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Tourism on or off-farms: two different activities for a single work?

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Abstract: In Corsica, a touristic island located at the heart of the Mediterranean basin, agriculture faces both the tourism urbanization and the tourists demand for local agri-food products and agrotourism services. Currently, tourism is the main economic sector of the island and the major source of employment. Nevertheless, agriculture is still the activity the most visible in the surrounding landscapes as the pretty 90% of the area is covered by agricultural and green lands. And, if tourism is clearly a disturbing activity for agricultural organizations (land pressures, competition for labour), it is at the same time an opportunity for farmers to diversify their activities, to complete or increase their incomes and to contribute to the local development. From that point of view, tourism on farms, agrotourism or, more generally, rural tourism participates to the agricultural development not only because it creates wealth and employees, but also as it contributes to the transmission of the local Heritage. But, not every farmers wants to, or can involve in the tourism services' furniture. Indeed, as tourism is another job and as it often requires another way to practice agriculture in these special cases, agrotourism is also a specific job that can be seen different from tourism on farms and from rural tourism too. So, what we want to discuss here is how tourism and agriculture combines together in these different models taking as an example the case-study of agrotourism in Corsica. Considering the several degrees of poly-activity implemented by the Corsican agrotourism farmers, we draw a typology of them from the most intricate combination of both activities on farms to the less one. So, tourism on farm is not the same product as rural tourism, which rather looks like tourism off-farms and it may be officially recognised like this as soon as the quality of the tourists destination's image is at stake.

Keywords: agrotourism, diversification, work organisation, quality management.

Introduction

Corsica is a touristic island located at the heart of the Mediterranean eastern-basin. Receiving more than 3 million tourists for 330 000 inhabitants (10 tourists per habitant, which is the same ratio as Sardinia or as the Balearic islands for example), the Corsican island faces both the tourism urbanization and a high-level tourists demand for local agri-food products and agrotourism services. Currently, tourism is the main economic sector of the island (gathering 31% of the GDP, transports included) and it is so the major source of employment and of revenues for the local people. Nevertheless, despite it only counts for 2 to 3% of the GDP, agriculture is still the activity the most visible in the surrounding landscapes: the pretty 90% of the area is covered by agricultural and green lands (Data: Corine Land Cover, 2018). And, if tourism is clearly a disturbing activity for agricultural organizations (land pressures and land-usage changes, competition for labour), it is at the same time an opportunity for farmers to diversify their activities, to complete or to increase their incomes and to contribute to the local development. From that point of view, tourism participates to the agricultural development not only because it creates wealth and employees related to agriculture but also as it contributes to the transmission of rural local Heritage (Patrimonial visits, "traditional" knowledge and know-hows demonstration, etc.). But, not every farmers can involve or wants to involve into the tourism services' furniture. Indeed, as tourism is another job and as it often requires another way to practice agriculture, it seems to be many ways of working with "agritourism" issues: can we differentiate agritourism from tourism on farm and from rural tourism? That's our question. What does the global term agritourism hides as different forms of practices? From the on-farm activities to the off-farms ones, we can draw up a specific typology of what "agritourism" is precisely, depending on the degrees of pluri-activity of the farmers, on the location of their activities and on the linkage between tourism and agriculture included

into the final product. So, what we want to discuss here is how agriculture and tourism combine themselves to determine different products and models of development, considering the case study of agrotourism in Corsica: so, are tourism on-farms and tourism off-farms two different activities or a single work? Finally, considering the diverse practices as several models can lead to make recognised, labelled a specific product representative from the territory and estimated as “a good practice” for the local development.

Method

Within the regional agrotourism case-study funded by the regional board (Regional Agency for tourism and Regional agency for agriculture and rural development, 2014) and by the National Agency for Research (Med-inn-local TMED-0001-2012 project, 2014-2018), our study has been implemented at a regional scale and at a local level in various geographic areas within Corsica (Center of Corsica, Balagna, Cap-Corse/Nebbiu, South Corsica). The study relays on a large quantitative enquiry and on some focused interviews lead with farmers, agritourism providers as well as with the people from the institutional structures in charge of tourism, agriculture, and local development. As a whole, almost 600 questionnaires¹ have been implemented² and like 60 interviews realised.

