

## Agritourism and local economic development in South Africa

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**Abstract.** The role of tourism for local economic development (LED) is a topic of critical importance for geographers. In the case of South Africa tourism is a priority sector for national economic development. The significance of research issues around tourism and LED is underlined by the 'developmental' mandate of local governments. Although tourism has received attention in a growing body of LED writings on South Africa issues around agritourism so far have been overlooked. Agritourism represents an evolving form of rural tourism which is targeted at mainly urban consumers. Against the background of a review of international scholarship on agritourism this article explores its potential implications for LED planning in South Africa. A national audit of agritourism is presented which shows its uneven geographical distribution. Agritourism is of special significance for small town economic development in South Africa's intermediate tourism spaces. Policy suggestions are offered for strengthening agritourism as a driver for LED in South Africa.

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## 1. Introduction

Among other writers Pedrana (2013: 91) stresses the significant global role which is played by the tourism sector in the context of local economic development. Since 2000 one of the most extensively researched topics within tourism studies has been that of tourism and local economic development (Hall, Campos, 2014: 6). In particular, within developing countries vibrant debates surround the nexus of local development, poverty reduction and notions of pro-poor tourism (Rogerson, 2006; Hall, 2007; Scheyvens, 2007; Goodwin, 2008; Rogerson, Rogerson, 2010, 2011; Scheyvens, 2011; Rogerson, 2012). Notwithstanding critiques around the concept of pro-poor tourism as well as doubts surrounding the limited local impacts of tourism in many destinations Hall (2014: 439) points out that “for the foreseeable future” the imperative for employment and economic development opportunities guarantees that such issues must remain significant tourism policy issues in the developing world. It is forwarded by Hall and Page (2009) and Hall (2013) that tourism and its local development impacts are major contributions made by geographers to tourism scholarship over the past two decades. In particular, it is within the context of tourism’s potential to support the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in the developing world where geographers have made certain significant contributions to international debates around the role of tourism in local economic development (Rogerson, Visser, 2011a; Saarinen et al. 2011, 2013; Saarinen, Rogerson, 2014a; Saarinen, 2014). One recent innovation in these debates has been to move beyond leisure tourism and give consideration also to the local impacts and pro-poor potential of business tourism (Rogerson, 2014b, 2014c).

In South Africa the importance of research issues around tourism and local economic development is underpinned both by national government’s commitment to the ‘developmental’ responsibility of local governments and its identification of tourism as a priority sector in national economic planning. Since 1998 the developmental role of local governments has been confirmed and as a result the planning of initiatives for Local Economic Development

(LED) is one of the core functions assumed by local government in contemporary South Africa (Nel, Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson, 2008, 2010, 2011). Van der Watt (2013: 62) states “*South African policy for local government and tourism assign substantial responsibility for tourism to municipalities (local government)*”. Much LED activity in South Africa has concentrated upon strengthening the role of localities as centres of production whether for industry, agriculture or mining. However, since the 1994 democratic transition, which permitted South Africa’s re-entry into the international tourism economy, a considerable amount of planning has been devoted also to maximizing the potential for tourism as a vehicle for promoting local employment and development opportunities. This shift to a tourism focus for driving LED in South Africa redirects the scholarly gaze upon local planning initiatives which are designed to build up localities as centres for consumption rather than for production purposes (Rogerson, 2002a; Rogerson, Rogerson, 2010; Rogerson, 2013a). Overall, the activity of LED planning in South Africa has been a vibrant focus of research by economic geographers for the past decade (Nel, Rogerson, 2005, 2007; Rogerson, 2008, 2010; Rogerson, Rogerson, 2010; Visser, Hoogendoorn, 2011; Visser, 2013; Rogerson, 2014a).

