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Diversifying the Countryside

Harvesting Sustainability through
Farm Tourism - The case of
Söderslätt Region, Sweden

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Supervisors

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Thesis for the fulfilment of the
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Abstract

Two simultaneously evolving trends on the European market have set the scene for the following research: the unprecedented growth of tourism industry and the decline of the agricultural sector. While tourism needs to diversify its current practices in order to address some of the negative environmental, socio- cultural and economic issues related to its growth, agriculture needs to complement the current farm practices in order to regenerate the rural areas. Farm tourism has been perceived as a potential solution to these needs.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the contribution of farm tourism to the sustainable regional development. Söderslätt region in Sweden was selected as a case – study, based on being the most agriculture intensive part of the country on the one hand, and indicating tourism related problems on the other.

The research has encompassed an understanding of the state – of the – art of farm tourism in the region, the current communication channels and the potential benefits at hand from developing a balanced farm tourism sector. The findings from the research have implications for both local authority and business level and indicate ample scope of improvement of the current communication practices that could provide significant changes for the future development of the farm tourism sector as well as for the region as a whole.

Executive Summary

The exponential growth of the tourism sector worldwide and the decline of the European agricultural sector have formed the background of the following research.

Tourism is the preferred choice of development for many regions, as it attracts foreign currency. That is why there is a strong ambition both on the part of the developing and developed countries to be promoted as tourism destinations. Due to its rapid growth, the need for unravelling more sustainable tourism practices, taking into consideration the economic benefits, natural surroundings and socio-cultural issues has emerged.

Simultaneously, and quite to the opposite of the tourism development trend, the agricultural sector has suffered recently a relative stagnation in Europe. Reduced protectionism, population loss - especially of younger and skilled people, aging population and introduction of technical innovations are among some of the forces that shape the current state of agricultural sector development. Therefore, the need to sustain a viable countryside has been acknowledged on a EU level through different policies and regulations targeting at preserving the rural environment. Many rural areas have tried to change their image and marketing aspects of their heritage, authentic or natural, in order to be able to sustain their primary functions.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to assess *the contribution of farm tourism can contribute to the sustainable regional development*. In order to answer the research question, the case of Söderslätt region situated in the southernmost part of Sweden was chosen. The main reasons behind selecting that particular area are that, first, this is one of the most agriculture intensive parts of Sweden, and second, there are already indications of conventional tourism induced impacts.

In order to set the scene for the analytical discussion, an extensive literature review was conducted. The aim was to understand the current trends of tourism sector development, the impacts related as well as the issues related to development of farm tourism within the Swedish context and the policies affecting the sector development. The literature review was also complemented by field data collection through a number of interviews with people involved with farm tourism in Söderslätt.

Further, the purpose of the thesis is supported by four additional questions related to the selected region. (1) What are the characteristics of farm tourism in the region? (2) How are the different actors involved in farm tourism inter-related? (3) How can the future development of the sector be monitored? (4) What are the potential advantages of developing farm tourism in the region?

The main findings following the literature research are that farm tourism has the potential to address a region's development since:

- Through farm tourism some negative impacts generated from conventional tourism practices are addressed;
- Farm tourism is increasingly gaining farmers' recognition, therefore their willingness to adopt farm practices is increasing.

Furthermore, the case specific findings following the interviews with different actors involved with farm tourism in the region could be clustered as environment, socio-cultural and economic related.

The main **environmental findings** from the research suggest that:

- In the region, some farmers do not see the connection between their agricultural practices, the state of the natural environment and the development of farm tourism;

- Farm tourism can contribute to reduction of the environmental pressures in the region through attracting some of the daily tourists for spending the weekend in the countryside;
- Increasing the interest of local people and tourists alike in local produce leads to decreasing the impact from transportation;
- Farm tourism is still predominantly small in scale in the Söderslätt region.

On another level the **socio- cultural findings** from the research are related to:

- The farmers' perception of the tourist is essential for developing the farm tourism sector;
- Differentiating farm tourism based on the cultural traits of the region is an opportunity that has not been fully realized;
- The increased interest in local produce can strengthen the region's identity;
- Some farmers are too reliant on the natural surroundings for promoting their business.

The following **economic findings** are of importance:

- Income generated through farm tourism remains within the local community;
- Seasonality is well expressed in farm tourism
- There is a potential risk that those farmers who practise tourism could turn it into their primary occupation and become too dependable on its benefits;
- Through farm tourism employment opportunities are created for local people

Based on the finding from the research some recommendations are drawn on what could be possibly done in order to sustain the development of a balanced farm tourism sector in the region. These recommendations are related to: (1) establishing a regional tourism structure that would monitor the development of farm tourism as well as set the trends of tourism development for Söderslätt; (2) introducing a common communication instrument that would display information about the tourism offer, the needs and the performance of farm tourism businesses and therefore would be a suitable tool for benchmarking as well as a source of shared experience and information; (3) filling the information gap and raising the awareness through addressing the environmental issues in a more systematic way; (4) strengthening the local brand for a sustainable agricultural region through taking measures for improving its image, recognition and loyalty within local population and tourists alike; (5) assuring local capacity building through improving the existing study - circle programmes.

Finally, the research concludes that, farm tourism can contribute to the sustainable regional development, not only on a municipal, but also on a regional level due to the potentials to address some negative impacts related to the present tourism and agriculture development. Still, in order to do so, the relationship among the different actors involved in farm tourism should be considerably improved.

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1. Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. The background to the research issue is presented and a theoretical explanation to various concepts important for the research is given. Purpose, methodology, scope and limitations are also provided as well as an explanation regarding the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and Problem Definition

The following research derives from two simultaneously evolving trends on the European market concerning the tourism industry and the agricultural sector development.

The tourism industry

“ As the world largest industry, Travel and Tourism is an essential component of international trade, a major contributor to economic growth, and an integral part of life in the developed and developing countries. At the same time, moving housing feeding and entertaining hundreds of millions of people every year has an evident environmental impact. Either we add to global problems or we adapt our practices and become part of the international solution. In reality there is no choice- we must strive for continuing environmental improvement. ”

Geoffrey H. Lipman & Robert H. Burns¹

The growth potential of the tourism industry has been fully realized and recognized over the last few decades (especially since World War II) as a major source of economic development and job creation. Tourism has also been both praised and criticised for its ability to develop and therefore transform regions into completely different settings². While the former case is usually associated with the economic benefits stemming from its development; the latter case is associated with ecological and social disturbance of the regions affected.

The major criticism related to the spread of mass tourism over a region has been that it imposes non-local orientation of the tourism development, the money spent is rarely kept within the boundaries of the region and it is not always concerned with the interests of local people and resource available³.

In view of that, the *need to diversify* the existing tourism practices has emerged, especially since tourism is usually found in locations with fragile environments. That is why the “new” forms of tourism, referred to as “proactive” or “alternative” tourism⁴, through their major characteristic of remaining small- scale, have been viewed as a way to control growth and keep control over the impacts within the capacity of the local area, preserving the cultural and natural capital of a region⁵.

¹ World Travel and Tourism Council. (1994). *Travel and Tourism*. Oxford: OCTALS, p. 1

² Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*. London: Routledge, p. 7

³ Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*. P. 9

⁴ Nordic Council of Ministers. (2001). *Towards a Sustainable Nordic Tourism*. Copenhagen. Nordic Council of Ministers. p. 27

⁵ France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*. p. 23

The agricultural sector

Rural areas are largely viewed and accepted as areas dominated by agricultural practices. Even though agriculture is one aspect of rural activities, rurality is much more. It also includes forest activities, lake and river activities, etc.

Traditionally rural areas have been also viewed as less developed as opposed to urban areas. As a result, there has been a trend of decrease of the local population in the rural areas. Throughout the European Union (EU) agricultural businesses rely largely on state subsidies for survival and development. When the amount of subsidies is reduced, the farm businesses are obliged to look for alternative land uses and resources of income⁶. That is why, there is often a need that the farm owners find alternative means of income generation rising.

In order for the farmers to sustain their practices, some of the activities proposed by the European Commission (EC) are: land improvement, setting- up of farm relief and farm management service, renovation and development of villages and protection and preservation of the rural heritage, protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation as well as with improvement of animal welfare; marketing of quality agricultural products⁷.

Tourism is one of the activities envisaged by the Commission that could help sustain and improve the quality of life in rural environments⁸. Hence, tourism has been largely perceived as a way to offset the adverse economic impacts and facilitate revitalising the declining rural regions.

Considering the above said, the problems that set the scene for this research are:

- The need to diversify the current tourism practices in order to address some potential environmental, socio- cultural and economic issues related to the tourism growth;
- The need to complement the current farming practices in order to regenerate the rural regions

This thesis will explore in theory and in practice the current state of development of the farm tourism sector and the way it addresses the issues stated above.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the following research is to answer the following question:

“How can farm tourism contribute to sustainable regional development?”

In the attempt to better understand the relationship between farm tourism and sustainable regional development and in order to be able to address the main research question, the following issue was investigated:

- What makes farm tourism a step towards sustainable regional development?

⁶ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, London: International Thomson Business Press p.32

⁷ Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 of 17 May 1999

⁸ Ibid.

In order to address the above issue in a systematic and pragmatic way, these questions are further analysed from the perspective of the Söderslätt region, in the southernmost part of Sweden, chosen as a case study for the research. Some questions specifically related to the Söderslätt context are:

- What are the characteristics of farm tourism in the region?
- How are the different actors involved in farm tourism related?
- How can the future development of the sector be monitored?
- What are the potential long- term advantages of developing farm tourism in the region?

The expected *outcome* from the research is, through systematically addressing the above questions, provide an understanding about the implications of farm tourism for sustainable regional development and indicate areas of improvement for the future development of farm tourism in the selected region.

1.3 Scope

The scope of the research refers to the establishment and development of farm tourism practices and their sustainable integration within the development context of a region. In this process, due to the characteristics of the chosen case study, only rural areas will be in focus, while issues related to larger towns and settlements will not be addressed.

Compared with previous studies on farm tourism, the main contribution of this research is that it addresses a region in Sweden that has not been studied before from the perspective of farm tourism development, and provides an analysis on how the key stakeholders within the Söderslätt area involved in farm tourism communicate. The research is built on the assumption that on a local level, establishing an efficient communication pattern between the local government and the other stakeholders involved provide a basis for a balanced development. For the purposes of the research, only relationships internal for the region of Söderslätt are examined.

In order to provide a theoretical background on farm tourism, a relationship is established to the broader concept of rural tourism (the differences between these forms of tourism are further discussed in 1.5). The main reasons for establishing such a relationship are:

- There is a general confusion about the meaning of the terms rural and farm tourism,
- Practising farm tourism can hardly exist on its own, it is usually associated with at least one of the rest of the activities related to rural tourism- biking, hiking, climbing, etc. (for a full list of rural tourism activities please refer to)
- In Sweden, there is still no regulation in force about farm tourism: The only existing normative document is a quality criteria for offering accommodation. Therefore, the development of the sector is indirectly shaped through the policy relevant for the rural tourism development.

Finally, recommendations are drawn upon the general farm tourism practices, with a focus on the development of farm tourism in the Söderslätt region.

1.4 Limitations

The case - study selection refers only to the geographical boundaries of Söderslätt region and addresses only the actors involved in the development of sustainable farm tourism practices within the region. Even though, the author recognises that external actors influence these internal relationships, the fact that the current research is a pilot investigation for the region, provides an initial step towards understanding the dynamics within the actors involved in farm tourism in the Söderslätt area.

One of the major limitations for the research is the availability of data regarding farm tourism. While there is quite a lot written about rural tourism in general, the literature concerning issues of farm tourism, especially on a regional level, is scarce. That is why the theoretical part of the research will be adopted from rural tourism literature, as well as from primary information gathered from interviews.

Challenging was also the availability of time provided for the research and the existing language barriers. The interviews conducted were in English and it may be that details of interpretation might have been more exhaustive in the original language (Swedish).

1.5 Definitions

Throughout the literature review, it became obvious that there are *controversial definitions* given for the different types of rural tourism. Some authors and official publications still consider rural and farm tourism as substitute words. Others consider that farm tourism has the characteristics of mass tourism. The question on how to distinguish between farm and agri tourism is also a common issue.

Following the literature review, it is observed that the definitions or the interpretation of the terms vary according to national or regional characteristics. Therefore, precise definitions are hard to find. While the purpose of this thesis is not to come up with new definitions about the different types of rural tourism, it is necessary to select those definitions that are most relevant to the Swedish context.

The following figure has the purpose to show the *relationship* between rural, alternative and farm tourism. It should be considered only as an illustrative example since only a few of the numerous forms of rural tourism are presented (for a full list of the activities related to rural areas, please refer to Appendix 2)

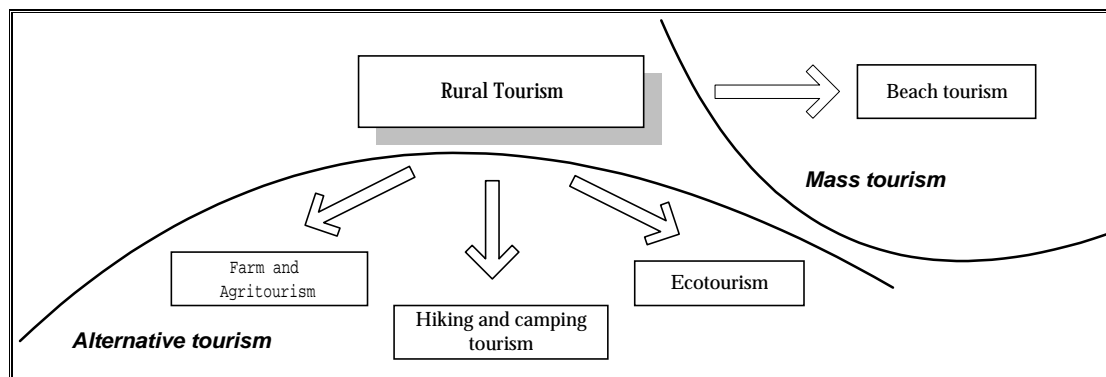


Figure 1-1: Relationship among rural, alternative and farm tourism

Figure 1-1 leads to the definition of the following terms: alternative tourism, mass tourism, rural tourism, farm tourism and agritourism. Understanding of the meaning of these terms is also necessary for the purpose of the research.

Mass tourism – according to Middleton and Hawkings, mass tourism involves the movement of a large number of people on nominally standardized packaged tour holidays to resorts that are mainly purpose made or adapted for the purpose. Such tourism is often associated with high volume of tourists and low prices⁹.

Alternative tourism - a term that encompasses various forms of tourism activities (“eco”, “soft”, “controlled”, “small- scale”, “cottage”, “green”, etc.) the purpose of which is to offer a more benign form of tourism in a region or destination. Therefore, the main characteristics of the different forms of alternative tourism are¹⁰:

- Small numbers of individual travellers are preferred to group tourists;
- Locally provided accommodation and decision- making in order to encourage slow, controlled growth of the tourist sector

Rural tourism - is tourism that takes place in the countryside¹¹ (the meaning of countryside is further explained in Chapter III).

Farm tourism - involves accommodation being offered in the farmhouse or in a separate guesthouse, providing meals and organising guests’ activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations¹².

Agritourism - tourism linked to agriculture, directly connected to agrarian environment, agrarian products or agrarian stays¹³.

A clarification point - even though, definitions related to farm and agritourism exist, distinguishing between these forms of rural tourism is hard. Throughout the literature review, some trends were established:

- Farm tourism and agritourism are equivalent¹⁴;
- Agritourism is the broader concept that encompasses farm tourism¹⁵;

It is not the purpose of this research to further elaborate on the differences and similarities between these two terms. Since both the Farmers’ tourist organisation and the Tourist information offices in

⁹ Synergy for WWF-UK. (2000). Tourism Certification. <http://www.wwf-uk.org/news/tcr.pdf> [Online]. Available: (2001, August 28)

¹⁰ France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p. 20

¹¹ OECD. (1994). *Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*. Paris. OECD.p. 8

¹² World Tourism Organisation. (1998). *Guide for local authorities on developing sustainable tourism*. Madrid: WTO, p. 79

¹³ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*. p.9

¹⁴Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, p. 50

¹⁵ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*. p.9

Sweden refer to this type of tourism as “*farm*”, it was decided that this is the term that best reflects the Swedish reality.

1.6 Methodology

The following research has evolved through several major stages, each of which with the purpose to build upon the knowledge and experience gained. The outcomes from each stage served as a starting point for the next and therefore a reflexive method of data interpretation and analysis was found to be most appropriate for the purpose of the research.

In order to design the research, the structure described by Maxwell “Qualitative research Design”¹⁶, was used. Therefore, the main stages of the research could be described as follows:

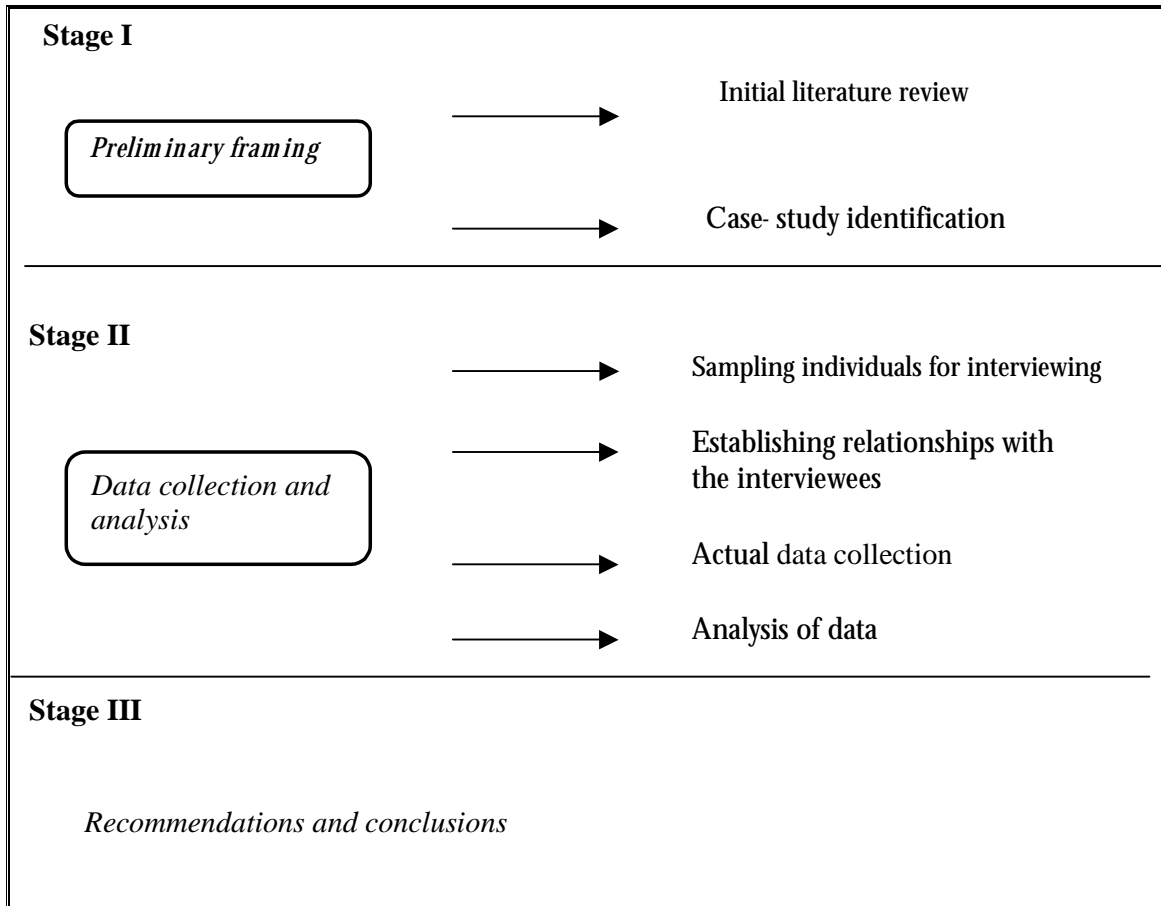


Figure 1-1: Research stages

1.6.1 Preliminary framing of the research

The literature review

¹⁶ Maxwell, J. (1996). Qualitative Research Design. An Interactive Approach. London:Sage. p. 65

In order to address the research question, information on issues related to farm tourism and sustainability was gathered. The subject of sustainable regional development was addressed on two levels- on one the hand, a holistic approach to the economic, environmental and socio- cultural issues was applied and secondly, a local political perspective was analysed, referring to the framework of LA 21 as a tool that involves the actors from a certain sector in an effective and efficient dialogue.

As a result from the literature review an understanding of the following issues was obtained:

- What is the meaning of farm tourism in the Swedish context;
- What is the organisational structure of the sector and what are the main policies influencing its development;
- Trends of development for the sector.

The case study of the Söderslätt region

The need for selecting a case study for the research became apparent for the following reasons: (1) In order to give a pragmatic perspective and a specific focus to the research; (2) To obtain more site-specific information about the development of farm tourism; (3) To obtain matter-of- fact information on which to build the analytical part of the research.

In that sense, the region of Söderslätt was found appropriate for the purpose of the research due to the following reasons:

- The predominately agricultural nature of the region;
- The number of farm tourism businesses in operation;
- The potential for future expansion of the sector due to the proximity of the region to the rest of the European continent;
- The expressed concern on the part of some local municipality members about the current patterns of tourism development in the region;
- The willingness and interest expressed by representatives from local municipalities to develop the region in a sustainable way

In order to establish the method of approach, the region of Söderslätt was viewed as a separate unit, the development of which was driven by a variety of internally and externally induced relationships. These relationships and the key actors involved were examined separately with the help of interviews constructed.

1.6.2 Data collection and analysis

Sampling and choosing individuals for interviewing

Sampling and choosing the most appropriate sources of information for the purpose of the research preceded the process of data collection. Miles and Huberman have described the logic of the process:

“ If you are talking with one kind of informant, you need to consider why this kind of informant is important, and from there, which other people should be interviewed.”¹⁷

The initial screening of people relevant for the research was a result from conversations and discussions with some practitioners in the area of sustainable development and tourism. Their input was especially valuable for the research since they provided advice on *who* was best to be contacted and in *what* way the information obtained would influence the research. Therefore, the following stakeholders were interviewed:

- *Local municipalities* - LA 21 coordinators (Vellinge, Skurup, Ystad)
- *Tourist information offices* - representatives from the four municipalities (Vellinge, Trelleborg, Skurup)
- *Farm tourism organisation* - representative from the farm tourism association (Bo på lantgård)
- *Farmers* - the farmers selected for interviews represented all range of practices in the sector (including ecological farming; proper tourism training; innovative ideas; business – as – usual) in order to achieve a more realistic picture about the current state of farm tourism in the area.