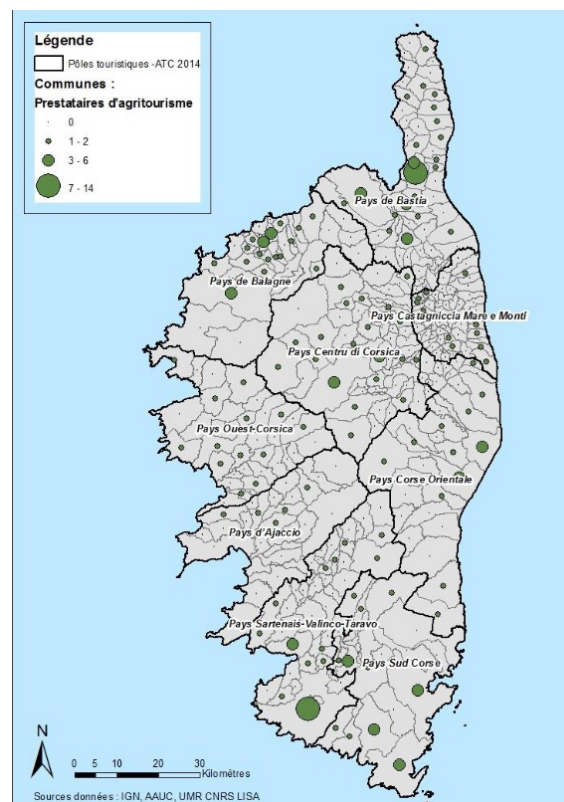


Figure 1. Location of the interviewed farmers at the regional scale. Source: author.

¹ Almost 15% of the regional number of farmers. These 600 persons are known as agritourism practicers within the official data of the regional agency for agriculture and rural development. The number of answers is of 49%.

² For a 50% answers.

The questionnaires, distributed to farmers, dealt with some 30 questions (among whose one open question) organised into 4 blocks of knowledge. As the study not only focuses on the linkage agriculture – tourism but also on a wider approach of agritourism practices and supply (trying to define it through a territorial diagnosis), many questions are not exclusively related to the strict relation agriculture and tourism. The questionnaire globally explores what is agritourism, what kind of activities farmers propose, how they manage their organization and how they feel with that type of activities.

Theme 1	The answerer's profile	Gender, age, nationality and origin, diploma, juridical and social status of the enterprise, geographical nobility, etc.
Theme 2	The agricultural structure's characteristics	Type of agricultural and food products, area exploited, type of farming contract, farm's technical orientation, material and resources needed, operations and labour & time dedicated, distribution channels, etc.
Theme 3	Tourism services on or off-farms	Type of services, location of tourism services, material and resources used, time dedicated and opening hours, labour contracted, distribution channels, etc.
Theme 4	Territorial organisation of agritourism	Funds and guarantees received, public sector investment and accompanying structures perceived roles

Table 1. Type of questions asked during the Farmers' interview.

At more, some 60 interviews were lead into the focused territories mentioned above. They have as an objective to precise the farmers' practices, preferences and choices but also their perception to work. Indeed, the literature often cites agritourism like being another job from agriculture (Hjalager, 1996; Sharpley & Vass, 2006) as tourism is a job of services, even of "servuction" (Eiglier & Langeard, 1987). About the interviews lead with the agricultural and tourism agencies, we asked people to speak about their representation of agritourism and of the accompanying conception and funding of the activity supported by their structure. Actually, the thematics tackled for the second phase were quite the same as in the first phase of the enquiry. But, during these focused interviews, the questions were rather about the organisation of the structures and their management in order to understand the global process and working of the activity within a systemic approach³. Finally, the objective of the interview was to model the activity system with it resources, its objectives and products (intermediary and final ones), and its performances in a given environmental context⁴.

