

TaTuTa ECOLOGICAL FARMS AND AGROTOURISM IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Urbanization is limiting natural habitats all over the world. For this reason, people's increasing longing for nature is coming to light. Recently, the increasing healthy nutrition and return to nature themed holiday ideas have led to the formation of various organizations in the field of agrotourism. TaTuTa (Agriculture, Tourism and Exchange) project is a project organized with the aim of encouraging ecological agriculture by providing voluntary labor, financial and/or information support to farmer families who make a living from ecological agriculture in Turkey and has become a self-financing system over time. It creates regional development and tourism mobility. In this compilation, organic agricultural enterprises will be evaluated in terms of agrotourism activities, specifically for the TaTuTa project.

Keywords- Agro-tourism, Agri-tourism, TaTuTa

INTRODUCTION

We often hear the words ecological farming, organic farming and biological farming. All three words are synonymous. These three concepts are widely used for products that have the label of the authorized certification institution and ministry. While ecological, organic, and biological agriculture share common goals of sustainability and environmental protection, they differ in their specific practices and regulatory frameworks. Ecological agriculture provides a broad framework for sustainable practices, organic agriculture adheres to specific standards that prohibit synthetic inputs, and biological agriculture emphasizes the importance of biological processes in maintaining soil health and agricultural productivity.

Ecological farming, is a broad term that encompasses various farming practices aimed at maintaining ecological balance and enhancing biodiversity. It emphasizes the integration of ecological principles into agricultural systems, promoting practices that respect natural processes

and cycles. This approach seeks to minimize the negative impacts of farming on the environment, such as soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity. It is a production method that aims to control the environment and accepts the use of modern agricultural production techniques that do not harm the environment and human health, and every stage is controlled, registered and certified. Ecological agriculture means not only a healthy food production method, but also an agricultural method or biological resource management that is effective in sustainable agriculture and development, eco-tourism, protection of biological diversity and water resources, prevention of erosion and eliminating the effects of factors causing environmental pollution (Rodríguez et al., 2022; Mali, 2023).

Organic agriculture includes human and environment-friendly production systems aimed at re-establishing the natural balance lost as a result of faulty practices. It is a production method that aims to increase the quality of the product as

well as increase the quantity in production by demanding that all these possibilities be created in a closed system (Marangoz 2005).

Recently, there has been a rapid transition from traditional agriculture to organic agriculture in line with the demands of the modern age. The financial support provided to producers in the transition to organic agriculture, the wide range of products and national symbols have made significant contributions. (Merdan K. 2019). Agro-tourism activities are also expanding in this process. Thanks to projects such as TaTuTa, there are significant contributions to agricultural production, regional development, and agro-tourism, as well as efforts to prevent and increase the extinction of small family farms.

Farm tourism is a type of tourism that allows visitors to use both agriculture and animal husbandry and various ecotourism activities together, as well as providing additional income to the local people in economic terms, and also contributing to the cultural promotion of the region. The development of ecotourism has led to the popularity of farm tourism as part of meaningful travel to natural areas that understand the natural and cultural environment, preserve the integrity of the ecosystem, while conserving natural resources that are beneficial to local people, providing economic opportunities for local people. Contrary to popular tourism, farm tourism, which develops in line with sustainable principles, is also expanding in Turkey. (Ahmadova and Akova, 2016)

Aro-tourism and Agri-tourism

Farm tourism is a sub-branch of rural tourism and is based on the use of resources found in rural areas (Mastronardi et al., 2015: 1). Although different definitions are made for farm tourism depending on the country,

region, legal regulations and authors, farm tourism, farm-based tourism, agritourism, agricultural tourism and rural tourism are often used interchangeably. Instead of replacing agricultural production with tourism, the aim is to integrate it with tourism (Akdu and Uygur, 2009:147). While the concept of 'agritourism' is widely used in Mediterranean countries, the concept of farm tourism is frequently used in Anglo-Saxon practices (Slavic and Schmitz, 2013).

