

# Natural and Cultural Heritage as a Paradigm for Agrotourism Development in Krapina-Zagorje County

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## Summary

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In this paper, we analyzed the connection between the natural and cultural heritage and agrotourism, respectively the natural and cultural heritage as a paradigm for development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County. Through the questionnaire related to the agrotourism offer, agrotourism households, Agency for Rural Development and the County tourist boards, we evaluated the extent to which the natural and cultural heritage in agrotourism is valorized.

The results are not satisfying with respect to the valorization of neither natural nor cultural heritage, but with a little good will, support and education, they can be easily improved. Through SWOT analysis we have also detected and synthesized strengths, weaknesses, benefits and limitations of agrotourism in this County. Since the Krapina-Zagorje County has a rich natural and cultural heritage, it should be incorporated into the tourist offer and it is necessary to create a unique agrotouristic product that will find its agrotouristic niche among local (excursion site for Zagreb residents) and foreign tourists.

## Key words

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natural heritage, cultural heritage, agrotourism, sustainable development, rural area

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## Introduction

As the modern idea, agrotourism is not a new phenomenon, because it has been recognized around the world, particularly in the developed world since the early twentieth century (Busby and Rendle, 2000; Wicks and Merrett, 2003). Around the world, including Croatia, agrotourism is increasingly attracting tourists who are looking for the natural environment and authentic agricultural products (Gill Arroyo et al., 2013). For example, in the US, the agriculture has experienced several structural changes over the past three decades, with an emphasis on the development of different companies, by using existing agricultural resources (Nickerson et al., 2001; Barbieri et al., 2008). Diversification of farms which include elements of entertainment and recreational activities in their offer, often called agrotourism, is becoming increasingly recognized in the United States and Western Europe especially because of a handful of economic, but also non-economic benefits for farmers, visitors and local community (Hernandez-Mogolon, 2011; Tew and Barbieri, 2012). It is believed that in this way the agrotourism helps family farms to maintain their operations, maintain cultures, maximize the productivity of agricultural resources through their use in recreational and other kinds of purposes, and clearly contribute to the improvement of the economic situation of the local community (Ilbery, 1991; Nickerson et al., 2001; Veeck et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2006; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007). From the perspective of a farm, agrotourism is used to increase agricultural income and it can also serve to other entrepreneurial goals, such as improving the quality of life (Nickerson et al., 2001; McGehee and Kim, 2004; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Grgic et al., 2011). An additional economic benefit for farms is particularly important because of the current agricultural situation and agricultural costs, as well as of the lower output, particularly among small farms (Ilbery, 1991; Busby and Rendle, 1999; Salamon, 2003; Franic and Grgic, 2009). Apart from that, the achievement of new noneconomic goals is very important due to the increase of 'hobbies' and 'lifestyle' of farmers, who are not led mainly by economic reasons (Valdivia, 2007; Wilson, 2008). Over the past decade the popularity of agrotourism among farmers suddenly increased, but the fusion of tourism and agricultural activities has so far been researched in a relatively limited extent. Despite the growing number of studies related to agrotourism, the literature remains doubtful in terms of the potential benefits of this activity, especially regarding the benefits expected from a provider of agrotourism services. This limited understanding is probably due to the complex economic and noneconomic goals related to the development of agrotourism (McGehee and Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007). Many small farms are struggling to survive (Valdivia, 2007) and therefore there is the need to diversify their offer on farms, such as the agrotourism (Barbieri and Valdivia, 2010). The concept of agrotourism is used to describe almost any activity in which the visitor of a farm enjoys natural environment or participates in an agricultural process, in order to meet their need for recreation and amusement (Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; Ilbery et al., 1998; Veeck et al., 2006; Grgic et al., 2011). It is often considered that agrotourism is taking place on farms or in other agricultural facilities, which thus generates additional income to holdings (Barbieri and Mahoney, 2009; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Philip et al.,

