

Agriculture and tourism relationship in malaysia tourism essay



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Agrotourism is also known as agritourism and farm-based tourism.

Agrotourism is actually the collaborations between tourism and agriculture since the visitor go to travelling as tourist to enjoy, relaxation, spend time and money for joyfulness and happiness in addition to visiting agricultural area, doing agricultural-related activities like harvesting, planting, fishing, and etc. It is a form of tourism in agricultural areas such as orchards, agroforestry farms, herbal farms and animal farms. According to World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 2002) that agrotourism is part of rural tourism and relates to tourism on farms. It gives farmers the opportunities to expand their activities and also to increase their income. Agrotourism is just a small part of rural tourism and agricultural practice worldwide, excluding in some European countries such as Austria, France, Italy and Switzerland, where the number of farms that offer some form of tourism is remarkably large.

Agrotourism has different definitions in different parts of the world. In Italy, it refers to farmstays. However in other parts of the world, agrotourism includes a wide range of activities which comprises of buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, picking fruits, feeding animals or staying at a B&B (bed and breakfast inn) on a farm.

Agrotourism covers a wide range of agriculture-related activities about which visitors learn and can try them out by themselves. In ASEAN countries like Thailand, rice farming, flower growing, vegetable and herb cultivation and livestock farming are some common examples of agrotourism. Agrotourists or visitors are exposed to agricultural practices in a more leisure fashion, such as by joining picturesque canal tours or strolling through shady fruit orchards (tasting the fruits right from the trees) and working in rice farms.

Almost all the agricultural research and study centres scattered throughout the country are supporting the agrotourism. Visitors are allowed to tour the centres, watch the demonstrations or take part in the hands on activities.

Agrotourism and ecotourism are also closely-related. Agrotourism is when a native person or locals of the area offer the tours to their agriculture farm to allow a person to view them growing, harvesting and processing locally grown foods such as coconuts, pineapple, sugar cane, corn or any produce the person would not encounter in their home country. The farmers would also offer a homestay programme and education for the visitors.

Activities that usually be offered to agrotourists or visitors:

Opportunities for interaction between hosts and guests (visitors)

Horseback riding

Demonstrating and participating in daily farm work

Providing courses in organic farming and gardening

Demonstrating or offering classes in making traditional local crafts

Demonstrating food processing, serving typical local dishes and offering cooking lessons

Organising cultural events

Offering excursions to natural and cultural attractions in the surroundings

Exhibitions of agrotourist products

Agrotourism in many European countries consists primarily of lodging and meals on the farm. Farm buildings are often remodeled by the farm families into rustic lodging facilities, and operate them as a type of bed and breakfast (B&B) inn. Some farms especially in Switzerland, do little more than clean out a barn and spread straw on the floor, upon which people roll out sleeping bags. Other farms will provide fairly upscale accommodations for the visitors. Visitors are also able to tour the farms, help out with some farm chores and have meals with the farm family. Invariably, they experience life on the farm genuinely.

In England, 23% of farms provide some type of commercial leisure service enterprise such as fishing, nature trails, picnic sites and so forth whereas 24% of English farms provide overnight accommodation and/or catering (Turner and Winter, 2003). In countries like France, hikers and cyclists can follow a network of trails around the country that leads from farm to farm. In the Netherlands and some other European countries, the farmers have centralized clearinghouses for contacting and booking stays services on working farms. Agrotourism, while new to many types of American agriculture, has been a major part of the development of the American wine industry for decades. Many wineries are part of organized regional wine tours, and some special events such as concerts, festivals, and weddings are also held for attractions. And another form of agrotourism that has been around for decades is “dude ranches.” Dude ranches are more common in the United States and Australian Outback. It offers visitors the opportunity to work on cattle ranches and the chance to take part in the cattle drives.