The initial list of interviewees was further expanded following information obtained during the course of the research from the actual meetings conducted.

Establishing relationship with the interviewees

The step that followed the screening of the interviewees was to establish a relationship with the people selected. Establishing a relationship with the interviewees prior to the interview itself was considered an important step, as confirmed by theory (Maxwell)¹⁸:

“In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument of the research, and the research relationship is the means by which the research gets done. This relationship has an effect not only on the participants in the study, but on the researcher and on other parts of the research design.”

Establishing an initial relationship was carried on through a telephone conversation, with the purpose of introduction of the author, the field of research and the issues of importance for the research. Further, it was important to obtain the interviewees' consent to participate in the research and make sure that they feel comfortable with the issues to be discussed.

There was also an attempt to approach some of the interviewees by e-mail, but that method did not achieve the expected results. Therefore, it was perceived, that through telephone presentation a greater sense of preliminary *trust* and *involvement* was established with the interviewees.

Actual data collection

Collection of primary and secondary data was undertaken during the field research in the region of Söderslätt. The primary data was collected mainly through personal interviews and to a far lesser extent through phone interviews or electronically. Throughout the research 18 interviews were

¹⁷ Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative Research Design. An Interactive Approach*. London:Sage. p. 69

¹⁸ Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative Research Design. An Interactive Approach*. London:Sage. p. 66

conducted, 14 of which were in depth, semi- structured¹⁹, while the rest of the interviews were spontaneously initiated and did not follow a specific structure.

For the purpose of collecting **primary data** several different types of conversation scenarios were constructed for the different actors involved. Separate scenarios were developed for local authorities representatives, tourist information offices, the farmers' association and farmers themselves. Example of the scenarios developed could be found in Appendix 1. Still, there were some common issues of importance, namely: (1) How do different actors perceive the development of farm tourism; (2) What are current problems/benefits for the region from developing farm tourism?; (3) What is the current pattern of communication between the different actors? In all cases, the questions were provided to the interviewees beforehand.

Secondary data was also collected, mainly in the form of information and promotional brochures and catalogues, data about the different municipalities from their web- sites and progress reports on the implementation of LA 21, tourism policies in the different municipalities and criteria documents for farm tourism. In that way, a broader scope of issues was addressed and a better background for the interpretation of the data collected through the interviews was provided.

Analysis of the data

Following the completion of data collection, clustering of information was performed according to the different stakeholders interviewed in order to find out common approaches and dissimilarities in the viewpoints of the interviewees. The findings of the research, were grouped under three sub-headings; environmental, socio- cultural and economic. Furthermore, these findings were used to investigate the relationship between the key stakeholders involved in farm tourism and also served as a base for suggesting criteria for the sustainable development of the sector. The questions of *how* is the communication process shaped and *what* has been communicated were important for the structure of this chapter. The selection of the criteria for the sustainable development of farm tourism was largely based on the findings presented.

On the next level, an analysis of the current stakeholder dialogue was undertaken. As a start, some well established networks were studied and the theoretical lessons learned were transferred on to the context of Söderslätt region. The communication process was assumed: (1) To be flexible enough to involve all the farm tourism stakeholders in a dialogue; (2) To be local authority initiated; (3) To show the links between farm tourism and the rest of the sectors of the economy in Söderslätt. The main difficulty regarding the issue of communication was that it took place among four different municipalities. Therefore a common pattern had to be established that would realistically depict the current situation.

In order to facilitate monitoring the future development of farm tourism in the region, a set of criteria was further proposed. For that purpose some already existing criteria was studied. In the absence of such criteria developed specifically for farm tourism in Sweden, the focus was turned to the one set by the Destination 21 scheme, Denmark, perceived to be of relevance for two reasons: (1) it bears the Nordic approach; (2) its aim is not only to promote sustainability within the planning framework for tourism but also address the sustainability for the entire region²⁰. While some criteria were found relevant for the current study (especially those related to the quality of natural resources and cultural heritage), it was further considered to be too broad since the development of a

¹⁹ A semi- structured interview implies that even though there is a preliminary set structure, the conversation could deviate according to the findings made throughout the discussion.

²⁰ Ramm, Niels H. (2001). *Introduction to: Destination 21- a labeling scheme for tourist destinations with sustainable development*, Copenhagen, Saloprint a/s, p. 3

destination is targeted as a whole. The aim of the author was to suggest criteria of relevance for the future development of farm tourism in the region.

1.7 Map of the Thesis

Chapter one: This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. The background to the research issue is presented and a theoretical explanation to various concepts important for the research (rural, alternative, farm, agritourism) is given. Purpose, methodology, scope and limitations are also provided as well as an explanation regarding the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two: A general overview of the current trends in the tourism industry as well as the positive and negative impacts related are presented. Two concepts, closely linked to tourism development, are also discussed- “the tragedy of the commons” and “the carrying capacity concept”. The chapter closes with identifying LA 21 as the political framework that facilitates a more sustainable sector development by providing the base for a broad stakeholder dialogue and presents the case of successful LA 21 implementation in Calvia, Spain.

Chapter three: The research is narrowed down to giving a theoretical background of the relationship rural tourism- farm tourism. Relevant EU policy that indirectly influences the farm tourism sector development is also presented. The chapter concludes with an overview of the current development of farm tourism in Sweden.

Chapter four: This chapter is related to the case study chosen for the purpose of the research. Therefore, a description of issues related to the thesis, such as tourism development and tourism potentials of the region; key actors in farm tourism and examples of some existing partnerships that directly or indirectly influence farm tourism in Söderslätt are presented.

Chapter five: The following chapter presents the findings of the research as related to farm tourism, grouped under environmental, socio- cultural and economic issues. It further focuses on the inter – stakeholder dialogue and discusses current gaps and potentials for improvement. Sustainability criteria that would help monitor farm tourism development in Söderslätt are suggested in order to facilitate concretisation of the advantages obtainable from a harmonised farm tourism development.

Chapter six: In this chapter, recommendations related to the issues identified throughout chapter five will be presented. These recommendations are primarily targeted at suggesting different ways of improving the current pattern of farm tourism stakeholder dialogue and therefore strengthening the image of Söderslätt region. Conclusions of the research are also presented based on the findings and analysis in chapter five, and an answer to the main research question will be obtained. A suggestion for a further research is also presented.

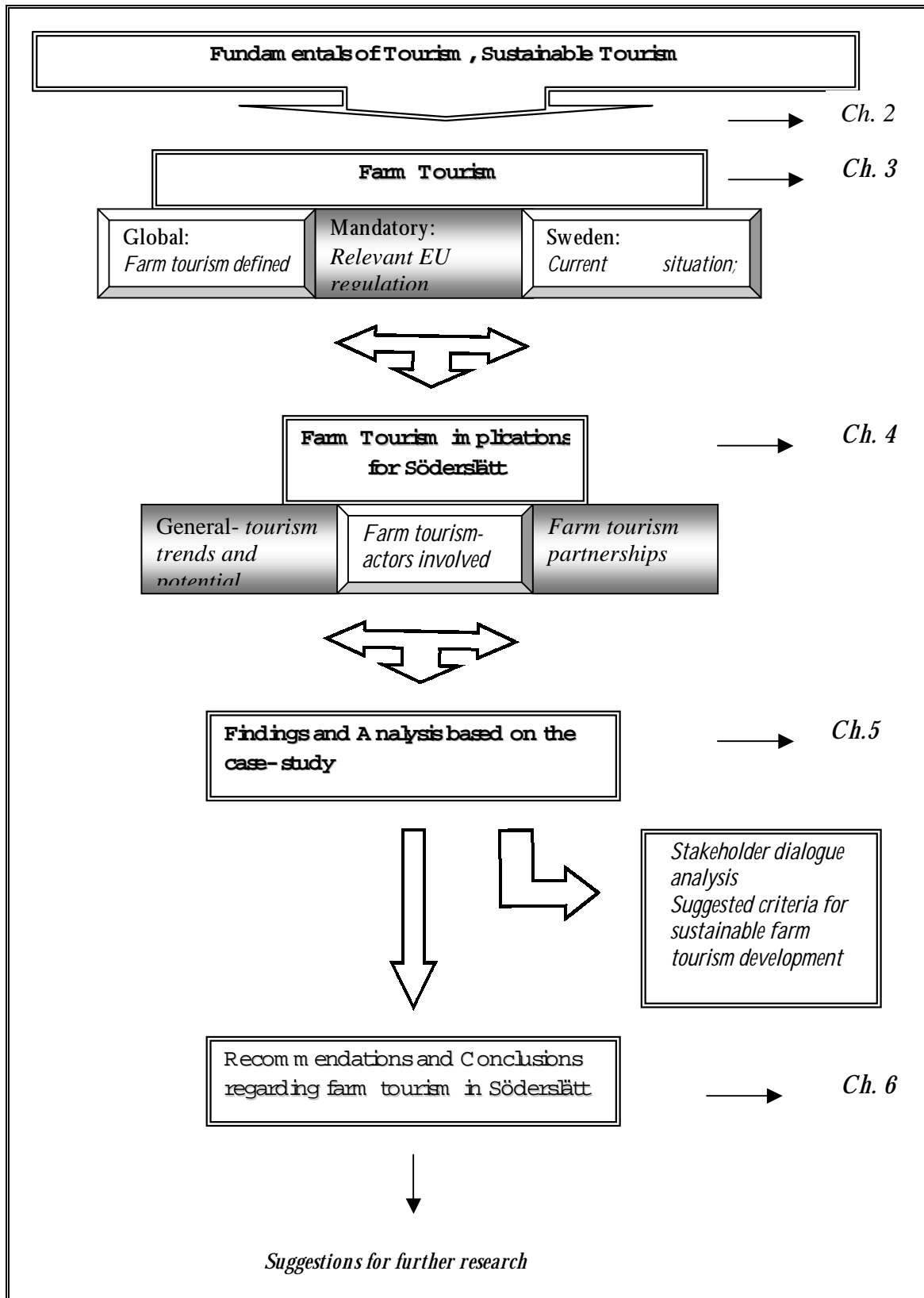


Figure 1-2: Research outline

2. Conceptual Framework- Tourism and Regional Sustainability

Chapter two: *A general overview of the current trends in the tourism industry as well as the positive and negative impacts related are presented. Two concepts, closely linked to tourism development, are also discussed- “the tragedy of the commons” and “the carrying capacity concept”. The chapter closes with identifying LA 21 as the political framework that facilitates a more sustainable sector development by providing the base for a broad stakeholder dialogue and presents the case of successful LA 21 implementation in Calvia, Spain.*

2.1 The Tourism Industry

Being the world’s largest industry, tourism is linked (directly or indirectly) to many of the prime sectors of the world economy. It is also integrated in the economic, socio- cultural and environmental aspects of human life. Therefore, coming with a common definition about the tourism industry has been difficult due to its multidimensionality and potential to touch many human lives and different economic activities²¹. Still, a definition, encompassing both the “conceptual” and “technical” aspects, is given by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSTAT) viewing tourism as:

“The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.”²²

Even though general in its nature, the definition discloses some of the fundamental characteristics of the “*tourism industry*”. These are that it is largely associated with travel away from home or working place; it is a short- term activity and is conducted for different purposes.

When trying to come up with a common definition about the term “*tourist*”, it should be taken into consideration that the major limitations stream from the fact that different people have different personalities, demographics and experiences²³. Therefore, the term tourist could be defined based on:

- Distinguishing between domestic and international trips - namely, trips done within the country of residence or to another country;
- The purpose of travel - leisure and recreation, business, cultural and religious pursuit, etc.

Furthermore, tourism should be viewed as a dynamic process incorporating relationships among various stakeholders and establishing communication networks among the different strips of the society. No matter whether viewed from a regional or national perspective the main actors involved have been classified by the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) as follows: the tourist/ consumer group; the local population (including people who live in the tourist destination); the

²¹ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*. p. 6

²² Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, New York: Longman Publishing.p. 8

²³ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*. p. 11

service providers represented by tour operators, accommodation providers, etc and the local and national governments²⁴.

The past few decades (ever since World War II) have been marked by an extensive growth of the tourist sector. Some of the driving forces behind this phenomenon have been recognised as:

- Increased wealth of the nations, leading to change in the living patterns;
- Development of transportation (plane as a mass mean of transportation, high speed trains, variety of fast cars, etc.);
- Change in the demographics (change in the age proportions of the world's population, etc.);
- Fall of frontier formalities and restrictions as well as language barriers;
- Introduction of common currencies (EURO).

Expressed in figures, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the trends shown by the world travel and tourism industry are²⁵:

- 11,7% of the World's Gross Domestic Product
- Total travel and tourism demand US\$ 4,5 trillion
- 9,4% of total investment, US\$ 701 billion
- 12,6% of total exports
- 8% of total employment, 192 million jobs

Furthermore, the trend of expansion of the industry over the past few decades could also be confirmed through the forecasts provided by the WTTC.

²⁴ Ramm, Niels H. (2000). *Toward sustainable destinations: an analysis of the Danish destination recognition scheme*. Lund: IIIEE, p. 17

²⁵ OECD. (2001). Seminar on tourism policy and economic growth.
<http://webnet1.oecd.org/oecd/pages/home/displaygeneral/0.3380.FR-document-0-nodirectorate-no-20-2494-0.00.html>
[Online]. Available: (2001, June 10)

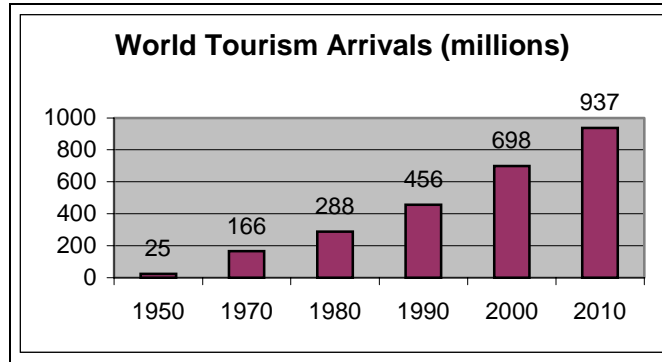


Figure 2-1: Dynamics of world tourism arrivals²⁶

Figure 2-1 indicates that world arrivals are expected to reach 937 million worldwide (2010) and 1,6 billion (2020). That is expected to lead to a 4,3% annual growth in arrivals worldwide, increase in the total amount of expenditure up to US\$ 2 trillion (2020), indicating an annual increase of 6,7% per year²⁷.

The development of the tourism sector, no matter whether at national or regional level, is closely related to the other sectors of the economy. One way of depicting the links is as proposed by Jafari and Ritchie and McIntosh and Goeldner through showing the relationship of the tourism studies to other educational disciplines.

²⁶ OECD. (2001).

²⁷ Ibid.

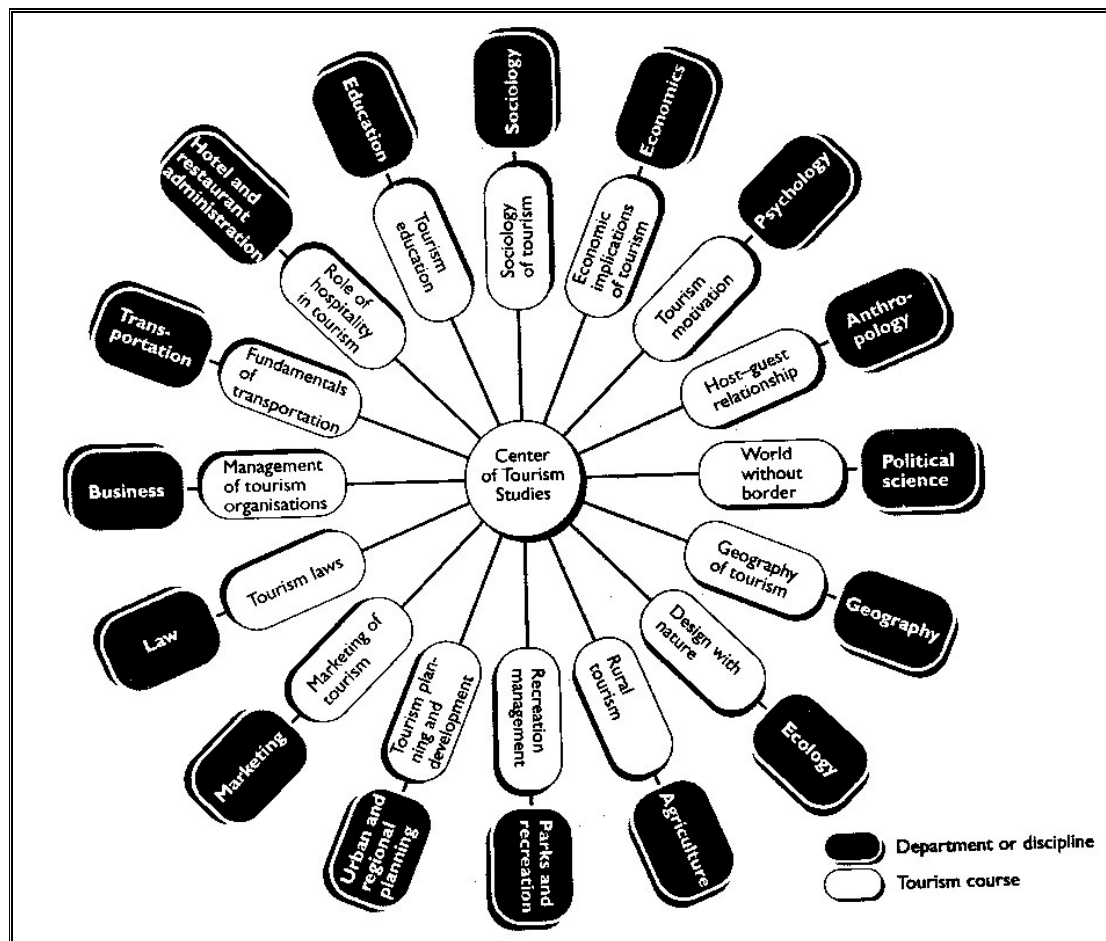


Figure 2-2: Tourism discipline integration with other disciplines of the economy²⁸

Naturally, some of the connections shown in Figure 2-2 are more explicit (Tourism - Transportation; Tourism - Marketing) while some are less explicit (Tourism - Sociology). Even though, depicting the links between different fields of study, the figure is also relevant for establishing the links and the complex synergy between the tourism sector and other economic sectors. However, society is faced with the situation of *satisfying the increasing demand for tourist services and products with the existing scarce resources by causing minimal impacts on the natural, socio-cultural and economic environment.*

2.1.1 Impacts of the Tourism Industry

In order to grasp the whole array of impacts resulting from tourist practices, economic, environmental and socio-cultural aspects should be equally addressed. The last few decades indicated a concern about the economic impacts from tourism, since profit generation was (and still is) the major incentive for the sector development. Recently, the income generating power of the industry within a community, region or country has been opposed with a growing concern for the social and environmental issues arising from tourist activities. While the concern about social impacts is mainly focused on how the industry has affected local people and their lifestyles, the environmental

²⁸ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 4

studies have tended to emphasise how the industry has transformed the physical nature of local and regional aspects²⁹.

The environmental impacts of tourism

When discussing the environmental effects of tourism, various authors discuss conservation and preservation as *positive*. Examples of such practices are associated with restoration of ancient monuments, sites and historic buildings; creation of national parks in order to preserve flora and fauna species; coral reef protection, etc. Still, as Cooper points out³⁰, in this case the calculation of *opportunity costs* should not be neglected. Creating a national park may decrease the amount of land suitable for other economic activities and therefore the subsequent effect on local population should be estimated.

On the *negative side*, different authors usually argue that tourism leads to deterioration of the resource quality. Some of the consequences associated are related to impacts on the wildlife environment due to hunting or fishing; land erosion; forest fires; vegetation destroyed by walkers, etc.

Various effects on the built environment further complement the effects on natural environment. This group of negative impacts is largely associated with construction of tourism super structure inconsistent with the existing architectural authentic characteristics of the region; damage of ancient monuments by tourists; negative visual impacts resulting from the new architectural styles; emergence of contrasts between urban areas developed for tourists and residential areas³¹. Further, the following Table 1 summarises the advantages and disadvantages for the natural environment due to tourism development.

Table 1: Potential costs and benefits from tourism for the natural environment³²

Benefits	Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conservation of natural areas and wildlife ➤ Environmental appreciation ➤ Rehabilitation and often also transformation of old buildings and sites into new facilities ➤ Introduction of planning and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Energy cost of transport ➤ Lost of aesthetic value ➤ Noise ➤ Air pollution ➤ Water pollution and generation of waste ➤ Disruption of animal breeding patterns ➤ Deforestation ➤ Impacts on vegetation through the collection of flowers and bulbs ➤ Destruction of beaches and dunes, coral reefs, National Parks and Wilderness areas through trampling or use of vehicles ➤ Change of landscape- permanent environmental restructuring ➤ Seasonal effects on population densities and structures

²⁹ Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*, p. 100

³⁰ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 162

³¹ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 156

³² France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p. 37

The socio - cultural impacts of tourism

The impacts associated with socio - cultural changes are due to the contact established between the host population and the visitors³³. Closely related to the frequency of contacts and the stage of development of the tourist facilities and infrastructure is the work of Doxey who recognises four stages of local attitude towards the tourism industry ranging from *euphoria*, through *apathy* and *annoyance* to *antagonism*³⁴.

Naturally, the impacts between local population and tourists, as previously discussed, are both positive and negative. On the *positive side* is usually the exchange of cultural information, ideas and beliefs. This cultural exchange usually serves as an incentive for restoration and preservation of the local cultural heritage (food, art, customs, etc.).

The major *negative socio - cultural impacts* from tourism are related to the increase of physical presence of tourists³⁵. Further, the relationship is affected by the so - called “demonstration effect” where local patterns of consumption change to imitate those of the tourists even though host population gets to witness only part of the visitor behaviour that may not be representative of his usual pattern of behaviour in their home country³⁶.

The adoption of foreign values that lead to alteration of the traditional patterns of development of the host population is yet another widely recognised problem³⁷. The changes brought about are associated with social tension between generations, loss of authenticity, migration to urban centres and standardization of the tourist product. Table 2 below provides an overview of the socio- cultural impacts related to tourism development.

