

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREA WITH REAL EXAMPLE OF THE AGRITOURISM FACILITY IN SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The essence of the article was to characterize agritourism facility Sheep farm Krajinka, and bring the view of the Liptov region in Slovak Republic. There is also described a history of sheep breeding in Liptov region. In this work we describe the neighbourhood where Sheepfarm Krajinka is situated, it means the lower Liptov region and Ružomberok city as a centre of the region. We described also the historical knowledge about sheep breeding and sheepfold industry in the Liptov region. In the paper we characterize the business activities of the Sheep farm Krajinka. In the final part of the work there are included some pictures of the Sheep farm Krajinka.

Keywords: agritourism, Liptov region, sheepfold, sheepfold industry, rural area

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this work was to present the activity of one of the few good prosperous agritourism facilities in Slovakia – Sheep farm Krajinka. Although Sheep farm Krajinka doesn't have a long tradition, it's very popular and has faithful clients, which ensures its operation. It is an exemplary company for many other beginning entrepreneurs in agritourism and proves that also in Slovakia it's possible to run a successful business. It's just about knowing what people want and how to offer and sell it. Agritourism in Slovakia doesn't have a long history, although some companies show that agritourism business is interesting, and if we work hard, it can also be successful.

Business in agritourism can bring a lot of positives to the region in which we choose to run it. The number of jobs will increase and it contributes to improve the welfare of the municipality or county in which we choose to run this business. Attracting tourists will ultimately ensure that increasing revenues of other complementary subjects. However, we need to have a good intention, what kind of business we want to run and then try to fulfil it. It is essential to realize that not everything goes right and smooth at the start that we

cannot become rich overnight, but success will come gradually. The first step should be to listen to customers' needs and wishes and then offer it. We need to look for answers on how we can do this instead of how we cannot. Business in agritourism is not an easy matter, but just Sheep farm Krajinka confirms that agribusiness is worth to do, if it is done well and with love.

The aim of this paper is to explain and describe agritourism facility Sheep farm Krajinka, to introduce the historical, cultural and natural heritage of the lower Liptov and to familiarize the history of sheep farming in Liptov region in Slovak Republic.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In the developing process of this work there were used following work methods: processing of studying literature, which is focused on the development of tourism and agritourism, as well as the literature focusing on cultural, natural and historical heritage in the lower Liptov; processing literature about the history of sheep breeding in Liptov, personal identification of the operation and further development of the Sheep farm Krajinka.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Liptov is a historic region in the northern part of Slovakia. The name was given according to the equally named castle, which was residency of Liptov governor. In the late 19th century Liptov area had 2,246 km². Liptov was allocated from Zvolen commit, origins of administrative independence date back to the 13th century. From the second decades of the 14th century Liptov acts as an independent territory (comitatus Liptoviensis). Liptov had always strong natural boundaries, which stay essentially unchanged for centuries. In the years 1786 – 1790 was temporary associated with Orava region. Liptov as a separate administrative unit ceased to exist in the 1922. Liptov area was divided into four districts, except of the period of Josephine reforms and Bach absolutism. According to the boundaries of three castles Liptov was divided into lower (Estate of Likava castle), intermediate (Estate of Liptovsky castle) and upper (Estate of Liptovsky Hradok castle). The original administrative centre of Liptov was the Liptov castle. In 1677 the centre of Liptov became Liptovsky St. Nicolaus.

The Liptov region nowadays covers an area of 1,970 km² in the eastern and western parts of Liptov valley, called the lower and upper Liptov. It includes the river Vah valley and its tributaries – the White and Black Vah and other streams. Liptov is surrounded by the West, High and Low Tatras, the Choc Mountains and the High Fatra. The highest peak is called Bystra with an altitude of 2,248 m. There is also a water reservoir Liptovská Mara with a water area covered 21 km² and the water content of 360 million m³.

Liptov has many cultural and historical sites. There's the largest number of national cultural sites in the Žilina region – 11. Overall, the region Liptov has 249 immovable and 479 of movable monuments in almost all villages. Visitors to the region can see many cultural attractions in the Liptov Museum in Ružomberok, in its department – the Museum of Ethnography in Liptovsky Hradok, exposures in the Peasant House in Vlkolíneč,

in the Museum Čierny Orol in Liptovský Mikuláš, in the Museum of Liptov Village in Pribylina and in the Archaeological Museum near Liptovská Mara – Havránok with the reconstruction of Celtic buildings. The P. M. Bohúň Gallery in Liptovský Mikuláš also has its department – the Ján Hála Gallery in Važec. Many visitors annually participate in folklore festival in Východná.