Agritourism, tourism-on-farms or rural tourism?

The current definitions

Actually, it appears necessary to firstly discuss the definition of agritourism (Marcotte *et alii*, 2006; Philipp *et alii*, 2010) on the basis of the official data available. In France, the rural law defines agritourism as the "activities by relation that correspond to the activities extending the productive action and whose farm is the material⁵" (Rural Law- article L311-1). These activities include transformation products ones, commercialization of the farm goods (whose animals and plants) which are considered extending the productive action, but also reception activities so-called "on farm" that have the farm as "medium" or "material" (Varenes, 2010). Actually, the meaning of "farm as material" is not unequivocal. It relies on the appreciation of practisers and law people. But, facing the principle of reality, this categorisation

³ See next sections for more indications.

⁴ For more specifications about that modelling, see : Tafani, 2010.

⁵ In the sense of medium.

appears a bit weak somehow. The two following examples point its limits out: can a guesthouse physically located on the farm-area but whose provision depends mainly from exterior providers (= the economical “medium”) be considered as an agritourism plant from a juridical point of view? In the same way, a cottage rental located on the farm-area can be considered as not being agritourism as it does not use the farm as a “material” to offer its service: the goods of the productive action of the agricultural plant enter for a thin part, even more not at all, in the reception service proposed by the farmer (Varenes, 2010,18-19). Indeed, considering these different examples, agritourism seems to depend on two joint criteria: first, what is the main economic activity depending on the major source of revenue within the activity system; and second, where is the location of the activity supplied. That means that to define exactly what is in the perimeter of agritourism, first, it is needed to consider how the service activities are physically related to the farm-location; second, it is necessary that the service activities are tightly linked to the productive activities on one way or another.

Then, at more, from a marketing point of view, agritourism is defined by the socio-professionals as regards to the activities supplied by farmers: tourism being on or off-farm is not at the heart of the discussion. The major issue relies on the linkages agriculture and tourism, and more generally on the link to the “rural world”. In other words, every leisure or touristic activity related to the “rural world” and offered by a farmer can be considered as being agritourism, never mind the location of this activity. More pragmatically, this definition is also less restrictive than the legislative one. At least, there is no big discussion about what is the main economic activity or the major source of revenue as soon as the provider of tourism services is a farmer.

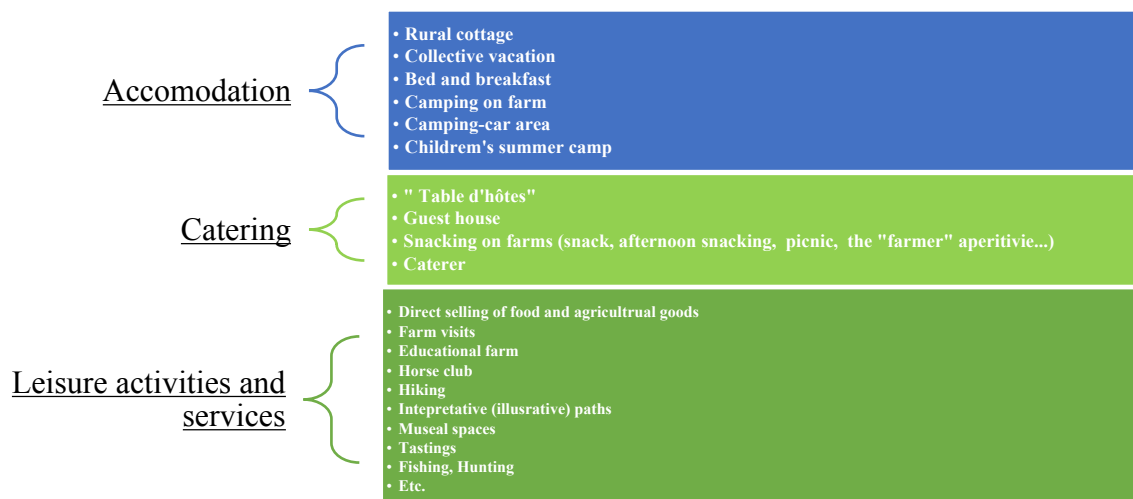


Figure 2. The agritourism supply according to the Network « Bienvenue à la ferme » (Welcom on farms).

