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## Agritourism in opposition to agriculture? Two Greek case-studies

### Introduction

Agritourism has been a component of the EU, and therefore of the Greek policy for the development of the countryside since the mid-1980s. Agritourism was initially meant to function as an alternative means towards the improvement of farm structures and, through the obtainment of supplementary income, to enhance farm succession rates as well as the prospects of rural populations to stay in their native communities (e.g. EEC, Reg. 797/85).

This strategy was subsequently differentiated along with the emergence of concepts such as integrated (and sustainable) rural development, endogenous development and multifunctionality which, in turn, transformed the development rationale. The Community Initiative LEADER pioneered in the implementation of projects incorporating the new rationale and thus opened up the opportunities for non-farmers and non-residents of the target areas to access the available financial assistance in order to establish agritourism related businesses (Koutsouris & Hatzantonis, 2002). In the Greek case, the fragmentation of the responsibility for the implementation of such a rationale (e.g. Giagou, 2000) resulted in the financing of such businesses via multiple programmes without either coordination, a clear definition of the 'product' or a certain legal framework.

A consequence of such a trajectory, in Greece, has been the lack of any systematic register of agritourism related businesses and their owners which would allow for the thorough exploration of the 'agritourism

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phenomenon' as well as the design of a coherent national strategy for its development. Nowadays, relevant information comes from a number of case-studies which, nevertheless, provide useful insights on the contribution of agritourism to local development, the variety of the established agritourism businesses, the quality of the products and services offered, relevant cooperative schemes, etc. (see, *inter alia*, Anthopoulou *et al.* 2000; Gidarakou *et al.* 2000; Emmanouilidou *et al.* 2000; Iakovidou & Partalidou, 2002; Partalidou, 2005; Sfakianakis, 2000).

However, some quite important issues have not been explored. Such issues concern, among others, the relationship between agritourism and farming (i.e. the contribution of the former to the survival or the abandonment of the latter, including farm succession), the characteristics of agritourism entrepreneurs and thus the contribution of such businesses to the local economy as well as the economics of agritourism related businesses and their prospects (as standing alone businesses or in conjunction with other sources of income).

Given such an issue this piece of work aims at exploring the characteristics of agritourism entrepreneurs (and their households), their origin and residence in relation to the area where their agritourism businesses are established as well as the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship. It further tries to trace the degree to which farmers take advantage of the opportunities and get involved in agritourism. Additionally, it attempts, through an approximation at household level, to compare the incomes earned from agritourism and farming as well as to estimate the (succession) prospects of both activities (agriculture and tourism).

The current paper is based on the results of two different case studies: the first one concerns the Dorida municipality, Fokida Prefecture (Sterea Ellada region, southern Greece) a barely known destination; the second one concerns the Lake Plastiras area, Karditsa Prefecture (Thessaly region, central Greece), one of the most well-known rural tourism destinations in the country (see: Koutsouris, 2009).

### **Theoretical background**

During the last few decades, the countryside, all over the developed world, is been challenged as never before; it faces unprecedented change (characterised as 'rural restructuring' by Marsden, 1998), the pace of which is considered to be increasing. Issues such as the extensive restructuring of agriculture, population decline, the downsizing of services, degradation of the natural resources as well as counter-urbanisation trends are indicative of such a process (Varley *et al.* 2009). As a result, the functions of agriculture and the rural space are transformed from production-orientated to novel ones aiming at the satisfaction of consumption-type demands (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997; Potter & Burney, 2002).

In terms of theory, such changes triggered the debate on the shift from productivism to post-productivism and thus a new, post-productivist or multifunctional model (or regime) for agriculture (e.g. Ilbery & Bowler, 1998; Lobley & Potter, 2004; Maye *et al.* 2009; Wilson, 2008). Multifunctionality, a key-term in this debate, is understood to relate to the combination of resources available both at the farm level and beyond and the creation of synergies between different fields of activity and between different levels and actors; it thus provides both the need and the opportunity for increased levels of pluriactivity and multiple job holding (Knickel & Renting, 2000; Robertson *et al.* 2008). Furthermore, van der Ploeg and Renting (2004) have defined rural development as a boundary shift and distinguished between three types of such boundary shifts: deepening (focusing on new farming activities), broadening (referring to on-farm but non-agricultural activities, including agritourism) and regrouping (with respect to efficiency farming and off-farm gainful activities or pluriactivity).

Meanwhile, pluriactivity, diversification and multifunctionality<sup>2</sup> have emerged as a fundamental component of the CAP strategy towards rural development, under the umbrella of the 'sustainable (rural) development' rhetoric. Especially the endorsement of agritourism development policies was founded on the understanding that through tourism the rural household can diversify its income generating activities which, in turn, would make it possible for its members to live in the countryside based on agriculture and the utilization of its resources (see, *inter alia*, Brandth, 2005; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011; Page & Connell, 2001; Park & Yoon, 2010; Van der Ploeg & Renting, 2004). The relationship between tourism and agriculture becomes obvious in the definition of agritourism in countries such as Italy where, in quite an early stage, the relevant legal framework had been developed with agritourism being, since 1985, defined as "activities of hospitality performed by agricultural entrepreneurs and their family members that must remain connected and complementary to farming activities" (Sonnino, 2004: 286).

