

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM IN TURKEY

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Abstract. The potential and the abundances provided by the geography on which Turkey is located have made possible for centuries the agricultural activities to be continued on these lands, hundreds of varieties of agricultural goods to be produced, and a sum of knowledge to be built up in this context. Also, the possibilities provided by this geography have contributed to our country in covering great values as per historical and natural beauties. Both agriculture and tourism sectors still have a major role in Turkey's economic and social life. However, in recent times both sectors have met new concepts owing to the rapid change process throughout the world. Within this change process, people have begun to tend to naturally produced goods in agriculture, and they have begun to seek new holiday approaches different from the traditional understanding as sea-sun-sand. In addition to these, the concepts of ecological agriculture and ecological tourism have come up, and they have been increasingly used. In our country, which has a noteworthy potential in both sectors, to assess, develop and sustain these new concepts will contribute much to our country in economic and social terms. A great part of Turkey should be used in this sense. As of 2007 in Turkey, there are nearly 70 ecological farms accepting tourists, most of which are in the Mediterranean Region. In these farms, the current potential should be well determined in order to provide the sustainability of tourism, to add new ones to these, and to consider the agriculture-tourism relationship more properly.

Key words: ecological agriculture, tourism, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

As a result of the economic and technological developments in parallel with the rapid population growth in the world, new developments and searches have started to take place in agricultural and tourism sectors as well. First of all, a heavy conventional agricultural production started to be carried out particularly at the end of 1950's to meet the increasing demand in the agricultural sector. Thanks to the economic contributions and excessive amounts of support provided by United States of America, intensive agriculture suddenly became widespread, agricultural mechanization started and chemicals and fertilizers as well as chemical additives started to be used. Agricultural support policies pursued by European Community at the end of 60's as well as the invention of pesticides and chemical fertilizers in 70's contributed to these developments as well. However, observing that the increase in agricultural production -which is also named "Green Revolution"- failed to solve the problem of world hunger, rather, it rapidly damaged natural

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balance and human health; some individuals and groups started to conduct researches on this issue. At the end of these researches and thanks to the pressure exerted by scientific circles and NGO's, the use of DDT-group pesticides were banned in 1979 firstly in USA and then throughout out the world. Thus, "organic agriculture", which was quite popular in the period between Ist and IInd World War, re-took the attention of the world and, with the pressure from consumers, turned from a component of family enterprises into a commercial phenomenon. Introduction of the law stipulating use of organic products in the production of baby formula for 0-2 age group in USA also contributed in the development of such commercial dimension² (www.tarim.gov.tr). Thus, the concept of "**organic agriculture**" has turned into the most popular trend of recent years³ (Karakuzulu, 2006, p.149). Rapid change process the world has undergone has had considerable impacts not only on agricultural activities but also on tourism patterns. Together with the raise of social awareness about prevention of any activity damaging ecological environment, new tourist types having different expectations and new tourism activities meeting such new expectations have come out. For instance; ordinary tourism activities of "sea-sand-sun" have been replaced by the tourism activities enabling integration with natural environment and culture. In parallel with these changes, the concept of "eco tourism" or "**ecological tourism**" has come out in tourism sector. In this part, evaluations will be made on **ecological agricultural tourism** - the main focus of this study - as well as two quite popular concepts: ecological agriculture and ecological tourism.

Ecological Agriculture is an agricultural production method which is certified and controlled in each phase (from production to consumption) and where no chemical input is used. The main objective of organic agriculture is to protect environment, plant, animal and human health without polluting soil and water resources and air⁴ (www.tarim.gov.tr). In this agricultural system, the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers and drugs is prohibited; instead, practices such as the use organic fertilizer (farm fertilizer) and green manure, crop rotation, strengthening of plant resistance and utilization of parasites and predators in the fight against diseases are suggested. Ecological agriculture consists of the methods and production systems that aim at restoring the balance of ecosystems, which was heavily damaged due to wrong applications.

According to the definition made by International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), **Ecological Tourism** is an environmentally-responsible travel and visit paid to intact natural environments, which promotes conservation of the nature and cultural assets, has low visitor impact and provides local people with socio-economic benefits⁵ (Kurdoğlu, 2001, p.4).

² www.tarim.gov.tr

³ Karakuzulu, Z., 2006, Kelkit'in Ekolojik Tarım Potansiyeli, Atatürk Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, C:6, S. 36, s. 149, Erzurum.

