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EDUCATIONAL OFFER OF POMERANIAN AGRITOURIST FARMS ASSOCIATED IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF EDUCATIONAL FARMS

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyse the educational offer of Pomeranian voivodeship agritourism farms which joined the National Network of Educational Farms. The analysis covers the years 2011–2020. The survey involved 25 licensed entities (100%). Their wide offers include educational programmes aiming to teach about farmer's life and work, the process of food production and acquisition, and the cultural heritage of the Polish rural areas and to promote the right attitudes towards nature and landscape protection. Educational activities are usually organised in the form of one-day group and workshop activities addressed to school children and adolescents. Thanks to that, the school education process is more varied and enriched with school curricula directed at hands-on activities, workshops in different school subjects, alternative venues of education and knowledge about rural culture. Farmers usually play the role of guides or sometimes they hire teachers to do the job. More and more often, people with disabilities and students of Third Age Universities use their services. The farms' offers are very flexible and their scope and prices are adjusted to the demands, age and number of participants. The educational programmes differ depending on the season of the year.

Key words

Pomerania, education, educational farm, agritourism.

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1. Introduction

When defining agritourism, it should be noted that this is a form of rest taking place in rural areas of agricultural character, with accommodation and recreational facilities related to a working farm and its natural, production and service surroundings (Barbieri, Mshenga, 2008; Drzewiecki, 1995; Majewski, 2000; Marks et al., 2006; McGehee et al., 2007; McGehee, 2007; Wall, 2000; Wiatrak, 1996). It is based on the

attractiveness of the natural environment and the landscape. It also builds and protects the natural, agricultural and cultural heritage of rural areas (Allen et al., 1991; Burr, 2011; Molenda, 2012; Połucha et al., 2003). In the light of the EU strategy for multifunctional rural development, it brings significant economic and social effects, including educational ones (Sikora, 2016).

Agritourism activity carried out on farms has a wide educational impact as it satisfies diverse

cognitive needs of tourists, especially children and adolescents. Education is accomplished through action, gaining experience, being, working and experiencing emotions in a group, playing, learning and discovering as well as developing senses and expressive skills (Canavari et al., 2011; Chojnacka-Ożga et al., 2007).

Due to its coastal location and unique natural environment, the voivodeship of Pomerania has perfect conditions for the development of agritourism. Therefore, this region is in the Poland's forefront in terms of agritourism development (Wiśniewska, 2017). Despite strong competition on the market, Pomeranian farmers have noticed opportunities for development of their farms through educational activities. Some of them, i.e. 25 entities, joined the National Network of Educational Farms operating since 2011. Farms classified as "educational farms" are obliged to complete at least two educational programmes in the scope of plant and animal production, processing of agricultural produce, environmental and consumer education, tangible cultural heritage of rural areas, traditional jobs, handicraft and folk art. The owners of the farms are also obliged to have farm animals or agricultural crops (Mitura, Buczek-Kowalik, 2016). Moreover, the farm buildings must comply with the technical requirements for educational farms and follow the safety regulations for visitors. Educational facilities include all farm buildings such as stables, barns, cowsheds, granaries, garages, shades, warehouses, dairy rooms, home bakeries, apiaries and even backyards. Membership in the National Network of Educational Farms is voluntary and free.

Nowadays, one of the conditions for effective education is learning through individual participation, personal discoveries and self-evaluation for own achievements. Activating methods of teaching are usually promoted as they develop the natural love for learning every human being is born with. This modern approach to education makes farms attractive venues to conduct classes and activities integrating theory with practice. A direct contact with rich rural-natural and cultural-social environment of a farm enhances holistic development. Free country space, the presence of animals, numerous smells and sounds provide multiple cognitive and emotional stimuli which make learning more successful in consistency with the rule that learning is more effective when it is fun (Kline, 1988). This modern approach to education offered on farms is extremely important as they shape environmental awareness, show life in accordance with the laws of nature and the consequences of overexploitation of natural resources. Activities provided by farms should contribute to

the dissemination and increase in knowledge about nature and shape the tourists' sensitivity (Kurczewski, 2007). Educational farm-based programmes are organised in many European countries. The most advanced networks are established in France, Switzerland, Austria and Germany (Kmita-Dziasek, 2010).

2. Research methods

The aim of the research is to analyse the educational offer of Pomeranian agritourism farms associated in the National Network of Educational Farms (Pl.: Ogólnopolska Sieć Zagród Edukacyjnych). The study includes conclusions drawn from quantitative and qualitative analyses of educational programmes provided by the entities. The research involved 100% of the entities from the Pomeranian voivodeship – a group of 25 agritourism farms associated in the National Network of Educational Farms in 2020 (Fig. 1).

The research was conducted through survey questionnaires concerning each farm in Pomerania, which are available on the website of the National Network of Educational Farms <https://www.zagroda-edukacyjna.pl/>. The first part of the questionnaire included contact details, the second part included the characteristics of the facility, whereas the third part included questions concerning its educational offer. Respondents could choose more than one answer to each question. The information was supplemented with direct interviews carried out (on the phone) with the owners of the farms from 13 to 16 December 2020. In order to define the scope of activity of each farm, the educational offers provided on the home pages of these entities were thoroughly analysed (address data were downloaded from the official website of the organization). Since 2019, parallel field research was also conducted, and 10 licensed farms belonging to the Network were visited, 2 of which are situated in Wejherowo County, 7 in Kartuszy County and 1 in Lębork County. While realising the assumed goals, other research methods were also used, i.e. analyses of the subject literature, statistical data as well as photographic and cartographic documentation.