³³ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 174

³⁴ Mowforth, Martin & Munt, Ian, (1998). *Tourism and Sustainability. New Tourism in the Third World*. London: Routledge, p. 227

³⁵ France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p.106

³⁶ Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*, p. 101

³⁷ 7th ERCP, (2001). Tourism workshop

Table 2: Potential costs and benefits from tourism for the socio - cultural environment³⁸

Benefits	Costs
Cultural Impacts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Renaissance and/or retention of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art ➤ Handicrafts ➤ Dance ➤ Ceremonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disappearance, degradation or commoditization leading to a loss of authenticity of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art and music ➤ Handicrafts ➤ Dance ➤ Ceremonies ➤ Architecture ➤ Dress ➤ Food
Social Impacts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Through relaxation and recreation, tourists change their environmental and social contact patterns ➤ Local people gain through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Impetus to modernization ➤ Women are given a level of independence ➤ People break out of traditional restrictive roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Local resentment resulting from “demonstration effect” ➤ Moral problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crime ➤ Prostitution ➤ Gambling ➤ Decline of traditional beliefs and religion ➤ Health problems ➤ Strains on local hospitality become intolerable ➤ Adverse effects on family and community life ➤ Dehumanising employment ➤ Neo- colonialism ➤ Unbalanced population structures

The economic impacts from tourism

Economic benefits provide the main driving force for tourism development. When attempting to estimate the full effect of the economic impacts a few aspects should be taken into consideration, namely³⁹:

- Indirect and direct effects from tourist activities;
- Leakages of expenditures out of the local economy;
- Displacements and opportunity costs.

³⁸ France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p. 102

³⁹ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 125

The tourist spending is the money spent on different tourism- related goods and services, such as food, beverage, accommodation, etc. These spendings, while remaining within the local community, create the *direct effect* of tourism on the host economy⁴⁰. In that sense, tourist expenditure contributes to improving the living standard of the local population, create an incentive for maintaining the existing facilities and contributes to the GDP.

Tourists spending influence other sectors of the economy as well. This process has also been viewed as being *positive* since some of the earnings of the tourist service industry are passed on and contribute to the development of other businesses such as food and beverage suppliers, accounting and bank services, construction firms, etc. This process, where the money is not kept locally but leak to other sectors is recognised by different authors and economists as *indirect effect*⁴¹ from tourist expenditures.

On the other side of the equation are the *negative economic impacts* from the tourism sector development in the form of *opportunity costs* stimulated by tourist activity. The idea of opportunity costs is that tourism activities use resources that could be otherwise used for alternative purposes⁴². As an example, the case of attracting human resources from rural to urban areas, whereas the productive labour for the agricultural sector decreases while the expansion of urban health, education services is necessary.

Yet another widely - expressed negative effect from the tourism development in a region is the problem of increased land prices⁴³. The increase of tourism activities is usually followed by an escalation of the local land prices. As a result, local people are usually “pushed” to sell their properties to “outsiders”, leaving them with short- term gains.

Table 3 gives a better understanding of the economic costs and benefits associated with the development of the tourism industry.

⁴⁰ Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*, p.

⁴¹ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 130

⁴² France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p. 168

⁴³ UNEP. (2001). <http://www.unepie.org/pc/tourism/sust-tourism/economic.htm>. (2001, July 6)

Table 3: Some potential economic costs and benefits from tourism⁴⁴

Benefits	Costs
Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foreign exchange earnings ➤ GNP ➤ State taxes ➤ Income: for businesses and individuals 	Financial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leakages: imports, repatriation of profits ➤ Opportunity costs ➤ Inflation ➤ Higher land prices
Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creating jobs 	Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Often part- time ➤ Low paid ➤ Low skilled ➤ Seasonal ➤ For women ➤ Employees taken from other sectors
Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Broaden economic base ➤ Intersectoral leakages ➤ Multiplier effects ➤ Encourages entrepreneurial activity ➤ Infrastructural provision ➤ Improvement of social services ➤ Promotes regional development in underdeveloped areas 	Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dangers of dependency

Economic, social and environmental impacts regardless of the destination are induced due to several commonly expressed reasons: the number of tourists as compared to local population; the physical size of the area that affects the density of the tourist population; the attitudes of the governmental bodies; the stage of tourist development and the type of tourism practiced⁴⁵. The influence of these factors on the future development of the tourism industry is addressed by two concepts that will be further discussed in the thesis, namely the “the tragedy of the commons” and the concept of “carrying capacity”.

2.1.2 The “Tragedy of the Commons”

“...freedom of the commons brings ruin to all.”⁴⁶

The concept behind the “tragedy of the commons”

The concept of the “tragedy of the commons”⁴⁷ finds recognition within different aspects of the economy. The underlying idea is that within a “common property structure of resource ownership”,

⁴⁴ France, L. (1997). *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Tourism*, p. 164

⁴⁵ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 185 - 189

⁴⁶ Herding, Garrett. (1972). *Exploring new ethics fir survival*. New York: Viking Press. p. 250- 264

⁴⁷ Herding, Garrett. (1972). *Exploring new ethics fir survival*. p. 250- 264

the individuals who mutually exploit the resource do not perceive their individual responsibility, but “pass on” the responsibility towards the community or group to which they belong⁴⁸. Therefore, because of the individual behaviour and actions, the result is degradation of the resource used by the entire community.

“Tragedy of the commons” and implications for tourism

The concept of the “tragedy of the commons” is also applicable for the tourist industry. The reason is that the market often fails to protect properly the resources on which the development of the industry depends for its survival⁴⁹. The paradox is that tourism being an industry, the success of which largely relies on the environmental quality of the natural surroundings, should strive to preserve that quality. On the other hand, the tourism industry does not use these resources in isolation from the rest of the businesses or industries. As a result, usually several businesses or industries compete for the same resources and rely on the same environmental space in order to operate. Furthermore, the reluctance to protect the environment is usually due to the fact that these resources are usually perceived as “free” from the different actors involved in their exploitation and therefore tend to avoid the burden of responsibility for the impacts incurred from the exploitation of the resources.

As an illustration the Figure 2-3 below presents the case of rural tourism and the demands from various industries and activities on the common resource.

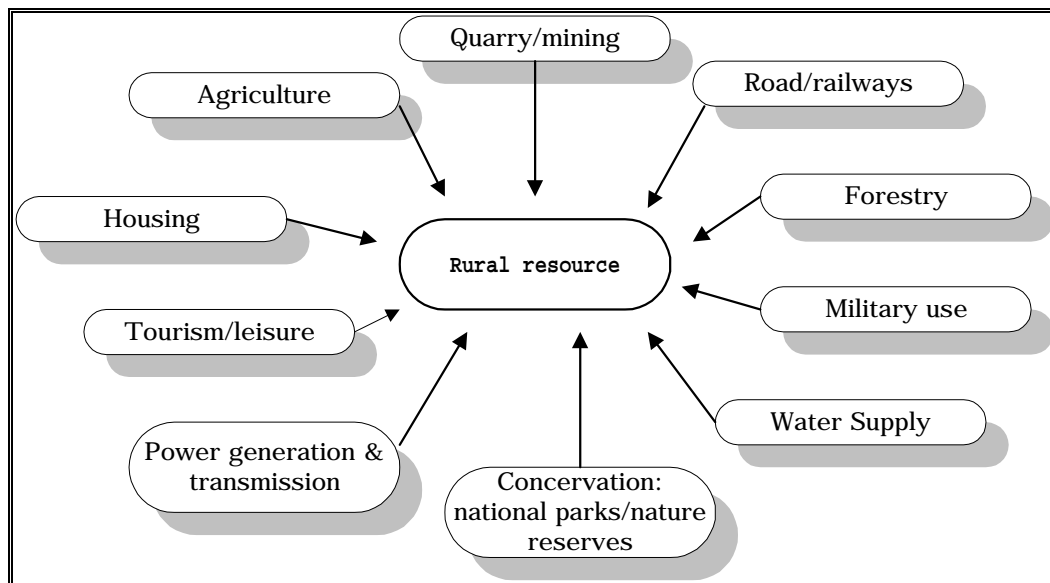


Figure 2-3: Demands on the rural resource⁵⁰

The problem is further emphasized by the fact that in most cases, businesses and individuals are mostly interested in the short- term benefits and profits and rarely consider the long - term social and

⁴⁸ *Managing the Tragedy*, p. 148

⁴⁹ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, p. 21

⁵⁰ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, p.30

environmental impacts⁵¹. That is even more true for the tourism industry since it largely consists of small and medium sized private businesses, which are predominantly interested in the short - term, fast increase of their income.

2.1.3 The Concept of Carrying Capacity

The concept of carrying capacity could be applied to a site, resort or even a region. Even though initially adopted from the strictest ecological sense where it is based on the balance between birth and death of the species⁵², in the *tourism context it refers to the ability to absorb tourism use without deteriorating a region*. When defining carrying capacity for the tourism sector several problems occur⁵³:

- The location of the region or destination related to the number of tourists;
- The type of tourist activities developed;
- The difference in cultures between tourists and guests;
- The speed of tourism growth over time.

As a consequence different concepts of carrying capacity have emerged, which are briefly summarised in the box below⁵⁴

⁵¹ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p.21

⁵² Fennell, D. (1999). *Ecotourism- An introduction*, p. 111

⁵³ Cooper, Chris., Fletcher, John., Gilbert, David., and Wanhill, Stephen., (1997). *Tourism- Principle and Practice*, p. 197

⁵⁴ Mowforth, Martin & Munt, Ian, (1998). *Tourism and Sustainability. New Tourism in the Third World*. p. 250

Types of tourist carrying capacity

Ecological - environmental capacity - the level of tourist development or recreational activity beyond which the environment as previously experienced is degraded or compromised.

Physical - facility capacity - the level of tourist development or recreation activity beyond which facilities are “saturated”; or physical deterioration of the environment occurs through overuse by tourists or inadequate infrastructural network.

Social - perceptual capacity - the level reached when local residents of an area no longer want tourists because they are destroying the environment, damaging the local culture or crowding them out of local activities.

Economic carrying capacity - the ability to absorb tourist functions without squeezing out desirable activities. Assumes that any limit to capacity can be overcome, even if at a cost- ecological, social, cultural or even political.

Psychological capacity - when tourists are no longer comfortable in the destination area for reasons that can include perceived negative attitudes of the locals, crowding of the area, or deterioration of the physical environment.

(adapted from Watson and Kopachevsky, 1996)

Different authors explore the relationship between the carrying capacity and the destination life-cycle. They argue that it is impossible to determine tourism carrying capacity outside the context of the position of the region or destination in the lifecycle⁵⁵. The premise is that all destinations usually undergo a uniform transformation over time, starting with *exploration*, evolving through *involvement* and *development*, to finally reach *stagnation*. The critical point is reached when the increase in tourist numbers leads to decline of the region. This brings out the question of integrating sustainability within the current tourism practices and therefore extensive managerial skills and monitoring of the different social, environmental and economic networks between hosts, tourists and the environment are necessary.

2.2 Tourism industry and Local Agenda 21

2.2.1 The Concept of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability was put forward in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, more usually called the *Brundtland Report*, published in 1987. It was this report that provided the key statement on sustainable development, defining it as:

⁵⁵ Cooper, C. & Wanhill, S. (1997). *Tourism Development- Environmental and Community Issues*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, p. 14

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁵⁶

It also implies that there is no uniform pattern on how to achieve sustainability, nor is there a state that indicates that sustainability has been accomplished. Rather, the deeper meaning is that different sectors of the economy perceive sustainability differently, the uniting element and final aim being alleviation of poverty and improving the quality of life. Through the concept, the highlight of future development was shifted to long- term management of resources and policies, which reflect the real costs of consumption and degradation of non- renewable assets⁵⁷.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992 undertook the challenge of translating the recommendations of the Brundtlands Report into concrete policies. Therefore, the concrete output was the creation of *Agenda 21*, focused on delivering a programme that united different actors and sectors of the economy towards sustainable development. The four sections covered by Agenda 21 are the following⁵⁸:

- *Social and Economic Dimensions* - stressing the link between environmental, social and economic issues;
- *Conservation and Management of Resources for Development* - stressing the need for sustainable management of land, seas, energy resources and waste;
- *Strengthening the Role of Major Social Groups* - stressing the need of involving all the groups of society in the sustainable development;
- *Means of Implementation* - stressing the role of the different stakeholders in the process as well as the tool and instruments for the process

Agenda 21 has aimed at providing a framework for integrating all levels of government, all sectors of society and all economic agents. The Swedish National Report on Agenda 21 also states *“...at local and municipal level, Agenda 21 has provided a strong incentive for broad and active public participation in the efforts to achieve sustainable development”⁵⁹*.

An important element of the Rio agreements was the emphasis made on the importance of local work for sustainable development. Local action and “capacity building” became a central point relying on the development of the structures, resources and skills needed to implement policies, programmes and actions. The role of local governments in Agenda 21 has been recognised as coordinators, possessing the political and legal power in order to integrate and provide a framework for the viable development of a region⁶⁰.

Furthermore, in order to assure an efficient enforcement of Agenda 21, each municipality was required to adapt the framework to the local peculiarities and prioritise issues, based on wide consensus between the different stakeholders in the community.

⁵⁶ World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future* Oxford University Press. p. 8

⁵⁷ Regions and Local Authorities Partnership. (1999). http://www.dra.ie/sruna/guidelines/SRUNA_ParticipationGuidelines.pdf [2001, July 5]

⁵⁸ Regions and Local Authorities Partnership. (1999).

⁵⁹ Ministry of Environment. (1997). *Agenda 21 in Sweden, National Report: From Environmental Protection to Sustainable Development*. Stockholm: Ljunglöfs Offset AB. p. 5

⁶⁰ World Tourism Organisation. (1998). *Guide for local authorities on developing sustainable tourism*, p. 9

The broad range of groups involved and interacting within the framework of *Local Agenda 21* is presented below.

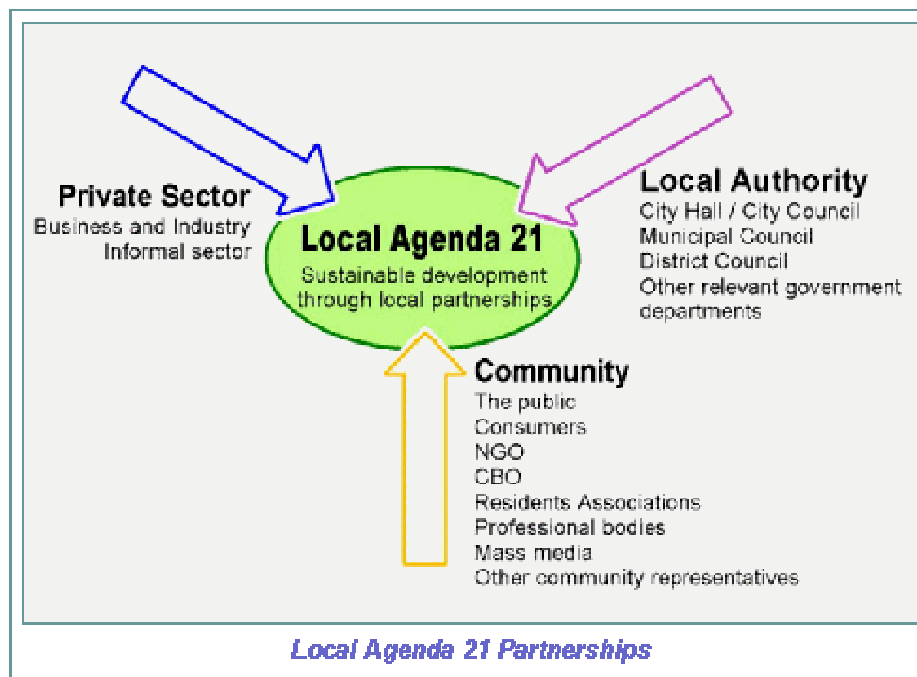


Figure 2-4: Partnerships in Local Agenda 21⁶¹

Creating local partnerships among actors in the various sectors of the economy has become the central idea in Agenda 21. These *partnerships*, where the local authorities are working to involve and inform local stakeholders and citizens, have been justified by the understanding that working towards sustainability is not feasible unless personal involvement and commitment is ensured at all levels of society⁶².

2.2.2 Local Agenda 21 and the Concept of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism has been discussed long before the Brundtland report outlined the philosophy of sustainable development. Even though, the concept emerged in the late 1970s, and definition of the concept has undergone numerous refinements, the implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism has been slow.

Still, sustainable tourism is a concept that is designed to serve the interest of the host communities, the tourists and the industry itself. This idea has been adopted by WTO when defining sustainable tourism:

“Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way

⁶¹ Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Malaysia. (2001). http://www.kpkt.gov.my/jkt/la21/eng1/page_4.html (2001, June 12)

⁶² The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio. (1999). *Earth Summit Agenda 21*, p. 233

that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological process, biological diversity and life support systems.⁶³

The focus of the definition is on finding a balance between development and conservation taking into account the ecology and culture of the region. Nevertheless, many authors argue that tourism can never be sustainable due to the nature of the industry. On the other hand others disagree by stating that “greening” the industry will be brought about through changing the relationships between visitors, visited and the place⁶⁴.

The foundation for establishing such a relationship has been provided by the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, where the idea of establishing sustainable tourism practices was further disseminated. The response of the global tourism industry came in 1997 when WTO and WTTC jointly drew up the report “Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development”.

On a regional level, Baltic 21 project is a development of Agenda 21 that aims at finding a feasible implementation strategy for sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region. Tourism is one of the seven main sectors included in the Baltic 21 programme⁶⁵. Subsequently, in 1998, an Agenda 21 for Tourism for the Baltic Sea Region was adopted⁶⁶, which provides the necessary political framework that allows the Baltic Sea tourism industry to take a lead in implementing sustainable development by developing tourist products and services within a destination in a balanced way at the same time providing for low impact on the environment.

Usually, the issues of sustainable tourism are touched implicitly through addressing biodiversity, transportation and land planning problems, therefore making much of Agenda 21 applicable for the tourism sector. The long- term goal of sustainability for the tourist sector has also lead the industry into a balanced relationship with the broader economic regional development.

That is why sustainable tourism should be viewed as an approach. This is not a particular type of tourism and therefore it only provides guidelines and policies and instruments towards achieving more sustainable practices. Claims related to the achievement of sustainable practice should be viewed critically especially when decrease of tourist number as well as decrease in profits are involved. The true proof of “sustainable tourism” will be sustainable development of local communities that serve as tourist destinations⁶⁷.

Often quoted as the best example of LA 21 implementation, the case of Calvia, Spain illustrates how tourism industry in a region could be regenerated. The text box bellow illustrates the problem that Calvia was faced with and gives an indication on how that problem was addressed under Local Agenda 21⁶⁸.

⁶³ Nordic Council of Ministers. (2001). *Towards a sustainable Nordic Tourism*. p. 37

⁶⁴ Improvement and Development Agency. (1999). [2001, July 5]

⁶⁵ Other sectors in Baltic Sea Region Agenda 21 are energy, agriculture, forestry, transport, industry and fishery.

⁶⁶ Baltic 21 Tourism Group. (1998). Agenda 21- Baltic Sea Region Tourism. <http://www.ee/baltic21/> [2001, June 15]

⁶⁷ ICLEI

⁶⁸ Calvia. (1995). *Calvia Local Agenda 21- the Sustainability of a Tourist Municipality Plan of Action*. <http://www.bitel.es/dir~calvia/book.doc> [2001, June 20]

The case of Calvia

Since the sixties onwards, Calvia, like a large part of the Spanish Mediterranean, has found itself subjected to unprecedented tourist growth due to a series of factors: its proximity to Europe, the natural and cultural attractions of the Balearic Islands and the cheap price of land and labour from the agricultural sector.

The Crises of Unrestricted Tourist Growth and the Treat of Local Decline

For three decades Calvia's coastline has been saturated with buildings. The 6, 800 units and 112 tourist establishments in 1960 had reached almost 120,000 units by 1997: about 60,000 units, plus 60,000 family apartment and villa units used by holidaymakers of different origin, and 256 tourist establishments, as well as complete range of complementary facilities, such as golf courses, marinas...

Tourists and holidaymakers were to be followed by new residents. The 3, 000 inhabitants of 1960 have become 35,000 registered residents and approximately 50,000 de facto residents.

The disproportionate human pressure on the coastline, the loss of environmental quality and the aging of its tourist area were seriously threatening the tourist and residential attraction of Calvia for the future.

The Calvia Local Agenda 21: Sustainability as a Reference for Integrated Tourist and Local Development

About the middle of the nineties the Town Council decided to extend the Excellence Plan's¹ field of action and to commit its future tourist and local development to a new strategy guided by sustainability criteria. This option took shape through the decision to develop Local Agenda 21 in Calvia, according to the guidelines of the Earth Summit and the 5th Programme of the European Union (1992).

From the beginning, the LA 21 made it necessary to consider the municipality as an integrated system. The Local System of Calvia was drawn up from this point of view and with very simple criteria based on the following:

- Delimitation of **6 Key Thematic Areas** as essential parts of the Local System of Calvia: population, social integration and quality of life; local ecology; historical and cultural heritage; economy and tourism; town- planning system; and key environmental sectors. Human pressure generated by tourist and residential population dynamics has been considered a determining factor of the whole.
- Delimitation of **27 Fields of Reference** and **775 Indicators**, which allow study, and evaluation of the present situation of said Key Thematic Areas and the Local System of Calvia.

The Local Agenda has further defined a project called the "**Complete Restoration Setting**", with the conviction that Calvia's best opportunities for the future lie in concentrating efforts on conserving its natural heritage, modernising its tourist sector, restoring and valuing the heritage of existing buildings and giving full support to enriching human knowledge and resources. The LA has translated these objectives into 10 Lines of Action and 40 Initiatives.

3. Fundamentals of the Farm Tourism Sector

The research is narrowed down to giving a theoretical background of the relationship rural tourism- farm tourism. Some relevant EU policy that indirectly influences the farm tourism sector development is also presented. The chapter concludes with an overview of the current development of farm tourism in Sweden.

3.1 Theoretical Perspective of Rural Tourism

Prior to the industrial revolution most rural areas were self- sufficient⁶⁹. Rural areas controlled food production and were usually owned by powerful political actors.

The rise of industrial production and the expansion of the cities lead to changes in the rural areas throughout the world. Rural to urban migration, the enclosure of open fields, the commercialisation of agriculture, the impacts of technology (from improvements in transportation and mechanisation to refrigeration and chemicals) and changes in the political and economic activities at a global level are amongst the most important factors contributing to the decline of the rural industries⁷⁰. Furthermore, the centralisation of functions has led to decimation of services in many communities and has forced small villages and towns to fight for their survival.

Recently, the countryside has increasingly become an attractive place to live without the need to be involved in agriculture. Improved accessibility has also contributed to the appeal of the rural areas. These changes are marked by a change in the ownership and management of many rural areas. The appearance of agriculture and the change of the image of the family farms served as a prerequisite for change in the traditional operation of farms⁷¹.

On the other hand, tourism has become a steady, fast - growing activity and has brought economic growth to the countries in which it was developed. Therefore, one of the questions central to this research is:

Could adoption of tourism practices be perceived as a way of sustaining rural development?

