

# Innovative Agro Tourism Idea

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## Agro Tourism

Tourism is considered to be the largest industry in the world, niche markets are being developed by the dynamics of markets all around the world. Agro-tourism is a phenomenon which has a combination of agricultural production and encourages short and long-term visitors to farms or rural areas for the purpose of enjoyment, education, and/or active involvement in the activities of agricultural production and farming life.

More and more people are attracted these days to the *offbeat* destinations and activities, agro tourism provides the potential customers with a sense of belonging to the environment and nature. Agricultural tourism is a form of niche tourism that is considered to be a growing industry in many parts of the world. New and innovative ideas are flourishing from all corners of the world

Recently Government of India won an award from PATA for the rural tourism project for a village in India called Hodka. The prestige was awarded to an innovative village resort named Shaam-e-Sarhad (sunset at the border) operated by the Village Tourism Committee of the indigenous people from Hodka village.<sup>1</sup>

Another eye catching example originates from California in the United states, Bay Area Green Tours mission is to provide educational tours that demonstrate the sustainable economy in action, inspire support of local green businesses. The most innovative tour is *Farm to Fork tours* in which tourist pick their own desired fruits and vegetables and then stop at an organic restaurant which makes the fresh meal out of their own handpicked ingredients.

Among both of the examples, the focus is based on the experience of the tourist, the experienced travellers are on a constant look out for an authentic way of life, which is the most appealing in Agro tourism. The heritage resort example worked for that Indian village because tourist are amazed by the culture and the traditions still present in the life of the village people and to be a part of that incredible experience for few days also would rejuvenate n create an unforgettable experience in their mind.

Farm to fork tour was an innovative approach to satisfy the ever changing needs of the tourist, in the fast paced life of the urban centres in the world today if a person gets an opportunity to slow it down and enjoy the basic necessities of life such as the fresh ingredients of the meal and share it with his/her loved ones. This would enable the tourist to come back year after year for the authentic and precious experience.

Agro tourism is a field where innovation plays a vital role, new concepts are needed to reinvent the destination which would keep the customer interested. Experience creation is the new focal point which is stressed upon in every niche of tourism more specifically to rural or agro tourism. The purpose of these experiences is satisfying a customer's needs and they are inherently personal, that is, they only exist in the mind of someone who has participated emotionally, physically, intellectually or even spiritually in an event (Pine and Gilmore 1999, Schmitt 1999). Consequently, two people cannot have the same experience, because each experience derives from the interaction between an organized event and the individual frame of mind (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

## My Concept

*When a person buys an experience they wish to “enjoy a series of memorable events that an enterprise engages to engage in him personally” (Pine and Gilmore 1999)*

Netherlands is a country which has its unique character in the world, being a small 17 million inhabitants country still has contributed a lot to the world over the course of history. In an attempt to make the experience of the tourist memorable we have to search for the iconic images of Netherlands. Cheese comes to mind within seconds and agricultural farms are very closely related to it.

The new innovative concept involves an integration of few ideas and putting forward an integrated product for the potential visitors to the farm. The idea is focused fully on experience and in a rural area or farms where the HOST Family is an important element. Concept is known as CHEESY HOMESTAY

Involves following elements

- Pick up and Drop
- Homestay
- Make your own Cheese

All would start with a personalised service for the customer where the person would be picked up from the train station or the airport and straight away brought to the country side. Where the farmer family would invite them in to their wonderful home. Home stay is indeed not an out of the box idea but would add greater detail to the authenticity if the holiday for the tourist, the farmer family would invite the guest into their home

The whole Cheesy home stay idea would enable the tourist to be a part of the farmer n its daily life, living and dining with the family. The innovative concept is realised in the make your own cheese tour. The tour would include the tourist to accompany the farmer into the world of making cheese where the visitor can help and make the desired cheese he/ she wants to cheese upon. The whole scenario would be of picking up the ingredients and adding the desired ones to create a one of its kind blend which would in turn be named and labelled as according to the customer, can also be taken back home to share with the friends and family.

This idea is focused upon the international tourist and the urban population of the European cities who are more and more interested in the farm and farmers day to day life which has a unique substance in the Netherlands. The *Cheesy Home-Stay* idea is addressing all the latest trends in the tourism industry, experience is the main essence as the direct dealing with the customers in a form of Home stays and Cheese making in a personalised way would attract tourist from all over the world and the authenticity would also enable people for repeat visit to the Cheese making farms of the Netherlands.

Netherlands is world renowned for its cheese farms, the Cheesy Homestay idea is not only allowing the visitors to actually see how the cheese is made, it's much more as the Guest is able to stay with the farmer family and learn the traditions/ customs which are in the root of every farm family.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHEESE phenomenon is unique because the person would be able to make its unique blend of cheese which is a personal touch to the whole holiday. What better way to create an experience than being able to live with a host family and making your own cheese in the Land of Cheese Royalty.

This innovative concept will provide an amazing opportunity for the young entrepreneurs of the family belonging to the farmers family who have far more pressure to move to urban areas for work these days. Tourism is incredible avenue for young minds as it gives them the appropriate outlay to interact with the world being in their home environment. With more than 8 Million International tourist in 2008 (WTO Factbook) Netherlands has a great opportunity to show a different side of Holland to the tourist who still develop the first images of Netherlands as the sin city capital of Amsterdam.

For any idea to work the source markets and the investment has to be carefully studied and according to this idea the major source markets for tourism in Netherlands consists of Germany and North American tourist who are looking for new avenues in Netherlands as the routine tourism attractions in Netherlands are losing the charm for the market, which urges us to recreate something completely new and attractive. This is the aspect where *Cheesy Homestay* shines as there is nowhere in the world where a person can interact with the family and make a unique blend of cheese.

In terms of Investment this idea requires minimum investment on the parts of the tourism boards or farmers in particular. Marketing budgets can sometimes be exuberant but in this case besides the usual tools of markets, Social media markets is encouraged which has been recognised as the up and coming tool for reaching the customers around the world. *Cheesy Homestay* can interactively keep in touch with its potential customers on websites like Facebook and twitter which will enable the tourist to share stories and images from their amazing travel. Home stay would play a vital role as a personal referral to a new customer has much more impact on the mind of any potential customer than spending huge amounts on marketing. This will eventually put customers/ tourist on the driving seat of this *Cheesy Homestay* Idea.

# CHEESY HOMESTAY

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.hodka.in/index.aspx?Sid=1>