3. Research results

The National Network of Educational Farms comprises 290 entities that provide educational activities based on their own agricultural potential usually combining agricultural production and rendering tourist and educational services (Kmita-Dziasek, Bogusz, 2017).



Fig. 1. Educational farms in Pomeranian voivodeship in 2020

Source: Own study based on the address data of educational farms available on the home pages of Ogólnopolska Sieć Zagród Edukacyjnych.

The Pomeranian voivodeship takes the third place as far as the number of entities associated in the National Network of Educational Farms is concerned, and there are 25 educational farms there (8.6% of all). Half of the farms are found in Kashubia, and most of these farms are found in Kartuszy and Wejherowo Counties (Fig. 2). Farms from the area of Kociewie and Żuławy are also joining the Network. A majority of the agritourism farms are up to 10 ha and educational services constitute an extension of their tourist offer and a way to prolong the tourist season (72%).

Pomeranian farms joined the Network by submitting an application and a letter of recommendation from an agricultural centre. All the associated farms were given a promotion of offers in the national online system, the right to identify the facility by the logo of the educational farms as well as mentorship and training. According to the farm owners, Barbara Ditrich¹ plays a very important role as their mentor and regional coordinator.

The research shows that Pomeranian farms receive organised groups most frequently, especially

pre-school and school groups. Their offers are also designed for families with children, adults and increasingly more often for senior citizens. Nearly 70% of the farms under research have developed educational programmes for special groups, mostly for people with disabilities. A slight but steadily increasing group of adults interested in rural education includes employees and members of institutions and organizations supporting the development of rural areas, i.e., the Agricultural Consulting Centre (ODR), the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARiMR), agritourism associations and care farms. This group also includes charges of social welfare centres, aging and disability associations and foundations. Students of Universities of the Third Age (from Tricity and Słupsk) make another significant group of users of the educational service. Figure 3 presents the respondents' answers to the question about their educational offer targets.

Visitors can see the farms, explore their basic functions and participate in the activities provided by the farmers. The offers are varied and designed for different recipients. Visitors can stay on a farm for a few hours, a day and even a few nights. The offers mostly include one-day stays (no accommodation).

¹ Chief specialist in the Pomeranian Agricultural Consulting Centre in Gdańsk.

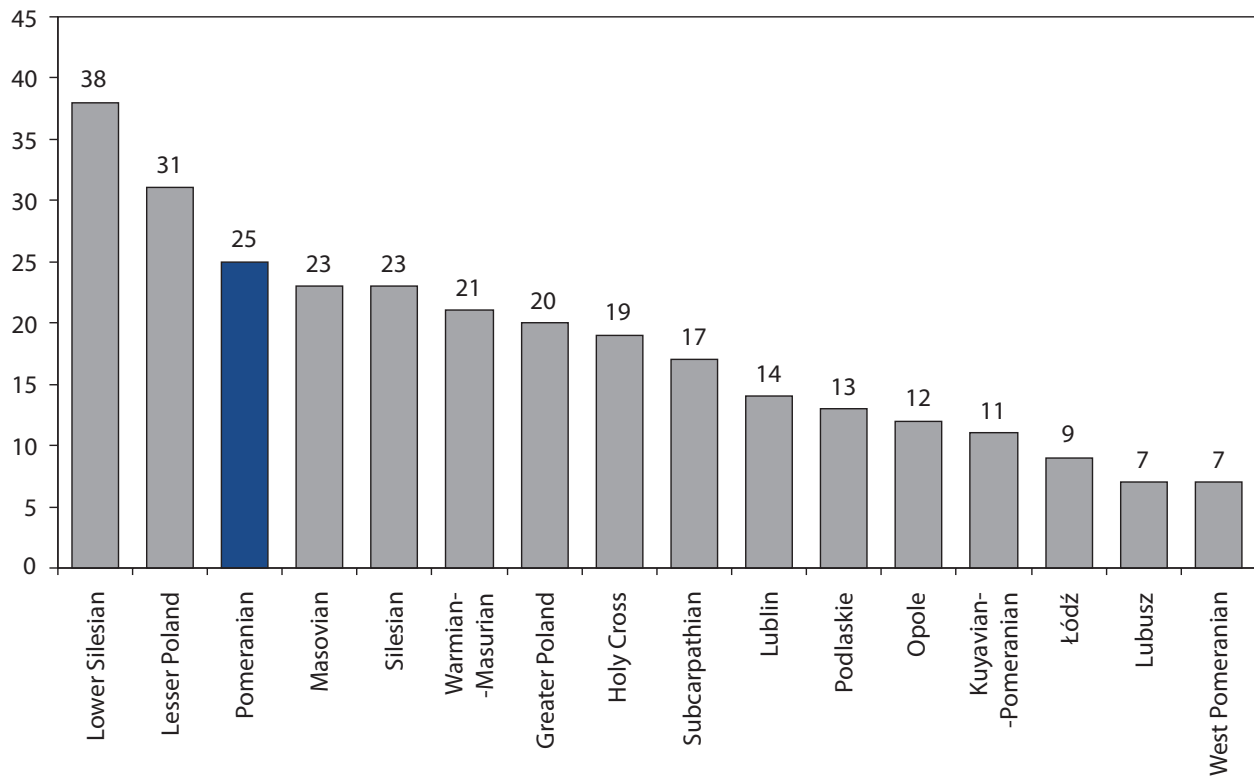


Fig. 2. The number of educational farms in individual voivodeships in Poland in 2020

Source: Own study based on the number of applications of educational farms available on the home pages of Ogólnopolska Sieć Zagród Edukacyjnych.