Farm tourism is a type of tourism where accommodation, food and beverages can be purchased, farm visitor centers, galleries and museums, stores selling farm products, guided hikes, farm and educational tours can be made, and activities such as fruit picking, horseback riding and fishing can be done (Uğurlu, 2010). Agro tourism helps diversify agricultural activities by offering alternative sources of income to farmers and local producers, while also serving the protection of environmental and cultural values. This type of tourism also plays a role as a tool of sustainable development in rural areas (Adam, 2004). According to Schilling et al. (2008:8), farm tourism includes many activities such as fishing, hunting, fruit and vegetable picking. Farm tourism or agritourism has been defined in different ways in the tourism literature and sociology literature. Farm tourism in the tourism literature; While it is the process of attracting people to the farm (Evans and Ilbery, 1992), in the sociology literature it is a type of initiative developed to increase the income of the farm (Che et al., 2005).

Ecologic Farms in Turkey

The first step of the association was taken in 1990 in the market in Bodrum, where the rice, olive oil, sage, thyme and sea salt purchased by Victor

Ananias from the villagers were sold, and it was established with the dream of a society that is in harmony with natural life and respectful of ecological integrity. The founder and chairman of the board is Victor Ananias. Continuing work of the association was institutionalized under the umbrella of Buğday Ecological Life Support Association on 12 August 2002. The goal of the association is to provide awareness for ecological life and sustainability of nature in each individual and society as a whole; It is to produce solutions against the problems that may arise as a result of the deterioration of the ecological balances in an impossible speed and manner and to support a life in harmony with the environment. The TaTuTa project is also supported by the Buğday Association (www.bugday.org).



Figure-2 Buğday Association Logo

Buğday Association has many national and international memberships. These memberships are; He is a member of the official Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs National Steering Committee for Ecological Agriculture, working on the preparation and implementation of the legal infrastructure and national strategy of ecological agriculture in Turkey. Active member and supporter of IFOAM (International 2.2. Farms Operating Within The Scope Of TaTuTa Federation of Ecological Agriculture Movements); The only representative organization of ECEAT (European Center for Ecological Agricultural Tourism) and WWOOF (Organization of Volunteers in Ecological Farms) in Turkey, a participant in the No to GMOs Platform for their efforts to spread

ecological agriculture and protect our seeds, soil and other natural and agricultural resources, and It is a member of EVU (European Vegetarian Union) (www.bugday.org).



Figure-3 TaTuTa Logo

TaTuTa (agriculture-tourism-exchange) Project is a project implemented all over Turkey since 2003 with the support of Buğday Ecological Life Support Association on 12 August 2002. Today, there are more than 100 farms involved in this project in our country. In the project, technical, marketing, social, environmental etc. of ecological production. While the people with knowledge/interest in the size of the farm share their knowledge, experience and/or workforce in farms and businesses, their food, beverage and shelter needs are met by the farm. In addition, volunteers have access to both social cohesion and real local experience and knowledge based on this experience (www.bugday.org).

Ecotourism farms, which operate within the scope of farm tourism in Turkey, continue their activities with the project known as "Agricultural Tourism in Ecological Farms and Voluntary Knowledge, Experience Exchange" and whose short name is "TaTuTa", the initials of the Turkish words "Agriculture-Tourism-Exchange". TaTuTa project, which has been operating since 2004, is also the Turkey representative of the WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) network, of which more than 11 thousand ecological farms are members in approximately 100 countries around the world. TaTuTa project was established to provide financial and moral support to farmer

families living on ecological agriculture, to contribute to ecological agriculture and to ensure its sustainability. In the project, technical, marketing, social, environmental etc. of ecological production. While the people with knowledge/interest in the size of the farm share their knowledge, experience and/or workforce in farms and businesses, their food, beverage and shelter needs are met by the farm. Within the scope of this project, Turkish citizens or guests from different countries visit the farms as volunteers or guests. The guests who come voluntarily help the farm owners in their work through any free interest, experience or workforce they provide. In return, the farmer offers free accommodation and food to the guest. Guests visiting the farm as a guest do not have to work on the farm (Çinko, 2013).