During the past two decades across all levels of the hierarchy of urban settlements in South Africa - in metropolitan areas, secondary centres, small towns and rural areas - the tourism sector has been targeted to energize economic development. South Africa’s cities have sought to promote tourism as a driver for urban economic development through support for an array of different kinds of tourism. Several cities built upon their inherent advantages for business tourism by the construction of new convention centres and bidding to host international and local conferences. For nurturing leisure tourism other initiatives encompass the building of casinos, waterfront developments, shopping complexes, support for cultural and heritage products as well as sports events hosting. In addition, cities cultivated development opportunities in niche forms of tourism such as backpacker tourism, gay tourism and slum tourism in township areas (Visser, 2003; Rogerson & Visser, 2007, 2011b). These initiatives for applying tourism as a leading sector for local development garnered much research interest

particularly in urban tourism destinations (Rogerson, 2002b; Rogerson, Visser, 2006; Ferreira, Visser, 2007; Rogerson, Visser, 2007, Ferreira, 2011; Rogerson, Visser, 2011b; Rogerson, 2013b; Van der Merwe, 2013).

Outside the metropolitan areas of South Africa tourism has assumed an equally pivotal role in the search for economic diversification in secondary centres and the shift to a post-productivist countryside accompanying rural restructuring. Several scholarly investigations have been undertaken of tourism LED challenges in secondary centres such as George (Ramukumba, 2012; Ramukumba et al., 2012), Kimberley (Van der Merwe, Rogerson, 2013) and Stellenbosch (Ferreira, Muller, 2013). In what has been described as the ‘intermediate tourism spaces’ of South Africa tourism is an essential catalyst for local employment creation and small town revival (Rogerson, 2014d). Many towns in the intermediate spaces have inherent attractions for second homes tourism. In addition, local development initiatives have been enacted to leverage tourism assets for a range of niche tourism products including adventure tourism, agritourism, avitourism, fishing, food/wine tourism, golf tourism and nature-based tourism. The market-driven approach of promoting a diverse package of tourism products into themed routes is a critical dimension of tourism-led expansion (Lourens, 2007; Myles, 2013). The most well-established are the Western Cape wine routes, the Midlands Meander, the Highlands Meander, Magaliesberg Meander and the Crocodile Ramble (Nowers et al., 2002; Rogerson, 2002c; Bruwer, 2003; Lourens, 2007; Rogerson, 2007; Stoddart, Rogerson, 2009; Ferreira, Muller, 2013).

Tourism scholars, including geographers, have responded to the research challenges of these tourism-led development initiatives. Second homes tourism and its local economic impacts are examined in a number of destinations (Hoogendoorn, Visser, 2004; Hoogendoorn et al., 2009; Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). The changing accommodation sector in small towns of Free State has been investigated (Rogerson, 2013). In addition, several issues around small town revival or potential thereof through tourism as a lead sector or ‘turn-around’ strategy come under scrutiny in other local research (Rogerson, 2002a; Briedenhann, Wickens, 2004; Marais, 2004; Van Staden, Marais, 2005;

Donaldson, 2007; Gibb, Nel, 2007; Nel, Rogerson, 2007; Keal, 2008; Van Niekerk, Marais, 2008; Ingle, 2010; Donaldson, Marais, 2012; Hoogendoorn, 2014; Meyer, 2014).

Against this background one relatively undeveloped theme in the scholarship on tourism and LED in the developing world, namely the role of agritourism, is examined in this study. The case of agritourism represents an evolving form of rural tourism which is targeted at mainly urban consumers. Tiffin (2005: 5) points out that with a growing share of population concentrating in cities rather than rural areas “so does the rural area become a sought after experience for the [urban-based] tourist”. Agritourism products in South Africa are marketed at both domestic visitors and international tourists (Marais, 2014). Despite the fact that agritourism offers considerable potential for contributing towards small town revival as well as local economic diversification it is argued in this article that agritourism development in South Africa largely has been overlooked in LED debates. The analysis is situated within a review of international scholarship and debates around agritourism.

## 2. Agritourism – international debates

Agritourism (which sometimes is termed agrotourism) represents an expanding segment of the tourism economy of many destinations (Sznajder et al., 2009). Conventionally, agritourism is considered a subset of rural tourism which encompasses recreational experiences involving visits to rural settings or rural environments for the purpose of participating in or experiencing activities, events or attractions not readily available in urbanized areas (Tiffin, 2005; Henderson, 2009; Sznajder et al., 2009; Kunasekaran et al., 2011; Choo, 2012). Among a host of activities which can be linked to agritourism in developed world settings are country accommodation or lodging, farm restaurants and wineries, ranch resorts, leisure fishing, the letting of rooms on farms, and the provision of food to travelers. Recently, the economic benefits of agritourism development has been identified as a topic in need of greater research attention (Jeczmyk et al., 2014).