In Australia, Canada and the Philippines, agrotourism is deemed as a growth industry. Reynolds (2005) mentions that agrotourism is a type of businesses conducted by farmers whose working agricultural operations for the enjoyment and education of visitors. Since it can complement farmers' income and contribute to local economic development, agrotourism is being conceptualized as a business model in terms of product diversification. Referred to as " agriturismo" in Italy, " sleeping in the straw" in Switzerland, " farmstays" in New Zealand, and " farm holidays" in England, agrotourism is well established throughout Europe and in many other countries (Rilla, 1999a). Agrotourism enterprise as a business conducted by a farm operator or farmer for the enjoyment and education of the public beside promoting the products of the farm, and generating additional farm income" (Hilchey, 1993: 4). Although the farmers may not always have the time, moneys and necessary skills and expertise to develop the tourism potential of their business, agriculture and public sector tourism organizations are always promoting agrotourism (Stephen J. and Getz, Don (eds)).

Trends of Agrotourism

Agrotourism was recognized as a part of ecotourism formerly as both have similar principles to conduct nature attractions (Rilla 1999). Both have been identified as the fastest tourism development model in the world. They have been widely developed in developing countries as a potential development models as natural resources and support of local society economically (OTA, 1992).

At the moment, agrotourism has successfully developed in many countries, for instance Switzerland, New Zealand, France, Netherlands, Australia, and <https://assignbuster.com/agriculture-and-tourism-relationship-in-malaysia-tourism-essay/>

Austria (Rilla 1999). In Indonesia, there are eight provinces trying to develop agrotourism such as North Sumatera with rubber and palm plantations, Riau with cacao plantations, West Java by botanical gardens, Central Java and Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta by salak pondoh agrotourism in Sleman, East Java by sugar plantations, Nusa Tenggara Barat by Rinjani ecotourism, Middle of Kalimantan and West of Kalimantan by palm plantations. Currently, they are still simply managed with limited facilities and are not developed on community-based model, and have not been well promoted (Indonesian Agriculture Department, 2005).

Previously, agrotourism attraction was only interpreted as panorama attractions and plantations area, but now agrotourism has been interpreted as a linkage system between tourism and agriculture sectors as well as a model of region development (Indonesia Agriculture Department, 2005).

Application of Agrotourism

Agrotourism is highly dependent on the type of agricultural activity that is practiced in that particular area. In other words, this means that not all agrotourism destinations in the world provide the same agricultural activities. So in this subtopic, we are going to introduce and discuss about some famous agrotourism destinations in our country, Malaysia. This will definitely exposed us the similarities and differences among the agrotourism destinations throughout the world.

First of all, let us look at Malaysia's agrotourism spots. There are some famous examples of destinations such as:

(i) Cameron Highland

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(ii) Taman Pertanian Sabah

(iii) Parit Jawa Johor

(i) Cameron Highland

Cameron Highlands is Malaysia's premier hill resort. Located in the state of Pahang, on the Main Range of Peninsular Malaysia, at 1524m above sea level, it is the largest of the Malaysian hill resorts. Much of its appeal lies in the net sprawling tea plantations which date back to 1929, as well as terraced flower gardens, strawberry farms, orchard and vegetable gardens. Being a popular hill resort, Cameron Highlands is well-developed with visitor amenities, tourist attractions, activities and a range of accommodation for a comfortable, leisurely holiday in cool invigorating climate.

The cool climate which never ranged more than 20 degree Celsius, along with its fertile soil also attracts tourist from various places. Initially, the virgin jungle cleared for cultivation of tea bushes. Thus began Boh Estate, the first highland tea plantation in the country. Subsequently, other tea estates were opened, among them, the Blue Valley and Bharat plantations. The highland was also found to be conducive for the commercial cultivation of vegetables, flowers and fruits such as oranges and strawberries. The increasing popularity of Cameron Highlands in recent years has attracted the development of more tourism facilities and spots to cater to the growing number of visitors.

The practice of agrotourism can be observed in various agricultural places which is well equipped with facilities in Cameron Highlands. This is important as the combination of both agriculture and tourist attraction forms

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agrotourism. There are many activities and places to be visited in Cameron Highlands in the context of agrotourism such as:

(a) Sungai Palas Tea Estate

It is one of the four tea states on the highlands, also produces the world famous BOH TEA. Tourists may travel 1 km into this estate where the factory is located. Resident guides will introduce the complex processes involved in the production of fragrant tea. These include the picking of tea leaves and the intricate art of brewing a good cup of tea. Tourists can even purchase some tea, the main produce of the highland, as a souvenir.