In Corsica, according to the quantitative enquiry lead on the regional territory, and on theses basis, the main activities illustrating agritourism practices are, first, accomodation on farms and, second, leisure related to farms (hiking, horse hiking, farms' visits, products tastings, etc.). Moreover, if direct selling can be considered like an agritourism practice, so, a third of the providers propose that type of activity too (see table below).

	Number	Percentage
Accommodation on farm	113	51,8 %
Catering on farm	60	27,5 %
Leisure on farm	98	45 %
Other agritouristic activities (caterer, summer camp...)	40	18,3 %
Direct selling	66	30,3 %

Table 2. The agritourism activities in Corsica. Source: UMR LISA/ODARC/ATC, 2014.

In details, the different services offered on farms are quoted here below (figure 3). It shows that the rural cottage is one of the most sold activity with the visits on farm. What does it mean? Actually, we can point out two major teachings:

- First, tourists are really looking after activities related to farms and to the “rural world” which is relevant to them way of thinking their holidays. Corsica have the image of a “destination of character”, well known for its natural assets as for its cultural ones. And precisely, these cultural assets (local language, “terroir” products, small villages, etc.) are related to the rural image of the land;
- Second, accommodation on farm can be financially more interesting than a city-accommodation more expansive like an hotel near the beach. And so, accommodation on farm can be seen like an spill-way of the coastal demand which is rather turned to natural assets (sand and beach leisure) (Furt and Tafani, 2011; 2017).

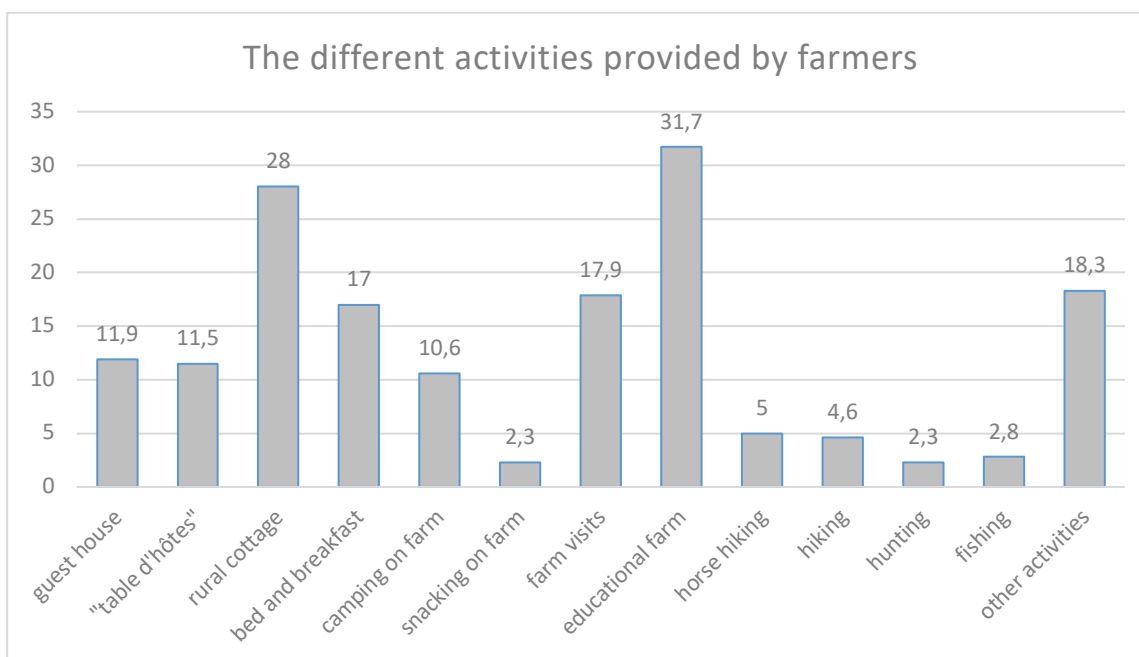


Figure 3. The agritourist services offered in Corsica. Source: UMR LISA/ATC/ODARC, 2014.