In the United States, there is an extensive history of agritourism activities (Barbieri, 2010). In Virginia the most popular agritourism activities identified by McGehee and Kim (2004) were listed as pick your own produce, Christmas trees, hayrides, children's educational programmes and visits to petting zoos. One study in the USA of residents' preferences for agricultural landscape features to encourage agritourism highlighted the most preferred pull attractions as wildlife, water resources and farm animals (Gao et al., 2013). In the developing world agritourism can be associated also with visits to farms to sample tropical fruits, visits to research centres, tours to tea, sugar, coffee, rubber or cocoa plantations, silk producing facilities as well as spice-producing facilities (Catalino, Lizardo, 2004; Colton, Bissex, 2005; Carpio et al, 2008; Kunasekaran et al. 2011; Hamilpurkar, 2012; Hamzah et al., 2012; Anbalagan, Lovelock, 2014; Eshun, Tettey, 2014; Thomas-Francois, Francois, 2014).

Much of the research which examines agritourism views the phenomenon as a form of leisure or recreational pursuit that is normally spent on farms and relates directly to agricultural activities (Veeck et al, 2006; Barbieri, 2010). However, despite a growth of the phenomenon, the term agritourism is contested and lacks a shared understanding in terms of precise definition (Sznajder et al., 2009; Arroyo et al., 2013). Tew and Barbieri (2012: 216) maintain "researchers have struggled to develop a classification system with respect to both the characteristics and the broad definition of agritourism". Instead, the term agritourism can be "*used to describe nearly any activity in which a visitor to the farm or other agricultural setting contemplates the farm landscape or participates in an agricultural process for recreation or leisure purposes*" (Tew, Barbieri, 2012; 216). Phillip et al. (2010) sought to resolve the slippery character of agritourism by putting forward a typology which was based on three criteria: whether the setting is a working farm, the level of contact between the tourist and the agricultural operation (whether passive direct or indirect) and whether the visitor's experience was authentic or staged. In the developing world Kunasekaran et al. (2011: 10) view agritourism as a form of rural tourism "*that allows the tourist to visit farms and experience a farmers daily life*" and in Malaysia consider it as an activity which "maximizes the use of farm settings and the

environment with hospitality" (Kunasekaran et al., 2011: 11). Based upon research undertaken in the Dominican Republic Catalino and Lizardo (2004: 106) offer an alternative typology of agritourists which is established on their preference levels, willingness to pay and factors that would discourage them from participating. Four groups of agritourists are isolated and classed as authentic, discreet, passionate and demanding.

Choo (2012) observes that research on agritourism is still in the early stage of development and there is scope for further theoretical and conceptual advances. Arguably, with the expansion of agritourism both in developed and developing countries a number of applied challenges for tourism and local development planning are beginning to emerge. Das and Rainey (2010) point out large areas of rural North America record gradual economic decline with small and medium scale farms dwindling in numbers and experiencing income stagnation. Agritourism is viewed as a catalyst for revitalizing these troubled rural agrarian economies. In addition, LaPan and Barbieri (2013) draw attention to the further role and linkage between agritourism and heritage preservation in the context of North America. Agritourism is recognized as an alternative farming activity that can contribute to agricultural sustainability across North America through rural economic diversification and with the further advantages that providing educational opportunities to urban visitors can engender greater community cohesion in rural areas (Colten, Bissex, 2005; McGehee, 2007; Choo, 2012).

The innovation of agritourism and its growth is driven both by economic considerations as well as what Barbieri (2010:2) describes as "*a set of intrinsic and market related goals such as pursuing a rural lifestyle, creating employment for family members, and socializing with visitors*". The adoption of agritourism can be vitally important for farmers "*because the additional revenues can help sustain their businesses, retain their rural lifestyles, and keep their farmlands*" with benefits that extend beyond the farm gates to society which along with the production of food or fibres can incorporate "environmental amenities, recreational opportunities, landscape management, and biodiversity and cultural preservation (Barbieri, 2010: 2). Overall, the advantages for rural areas of developing agritourism activities



can go beyond issues of economic revival and incorporate environmental and socio-cultural benefits which can contribute towards sustainable development (Choo, 2012; Barbieri, 2013).