2010). Agrotourism includes many activities, such as daily visits (eg. a tour of the orchard, a ride on the tractor), recreational harvests (eg. participation in harvest and processing of grapes), hunting and fishing for compensation, the study of nature and wildlife and other outdoor activities (Barbieri et al., 2008; Caballé, 1999; Che, 2007; Ilbery, 1991; McGehee and Kim, 2004; Wilson et al., 2006). However, there are inconsistencies on the scale of activities that agrotourism includes. For example, some include hotel and restaurant services such as accommodation, food and beverages (eg. restaurant within the household, catering, etc.), and are organizing special events (Barbieri et al., 2008; Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; Ilbery, 1991; McGehee, 2007), while others strictly exclude such services (Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007). Similar inconsistencies are also found in educational activities and in direct sales of agricultural products (Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; McGehee, 2007). Although in the literature many definitions of the activities associated with agrotourism are well known, researchers are still struggling with devising a classification system that will harmonize the definition of agrotourism. However, the exceptions are Philip et al. (2010), who developed a theoretical classification based on three criteria: the activity of the farm, the degree of contact between the tourist and agricultural activities (eg. passive, direct or indirect), and truly authentic experience of visitors. Tourists especially want to participate directly in the farms that are dealing with organic or integrated production, where they often want to exchange their work on farms for accommodation and food (MacCannell, 1973; McIntosh and Bonnemann, 2006). The perception of the introduction of tourism in rural areas is generally positive, following the belief that combining these two activities (tourism and agriculture) can facilitate local issues by linking the labor force in tourism and agriculture (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Torres and Momsen, 2004). The positive impact of agrotourism is also visible in the contribution of the agrotourism business to local community through sales tax, local employment and stimulation of local businesses such as shops and restaurants (Barbieri and Mahoney, 2009; Saxena et al., 2007; Sharpley, 2007; Veeck et al. 2006). Important are also those non-economic social benefits, including maintenance of rural way of life, increasing the awareness of preserving local customs and unique cultural features of the area, especially those related to the production and preparation of food (Turnock, 2002; Che, 2007; Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Lapan and Barbieri, 2014; Gao et al., 2014). It is believed that diversification of the economy would create more stable and often higher incomes for producers (Barbieri et al., 2008; Brandth and Haugen, 2007). The recent research abroad shows that in times of economic difficulties, the visitors pave the way for the generation of alternative or additional income for the farm through agrotourism (Busby and Rendle, 1999; Fisher, 2006; McGehee, 2007; Nickerson et al., 2001). However, in most cases, agrotourism serves as a supplementary source of income, while agricultural production remains the primary goal (Fisher, 2006; McGehee, 2007; Nickerson et al., 2001; Veeck et al., 2006). It is also considered that agrotourism can provide the employment for family members or serve as a plan for the inheritance of the farm (Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Veeck et al., 2006; Grgic et al., 2011). Nevertheless, agrotourism seems like an appropriate diversification strategy because it does not

necessarily requires excessive investment in infrastructure, labor or equipment. Farms which are extending their business to tourism are likely to be rather focused on those activities that use their existing resources, than on those that require additional investment, because many producers look at the diversification as a to a method to increase revenue or to cope with the growing costs of agricultural technology (Fisher, 2006; Ilbery, 1991; Nickerson et al., 2001). The economic benefits of agrotourism for holders of the rural households are not universal because they are dependent on the level of development of agrotourism, as well as its proximity to other attractions (Busby and Rendle, 1999; Fisher, 2006; Fleischer and Tchetchit, 2005; Nickerson et al., 2001; Saxena et al., 2007; Veeck et al., 2006). Numerous results showed that visitors of agrotourism farms mostly prefer landscape specifics, including cultural heritage. Among the same, on top of desires are wildlife, water resources, historical elements, domestic animals and plant species, all of which makes a unique attraction of the household (Leco et al., 2012; Gao et al., 2014; Lapan and Barbieri, 2014).

### Material and methods

The Krapina-Zagorje County has a vast potential for the development of agrotourism, which provides great development opportunities, but the problem is that the mentioned opportunities are not yet used to the best possible extent. The subject of this paper is contained in the topic title, which includes natural and cultural heritage as a paradigm for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the research of mentioned problems and to reach the new insights that will serve as guidance in further researches and development of agrotourism activities.

In this paper, we firstly used the descriptive method to collect information from the domestic and foreign literature that we then analyzed and interpreted, while in the research we used the comparative method in order to compare the obtained results with existing knowledge. Furthermore, the most important part of primary research relates to the method of the survey containing a questionnaire prepared for owners of registered agrotourism farms in the County, representatives of the Tourist Board of the County and the Department of Rural Development and Tourism within Zagorje Development Agency. The purpose of these surveys was to gather opinions of the respondents regarding the subject of this paper. The results were analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Sciences 1.7) package for statistical data analysis, and are shown in tables and graphs. Finally, we used the SWOT analysis, which aims to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are typical for agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County.

### Results and discussion

Agricultural activity in the County is largely dependent on the climate, the abundance of water, relief configuration of the terrain, the quality of soil, the deployment of the population and the traditional way of living on smaller estates. One of the basic characteristics of farms is land fragmentation. But all of this does not represent limitations for agrotourism activities, on the contrary, such configuration of terrain conditions the landscape and special microclimate in which traditional winegrowers

(Zagorje belina, Rizvanac etc.), fruit crops (domesticated cultivars of apples, pears, plums), vegetables, agriculture and livestock breeding come to the fore. Genetic uniqueness of individual domesticated varieties of plants and domesticated breeds / species of animals (Zagorje turkey, chicken Hrvatica, etc.) is especially reflected in landscape playfulness.