⁴ www.tarim.gov.tr

⁵ Kurdoğlu, O., 2001, Koruma Alanları ve Ekoturizmin Karadeniz Bölgesi Açısından İrdelenmesi (*Examination of Conservation Areas and Ecotourism from the Point of Black Sea Region*), Türkiye Ormancılar Derneği Yayını, Orman ve Av, S.4, p.4, İstanbul.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as a nature-friendly visit, which conserves environment and safeguards the welfare of local people⁶ (Yılmaz, 2006, p.238,). From this perspective, ecotourism features protection of people as well as conservation of nature and culture and provides financial contributions to local people and local area. **Ecotourist** refers to a special and intelligent person who knows that s/he visits a place as a guest, does not try to reorganize the place s/he visits according to her/his own expectations, gets in touch with local people, ensures sustainability of local economy by purchasing the labor of local people⁷ (www.radikal.com.tr/ Ecology+Tourism). It can be concluded that agriculture and tourism sectors are the two most important components of rural development. The principles and objectives of the ecologically sustainable forms of both sectors - in other words ecological agriculture and ecological tourism - comply with each other as well. Main objectives of both activities are to conserve environment and natural resources; to restore already damaged ecological balance; to ensure sustainable agriculture and tourism; prevent loss of useable lands; to conserve flora and fauna; to sustain bio-diversity and; to prevent chemical pollution and toxic residues. Indeed, this is a production and sharing culture that respects nature and all living things. "Respect" lies at the core of the system; the system is based on respecting all living things from the smallest microorganism to the most developed living thing, namely human being. Both the ecological agriculture and ecological tourism is to sell what is local and original. If the ecological agriculture is accepted as the main tool for rural transition, ecotourism will be an integral component of it. As a matter of fact, these two concepts must be considered together to achieve such development.

Today -although at different levels in each country- important developments have been achieved in conserving environment and protecting human and social health. Integrating role of common objectives has brought a new concept: **Ecological Agricultural Tourism**.

Ecological Agricultural Tourism is a touristic activity that combines ecological agriculture with ecological tourism to provide people with the opportunity of making a holiday in a natural environment. This concept refers to a touristic model which has developed together with agriculture⁸ (www.mezrabotan.com). It can also be defined as a tourism service provided by rural people.

ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGICAL TOURISM POTENTIAL OF TURKEY

Thanks to the geographical advantages brought by its location, Turkey has a high potential for agriculture and tourism. Moreover, with its unique geographical position (as a country located at a point where 3 continents of the old world -Asia, Africa, Europe- are closest to each other), it serves as a focal point for a region that has

⁶ Yılmaz,Ü., 2006, Eko Turizm Destinasyonu Olarak Buldan (*Buldan as a Tourism Destination*), 23-24 November,2006,Buldan Sempozyumu,C.2,s.238,Buldan.

⁷(www.radikal.com.tr/ Buket Baydar,Münevver Eminoğlu)

⁸ www.mezrabotan.com

high tourism and agricultural potential⁹ (Doğanay, 2001, p.29) (Fig. no 1). Turkey's unique geographical features increase its both agricultural and touristic potential. It is a quite colorful country with various landforms, climatic features, flora, hydrographic features, soil structures, population and settlement characteristics and economic activities. For instance; various morphological formations created by different landforms have shaped climatic conditions and enabled people enjoy four seasons. Four-season opportunity enriches economic activities, diversity of agricultural products as well as flora and fauna. In addition, Anatolia - which is open to settlement since Neolithic period and which has hosted many civilizations and societies throughout its history- provides considerable knowledge about agricultural culture and offers diversity in terms of cultural heritage and touristic values.



Fig. no 1. Location map of Turkey

General location, unpolluted lands and climatic conditions of Turkey turns all of its regions into valuable sources for organic products. Turkey has a high potential for organic production. Even, many products cultivated in Turkey are not classified as “organic” today only because controlled-cultivation process is not applied¹⁰ Kirazlar, 2001, p.15). Factors such as geographical position, high agricultural population and product diversity turn Turkey into a country appropriate for organic agriculture. Main components of the ecological tourism potential of Turkey can be listed as natural, cultural and historical values.

Cereals such as wheat, barley and corn; all vegetable species; industrial

⁹ Doğanay, H.,2001, Türkiye Turizm Coğrafyası (*Turkish Tourism Geography*), Çizgi Kitabevi, 3rd print, p.29,Konya.

¹⁰ Kirazlar, N.,2001,Ekolojik Tarım Mevzuatı, 14-16 Kasım 2001,Türkiye II. Ekolojik Tarım Sempozyumu, s.15, İzmir.

plants such as tobacco, cotton and sugar beet; all fruit species especially hazelnut, olive, grape, fig, apricot, apple, peach, quince, pear and; other agricultural products such as peanut, almond, walnut, sesame, sun flower, rose, thyme, bay, opium and sage can be produced in Turkey via organic production.