In many parts of Europe agritourism is promoted as a diversification strategy in search of more diverse and sustainable rural economic development (Aikaterini et al., 2001; Nickerson et al., 2001; Hegarty, Przezborska, 2005; Loureiro, Jervill, 2005; Veeck, 2006; Kizos, Iosifides, 2007; McGehee, 2007; Phelan, Sharpley, 2011, Marsat et al., 2013; Jeczmyk et al. 2014). In certain European countries agritourism constitutes a major element in national tourism economies. Embacher (1994) draws attention to the fact that in Austria farmers represent as much as one-sixth of the total supply of tourism beds. In Greece Kizos and Iosifides (2007) point out agritourism was officially introduced by European Union support programmes to Greek farmers or women's cooperatives in the 1980s since when it has experienced substantial expansion because of its positive impacts for rural economies. Further benefits of agritourism including environmental and socio-cultural spinoffs which contribute towards sustainable development are reported from agritourism development in Tuscany by Sonnino (2004) and in Austria by Embacher (1994).

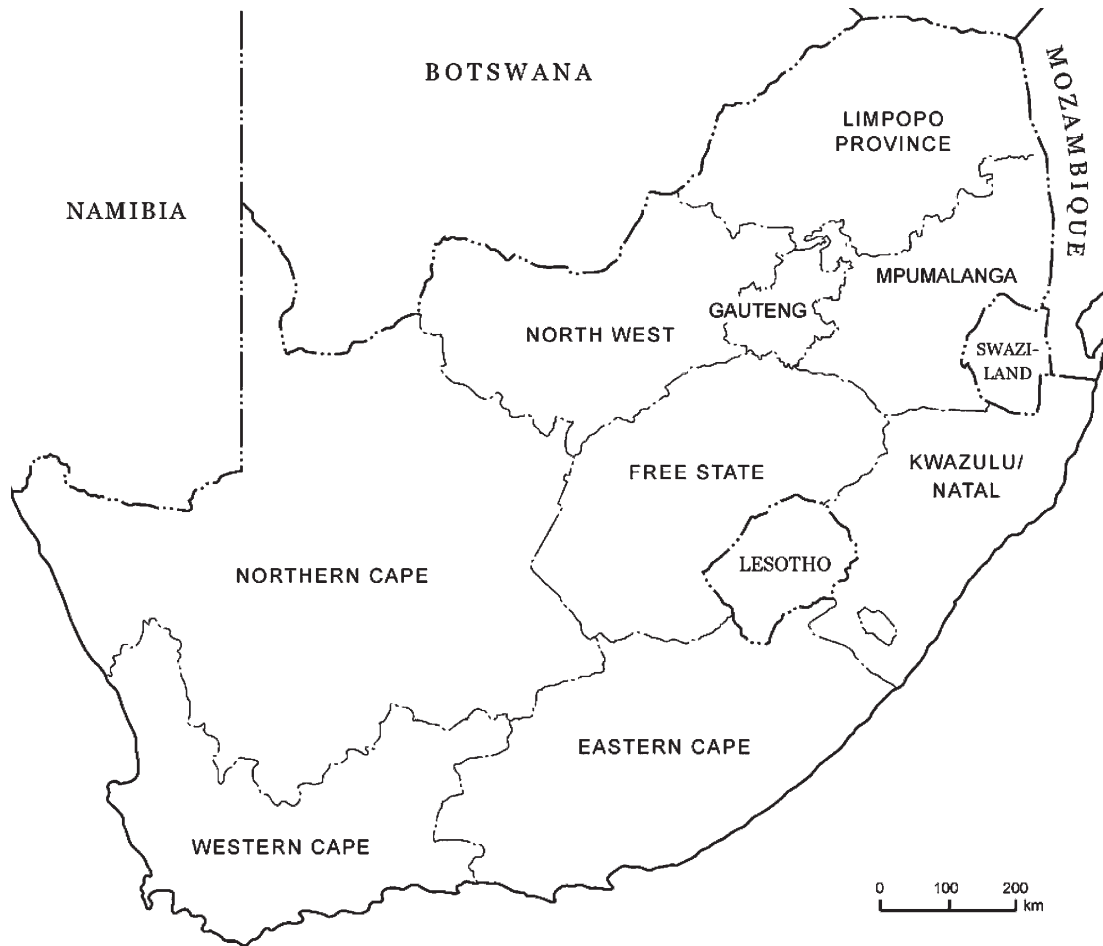
Outside of North America and Europe the advantages of agritourism development are also being acknowledged for tourism economic growth and diversification. In research undertaken in several parts of the developing world the benefits of agritourism and its promotion are gaining recognition including in China (Lee, 2012), Ghana (Eshun, Tettey, 2014), India (Hamalpurkar, 2012), Iran (Hosseini et al, 2014) Malaysia (Kunasekaran et al, 2011; Hamzah, 2012; Shaffril et al. 2014), Nepal (Pandey and Pandey, 2011) and Sri Lanka (Malkanathi and Routry, 2011). One emerging focus of research in sub-Saharan Africa is the potential for exploiting the niche of coffee tourism which has attracted attention both in Tanzania (Karlsson, Karlsson, 2009) and Rwanda (Anbalagan, Lovelock, 2014).