Agricultural production takes place on farms which operate as family farms (Family Farm - 7506 in 2008) and as a legal entity (crafts, companies or cooperative - 174 in 2008.) if they are registered to perform agricultural activities. It should be noted that from a total of 7,506 family farms, 29 of them provides one of the tourist services, while only nine farms are engaged in agrotourism business. Within these nine agrotourism farms are Vuglec Breg, Klet Kozjak, Kos, Trsek, Gresna Gorica, Lojzekova House, Majsecov mlin, Masnec and Šumak. Residents of rural areas are no longer investing only in agriculture but also offer a variety of tourist activities. Agrotourism, as a type of tourism that links the agricultural and tourism activities, in rural areas provides a better economic performance of the household. In the last 20 years agrotourism partially spread due to the realization that it has a great impact on the promotion of agriculture and agricultural products. Agrotourism offers to agricultural producers a new opportunity to increase income by offering predominantly to urban population the experience of life in the countryside, learning and raising of awareness about the importance of agriculture for the local economy, wherein an important role is played by the location of a County. This provides a powerful impulse to the development of agrotourism in the entire County that has recognized this form of tourism, which connects agriculture and agricultural products in a unique tourist product of this region.

### Survey results

Primary research included the implementation of two surveys, one of which was prepared for the Tourist Board of the Krapina-Zagorje County and the Department of Rural Development and Tourism within Zagorje Development Agency (ZARA), while the other was prepared for owners of agrotourism farms. It is important to note that the survey was carried out on the spot with each respondent.

#### Results of the survey prepared for Tourist Board and the Department of Rural Development and Tourism (ZARA)

The survey consisted of a Likert scale, i.e. a series of statements about agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County. The respondents (representatives of the Tourist Board and the Department of Rural Development and Tourism, ZARA) were asked to indicate on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) their level of agreement with each statement. The survey consisted of 34 questions, and eight of the 10 possible participants took part in it. The survey consists of three parts: the first part refers to the statements on the development and investment in agrotourism, while the second and third parts of the survey are related to the cultural or natural resources that are essential for the development of agrotourism. Table 1 gives an overview on statements regarding the investment in agrotourism and agrotourism development, from which it is clear that for various

statements there are diverse responses, which indicates a kind of wandering in terms of this issue.

The largest number of respondents or nearly all highly agrees with statements (lowest standard deviation): Additional investments are needed for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County. We are interested in subsidies and investments from the European Union for the development of agrotourism. It is necessary to revitalize abandoned rural areas or economically valorize less known resources of the Krapina-Zagorje County. Agrotourism is a long-term perspective of the tourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County because it enables significant economic income.

On the other hand, the majority tend to disagree that *the promotion of agrotourism is satisfactory and that there is a sufficient number of organized seminars and trainings for entrepreneurs in agrotourism*, which is a weakness and it should be worked on systematically. The biggest differences in answers show up in terms of *access to information on subventions and*

*subsidies in agrotourism, participation in improving infrastructure and the quality of the environment, as well as on the issue of participation in projects that contribute to the revival of local and traditional crafts, and in preservation of traditional rural infrastructure.* Answers of our respondents are in accordance with foreign studies (McGehee and Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007), as well as local researches (Franic and Grgic, 2002; Brščić et al., 2010; Grgic et al., 2011), which emphasize the need, encourage, investment, training and promotion of traditions and specificities of the region.

**Cultural heritage.** By analyzing the statements of the second part of the survey related to cultural heritage (Table 2), we can see that the situation here is rather bad because, on average, the respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statements. The largest number of respondents agree or mostly agree that *agrotourism contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, rural identity, social and cultural vitality and revival of identity of the community*, while generally they don't agree with the

**Table 1.** List of statements on the investment and the development of agrotourism (mean value, standard deviation, median and mode)

	M	SD	Median	Mod
1. We are interested in subsidies and investment from the European Union in the development of agrotourism.	6.75	0.5	7	7
2. Informations about subsidies for dealing with agrotourism are available.	5.25	1.707825	5.5	-
3. Additional investments are needed for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County.	7	0	7	7
4. Agrotourism has a long-term perspective of development in the Krapina-Zagorje County as it provides a significant economic income.	6.75	0.5	7	7
5. It is necessary to revitalize abandoned rural areas or economically valorize less known resources in the Krapina-Zagorje County.	6.75	0.5	7	7
6. Compared to the last year, the quality of the tourist offer on tourist farms has increased.	6	0.816487	6	6
7. We participate in the improvement of infrastructure and environmental quality.	5.75	1.2558306	6	6
8. Promotion of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County is satisfactory.	4	1.154701	4	3
9. We organize seminars and training for entrepreneurs in agrotourism.	3.75	2.362908	3	2
10. We participate in projects that contribute to the revival of local and traditional crafts, as well as in preservation of traditional rural architecture.	5	2.160247	5.5	-