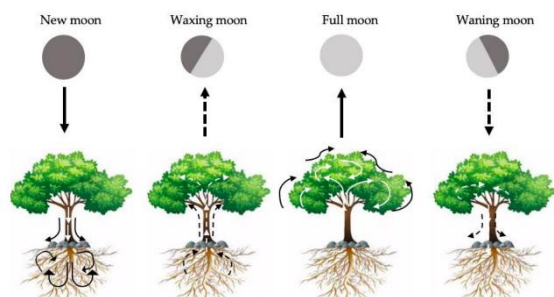


Figure-1 Agricultural effects and rhythms of moon (Mayoral et al, 2020)

Returning to the old farming methods with ecological farming and adapting to the rules of nature and the universe attracts the attention of both farm owners and visitors. Those dealing with biodynamic or ecological agriculture organize their work according to 6 different moon rhythms that are renewed between 27 and 29 days. These; new moon is known as full moon, moon opposite Saturn, ascending and waning moon, Lunar nodes, Periphery, Zodiac constellations. It affects the water content of the soil by creating more

moisture in the soil at the time of the new and full moon. This increased moisture encourages growth and seed germination. The fourth quarter after the full moon is time to rest. It delays growth. It is also considered the time of harvest. This situation is presented visually in Figure 1 (Koepf, 1993). In fact, making agricultural production according to the movements of the moon is among the practices that continue from generation to generation in family businesses that make traditional production, although it is not under organic production certificate. Various plant protection methods can be given as an example to this situation. Production methods made years ago by trial and error or memorized knowledge form the basis of current organic production methods. By including volunteer visitors in agricultural activities carried out using traditional methods, alternative experiences are provided for those who live away from agriculture or who love the natural life.

The activities carried out in the direction of farm tourism in farms differ according to the location and characteristics of the enterprises. These activities are; product planting and care, animal care, traditional handicraft practices, certified organic agriculture, ecological life trainings. In addition, there are ecological hotels that grow certified organic products and farm-hotels that generate income from yoga, natural life and agricultural activities among the farms. In addition, there are ecological hotels that grow certified organic products and farm-hotels that generate income from yoga, natural life and agricultural activities among the farms.

The types of visits differ according to the establishment purposes of the farms and the types of activities. For example, the reason why the Yoga House, which deals with yoga, natural life and traditional handicrafts,

accepts visitors is that it gains financially. However, other farms engaged in organic agriculture, sales and marketing of organic products stated that they host both voluntary, semi-voluntary and trainee visits as well as guest visits. When the activities carried out in TaTuTa farms are compared with the activities offered to the guests within the scope of farm tourism in the literature, some differences stand out. Some of these farms, unlike TaTuTa farms, have special events such as music and harvest festivals, various invitations, and various off-farm activities. (Ahmadova and Akova, 2016)



Figure- 4: Distributions of ecological farms in Turkey (www.TaTuTa.org)

There are 92 farms operating under the TaTuTa project in Turkey. 14 of these farms are located in the Mediterranean Region, 26 in the Aegean Region, 5 in the Eastern Anatolia Region, 6 in the Central Anatolia Region, 2 in the South East Anatolia Region, 25 in the Black Sea Region and 14 in the Marmara Region. (www.TaTuTa.org)

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon that aims to meet the different demands and needs of people who travel by participating in tourism, while being an important economic activity that provides income to countries. Developing countries are trying to diversify their tourism products to meet the different demands and needs of

people in order to increase their share from tourism. Agricultural tourism, which is one of the types of tourism, is carried out in regions with agricultural areas. It is a type of tourism that can be easily carried out throughout Turkey due to its geographical features.

TaTuTa projects in the field of agro-tourism in Turkey are achieving quite successful results. It has become an expanding area with the increasing number of visitors according to the positive experiences and comments of the visitors in different farms they find through the project according to their own interests. Labor costs provided by the increase in visitors have been covered and the burden of farm owners is reduced. A kind of mutual living example is seen in the farms within the scope of this project.

Environmentally friendly practices should be adopted in order to reduce the possible negative effects of farm tourism on the environment. In particular, organic farming practices can play a role in reducing the negative effects of agriculture on the environment, and farm tourism can contribute to the spread of sustainable production models such as organic farming. Agro-tourism helps ensure sustainability and protect the environment. The farm tourism application affiliated with TaTuTa in Turkey makes significant contributions in this context. It is observed that the places where the farms are located have a climate, natural resources and an unspoiled environment suitable for tourism. The farms located in this natural environment also contribute to the promotion of the natural beauties of the region they are located in. Farm tourism helps the farm operator and his/her family to continue farming, continue living in the countryside and enjoy the rural lifestyle, thus helping the farm business to survive and keeping the farm ownership in the family. In this

way, migration from rural to urban areas becomes less attractive, at least for farm owners.

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