Ružomberok

The centre of Lower Liptov, Ružomberok is based on an important business crossroads of European importance. It lies on the left riverside of the River Váh, in the inflow of Revúca and Likavka into Váh, on the southwestern edge of the Choc Mountains. In the urban area there were discovered two small ancient fortified settlements of the Púchov culture. In the 13th century there existed Slavic settlement between the River Revúca and the stream Štiavnica, that later became the foundation of the city. The impulse for its creation was particularly mining development in the region. Especially it was linked with the arrival of German colonists in the 14th century. The first city privileges came from 1318. Mining expansion lasted only for a short time. Nevertheless, mainly due to its location, the city was developed to the natural centre of commerce and handicrafts. Handicraft manufacture followed the traditional manners of subsistence, which were mainly agriculture, timber industry and sheep farming. A significant industry development occurred in the 19th century (the pulp mill, sheep cheese manufactory, fabric factory), which greatly influenced the development of the city.

Currently, Ružomberok is the centre of the Lower Liptov and there are situated many offices and administrative entities. The best known is the Catholic University and there are also branches of the University of Žilina and the Trenčín University of A. Dubček. In addition to universities there are six secondary schools and two grammar-schools. One of the most interesting cultural and historical monuments of the city is the Andrej Hlinka Square, which also ranks among the oldest monuments of the city and it can be divided

into two parts, which are connected with the protected lime tree alley. The other monuments are the Roman-Catholic Church of St. Andrew, which was originally a Gothic and was mentioned already in 1318. In the church there is the original Gothic font from the 16th century and makings of A. Belopotocký, J. Hanula and E. Massányi. Stained glass windows in the southern nave of the church are the work of master L. Fulla. In church tower there is the oldest bell in Liptov. The Bell Andrew was molten in 1506 by A. Sladič from Banská Bystrica. Town hall is non-baroque storey building built in 1895. Under the southern nave of the Church of St. Andrew is the Mausoleum of Andrej Hlinka and in the front of the town hall there is the Marian column from 1858. The most important natural site is the Alley on the A. Hlinka Square. This protected alley consists of 156 trees, of which 101 pieces are lime tree (*Tilia cordata*), 52 pieces of horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and 3 pieces of Norway maple (*Acer saccharum*) growing in the central part of Ružomberok (rínok) in area 0.5 ha. The mightiest tree in the Alley is the lime with a height of 20 m and 271 cm girth. Date of planting this alley is probably related to the establishment of the Piarist School in 1888 and development of the city in this period. In the western part of the A. Hlinka Square we can find The Monastic Church of St. Cross built in Empire style in 1806, The Convent of St. Cross built in New-baroque style in 1730, the Ružomberok Piarist Grammar School from 1729, which was at that time the only school of its kind for Liptov, Orava, Turiec and the northern part of Trenčín County. The school was attended by many important people. Currently there is a rectorate of The Catholic University. As the well-known architectural monuments in Ružomberok is considered stairs. The Andrej Hlinka Square is connected with the "lower town" with famous stairways that are very typical for Ružomberok. There are six of them: the School stair, the Dark stair, the Pink stair, the stair on the Mostová Street, the North Lane and the Convent stair. In total there are 579 steps, you can use to get to the

A. Hlinka Square. The longest stair is the School stair with 155 steps. An interesting historical monument of the western part of the city is the Lutheran church built in the Dončová Street in 1923 – 1926. The bells of the church were supplied by Fischer Company from Trnava. In the carved altar there is an altar painting of the Christ blessing the cup, painted by Peter Michal Bohúň, which was part of the original decoration of the chapel from 1873rd.

In Ružomberok there is situated the Museum of Liptov built by Ružomberok city in 1936. In the museum there are situated permanent expositions of geology, palaeontology and botany, zoology and archaeology, ethnography, exposure of the life and work of Ms gr. Andrej Hlinka, and exposure of paper production in Slovakia. Another institution is the Ľudovít Fulla Gallery. Branch Office of the Slovak National Gallery in Ružomberok came as a decent stand for storage and presentation of artworks by leading figure of the modern Slovak painting, the artist and the awardee of the national Grand Prix at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937, Ľudovít Fulla. Gallery was opened to the public in 1969. In the 80's and early 90's there was taken place interior spaces arrangement throughout the building, which presents a representative overview of the painter's work and also there are organized smaller exhibitions and cultural programs for the wide public.

The Sheep farm Krajinka

The Sheep farm Krajinka is located directly next to the main road that interconnects western and eastern part of Slovakia in the north. Entrance to the chalet is different than anywhere else. Above the main road rise a few wooden buildings, between them, there are sittings and the wooden sculptures of animals. On the parking lot, you can meet a running donkey, also you may encounter with geese and calves. At first the owners of the objects only rented them, they only sold cheese. When they found out that there is a great demand after cheese, they gradually expand sales. The area was expanded according to customer requirements. What customers wanted, they built it for them.