**Table 2.** List of statements related to cultural heritage (mean value, standard deviation, median and mode)

	M	SD	Median	Mod
1. Agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County has a sufficiently developed identity.	3	0.816497	3	3
2. Cultural heritage is sufficiently used for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County.	3.75	0.5	4	4
3. Ethno-offer in the Krapina-Zagorje County is a quality and comprehensive.	3.75	0.957427	3.5	3
4. Offer of autochthonous souvenirs of domestic production is adequate.	4.25	0.957427	4.5	5
5. Agrotourism encourages and includes the local community in the conservation of cultural heritage.	5.75	0.5	6	6
6. Agrotourism activities affect the development and preservation of the rural identity.	5.75	0.5	6	6
7. Touristic farms offer enough cultural activities.	3	0.816497	3	3
8. Agrotourism increases awareness of locals about the value of their own heritage.	6	0.816497	6	6
9. During the construction of new tourist facilities the autochthonous construction standards are taken into account.	5.25	0.957427	5.5	6
10. Agrotourism offer and production contribute to the revitalization of traditional crafts / local products.	5.5	0.57735	5.5	5
11. We encourage and train craftsmen to use traditional skills and traditional building materials.	4.74	1.707828	4.5	-
12. The development of agrotourism improves the social and cultural vitality of rural areas and revives identity of a community.	5.75	0.5	6	6
12. Tourist farms use local agricultural products in the preparation of wine and gastronomy.	5.5	0.57735	5.5	5
14. Tourists highly appreciate our local wine and food offer.	5.75	1.258306	6	6



Table 3. List of statements concerning the natural heritage (mean value, standard deviation, median and mode).

	M	SD	Median	Mod
1. Natural heritage is used enough in purpose of development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County.	4	0.816497	4	4
2. Agrotourism encourages action to protect and care for the landscape heritage.	5.5	0.57735	5.5	5
3. The development of agrotourism activities aims to raise awareness about the importance of the natural heritage and promote an understanding of diversity.	6	0.816497	6	6
4. It can be noticed that tourists have a growing interest in eating healthy and ecologically produced food, which led to increased interest in offer of tourist farms.	5.5	0.57735	5.5	5
5. It is necessary to further develop and promote the wine road and indigenous varieties of wine.	6.5	0.57735	6.5	6
6. Integral part of the agrotourism farm should be grape harvest, apple picking and similar activities in order to extend the tourist season.	6.25	0.957427	6.5	7
7. Promotion of local agricultural products is satisfactory.	4.5	1.290994	4.5	-
8. Agrotourism households include local products and organic foods in its offer	5	0.816497	5	5
9. The Krapina-Zagorje County has clear goals and a good strategy for the development of agrotourism.	4.5	0.57735	4.5	4
10. The development of agrotourism reduces deagrarisation and depopulation of the countryside.	4.75	1.892969	5.5	6
11. We see agrotourism in the future, as a possibility of additional employment and additional source of income for the economy.	6	0.816497	6	6

statement that *agrotourism in the County has distinctive identity, that it offers enough of cultural content and that it promotes the ethno offer*, which is not in accordance with international studies (Turnock, 2002, Che, 2007; Everett and Aitchison, 2008; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Leco et al., 2012; Gao et al., 2014; Lapan and Barbieri, 2014) but which is in accordance with research conducted by Grgic et al. (2011) on the example of the Zagreb County. It is significant that agrotourism households, according to the heads of tourist boards, do not use enough of local agricultural products in enogastronomic offer, although tourists highly value it.

The greatest indecision is reflected around the statements that *the offer of autochthonous souvenirs of domestic production is insufficient and that the respondents encourage and train craftsmen to use traditional skills and traditional building materials*. With statement that *cultural heritage is sufficiently exploited for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County* respondents neither agree nor disagree which partly proves the second hypothesis (H2) that cultural heritage of the Krapina-Zagorje County isn't adequately valued for the development of agrotourism, although it has all the possibilities for the development. It is interesting that in any statement regarding the valorization of cultural heritage in tourism respondents agree completely, which is even more interesting given the fact that all of the respondents are directly involved in creating agrotourism products. Lapan and Barbieri (2014) put in a high position the cultural heritage in agrotourism as an integral part in creating agrotourism products. Similar key elements in agrotourism are singled out by other authors, Roberts and Hall (2001: 16), on basis of which the tourists should experience the rural life of people in the past in an authentic way (Egger et al., 2008: 34).