(b) Apiary- Honeybee Farm

Apiary- Honeybee farm is a small cottage industry for the production of honey. It is a garden ere some 25 varieties of flowers have been cultivated not for sale, but as a food supply for honey bees in search of nectar and pollen. Honey, believe it contain amazing ingredients for treating ailments such as insomnia, lethargy, skin diseases and even impotence.

(c) Strawberry Farm

Strawberries are another unique and proud product of the Highlands, seen as a trademark of the hill resort. The variety is known as “ FRESNO”. Tourist will not leave the farm without a jar of strawberry jam.

(d) Flower Nurseries

Fresh flowers are cultivated in the highlands and are a leading export. Most of the flowers are grown in Brinchang. Bloom like roses, chrysanthemum, carnations, dahlia, geranium and everlasting flowers are grown in the nurseries. No visit to the highlands is complete without purchasing some of these colourful cuts to take back home.

(e) Vegetable Farm

Cameron Highlands is the nation's prime producer of fresh vegetables, with some of the produce exported to neighbouring countries. Most of the vegetable farms can be spotted from the road along Brinchang to Tringkap. Cabbages, cauliflower, tomatoes, carrots, leeks, parsley and pepper are grown here. Purchases can be made at the vegetable stalls.

(ii) Taman Pertanian Sabah

Taman Pertanian Sabah is part of the 1500 acres of the Agriculture Research Station, Lagud Sebrang Tenom which is administered and owned by the Agriculture Department Sabah. It is a complex consisting of the Agriculture Research Station, Seed production Centre for Cash Crop, Farmers Training Centre and Taman Pertanian Sabah itself. The Park sprawled over an area of 500 acres. The park was first opened to visitors in October 2000, and was officially launched by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad on the 25 March, 2001.

With its rich biodiversity, the Park has a magnificent collection for indigenous and introduced plants species. It is also a conservation centre for native

Orchids of Borneo. This park would become a heritage for the next

generation and this will help to educate people in nature conservation and <https://assignbuster.com/agriculture-and-tourism-relationship-in-malaysia-tourism-essay/>

the preservation of natural rainforest through cultivation of trees, shrubs, plants and flowers.

The lush greenery, multitude species of plants or flowers of endemic to Borneo Island and very rare, panoramic view of the lakes, captivating landscaped gardens provide an excellent base to expand your knowledge and ideal environment for those who seek peace, quiet and tranquility away from stressed and urban noise. This park also provides a great trekking ground as well as nature walks and jungle activities. The park is blessed with Mother Nature's treasures.

The park is a showcase of integrated activities carried out by all the Departments and Agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture Development and Food Industry. It also serves as a training and education centre for agriculture, horticulture, apiculture, seed production, forestry, fishery and animal husbandry. It is divided into four key areas:

(a) Agriculture

This included Living Crop Museum, Demonstration Farms, Agro forestry, Bee Centre and Germplasm collection.

(b) Horticulture

This include Native Orchid Centre, Hybrid Orchid, Evolution garden, Model Garden and Ornamental Garden

(c) Animal Husbandry

This included Animal Park and Animal Farm.

(d) Fisheries

This included Freshwater Fishing.

Objectives of Taman Pertanian Sabah are firstly, as a major Agrotourism centre in the state. Secondly, to provide demonstration farms for Agricultural activities, Animal breeding and Fisheries. Thirdly, to serve as a centre for training and demonstration on Agriculture, Horticulture, Fishery, Apiculture, Seed Technology, Forestry and Animal Husbandry. Next is to provide facilities for nature-based recreational activities and the final objective is to promote awareness and love for nature.

(iii) Parit Jawa Johor

The following agrotourism destination that i recommended is a place which situated On the western coast of Johor, lies a small town called Parit Jawa. The main attraction here especially during the October-March migration season, is the birdlife. Despite the busy river mouth near the jetty the bird fauna seems unperturbed. The most noticeable of the birds are the Lesser Adjutants of the family of Storks, by sheer virtue of their endangered status and size. Standing at 120 cm tall, with a white body and dark grey wings this species is unmistakable. Its head is virtually bald, apart from a sparse covering of fine hair-like feathers. There are only 2000 odd numbers left in the world and its cousin, the Greater Adjutant, not found in Malaysia, is critically endangered with only 500 odd left in the wild. To be able to sight these amazing prehistoric looking birds is worth the weekend to this classic, pre-war-looking town of Parit Jawa.