The international growth of agritourism in rural economies raises a number of important policy-related issues for local development programming. The most important are those surrounding product development and support for agritourism entrepreneurship. From research undertaken in the United

Kingdom Phelan and Sharpley (2011) highlight that whilst farmers are increasingly turning to agritourism as a means for income diversification they do not always possess the essential business competencies required for success. Likewise, in North America Ainley and Kline (2014) argue that supporting farmers to enter into agritourism can best be accomplished by building business skills and entrepreneurship capabilities. Another policy tool is to foster networking especially in respect of farmer to farmer connections (Ainley, Kline, 2014). Phelan and Sharpley (2011) point to the imperative for policy initiatives that address skill deficiencies around product development and the running of small tourism business enterprises through the introduction of effective training support programmes. These issues of capacity building for agritourism development are relevant also for the upgrading of agritourism products and enterprises in the developing world.

### 3. Agritourism in South Africa

Despite a considerable growth in South African scholarly research around tourism in the past decade only limited research attention has been directed at agritourism activities. One of the few policy-focused discussions is that by Tifflin (2005) on options for promoting agritourism in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. In the Western Cape, van der Merwe et al. (2013) draw attention to the potential application of spatial computing technologies, more especially the use of geographical information systems, in support of planning for agritourism. The most important investigations around agritourism relate to the establishment and growth in the Western Cape of wine tourism and of wine routes which have spurred a burst of new agritourism enterprises in that province (Nowers et al. 2002; Brouwer, 2003; Ferreira, Muller, 2013). The research undertaken in this investigation builds upon these studies and offers the first attempt to evolve a national profile and geography of the state of agritourism across South Africa. The national audit was developed upon an extensive internet search of accommodation establishments which were linked to agritourism activities. The implications of the expansion of agritourism activities are highlighted for LED planning.



**Fig. 1.** South Africa's Nine Provinces

*Source:* Authors

The national audit reveals a total of 386 accommodation establishments which offer agritourism linked activities. The geographical distribution of

these establishments is unpacked at both provincial and locality scales for analysis.

**Table 1.** Agritourism in South Africa: a provincial analysis

Province	No. accommodation estabs.	Percentage	Multiple activities	Percentage
Eastern Cape	45	11.7	30	10.8
Free State	46	11.9	40	14.3
Gauteng	4	1.0	3	1.1
KwaZulu- Natal	39	10.1	29	10.4
Limpopo	14	3.6	11	3.9
Mpumalanga	35	9.1	26	9.3
Northern Cape	29	7.5	22	7.9
North West	11	2.8	9	3.2
Western Cape	163	42.2	110	39.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Authors

Table 1 provides a profile of agritourism establishments across South Africa's nine provinces. It reveals an uneven spatial distribution of agritourism activities. The Western Cape province emerges as the leading destination and national core region for agritourism with an estimated 42 percent share of all such accommodation establishments. The next most important provinces for agritourism are shown as Free State, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape. The parts of South Africa with the lowest proportion of agritourism establishments are Limpopo, North West and especially Gauteng, South Africa's urban economic heartland and potentially the major source market for agritourists. Of note in terms of the geography of agritourism establishments and activities is that minimal development of agritourism occurs in the underdeveloped and poverty-stricken rural areas of the former Homelands areas. Indeed, it is evident that the majority of agritourism activity in South Africa takes place in the intermediate spaces and occurs in more prosperous rural areas where it impacts upon economic development opportunities in a number of towns and small towns.