**Natural Heritage.** In the third part of the survey related to the respondents perception of natural heritage in agrotourism (Table 3), we can unfortunately state that even here a valorization is not good enough, as well as in the second part of survey about cultural heritage. We can see that most of them agreed with the statement: *It is necessary to further develop and promote the wine roads and indigenous varieties of wine. Integral*

*part of the agrotourism offer should be grape harvest, apple picking and similar activities to extend the tourist season. The development of agrotourism activities aims to raise awareness about the importance of heritage and promote an understanding of diversity. We see agrotourism in the future as a possibility of additional employment and additional source of income for the rural households.* In research of Grgic et al. (2011) we can find similar results as well as in relevant international studies (Busby and Rendle, 1999; Nickerson et al., 2001; Fisher, 2006; McGehee, 2007; Ollenburg and Buckley, 2007; Barbieri and Mahoney, 2009; Philip et al., 2010). We can single out the following statements with which the majority of respondents agree or tend to disagree: *Agrotourism encourages action to protect and care for the landscape, historic and cultural heritage. It can be noticed that tourists have a growing interest in healthy eating and organic produced food, which lead to the increased interest in offering rural households. Agrotourism households offer local products and organically grown food.* The biggest indecision in answers is reflected in the statements that *promotion of local agricultural products is satisfactory, that the Krapina-Zagorje County has clear goals and a good development strategy for agrotourism and that the development of agrotourism reduces deagrarisation and depopulation of the countryside.*

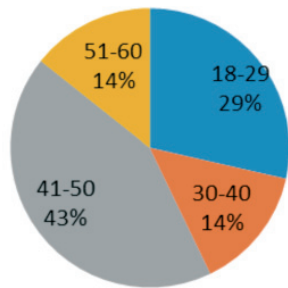
If we separate the statement which states that the natural heritage isn't sufficiently exploited in the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County, with which the respondents neither agree nor disagree, we get an identical situation as with the statement of the use of cultural heritage in the second part of the survey. This statement also proves the first hypothesis (H1) that the natural heritage of the Krapina-Zagorje County is not adequately valorized for the development of agrotourism, but has great potential for the development of the same.

#### Results of the survey created for agrotourism households

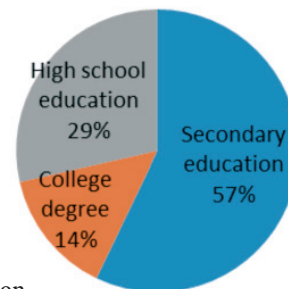
The survey prepared for the owners of agrotourism households consisted of questionnaire, a total of 50 questions, of which nine questions were related to socio-demographic characteristics

and general familiarity with the concept of agrotourism, while 41 questions were related to the characteristics of agrotourism farms, as well as to the offer, planning, promotion, cultural and natural heritage, etc. We have included agrotourism households in the Krapina-Zagorje County that are engaged exclusively in agrotourism business. Therefore, from a total of 29 tourist farms in the County, nine can be classified solely in the category of agrotourism and they meet those assumptions and conditions that are related to agrotourism. Furthermore, the survey included seven of nine registered agrotourism farms in the Krapina-Zagorje County.

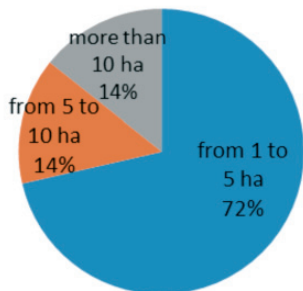
**Results of the questionnaire.** Agrotourism farms are led mostly by men (71.43%). Regarding age, the data (Graph 1) shows that most of the respondents were aged between 41-50 years, then at the age of 18-29 years and an equal number between the ages of 30-40 and 51-60. Analyzing the educational structure of the respondents (Graph 2) it can be seen that the most of respondents have secondary education, then a high education, but the least number of them have a college degree. This data is satisfactory because agrotourism starts to engage educated people and people who are more prone to life-long education. Regarding the statement *I'm familiar with the concept of agrotourism* all