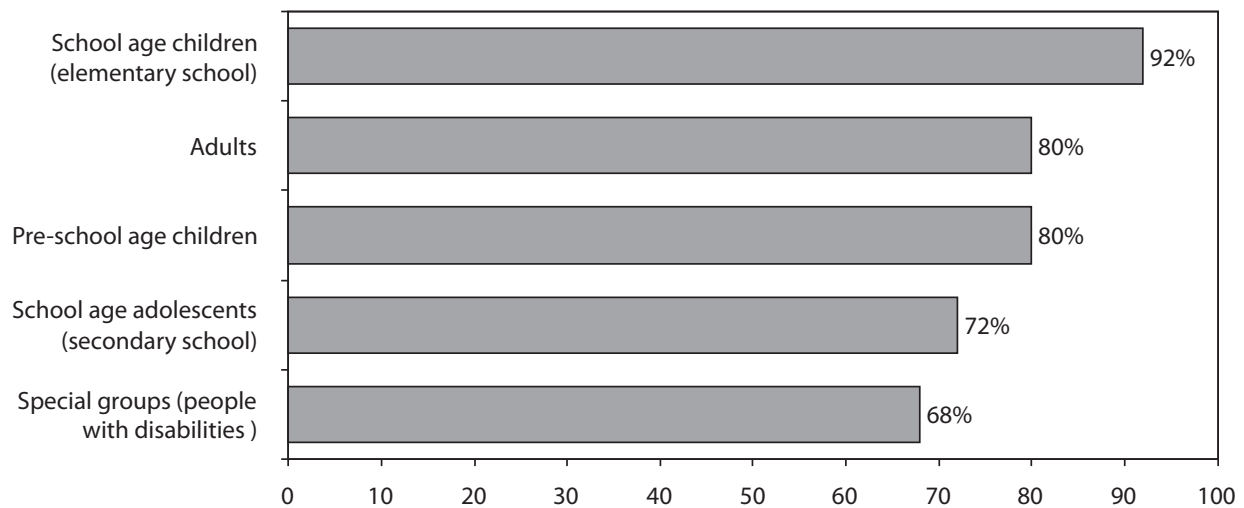


Fig. 3. Recipients of the educational offer

Source: own study based on surveys.

Nearly 44% of the farms also provide overnight stays for a few days. Catering is available in 76% of the farms. Only two farms offer ticketed tours (Fig. 4). Interestingly, most farms negotiate the fares with each group individually.

In most Pomeranian farms, educational activities are mostly conducted by the farmers and other members of their families. Some of the farmers hire

teachers (40%), usually folk artists, beekeepers and local organisers of cultural activities, while 36% allowed teachers-group mentors to run the activities (Fig. 5).

Pomeranian farms, like all farms in the country (Sikorska-Wolak, Zawadka, 2016), provide their own educational programmes depending on the profile of their agricultural activity, the nearest surrounding

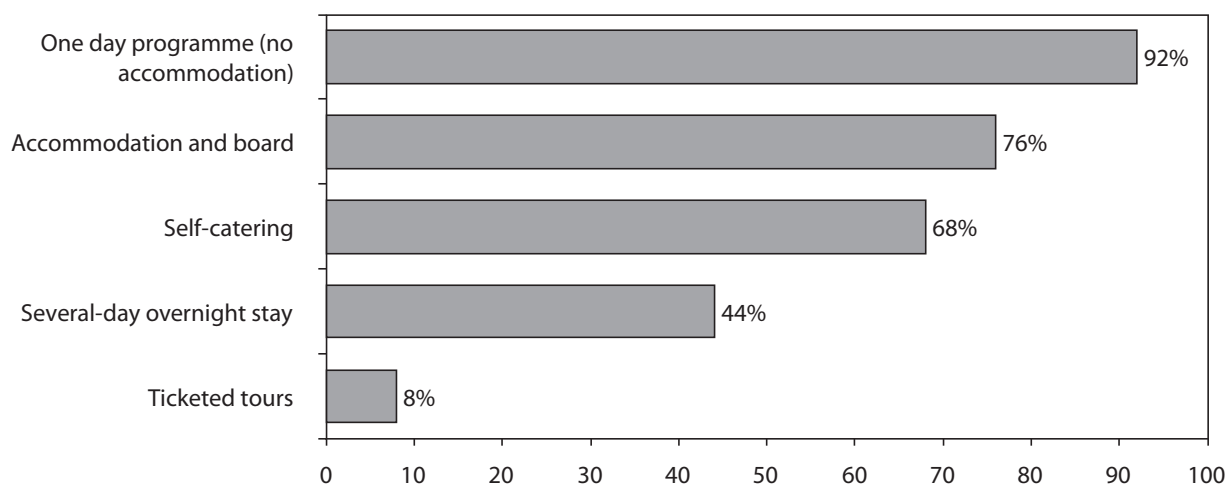


Fig. 4. Scope of the offer

Source: own study based on surveys.