In Greece the emergence of agritourism has been quite late. The first signs of agritourism appeared in the islands and coastal regions during 1960s, however in the context of a dynamic development of mass tourism - thus not corresponding to any particular policy framework or guidelines. The idea of agritourism started playing an important role in the planning of the country's local development policy only after the country's accession in the EEC/EU in 1981, stimulated by the latter's agritourism programmes for the diversification of the rural economy in the mountainous and disadvantaged areas. Within such a framework, till the late 1990s, the relation-

<sup>2</sup> The further elaboration of such contested concepts is not among the aims of the present paper; for a discussion see: Aguglia *et al.* 2011; Knickel and Renting, 2000; Robertson *et al.* 2008; Van Huylenbroeck *et al.* 2007; Wilson, 2008.

ship between agritourism and agriculture was made obvious through the requirement that one should be a farmer, permanent inhabitant of the target-area, in order to be eligible to access the available, at the time, financial support/incentives<sup>3</sup> (Ministry of Agriculture, 2000). Since the early 2000s though, the framework of the criteria concerning the potential investors' occupation and origin was differentiated owing both to farmers' diffidence in getting involved with tourism and the strategy of integrated rural development, dictating the mobilization of resources beyond the ones available by local farmers or residents.

Indeed, around that time, the theoretical debate and the call for sustainable production systems facilitated the EU decision-makers' shift from sectoral towards spatial, multisectoral and integrated policies for rural development (Walford, 2003). Sustainable rural development thus became the cornerstone of the EU, national, regional and local development policies; hence, the diversification of economic activities was actively promoted through the third and fourth Rural Development Programmes (2000-2006 and 2007-2013, respectively) (EC Reg. 1257/1999, 1698/2005). In this respect, both rural inhabitants and others were allowed to access the financial support provided for the development of new businesses in the rural space; in parallel, public bodies (especially the local authorities) were financially supported for the protection of their cultural and natural resources. The Community Initiative LEADER is characteristic of such an innovative approach involving the local population and agencies in local development processes aiming at the mobilization of local resources, with emphasis on the underutilized human and material resources of the rural families (notably the farming ones), towards the creation of additional income sources.

Indeed, in Greece, the major push towards integrated local development was provided through the LEADER Initiative addressing the development needs of the country's less favoured and mountainous areas (LFAs). Additionally, the Integrated Programmes for the development of the rural space (IRSDP), also addressing the Greek LFAs, was first implemented in the framework of the third Rural Development Programme (2000-2006). The IRSDP scheme continued in the fourth RDP (2007-2013) as a result of the persisting problems (i.e. declining agriculture and population) and the perceived advantages (i.e. the availability of resources such as the intact natural environment, the diversity of landscapes and the rich cultural heritage) of the country's LFAs; within the sustained interest on integrated rural development and multifunctionality, LFAs continued to be the main target-areas in terms of the need for local economic diversification.

<sup>3</sup> See also: Iakovidou, 1995.

Yet, contrary to the developments in countries with a 'tradition' in agritourism (e.g. Italy, France, Germany), in Greece there is still lack of a national legal framework for soft tourism. The categorization of agritourism accommodation businesses follows the standards of the National Board of Tourism which does not differentiate between mass and soft tourism, especially agritourism. Moreover, the anxiety for the uptake of the available EU funding (Koutsouris, 2008) along with the fragmentation of competency as well as the lack of coordination between agricultural, tourism and land use policies jeopardize agritourism development; they allow for the establishment of dotted (often, low-quality) infrastructure and businesses which do not substantially contribute to either households' incomes or local development; moreover, many of these businesses have been established in already or potentially saturated, in terms of tourism, areas.

Turning to agritourism development, an important issue raised by Busby and Rendle (2000) concerns the fact that farmers often lack appropriate skills; they may be isolated, without prior experience or training in tourism. Moreover, age, the innovative character of the new activity and the lack of sufficient capital (see: Koutsouris, 2008) are factors that prevent farmers from engagement with tourism related activities.

According to Garrod *et al.* (2006) tourism and farming, while overlapping to a certain extent, differ quite substantially. Tourism-related activities imply the development of a new identity on the part of the land owner (such as in terms of communication, politeness, the development of positive experiences for the guests, etc.) which diverge from those of the farmer. Furthermore, since identity is related to occupation, it has been shown that, on the one hand, the more a tourism entrepreneur the farmer becomes the more s/he dissociates her/himself from the farmer identity and, on the other hand, that s/he restricts her/his involvement with farming or abandons it altogether (Brandth, 2005; Sonnino, 2004; van der Ploeg & Renting 2004)<sup>4</sup>.

According to the OECD (1994), while farm-based tourism is a means to alleviate the problems agriculture faces, it is not a panacea. The inability of small farms to provide accommodation facilities, the indifference of large farms to diversify towards tourism, the indifference of local authorities and farm coops and professional organisations to contribute to the improvement of infrastructure and the promotion of their areas as tourism destinations, the lack of (natural or cultural) attractions, and distance are among the factors that do not allow especially small farms to get involved. Notwithstanding other factors, it has to be underlined that Greece, with

<sup>4</sup> According to Sonnino (2004), many of the farmers involved in agritourism in Maremma (Castelborgo, Italy) would have abandoned farming if only they were not restricted by law to continue farming; in parallel, despite expectations, no investments on the farms, coming of the agritourism earnings, were detected.

an average farm size of around 5 ha., is a country where small scale farming predominates; this is indeed more obvious in the less favoured areas, which have been the areas mainly addressed by agritourism development programmes. Moreover such areas are characterised by deterioration of the social web, aged population and lack of financial resources on the part of locals (see: Anthopoulou *et al.* 2000).