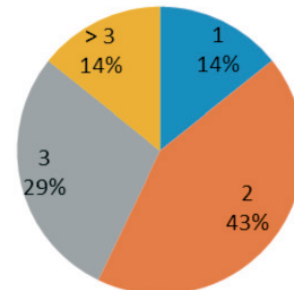
Graph 1. Age



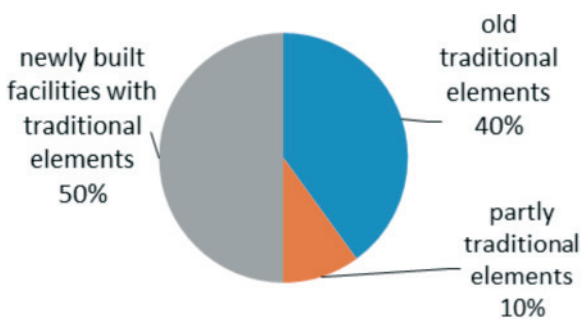
Graph 2. Education



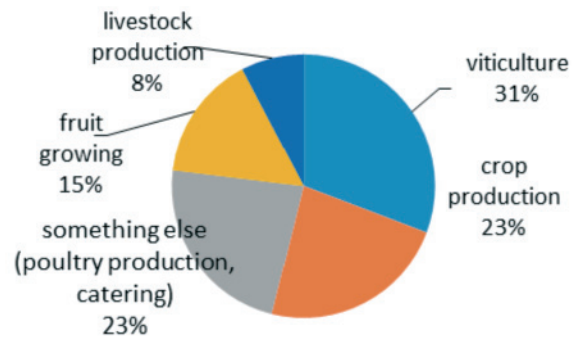
Graph 3. Surface of households



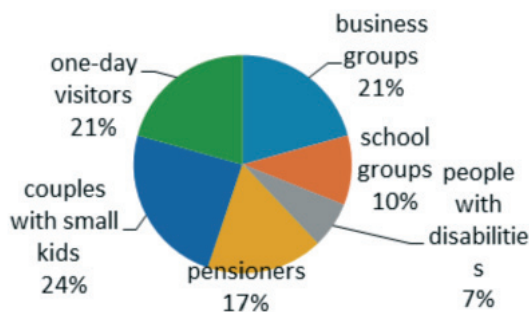
Graph 4. Number of facilities on households



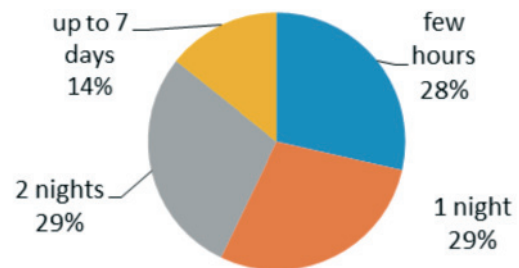
Graph 5. Type of facilities



Graph 6. Primary production



Graph 7. Profile of visitors



Graph 8. The average stays of visitors



Graph 9. Households with different facilities



Graph 10. Promotion



Graph 11. Obstacles in development of agrotourism



Graph 12. Activities in nature

seven respondents said yes, and they are ready to learn more about agrotourism and they want to focus their business in direction of agrotourism as well. Furthermore, more than a half of respondents (57.14%) took part in some training/course related to agrotourism. The most common are various educations related to catering, tourism, wine, fruit, sommeliers and wine production, while one of the subjects, holds lectures such as “specific forms of tourism” in the Business School “Utilus”.

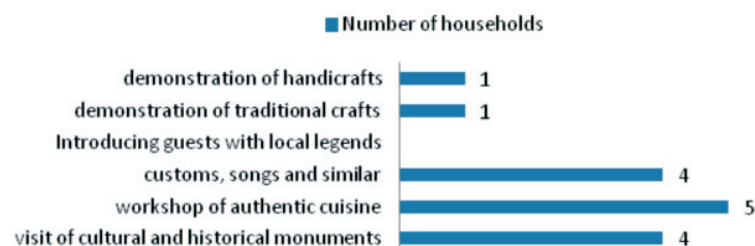
The households included in the survey cover an area of 1 to more than 10 hectares, which can be seen in the Graph 3. All the respondents or owners of agrotourism farms provide accommodation, food and wine, except for the one who is still working on the construction of accommodation facilities, while already offering meals and tastings. In all accommodation units, respondents have diverse number of rooms (3-17) and beds (6-47). When we talk about the number of buildings on agrotourism farms, on the Graph 4 is shown that one farm contains more than three properties, two farms include three properties, and three farms have two properties, while one farm contains one property.

