

## PARALLEL SESSION 1

### **The enabling environment for agritouristic activities**

*Chair: Tor Arnesen, Senior Research Scientist, Eastern Norway Research Institute (ENRI), Norway (S1-07/11)*

### **Defining Agritourism comparing with other modes of Rural Tourism in Agricultural Areas**

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Defining agritourism comparing with other modes of rural tourism in agricultural areas, agritourism has been given different interpretations, definitions and overviews by different researchers and professionals of this field of study. It has been examined in several ways, means and frameworks by different researchers and professionals. However, none of these studies could suggest a clear and solid understanding and definition for agritourism. This paper suggest a scientifically examined typology for defining agritourism by examining the major characteristics of the agritourism destinations discussed in the literature. Also an objective of this study is to unifying these major characteristics described in literature into an organized format enabling to make a realistic classification of system of agritourism. It was found that different regions in the world defines agritourism in different ways. Nevertheless, it is important to have an accepted typology to define agritourism which reflects the major characteristics of it. There are unique features identified in agritourism operations, business and destinations. Therefore, any tourism activity or operation happened in agricultural or rural areas cannot be considered as agritourism activity or operation. This paper attempts to clarify the misinterpretations in agritourism and to open a clear forum to discuss about real features of agritourism. This allows to formulate an acceptable scientific definition for agritourism.

### **Agritourism perceptions, cooperation and networks: Empirical evidence from Greece**

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This study analyzes the perceptions of agritourism units owners and stakeholders on (a) agritourism compared to rural tourism and (b) cooperation of different types of actors in the sector. Furthermore, it assesses the type and the degree of cooperation, in other words it investigates the characteristics of informal agritourism networks within destinations. The data were collected through personal in – depth interviews and with the use of semi-structured questionnaires in Greece, Europe. From a methodological perspective the qualitative methods and the social network analysis that were selected provide useful insights on the theme. It seems that the overall image of agritourism and cooperation is positive. The descriptive results of the sample, among others types of promotion, languages in websites, reservation on-line, confirm as the network characteristics, that the cooperation is based on personal relationships. The question that emerges is how these findings of agritourism perceptions and cooperation can used to facilitate the promotion of the product and foster-strengthen the networks. Acknowledgments: This research is the result of the first author's PhD thesis.