As far as research on agritourism in Greece is concerned, it has to be mentioned that it has largely neglected issues such as the economics of agritourism businesses, the businesses' contribution to families' incomes (and its comparison to the families' farming incomes) and their prospects (including succession). Instead, as aforementioned, research has mainly focused on the services (i.e. variety and quality) provided by agritourism businesses, the guests' characteristics, tourist occupancy and the like. Research has also addressed the relation between gender and agritourism pointing to the difficulties pertaining the development of women's entrepreneurship but, on the other hand, the increasing women's interest for collective ventures (through women's cooperatives operating accommodation units or utilizing the local culture relating to crafts, folklore, gastronomy, etc.) as well (Anthopoulou, 2006; Gidarakou, 2007; Gidarakou *et al.* 2000; Kazakopoulos & Gidarakou, 2003; Koutsou *et al.* 2003; Papadaki-Klavdianou, 2007)<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding women, according to Giraud (1999) agritourism, as an occupation and income generating activity, is preferred than agriculture. Women's endeavour to acquire occupational identity and utilise their labour force, which was made redundant as a result of the modernisation (particularly mechanisation) of agriculture, motivates them to get involved with agritourism; in other words, agritourism provides women with the opportunity to elevate their occupational status and contribution to the family income. Research has shown that, for example, through agritourism women can utilise their specific qualities (such as their communication skills; Gidarakou, 2008; Skordili, 2005) and professionalise activities with which they are usually involved in the framework of their household economy (see: Bock, 2004; Gidarakou *et al.* 2000; Nilsson, 2002). As Bock (1994) underlines, agritourism (as an employment field) is female; at the same time though, women's entrepreneurship is lagging behind in rural areas (Gidarakou *et al.* 2000; O'Hara, 1994; Ventura, 1994).

Research in Greece has shown that the presence of women as owners/managers of accommodation units is notable, approaching 40% (Vasileiadou, 2008; Grava, 2011). The presence of women in agritourism is also remarkable in LEADER+ and IRSDP in the third RDP (59% and 37% respectively; Gidarakou, 2008). Nevertheless, such numbers do not, for a variety

<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that nowadays, around 200 such coops are in operation, with the first one been established in 1983.

of reasons (such women's compliance with the family livelihood strategy), straightforwardly imply that women are actually involved with the running of the agritourism businesses (Gidarakou *et al.* 2008).

With respect to the economics of agritourism related businesses, recent research addressing the owners of accommodation units in mountainous Korinthia (Peloponnese), a well-known tourism destination near Athens, provides interesting insights (Grava, 2011). In the first place, quite a number of accommodation units' owners live in Athens (44% before and 31% after the establishment of the business); overall, their majority (68%) does not stay permanently in the area and their main occupation and source of income is not agritourism. Furthermore, businesses are differentiated depending upon the owners' relationship to agriculture (i.e. not involved in farming - without a farm; farming being a supplementary occupation; or, farming being the main occupation). Research revealed that the households whose owners are either not involved with farming or are involved but as a secondary occupation operate their accommodation units with loss; i.e. the average operational cost of the accommodation unit (mainly comprising loans as well as the salaries of permanent staff - the owners do not permanently live in the area and have to hire staff to operate their business) surpasses the revenues. On the contrary, the accommodation units of the households whose owners are primarily occupied in farming contribute substantially to the household's income (on average 24,000 €); this is so since these households have lower loans as well as fewer permanent staff (i.e. they only occupy short-term, temporary staff). As Page and Connell (2001) have argued family labour tends to be the main resource utilized in farm tourism enterprises. Other research findings in Crete (Vasileiadou, 2008) show that according to the majority of the owners (i.e. their own estimations) the income from tourism is generally low to moderate (up to 15,000 € per year).

As far as the succession of agritourism businesses is concerned, it has to be stressed that it largely depends on the business's profitability, a topic which nevertheless has not, so far, attracted the attention of agritourism research. Grava's research (2011) provides some hints by showing that currently the great majority of accommodation owners' children in mountainous Korinthia are not occupied in either agriculture or tourism; additionally, while quite some children 'give a hand' in their parents' agritourism businesses this is not the case for farming. The case of succession certainly is more complex as compared to its viability under the present owner. Some indications from Greece, concerning rural women's businesses or cooperatives, are not encouraging; the prospects of their children to become involved are bleak; no matter if businesses concern accommodation or other tourism related activities succession prospects are poor. As a matter of fact, research shows that such businesses have been established to provide (alternative) employment to the current own-

er(s) rather than with a view to their heirs (Iakovidou *et al.* 2006; Gidarakou, 1999; Gidarakou *et al.* 2000). Nevertheless, under the current economic crisis and the huge unemployment rates among the younger generation it is possible that the latter's employment orientations have changed.

Finally, the expectation that agritourism will support the continuance of farming, by the household and especially by heirs, has not been dealt with. The indications provided by Grava (2011), based as aforementioned on the involvement of children in both activities, point to rather pessimistic prospects.

## **Case study areas and research methodology**

### **Research areas**

Following, the results of two Greek case studies are presented. The first case study concerns the Dorida municipality, part of the Fokida Prefecture. It comprises 55 villages, 80% of which are characterized as mountainous. Farms are very small (average 1.7 ha.); almost two out of three are involved in plant production with olive tree plantations dominating the landscape. The great majority of the rest are mixed farms; animal production concerns sheep and goat husbandry. Agriculture is characterized by its low competitiveness owing to the high costs of production and difficulties in the transportation and thus the marketing of the produces. The area has quite a number of picturesque mountainous villages built according to the traditional area's architecture; there are also opportunities for trekking as well visiting religious sites and folklore museums. The presence of 77 cultural clubs, organising a wide range of cultural activities in the area, is also noticeable, since it enhances the attractiveness of the area. Nevertheless, the area is a rather unknown tourism destination.