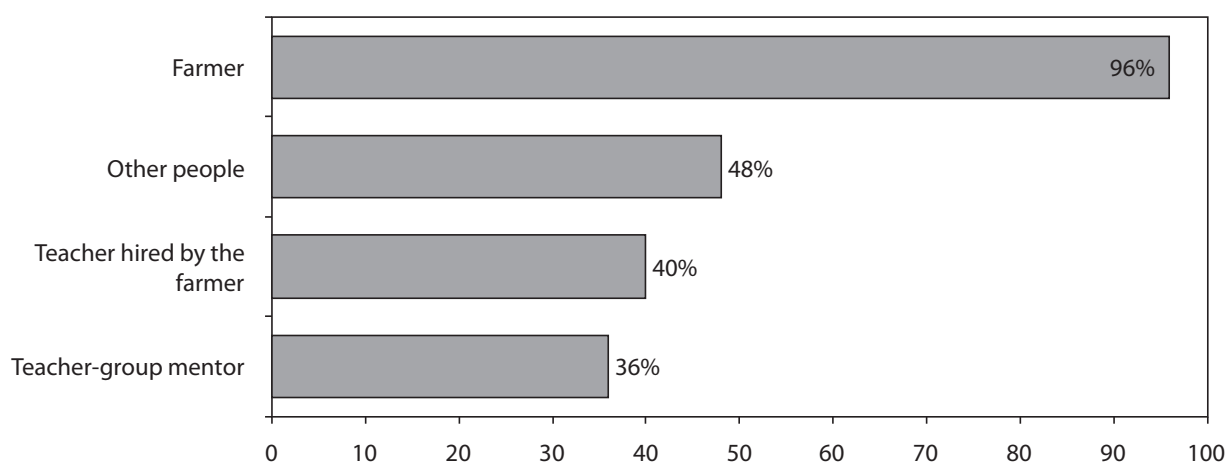


Fig. 5. People conducting activities

Source: own study based on surveys.

Tab. 1. Educational programmes provided by Pomeranian educational farms

Educational farm/location	Educational programme provided by the farm
Agritourism farm "Lipy", Stara Kiszewa	1. Educational activities in a forest maze, including bread baking. 2. Art workshop.
Agritourism farm "Agrohanka, Kniewo	1. Vegetables and their use. 2. Selected crop plants and traditional pastries. 3. Traditional farm animals.
Educational farm "U Garncarza", Polnica	1. The world of horses. 2. Pottery workshop. 3. Clay modelling workshop 4. Agricultural equipment and tools, household devices – in the past and today.
Agritourism farm "U Rychterów, Kiełpino	1. Milk lesson. 2. Corn lesson. 3. Painting traditional Kashubian embroidery patterns on glass.
Agritourism farm "Wichrowe Wzgórze", Chmielno	1. Corn lesson. 2. Hay ornaments. 3. Painting traditional Kashubian embroidery patterns on glass. 4. The Kashubian region lesson.
"A different world – a country of nature and adventure", Krastudy	1. Educational visit to the country. 2. Village toys – workshop on making hay toys and straw mats. 3. Village Olympics 4. Come, paint my world – manual activities workshop. 5. Country game hare and hounds – HIT !!!
"Dolina Jadwigi", Gowidlino	1. At the farmer's.

Agritourism farm "U Chłopa", Chmielno	1. Get off lightly. 2. Janko the Musician. 3. From grain to bread. 4. Painting on glass. 5. Baking cakes. 6. Leave the computers – come and learn about Kashubia.
Agritourism farm "Pod Lipą", Sierakowice	1. A visit to the country. 2. Adventure with Kashubian nature. 3. All about Kashubia 4. Learning traditional craft.
"Jałowcowa Dolina", Sylczno	1. A day at the farmer's. 2. Encounters with Kashubian history and nature. 3. Kashubian cultural heritage.
"Kaszëbskô Zagroda", Pierszczewo	1. From grain to bread.
"Lavender Farm", Przywidz	1. Ecology on the farm. 2. Lavender tales. 3. Culinary workshop with lavender – what is it about? 4. Lavender oils workshop. 5. Soap workshop. 6. Lavender manufacture of women's happiness. 7. Santa Claus family workshop.
"Wiejska Zagroda", Osice	1. Why do we raise animals and plants? 2. Delicious treasures of nature. 3. Żuławy – various viewpoints.
"Stadnina Koni Maciukiewicz", Nowęcino	1. Breeding and use of horses.
Agritourism farm "Maciejówka", Opalenie	1. Learn about the world of horses. 2. Country life behind the scenes.
Apiary "U Strusi", Jantar	1. The role of bees in nature. 2. Bee products. 3. The ostrich's life.
"Magic Farm", Czarnylas	1. Pumpkin festival. 2. The world of wool from Bella the sheep. 3. Kociewie rituals. 4. Mad rabbit. 5. Naughty goat. 6. Roosters and hens. 7. Looking for treasure in the forest.
Stock and agritourism farm "Alpaki na Kaszubach", Nowa Huta	1. Using exotic and farm animals in agritourism. 2. Dry felting of wool. 3. Arts and folklore. 4. The quaint world of the sanctuary.
"Mały Holender", Żelichowo	1. Cheese making – the Żuławy style. 2. Wild kitchen – identifying, collecting and preparing wild plants. 3. The secrets of good pastries. 4. The secrets of the arcade house. 5. Painting Żuławy chests. 6. Lesson in the mill. 7. Reading Żuławy cemetery symbols. 8. Photography panel. 9. Making soap. 10. Basic course of anti-flood protection.
Art and Relaxation Farm, Wilcze Błota	1. Crop and wild plants. 2. Herbs in nature. 3. Herbs in art. 4. Herbs in art and nature. 5. Following the Kashubian tradition. 6. Midsummer night in Kashubia. 7. Plaiting utility items.
Agritourism farm "Turze", Turze	1. Raising and using horses. 2. Collecting various plants, and animal habitat in the forest. 3. Local history. 4. Dairy cattle breeding and milk acquisition. 5. Visitig the farm.
Wiatrak Paltrak "U młynarza", Mokry Dwór	1. Old ways of cereal production. 2. Growing vegetables. 3. Milling – a forgotten craft. The miller's job. 4. Żuławy Gdańskie.
"Gowińska Zagroda", Gowino	1. The secrets of our forest. 2. Sheep. 3. Learning about Polish corn. 4. Kashubian folk art. 5. Goats in the past and today.
"Sołtysówka Zagroda", Łapalice	1. From grain to bread. Baking rolls. 2. Learning about farm animals. 3. Cultural heritage of the Kashubian region. 4. Discovering the secrets of enchanting Kashubia. 5. Painting on the tree. 6. The Potato Day – seasonal.
Museum farm "Izba", Bychowo	1. Rolls and buns 2. Crumpets and fritters. 3. Kashubia painted on glass. 4. Kashubian cushions. 5. Painting with meadow and field. 6. Soap fantasies.