In fact, anyway, it is still a question to know if tourism is practiced on or off-farm. Indeed, it is not because it is so-called and labelled « accommodation on farm » that the accommodation is exactly located on farm. Actually there are many cases of « accommodation on farm » proposed in the village or in the near city to the farm it is formally attached.

Our proposition: several models of agritourism structures

Considering the analysis of the activity system⁶ (Casabianca and Tafani, 2017), we can draw up several models of agritourism structures. Here, as regards to what is considered as relevant to define agritourism for the law and for the socio-professionals, we examine three different criteria to increase the scope of the previously discussed typology.

- The nature and the location of products proposed by farmers (1. type of products and their ability to link agriculture and tourism; 2. their location on or off-farms);
- 3. How the resources (Capital which means animals, material, etc.; Work force and Land and real estate) of the productive system are allocated to one or the other activity (agriculture or tourism) and how they are in concurrency or they are managed and combined together. Actually, it is almost impossible to get some information about the revenue of the tourism activities as regards to the agricultural revenues because that kind of declaration can eventually change the status of the plant (agricultural versus of services), and so, its fiscal status. It is so easier to get data about the management of the structure, its internal and external organisation (what we explain we did here within the qualitative enquiry, see section 1).

So, three different criteria are useful to determine the several models as explained here below.

Criteria1: type of products sold	Only one type	accommodation, catering of leisure activities, direct selling
	Two types	accommodation & catering, etc.
	Three types	full agritourism product
Criteria2: location of products and services commercialized	On -farm	Farms visits, tastings, catering...
	On and off-farm	Direct selling (on rural markets), hiking
	Off-farm	Hiking, direct selling on rural market, accommodations
Criteria3: common use of resources between agricultural products and tourism services within the productive process	Yes	Farm visits and Heritage demonstration, tastings
	Yes and no	Direct selling; catering
	no	Accommodation

Table 3. The three criteria used to define agritourism within the French context of Corsica. Source: author.

⁶ An activity system is « a global, dynamic and structured set of activities in interaction themselves, implemented by a social entity mobilizing available resources within a social and ecological context (Gasselien & alii., 2014).

Every type of combination is possible but we present here the most implemented ones, which cover a kind of field reality. First of all, the system resources are utilized as well for food and agricultural production and for tourism services: indeed, the tourism activity, like direct selling, snacking on farm, or visits on farm relies on a product selling or a story-telling of the farm and do not requires an important entrance of money of other specific resources (except a small plant to meet the visitors for example). So one's can consider that the tourism activity is like an extension of the productive action proposed on farm, and exceptionally off-farm sometimes (direct selling on a rural market for example). In some different cases, the resources utilized for one or the other activity (agriculture or tourism) are not the same: the example of accommodation like rental cottage supply is a good illustration of that situation. Then, when the provider offer the three types of product (agricultural goods, accommodation and catering), it offer what we call a "full product", combining the three possible and existing activities recognised in the field of agritourism. Notice that a farmer can provide just one type of product and nevertheless be considered as an agritourism plant, as explained previously, depending on the location of the product, its real link between the tourism services and the agriculture world, and the use of resources in common or not. As an example, a "guest house" based on the agricultural goods and products of the farm, even it not located on farm but in the village for example, can be considered as agritourism. In other cases, one's can discuss whether it is rural tourism (tourism related to the agricultural world but not tightly linked to the agricultural work) or tourism off-farms (tourism provided by farmers but without any explicit link to the agricultural world and work). Actually, on these bases, we can sketch out 4 different models that are introduced here below: they rely on the previous modelling; as a first result, we can say that agritourism or tourism-on-farm is not as frequent as can be expected (see section Results).