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Birdlife

The main attraction of Parit Jawa, especially during the October-March migration season, is the birdlife. Though there is a regular traffic of fishing boats winding its way through the muddy channels, and though there are local people going about their business near the jetty the bird fauna seems unperturbed. The most noticeable of the birds are the Lesser Adjutants, by sheer virtue of their size. Standing at 120 cm tall, with a white body and dark grey wings this species is unmistakable. Comically, its head is virtually bald, apart from a sparse covering of fine hair-like feathers.

Active during the day, these storks feed on fish and amphibians such as the Crab-eating Frog. Once seized, the prey is subjected to a series of stabs with its powerful beak, before being swallowed whole. At nights the storks roost in mangrove trees along the coast. Nesting occurs mainly during the dry season, either in small colonies or as single nests.

Other shorebirds not commonly seen in Malaysia but which may be sighted at Parit Jawa include the Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*, the Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* and the Grey-tailed Tattler *Heteroscelus brevipes*.

Egrets and smaller herons are easily seen, including the Chinese Pond Heron *Ardeola bacchus*. The Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* is very common, and is often seen perched close to the jetty or stalking small fish around the moored fishing boats.

Flocks of terns are often seen following fishing vessels back to harbour, swooping down to pluck small fish from the waters churned up by the boats'

propellers. Kingfishers are common too, including migrants such as the Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and the Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*; there are numerous sticks or posts close to the jetty where they like to perch.

Fishing Village

For visitors unfamiliar with the laid-back charms of rural Malaysia the fishing village of Kuala Parit Jawa serves as a fine example. The tidal inlet is crowded with wooden vessels which fish the muddy waters of the Straits of Malacca, and there are a number of open-air seafood restaurants specialising in spicy fish recipes. Add to that a couple of brightly coloured Chinese temples and modest Malay kampung houses surrounded by banana, papaya and durian orchards and you have a scene of rural tranquility.

Mud and Mangroves

Beyond the rickety wooden jetty at the mouth of Kuala Parit Jawa is a wide expanse of mud, which is exposed at low tide. The coastal mudflats of the Straits of Malacca are rich in organic content, supporting an abundance of invertebrate life including worms, snails, bivalves, crabs and prawns. In turn these food groups support a rich web of higher species including fish such as mudskippers, reptiles such as water snakes and monitors, and a wide range of bird species. Mammals too live in the adjacent mangroves; groups of Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis* regularly venture out of the mangroves and onto the mudflats, probably to feed upon crabs - hence their other name 'Crab-eating Macaque'. The Oriental Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinerea* can also be sighted here.

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Implications of Agrotourism

Agrotourism has contributed much to both the economic and social sector in our country development. However, there are positive and negative implications of agrotourism.

First of all, agrotourism contributes lots in improving the economy of the local communities. When we are promoting about agrotourism, we are actually promoting both the agriculture and tourism as they are combined in this sector. Places of agriculture will sell the products and induce the tourism of the place at the same time. As a result, tourists will buy the agriculture products and spending for tour cost such as accommodation as well.

Besides, agrotourism will help to increase the value of the village. For instance, the residents can provide home stay-themed-accommodation for the tourists. Home stay is a form of program that allows the tourists to live with a local family to experience their lifestyle. Besides this program, by spending on the service provided or products bought, the tourists can increase the incomes of the residents in rural area. This additional income will help to raise the status of the residents. Thus, the poverty rate in rural area can be decreased.

Other opportunity generated from agrotourism is providing local employments. The residents of rural area, especially the youths, can work on accommodation service, tour guide service, restaurant or handicraft industry. This will decrease the migration of youths to cities.

Thus, agrotourism helps improving the social situations, particularly poverty alleviation, decreasing unemployment and declining urbanization.
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Generating agrotourism-related businesses is the most potential opportunity of agrotourism development. Due to the increasing amount of the tourists, traditional cakes or chips are produced in order to introduce the local food to them. In the handicraft industry, souvenir such as batik and canes' products are made to sell to the tourists. To maintain the amount of visitors, agricultural product improvements and stimulations of tourism-related enterprises are done.