The national audit reveals a range of different activities or agritourism products which were offered as attractions in various parts of the country. In addition to the long established attractions of wine farms and ostrich farms the list of agritourism products includes visits to banana plantations, citrus, olive, avocado or macadamia farms, horse stud farms, sheep and cattle farms as well as maize and potato farms. Further popular farm-related activities include strawberry picking, cheese tastings, horse riding and various forms of fishing. Bird watching is also advertised as a supplementary attraction in many parts of the country (Marais, 2014).

As is shown in Table 1 multiple attractions were on offer at the majority of the agritourism accommodation establishments. Overall, 73 percent of the listed establishments advertise that they provide more than one agritourism activity or product offering. The diversification of product offerings by agritourism enterprise is especially notable with the wine farms which have introduced a number of innovative products which enhance their competitiveness (Ferreira, Muller, 2013).

**Table 2.** Leading agritourism destinations in South Africa

Town	No. accommodation estabs.	Activities
Stellenbosch	9	Wine, olives, vinegar, proteas and roses, horse riding and farm animal petting and feeding
Montagu	7	Wine, fruit, apricots, olives, stud farm, horse riding, fishing, farm animals
Worcester	7	Grape picking, bird watching, fishing
Tulbagh	7	Olive and wine farming, fishing, orchards, horse riding
Oudtshoorn	7	Ostrich farming, horse riding, bird watching
Knysna	7	Fishing, berry farms, horse riding, jersey herd, collecting farm eggs
Citrusdal	7	Citrus farming, bird watching, fishing, horse riding
Dullstroom	7	Trout fishing, horse riding, cattle farming
George	6	Fishing, horse riding, strawberry picking, animal feeding
Memel	6	Fly fishing, cattle, maize and potato farms farming, bird watching
Paarl	6	Wine, fruit and olives, bird watching, fishing, horse riding

Source: Authors

Table 2 shows the leading agritourism destinations or 'hotspots' in South Africa as ranked by numbers of accommodation establishments that provide activities. The list of leading destinations is dominated by towns in the Western Cape with nine

of the most prominent destinations found in that province. Heading the national list of agritourism destinations are the attractions of the wine farms in the environs of Stellenbosch, Montagu, Tulbagh, Paarl and Worcester. Oudtshoorn is distinguished

by its attractions of the area's ostrich farms whereas George, Citrusdal and Knysa offer an array of different agritourism products. Outside of the Western Cape the two most notable agritourism destinations are Dullstroom in Mpumalanga, which offers a combination of horse riding, visits to cattle farms and flyfishing, and Memel in Free State which offers a highly diverse range of attractions.

**Table 3.** Number of towns with agritourism activities per province

Province	1	2-3	4-5	>5	Total
Eastern Cape	18	7	2	0	27
Free State	13	6	3	1	23
Gauteng	1	1	0	0	2
KwaZulu-Natal	13	11	1	0	25
Limpopo	4	4	0	0	8
Mpumalanga	10	6	1	1	18
Northern Cape	7	9	0	0	16
North West	5	2	0	0	7
Western Cape	35	18	5	9	67
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>193</b>

Source: Authors

Table 3 provides further detail and highlights the widespread character of agritourism activities across South Africa. The table provides an analysis of the number of towns which are engaged in agritourism and the number of different agritour-

ism accommodation establishments in each of these centres. The analysis reveals an estimated 193 towns across South Africa in which agritourism is part of the local tourism economy. This finding is significant for it highlights the role of agritourism for economic development of small towns in many parts of South Africa. Although towns in the Western Cape emerge as numerically the most important for agritourism and LED the relevance of agritourism for small town local economic development in several other provinces is demonstrated. It is observed that agritourism is a component for LED in at least 15 small towns in each of the following provinces; Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape.