Rural tourism is not a new phenomenon. Still, during the second half of the eighteenth century few people participated due to lack of time, money, and the relative isolation of the rural areas or simply because of a lack of interest⁷². The beginning of rural tourism was constricted to the practice of leisure activities that were mainly focused on the church, tavern or the market. Holy days, fairs and agricultural events were also popular. The last twenty years of the century have been marked as “revitalising for the rural areas”⁷³. That is primarily due to further developing and diversifying of the rural tourism activities, thus providing individuals and families with alternative jobs, and reduced risk⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p.45

⁷⁰ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p.5

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*,p. 4

⁷³ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p. 45

⁷⁴ Lane, B. (1999). What is Rural Tourism? Its Role in Sustainable Rural Development. [Online]. Available: (2001, July, 9)

3.1.1 Understanding Rural Tourism

Though it seems to be simple to define rural tourism as “tourism that takes place in the countryside”, this definition appears to be too general since it does not really touch upon the complexity of the activity and further does not cover the different forms and meanings developed in the different countries. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report “Tourism Strategies and Rural Development”, the main problem with defining rural tourism is the complexity of applying it to all different countries. Further problems include⁷⁵:

- Urban tourism does not necessarily confine to urban areas but also spills out into rural areas;
- Rural areas are difficult to define and definitions vary from country to country;
- Not all tourism that takes place in rural areas is strictly “rural”, it can be urban in form;
- Historically tourism has developed as an urban concept and the majority of tourists live in the urban areas. Therefore tourism can have an urbanising influence over the rural areas, bringing social and cultural, economic and environmental changes to the area;
- Different regions have developed different forms of tourism;
- Rural areas themselves are also in a process of change, therefore, the distinction between rural and urban has been blurred;
- Even though largely associated with farm and agricultural practices, rural tourism also comprises other activities as for example climbing, walking and riding holidays; sport and health tourism; educational travels; heritage tourism, etc.

Still, according to the same report and some other authors, the definition of rural tourism is closely related to defining the broader concept of “**rurality**”, where the three main points are: population density and size of settlements; land use and its dominance by agriculture and forestry and traditional social structures and issues of community identity and heritage⁷⁶.

Rural population densities and settlement size

Rural areas are usually of low population densities and small settlement size where the farm/ forest environment dominates the urban environment. Different countries give different definitions to the term small settlements but still, the general trend is that the population should be less than 10, 000 inhabitants and the surrounding areas should be relatively low populated⁷⁷.

Land use

The three main implications here are that the areas will be dominated by agrarian and forest- based economic activities; these areas will to a large extent represent the natural world and wild- life and finally the economies depending on the area will be largely influenced by the changes in the agricultural and forestry sectors⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ OECD. (1994). *Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*, p.8

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, p. 14

“Traditional” social structures

The importance of preserving the older ways of life and thinking is important in order to emphasise the rural character of an area. Combined with the scenic views and recreational potential of the area, the preserved social and cultural identity represent a major attraction for the development of rural tourism.

The above- mentioned considerations and concepts have been best summarised by Lane, who gives the following description of rural tourism⁷⁹:

1. Located in rural areas;
2. Functionally rural- built upon the special features of the rural world such as small- scale enterprises, open space, “traditional” societies and practices, etc.;
3. Rural in scale- both in terms of buildings and settlements- and, therefore small in scale;
4. Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically and connected with local families;
5. Of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy, history and location.

3.1.2 Farm Tourism within the Context of Rural Tourism

Defining farm tourism has also been problematic. One of the reasons is seen as the lack of a comprehensive body of knowledge and theoretical framework since the trends in the sector development are usually viewed from the broader rural tourism point of view. Still, throughout the last thirty years, farm tourism has been understood as follows:

Table 4 Farm tourism: chronology of definitions⁸⁰

DART (1974): any tourist or recreation enterprise on a working farm

Hoyland (1982): the provision of temporary accommodation and/or direct recreational facilities on working farms

Frater (1983): tourism enterprises that are present on a working farm and yet are largely supplementary to existing farm activities

Murphy (1985): working farms that supplement their primary function with some form of tourist activities

Wales Tourist Board (1986): working farms, irrespective of type or size, where the primary activity is agriculture and where tourism is a supplementary activity

Denman and Denman (1990): active provision of facilities for tourists within a farm

⁷⁹ Page, S. & Getz, D. (1997). *The Business of Rural Tourism- International Perspectives*.p. 9

⁸⁰ Busby, G. & Rendle, S. (2000). The Transition from Tourism on Farms to Farm Tourism. *Tourism Management* p. 636

Davies and Gilbert (1992): a form of rural tourism whereby paying guests can share in farming life either as staying guests or day visitors on working farms

Pearce (1990): farm tourism represents continuing ownership and active participation by the farmer in, typically, small- scale tourism ventures

Roberts (1992): farm tourism is about people who are away from the place where they normally live and work, and about the things they do on a working farm, whether they visit for the day or a longer holiday

Denman (1994): a term which covers the provision of facilities for tourists on a working farm

Clarke (1996): tourism products in which the consumer is aware of the farming environment, at a minimum

Weaver and Fennel (1997): rural enterprises, which incorporate a working farm environment and a commercial tourist content

Ilbery et al. (1998): farm tourism is conceptualised as an alternative farm enterprise comprising of one of seven possible “pathways of farm business development”.

Even though, the number of definitions is big, the main characteristics of farm tourism can be identified. Therefore, when referring to farm tourism the author has indicated the presence of the following characteristics:

- A working farm is an absolute condition for practicing farm tourism;
- Agriculture is considered to be the primary activity on the farm;
- Tourism activities are supplementary;
- Farm tourism could be daily or a longer holiday.

Furthermore, farm tourism can be viewed as consisting of two principal forms: non- accommodation and accommodation related activities. Many farms practice both. Interpreting farm tourism *product* and its specifications can be also achieved by listing the attractions, access, activities, accommodation and amenities provided. Clarke gives a comprehensive list where the farm tourism elements are described as follows:

Table 5: Farm tourism elements⁸¹

Attractions- permanent	Attractions- events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Farm visitor centres ➤ Self- guided farm trails ➤ Farm museums ➤ Farm centres ➤ Conservation areas ➤ Country parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Farm open days ➤ Guided walks ➤ Educational visits ➤ Demonstrations
Access (rural)	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stile/gate maintenance ➤ Foothpaths/bridleways/tracks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Horse- riding/ trekking ➤ Fishing ➤ Shooting/ clay ➤ Boating
Accommodation	Amenities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bed and breakfast ➤ Self- catering ➤ Camping and caravanning ➤ Bunkhouse barns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Restaurants ➤ Cafes/ cream teas ➤ Farm shops/ roadside stalls ➤ Pick your own ➤ Picnic sites

The relationship between farm tourism and the broader rural tourism is clear even in the above simplistic presentation of farm tourism elements. While some of the attractions are strictly farm specific (farm visitor centres, farm open days, etc.), others involve at least one different aspect of rural tourism (conservation areas and country parks- nature tourism, education visits and demonstrations- educational tourism, etc.). The same trend is also visible for the rest of the farm tourism elements.

3.2 Farm Tourism and Sustainability

The main reasons for adopting the consideration that farm tourism represents a more sustainable form of tourism practices is that it attracts a small number of visitors, there is no need for extensive infrastructural development and tourists are mainly interested in local cultures and traditions. In the OECD report from 1994, Tourism Strategies and Rural Development seventeen benefits for rural tourism for the overall sustainable development of a region are identified. Among these, the following are closely related to farm tourism⁸²:

- *Job retention* - tourism practices are viewed as the marginal income necessary to sustain the traditional practices (e.g. agricultural sector);
- *Job creation* - provides further opportunity if the adoption of tourism practices is successful;
- *Job diversity* - most rural areas have little job variety outside farming. Diversifying the job nomenclature helps retain the population levels;

⁸¹ Busby, G. & Rendle, S. (2000). *The Transition from Tourism on Farms to Farm Tourism*, p. 637

⁸² OECD. (1994). *Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*, p.26

- *Pluriactivity* - the idea is that an individual or a family can carry out more than one type of jobs to maintain their income. As an example, a part- time farmer can also offer accommodation, assist local administration, etc.;
- *Farm support* - farm incomes could be increased due to providing accommodation, development of open farms and other attractions, increased sale of farm produce and increased female activity through off- farm employment;
- *Rural arts and crafts* - the produce and purchase of local art is a way to promote the cultural heritage of a region;
- *Cultural provision* - through different rural festivals and other activities (such as wine tasting), rural areas broaden their cultural provision and become more attractive for visitors;
- *Environmental improvements* - development of tourism practices brings about environmental improvements through the generation of tourism revenues, which further attracts new enterprises and families.

Naturally, development of farm tourism practices poses also challenges, the main being that in economic terms the demand for farm tourism services is highly seasonal, the occupancy rates are low and therefore the investments for improving the facilities are unreasonably high⁸³.

The issue of particular concern related to the environment is that the less developed areas, which are usually also the most sensitive to human interference, suffer from the expansion of farm tourism practices⁸⁴. In socio- cultural aspect the biggest threat is the co modification of the local culture and identity.

The question of whether farm tourism could be truly sustainable has been indirectly addressed by Hvenegaard who has proposed a model for sustainable rural tourism implementation. That model indicates that the sustainable approach is dependent on a number of factors including community involvement, development of partnerships and effective visitor management.

⁸³ OECD. (1994). *Tourism Strategies and Rural Development*, p. 30

⁸⁴ Ratz, T. & Puczko, L. (1998). Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development. www.oecd.org/dsti/sti/transport/tourism/prod/e_94-49.pdf [Online]. Available: (2001, June 06)

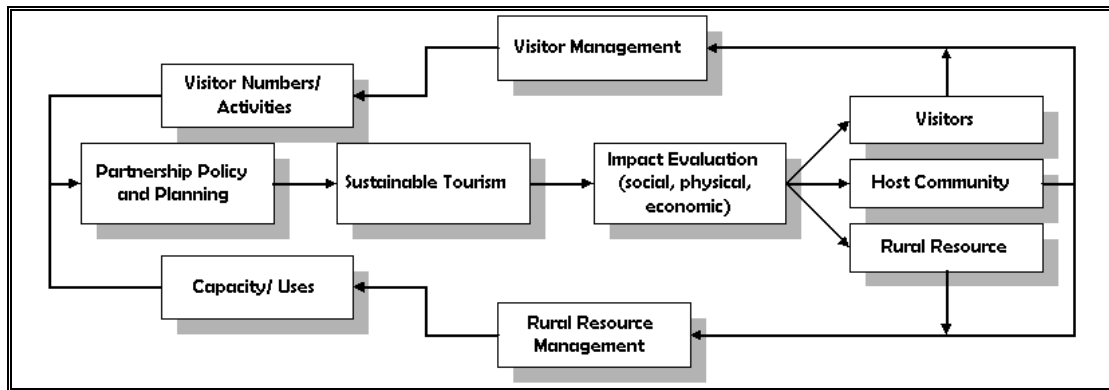


Figure 3-1: A conceptual model for the implication of sustainable rural tourism⁸⁵

The emphasis of this model is facilitating sustainable development of the rural tourism sector through allowing local community involvement. Further, the community is integrated in viable partnerships, where organisations from both public and private sector interact and simultaneously find effective tools to manage or control the number of tourists in the destination or region⁸⁶.

3.3 Policies for Rural Tourism Development

Government intervention in tourism and recreation has been widespread. A major reason has been the importance of tourism for the economic development of the rural areas and job creation. Still, nowadays, on a general level, tourism sector is considered to be relatively free of regulation as compared to other sectors of the economy. Most of the regulations are indirect in nature (energy, water, waste management policies) due to two main reasons: the relation of the tourism industry to the rest of the industries in the economy and social structures (see Figure 2-2) and because of the price sensitivity of the sector⁸⁷.

In Sweden, there are currently no specific regulations governing the development of farm tourism. Still, on a EU level, there are a series of policies and policy tools applicable for rural tourism development, which influence farm tourism as well.

3.3.1 Tourism and Rural Development- Policy Tools

The different policy tools have the aim to facilitate the process towards sustainable regional development through internalising the externalities related to tourism development. Different governments have chosen and implemented different policy instruments, providing incentives (mainly financial) for appropriate practices and disincentives for inappropriate ones.

Five different categories of policy instruments have been identified⁸⁸. The complete list of these instruments is given in *Appendix 3*.

⁸⁵ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, p. 125

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ramm, Niels H. (2000). *Toward sustainable destinations: an analysis of the Danish destination recognition scheme* Lund: IIIIEE, p. 30

⁸⁸ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p. 29

- *Regulatory instruments* - regulations, permits and licences that have a legal basis and which require monitoring and enforcement (e.g. laws, standards, tradable permits);
- *Voluntary agreements* - actions or mechanisms that do not require expenditure (e.g. information, technical assistance, volunteer associations);
- *Expenditure* - direct government expenditure to achieve policy outcomes (e.g. expenditure and contracting, investment, public enterprise, promotion);
- *Financial incentives* - including taxes, subsidies, grants and loans, which are incentives to undertake certain activities or behaviours and which tend to require minimal enforcement (e.g. pricing, taxes and charges, grants and loans, subsidies);
- *Non- intervention* - where government deliberately avoids intervention in order to achieve its policy objectives.

According to the above list, government possesses a substantial number of instruments to achieve a desired policy outcome. Still, some of the problems mentioned by different authors are related to establishing the proper policy mix and establishing a monitoring and evaluation policy procedure at a regional level. Once again, the problem is emphasised by the complex relationships of the tourist sector with the rest of the industries at local, regional and national level. One way of coping with the problem has been by creating *cooperative structures*, where the partnership of all industries officials sharing the same resource is sought in order to provide coordinated planning services and leadership in developing rural tourism services⁸⁹.

3.3.2 Rural Development Policy and Tourism

Within the European context there is an identifiable relationship between the promotion of rural tourism, agricultural policies and broader regional development policies. This has resulted, to a great extent from the changes in the ***Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)***, which presents rural communities throughout the European Union with a variety of challenges and opportunities.

The initial framework of CAP had to undergo a great deal of changes in order to be able to meet the challenges with which it has been faced over the years⁹⁰. The original aim of the policy was to assure a fair living standard for the agricultural community and assure supply of farm products at affordable prices⁹¹.

In 1992, a reform in the CAP policy was initiated and a new approach was adopted where lowering the institutional prices and making compensatory payments were targeted. Since then, the aim of the CAP reform has been to deepen and widen the 1992 reform by replacing price support measures and accompanying this process by drawing up a consistent rural policy⁹². For the purpose of this research, the changes of the rural policy are of interest.

⁸⁹ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p. 33

⁹⁰European Union. (2001). <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l60002.htm> [2001, July 16]

⁹¹ Sharpley, R. & J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, p. 31

⁹² EU. (2001).

CAP reform: rural development

Since the rural areas cover 80% of the European territory, the position of the Commission is clear; “*agricultural and rural policy has an important role to play in the cohesion of EU territorial, economic and social policy.*”⁹³ The new rural development policy (part of the broader CAP) has the aim to put in place a consistent and lasting framework for guaranteeing the future of rural areas and promoting the maintenance and creation of employment⁹⁴. In order to meet this aim, the following principles were identified:

- The **multifunctionality of agriculture**, implying the excess services that the sector could provide different from the production of foodstuffs;
- Diversifying the activities and providing new sources for income by integrating **multisectoral and integrated approach**;
- **Flexible** aids for rural development, based on subsidiarity and promoting decentralisation, consultation at a regional, local and partnership level;
- **Transparency** based on simplified and more accessible legislation.

The main innovation in this policy is the method used to improve the integration between the different types of intervention therefore aiming at⁹⁵:

- Strengthening the agricultural and forestry sector;
- Improving the competitiveness of rural areas;
- Preserving the environment and rural heritage.

The regulation governing these measures is the new *EC regulation 1257/1999 of May 17 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF)*. This regulation establishes a clear link between agriculture, tourism and the regional development. Under Chapter IX of the regulation- Promoting the Adaptation and Development of Rural Areas, article 33 states that⁹⁶:

“Support should be granted for measures, relating to farming activities and their conversion and to rural activities...”

The underlying idea is that in order to assure development of the rural areas, the following should be taken into consideration (for the complete list of Chapter IX, please refer to): development and renovation of villages; infrastructures in rural areas; environmental protection; recreational functions and rural areas; regional products and alternative incomes, tourism and crafts⁹⁷.

⁹³ European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture. (1999). *CAP Reform: Rural Development*. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/publi/fact/rurdev/en.pdf> (2001, July 16)

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 of 17 May 1999

⁹⁷ EC Directorate- General for Agriculture.(1999). CAP Reform: Rural Development

The role of the Structural Funds

The structural development of rural areas in the EU is supported by the Structural Funds that provide grants in order to promote the economic and social development in those regions.

The specific objectives of the Structural Funds are⁹⁸:

1. The development of structurally backward regions;
2. The conversion of regions in industrial decline;
3. The combating of long- term employment;
4. The increase of employment opportunities for young people;
5. (a) the adjustment of agricultural structures to accompany the reform of CAP;
(b) the promotion of the development of rural areas;
6. Promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions with an extremely low population density.

Of particular relevance for tourism development in rural areas is the objective 5 (b) under which different projects (including tourism) are financed. Objective 1⁹⁹ funding is also relevant for tourism since the Fund allocates investments for tourism development in underdeveloped regions under this objective.

Community initiatives

Assistance from the Structural Funds is available through various Community Initiatives. These initiatives are important since the Community rather than the Member State initiate them and draw up priorities and criteria¹⁰⁰. Among the existing initiatives ENVIREG (with the aim to improve environment and foster economic development); INTEREG (concerned with cross- border projects) and LEADER (concerned with assisting rural communities to develop their own ideas in accordance with their own priorities) are the most relevant to environment.

However of particular interest to tourism development in rural areas is the **LEADER Programme**.



Figure 3-2: Logo of LEADER initiative⁰¹

⁹⁸ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*, p.33

⁹⁹ Regions falling under Objective 1 are those regions where per capita GDP falls under 75 per cent of the EU average, which altogether comprises to 40% of the total land area and 22 % of the population.

¹⁰⁰ Environment Publications Ltd. (n.d.).

¹⁰¹ Rural Europe. (2001). <http://www.rural-europe.acidl.be/logo/index.html> (2001, July 16)

The LEADER programme was first established in 1990 with the intention to promote an integrated approach to rural development with a particular focus on local support and involvement. The programme has since undergone its LEADER I and II stages (stage II being still ongoing). On 14th April 2000 the Commission approved guideline for the new LEADER +, which is one of the four Initiative implemented under the Structural Funds for the period 2000- 2006. The value added that the new Initiative brings along is the emphasis on co- operation and networking between rural areas¹⁰². In order to better understand the differences between the two currently ongoing programmes, please see Appendix 4.

The European Commission approved on the 5th July 2001 the programme for EU Initiative LEADER + in Sweden¹⁰³. The five objectives running the Swedish programme include: employment, equality, integration, young people and environment. In order to reach the objective a set of strategies will be used, which will include: using of new skills and technology in order to achieve competitiveness of rural products and services; making the market more accessible for SMEs and therefore raising the value of local products; improving the quality of life in rural areas and best exploiting the natural and cultural resources of the rural area¹⁰⁴.

3.4 Farm Tourism in Sweden¹⁰⁵

The farm tourism sector in Sweden still represents a very small portion of the total tourism industry. For the year 2000 around 144,700 guest nights were spent on farms, out of the 37,5 million nights spent by tourists in hotels, cottages, youth hostels and camp- sites. The turnover from farm tourism was worth SEK 22- 25 million to farmers¹⁰⁶

Most Swedish farmers are members of the Federation of Swedish Farmers, Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund (LRF), which is the business policy and trade organisation for all farmers and forest owners. The structure of this organisation is presented in the figure below.

¹⁰² The European Commission. (2001). http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm (2001, July 16)

¹⁰³ Rural Europe. (2001).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Gössling, S. (2001). *Farm Tourism in Sweden. Potentials of a sustainable tourism strategy*. p.8

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

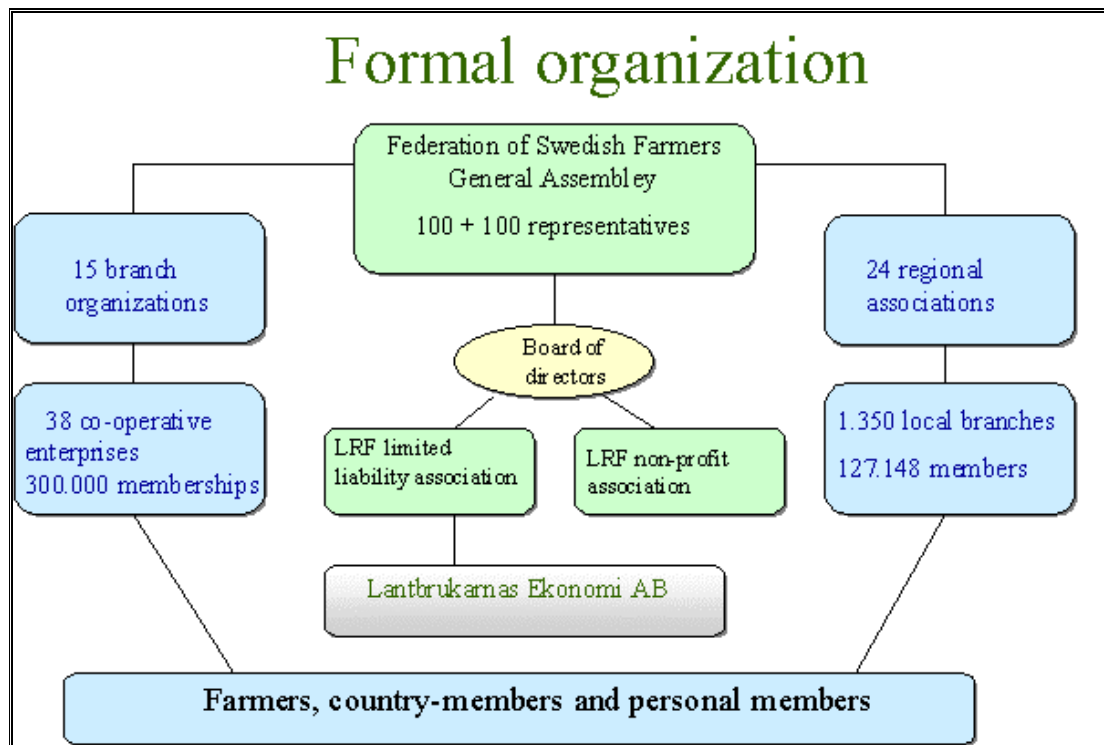


Figure 3-3: Organizational structure of the Swedish farmers¹⁰⁷

LRF is based on the existence of about 38 co-operatives distributed among 15 organizations or industries. The other section is made up of approximately 140 000 individual farmers and forest owners, organized on the basis of 1295 local associations and 24 regional associations. The most important task of LRF is to improve conditions and profitability in agriculture and forestry and create potential for sustained production¹⁰⁸.