The second research area concerns a Less Favoured Area (LFA) around the Lake Plastiras, including 14 villages. The Plastiras Lake is an artificial one; it was constructed during the 1958 - 1962 period covering a previously fertile mountainous plateau to satisfy the needs for water supply and irrigation of the city of Karditsa and another 38 plain towns and villages, and the production of electricity. As a result, the area experienced a severe population exodus (Koutsouris, 2008).

Despite its natural beauty and value, as well as religious monuments and other attractions (cultural festivities, etc.) the lake area had not been considered as an important resource for the surrounding communities until 1987 (Kasimis *et al.* 2009). Then, a local development project designed on behalf of the Prefectural authorities indicated rural tourism (with an emphasis on agritourism and various other forms of alternative/soft tourism) as the path to development. Following, the construction of the first hostels by the local authorities, the nation-wide marketing of the natural beauty of

the area, public investments in infrastructure, a number of projects as well as, on a later stage, private investments triggered by the local LEADER II (and thereafter LEADER+) helped to change the area's profile thus transforming it to a major tourism destination among Greeks (Koutsouris, 2009).

Agriculture in the area has, since 1961, experienced a serious decline in terms of the numbers of farm holdings, cultivated lands and animal numbers. Farms are small sized (average of 1.3 ha. per farm) and fragmented (4.5 parcels per holding on average). Nowadays, fallow lands and grasslands account for almost half of the agricultural land. Productivity is low due to the fragmentation of properties and the steep sloping of the land. Livestock farming is still 'traditional'; it is labour intensive with low rates of capital investment and heavily dependent on pasture during the summertime and autumn (Koutsouris, 2008).

## **Methodology**

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews with agritourism entrepreneurs based on structured questionnaires comprising both closed and open-ended questions. It is worth mentioning at this point that in rural Greece accommodation is the dominant form of the newly established agritourism activities followed by the renovation or the establishment of catering businesses, i.e. restaurants as well as neo-traditional taverns and coffee shops; other tourism related activities are rather rare in the countryside.

More specifically, in the Dorida case, the research (2011) addressed all the entrepreneurs who operated accommodation units in the area; 41 out of the 47 owners were reached and interviewed.

The current paper also draws on part of the data collected at the Neohori village in the Lake Plastiras area (2007). Neohori is the core of tourism development in the study-area (25 out of the 70 accommodation establishments in the Lake's 14 communities are found in Neohori). The survey followed a snowball technique among residents with tourism related activities; 18 (out of 66) entrepreneurs were interviewed.

## **Results**

### **The Dorida case**

#### **Entrepreneurs' identity**

The majority of the accommodation owners are relatively young when compared to the average age of farmers in the country<sup>6</sup>; more spe-

<sup>6</sup> According to the 2001 Census, 45% of the farmers (heads) are between 45-64 yrs old and 31% over 65.

cifically, 60% are up to 55 years old (22.5% under 45 years) and 10% over 65 (Table 1).

Table 1 – *Entrepreneurs' age and gender (Dorida)*

Age clusters	No.	%	Men	Women
Up to 45 yrs	9	22.5	8	1
46 – 55	15	37.5	10	5
56-65	12	30.0	9	3
> 65	4	10.0	4	0
	40	100.0	31	9

The majority of the owners (85.4%) originate from the study area. Just over half of them are permanent inhabitants of the study area (56.1%); the rest of them either stay permanently outside the area or move (commute) to the area according to their businesses' needs (Table 2). Additionally, the fact that the numbers of the owners who live permanently in the area has decreased after the establishment of their business (56.1% vs. 65.9%) has to be stressed.

Table 2 – *Entrepreneurs' origin and permanent residence (Dorida)*

Place	Permanent residence today		Place of birth		Past residence	
	Entrepreneurs No.	%	Dorida No.	Other No.	Dorida No.	Other No.
Dorida municipality	23	56.1	23	0	21	2
Outside Dorida municipality	11	26.8	6	5	4	7
'Commuters'	7	17.1	6	1	2	5
Total	41	100	35	6	27	14

Their educational level is quite high: 53.7% have completed the senior high school (Lyceum) with 10 of them having completed tertiary education. Such findings are in line with the findings of other studies also pointing to the accommodation owners' relatively high educational standards (Kokkali, 2007; Vasileiadou, 2008; Grava, 2011). Only 3 of the owners have just primary education – all farmers and permanent residents; in general, permanent residents' educational attainments are lower than that of the non-permanent residents.

Only 8 among the 41 owners (19.5%) are primarily occupied in farming (with 3 of them also running butcher shops); 7 of them are permanent inhabitants of the area, corresponding to 30.4% of the owners who dwell permanently in the study area (Table 3). Agriculture is also negligible as a secondary occupation; it only concerns 2 of the area's permanent in-

habitants. As far as spouses are concerned, agriculture is the primary occupation for only 3 of them (none of the spouses declared farming as a secondary job). Nevertheless, 22 of the owners declare that they are owners of agricultural land; with the exception of those who declare farming as their primary or secondary occupation, the rest claim that they are hobby-farmers or rent their lands. In general, those who own agricultural land originate from the area; in parallel, their majority (77.3%) stay permanently in the area, are older and less educated. It can thus be argued that the expectation that agritourism would contribute to the improvement of farm structures and enhance agricultural multifunctionality does not seem to be fulfilled.

