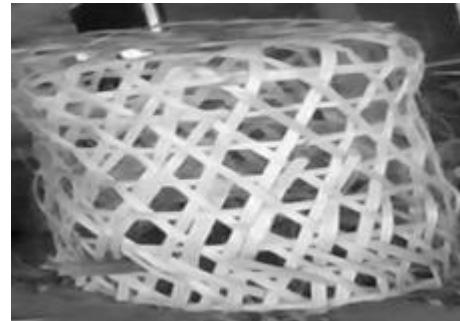


Figure 10 Finish made farmer's basket "bakid"

Figure 9 illustrates the finished product of chicken cages made from bamboo plants. In ancient times, furniture was usually made of bamboo. These include "papag" (bed), "bangko" (bench), and "aparador" (cabinet). On the other hand, basketry is probably the oldest bamboo handicraft in the Philippines. Bamboo baskets are produced for all sorts of uses which are being demonstrated in figure 10.

Table 1 presents the problems encountered by the respondents who are residing in San Luis in the development of agritourism in the town. It explicates that for the municipal officers, the need for agritourism business training topped in the rank with a weighted mean of 3.23 and rated agree. It was followed by poor funding practices for agritourism business and lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism which both had a weighted mean of 3.17. Knowledge about agribusiness is already present among municipal officials and farmers but in applying it with agritourism needs proper orientation and strategy.

Table 1. Problems Encountered in the Development of Agritourism in San Luis, Batangas

	Municipal Officers			Teachers			Farmers			Over-all		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. Lack of communication facilities	2.90	A	6	2.33	A	13	2.63	A	12	2.62	A	13
2. Poor tourism vision, direction or clear plans	2.93	A	5	2.56	A	10.5	3.38	A	3	2.95	A	6
3. Lack of cooperation among stakeholders	2.87	A	7	2.78	A	8.5	3.00	A	7	2.88	A	7
4. Need for municipal regulations that inhibit on-farm value-added-products	2.70	A	8.5	3.22	A	1.5	3.38	A	3	3.10	A	3
5. Poor Insurance liability	2.97	A	4	3.00	A	4.5	3.00	A	7	2.99	A	5
6. Lack of municipal support	2.63	A	11.5	2.78	A	8.5	2.75	A	10.5	2.72	A	11
7. Poor infrastructure regulations	2.63	A	11.5	3.00	A	4.5	2.50	A	13.5	2.71	A	12
8. Lack or absence of related permits	2.50	A	14	2.33	D	13	3.50	SA	1	2.78	A	9
9. Lack or absence of desire/ability of the farmers, operators	2.67	A	10	2.89	A	6.5	3.00	A	7	2.85	A	8
10. Need for Agritourism business training	3.23	A	1	3.22	A	1.5	3.00	A	7	3.15	A	1
11. Poor funding practices for agritourism business	3.17	A	2.5	2.89	A	6.5	3.38	A	3	3.14	A	2
12. Lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism	3.17	A	2.5	3.11	A	3	2.75	A	10.5	3.01	A	4
13. Lack of transportation means	2.57	A	13	2.33	D	13	2.50	A	13.5	2.47	D	14
14. Lack/absence of anti-pollution program: noise, air, water etc.	2.70	A	8.5	2.56	A	10.5	3.00	A	7	2.75	A	10
Composite Mean	2.83	A		2.79	A		2.98	A		2.87	A	

Agritourism is a new business program for San Luis that's why the respondents believed that appropriate education and training is important to farmers, agribusiness owners and operators.

According to Malkanti and Routh [8], making farmers well aware of agritourism and creating a positive attitude towards opportunities of agritourism is essential in order to have agritourism operations. San Luis' farmers realized their poor funding practices for agritourism development as well as weakness in their promotion for it as San Luis' officials, maybe because they were not fully aware of agritourism and its possible benefits to the town.