Turkey is rich in natural and human touristic sources which will support ecological agricultural tourism and which can be utilized together with such kind of tourism activity. Capped earth pillars, travertine, caves, tablelands, national parks, thermal resources, waterfalls, lakes, bird paradises, shores, historical settlement areas, historical artifacts and museums are among these natural and human touristic sources. In addition, other potentials that promote ecological tourism can be listed as substantially preserved environment, traditional diversity, hospitality of Turkish people, unique socio-cultural features, exotic integration of the East and the West and handicrafts based on local potentials.

Guests have an important place in the Anatolian culture. This place necessitates entertaining a guest in the best way and is deemed “blessed” due to the belief that guests bring abundance together with them. Guests are welcomed and entertained well.

Despite the high potential mentioned above, Turkey does not have a long history of ecological agriculture and ecological agricultural tourism. This process started with the ecological production of dry grapes and dry figs in 1984-85 season to meet the demand of European buyers. In 1985-90 period, ecological agriculture was characterized by the product range composed of 8 conventional export products. Foreign market-oriented domestic and foreign firms made production in cooperation with producers on demand basis. Product diversity started to increase after 1990 while foreign demand played the decisive role in terms of the amount of production and type of product. By-law introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs in 1994 set the legal framework and delegated the ultimate responsibility to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Another by-law put into effect in January 1996 stipulated inclusion of ecological products in the group of “products requiring export declaration”. The same by-law authorized Aegean Exporters Union to ensure the collection of all export related information in one center.

Ecological agricultural products were produced for foreign markets till 2000. Some attempts made within this period to introduce these products into domestic market via supermarkets failed due to limited product range and high prices.¹¹ (Uygun, 2001, p.4). An increased demand has been observed after 1999 with the introduction of ecological products in specific shops in cities such as Istanbul¹² (Arda, 2007, p.28), Ankara, Antalya Samsun, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Antalya, Kuşadası and Bodrum. Such shops sell natural and/or home-made products to diversify the product range and to provide consumers with information on ecological products they sell. Selves/sections have started to be allocated for ecological products in some supermarkets as well. In 2001, a supermarket sold (for

¹¹ Aksoy, U., 2001,Ekolojik Tarım:Genel Bir Bakış, 14-16 Kasım 2001,Türkiye II. Ekolojik Tarım Sempozyumu, s.4, İzmir.

¹² Arda,M.,2007,Küresel Organik Tarım Pazarları, 19-20 Ekim 2007,Organik Tarım I. Kongresi Raporu, s.28, İstanbul.

promotional purposes) ecological products at the same price with their counterparts produced by conventional methods. Thus, production of fresh fruits and vegetables, processed products and bread for domestic market has started to gain momentum at the local level. Moreover, ecological product markets are set up in big cities such as İstanbul (Şişli), Ankara (Ayrancı), Antalya, Bursa and Samsun.

Table no 1

Ecological agriculture data on a yearly basis

Years	No of Products	No of Farmers	Production Area (ha)	Production Amount (ton)
1996	26	1.947	6.789, 5	10.304, 0
1997	53	7.414	15.906, 1	47.611, 6
1998	67	8.199	24.041, 9	99.299, 8
1999	92	12.275	46.522, 8	168.306, 2
2002	150	12.428	89.827	310.125
2003	179	14.798	113.621	323.981
2004	174	12.806	209.573	378.803
2005	205	14.401	203.811	421.934
2006	203	14.256	192.789	458.095
2007	201	16.276	174.283	568.128

Source: www.tarim.gov.tr

Today, 16276 producers make 568.128 tons of ecological production of nearly 201 species on 174.283 hectare land (Table no 1). In addition, 16 farmers breed 42192 animals according to organic methods while 149 farmers produce 49738 tons of ecological honey in 23308 beehives. As of 2007, ecological agriculture sector exported 934667694 kg product in return for USD 2935932149 (Table no 2) ¹³ (www.tarim.gov.tr).