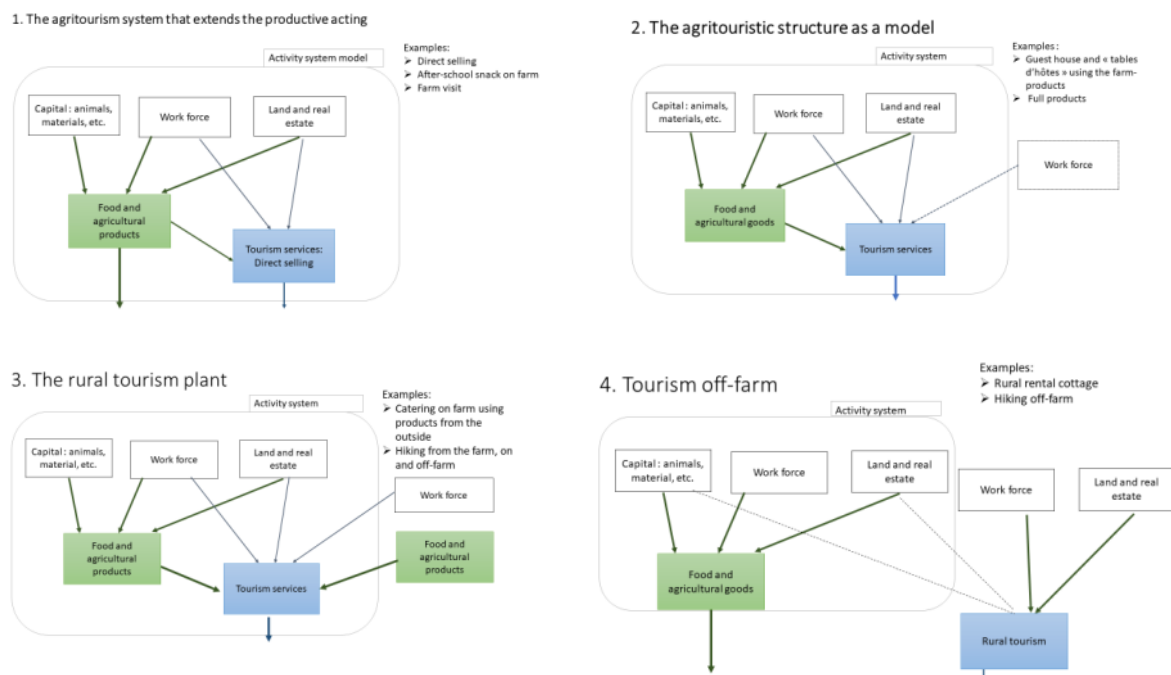


Figure 4. The 4 models of « agritourism » structures from the on-farm tourism to the off-farm one. Source: author.

So, the question now, beyond the modelling, is to understand who does what in the field of agritourism in Corsica. Because, as we can see, if there is tourism-on-farm and tourism-off-farm within the understanding of what is agritourism on the regional territory today, this could be a problem for the network organisation and for any communication related to that proper product that must be specific and authentic to the consumers (Furt and Tafani, 2017).