Table 3 – Entrepreneurs' main and secondary occupation (Dorida)

Occupation	Main occupation				Secondary occupation			
	Total (no.)	Permanent residents		Total (no.)	Permanent residents		Total (no.)	%
		%	(no.)		%	(no.)		
Agriculture	5	12.2	4	17.4	2	4.9	2	8.7
Agriculture* and butchery	3	7.3	3	13.0				
Accommodation	18	43.9	10	43.5	23	56.1	13	56.5
Tavern	2	4.9	2	8.7				
Free lancer	10	24.4	3	13.0				
Business abroad	1	2.4	-	-				
Other	2	4.9	-	-	1	2.4	-	-
None	-	-	-	-	14	34.2	7	30.4
Total	41	100	23	100	41	100	23	100

\* Specifically, animal breeding.

At the same time, tourism is not the main occupation of the accommodation units' owners. The accommodation business is the main occupation for the 43.9% of the owners; if the 2 tavern keepers are also taken into account, tourism appears to be the main occupation for the 48.8% of the accommodation owners. Thus for over half of the owners accommodation is a supplementary occupation. A considerable percentage of the owners (31.7%) are not primarily occupied in either farming or tourism; 24.4% of the owners are free-lancers. A similar picture as far as the origin, residence and occupation of accommodation owners are concerned was found in mountainous Korinthia (Grava, 2011).

In Dorida, women account for the 22% of the accommodation owners, a percentage which is slightly lower than that of the women farm-heads in Greece (around 25%). This percentage is quite lower among the permanent in the area inhabitants (17.4%). More specifically, among the 28 married owners 23 are men and 5 are women (i.e. 82:18), a fact that confirms the

gender gap in terms of entrepreneurship. This is so despite the fact that such businesses suit women - as manifested by the women's engagement in these businesses (5 declared tourism as their primary occupation and another 17 as secondary). It can thus be argued that, in Dorida, agritourism, although it opened new (mostly part-time) employment opportunities for women, did not actually fulfil the aim to enhance women's entrepreneurship. As aforementioned, other Greek studies show higher numbers of women-entrepreneurs; however, the fact that women may, following their households' livelihood strategies, be phoney-owners has to be kept in mind (Gidarakou *et al.* 2008).

### **An approximation to (agritourism and farming) incomes**

Only 10 out of the 41 owners took advantage of the financial support (LEADER, IRSDP) to establish (8) or renovate (2) their accommodation units. None of them was a farmer and only half of them were permanent residents of the area at the time they submitted their applications. Moreover, the obtained financial support was not of outmost importance for 6 of them who claimed that they would establish their business anyway. Similar is the situation in mountainous Korinthia where only 30% had access to financial support (Grava, 2011).

On the basis of the owners' estimations about their income from agriculture and/or their accommodation businesses, it becomes obvious that most of the households involved in agriculture earn less than 15,000 € yearly (Table 4); similar is the situation concerning accommodation businesses.

*Table 4 – Self-reported farming, agritourism and household incomes (Dorida)*

Income clusters (€)	Farming				Agritourism				Total Household Income (all sources)			
	Total		Permanent residents		Total		Permanent residents		Total		Permanent residents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
< 5000	2	20	2	20	4	12.9	4	20				
5001 -10000					10	32.2	6	30	1	3.2	1	5
10001-15000	4	40	4	40	9	29	5	25	5	16.1	3	15
15001-20000	3	30	3	30	3	9.7	2	10	5	16.1	4	20
>20000	1	10	1	10	5	16.1	3	15	20	64.5	12	60
Total	10	100	10	100	31	100	20	100	31	100	20	100

Almost half of the accommodation businesses earn less than 10,000 € per year, implying that these households are at-risk of poverty (the threshold being at 8,644 € in 2009); only 8 businesses make more than 15,000 €. As a result, it can be argued that neither agriculture nor accommodation

can, each by itself, provide a satisfactory income to the households; on the other hand, their combination would provide most of the households with noteworthy incomes. However, as already shown such a combination appears to be minimal in the study area. The findings of other studies (Kokkali 2007, Grava 2011) are in line with such findings<sup>7</sup>.

It therefore seems that involvement in accommodation businesses was rather marginal on the part of farmers; thus this type of business has not been, as expected, the catalyst towards the diversification of the farming based households' economy. On the other hand, agritourism has resulted in the development of pluriactivity on the part of some of the household's members (owners, spouses or children) and, in this sense, supported the differentiation of the local economy.

### **Owners' satisfaction and succession prospects**

The low businesses' economic yields are reflected in owners' dissatisfaction; the majority (73.2%) claims that they are not satisfied by either their businesses' revenues or the employment opportunities in the area. With an additional 12.2% holding an ambiguous opinion, it is only 14.6% of the entrepreneurs who are clearly satisfied; yet, 75% among the latter focus on the fact that their tourism activities are new and pleasant to them – only 25% claim satisfied with the incomes obtained. As a result, 83% of the owners believe that under the current circumstances there are no attractive employment incentives for youngsters to stay and contribute to the development of the area. This is indeed reflected in the succession prospects as far as both agriculture and the accommodation businesses are concerned (see below).

Less than 40% declare that they are informed about measures to protect the environment, mainly owing to their own efforts; on the other hand all the entrepreneurs claim that they do their best to protect the environment. Further, 83% claim that they use local products in their business.

According to the data provided by their parents, the majority of the 45 owners' children, aged over 18 years old, are employed in neither farming nor the accommodation business; 38% are free-lancers and employees, 2 are public servants and 1 athlete with a further 22% being higher education students. Only 5 are primarily occupied in agriculture with another 2

<sup>7</sup> In her research addressing 66 accommodation owners in the Lake Plastiras area, Kokkali (2007) found out that only 18.2% of the owners are exclusively based on their accommodation unit to make a living with a further 10.6% claiming that their business contributed more than 50% to the total household income. On the contrary in 40% of the cases it contributed less than 30% to the household income. In her research addressing 74 accommodation units in mountainous Korinthia, Grava (2011), using a full account approach, found out that only in 14% of the cases the accommodation unit is the only household's income source; on the other hand, in most cases (57%) it contributes less than 40% to the household income.

assisting their parents when in need (Table 5); 6 of them are farmers' children. The succession prospects are positive for only 4 of them, all of them farmers' and permanent in the area inhabitants' children.