Source: own study based on the home pages of Ogólnopolska Sieć Zagród Edukacyjnych.

of the farm and first and foremost the owner’s passions and interests. Table 1 presents detailed offers of educational farms.

Pomeranian farms usually provide educational activities connected with plant production (92%) and learning about the rural tangible and intangible cultural heritage (80%). Nearly half of the farms provide programmes connected with agricultural produce processing, environmental and consumer education (Fig. 6).

Activities cover a wide range of topics (Fig. 7). Although outdoor recreational activities are the most commonly provided by the farms, the basic educational activity of agritourism farms is connected with showing life in the countryside and getting to know the farmer’s work.

The possibility of observing production processes and field works was declared by 90% of surveyed farms – 68% of them provide specific educational programmes. The initiatives showing life in the village are activities called “A farmer’s day” – the secrets

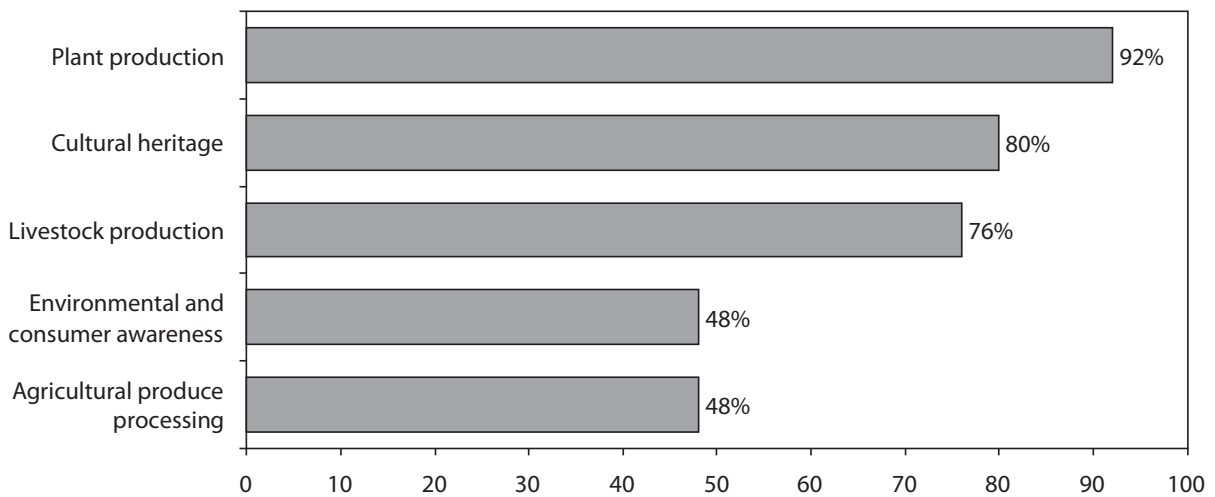


Fig. 6. Scope of educational programmes

Source: own study based on surveys.