However, the lowest rank is lack or absence of related permits, with a weighted mean of 2.50 and rated agree. It was followed by lack of transportation means with a weighted mean of 2.57. Municipal support and infrastructure regulations both had the weighted mean 2.63. This result proves that these respondents, being the town's officials comply with providing legal authorization for any business transactions that needs it. When it comes to transportation, it is not anymore a problem because far places in the town are already accessible and reachable. Besides, these municipality officials believed that support had been properly given to

their residents whether it is their presence, time and advices are needed.

On the contrary, insufficient support received from both the local and provincial government bureaus, small population in the region, short time of the tourism season were other impediments against the growth of the agritourism and tourism industries [5].

For teachers, the need for agritourism business training and need for municipal regulations that inhibit on-farm value-added-products both rank the highest with a weighted mean of 3.22 and rated agree. According to the responses of the teachers, education and training particularly in agritourism aspects is a must for a town like San Luis because agritourism is a new trend. They believed that they need agritourism education and training, including customer orientation which is a big part of it.

The third highest rank is lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism with a weighted mean of 3.11. This explicates that if ever San Luis has good agricultural productions, they are not much known to other people and neighboring towns that's why need to be promoted. It was followed by poor insurance liability and infrastructure regulations which both had a weighted mean of 3.00. Agritourism are linked to insurance

liability as an important part of its operation. That's why, owner or operator is liable or legally responsible for the safety and well-being of people invited on to his property to participate in activities [9].

Conversely, the lowest rank is lack of communication facilities, Lack or absence of related permits and lack of transportation means which all had a weighted mean of 2.33 and rated disagree. Since communication technology is widely used even in remote areas of San Luis, important informations and clear communications is possible to attain, more specially in securing or rendering permits.

For farmers, the lack or absence of related permit topped in the rank with a weighted mean of 3.50 and rated strongly agree. Most of the farmers find difficulty in processing permits due to time constraints for they are very much needed in their farm.

On the other hand, the lowest rank is Lack of transportation means and lack of infrastructure regulations with a weighted mean of 2.50 and rated disagree. It was followed by lack of communication facilities with a weighted mean of 2.33 and rated agree. It was followed by lack of municipal support and lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism, with a weighted mean of 2.75 and rated agree. Farmers responses means that lack of municipal support is not experience instead they are receiving it whenever they need it.

In general, need for Agritourism business training topped on the ranked with a weighted mean score of 3.15 and rated agree. This proved that all of the respondents had the same view points that knowledge is a big

problem in the development of Agritourism in San Luis. According to Haghiri & Okech, [10] to build a successful enterprise in agritourism, education and up-to-date knowledge of the field is very important. It was followed by poor funding Practices for agritourism business, need for municipal regulations that inhibit on-farm value-added-products, lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism and poor Insurance liability. This results summarized the respondents' agreement of other major problems for the development of agritourism in San Luis which are poor funding practices particularly for agritourism, need for municipal regulations that inhibit on-farm value-added-products, lack of agritourism promotion/marketing mechanism and poor Insurance liability.

However, they disagreed that there is a lack of transportation means since it obtained the lowest mean value of 2.47. Though places in San Luis are mountainous in nature, they are still accessible. They can be reached by different land transportation like tricycle, jeeps, cars and trucks. On the other hand, Collins [2] suggested that it is a helpful tip to consider in venturing agritourism program to provide safe and efficient on farm transportation. Batangas as an agricultural area may encourage Batangueños to plant organic products [11].

Table 2 shows the difference of responses of the three groups of respondents on the problems encountered in the development of agritourism in San Luis. It was observed that only on "Poor tourism vision, direction or clear plans" and "Need for Agritourism business training" shows significant difference since the obtained p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05 alpha level.