The succession prospects concerning the accommodation businesses are better. Although only 2 of the children appear to be fully occupied in their parents' businesses, with another 3 working in their parents' taverns, the number of children more or less involved with their parents' businesses is as high as 16 (among which 7 from families not-permanently staying in the study area) (Table 5). A similar picture was obtained in mountainous Korinthia (Grava, 2011) where the accommodation units provide the opportunity for supplementary employment for the household members (70% of the spouses, 74% for the children and 57% for the grandparents).

Table 5 – Succession prospects (farming and agritourism) (Dorida)

	Businesses with children (over 18 yrs.) involved in farming				Succession prospects (farming)			
	Total		Permanent residents		Total		Permanent residents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	7	22.58	5	26.32	4	23.53	4	30.77
No	24	77.42	14	73.68	7	41.18	6	46.15
Don't know					6	35.29	3	23.08
	31	100.00	19	100.00	17	100.00	13	100.00

	Businesses with children (over 18 yrs.) involved in agritourism				Succession prospects (agritourism)			
	Total		Permanent residents		Total		Permanent residents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	16	51.61	9	47.37	20	64.52	12	63.16
No	15	48.39	10	52.63	4	12.90	3	15.79
Don't know					7	22.58	4	21.05
	31	100.00	19	100.00	31	100.00	19	100.00

As far as the succession prospects are concerned parents estimate that 20 businesses have positive prospects; 12 among these businesses are owned by permanent in the area inhabitants. Among the 10 owners who accessed financial support (5 of which would establish the business irrespectively of such a support) 7 expect to have a successor and another one is ambiguous. It is rather obvious that under the current circumstances the accommodation businesses, despite their better succession prospects, do not provide employment opportunities to the younger family members - who are expected to come after their parents. Furthermore, the issue of whether these

accommodation businesses will be a part-time job in combination with the current heirs' employment or it will become their main occupation is open. The data also point to the limited relationship between farming and agritourism which, in turn, suggests the continuous abandonment of agriculture - with tourism being a track towards the exodus.

## The Neohori case

### Entrepreneurs' identity

Most of the households got involved in tourism related businesses after the take-off of tourism in the area in late 1990s. The opening of new business opportunities has been their main motive; the small/insufficient incomes gained from agriculture and the wish to stay in their native area have also been crucial driving forces among those staying in the village. Almost all (95%) the interviewees believed that the area has a distinctive identity attributed to its landscape, people's hospitality and local traditions. Very few claimed that the area loses its identity as well as that people were increasingly becoming interested just in profit-making; these were the elder ones, with low education and incomes, and children who did not live in the area.

In Neohori the majority of the household heads (men) were aged. Half of them were over 65 years old (or, 72.2% over 55 years old) with only 17.8% being under 45 (Table 6). Accordingly, their educational attainments were rather low; 40% had, at best, primary schooling (Table 6). Such findings contradict the findings concerning accommodation units' owners as shown by Kokkali (2007), Grava (2011) as well as the Dorida case. Spouses (wives) were younger (58.8% over 55 years old) and rather less educated (41.2% with, at best, primary education) (Table 6).

Table 6 – Entrepreneurs' and spouses' age and education (Neohori)

Age cluster	Head N= 18 Spouse N=17		Education	Head N= 18 Spouse N=17	
	(%)	(%)		(%)	(%)
<30		5.9	Illiterate	5.6	5.9
30-44	16.7	11.8	Primary	33.3	35.3
45-54	11.1	23.5	Lower Sec.	27.8	29.4
55-64	22.2	41.2	Higher Sec.	16.7	23.5
>64	50.0	17.6	Higher	16.7	5.9

Among the heads, 50% originated from the village and had always lived and worked in the area. A further 16.7% settled in the village due to occupational-economic reasons with the rest (33%) originating from the area but having worked away and returned to the area also due to the business opportunities opened due to the explosion of tourism in the lake area.

As shown in Table 7, employment in agriculture was restricted; only one out of four declared that his main occupation was farming (including aquaculture). Six out of ten were primarily occupied in agritourism related businesses and one out of ten was a free-lancer. On the other hand, among those who held a second job as well farming was dominant. Given that half of the entrepreneurs had been permanent residents of the area (i.e. before the establishment of their businesses) where small-scale, extensive agriculture predominated, it seems that most gave up agriculture as their primary job<sup>8</sup> in favour of their tourism related businesses. Additionally, the development of tourism opened windows of opportunity and attracted newcomers in the area (see: Koutsouris, 2008). Such opportunities, for both locals and newcomers, concerned a variety of tourism related jobs besides accommodation, especially taverns and restaurants - the second most preferred tourism related business in the Greek rural areas.

As far as spouses' main employment is concerned, four out of ten were housewives with another four out of ten being employed in tourism related businesses; the rest were free-lancers and none was predominantly engaged in farming. Women were reported to be in charge of the tourism related business in 7 out of the 18 cases (or out of the 17 cases if only married owners are taken into account). Furthermore, half of the wives who declared engaged with a second job too (or 47% of all wives) were occupied in agriculture.