Stables for a thousand sheep were divided into three parts. One of them was made into a restaurant and another one into production room. There has left only three compartments, each one with hundred sheep.

The farm once belonged to the agricultural cooperative Biely Potok, but it fell into bankruptcy also with this, nowadays lucrative area. But at that time, no one wanted it and had no interest. The Badánik family saw an opportunity to stall their horses here, and it was the first reason why they bought the place. That was eight years ago. They rented stalls for sheep and started selling cheese in small booth. The demand after cheese products has been rising, so they built an area according to customers' requirements. They changed the form of selling; they have begun to sell packaged products. And then customers wanted a restaurant. But at first they decided to build the production room. The third of the stalls was made into advanced production room, made in accordance with strict EU directives. They made classic threads from cow's milk, garlic sticks, paprika speciality and another specialty – "pareničky", some of them also smoked. Most sales go to the threads, they make them by machine, but on request they can make also handmade threads. They process daily 150 to 300 kg lumps of cow and about one thousand litres of sheep's milk, which is made into about 300 kg of cheese. They have only 180 l of milk from their own source, the rest must be bought. Everything they produce is sold in their own shop and restaurant. These organic products are non-pasteurized, without any chemical additives, sheep products are made with 100 % share of sheep's milk or cheese. All products are completely fresh, on the farm there cannot be bought any products from the previous day. The Badánek family decided that although another shops and restaurants are interested into selling their products, they will not dispatch. They do not want to prefer quantity over quality. They want to stay in a homely form of production.

As home made also taste the dishes in a restaurant that was opened just recently. The entire menu was built on their own products.

Here again, everything is fresh—nothing from the previous day. Young lambs are not sold to Italy. All of them are consumed in the restaurant. Particularly, they are great to the goulash. They breed lambs that have meet with more tendons. But the menu is supplemented with lambs from New Zealand, where they farm lamb species with more muscles.

The restaurant was primarily a stall, now it is spacious and stylish wooden building that is separated from stall only with a glass wall. Tourists can observe sheep directly in their stall during lunch ordinner. During Christmas, they will make a living Bethlehem in the stall. Restaurant thrives; there can be no speech about crisis. Everything is under the charge of the family but also 25 other workers. Everyone has to get used to willingness, quality in production, and should also be able to inform customers about the activities of the whole farm. Shop assistants go once a week to restaurant to recommend customers specific dishes. Waiters and waitresses also know a lot about cheese. The owners are working seven days a week.

The owners are gradually building the entire farm from their own sources. Altogether they have already invested more than 66,000 EUR. They receive grant only for sheep, the only subsidized investment has been buy in ga tractor. The fact that they invested their own sources does not detract from the other planned investments. It is necessary to relieve the crowded restaurant. During the coming months they would like to open another cottage, in which they will offer fast foods. Lamb stew, sheep cheese and cheese-spreads, it is only a part of the menu that will be offered to clients. Also there will be added new attraction. They will import about a thousand straw-cubes, from which it can be built a labyrinth and castle as entertainment for children. They also have other plans. This year, they want to build an observation tower from which the tourists could see not only the whole area, but also the Mountains of High Fatra.

In addition to classic cuisine they want to offer also a speciality – sheep ice cream. The

vision of the future is also Jánošík's slide-bob sled. They are also considering in offering accommodation because customers would like that. First, they want to focus on expanding services. Besides, everyone admires the appearance of the area. Buildings are wooden, although simple, but stylish. The sittings are original, their appearance is improved with wooden sheep and scarecrows made of sprigs. There is also chalet, in which shepherds used to live, cook "žinčica" and make cheese. The whole area is a kind of open-air museum.

Sheep farm Krajinka is thriving despite any active advertising in news papers or on billboards. There is only one small inconspicuous table showing the turn off to the chalet. The best advertising according to the owner's opinion is when people are talking about them. Approximately 60 % of clients are Czechs. The Slovak clients are coming mostly from Bratislava and southern Slovakia. It is also visited by tourists from Poland. Sheep farm Krajinka represents the Liptov Region on many events, info-trips, at trade fairs they cook, for example sheep cheese dumplings. Foreign visitors to the Liptov Region are stopping by in Sheep farm Krajinka near Ružomberok.