<i>Profile of the provider</i>	<i>Characteristics of the structure of commercialization</i>	<i>Frequency on the territory</i>	<i>Model</i>
Agri-rural entrepreneur	Full-product but agriculture represents an appendix activity to tourism, which can be clearly dominant. The farmer can ask to other farmers to provide him in food and agricultural products to reaffirm the authenticity of its product.	In development (1/4)	Tourism-on-farm → rural tourism
Agritourism entrepreneur	Full product in which the agricultural goods are mixed to the final tourism service ; the farmer entirely manage the production of food and agricultural products commercialised	Rare (less than 5%)	Tourism-on farm
Farmer - shopkeeper	Selling its own products on short-channels on or off-farm, he practices a commercial activity, which is an extension of its productive system. He can be considered as not precisely providing tourism service if direct selling is not define as to be an agritourist activity. Anyway, from a juridical point of view, it is an agritourism structure.	Very frequent (almost 1/3 rd)	Not a "tourism service" Or considered as Tourism-on-farm
Farmer – Heritage trainer	This farmer invests in the educative and touristic valorization of its rural Heritage through tastings and demonstrations. So, he provides a tourism service directly and tightly linked to the agricultural production of the farm. The product sold is "incomplete" and can be, to some point of views, considered as not a real tourism service but part of a more globally tourism-on-farm product.	Rare (less than 5%)	Not a "tourism service" Or considered as Tourism-on-farm
Farmer - Hosteller	Located near the coasts, this farmer take advantage of its location by receiving the "surplus" of coastal tourism in its accommodation. He simply proposes to hostel people and do not offer an additional product like a farm-visit or a tasting. So there is no effective link to the rural world and to the agricultural work.	Very frequent (almost 1/3 rd)	Tourism-off-farm
Poly-active farmer	Alongside to its agricultural work, he works in the field of hiking support and accompanying with its proper diploma to do so. There can be relation to agricultural products (snack with local agro-food products for example) but clearly, it is another job that the farmer practices here during the summer tourists' season.	Rare (less than 5%)	Tourism-off-farm

Table 4. The 6 different profiles of farmers practising a kind of agritourism in Corsica. Source: author and [Furt & Tafani, 2014; 2017]. *when no other activity like hosting or catering is sold, one's can consider the product as incomplete and do not order in the field of tourism services strictly speaking.

Results: the typology of providers

What we did to that aim was to build up a typology of providers, considering the previous models. Our results show 6 different profiles of providers as presented in the next figure. Actually, agritourism covers a wide diversity of representations (Perret and Marcelpoil, 2001).

As regards to the results of our enquiry and of our modelling, as presented in the previous table, it seems that the agritourist entrepreneurial strategies, strictly speaking, are not so frequent (type2 and type1 in some conditions). Moreover, it is not rare that tourism become the main activity of the plant and that the type 1 “agri-rural entrepreneur” moves from a tourism-on-farm offer to a rural tourism one. In other cases, it looks like farmers are waiting for the “coastal” tourists who are curious to taste some local products or who are looking for a cheaper accommodation: in these cases, the farmers’ investment in tourism service is minimum as they only opportunely benefit from the regional tourism peak of seasonality (Senil *et alii*, 2014). At more, there are farmers who clearly implement a second job, as being a hiking accompanier for the tourist season. These, who are quite rare, are considered as poly-active entrepreneur, which is not the case at all of farmers who propose some services as an extension of their agricultural work (see profiles 3 and 4).

Conclusion and discussion

Is this offer that clear to the consumers (Flanigan *et alii*, 2014)? For instance, we ask the question because the destination wants to communicate on its agritourist supply, as being an authentic product, representing the real “work on field” and considering that it contributes to the globally quality image of the territory. From that point of view, don’t we need to clearly define what agritourism is to qualify it and, why not, to label it? The Balearic islands and The Tuscany province already did it, considering tourism-on-farm as a different product than rural tourism (Furt and Tafani, 2011; 2014). It is quite relevant that Corsica too thinks to do such a classification on its own territory. But long is the way to reach the expected result as soon as the different stake-holders of the industry sector do not agree each other on that option. Moreover, the study developed here also tackle major stakes like sustainable development: indeed, thinking the definition of agritourism In Corsica is also a way to refer to the best form of tourism able to support an “integrated rural tourism” (Panyik *et alii*, 2011). Is it the rural tourism one or the tourism on- farm? What is the contribution of the tourism off-farm to the sustainable and local development? (Tafani, 2011; 2013).

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