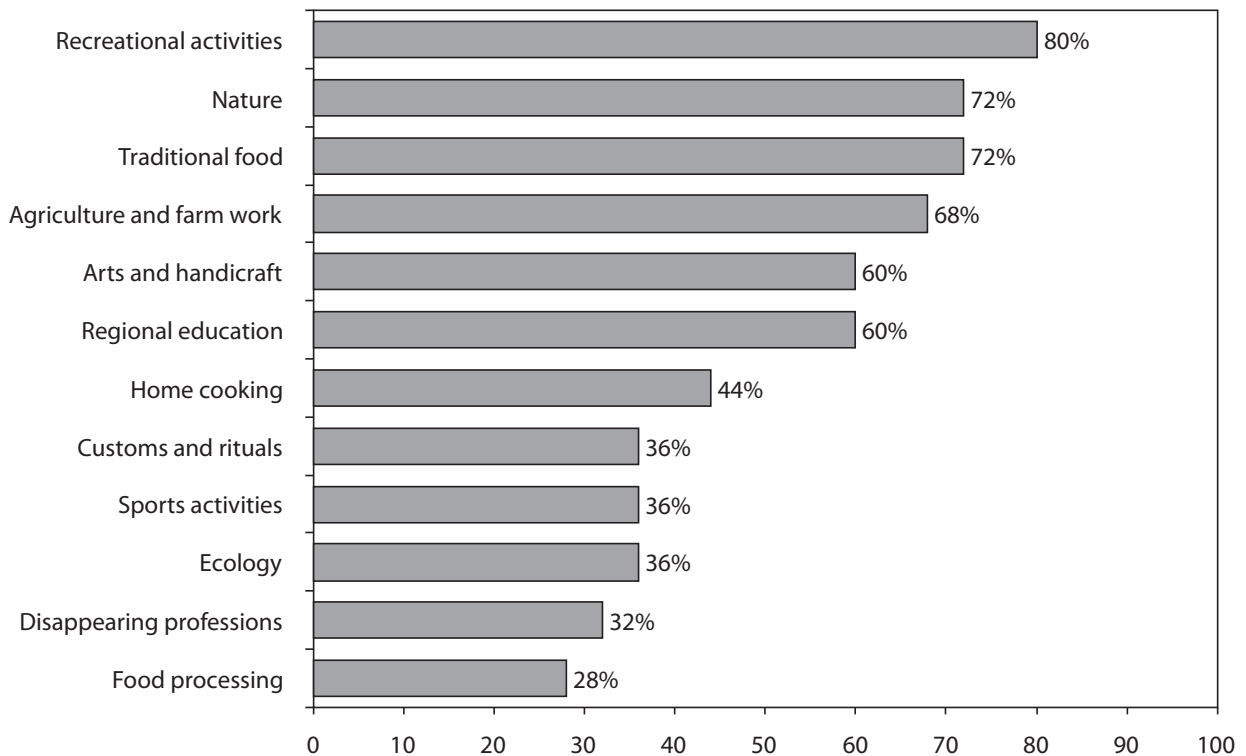


Fig. 7. Topics of provided educational activities

Source: own study based on surveys.

of everyday farm activities, farmer's life, countryside is fun or country life behind the scenes.

Education in the scope of plant production is provided by 92% of the farms. Programmes showing that process include: *corn lesson, why do we grow corn, from grain to bread, vegetables and their use, lavender tales, crop and wild plants and herbs in nature*. During the demonstration called *from grain to bread* provided by the farm "Kaszëbskô Zagrodô"², the visitors (mostly children) can see a multimedia presentation on the stages of corn growth and then visit the farm in order to try and identify the types of corn grown there. They also take part in baking homemade bread and making souvenirs using the technique of salt dough modelling. On Lavender Farm, visitors can listen to lavender tales, participate in lavender culinary workshop – "what is it all about" or lavender oils workshop.

Zoological education plays an important role in agritourism. Visitors learn about animals' customs and behaviours through observation and participation in 1–2 hour activities such as: *horse breeding and use, the world of horses, the world of bunnies, mad bunny, the role of bees in nature, naughty goat, roosters and hens, use of exotic animals (alpacas and llamas) and farm animals in agritourism*. The offer of Zaczarowany Folwark (Magic Farm) is also worth knowing as it has provided educational workshops called "Our animals" for years. The activities aim at raising respect for animals and broadening the knowledge about their lives. Apart from activities on the farm, representatives of the farms visit pre-schools and schools with their animals. Activities conducted in educational institutions usually last about 45 minutes. Stock and agritourism farm "Alpaki na Kaszubach" provide alpaca therapy for pre-school and school age children including children with disabilities (Autism, cerebral palsy, etc.). Farms "Maciejówka" and "Maciukiewicz Stadnina Koni" provide hippotherapy. Similarly, the owners of Farm "Turze" run activities designed for children, adolescents, adults and the disabled concerning horse and Jersey dairy cows breeding. This farm annually hosts the Foundation for Multi-profile Improvement OD NOWA which provides "Original play" – horse play workshops for teachers, therapists and educators. The farm "Pasieka u strusi" provides apitherapy.

Contact with animals is a great tourist attraction as well as a form of education. It shows tourists how much work needs to be done to eventually obtain various food products of animal origin (Marks et al., 2007). **Education in the scope of food production** is provided by 76% of the farms. Examples of

educational activities presenting the process of food acquisition and production in the surveyed farms include: *milk lesson, dairy cattle breeding and obtaining milk, talks on why we produce, the world of hens, the life of the ostrich, the world of wool and sheep and bee products*. "Pasieka u strusi" provides interesting educational activities in these areas, and visitors have an opportunity to watch one working bee family placed in a glass hive (no risk of being stung). Also, there is a "hotel" built for wild bees, where solitary bees, e.g., mason bees, can be seen especially in spring.

Another area of education aims to familiarise tourists with **the cultural heritage of Pomeranian rural areas**. Culture means all the creations of human activity, tangible and intangible, values and methods of conduct, recognised, objectified and adopted in given communities, transferred to other communities and next generations (Szczepeński, 1970). Agritourism is a medium of knowledge for tourists, and a method of saving cultural heritage from oblivion for villages and agritourism farms (Firlík, 2007). It creates the possibility of comparing the proper culture in the place of residence of tourists with rural culture. On the one hand, it shows the diversity of these cultures, and on the other hand, it teaches tolerance and creates the basis for dialogue between them (Sikorska-Wolak, 2007).

The results of field observations allow stating that there has been a return to old rituals, customs and preservation of traditions in the rural areas of the voivodeship of Pomerania. Folklore activities of folk bands, regional cuisine and folk handicraft are promoted as well. On the farms, visitors get familiar with both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. 36% of the surveyed entities provide educational activities showing local customs and rituals. 60% of the educational farms provide folk arts and handicraft workshops which are very popular with visitors.