Last but not least, abandoned land can be developed in the practice of agrotourism. The development of agrotourism brings about the utilization of lands. These lands can turn out to be a new tourist attraction spot. They can be used as aquaculture rearing, orchard farm or recreational park.

Nevertheless, agrotourism has its negative effects towards the environment when it is over-developed. Climatic change is one of the major problems which the agrotourism sector caused. Recently, we can see the global temperature is increasing drastically from year to year. The best example is Cameron Highland, a place that practice agrotourism. It was known as a cold place but now, the temperature is actually increasing. This has caused the crop yield of the agriculture products such as vegetable and fruits to decrease because these plants are only suitable in temperate condition.

Another negative effect that we can see is the pollution problem. Extensive agrotourism activities have released polluting by-products which results in environmental problems. The increasing number of tourists causes air pollution in a particular area as they using vehicles which release greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides. These

polluting gases are emitted into the atmosphere and translate into the acid rain. Acid rain has adverse affect on the plants, fresh water and soil because it can kills some of the living organisms.

Besides, the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides also result in soil pollution. Excessive use of chemical pesticides which exceed permissible limit causes undesirable health effects and reduces biodiversity. Continuous use of fertilizer that contains heavy metals such as cadmium in phosphate rocks will pollute the soil and render the crops to be toxic. When the rain falls, the pollutants in soil will be brought to the river along with the rain, which will then cause water pollution. In addition, increases in use of chemical fertilizer results in higher level of nitrates being washed from the soil into the water ecosystem. This causes an excessive enrichment of the water, eutrophication, leading to rapid algal growth that creates oxygen deficit and killing of aquatic life. This chain reaction will further affect our ecosystem and biodiversity.

When agrotourism is allowed to develop without proper planning, deforestation might happen. As this sector is growing rapidly, more and more land is required. So, the limited availability of land will lead to deforestation. Deforestation will brings to decrease in the wildlife population and at a more critical state, the biodiversity of the area will be affected. Consequently, there will be agricultural mismanagement which results in less arable land for agriculture and at the meantime, affect the agrotourism sector.

Constraints of Agrotourism

Lack of promotion is another constraint of agrotourism. Advertisement related to agrotourism is not established to a wider range of places. People will not have much information about the agrotourism places. Besides, the pamphlets that provide incomplete information will confuse the tourists. The information given may not be interesting or fascinating enough to attract the tourists. Furthermore, many places are lack of tour guides to introduce the places to the tourists. These will deter them from visiting the agrotourism spot. The authorities should promote the uniqueness of each village to strengthen the destination by combining with other related activities to reach the goals of agrotourism.

Facilities also play an important role in the development of agrotourism. The hardest barriers of agrotourism development are inadequate infrastructures, limited public facilities and imperfect human resource skills. It will be a trouble when the facilities such as transportation, hotel and toilet do not fulfill the tourists' demands.

Another problem in agrotourism is insufficient government supports. Due to the small amount of governmental expenditure on research and development of agrotourism, technical assistance and support, as well as agro-marketing, agrotourism always faces problems in developing.

Government empowerment, investment in agricultural sectors, infrastructure development, human skill improvement, public facilities development, and local communities' empowerment and involvement need to be immediately committed to apply an ideal agrotourism.

Besides, the younger generation is the important factor in the development of agrotourism. However, they are not concerned and interested about the greenery. From their point of view, agrotourism spot is not an interesting place to travel and it is not worth to go for such an unmemorable and uncomfortable trip. Water World or Extreme Park will draw more attention from them. Also, they are not interested to work in the agrotourism sector. Fresh graduates are not enthusiastic about the job in agrotourism as they thought it is not well-paid compared to the professional sector. As a consequence, there is no new generation to take over this sector.

Lastly, scarce investment is a big problem for agrotourism sector. It is more risky to invest in this sector compared to the other sectors which are stable in development. Investors are less likely to invest in agrotourism as this sector is not a popular trend in the world yet.