The properties on farms (Graph 5) are mainly new buildings with traditional elements, old traditional facilities or partly traditional facilities. Regarding the primary activities of the owner of households (Graph 6), most of them deal with more activities. Visitor profile varies (Graph 7), mostly couples with children, business groups, short stay visitors and school groups, pensioners and people with disabilities. It can be seen as a negative phenomenon that practically two thirds of visitors come for a few hours or on one-day visit, and a fewer people come for two days and more (Graph 8). Concerning the facilities on farms (Graph 9), the most common facilities are those for accommodation and

reception of guests, followed by an equal number of facilities of traditional architecture and facilities in the open space (cycling, riding and thematic paths), then facilities for animal husbandry for tourism purposes, and facilities for recreation. All respondents use multiple ways of promotion and the most common ways of promoting tourist farms (Graph 10) used by all the respondents are Internet, friends and acquaintances, as well as fairs and exhibitions. This is followed by brochures, travel agencies and tourist offices, while press, TV and radio are used for the promotional purposes to the smallest extent. Only one farm doesn't have its own website, while the others do. Respondents believe that the biggest obstacles for the development of agrotourism (Graph 11) are the lack of finances, legislation, undeveloped marketing, insufficient organization of agrotourism farms, as well as seasonality and lack of the knowledge. Respondents offer a variety of outdoor activities on their tourist farms (Graph 12) and all of them provide activities such as cycling, landscape sightseeing, socializing with animals, than participating in agricultural activities, sports fields, hiking and horseback riding. The biggest part of products from their tourist farms that they sell are brandy and liqueurs, fresh fruits and vegetables from their garden, then wine, eggs, meat and sausages, as it is shown in Graph 13. One part of the households offers products such as jams, marmalades, juices and canned fruit, cheese, honey and honey products, while one of the respondents stated that he produces its own flour. Among cultural activities that tourist farms offer (Graph 14), organized workshops of local cuisine, followed by education of guests about local legends, customs, songs, dances, etc. make the biggest part, as well as tours of historical and cultural monuments, and in smaller amount the demonstrations of traditional crafts and of handcrafts are being organized.



Graph 13. Sale of its own products



Graph 14. Cultural activities on agrotourism farms

### SWOT analysis of agrotourism in Krapina-Zagorje County

On the basis of the research of valorization of natural and cultural heritage in agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County, which was done through a questionnaire with the owners of agrotourism farms, tourist boards and Agency for Rural Development of the Krapina-Zagorje County, we bring up the SWOT analysis and the concise overview of the basic advantages and disadvantages, benefits and limitations, including the economic and institutional aspects.

From the SWOT analysis we can notice the advantages such as vicinity of Zagreb as a large urban center, natural and cultural characteristics and attractions, the authenticity of local offer of agricultural products, wine and food of the Krapina-Zagorje County. On the other hand, as a weakness we can point out the insufficient valorization of agrotourism products, depopulation of the region, population of the prevailing older age and inadequate system of subsidies, financing and training

Table 4. SWOT analysis of agrotourism in Krapina-Zagorje County

Benefits	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preserved natural heritage, picturesque landscapes, protected natural area</li> <li>- Favorable climate conditions</li> <li>- A low level of pollution</li> <li>- Favorable geographical position</li> <li>- Proximity to the outboudng markets and good traffic connections</li> <li>- The diversity of agricultural production</li> <li>- Easy availability of healthy and high quality food</li> <li>- Rising trend of rural tourism and of agrotourism</li> <li>- Increasing of transit traffic</li> <li>- Wine roads</li> <li>- Rich culinary / wine offer</li> <li>- Authentic and traditional products</li> <li>- Tradition of craftsmanship</li> <li>- Hospitality and kindness of the local population</li> <li>- Concentration of diverse tourism resources</li> <li>- The rich cultural and historical heritage and evaluation of traditional values</li> <li>- Museums, castles</li> <li>- Archaeological and paleontological treasures</li> <li>- Religious heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depopulation and migration trend of young and educated people towards the cities</li> <li>- Predominantly elderly population</li> <li>- Lower quality of life in rural areas</li> <li>- Lack of heritage</li> <li>- Poor cooperation and networking of tourist farms</li> <li>- Inadequate system of subsidies for the development of agrotourism, the owners are left to themselves</li> <li>- Lack of cooperation between public and private sectors</li> <li>- Unclear or outdated legislation in the sphere of agrotourism</li> <li>- Lack of favorable financial resources for the development of agrotourism</li> <li>- Insufficiently developed / unrecognizable tourist identity</li> <li>- Lack of training in management and marketing of agrotourism</li> <li>- Lack of skilled and highly skilled labor</li> <li>- Lack of public transport in rural areas</li> <li>- Poorly developed infrastructure (roads, water, communications, energy)</li> <li>- Lack of competitive strategy</li> <li>- Insufficient level of knowledge about agrotourism in the wider public</li> <li>- A lack of vision and inventiveness</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An increase in demand for tourist farms and rural products</li> <li>- Increased demand for environmentally friendly and traditional products and their sale in order to change the minds of consumers regarding nutrition and environmental protection</li> <li>- Production of organic foods and local products</li> <li>- New trends in tourism</li> <li>- Revitalization of natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>- Subsidies and investment from EU funds</li> <li>- Raising awareness of local people about the benefits of agrotourism</li> <li>- Creation of new jobs / additional employment and additional source of income</li> <li>- Agrotourism as a tool for branding local, organic and autochthonous products</li> <li>- The creation of a sustainable environment</li> <li>- Incentive programs for development of small and medium-sized enterprises</li> <li>- Competitiveness in comparison to neighboring countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of individual agricultural producers</li> <li>- Mass production of traditional products and services on households</li> <li>- Lack of interest from relevant institutions regarding the development of agrotourism and tourism projects</li> <li>- Lack of cooperation between the owners of households and tourist boards</li> <li>- Lack of cooperation with relevant institutions at the regional and national level</li> <li>- Increased pressure on the environment</li> <li>- Migration of young rural people</li> <li>- The aging of the population</li> <li>- Unspecified national strategy for development of agrotourism</li> <li>- Poor co-operation between local authorities, agencies and tourist farms</li> <li>- Increase of the attractiveness of competing destinations</li> <li>- Increased environmental pollution</li> </ul>