The Kashubian and Kociewie customs and traditions are the most vital on the farms. Since May 2005, the Kashubian language has been the second official language in 10 communes of the Pomeranian voivodeship along with dialects: Kociewie, Krajna, Tuchola and new mixed dialects (Ustawa z dnia..., 2005). On the surveyed farms, Kashubian people cultivate such customs of their ancestors as "Dyngus kłującym jałowcem" (Wet Monday with prickly juniper), "Sobótki" (Kupala Night), seven-colour embroidery. Some of the hosts and household members are able to communicate in the Kashubian language which is still used today. The farm "U Rychertów" provides educational programme involving learning the Kashubian alphabet for instance.

On numerous farms of the Bytowski and Kashubian Lake Districts, many Kashubian traditions are

² A Kashubian name which means a Kashubian Farm.

cultivated including embroidery, pottery and ceramics (with specific colours and floral motifs). The hosts also emphasise the participation of their family members in a number of folklore groups and folk bands whose activity is frequently included in the offer. Tourists on agritourism farms can get acquainted with Kashubian music during so-called ethnic food festivals. Kashubian culture is presented during educational activities on the farms and they include: *Kashubian cultural heritage, Following Kashubian tradition, Kashubian region lessons, Leave computers – come and learn about Kashubia, All about Kashubia, Painting Kashubian embroidery patterns on glass, Adventure with Kashubian nature, Learning traditional crafts, Encounters with Kashubian history and nature, Kupala Night in Kashubia, Kociewie art and folk rituals.*

The Kashubian and Borowiacki traditions are cultivated on the farms of the Tuchola Forest region due to the large ethnic diversity of this region. The hosts renovated and maintained the specific architecture including: wooden cottages, farms with a well in the middle, rail fences and fences made with interlacing poles, outbuildings and granaries. Folk traditions are also reflected in music, ceramics and sculpture. On the other hand, visitors can learn about the culture of Żuławy Wiślane area participating in activities called *Żuławy from different points of view, reading the symbols in Żuławy cemeteries, painting Żuławy chests or making Żuławy cheese.* 60% of the farms under study provide **regional education**.

All aspects of culinary culture deserve particular attention when it comes to the rural tourism market including traditional raw materials and food products, eating habits, types of food, methods of preparing food, and the process of consumption itself. Visible interest in the culinary heritage of rural areas is an opportunity for the development of local entrepreneurship and the preservation of folk culture related directly or indirectly to food (Dorocki, Struś, 2015; Orłowski, Woźniczko, 2015).

Culinary education is also conducted on Pomeranian agritourism farms. The agritourism providers offer various educational activities that are aimed at tourists of all age groups, and their main goal is to acquire or develop practical skills related to learning about regional cuisine. In addition to offering their own culinary products, it is possible to participate in their preparation and production together with the hostess. Tourists have an opportunity (within the specifics of the offered culinary products) to participate in the entire production cycle from the stage of harvesting agricultural products to the final product on the plate. The hosts serving regional cuisine encourage guests to learn about the local culinary traditions. Nationwide research conducted by

M. Marks et al., (2007) and D. Orłowski (2008) shows that tourists appreciate educational values that are associated with participation in kitchen work, learning how to prepare regional dishes and drinks, and acquiring skills related to traditional food processing. The Pomeranian voivodeship is similar in this respect. A wide range of educational culinary activities provided by Pomeranian farms includes such initiatives as:

- traditional bread baking;
- baking cakes and cookies – for holidays or rituals;
- making and moulding butter;
- manufacture of pressed cottage cheese;
- meat preservation – smoking;
- meat processing – production of sausages, brawn, black sausage, jellies, cold meats;
- smoking and processing of freshwater and marine fish;
- fruit and vegetable processing, i.e. pickling cabbage, pickling cucumbers, drying fruit, making juices, preserves, marmalades, jams and powidła³;
- drying herbs and mushrooms;
- traditional picking and spinning of honey in an apiary located in a fruit orchard or garden;
- preparing non-alcoholic beverages from forest and garden fruits – beetroot or bread sourdough, birch, maple, mint or elderberry;
- preparing alcoholic beverages – fruit and herbal tinctures;
- preparing regional dishes.

Educational culinary activities mostly involve baking bread, cookies and crumpets, making cheese, butter and cream, pressing fruit juices, identifying and drying herbs. The farm Pasięka "U Strusi" provides activities teaching how to prepare honey with propolis, bee pollen and a warming honey with cinnamon. The farm "Stadnina Koni Maciukiewicz" runs a seasonal restaurant "Pod Gołębnikiem" where they serve local dishes belonging to the European Network of Regional Culinary Heritage. Some of the farms provide regional dishes made with the use of traditional equipment, e.g., coal stoves, kneading-troughs, bowls, pokers, wooden shovels, butter dishes, barrels, moulds, cheese presses, slicers and stoneware pots. The greatest attraction in "Kaszëbskô Zagroda" is a large wood-fired bread oven where they bake bread according to an old recipe. The farmers cultivate this tradition and they have submitted an application to place their "Bread from Pirsno" in the list of traditional products. 12% of the farms under study have bread ovens. In nearly 30% of the farms, so-called culinary feasts are offered – tasting of regional dishes and traditional food products prepared

³ It is a specific type of jam made from plums.

according to recipes handed down in the family for generations. Kashubian feasts (with singing, dancing, roasting a boar, a piglet or a ram) prevail in the offers of the farms under study.