Table 2. Difference of Responses on the Problems Encountered in the Development of Agritourism in San Luis, Batangas When Grouped According to Category

Indicators	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
1. Lack of communication facilities	1.017	0.370	Not Significant
2. Poor tourism vision, direction or clear plans	8.294	0.001	Significant
3. Lack of cooperation among stakeholders	0.510	0.604	Not Significant
4. Need for municipal regulations that inhibit on-farm value-added-products	0.340	0.714	Not Significant
5. Poor Insurance liability	1.193	0.313	Not Significant
6. Lack of municipal support	0.915	0.408	Not Significant
7. Poor Infrastructure regulations	0.304	0.739	Not Significant
8. Lack or absence of related permits	0.862	0.429	Not Significant
9. Lack or absence of desire/ability of the farmers, operators	1.017	0.370	Not Significant
10. Need for Agritourism business training	8.294	0.001	Significant
11. Poor Funding Practices for agritourism business	0.510	0.604	Not Significant
12. Lack of agritourism promotion/	0.340	0.714	Not Significant
13. Marketing Mechanism	1.193	0.313	Not Significant
14. Lack of transportation means	0.915	0.408	Not Significant
15. Lack/absence of anti-pollution program: noise, air, water etc.			
Over-all	0.524	0.596	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

This means that the respondents' assessment varies as to the above mentioned items. This explains that the respondents had different assessment of the level or gravity of problem regarding the need for agritourism business training and poor tourism vision or clear direction or clear plans. The possibility of having differences in their responses in terms of poor tourism vision, directions or clear plans, are could be the theory of work of the respondents being legislative and law implementer and the others are ordinary members of the municipality. The first group of respondents, who are the municipal officials and barangay captains agreed on having clear goals of tourism plan while it is not clear with the other group. In terms of the need for agritourism training, the other group being the farmers who are very much expose to it believed that there is no need for them for training while the other group being the legislative agreed that agritourism training is a need. The level of learning or differences in educational attainment as well as differences in concerns and focus in life in terms of agritourism development may also affect the big differences of the respondents' responses.

Other indicators on the problems encountered do not show significant difference and indicates that what the municipal officers, teachers and farmers experienced are the same on the development of agritourism.

Proposed Development Plan for Agritourism in San Luis

The plan emphasizes on the potentiality of San Luis, Batangas as an agritourism business destination in Batangas province. The proposed development is connected with the result of the responses of the participants with the problems of San Luis, Batangas in the development of agritourism in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added product. It is suggested to provide of training and education on boosting organic farming, customer service/ relations, intensifying local farm production like delicacies and organic crops and marketing or promotion thru social media and media relations.

Farm experience development for tourist like educational tours observation of agricultural processes and actual training of planting and harvesting of farm products may also be facilitated.

In terms of fishing, funded training and workshops may be facilitated on fishing business, techniques and guides, agritourism activities, intensifying propagation of tilapia, cage farming, prawn and sea weed culture, building good customer service orientation and relation, promotion of local products like fish processing and

programs for tourist's activities like fee fishing and fish production trainings.

When it comes to livestock, facilitate the establishment of an agritourism program that emphasizes educational and recreational activities like farm animal raising, animal feeding, petting zoos or farm animal displays, riding in carabao sleigh; improve agricultural business management; and provide education, training and programs about risk management and liability insurance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The agritourism business in San Luis, Batangas was described in terms of farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added farm products. San Luis, Batangas encountered problems in the development of Agritourism business in their place such as lack of business training, workshops and programs about farming, fishing, livestock and production of value added farm products. There was significant difference in the problems encountered when grouped according to respondents, in terms of level of needs for agritourism business training and clarity of tourism vision. Development plans were proposed to help improve the agritourism business in San Luis, Batangas.

It is recommended that San Luis officials may provide themselves, farmers and other agribusiness operators with trainings and education for the progress of agritourism business.

Modification of funding practices for agritourism business may be done to boost the business. Regulations for the production of value added farm products may be improved to encourage more skilled farmers and residents to participate. Agritourism promotion/marketing may be enhanced to established public awareness of San Luis present condition and level of participation in agritourism business. Proposed development plan may be used to help improve the agritourism in San Luis. Future researchers may conduct similar study using different set of variables like the possible developments achieved by the Municipality and several innovations it utilizes.

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