The relationship of the above figure to farm tourism is that farmers involved in tourism have their own organization part of LRF. The name of the organization is **Bo på Lantgård** (Stay on a farm) established as a non-profit body in 1989 and as a pilot project it initially covered the region of Skåne (Southern Sweden). Following that initial project Bo på Lantgård was established throughout the whole country. The tasks of the organization are to organize national and international marketing, collect statistics, deliver information, and assure cooperation with authorities and other institutions¹⁰⁹. These responsibilities are further delegated to the 20 regional offices, which are independent and support and control the farms within each region.

According to a survey conducted in Sweden (in January 2001)¹¹⁰, Swedish farmers offer three types of accommodation: self-catering, Bed & Breakfast (B&B) and camping. The most wide-spread form of accommodation is Bed & Breakfast, followed by self-catering. Farm tourism in Sweden is small in

¹⁰⁷ LRF. (2001). <http://www2.lrf.se/eu2001/main/facts.htm?uk?facts.1> (2001, May 22)

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Gössling, S. & Mattsson, Susanne. (2001). *Farm Tourism in Sweden. Potentials of a sustainable tourism strategy.*, p. 5

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

scale. The farms providing tourist activities offer up to eight beds on their premises. If farmers want to provide more bedding, it should be authorized by police, fire department and health authorities.

According to the same survey, there has been a rapid growth in the membership of Bo på Lantgård since 1989. While in 1989 only 9 farms participated, in 1992 their number increased to 60, to reach 230 in 1997. In 2000 the number further increased to 430 farms. At the same time, the number of visitors was also on the upraise. While in 1997 the number of visitors was estimated to be around 61, 700, in 2000 that number rose to 144, 700 which indicated an increase of + 136%. The following numbers give an indication of how that rise is represented in the different areas of Sweden.

Growth occupancy rates 1997- 2000¹¹¹

1. Skane (+21%)	11. Örebro län (+66%)
2. Halland (-10%)	12. Södermanland (+64%)
3. Blekinge (+35%)	13. Västmanland (+29%)
4. Smaland (+10%)	14. Uppland (+8%)
5. Öland (+38%)	15. Dalarna (+56%)
6. Gotland (+43%)	16. Hälsingland/Gästrikland (+22%)
7. Östergötland (+50%)	17. Västernorrland (+21%)
8. Västergötland (+24%)	18. Jämtland/Härjedalen (+32%)
9. Bohuslän/Dalsland (+24%)	19. Västerbotten (+61%)
10. Värmland (+38%)	20. Norrbotten (+193%)

The figures above indicate that all regions have experienced growth in the farm occupancy rates. Demand for farm tourist services has increased in all parts of the country but Halland where the only decrease in visitor number was acknowledged. While the traditional farm regions also saw an increase in the visitors, the increase in the most northern part of Sweden is mainly due to the variety of activities that could be offered not only during the summer but during the winter season as well¹¹². Some of the special winter activities organized by farmers in the North include: survival courses; igloo construction and ice sculpturing. The seasonality problem is felt a lot stronger in the South of Sweden.

¹¹¹Gössling, S. & Mattsson, Susanne. (2001). *Farm Tourism in Sweden. Potentials of a sustainable tourism strategy*. Lund University, p. 5

¹¹² Ibid.

Farm Tourism in the region of Skåne

The attractiveness of the region is to a large extent due to its proximity to Denmark and Germany as well. As the figure above indicates, farm tourism in Skåne has risen by 21% for the past three years. Interviews under the same survey indicated that the main reasons to start farm tourism were:

- Improving social contacts;
- Economic gains- pointed out only by one forth of the interviewees since about 50% of the farmers admitted to have received less than SEK 10, 000 net per year;
- Make use of empty buildings or rooms from the farm property;
- Proved incentive for the wife to stay at home and simultaneously take care of the children.

In Skåne, the activities offered by the farms and at the same time being most appreciated by the visitors are those based on the usual practices of the farmer. Some of these activities include: horse-back riding, watching and stroking animals, milking, etc. Another group of activities is developed due to the natural beaches existing in Southern Sweden. Golf courses also represent an interest for the tourists¹¹³.

Currently, the development of the farm tourism sector is monitored in two ways. On the one hand there are site inspections by representatives of Bo på lantgård and, on the other, through quality standard documents for B&B and self catering establishments. A project for standardization of the accommodations offered is also under way¹¹⁴.

¹¹³ The source for this statement is from personal interviews with farmers

¹¹⁴ Staneva, Katerina, (2001, August 3). *Re: Thesis questions related to our telephone conversation*. E- mail to Ingvar Johannesson, Manager of Bo på lantgård (Stay on a farm)

4. Case Study- the Söderslätt Region

This chapter is related to the case study chosen for the purpose of the research. Therefore, a description of issues related to the thesis, such as tourism development and tourism potentials of the region; key actors in farm tourism and examples of some existing partnerships that directly or indirectly influence farm tourism in Söderslätt, are presented.

4.1 Identifying a Region

Apart from the basic geographical factors, different cultural, political and economic development paths have substantially shaped the current spatial structure of the EU¹¹⁵. Still, the trend of dropping the boundaries between the countries brings along a threat to the cultural identity of a region and therefore the question of finding a consolidating element within a region will be further discussed.

Back to theory- the concept of “unifying theme”

The idea behind the concept of “unifying theme” is that mental, rather than geographical boundaries encompass a region, based on an existing strong link that gives a common ground for identification of the local people ¹¹⁶.

Identifying the unifying theme within a region points out the strong elements around which the area’s future is going to be organized. Therefore, the advantages related to the concept are as follows¹¹⁷:

- Unifying themes are a way to revive and enhance the regional identity- helps different people rediscover specific features that they have not considered of value;
- Themes create links between the different industries as well. For example such a strong link in the rural areas is created among farmers, craftsmen, restaurant owners;
- Themes can also give economic vitality to an area- through the links among the different industries, new opportunities can be revealed. This is also a way to satisfy new demand and better distribute resources on the market;
- The thematic approach is also about development- the unifying links not only sustain the local identity but also require that the players be involved in learning cycles and establish viable networks.

A unifying theme can be built or created differently; therefore the concepts behind an identified region can vary. Sometimes the very *name of an area* can serve the purpose since it is well recognized and valued by the local residents. Using the *history of a region* is also a well-recognized way for building up themes¹¹⁸. At another level a more *specific element* of an area is used in order to select a theme. Water could be one such element and different economic and cultural activities could be created

¹¹⁵European Commission. (1999). *European Spatial Development Perspective Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union*. Luxembourg: European Commission, p.61

¹¹⁶ Rural Europe. (2000). <http://www.rural-europe.aeidl.be/rural-en/bibli/theme/art01.htm> (2001, July 17)

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Rural Europe. (2000).

around that. *Developing thematic roads* is yet another way- in this case synergies are created between similar small- scale elements or activities in order to enhance their individual potential.¹¹⁹

4.2 Söderslätt - Regional Characteristics

The above- described concept of the “unifying theme” is also applicable for Söderslätt. The strongest trait around which the region can be defined is the historical theme uniting the different municipalities and encompassing the area south of the old country road 101 connecting Malmö and Ystad in the most Southwest part of Sweden. Today, the municipalities of Vellinge and Trelleborg make most of the area but parts of Skurup and Ystad municipalities are also included in the boundaries of the Söderslätt region. The following figure gives a better understanding of the location of the Söderslätt region as compared to the rest of the Baltic countries.



Figure 4-1: The Söderslätt region

The general statistics about the region show some deviation from the average numbers for Sweden, especially regarding the average density of population. According to the national statistics the average population density for the country is 20 people/km². The distribution among the age groups is between 30- 70 years of age¹²⁰. The table below show the specific trends about population density and age proportion between the different municipalities of Söderslätt.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Svenska central burau. (1999). *Statistical Yearbook of Sweden*. Örebro: Statistics Sweden. p. 5 and 64

Table 6: General statistics about the municipalities of Skurup, Trelleborg Vellinge, Ystad¹²¹

Municipality	Area km ²	Population	Density people/km ²	Population age groups by % as at 31 st December 2000							
				0-8	7-15	16-19	20-24	25-44	45-64	65-79	80-
Skurup	196	13, 638	70	8	13	5	4	25	27	14	5
Trelleborg	342	38,226	113	8	12	5	5	26	26	14	5
Vellinge	142	30,206	215	8	12	5	6	27	25	12	5
Ystad	352	26,185	74	7	11	5	4	25	26	16	6

According to the figures represented above as well as according to Gössling¹²² the population density is relatively high (approximately 100 people/km²) which exceeds the average number for Sweden. The prevailing number of people is in the age group of 25 - 64. Furthermore, the size of the settlements is relatively small (excluding Malmö, which is not originally considered part of the Söderslätt region). Even though, more than seventy per cent of the land in the region is used for agriculture, the urban influences are felt in the area and the opening of the Öresund link connecting Denmark and Sweden creates a set of opportunities that can lead to changes in the current priorities of the local communities.

Another set of statistics shows the growth rate of the tourism sector for the four municipalities respectively, as well as the turnover from tourism per person for every municipality.

Table 7: Economic Importance of Tourism¹²³

Municipality	Turnover 1990- million SEK	Turnover 1998- million SEK	Turnover 1999- million SEK	Population	Turnover per person/ year
Skurup	37	57	64	13,638	4,693
Trelleborg	165	234	260	38, 226	6, 802
Vellinge	128	161	175	30,206	5,794
Ystad	239	395	465	26,185	17,758

Further, the tourist potentials of the Söderslätt region can be described as follows:

Communications

The Söderslätt area has perfect communications with the rest of the European continent. On the one hand the Öresund bridge provides a permanent connection and assures not only economic gains due to the increased number of visitors but also exchange of cultural values, technological advancements and environmental knowledge.

¹²¹ Skånes Turistråd (2001) <http://www.skaneltur.se/statistik/ekonomi.html> (2001, July 22)

¹²²Gössling, S. (2001). Farm Tourism in Sweden. Potentials of a sustainable tourism strategy. p. 7

¹²³ Skånes Turistråd (2001).

The other “bridge” that exists in the region is the floating link across the Baltic, connecting Rostock in Germany to Trelleborg. At present the harbour accounts to approximately 20% of the Swedish foreign trade and the traffic is expected to double by the year 2010¹²⁴.

Furthermore, the proximity to two large airports, one of world- wide significance (Copenhagen-Kastrup and Sturup airports) provides easy accessibility for the rest of Western Europe.

A common history¹²⁵

The first people arrived on the south shore of Scania 10, 000 years ago their main occupation being hunting and fishing. Later on the area belonged to Denmark from the Vikings Era in the 8th century until around 1660, therefore leaving lots of traces from the Danish influence on all aspects of culture.

The later prosperity of the region is largely related to the Middle Ages when inhabitants along the coast mined for the silver of the Baltic- the herring. Soon after, the powerful merchants from the Hanseatic League brought another hard currency in the region- salt.

The culture and identity of Söderslätt are well preserved, with numerous museums, exhibitions and events lending insight into the cultural potential of the region.

Natural attractions¹²⁶

The scenery of Söderslätt is quite varied. Mile- long beaches are among some of the best in Sweden and attract tourists in the summer. The beaches in the area are part of the approximately 500 km of coast between Båstad in the Northwest and Nymölla in the Northeast of the country. That is why the population along the coast has increased considerably during the 20th century. The mild climate in the summer also attracts people from the country who consider Söderslätt as their preferred choice for having a second home or simply rent a cottage.

Still beaches are not the only asset of the region- on hills and meadows, through the vast plain of Söderslätt and along beaches and waterways, the diversity of landscapes and ecosystems present opportunities to experience an unspoilt natural environment. Millions of migratory birds pass the Falstebro Peninsula every autumn and attract thousands of birdwatchers.

The farm holiday

Agricultural heritage plays a major part in the “personality” of Söderslätt. Here lies the best cultivable soil in the country, well - known for its high - quality production and assortment. A great number of farms can be found here, agriculture being the main occupation. Agricultural and farming practices have engaged a succession of generations and are traditionally involving crop production. The landowners in the area are big and influential in the decision- making process.¹²⁷ The farm - house holiday provides tranquil and peaceful relaxation for those who cherish the beauty of the countryside. Staying on a farm can be a quite exciting holiday as well- bread kneading, cow milking, are among some of the activities that one can experience. Getting acquainted with the local crafts and folklore, tasting local food is also treasured among the tourists.

¹²⁴ Trelleborg. (2001). *Trelleborg on the South coast of Scania*, brochure

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Skånes Turistråd. (2001). *Skåne. Southern Sweden*, brochure

¹²⁷ Wilhelmsson, P.(2001, July 20), Project coordinator, personal conversation

Sport

Söderslätt also offers a variety of sports. Equestrian sports are very popular, with the annual “Falstebrö Horse Show” attracting visitors from throughout Europe. World - class golf, combining the challenge of the greens with stunning scenery is available the year round. Windsurfing is yet another challenging activity in the region.

4.3 Problems Associated with Tourism and Agricultural Development in the Region

The tourism industry

Since Söderslätt is a coastal region at the southernmost part of Sweden, the population structure significantly changes over the summer months. The long sunny beach, lining the region, accounts for most of the arrivals in the area¹²⁸. The problems related to this phenomenon can be clustered in two main groups:

- Problems related to summer guests;
- Problems related to daily visitors.

The main characteristics of summer guests are that they stay in the coastal area from two weeks to a couple of months during the summer months. The interviews have shown that these could be both tourists and residents (mainly from the Stockholm - Göteborg region) who have a second home in the area¹²⁹. The main problem associated with “summer guests” is that while they benefit from the already existing infrastructure in the region, they do not really contribute to the actual maintenance of this infrastructure¹³⁰. The increased number of second homes, results not only in increased land price, but also in blending the socio- cultural identity of Söderslätt.

In addition, daily visitors are also crowding the coastline of Söderslätt. The problem with visitors is most eminent in the Skanör - Falstrbo Peninsula situated in the most South - western part of the region. The main problem in the area is the traffic congestion due to the fact that there is only one road connecting the peninsula to the mainland¹³¹. Further, the municipalities see the following problems in relation to daily visitors: noise and pollution from transportation; potential for destruction of the natural habitats of the region; no economic benefits for the local population; increased tension between local people and daily tourists¹³².

The agricultural sector

Nearly seventy per cent of the land in Söderslätt is arable and due to that several problems that also affect the development of farm tourism in the region occur. First of all, there is a concern that both

¹²⁸ Keskin, Bahar. (1998). A model for sustainable tourism development on a regional level- the case of Vellinge municipality, Sweden. Unpublished. p. 37

¹²⁹ Hellström, M. (2001, July 18), Turistinformatör, personal interview; Strömbland, M. (2001, July 11), Turistchef, personal interview

¹³⁰ Stenner, A. (2001, June 5), Project coordinator, personal interview; Lundqvist, P. (2001, June 5), Turistchef, personal interview

¹³¹ Keskin, Bahar. (1998). A model for sustainable tourism development on a regional level- the case of Vellinge municipality, Sweden. Unpublished. p. 37

¹³² Day, C. (2001, May), Project coordinator, personal conversation; Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19)

ground and surface waters can be infiltrated by nutrient and pesticide pollution from arable land¹³³. While the interviewees state that there is still no impact on the drinking water they recognize the *ecological consequences on the aquatic life and the quality of the water bodies*¹³⁴. Nutrients, especially phosphates cause eutrophication of water, which upsets the ecological balance and can result in undesirable effects such as fish death and algal blooms. Big algae bloom is a common problem in the Trelleborg region especially in the summer¹³⁵.

Yet another expressed concern was that the intensification of arable systems has led to a large *decline in biodiversity on arable farmland*¹³⁶. Loss of non-crop habitat has disrupted food chains and caused declines in the number of many species. Landscapes have changed considerably as farming systems have changed- fields have become larger and the landscape simpler. In that respect it is the will of the local authorities from Ystad municipality to create natural corridors between the remaining natural spots and therefore facilitate the migration of species¹³⁷. The potential for tourism development was also acknowledged since the corridors will also facilitate the creation of biking and hiking route around the countryside and would in general improve the attractiveness of the inner parts of the region.

4.4 Farm tourism in Söderslätt

4.4.1 Actors Involved

Within the region of Söderslätt, the following actors, depicted in the figure bellow, related to farm tourism were identified.

¹³³ Hedin, A. (2001, June 26), Agenda 21 coordinator, personal interview

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Strömbland, M. (2001, July 11), Turistchef, personal interview

¹³⁶ Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19), Municipal ecologist, personal interview

¹³⁷ Ibid.

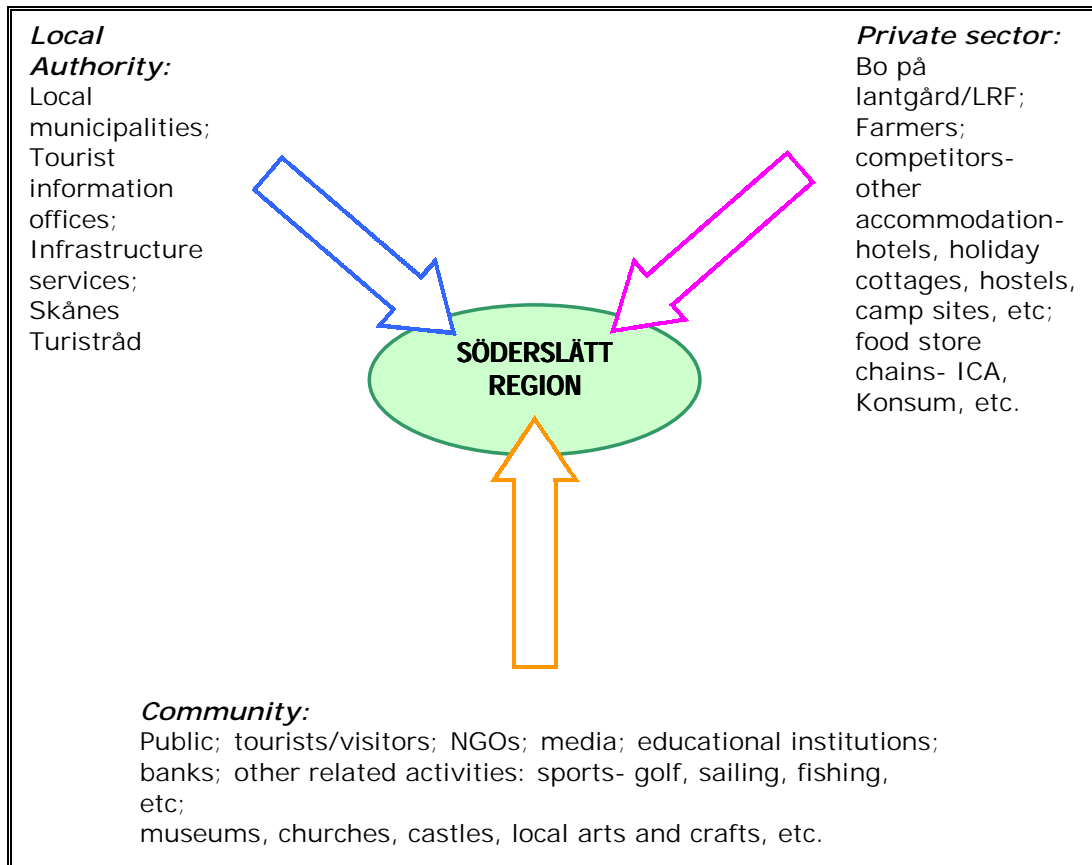


Figure 4-2: Actors in farm tourism, Söderslätt region

Among the stakeholders, the “key” ones were identified based on the following criteria:

- What is the potential of the stakeholder group to initiate changes in the farm tourism sector in the region of Söderslätt
- Is the engagement of a particular group in a dialogue related to farm tourism going to lead to a productive outcome from the multi- stakeholder dialogue

The groups that have the potential to satisfy the above conditions were chosen as key stakeholders, namely: *local municipalities*, *tourist information offices*, farmers’ tourist association *Bo på lantgård*, *farmers offering accommodation* for tourists and *tourists* themselves. The importance of the various actors will be further discussed in the chapter.

Local authorities

The role of local authorities for initiating and assuring a viable stakeholder dialogue has been recognised at the Earth Summit in Rio and has found an expression through chapter 28 of Agenda 21.

“Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure, oversee planning processes, establish local environmental policies and regulations, and assist in implementing national and sub national environmental policies. As the level of governance closest to people, they play a vital role in educating mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.”

Agenda 21, chapter 28¹³⁸

In the context of the Söderslätt region, local authorities have management, administrative and coordinating functions. They are also responsible for drawing up and implementing various policies on economic, social and environmental matters. Among some of their areas of responsibilities are housing, local transport, and adult education. Municipalities also engage in cultural and leisure activities and the promotion of local business¹³⁹.

Local authorities play a very important role in environmental protection and urban and rural planning too. The municipalities are empowered to limit emissions and other environmental hazards from many activities. Their role in controlling and monitoring the way the different regulatory, voluntary or financial instruments are implemented at regional level is crucial.

Tourist offices

While the role of the local authorities is to take care of the balanced development of all sectors of the economy within a region, the tourist offices are the major body for information and promotion of various tourism activities in the Söderslätt region. The tourist offices belong to the local municipalities as a part of the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Department. They are also the unit that establishes direct contact with the customers. Since tourist offices are the major source of information distribution, either directly “mouth - to - mouth” with the visitors or indirectly, through their web- sites, brochures and leaflets they have the power to influence attitudes and perceptions about the region.

Farm tourism organisation- Bo på lantgård¹⁴⁰

Within the regional context, Bo på lantgård is the organisation that unites the farmers engaged in tourism. The importance of this stakeholder for the development of farm tourism is that in a dialogue it can best represent a sector constituted of a large number of SMEs.

Bo på lantgård is essential as a body that assures quality control and monitors the farm tourism business development. Bo på lantgård is also the organisation that maintains and assures data distribution about the development of the farm tourism business. Addressing the economic interest of the farmers and developing conditions for setting up viable rural communities also create conditions for promoting social and cultural interests.

Farmers

Diversification of agricultural practices has been a key component of the new CAP reform related to establishing sustainable practices for regional development. The need to increase awareness about

¹³⁸ The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio. (1999). *Earth Summit Agenda 21*.p. 233

¹³⁹ The information has been aggregated from the web sites of the four municipalities

¹⁴⁰ Staneva, Katerina, (2001, August 3). *Re: Thesis questions related to our telephone conversation*. E- mail to Ingvar Johannesson, Manager of Bo på lantgård (Stay on a farm)

agriculture induced environmental problems is also addressed in Agenda 21, chapter 32 “Strengthening the role of the farmers”.