in agrotourism. More clearly, despite the concentration of diverse tourism resources, such as original and traditional products, enogastronomy and the entire rural heritage, it is clear that tourism potential has not yet been adequately used.

Options for agrotourism are unlimited considering the micro-relief division of the whole area of the County, which conditions a diverse microclimate, and which is a precondition for a diverse agricultural crop or livestock production, resulting in a wide range of local products in enogastronomy and ethno offer or in the offer of souvenirs (perfumes based on herbs, special or rare wines, etc.). Of course, there are threats to the development of agrotourism, and these are primarily the increasing of environmental pollution, shutdown of family farms, wrong spatial strategies associated with environmental pollution, poor strategy of agrotourism, lack of life-long education, low quality support and finance, and uneducated and unkind bureaucracy. In order to build a recognizable tourist identity it is necessary to prevent possible mass production of traditional products and services, reduce pollution and pressure on the environment, and to focus on the organic or integrated production of agricultural products considering the fact that the demand for healthy food and local products is continuously growing. That would already represent a significant step for the eco-agrotourism, a sophisticated form of agrotourism because opportunities exist, but they should be optimally valorized. On the basis of recent results of seven agrotourism, according to Philip et al. (2010) we can classify a *contact with visitors and the authenticity of the experience* to the highest type / form of agrotourism as “an active farm, which provides direct contact between tourists and agricultural activities with an authentic experience (e.g. assistance in agricultural work)” (MacCannell, 1973; McIntosh and Bonnemann, 2006; Marques, 2006).

## Conclusions

Following the title, this paper tried to emphasise natural and cultural heritage as preconditions for the development of agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County, in order to confirm or disprove the set hypotheses and provide eventual guidance for the improvement of agrotourism in the County. By analyzing the correlation of natural and cultural heritage of agrotourism, we have shown how tourism can and must use the heritage elements for the purpose of sustainability of rural areas. Protected and untouched parts of nature, idyllic picturesque landscapes of the County, diverse wild plants and fauna attract and fascinate people, which initial minus (small property with lots of land) turns into a plus. Like the natural heritage, excellent potential for the development of agrotourism are also cultural heritage and traditional heritage of the Krapina-Zagorje County. Tangible cultural heritage of rural areas, like important historical and cultural attractions, is an additional motivation for the tourists coming to the agrotourism farm. Traditional heritage is even more important within the households because in some places the tradition is still “alive” and visitors can learn on the spot about the traditional way of life, gastronomy, folklore, crafts and the whole intangible cultural heritage that has been created during many previous generations. Cultural and traditional heritage in recent years is gaining increased value and it builds and enriches the identity and culture of rural communities, which creates a

more complete picture of the rural areas of the County among tourists and allows them a unique experience. Since the County has numerous museums, castles, archaeological sites, religious objects, shrines, etc., all these features should be incorporated into unique agrotourist product of the Krapina-Zagorje County. By taking a look at two important questions in both surveys related to the valorization of natural and cultural heritage on tourist farms, we can conclude that the hypothesis of this paper is justified, since we started with the assumption that the natural and cultural heritage are still not sufficiently valorized for the purpose of developing agrotourism in the Krapina-Zagorje County. So, despite the existence of numerous natural, historical and cultural resources in the Krapina-Zagorje County, they are still not sufficiently valorised, and in the future there is still much room for the improvement of surveyed agrotourism farms.

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