All in all, the government, non-governmental organizations, and even the people of our country should do their best to contribute to agrotourism. The government should not just fork out money in maintenance. Instead, they should find alternatives in supporting the development of agrotourism. Solutions to solve the constraints and implement to improve this sector should be their priority concern.

Ways to Improve Agrotourism In Malaysia

Agrotourism and homestay programmes provided opportunities for local involvement and additional sources of income. A total of 19 agro-tourism locations were developed with the participation of farmers and fishermen

during the Seventh Plan period. The products included day visits, farm-stay and agro-tourism packages.

Agrotourism is rapidly carving a niche in Malaysia, especially as the country has a wealth of products to offer locals and visitors alike. Agricultural tourism, as it is formally known, helps by improving incomes and economic potentials of small farms, rural communities and agro-based ventures throughout the country. Visitors can also help with the locals' daily chores, feeding the ducks, tending to the vegetables and see how the local communities thrive in today's fast-paced world. There are also homestays where visitors can discover more of local agrotourism practices. There are also fruit farms and parks where locals and visitors can learn more of agrotourism in Malaysia.

In Malaysia, an agriculture park measuring over 10000 hectares has been opened, showing visitors how Malaysian agriculture has developed. For example, Cameron Highland located at Pahang and Dusun d' Paradise that is situated in Melaka. These places have become tourist hotspot as it offer variety of activity and different experience for tourist. Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism (MAHA) is the main organization that promotes the practice of agrotourism. Today, the industry is still growing and need a lot of improvement to achieve optimum benefit.

Supportive government policies are one of the ways of improvement. It maintains a business environment with oppurtunities for growth and profits have made agrotourism in Malaysia an attractive sector. The private sector in Malaysia is encouraged to become partners with the public sector in

achieving the nation's development objectives. Government's commitment to maintain a business environment should be the main objective that provides companies with the opportunities for growth and profits.

Government can also pay constant feedback from the business community through channels of consultation such as regular government- private sector dialogues. These allow the various business communities to air their views and to contribute towards the formulation of better agrotourism.

Air, land and sea transportation will be continuously upgraded to facilitate accessibility and the growth of the tourism industry. The comfort, safety and security of tourists are crucial for the success of the agrotourism industry. The government will increase security patrols, especially in remote tourist resorts, to ensure the safety of tourists. At the same time, adherence to safety measures in the transportation of passengers by road, rail, sea and air will remain a top priority. Operators, guides and instructors in the tourism business will need to be more conscious of the well-being of tourists and strive to ensure their comfort and safety. In addition, further efforts will be made to provide tourists with quality goods and services at reasonable prices.

Over the years, extensive promotional campaigns have been engineered both locally and overseas to attract tourists from around the world. Despite the economic slowdown, the tourism industry remains strong. Today, Malaysia is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Asia. This will allow the agrotourism industry to continuously expanding. Government must take initiative, which are undertaken by its official tourism promotional board, Tourism Malaysia. This will create potential investment opportunities <https://assignbuster.com/agriculture-and-tourism-relationship-in-malaysia-tourism-essay/>

in many areas. Tourism Malaysia has established video clips in local television programme to promote agrotourism.

Stable political condition is also essential for marketing in agrotourism even for major tourist attractions. Government should ensure the political condition is always stable so as to allow the continuous of tourist flowing into the country, thus promoting agrotourism. Besides that, this will make investor feel secure and allow them to expand the field safely.

Malaysia government should offers investors a young, educated and productive workforce at costs competitive with the other countries in Asia. This will allow the investors to develop and practice agrotourism in a more convenient way. Thus, this will attract more investors to develop in Malaysia and directly contribute to the country's economy.

The investors also need to play their role to improve the practice of agrotourism. They should provide better infrastructure for their customers such as transports, accommodations and catering facilities. They must provide good transport links because even attractive regions can be almost impossible to market for tourism if they are not accessible from the population centres. Investors should ensure that the agriculture they planted must be in healthy condition and always fresh to attract more people to come and have a tour.

Investors can cooperate with government to create partnership with travel agency of other country to promote local agrotourism. Tour agency can provide attractive tour packages and promotion for the tourist where is the investor will give cheaper price for the agent. This is a form of symbiosis
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interaction between the tour agent and investor. Both parties will get benefit from the interaction. Investor must provide wide d