“Farmers must conserve their physical environment as they depend on it for their sustenance.”¹⁴¹

In the Söderslätt region the number of farmers practicing tourism has grown over the last decade. According to some interviews¹⁴² at the beginning of the nineties there was hardly anybody involved in farm tourism. The first practice related to tourism was claimed to have started 13 years ago¹⁴³. The main reasons for introducing tourism on the farm have been related to generation of additional income, the changes in the agricultural policies and the need for social contacts.

Tourists¹⁴⁴

Tourists bring economic benefits to the community. Interviews with farmers and tourist offices indicated that the largest number of tourists in the Söderslätt region come from the Stockholm-Göteborg region, followed by Denmark, Germany and Norway. According to the interviews, the average stay at the high season (June- August) is around 1-2 weeks for visitors from Sweden and a few nights for foreign guests. The activities mostly perceived by the tourists in the region have been proven to be horse- back riding, golf and to a lesser extent fishing.

4.4.2 Communication

As a result from the interviews held with the various actors involved in farm tourism in the Söderslätt region, a general pattern of local authority initiated communication within the framework of Agenda 21 was established.

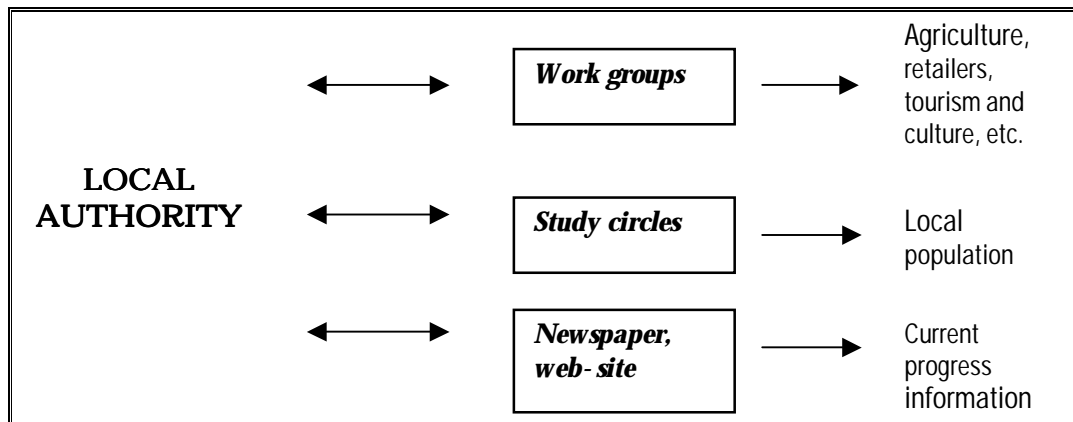


Figure 4-3: LA 21 information dissemination pattern in Söderslätt¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio. (1999). *Earth Summit Agenda 21*. p. 243

¹⁴² Brödde, K. (2001, July 24), farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Strömbland, M. (2001, July 11), Turistchef, personal interview; Hellström, M. (2001, July 18), Turistinformatör, personal interview

¹⁴⁵ Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview; Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19), Municipal ecologist, personal interview; Hedin, A. (2001, June 26), Agenda 21 coordinator, personal interview

This structure involves farm tourism actors in two ways. First, through the existing workgroups farmers can help prioritize the issues of importance for their business. Secondly, farmers and local population could also participate in study circles, the importance of which is that while everybody interested could participate, the opinions of the public could be filtered in the discussions and later taken into consideration when setting priorities.

Outside the framework of LA 21, information *to the demand side* about farm tourism practices in the region is disseminated primarily in two ways.

- Catalogues
- Web pages

Catalogues are the major source of promotion of farm tourism. There are two catalogues that are mostly favoured by the farm tourism businesses. The one distributed by the farm tourism organization (Bo på lantgård) is the most all - inclusive one and regards B&B or self-catering establishments in the farm tourism sector and is usually the choice of farm accommodations. Skåne Cottages is the catalogue that lists summer holiday cottages and farm establishments. Bo på lantgård also offers a **web page** with all the farms participating in farm tourism. Both the catalogues and the web page are targeted at the local and the international market as well.

On the *supply side*, information about farm tourism is provided through the existing **educational programmes** initiated by Bo på lantgård. The idea has been to spread the knowledge and attract farmers in the tourist business through special study circles based on the “mentorship” idea¹⁴⁶ where help and advice is provided by already established businesses. The role of such educational circles is that they establish a special form of partnership between the farmers involved in tourism and could serve as link to the rest of the actors involved in the tourism industry in the region.

4.4.3 Partnerships in Söderslätt Facilitating Farm Tourism Development

Following are several examples of different partnerships that address the current operation of farm tourism in the region.

Landsbygdsturism in Skurup municipality¹⁴⁷

The purpose of this group is to work with farmers and educate them about the tourism sector and how to work with people. Usually the group is represented by farmers (4 to 5 persons) indicating interest in developing tourism activities, farmers who have already started with farm tourism, representatives from the farmers association in farm tourism “Bo på lantgård”, representatives from hotels, tourist offices and local tourist schools. The main issues discussed are the benefits and obstacles for tourism on farms, providing advice about basics in tourism management and how to interact with people. Sharing of experience and knowledge with already established businesses is an important part of the course.

Result: In 1999 there has been only one farmer in the community offering tourism services. Due to the courses organised, another farmer joined in 2001 and there is another farmer that is expected to

¹⁴⁶ Staneva, Katerina, (2001, August 3). *Re: Thesis questions related to our telephone conversation.*

¹⁴⁷ Hellström, M. (2001, July 18), Turistinformator, personal interview; Hakansson, P. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

join in 2002. The benefits for the farmers are not only that they learn about common problems but also that they receive adequate training and knowledge about the tourism sector.

*Skånsk Lantliv*¹⁴⁸

The idea behind this network is that a municipality cannot be promoted to the tourists on its own. That is why it is of mutual interest both for the supply and the demand side to promote the region as a whole.

In view of that, Skånsk Lantliv tries to unite representatives from different branches of the tourist industry in the bigger Skåne region including hoteliers, farmers, bird- watchers, restaurants, etc. At the moment there are 20 members trying to identify the most significant attributes of the region (e.g. food, crafts, beaches, nature, etc.) and create a network of attractions in order to assure a better promotion of the region.

General Impression: environmental issues are omitted within the framework of these two partnerships. LA 21 has been identified as a framework that has the potential to equally address environmental, socio- cultural and economic issues related to farm tourism.

*Local Agenda 21*¹⁴⁹

Setting up a local agenda relies heavily on how the interests of the different sectors of the economy in the region are represented. For that purpose there are workgroups that make sure that sectors with common background (e.g. tourism and culture) are brought together in order to discuss and prioritise the common issues of concern (see section 4.4.2). Through these workgroups, a network between local authority, community and private sector is established.

In this process, the different municipalities set the priority issues differently. Tourism and tourism related issues are addressed directly (Vellinge) or indirectly (Ystad, Skurup) in the municipalities. In Vellinge some of the issues emphasised are public involvement, traffic problems, assistance for local companies and municipal operators in adopting an environmental management and audit schemes (EMAS). Still, according to the LA 21 coordinator in the municipality “*development of tourism is the most successful implementation of LA21*” due to the fact that a strong network has been created (Stakeholder council) including representatives from all tourist industries in the region¹⁵⁰.

Farm tourism is not directly addressed in any of the municipalities’ LAs. Still, indirectly, farm tourism issues are touched upon. One example is Ystad municipality. They have prioritised biodiversity in their Agenda. Creating corridors between natural spots in the area is a project, which is currently under development that will facilitate the migration of the species and will also improve the attractiveness of the region. Another part of the agenda is local food production and consumption. Similarly in the rest of the municipalities local food production and consumption, biodiversity and ground and underground water are also prioritised in the agendas and therefore, indirectly the farm tourism sector is also addressed.

¹⁴⁸ Nordström, R. (2001, July 26), Farm tourism entrepreneur, personal interview

¹⁴⁹ Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview; Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19), Municipal ecologist, personal interview; Hedin, A. (2001, June 26), Agenda 21 coordinator, personal interview

¹⁵⁰ Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview

5. Analysis

Chapter five: *The following chapter presents the findings of the research as related to farm tourism, grouped under environmental, socio- cultural and economic issues. It further focuses on the inter – stakeholder dialogue and discusses current gaps and potentials for improvement. Sustainability criteria that would help monitor farm tourism development in Söderslätt are suggested in order to facilitate concretisation of the advantages obtainable from a harmonised farm tourism development.*

5.1 Findings

5.1.1 Theoretical Considerations

According to the definition given earlier in chapter 1.5, farm tourism in the Swedish context possesses the characteristics of alternative tourism. The general impression, arising from the literature review, leads to the main theoretical findings that farm tourism has the potential to address a region's development due to the following reasons:

- Through farm tourism some of the negative impacts generated from conventional tourism, (as discussed in chapter 2.1.1) are addressed;
- Farm tourism is increasingly gaining the farmers' recognition; therefore their willingness to adopt farm practices is increasing.

However there are challenges to take into consideration when promoting farm tourism.

“ At the beginning neighbours thought that we were crazy if we let strangers in our house ¹⁵¹ ”.

While this remark is probably a quite common observation made by a large group of people, the message is clear: not everybody enjoys the presence of or would like to be disturbed by other people. While “my home is my castle” well describes the attitude of some people towards tourism, others embrace the company of visitors warmly. How they (consciously or subconsciously) perceive the social, environmental and economic benefits from such encounters will be discussed in the following sections.

5.1.2 Farm Tourism Unravelling- Economic, Environmental, Social and Cultural Issues

In the course of this section, the findings from the research are presented as well as their relevance to the current problems of the rural areas and tourism development in the region.

Environmental findings

The main *environmental findings* from the research could be briefly summarised as:

¹⁵¹ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

1. Some farmers do not see the connection between the agricultural practices, the state of the natural environment and the development of farm tourism;
2. Farm tourism can contribute to the reduction of the environmental pressures in the region through attracting some of the daily tourists for spending the weekend in the countryside;
3. An increased interest of local people and tourists alike in local produce leads to decreasing the impact from transportation;
4. Farm tourism is still predominantly small in scale (up to eight people at a time on a farm).

Representatives from local municipalities have pointed out agriculture - related impacts on the natural surroundings as the most acute in the region (see chapter 4.3)¹⁵².

While local municipalities are quite alert about the environmental problems related to agriculture, the attitude of farmers towards agriculture - induced environmental problems differs significantly. All the farmers interviewed were practicing tourism, for some the relationship agriculture- natural surroundings- tourism was quite strong. They have taken steps towards reducing these impacts by adopting ecological farming practices related to the crop cultivation, livestock care and environmental purchasing of household materials¹⁵³. On the other side were those farmers who perceived their business, as having no effect on air, soil or water at all and therefore did not acknowledge the relationship with the development of tourism practices¹⁵⁴.

The natural beauty of the countryside, peace and quiet have been stated both by the tourist information offices and by the farmers as a major driver for developing farm tourism. *"People like to break away from the urban life and that is why they come here,"* shared one of the interviewees¹⁵⁵. Still, the full potential of agriculture to alter the natural characteristics of an area should be equally realised by all participants in farm tourism. Visitors have the power to change the attitude of the landowners about their practices, still all the interviews pointed out to the fact that there is little awareness on the demand side about environmental issues. For example, the potentials of ecological farming for improving and preserving the natural state of the area (perceived by many as the strongest farm tourism asset in the region) have not been communicated to the tourists, and therefore no interest have been registered on their side¹⁵⁶.

Yet, farm tourism can address the environmental pressures in the region not only from agricultural perspective but also in relation to tourism development. Interviews with municipal representatives indicated that they expect farm tourism to help reduce the impacts related to daily visitors (as

¹⁵² Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19), Municipal ecologist, personal interview; Hedin, A. (2001, June 26), Agenda 21 coordinator, personal interview

¹⁵³ Hakansson, P. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview; Nordström, R. (2001, July 26), Farm tourism entrepreneur, personal interview

¹⁵⁴ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview; Brodde, I. (2001, July 25), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

¹⁵⁵ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

¹⁵⁶ Hakansson, P. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview; Hellström, M. (2001, July 18), Turistinformatör, personal interview

discussed in section 4.3)¹⁵⁷. Combining beach and golf tourism with a night spent on a farm is an alternative solution to some of the problems that local municipalities are willing to explore. That implies diverting some of the daily trotters off the beach areas to the inland parts of the country and combining sun, sand and sea with peace, quiet, nature and local produce.

Through promoting local food and local produce, yet another environmental issue is addressed on a local level - the impacts from transportation. The interviews conducted with representatives from local authorities from the four municipalities indicated that local people and tourists alike are showing a growing interest in locally produced food. Local initiatives like “Gåsamärkt- the Goose label” initiated by Vellinge municipality play an important role for changing the consumer behaviour. Still, the initiative should further concentrate on the visitors to the region and more aggressively communicate the environmental considerations it implies.

Farm tourism in the region is still predominantly small in scale making use of the existing buildings on the farm. Therefore, in most of the cases, it does not require additional construction work on the farm. Still, several interviewees have shown concern that there is a tendency to expand the business. That could further result in some environmental as well as social problems in the region.

Social and cultural findings

The following box briefly summarises the findings related to the *social and cultural* aspects of farm tourism.

1. The farmer's perception of the tourist is essential for developing farm tourism;
2. Differentiating farm tourism based on the cultural traits of the region is an opportunity that has not been fully realized;
3. The increased range in locally produced food can strengthen the region's identity;
4. Some farmers are too reliant on the natural surroundings

Farm tourism can address the socio- cultural impacts of tourism in the region. The main difference between farm tourism and beach related tourism in Söderslätt is that while people along the coast usually feel intimidated by the visitor presence, the need to meet new people has been the most commonly quoted reason for starting farm tourism. *“It was hard before because my husband was occupied with farming and I had a lot of free time. I was lonely. That is why we decided to start with tourism. But you cannot do that unless you really like people. And we love to have people with us.”*¹⁵⁸ Through the interviews it became clear that even though most of the people were not initially trained to perform tourism, their natural warm disposition towards the visitors helped them a lot at the initial stage.

¹⁵⁷ Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview; Day, C. (2001, May), Project coordinator, personal conversation

¹⁵⁸ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview

Naturally, the efforts of the farm owners are to satisfy the needs of their customers. Horse-riding, animal and nature watching are among some of the most - widespread activities on the farm¹⁵⁹. Providing help with golf schedules is another popular activity. Still, the cultural identity of the region is not explicitly emphasised by the farmers. Since not all of them are originally from the Söderslätt region, they are seldom aware of the historical background and therefore, actually engage themselves in promoting the regional culture and traditions to their visitors.

It is the opinion of the author that if farm tourism is sought as a means of offsetting the negative impacts from other types of tourism in the region, setting the cultural identity of the region in the core of the product could serve as the base for its differentiation. A few trends in the region further support this statement.

The farmers interviewed indicate that the Öresund link has contributed to the increase of visitors over the last year¹⁶⁰. According to the business owners, the share of foreigners mostly from Denmark has increased. This should be seen as a good opportunity to diversify the traditional farm holiday by promoting the common cultural heritage.

The interest in local food and products should be seen as another opportunity for diversifying the farm tourism product. Still most of the farms are only B&B or self-catering establishments and they rarely offer farm shops or restaurants on the premises. For example, information about the points-of-sale of freshly harvested production is extremely scarce. Usually, the farmer restricts the information about this to a hand-written sign at the entrance of the farm.

While it is true that the area of Söderslätt offers nice nature, peace and quiet, it should be also considered that the whole region is quite flat with predominant agricultural landscape. As already mentioned, some municipalities consider the beach as their primary tourism asset and find their natural attractions quite obscure¹⁶¹. That is why municipalities have adopted a more proactive approach by trying to emphasise different traits of the local culture. Organising different festivals with the purpose of reviving traditions of the past (for example "Days of Margareta" - emphasising the herring culture in the region) is a way to increase local awareness¹⁶². Still, there is an expressed need to consider all aspects of the local culture and therefore farm tourism could be a suitable tool to promote the local identity by integrating local history, traditions, food and crafts.

Economic findings

Finally, the *findings* related to the economic reality of farm tourism in Söderslätt are presented in the box below:

¹⁵⁹ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview; Brodde, I. (2001, July 25), Farm tourism entrepreneur, telephone interview; Strömbland, M. (2001, July 11), Turistchef, personal interview; Hellström, M. (2001, July 18), Turistinformatör, personal interview

¹⁶⁰ Nordström, R. (2001, July 26), Farm tourism entrepreneur, personal interview; Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), telephone interview

¹⁶¹ Lindsjö, S. (2001, June 19), Municipal ecologist, personal interview

¹⁶² Day, C. (2001, May), Project coordinator, personal conversation

1. The income generated through farm tourism remains with the local community;
2. Seasonality is well expressed in farm tourism;
3. Through farm tourism job opportunities are created for the local people;
4. There is a potential risk that those farmers who practise tourism could turn it into their primary occupation and therefore become too dependable on its benefits in the long run.

The mechanisation of the agricultural labour has left spare time for the farmers to engage in other activities. Moreover, the agricultural sector, while still labour - intensive does not assure steady profit to the farmer. The restructuring of the Common Agricultural Policy, which is likely to lead to a decrease in the subsidies for the industry, puts a pressure on the farmers and their families to find an alternative source of income and diversify their activities.

“We do it because we get additional money, of course.¹⁶³”

One of the most often cited reasons for initiating tourist activities on the farm is the additional income generated. Even though farmers admit that this income is not very large, they consider it of importance, since it allows them to keep parts of the house or separate properties on the farm used by the tourists in a good condition. In some cases the family is even prepared to confine their own living space in order to create more room for the tourist. In that case, the current economic conditions are again pointed out as a reason for the choice. Another expressed opinion is that the income gained from tourism is invested to improve the conditions for the tourists on the farm and that the family is reluctant to invest in agriculture. *“We want to have more tourists but (in the summer) there is not enough place¹⁶⁴”* is a commonly expressed opinion.

An important feature of farm tourism in the region is its strongly expressed seasonality. July, being the traditional holiday month in Sweden, is characterised by a full rate of occupancy of all available farm tourism accommodation. Even if compared to June and August, the rates of occupancy are significantly higher¹⁶⁵. This trend also contributes to the unstable income generated from farm tourism. In order to partially offset the problems farmers seek opportunities for extending the season. Providing the premises for small conferences or trying to attract foreign visitors off-season are some examples of their efforts¹⁶⁶.

In fact, another reason to start with farm tourism is to provide an occupation for the woman who could in addition be involved in other activities such as being a church activist or running different kinds of courses. Therefore, the time for commuting to the urban areas is reduced and this has been also acknowledged as an excellent way to take care of growing kids.

¹⁶³ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), telephone interview; Grevendahl, K. (2001, June 7)

¹⁶⁴ Brodde, I. (2001, July 25), telephone interview; Hakansson, P. (2001, July 24) telephone interview

¹⁶⁵ Strömbland, M. (2001, July 11) personal interview; Hellström, M. (2001, July 18) personal interview

¹⁶⁶ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), telephone interview

“My eldest daughter (17years old) loves horses and she gives riding lessons to our visitors.¹⁶⁷”

Farm tourism is a family business. Not only the parents are involved in it, once the kids are old enough, they could be also involved with different activities. Some of them are educated in the family business, and therefore they can consider it as a full - time occupation. In order to assure a better quality of the farm tourism product, that would lead to a better return on the investments and provide a steadier income to the family, proper training and education is needed. Currently, farmers who have already established their tourism practice give advice on how to start the business, how to encounter the benefits and difficulties and how to manage the business¹⁶⁸.

An issue of importance for the future development of farm tourism is that, in some cases, tourism activities could take over the traditional agricultural practices. Some families invest in the construction of new cottages on their land¹⁶⁹. More people on the farm naturally require more time and attention on the part of the hosts. Therefore, there is a threat that in time, farming activities could become supplemental by tourist activities for some of the farmers.

5.2 Stakeholder Communication Analysis

Even though Söderslätt represents a network of seven cities, in practice, the separate elements that constitute the network could be better interrelated. In the case of farm tourism, no formal network between the different actors was observed during the research. This chapter will discuss and analyse the existing pattern of communication between farmers and other actors involved in the development of farm tourism in the Söderslätt region.

As a starting point, the author was interested to find out what the main characteristics of some existing networks in the field of tourism were. For that reason as a guiding framework a project called “EMPOST – NET” was used¹⁷⁰, which studied nine different networks.

“ At a regional level, one impact of networking was to augment the attractiveness of the region as a tourist destination, that is, an improved tourist product. In this way networking contributes to long- term survival of the region. It also brings a competitive advantage to the region over other tourism destinations. Furthermore, it was possible to increase the lobbying power of the region through networking. ¹⁷¹ “

According to the findings of the “EMPOST - NET” project: “ *Networking towards sustainable development means a dynamic process of collaboration between multiple and interdependent stakeholders.*¹⁷²” In order to study the dynamics among the key actors involved in farm tourism in the Söderslätt region, the communication pattern between them is further analyzed.

¹⁶⁷ Hakansson, P. (2001, July 24) telephone interview

¹⁶⁸ Staneva, Katerina, (2001, August 3). *Re: Thesis questions related to our telephone conversation*. E- mail to Ingvar Johannesson

¹⁶⁹ Brodde, K. (2001, July 24), telephone interview

¹⁷⁰ Emerging Paradigm of Sustainable Tourism- a network perspective

¹⁷¹ Fadeeva, Zinaida & Halme, Minna. (2001). *EMPOST- NET Emerging paradigm of sustainable tourism- a network perspective*. Lund: KFS AB, p. 113

¹⁷² Fadeeva, Zinaida & Halme, Minna. (2001). *EMPOST- NET Emerging paradigm of sustainable tourism- a network perspective*. p. 134



Figure 5-1: Mapping out the four municipalities in Söderslätt- Skurup, Trelleborg, Vellinge and Ystad

Main communication finding - Söderslätt is a region that consists of four different municipalities; therefore the communication process should be filtered not only within the individual municipal structure but also among the four different municipal structures of which the region consists- Skurup, Trelleborg, Vellinge and Ystad.