The drivers of the growth of agritourism businesses in South Africa are both demand- and supply-side related and reflect the causes of agritourism entrepreneurship as observed in other countries (see Nickerson, 2001; McGehee, 2004). On the demand side within the context of expanding urbanization and stresses of urban life there is a rise in the recreational value of rural landscape and amenities for urban consumers in South Africa. On the supply-side with agricultural restructuring there are financial strains on small family farmers many which have viewed tourism as an opportunity for income diversification (Marais, 2014). The need exists therefore for awareness and capacity building for business development around agritourism in those

**Table 4.** Leading agritourism destinations on a provincial basis

Province	2-3 Farmstays	4-5 Farmstays	>5 Farmstays
Eastern Cape	Bathurst, Cathcart, Cradock, Kei Mouth, Rhodes, Tarkastad, Tsitsikamma	Addo, Graaff Reinet	
Free State	Arlington, Bothaville, Frankfort, Harrismith, Verkykerskop, Vrede	Clarens, Fouriesburg, Gariep	Memel
Gauteng	Heidelberg		
Kwa-Zulu Natal	Balgowan, Ballito, Champagne Valley, Dargle, Bergville, Howick, Lidgetton, Mooi River, Nottingham Road, Rosetta, Pongola	Underberg	
Limpopo	Hoedspruit, Magoebaskloof, Nylstroom, Vaalwater		
Mpumalanga	Belfast, Chrissiesmeer, Hazyview, Nelspruit, Piet Retief, White River	Wakkerstroom	Dullstroom
Northern Cape	Augrabies, Campbell, Carnarvon, Colesburg, Hanover, Kimberley, Richmond, McCarthy's Rest, Sutherland		
North West	Lichtenburg, Magaliesburg		
Western Cape	Beaufort West, Bonnievale, Botriver, Calitzdorp, Cederberg, De Doorns, Durbanville, Elgin, Heidelberg, Hermon, Ladismith, Malmesbury, Noordhoek, Rawsonville, Riversdale, Stanford, Vredendal	Clanwilliam, Franschhoek, Plettenberg Bay, Robertson, Wellington	Citrusdal, George, Knysna, Montagu, Oudtshoorn, Paarl, Stellenbosch, Tulbagh, Worcester

Source: Authors



South African provinces which exhibit the greatest potential for agritourism.

Finally, Table 4 gives a fine-grained picture for each province of the small towns where there is a presence of agritourism as indexed by a cluster of two or more agritourism accommodation establishments. This listing of towns is important for LED planning and tourism support programming in South Africa. A large number of small towns are identified where local government awareness must be raised of the potential for local agritourism development opportunities. In many of the small towns which are listed in Table 4 agritourism should be one of the central elements of small town local economic development programming. For policy development to support tourism the information in Table 4 provides a base for the rolling out of skills training and capacity building for agritourism development activities.

#### 4. Conclusion

Agritourism is an emerging and increasingly important form of tourism which occurs in both developed and developing countries (Sznajder, et al. 2009). In a rapidly urbanizing world it provides a range of experiences for urban visitors which allow them to reconnect with the countryside. Despite its rise the implications of agritourism for local economic development have so far been little explored. The South African environment is particularly appropriate to examine LED and policy issues for agritourism in view of national government policy initiatives to expand the role of tourism as well as to support local economic development programming.

In policy terms a case exists from the international experience for building support for agritourism entrepreneurs. The international research suggests that entrepreneurs and especially farmers turning to agritourism as a means for income diversification do not always possess the essential business competencies required for success. This underscores the need for building business skills, entrepreneurship capabilities and enterprise networking. Innovation, learning and networking for enhanced product development in agritourism enterprises are of critical policy concern as well. In South Africa such issues

must be incorporated into the roll out of tourism and LED support programmes which currently are being operationalised (Rogerson, 2013a). The findings in this investigation reveal that the spatial distribution of agritourism activities point to a widespread need for such LED and tourism training and capacity building and most especially in the country's intermediate tourism spaces (Rogerson, 2014d). Training programmes and awareness-raising of LED decision-makers is needed in order to catalyze and support policy initiatives for addressing skill deficiencies around product development and the running of small tourism business enterprises.

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