Table 7 – Heads and spouses' main and secondary occupation (Neohori)

Employment	Primary job		Secondary job	
	Head N=18 (%)	Spouse N=17 (%)	Head N=14 (%)	Spouse N=15 (%)
Farming	22.2	-	64.3	53.3
Tavern-restaurant	33.3	17.6	14.3	33.3
Ho(s)tel	11.1	11.8	14.3	
Handicraft	5.6	-		
Souvenirs	11.1	11.8		
Aquaculture	5.6	-		6.7
Free-lancer	11.1	17.6	7.1	
House keeping	-	41.2		6.7

### **An approximation to (tourism and farming) incomes**

Almost two-thirds of the interviewees had benefitted from the financial support provided by various programmes (LEADER, national devel-

<sup>8</sup> The main produces (wine and legumes) were thus used for self-consumption or in their newly established tourism businesses.

opment law). According to the heads' estimations (Table 8) income from farming was extremely low for the majority of those involved in agriculture and thus cannot support the households; 85.7% made less than 5,000 €/year; no case exceeding the 10,000 € was reported. It is worth noting that the data obtained in Neohori are more discouraging as compared to the Dorida case. Therefore, families in Neohori made a living based either partially or, at least as far as one out of three households is concerned, totally on tourism. Nevertheless, the incomes obtained from tourism related businesses were also rather restricted. Only 5% of the heads declared his income from tourism surpassing the 20,000 €, a picture similar to the Dorida case.

Table 8 – Self-reported farming, agritourism and household incomes (Neohori)

Income (Euro)	Income from agriculture	Income from tourism	Overall family income
< 5000	85.7	11.1	
5001 – 10000	14.2	22.2	5.6
10001-15000		33.3	27.8
15001 – 20000		27.8	11.1
> 20000		5.6	55.6

### Owners' satisfaction and succession prospects

Almost 90% of the interviewees claimed satisfied with tourism development in the area given the profitability of their businesses, the fact that they enjoy such a kind of employment (*vis-à-vis* agriculture) as well as the creation of a new 'social climate' in the area. Around 80% of the heads believed that tourism was beneficial to the area since it presented the locals with new opportunities. The ones who disagreed, claiming that tourism resulted in pollution as well as in the area becoming expensive – even for its inhabitants, were mainly born in the area, with rather high incomes and seemed to be more concerned for the area's future. Most of the interviewed heads declared that they would continue to operate their businesses without making changes; 4 of them were thinking to go on with the building of a hostel and one to get involved in agriculture – for self-consumption.

Moreover, the heads claimed that they were using local products (especially agricultural produces) in their businesses; first they looked for products from their own village and then from the area or the Prefecture. Finally, as far as the protection of the environment is concerned two-thirds of them claimed that they knew the relevant restrictions due to the fact that the area is a NATURA 2000 site; in parallel, given the importance of the landscape and the environment for local (tourism) development, they, more or less, claimed that they took care of the physical environment and

were aware of relevant measures. However, when research went in more depth, especially as far as good agricultural practices and their implementation are concerned, they were not found knowledgeable.

Although few of the local farmers got involved in agritourism, at least as far as accommodation is concerned, the newcomers (not originating from the area) who established such businesses in the area supported the differentiation of the local economy and multifunctionality.

As far as their (27) children are concerned, the majority (81.5%) fell into the 30-44 age bracket (comprising the eldest cohort); overall, children's educational attainments were better than those of their parents (only 2 out of the 27 with primary education vs. around 40% of their parents with, at most, primary education). As in the Dorida case, the majority of the children (all being over 18 years old) were not occupied in farming or tourism. Less than one out of four (i.e. 6 children) were occupied in tourism (4 among the eldest and 2 among the younger ones) and less than one fifth among the eldest ones (and, none of the younger ones) were occupied in farming (i.e. 1 in farming and 2 in fish-farming). Almost two thirds were free-lancers or technicians (Table 9) spending, according to their fathers, at least 90% of their working time in their main job.

Only six (out of 27) children were pluriactive. Two among the eldest ones in farming and a younger one in fish-farming, with the rest (3 among the younger children) assisting their parents (during the week-ends) in family operated taverns-restaurants (Table 9). In general, agritourism related businesses seemed to have better prospects as compared to farming given that one third of the children were occupied in (mostly family owned) hostels and taverns (22% as main and 11% as supplementary occupation). It should be noted however that the development of agritourism had not been able either to attract or to provide employment opportunities to the businesses owners' children even in such a well-established tourism destination.

Table 9 – Children's main and secondary occupation (Neohori)

Employment	Primary job		Secondary job	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Child N=17 (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Child N= 10 (%)	1 <sup>st</sup> Child N=2 (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Child N= 4 (%)
Farming	5.9	-	100	
Tavern-restaurant	17.6	10		75
Ho(s)tel	5.9	10		
Handicraft	-	-		
Souvenirs	--	-		
Aquaculture	11.8	-		25
Free-lancer	58.8	80		
House keeping	-	-		

Children, according to their fathers, although having assisted substantially in the establishment of the family's tourism-related businesses, were not interested in working in either tourism or agriculture. Nevertheless, parents aspired that, in case such businesses were to prove profitable, children would inherit/undertake them later on. The current high unemployment rates, owing to the country's economic crisis, may (*ex ante*) support such an expectation and, in general terms, the return of young people to their native communities in the Greek countryside.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In this piece of work an effort to explore issues which have been marginally dealt thus far with, such as the profile of those involved in agritourism, especially the degree to which farmers pursue diversification and multifunctionality, the incomes obtained from agritourism and farming and the succession prospects of both activities, was undertaken. To fulfil such an aim (part of the) data from research in two different, in terms of agritourism development, Greek areas were utilized: first, the Dorida municipality, a not-well known destination; second, the Neohori village at Lake Plastiras, a nowadays well-established tourism destination where the local authorities and development agencies have been extremely active in promoting a wide variety of projects relating to agritourism, local culture and the environment.