5.2.1 Stakeholder Dialogue in Farm Tourism

The following figure maps out the communication relationships among the key stakeholders involved in farm tourism in the region, as identified in chapter 4.4

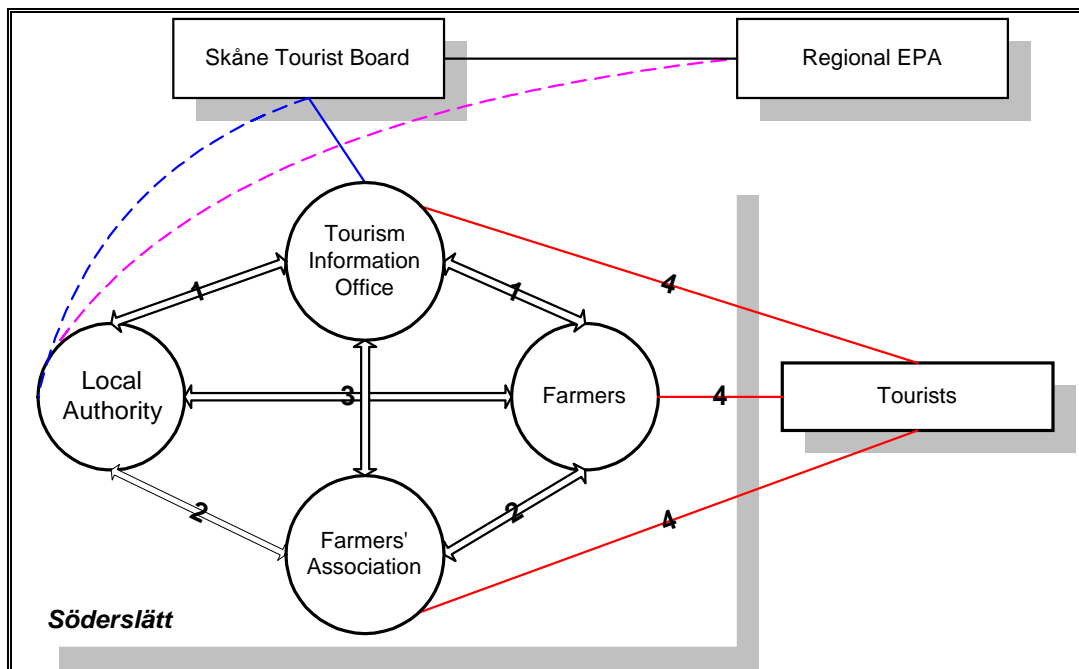


Figure 5-2: Communication pattern among the key farm tourism actors in the Söderslätt region

The arrows and the lines indicate the communication relationship among the farm tourism actors in Söderslätt. The figures indicate the relationships that are further analysed. Local authorities, tourist information offices, farmers' association and farmers are the actors that mainly intervene *within the boundaries of the region*. Tourists, Skåne tourist board and the regional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are important actors that influence the communication in the farm tourism business *externally*.

A common trend: when farm tourism is concerned, the relationship among the three major bodies that have the potential to push and direct the stakeholder dialogue- Local authorities, Tourist offices and Farm Tourism Organisation, is currently used only for the commercial activities, specifically the promotional material production. This is seen as the starting point for improvement of the farm tourism communication pattern among the different actors.

Local authorities - Tourist Offices - Farmers (1)¹⁷³

The relationship between local authorities and tourist offices regarding farm tourism derives from the provision of financial resources by the local authorities for developing tourism in the region. Consequently, the tourist offices need to prepare promotional material and make it accessible to tourists in the region. One of the biggest obstacles in the communication process is that the municipalities in the Söderslätt region are small, dealing with a very tight budget. Furthermore, the distribution of the budget depends on the priority setting within the municipality and is usually a political decision. This issue is indirectly related to farm tourism since the budget allocated is for the tourism sector in general.

Still, dealing with a tight budget is an issue that is influenced externally (national government level). On a local level, according to the author's opinion, in order to facilitate and improve the communication flow, a few issues could be considered especially at the level of the tourist information offices.

In the case of the tourist information offices improvements can be made for increasing the environmental awareness of the staff. A tourist office better-informed about the natural resources and the environmental issues in the region would be able to establish a better relationship with the tourists themselves and help them make informed decisions.

At the same time, the tourist offices could also influence local authorities. The fact that the current demand exceeds the supply of farm tourism accommodation during the high season should be made more transparent to the local authorities. The advantage of this condition is that there is a room for generating additional revenue that would be used locally and improve the quality of life within the community and therefore serve the needs of the municipality. By introducing incentives for tourists to visit farms off-season, some marginal revenue could be captured and utilized locally. One target group has been business people and golf players. Yet, bird watchers could represent another group of interest.

¹⁷³ Analysis of the relationship is based on the following interviews: Lundberg, K. (2001, August 20), Culture and tourism, Svedala municipality, personal interview; Staneva, Katerina. (2001, August 08). *Re: Some clarification questions*. E- mail to: Fredrika Linderoth (fredrika.linderoth@trelleborg.se), Turistinformatör

Local authorities- Farmers' Tourism Organisation - Farmers (2)¹⁷⁴

While establishing the relationship between local municipalities and the farmers' organisation (Bo på lantgård), it became clear that currently there is a lot of potential for improving the cooperation. The only field of contact at the moment is the commercial development of catalogues and web pages.

Moreover, both sides feel that the relationship could be strengthened. In order to diversify their practices, farmers need support on how to start a new business. One example is the willingness of the farmers to adopt tourism practices and their lack of knowledge on how to proceed. The farmers' organisation is usually aware and knowledgeable about the problems that farmers meet but on the municipal level they lack the capacity to address their interests. Farmers' organisation has the potential to draw the attention of the local authorities to the specific problem but on the other hand they have little influence especially when farm tourism is not within the priority issues in the municipality.

The opinion is that the relationship between local authorities and the farmers' organisation could be taken a step further by establishing continuous cooperation in improving the study circles for farm tourism enterprises.

Local authorities - Farmers (3)¹⁷⁵

The importance of engaging farm SMEs and local authorities in a partnership is that the development of the tourist destination could be better coordinated. In the case of farm tourism the problem is related to the issue that expanding the tourist product to include environmental and socio- cultural aspects in the product development is also usually related to cost increase for the business. Therefore, through engaging farmers in a dialogue based on the broad participation of businesses, various organizations and local authorities, the following benefits could be pursued:

a) Improved communication flows lead to an increase of the social capital in the local network

At a local level, ecological, environmental and socio - cultural knowledge is usually built up within the municipality. Involving different actors in partnerships such as Agenda 21 implies that it is within the responsibilities of the local municipality to disseminate information around the network. *How to make the information suitable and accessible for everybody* is a question that municipalities are dealing with. Canalising the knowledge to tourism related businesses in the farming sector is a way to provide them with understanding on how to reduce their costs by simultaneously increasing their environmental and socio- cultural awareness. Farmers would also benefit by gaining understanding on how human activities related to agriculture and tourism affect the environment and how improved conservation of the regional natural capital (forests, seas, etc.) improves the quality of life within the region. Involving farmers in partnerships increases their social awareness, while at the same time, reduces their ecological footprint¹⁷⁶.

b) Assessment of the carrying capacity of the region

¹⁷⁴ Analysis of the relationship is based on the following interviews: Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview; Staneva, Katerina, (2001, August 3). *Re: Thesis questions related to our telephone conversation*. E- mail to Ingvar Johannesson, Manager Bo på lantgård (Stay on a farm)

¹⁷⁵ Analysis of the relationship is based on the following interviews: Andersson, N. (2001, July 12), Project leader, personal interview; Hedin, A. (2001, June 26), Agenda 21 coordinator, personal interview; Nordström, R. (2001, July 26), Farm tourism entrepreneur, personal interview; Wilhelmsson, P. (2001, July 20), Project coordinator, personal conversation

¹⁷⁶ The **Ecological Footprint** a measure of the 'load' imposed by a given population on nature. It represents the land area necessary to sustain current levels of resource consumption and waste discharge by that population.

So far, farm tourism in Sweden and the Söderslätt region in particular, has been perceived as one of the more sustainable tourism practices due to its small scale, provision of local benefits and local revenue, the potential to address various environmental and socio - cultural issues in a region. *Why is then the question of estimating the carrying capacity relevant to farm tourism?*

Currently farm tourism demand exceeds supply in the region during high season. As a result, the attitudes of farmers and farmers' association are changing. The *physical consequences* of the potential expansion of the existing farm tourism establishments imply that local authorities should perceive estimating the *physical carrying capacity* of the region. One reason is that some arable land will be used for construction purposes. There are two issues related to this aspect, *firstly*, since the land in Söderslätt is highly fertile, converting its use for purposes different from agriculture deteriorates the quality of the resource. *Secondly*, increasing the number of constructions brings about the question of the impact created through the life- cycle of these establishments, especially through the construction and exploitation phase.

Another important issue to be considered is the sensitivity of the region. As previously stated Söderslätt is predominantly agricultural land and therefore the natural areas are vulnerable to any change. Increasing the number of tourists can further deteriorate and threaten the biodiversity in the region. Therefore, issues of land planning and management are important for the regional development and should be not only prioritized by the local authority but also properly communicated to the farmers themselves.

Expanding the tourist number is also related to social aspects within the region. Estimating the *social carrying capacity* implies that local population attitudes toward the increased number of tourists should be taken into consideration. In this case, local authorities should find the equilibrium between income generation and social tolerance.

c) Increasing transparency through early involvement of all interested parties

In some cases municipality representatives have expressed the concern that when trying to involve landowners in decision- taking, they meet difficulties in convincing them that in that way their interests are better addressed. Early involvement therefore sets the scene for a more efficient prioritization of the problems within the region, less controversial provision of information and an early establishment of a dialogue pattern that best suits the interested parties. By creating an early sense of farm tourism product ownership a greater sense of responsibility is also achieved.

Tourists- Farmers- Tourist Offices- Farmers' Association (4)

There is a need that local authorities, through the promotional channels of the tourist information offices and farmers' association, make available to the public and the farm tourism businesses respectively, better information on the state of the environment. In that way the enhanced public pressure coming from the environmentally aware tourist and the local population respectively could act as a driver for adopting more sustainable practices and contribute to the balanced development of farm tourism in the region. On the other hand, introducing the current environmental problems to visitors and tourists alike and revealing how they, through their practices relate to these problems, could help them make more responsible choices about the activities they choose while visiting, the modes of transportation used and the time spent in the region.

5.3 Identifying Sustainability Criteria for Söderslätt

Improving the inter- stakeholder communication pattern will provide the opportunity to better manage the long- term development of farm tourism in the region. Monitoring the current pattern of

development for the sector could also facilitate that process. Hence, a series of sustainability criteria for the farm tourism sector is proposed that should serve the following purposes:

- Are of relevance to farm tourism;
- Have the capacity to offset potential negative impacts of tourism within the region;
- Addresses holistically the region from economic, environmental and socio- cultural perspective.

Some of the criteria proposed are clearly qualitative, while others could be further developed and indicators could be set in order to provide some quantitative information. For example, under the criteria “ecological farming”, the indicators per cent of ecological farms/total number of farms or simply increase of number of ecological farms/year could be further developed. In this way, trends could be established about the development of farm tourism or other forms of tourism in Söderslätt through data collection, comparison and analysis. The following *Table 8* presents the sustainability criteria, proposes a quantitative measure where feasible and explains the relevance to the overall development of the Söderslätt region.

Table 8: Sustainability criteria monitoring development of farm tourism in Söderslätt

Criteria	Proposed unit	Relevance to Söderslätt region
<i>Economic</i>		
Farm tourism revenue	➤ SEK/tourist/ year	➤ Revenue kept locally; small amount of leakages out of the region; contribution to the development and maintenance of local social systems and infrastructure; improvement of the quality of life; farm tourism still contributes very little to the local revenue, farm accommodation represents a very small per cent of total accommodation in the region; local food (shops, restaurants, arts and crafts, festivals) could have a greater potential to generate income
Local employment generated by farm tourism	➤ Number of local employees/ farm	➤ Provides occupation for women in the region- no need of daily commuting; provides good opportunities for the children in the family- at least one could stay in the business; reduces migration to urban areas
Household income generation	➤ SEK from farm tourism/ year	➤ Alternative income for the household; allows maintenance of the house and other constructions on the farm ground; allows further investments in the property; improves the standard of living for the farm family
Tourism training and education	➤ Number of tourism educated farmers/ year	➤ Provides capacity- building within the sector; provides knowledge on how to better manage the resources; provides knowledge about how to manage the business and the tourists; investment knowledge; basic knowledge about accounting; if properly structured, gives a more holistic approach about the development of the region; increases the social capital in the sector
Second homes	➤ Number of second homes/ year	➤ Second homes increase the price of the land property in the region, which is seen as problematic for young farmers; do not contribute to the local quality of life; change the population structure (mainly older people can afford them) and dilutes the local culture

Environmental		
Quality of natural areas		➤ Natural areas in Söderslätt important for developing tourism; preserve natural environment, an incentive for developing tourism related activities- hiking, cycling; of benefit to local population- recreation areas
Quality of aquatic environment		➤ Sea and inland water bodies- especially important for developing tourism in Söderslätt; agriculture related negative impacts on water bodies in the region; fishing is a popular tourist activity closely related to farm tourism
Capacity of the accommodation	➤ Number of farms expanding their capacity/ year	➤ Current capacity of farms in the region is usually up to eight people; tendency to increase the current capacity up to 20- 30 people on a single farm; issues of concern- impacts of further construction on the farm land; use of fertile land for other purposes; conflict of interest with those farmers who are not in favour of tourists
Biodiversity	➤ Increase/ decrease of types of species/ year	➤ Small islands of natural areas in the region; big fields of arable land separate the natural areas; migration of species is hard; loss of flora and fauna species in the region; decreased attractiveness for tourists and visitors
Ecological farming	➤ Per cent of ecological farms/total number of farms ➤ Number of ecological farms/year	➤ Big farms, most of which adopting “business- as- usual” practices; environmental impacts from farming in Söderslätt- some of the most pressing environmental problems; ecological farming addresses these problems; provides a better living environment for local population and visitors
Socio- cultural		
Perception of the tourist		➤ Not all farmers in the region see tourism as an opportunity they would like to develop; not all farmers have a positive attitude towards tourists; at present farm tourism is picking paste in Söderslätt but still meets a lot of suspicion
Visitor tolerance		➤ Some conflicts could arise about the “all men right” between neighbours; difference in the attitude of the residents along the coast and inland
Cultural Potential of the region		➤ Farm tourism has the potential to promote the culture of the region esp. through local food, arts, crafts and festivals; Söderslätt has a rich cultural heritage in terms of historical attractions- churches, castles,
Quality of cultural heritage		➤ Good condition of the cultural heritage spots in the region; such quality is necessary to be maintained since on the one hand it is a source of tourist revenues in the region, on the other it enhances the local pride; relevance to farm tourism- well- preserved food traditions, crafts and farm folklore increase the interest in that form of tourism activity

Local identity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sense of local identity- important for farm tourism in Söderslätt; different festivals- a good way of emphasising the local identity; problems with new-comers; a well- built sense of local identity influences the tourist; relevance to farm tourism- tourists perceive farm tourism not only because they need peace and quiet but also because they want to experience traditional farm atmosphere
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The importance of setting criteria for the development of farm tourism in the region could have three dimensions. First, the set of criteria proposed empowers the local authorities to better *plan and manage* the resources necessary for the development of the sector. Second, the criteria also allows for improved and regular *follow up* of farm tourism development. Hence, through addressing these criteria, a preventative approach about the sector development is adopted. Third, the criteria implies *sector transparency* and therefore are an efficient tool for conveying information not only to the stakeholders involved within the region, but are also a good benchmarking source for other tourist destinations interested in developing farm tourism.

5.3.1 Potential Advantages from Developing Farm Tourism

Improving the multi- stakeholder dialogue pattern and leading the sector development through a set of criteria addressing the three aspects of sustainability, can bring potential benefits not only to the supply and demand side, but also to the overall development of Söderslätt as well.

Benefits for the supply side: farm tourism establishments

Establishing partnerships among the actors involved in farm tourism assures that information is accessible to all. Even though, from the viewpoint of the local authorities and farmers organisations farmers' attitudes are changing and they are becoming increasingly environmentally aware, farmers are still not fully aware about the impacts related to their practices and the relationship between social, cultural, environmental and economic factors in the region. Therefore, awareness rising, using the partnerships network through exchange of information and optimising the channels of information available could provide the following benefits:

Diversification of agricultural activities - in view of the challenges that farmers are faced with (decrease of subsidies for the agricultural sector, decline of the rural countryside and unemployment), information about the options that would bring about not only alternative income to the farmer but will also take care of the overall development of the region needs to be provided. Tourism is one such option.

Capacity- building for the sector - farm tourism has been usually criticised since it is believed that the labour employed does not possess the proper training in order to manage tourism activities. The existing education circles in the Söderslätt region are a good step towards efficient capacity- building in the sector.

Maintain high quality of the product offered - dissemination of information through the network provides not only for capacity- building in the sector but also for sustaining the quality of the tourist product offered. Not only meeting the short- term benefits from the additional income provided through tourism is needed but also developing a product that would not be in conflict with the natural surroundings and local population life styles in the long term.

Protection and preservation of the rural heritage (cultural and natural) - farmers are using the natural and cultural heritage of the region in order to develop their product. Internal capacity - building and

awareness - rising among the farmers and external dissemination of information to the tourists about the natural and cultural features of the Söderslätt region can be achieved through strengthening the existing partnerships.

Dissemination of information about best practices in the farm tourism sector - farmers need to be informed about the best practices available on a broad scale. Start-up businesses can be particularly influenced if such information is made accessible to them. Compiling this kind of information and regularly updating it would require external assistance, this could be provided for example by the farm tourism organisation.

Streamlining the information to the farmer at an early stage makes them feel responsible about the development of the tourism sector and the region as a whole - all of the above-mentioned benefits of partnerships for farm tourism businesses, if made comprehensible to the farmer at an early stage, create a strong sense of responsibility and a deeper engagement in the sector development.

Benefits for the demand side: tourists

The biggest benefit for the tourists from the existing partnerships in the farm tourism sector is that they could obtain a better quality service and better information about the development of the sector. Based on that they can also make informed and responsible choices when choosing a farming establishment as well as when pursuing a specific tourist activity. Given the right information, the tourists can potentially influence the development of the Söderslätt region as follows:

Make use of environmentally friendly means of transportation - currently, a big amount of work has been done in the region to promote alternative ways of transportation. Cycling and hiking maps are available at each tourist office. A project presenting the whole Söderslätt region is also underway. Still, a point that could be further discussed is how to make this kind of information more pro-active and engage a larger audience of visitors. One way could be to assure that this type of information is also available at the farm business establishments.

Make use and increase the share of local produce through visiting local restaurants, grocery stores and food markets - information about such businesses should be made available to visitors interested in farm tourism. The effect is two-fold - on the one hand a promotion of an important element of farm tourism is achieved and on the other a boost of the local economy is also accomplished. The "Goose label" developed by Vellinge municipality is a good example for the rest of the municipalities in the Söderslätt region.

Combine beach and farm stay - discovering the advantages of farm tourism can influence the potential tourists rethink their vacation pattern. The day trip to the beach could be substituted with a weekend spent on a farm where variety of activities is presented. Enjoying the natural surrounding, experiencing the local food, accessing the beach by the cycling paths are some examples, which grouped together address some issues related to day trips like car congestion and pollution as well as the lack of local income generation.

Influence the current patterns of farm tourism development - currently, tourists are not initiators of change especially in relation to the environmental aspects of tourism. Making a balanced, precise information accessible to the customers could influence the development of farm tourism in Söderslätt through the behaviour and attitude of the tourists. Empowered with information they could set higher requirements or expectations and pass on the information to other potential users.

Benefits for the destination- Söderslätt

If farm tourism partnerships might influence positively both the farm tourism businesses and the tourists themselves, at the level of Söderslätt, the following synergetic effects could potentially be addressed:

Sustainable land management - partnerships in farm tourism could disseminate knowledge on how to use the limited resources on which tourism development is relying. In the case of Söderslätt region, the attractiveness of the natural surroundings is perceived as an asset adding up to the quality of the farm tourism product. At the same time, the current agricultural practices jeopardise the future development of farm tourism (pollution of the water bodies in the region being the biggest environmental problem).

Rural migration to urban environment - developing farm tourism in the Söderslätt region could lead to decreasing the migration rates. Keeping the business within the farm family members has the potential of providing a good occupational opportunities and educational background for the young generation.

Strengthening the local culture and identity through promoting local arts, crafts, folklore and food - communication and information dissemination within the partnership strengthens the bonds in the local community. In the case of the Söderslätt region, this is necessary due to two reasons. First, this is the region that is closest to the rest of the European continent and therefore experiences the influence of other cultures and secondly because a large part of it is arable land where farmers often lead a quite isolated life.

Money kept locally - development of farm tourism in the Söderslätt region contributes not only to improving the natural and cultural environment, but also to addressing economic issues. Money is kept locally which supports the maintenance of local infrastructure and therefore the quality of life of the local population.

Partnerships in the farming sector - a tool for better controlling an industry consisting of SMEs- data regarding the development of farm tourism on a regional or national basis is hard to obtain due to the small - scale and dispersed nature of the establishments. While the farm tourism organisation provides information about the existing places offering farm tourism, finding out some quantitative information about the sector was problematic. Therefore, the impacts from developing farm tourism on a regional basis are not well monitored and hard to establish.

6. Recommendations and Conclusions

In this chapter, recommendations related to the issues identified throughout chapter five will be presented. These recommendations are primarily targeted at suggesting different ways of improving the current pattern of farm tourism stakeholder dialogue and therefore strengthening the image of the Söderslätt region. Conclusions of the research are also presented based on the findings and analysis in chapter five, and an answer to the main research question will be obtained. A suggestion for a further research is also presented.