A very important educational aspect of agritourism farms is the ability to shape appropriate attitudes towards nature and landscape protection. It is particularly important as tourism today tends to be environmentally friendly and promote environmental trends (Al-Sayed, Al-Langawi, 2003). Educational farms are designed to raise environmental awareness, show life in compliance with the laws of nature and prevent the effects of over-exploitation of natural resources. Educational activities provided by the farms should contribute to the dissemination and deepening of knowledge about nature as well as shape the tourist's sensitivity (Kurczewski, 2007).

The offers of 72% of the surveyed farms include nature workshops, while 36% of them include ecology workshops addressed to children and young people staying on the farms within the so-called green school project. During the classes, participants follow didactic paths on the farm or in the vicinity (with stations in the garden, in the field, in the meadow, in the forest). They also take care of the farm animals or work in the garden (gardening with environmentally-friendly methods).

The offers of farms located near national parks (Słowiński National Park and the Tuchola Forest National Park) emphasise the possibility of using the resources of these places. At the same time, the environmental education centres located in the parks or along designated didactic paths are pointed out as perfect places to visit by tourists staying in the countryside. "Alpacas in Kashubia" farm ("Alpaki na Kaszubach") provides activities aiming to teach children about flora and fauna in the nearby nature sanctuaries: Lubygość Lake and Żurawie Błota. "Maciejówka" farm provides a carriage ride to the Chamber of Environmental Education at the forester's lodge in Opalenie (equipped with a number of interesting and modern didactic aids), and a visit to the Apiculture Education Centre called "Miodowe Rajskie Pólka" where visitors can learn about the life of bees and the healing properties of honey. The agritourism farm "Lipy" prepared a special educational offer in the forest maze with paths and information boards. Agritourism farms "Pod Lipą" and "Jałowcowa Dolina" provide an adventure with Kashubian nature. Lavender Farm provides activities called *ecology on the farm* which show ecological cultivation of several species of lavender in one of the biggest lavender fields in Poland. On the other hand, Art and Relaxation Farm organises herbal classes. There are

educational paths along a meadow of herbs and flowers with descriptions of each plant.

Educational sports and recreation programmes provided by most of the farms are designed mostly for children and adolescents. They are always personalised depending on the participants' age and fitness. The offers include horse riding, carriage driving, forests rallies and team games.

The research shows that the offers of Pomeranian educational farms are usually created and modified according to the demands and interests of service users. Also, the prices are negotiable depending on the group size and the scope of the offer. Such a flexible approach of the farmers shows in varied offers depending on the season, the life cycle of the farm and the weather.

4. Summary

The research proves that a majority of small but vigorously operating agritourism farms (up to 10 ha) are interested in the development of educational activities, and membership in the Network of Educational Farms enables them to enter a new market, lengthen the tourist season and extend their offers. Pomeranian farms have extensive educational facilities including stables, cowsheds, granaries, garages, shades, cheese dairies, home bakeries, apiaries and craft workshops. Most of the farms conduct educational activities in their gardens, orchards, vegetable gardens and herbaria. In the majority of the entities, educational activities are conducted in home gardens, orchards, vegetable gardens or herbaria. The farms offer personalised educational programmes depending on the farm's profile and the farmer's passions. Over 50% of the entities have adjusted their farms and provide activities for special groups, mostly groups of people with disabilities. Although organised groups of children and adolescents constitute the majority of the service users, more and more often adults use the services, as they perceive them as a good source of knowledge, entertainment and relaxation. More than 50% of the entities have personalised their offers and provide activities for special groups – mostly groups of disabled people.

Pomeranian educational farms offer a wide variety of educational activities. Most farms provide several educational programmes organised in the form of shows, demonstrations, contests, workshops and outdoor activities. The main aim of such initiatives is to activate the visitors. Educational programmes connected with plant and livestock production prevail in the offers. Visitors learn about country life, acquire knowledge about agricultural production

and food processing. Numerous activities present rich tangible and intangible culture of Pomeranian rural areas. The Kashubian and Kociewie traditional customs and patterns are the most outstanding on the farms under study. Handicraft and folk products offered by the farms are generating more and more interest. Tourists can learn to make cut-outs and to paint, sing and dance as well as to try embroidery, weaving, pottery, wickerwork, jewellery production and sculpture. Educational offers of the farms also include activities of folk groups and folk artists. Several farms provide regional culinary education which is very popular with visitors. Another popular part of the offers are Kashubian culinary festivals combined with local folklore. Environmental educational programmes are the domain of farms located in the vicinity of protected areas. The main recipients of nature and environmental workshops are children and adolescents arriving within the “green schools” project. Apart from standard offer, Pomeranian farms provide innovative educational programmes of apitherapy, alpaco therapy and hippotherapy.

Generally, it can be stated that all educational activities carried out on the agritourism farms under study contribute to the dissemination and broadening of knowledge about the farmer’s life and the natural and cultural environment of the Pomeranian rural areas. They shape the sensitivity of tourists and lead to raising environmental awareness.

Both schools and the agricultural sector benefit from education conducted on the farms. Education becomes more varied, and the education process becomes richer due to hands-on educational programmes, workshops covering different subjects, alternative venues of education and learning about rural culture. On the other hand, it is also important for the agricultural sector to meet their potential customers and raise their awareness of the needs of rural economy. It also constitutes a variety and expansion of the farmer’s life, work with children and teachers, a creative development of farming families as well as additional income.

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