The results of the two case studies point to the fact that the majority of those involved in agritourism, especially accommodation, are not farmers. The entrepreneur's demographic data show that they are younger and better educated as compared to the farming population. This is clear in the Dorida case as well as in other Greek case studies addressing accommodation entrepreneurs but it is not verified in Neohori, possibly owing to the (earlier) timing of the establishment of the agritourism related businesses in the area.

Furthermore, although quite a number of agritourism entrepreneurs own agricultural lands, involvement in farming concerns, mainly as a secondary job, those who live permanently in the research areas and much less the rest of their households' members, especially their children. In this respect, the fact that farms are small (i.e. smaller than the national average of 4.6 ha.) and income from agriculture is, in most cases, lower or around the at-risk of poverty line has to be underlined.

It has also to be stressed that around half of the agritourism entrepreneurs had been permanent residents of the research areas. In Neohori, the majority among the rest of the entrepreneurs originates from the area and returned in order to establish their business. Additionally, especially in Dorida, quite a number of the entrepreneurs do not stay permanently in the area but commute in order to take care of their business. In some cases in-

dividuals with no prior relationship with the research areas took advantage of the opportunities offered by tourism development in order to establish their agritourism related businesses. The degree to which entrepreneurs took advantage of the available financial support (LEADER and IRSDP) is differentiated between the two research areas given the active contribution of development agencies and local authorities in agritourism development in the Lake Plastiras (Neohori) case which is missing in Dorida.

It has to be mentioned here that all agritourism businesses are based on Greeks visiting the areas mainly during the week-ends and major religious festivities-vacations (Easter, Christmas, Ash Monday, etc.); on the contrary, summertime vacations in Greece are still related to seaside tourism. Under such circumstances the employment opportunities for the households' members are limited. At the same time, our findings suggest that in quite many cases agritourism per se does not provide satisfactory incomes. Thus, quite some among the agritourism entrepreneurs and the majority of their children are primarily not occupied in tourism. Nevertheless, many children give a hand in their parents' agritourism businesses and indeed much more than in the case of farming. Succession prospects are also better in agritourism as compared to agriculture. Agritourism development thus gradually downgrades farming to a secondary job or drives to its abandonment.

With respect to gender, despite the fact the agritourism related programmes, in the framework of gender equality mainstreaming, offer additional incentives to women, the majority of entrepreneurs are in both cases men. This is true especially in Dorida while in Neohori the picture, given the diversification of the agritourism related small-scale businesses, is more balanced. As aforementioned, other case studies in Greece present a better picture of women's agritourism entrepreneurship in relation to Dorida; in parallel, though, it has to be stressed again that these results should not be taken at face value. Notwithstanding such considerations, it is obvious that agritourism has, at least, provided women with employment opportunities; on the other hand, women are much less involved in farming, mainly as helpers.

As far as succession in agriculture is concerned it is most likely that very few of the entrepreneurs' children (mainly children of full time farmers) will continue farming. The espoused target of agritourism, i.e. the broadening of the production basis of farming households and the improvement of farm structures, seems to have been minimally fulfilled; as aforementioned multiple reasons (age, risk-aversion behaviour towards innovations, lack of financial capital, etc.) disincline farmers from getting involved in agritourism. Moreover, the better succession prospects of agritourism businesses indicate that agritourism development functions as a path towards the abandonment of agriculture. Such a trajectory has been pointed out in international research/literature as well; although diversification through tourism is often espoused as a means for the alleviation of the problems

agriculture is faced with, this is not always the case (OECD, 1994).

Overall, the findings of the two Greek case studies suggest that agritourism has not been an attractive option for farmers; thus a strong relationship between the two activities has not been established. Agritourism has been an opportunity for rather younger and better educated individuals, as compared to the average farming population, to establish new businesses in the research areas. Quite many among them originated from or were new-entrants but still not permanent residents in the areas. Agritourism supported, in both the cases examined here, the diversification of the local economy and the utilization of the primary production; additionally, through 'farming the land', pluriactive farms contribute to the maintenance of rural nature and landscape. At the same time, agriculture is endangered with abandonment on the part of the next generation; and while tourism seems to have better succession prospects, these are not secured either. However, nowadays, the rapidly increasing rates of unemployment along with falling wages may augment the prospects that urbanites will return to the countryside and engage in multifunctional agriculture.

With reference to the typology of Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004), the main shift on the part of the farming households in the study areas is manifested through the redistribution of the household's labour force between on and off-farm activities. It thus concerns 'regrounding' (re: pluriactivity), rather than 'broadening' or 'deepening'. Or, according to Ilbery (1991) it concerns structural rather than agricultural diversification.

Such findings are in line with research stressing phenomena concerning "the expropriation of agriculture as a means of creating 'room' for the consumption of the countryside" (Van der Ploeg & Renting, 2004: 234) or that tourism "has become the lynch pin of many rural communities, having effectively replaced agriculture in this role" (Garrod et al. 2006: 118). On the other hand, the vulnerability of rural tourism development, i.e. the fact that concentration on tourism "runs the danger of producing too great a reliance on specific and limited economic sectors" (Lee et al. 2005: 275) thus opening the areas to greater exploitation and loss of autonomy with adverse results under conditions of economic crisis, like the current situation in Greece<sup>9</sup>, has to be stressed as well.

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<sup>9</sup> As revealed by recent research data from the Lake Plastiras area (re: Kokkali, 2011; ongoing PhD research on rural tourism in the Dept of Agricultural Economics & Rural Development, Agricultural University of Athens).

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