6.1 Recommendations

Based on the interviews and the analysis developed in the previous chapter, the following main recommendations can be made:

Establishment of a regional tourism structure

Promoting Söderslätt as a tourist destination will require setting a common vision about the future development of the tourism industry. For that purpose, the author suggests establishing **Regional Tourist Council** for the Söderslätt region, consisting of the officers responsible for tourism in the four municipalities. The main role of the proposed Council would be to investigate the *current performance* (environmental, socio- cultural and economic) of the different tourist sectors in the region; setting up the future trends of development through drawing up a *common tourism policy, set objectives* for improvement of the current tourism practices and establish *action plans* and efficient *management programmes* that would not only facilitate the overall *monitoring* of tourism development in Söderslätt, but will also set the scene for *corrective actions* when necessary. Therefore, the proposed structure of the Council is:

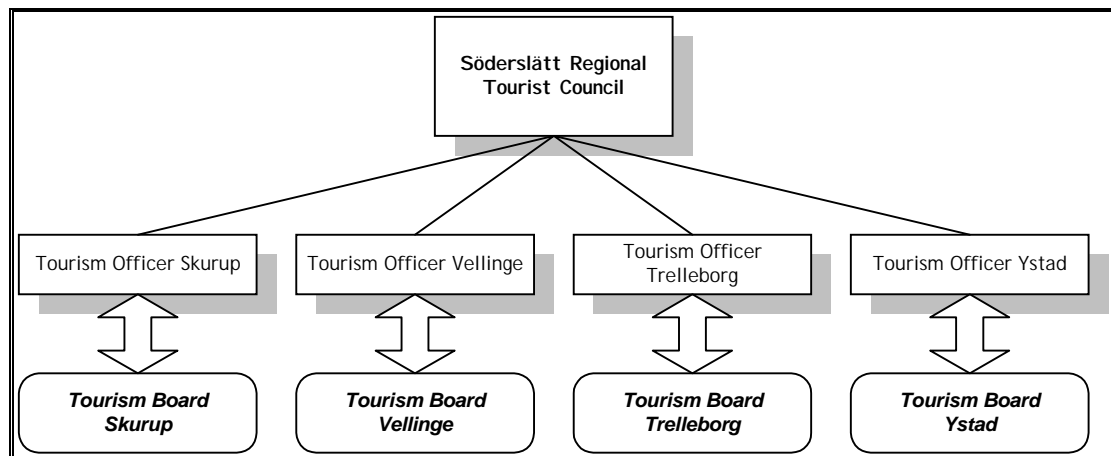


Figure 6-1: Structure of the proposed Söderslätt tourist board

The proposed structure could also streamline the marketing efforts in the four municipalities related to tourism. The advertising of the destination on a higher level will be facilitated and hence the Söderslätt brand will be strengthened. Attracting financial resources and improved international cooperation will be yet another asset for the region.

The Regional Tourism Council is also relevant for the future development of farm tourism. The farm tourism sustainability criteria selected in the previous chapter should be applied locally (in each municipality) and through the existing municipal structures they could be monitored on a local level. Still, comparing data related to the criteria should not be carried out only within the municipality but also among the four municipalities in the region. Therefore, through the Tourist Council the overall trend of farm tourism development will be established.

Further, the different participants (Figure 6-1) will have the following organisation and responsibility:

Tourist Boards - will be formed within each municipality and within the framework of LA 21, based on broad participation of different sectors of the tourism industry in Söderslätt. As a model, Vellinge Tourist Board could be used. The task of these boards could be to prioritise issues related to the tourism sector development in the municipality, follow the proposed tourism policy objectives and action plans and monitor the proposed criteria.

Tourist Officers - form the Regional Tourist Council. Based on the issues identified as critical within the separate municipalities, they can prioritise the issues of importance at the level of the Söderslätt region. Comparing the progress made in the municipalities, they can stress or further develop the criteria of relevance for the current regional development. Hence, a close cooperation with the local environmental departments is recommended, in order to be able to monitor the physical parameters of the region. The tourist officers would further need to communicate back to the local Tourist Boards and assure that the information is passed on to the different tourist sectors as well.

Create an easily accessible communication instrument available to both demand and supply side.

Much could be done especially when it comes to not only how to promote the farm tourism business, but also how to compile and package the best traits of Söderslätt and present it to the tourists.

A common communication platform, initiated with the support of the local government in cooperation with the farmers' association, would be of benefit both to farm tourism enterprises and the tourists. The purpose of the platform would be to facilitate the communication process along the tourism supply chain, as well as facilitate the meeting between supply and demand. Web based information, that could be used by farm businesses and consumers respectively, is an appropriate solution that would also allow to follow the trends of the sector development and compare performance with other businesses within the region. Furthermore, farm businesses could get consultation about environmental management, farming and new technologies that would reduce the environmental impacts from their activities.

Addressing the information gap and raising awareness

The current information and promotion tools used (web - pages and catalogues) could be improved especially in relation to disseminating environmental information. Farm tourism could be differentiated based on whether farms apply ecological farming or not. Currently, ecological farming has not received the necessary attention from the residents, tourists or businesses. One way to underline this practice would be to develop a separate section (for example, under the title "Our Ecological Farms") in the web page of Bo på lantgård and the catalogues about ecological or KRAV labelled farms in Söderslätt.

At the level of the Farm Tourism Organisation some improvements could be also achieved. One suggestion is targeted towards increasing the environmental awareness of the farm tourism

businesses through incorporating environmental requirements in the existing quality criteria documents for farm accommodation.

Strengthening the local brand for a sustainable agricultural region

The relationship between food production and farm tourism could be used for farm tourism differentiation. The first step has already been made in Vellinge municipality by introducing the “Gåsamärkt- the Goose”. The label should become the symbol for local food identity within the Söderslätt region indicating that the food is produced and consumed locally. Being introduced by the local authority it brings together local producers, retailers and restaurants and therefore sets the base for establishing a local food network in the region. For that reason, it is necessary to further strengthen and promote the Goose label by:

- Continuing the work in branding of the local food, in order to establish the food industry profile and relate it to the tourism industry;
- Developing potential “food trails” and reinforce the existing farmers’ markets- a map could be created where Goose labelled retailers and producers will be displayed;
- Strengthening the promotion of the label by involving the local population. For example, one way could be by distributing leaflets in the mail boxes explaining the purpose of the label; use local newspaper with information about the label on a regular basis; organise food tasting for local people;
- Informing the tourists- it would be useful if the information about the label is translated into English, German and Polish. Tourists should be made aware of the meaning and that by choosing the food products marked with the label they contribute to the local economy;
- Using retailers and restaurants as means of communication. The point- of- sale places (local food stores) should not only have stickers but they can also be supplied with a poster providing information about the label. The information about the label could be printed at the back of the menus in the restaurants, adding up to the awareness - raising efforts for the locals and the tourists simultaneously.

Local capacity building

Existing study circles, based on the “mentorship” idea for farm tourism, should be improved and expanded. They should especially take into consideration that some of the farmers have recently migrated to the region and therefore lack the cultural background of Söderslätt. Study circles could be used to provide a more holistic approach towards sustainability to farmers by enlarging their understanding about: local history, local traditions and folklore, the current state of the local environment including local endangered species, their living conditions and the sources of impacts on them.

One way of achieving the above- mentioned is to initiate regular tourism workshops, where representatives from different tourism businesses in the region will be able to obtain information (the Council proposed earlier would be the appropriate body) about the problems associated with tourism in the region but also seek long- term solutions.

6.2 Conclusion

Farm tourism in general is a relatively recent form of tourism that has been gaining recognition on a regional and national level during the last decade. The *need* for developing this sector is closely related

to the general trend of decline of the agricultural sector in the EU on the one hand and the effects from mass tourism on the other. In that sense, the need for promoting farm tourism has been seen as a way of diversifying the farming practices in order to sustain farm families' quality of life, reduce the pressures created from mass tourism activities and therefore facilitate the overall development of the rural areas.

In view of that, the *purpose* of the research was to find out *how farm tourism development in Söderslätt can contribute to the overall regional development*. Part of the investigation referred to the analysis of the current pattern of dialogue between the different actors in farm tourism. Consequently, a set of sustainability criteria to be monitored on a local as well on a regional level was proposed.

The main conclusion of the research is that farm tourism can contribute to the sustainable development of Söderslätt, but in order to achieve that, the relationship among local authorities; tourist information offices, local population, businesses and business associations should be considerably strengthened. That would imply improving the relationship among different actors not only on a municipal level but among the different municipalities as well. Improved cooperation should be seen as an opportunity that not only facilitates generation of financial benefits for the region, but also strengthens the local identity and improves recognition by the tourists.

Furthermore, LA 21 in the four municipalities provides a flexible political framework to sustainable development and has been fully recognised by the local authorities in the region as a useful tool. It involves actors not only within a sector but also establishes a relationship between the various sectors in the economy.

The political framework of LA 21 could be adopted for improving the existing partnerships in the farm tourism sector. Through more active involvement of the key actors of farm tourism in the LA 21 process, the following can be achieved:

- Increasing environmental awareness of farmers;
- Strengthening of their cultural identity
- Increasing the flow and transparency of information
- Improving overall environmental performance of the farm tourism sector

By improving the stakeholder dialogue related to farm tourism, benefits can also be achieved in the longer term, such as a clearer local responsibility setting process, efficient land management consideration and estimation of the physical and social carrying capacity of the region.

Currently, no comprehensive set of criteria addressing the farm tourism sector within the Swedish context, has been developed. The benefits from implementing such criteria would refer to the farm tourism sector since they:

- Allow for planning and management of “common use” resources, such as land and water;
- Establish an efficient management framework for monitoring the sector development;
- Provide sector transparency and structure the flow of information to stakeholders, competitors and general public.

Setting criteria for farm tourism development is also important for the overall sustainable regional development since different regional issues such as income generation, employment, quality of natural and cultural resources, cultural identity of the region are addressed.

Expanding the farm tourism sector in the Söderslätt region is feasible and likely to happen due to the following reasons. On the one hand demand exceeds supply especially during the summer season and on the other Söderslätt is THE agricultural part of Sweden where large farmland predominates the region's landscape. In order to achieve this growth in a sustainable way, farm tourism should incorporate much more than farm - based accommodation, farm practices and natural surroundings. The cultural and social potential of the region should be properly assessed and a product should be developed based on the right mix of economic incentives, environmental factors, social conditions and cultural distinctiveness of Söderslätt.

6.3 Final Thoughts

The final thoughts of the author will address the following issue: “ *While farm tourism can contribute to the overall sustainable regional development, how does it address the two problematic issues related to the decline of the rural areas and the boost of other tourism practices?*” the answer to this question is related to the following issues.

Is farm tourism the answer to the problems related to the agricultural decline?

Based on the findings from the interviews, the following conclusion could be made. Farm tourism has the potential to address a variety of issues related to the need for diversifying the rural areas but should not be seen as a universal panacea.

On the positive side, farm tourism helps improve the financial bottom line both for the individual farm family and for the rural community. Further, farm tourism provides employment for local people and thus helps decrease the trends of migration towards the urban areas. Start - up businesses do not need big initial investments. Introducing farm tourism creates little or no impacts on the natural surroundings while at the same time serves as a catalyst for cultural exchange.

Still, the main reasons why farm tourism should not be readily accepted as an universal answer to the rural problems are: the unstable and low margin income provided due to the seasonality of the sector and the negative attitudes of some farmers towards tourists. The general suspicion and disbelief about the positive results of farm tourism are yet another reason.

Is farm tourism the solution to the present mass tourism problem?

In order to answer this question, one should probably ask oneself: “ Am I willing to substitute the sun, sand and sea for a farm holiday?” The answer to this question may still be “No.” However, farm tourism should not be lightly rejected. There are potentials that should be further explored. Farm tourism should not be mixed with mass tourism and should not be seen as a possible substitution. Hoping that farm tourism will solve the mass tourism problems is unrealistic. The aim of developing farm tourism is not to induce but reduce problems. In that sense, the strength of farm tourism should be sought in its potential to release some tourism related tensions in a region and to mitigate the negative attitudes of the host population towards tourism in general.

6.4 Further research issues

Research about the relationship between farm tourism and its implications to sustainable regional development is new. Further investigation on whether this relationship has practical application to

other regions with a similar socio- economic profile could be relevant especially in the context of other developed countries where LA 21 has already gained credibility as a framework that sets the base for efficient local involvement in the community life.

On an applied level, further research can concentrate on how the recommendations that conclude the thesis could be applied to already existing tourism networks. The value added of the current recommendations can be better estimated if they have the potential to bring further improvements to already studied communication patterns. On the other hand, that will also lead to adopting new ideas for improving the farm tourism - region relationship under study.

Yet another area that could be further investigated is related to how the existing support schemes affect the development of farm tourism sector in the region of Söderslätt. Two main streams influence this research. On the one hand, the question is how the conventional agricultural sector is affected by the current structure of subsidies on EU and national level. On the other hand, the question is whether farmers have the option to receive any institutional help in order to develop farm tourism practices. The general availability of such aid (could be in the form of subsidies, venture capital, etc.), the conditions on which such aid is provided and the overall knowledge and awareness on the part of the farmer about these opportunities are significant issues for further research.

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3. Siv Bengtsson- Lindsjö, Kommunekolog, Ystad Kommun, Ystad, personal interview, (2001, June 19)
4. Anita Hedin, Agendasamordnare, Skurup Kommun, Skurup, personal interview, (2001, June 26)
5. Monika Strömbland, Turistchef, Trelleborg Kommun, Trelleborg, personal interview, (2001, July 11)
6. Nils- Arvid Andersson, Agenda 21 samordnare, Naringsliv och Turismansvaring, Vellinge Kommun, Vellinge, personal interview, (2001, July 12)
7. Magdalena Hellström, Turistinformatör, Skurup Kommun, Skurup, personal interview, (2001, July 18)
8. Kersti Brodde, Farm Tourism Entrepreneur, Broddahill farm, Vellinge, telephone interview, (2001, July 24)
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2. Karl- Erik Greuendahl, Sustainable Business Hub, Malmö, personal conversation, (2001, June 07)
3. Fredrika Linderoth, Turistinformatör, Trelleborg Kommun, Trelleborg, exchange of emails throughout the whole research
4. Petra Wilhelmsson, Biträdande Projektledare- Assistant Project Manager, Svedala Kommun, Svedala, personal conversation, (2001, July 20)

Abbreviations

B& B	Bed and breakfast accommodation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EC	European Commission
ENVIREG	Programme for improving and fostering economic development
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
INTEREG	Cross- border projects
LA 21	Local Agenda 21
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Developpement de L'economie Rurale- Rural community initiative
LRF	Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SMEs	Small and Medium Size Enterprises
UNSTAT	United Nations Statistic Commission
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Appendix 1 General Pattern of the Interviews

Local Authorities	Tourist Information Offices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction; ➤ Addressing the environmental issues in the region; ➤ Description of the implementation process of LA 21; ➤ Representation of farmers interests in LA 21; ➤ The current priority issues in LA 21; ➤ Current or planned projects in cooperation with the rest of the Söderslätt municipalities in the area of environmental protection and tourism; ➤ Involvement with the other farm tourism actors; ➤ The plans for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction; ➤ Structure of the tourists in the region (nationality, average length of stay, preferred accommodation); ➤ Activities pursued by the tourists; ➤ Current problems/ benefits related to tourists; ➤ Interest in farm tourism; ➤ Supply and demand ratios related to farm tourism; ➤ Promotion of farm tourism- co- operations and links; ➤ Involvement in LA 21; ➤ Current or planned projects in cooperation with the rest of the Söderslätt municipalities in the area of tourism
Farmers	Farm Tourism Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction; ➤ Length of stay in the business; ➤ Reasons for initiating farm tourism; ➤ Tourist characteristics and interests; ➤ Activities offered on the farm; ➤ Environmental requests on the part of the tourists; ➤ Major problems related to tourists; ➤ Problems expressed by the tourists; ➤ Areas where help is needed; ➤ Promotion of the business; ➤ Involvement in partnerships related to farm tourism; ➤ Special tourism training provided; ➤ Future expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduction; ➤ Share of farm tourism as part of the broader rural tourism; ➤ The role of Bo på lantgård in farm tourism; ➤ Internal relationship between LRF and Bo på lantgård; ➤ Relationship between Bo på lantgård and the tourist information offices; ➤ Relationship between Bo på lantgård and the local authority; ➤ Promotion of farm tourism- problems associated; ➤ Reasons for farmers to initiate farm tourism; ➤ Existing training programmes for farmers about tourism; ➤ Dissemination of environmental issues to farmers in tourism; ➤ existing partnerships of farmers in tourism

Appendix 2 Range of Tourist Leisure Activities in the Countryside¹⁷⁷

Touring

- Hiking (footpaths, fitness trails, nature parks);
- Horse riding
- Motorised touring (trail riding, motoring);
- Cycling
- Donkey riding
- Cross- country skiing

Water- related activities

- Fishing;
- Swimming;
- River tourism (houseboats, narrow boats)
- Canoeing and rafting;
- Windsurfing;
- Speedboat racing
- Sailing

Aerial activities

- Light aircraft;
- Hang- gliding and microlight aircraft;
- Hot air balloons;

Activities on dry land

- Tennis;
- Golf;

¹⁷⁷ Sharpley, R. &J., (1997). *Rural Tourism- an introduction*.p. 8

Sporting activities

- Pot- holing;
- Rock climbing;

Discovery- type activities

- Local industrial, agricultural or craft enterprises;

Cultural activities

- Archaeology;
- Restoration sites;
- Courses in crafts;
- Artistic expression shops
- Folk groups;
- Cultural, gastronomic and other routes;

Health- related activities

- Fitness training
- Health resorts

Appendix 3 Rural Tourism Development Policy¹⁷⁸

Categories	Instruments	Examples
Regulatory Instruments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laws 2. Licences, permits and standards 3. Tradable permits 4. Quid pro quos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planning laws can give considerable power to government to encourage particular types of rural tourism development through, for example, land use zoning ➤ Regulatory instruments can be used for a wide variety of purposes especially at local government level, e.g. they may set materials standards for tourism developments or they can be used to set architectural standards for heritage streetscapes and properties ➤ Often used in the United states to limit resource use or pollution. However, the instrument requires effective monitoring for it to work ➤ Government may require businesses to do something in exchange for certain rights, e.g. land may be given to a developer below market rates if the development is of a particular type or design
Voluntary Instruments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information 2. Volunteer associations and non- governmental organisations 3. Technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expenditure on educating the local public, businesses or tourists to achieve specific goals, e.g. appropriate recreational behaviour ➤ Government support of community tourism organisations is very common in tourism. Support may come from direct loans and/ or by provision of office facilities. Examples of this type of development local or regional tourist organisations, heritage conservation groups, mainstream groups, tour guide programmes, or helping to establish a local farm stay home stay association ➤ Government may provide technical assistance and information to businesses with regard to planning and development requirements

¹⁷⁸ Butler, R., Hall, C. & Jenkins, J., (1999). *Tourism and Recreation in Rural Areas*, p. 30

<p>Expenditure</p>	<p>1. Expenditure and contracting</p> <p>2. Investment or procurement</p> <p>3. Public enterprise</p> <p>4. Public- private partnerships</p> <p>5. Monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>6. Promotion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This is a common method for government to achieve policy objectives as government can spend money directly on specific activities, this may include the development of infrastructure, such as roading, or it may include mainstream beautification programmes. Contracting may be used as means of supporting existing local businesses or encouraging new ones ➤ Investment may be direct into specific businesses or projects, while procurement can be used to help provide businesses with a secure customer for their products ➤ When the market fails to provide desired outcomes, governments may create their own businesses, e.g. rural regional development corporations or enterprise boards. If successful, such businesses may then be sold off to private sector ➤ Government may enter into partnership with the private sector in order to develop certain products or regions. These may take the form of a corporation which has a specific mandate to attract business to a certain area for example ➤ Government may allocate financial resources to monitor rural economic, environmental and socio- economic indicators. Such measures may not only be valuable to government to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of rural tourism development objectives but can also be a valuable source of information to the private sector as well ➤ Government may spend money on promoting a region to visitors either with or without financial input from the private sector. Such promotional activities may allow individual businesses to reallocate their own budgets by reducing expenditures that might have made on promotion
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<p>Financial Incentives</p>	<p>1. Pricing</p> <p>2. Taxes and charges</p> <p>3. Grants and loans</p> <p>4. Subsidies and tax incentives</p> <p>5. Rebates, rewards and surety bonds</p> <p>6. Vouchers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pricing measures may be used to encourage appropriate behaviour or to stimulate demand, e.g. use of particular walking trails, lower camping or permit costs ➤ Governments may use these to encourage appropriate behaviours by both individuals and businesses, i.e. pollution charges. Taxes and charges may also be used to help fund infrastructure development, e.g. regional airports ➤ Seeding money may be provided to businesses to encourage product development or to encourage the retention of heritage and landscape features ➤ Although subsidies are often regarded as creating inefficiencies in the markets they may also be used to encourage certain types of behaviour with respect to social and environmental externalities, e.g. heritage and landscape conservation, that are not taken into account by conventional economics ➤ Rebates and rewards are a form of financial incentive to encourage individuals or businesses to act in certain ways. Similarly, surety bonds can be used to ensure that businesses act in agreed ways, if they do not then the government will spend the money for the same purpose ➤ Vouchers are a mechanism to affect consumer behaviour by providing a discount on a specific product or activity, e.g. to shop in a rural centre
<p>Non-intervention</p>	<p>1. Non- intervention (deliberate)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Government deciding not to directly intervene in sectoral or regional development is also a policy instrument, in that public policy is what government decides to do and not do. In some cases the institution may be such that government may decide that policy objectives are being met so that their intervention may not add any net value to the rural development process and that resources could be better spent elsewhere

Appendix 4 Differences between LEADER II and LEADER+ Objectives¹⁷⁹

The objectives	
<i>LEADER II</i>	<i>LEADER +</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote innovative, demonstrative actions (multisectorial and integrated) and disseminate them throughout the EU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain the experimental nature of the area-based development strategies but place more emphasis on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ quality projects ➤ sustainable effects ➤ strategies developed on the basis of a unifying theme ➤ actions that encourage job creation
The measures	
<i>LEADER II</i>	<i>LEADER +</i>
<p>4 main measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acquisition of skills ➤ Rural innovation programmes (incl. Technical assistance; vocational training; rural tourism; small businesses, crafts; local products; quality of life) ➤ Transnational cooperation ➤ Networking 	<p>3 priority actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rural development strategies (area- based, integrated, pilot, transferable and complementary)- incl. New technologies and know- how for competitiveness of products and areas; quality of life; adding value to local products; best use of natural and cultural resources ➤ International and transnational cooperation ➤ Networking

¹⁷⁹ Rural Europe.(2001). *LEADER+*. [Online]. Available: <http://www.rural-europe.aeidl.be/rural-en/plus.htm> (2001, July 17)

Appendix 5 Promoting the Adoption and Development of Rural Policies¹⁸⁰

Promoting the Adaptation and Development of Rural Areas

Article 33

Support shall be granted for measures, relating to farming activities and their conversion and to rural activities, which do not fall within the scope of any other measure referred to in this Title.

Such measures shall concern:

- Land improvement,
- Reparcelling,
- Setting- up of farm relief and farm management services,
- Marketing of quality agricultural products,
- Basic services for the rural economy and population,
- Renovation and development of villages and protection and conservation of the rural heritage,
- Diversification of agricultural activities and activities close to agriculture to provide multiple activities or alternative incomes,
- Agricultural water resource management,
- Development and improvement of infrastructure connected with the development of agriculture,
- Encouragement for tourist and craft activities,
- Protection of the environment in connection with agriculture, forestry and landscape conservation as well as with the improvement of animal welfare,
- Restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention mechanisms,
- Financial engineering

¹⁸⁰ Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999 of 17 May 1999