CONCLUSIONS

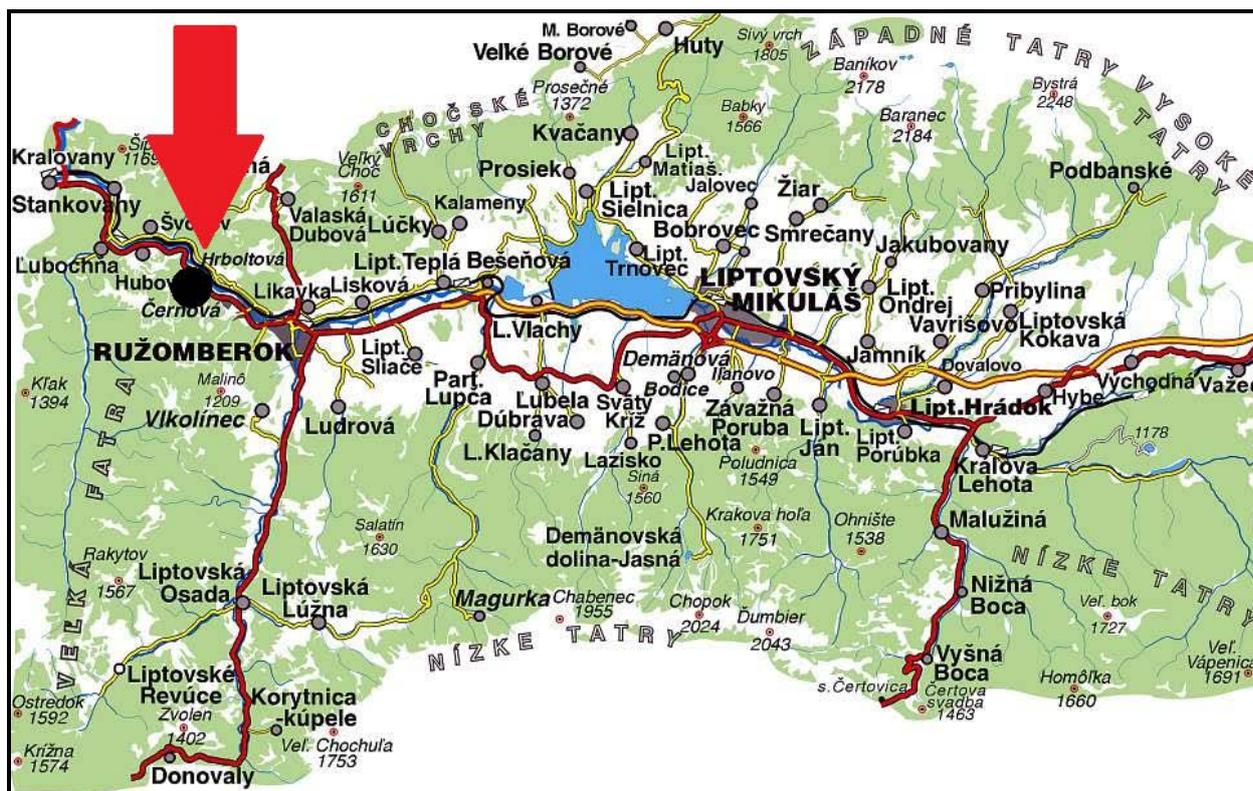
The Lower Liptov region has great potential for business in agritourism. Sheep farm Krajinka is an example of that business in agritourism can have an upward trend. However, it requires expanding services constantly and offering clients services and products after which there is an increasing demand. It needs to build a good reputation among customers by providing quality services and products. Once customers leave satisfied, agritourism services providers will be satisfied, too.

In Slovakia there are a lot of agritourism facilities, which is evidence that business in this sector is going well. But it is important to provide services that people are demanding. This contribution includes a history of lower Liptov and information about the natural and

cultural heritage, which is located nearby Sheep farm Krajinka.

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Picture 1: Location of Sheep farm Krajinka
(<http://www.liptov.sk/predaj/mapa.html>).



Picture 2: Sign of Sheep farm Krajinka.



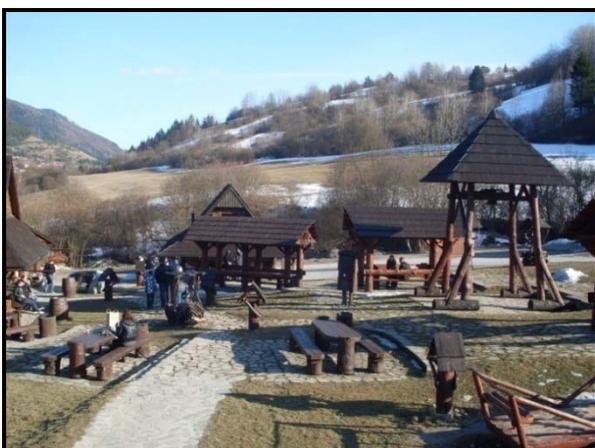
Picture 3: Information board at the farm.



Picture 4: View of Sheep farm from restaurant.



Picture 5: Exterior of the farm 1.



Picture 6: Exterior of the farm 2.



Picture 7: Parking place for cars or buses.



Picture 8: Farm cheese shop.



Picture 9: Farm bakery.



Picture 10: Farm outdoor sitting.



Picture 11: Typical climbing frame for children.