Table no 2

Export and amount of ecological products on a yearly basis

YEAR	AMOUNT (kg)	SUM (\$)
1998	8.616.687	19.370.599
1999	12.049.949	24.563.892
2000	13.128.934	22.756.297
2001	17.556.280	27.242.407
2002	19.182.859	30.877.140
2003	21.083.351	36.932.995
2004	16.093.189	33.076.319
2005	9.319.328	26.230.259
2006	10.374.493	28.236.617
2007	9.346.677	29.359.321

Source: www.tarim.gov.tr

¹³ 2007 Statistics of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Despite the attempts in domestic market, the share of ecological production in whole agricultural production is below 1%. Ecological product range -regardless of whether it is a food or non-food product- consists of dry fruits-vegetables, nuts, legumes, medical and aromatic plants and processes (frozen, canned fruits-vegetables, fruit juice, essential oil, etc) products that have long shelf life and market flexibility.

First Ecological Agricultural Tourism activity in Turkey started in 2004 with “**Ecological Agricultural Tourism, Information and Experience Exchange (Ecological TaTuTa) Project**” undertaken by Wheat Association with the support from United Nations. With this project, Wheat Association became the representative of European Centre for **Ecological and Agricultural Tourism** (ECEAT) and Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) in Turkey. Many volunteers and visitors pay visits to the farms of TaTuTa project via these organizations. Agricultural tourism-which has been introduced in Turkey short time ago- is undertaken in 34 different points with 72 farms. To date, **1383** people have participated in agricultural tourism introduced with Ta Tu Ta project. Ta Tu Ta Project provides the opportunity of making agricultural tourism in 72 farms located in 32 different points of Turkey for people looking for alternative touristic options other than usual sea-sand-sun tourism (Fig. no 2) (Table no 3). The aim of the project is to give material and spiritual support to farmers doing ecological agriculture. 150 of totally 1400 farms where ecological agriculture is done have applied for ecological agricultural tourism. Visitors who were taken to project farms by Ta Tu Ta at the beginning of the project have started to pay their visits via Genç Tur.



Fig. no 2. Ecological agricultural tourism areas in Turkey (www.buğday.org)

As of 2007, 114 tourists visited Turkey for ecological tourism purposes. Genç Turizm officers state that half of the visitors were volunteers and the other half were guests and that main demand came from abroad. 60% of the visitors were composed of foreign visitors. Tourists coming from Japan, Germany and Holland and from far countries such as Canada, USA and Australia, France, Italy, Ireland, Switzerland (Table no 3) mainly prefer the farms in Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea Regions. Indeed, farms are located in Aegean Region (Manisa, Muğla,

Afyon, Burdur, etc.), Marmara Region (Thrace, etc.), Mediterranean Region (Lakes District, Antalya, etc.), Black Sea Region (Gümüşhane, Artvin, etc.) and Eastern Anatolia Region (Erzurum, etc.) which have suitable climatic conditions, diverse agricultural products, lands not heavily damaged by conventional agriculture, high agricultural culture and rich touristic sources (Table no 5) (Fig. no 2). Agricultural tourism has not been fully adopted by domestic tourists yet. In Turkey, this type of tourism is mainly preferred by students.

Table no 3

Coming tourist number country basis (2007)

NATIONALITY	WILLING	GUEST
TURK	20	12
ALIEN	71	11
	91	23
COUNTRY	WILLING	GUEST
USA	26	4
Turkey	20	12
Germany	16	
France	5	7
Canada	4	
Italy	5	
Denmark	4	
Ireland	3	
Switzerland	3	
Japan	2	
Brazilian	1	
S. Korea	1	
Australian	1	
Total	91	23

Source: Genç Tur 2007

Conditions that must be met to be an “agricultural tourist” are quite simple. First of all, the visitor chooses the farm s/he wants to visit according to “visitor reception” schedule which shows the periods when the farms are open to visitors. The visitors reception period differs from one farm to another as the product and seasonal characteristics of one farm differ from one to another. After making her/his choice according to visitor reception periods and features of the farms, the visitor must decide whether s/he will go as a “volunteer” or a “guest”. If s/he goes to a farm as a “guest”, s/he stays in an eco-guesthouse or a guestroom in the farm s/he will visit. As of 2007, the cost of staying in a farm as a guest changes between 25-75 YTL/person.

Any visitor who wants to visit a farm as a “volunteer” makes no material contribution; rather, s/he works in that farm - as seasonal workers do. The owner of the farm provides food and accommodation in exchange for her/his service. Farms

enable volunteers to learn ecological agriculture by doing agricultural works in lands and gardens, to learn about the other touristic values of the area, to learn how to prepare local food such as gravy, jam, molasses, tarhana (dried yoghurt used to cook soup), pickle and to learn how to make handicrafts such as pottery, woodcarving and basketry.

In the beginning, most of the visitors coming to Ta Tu Ta farms do not know “what people do in a farm”. Indeed, it is the curiosity that attracts the attention of visitors to these farms. While some visitors prefer farms to learn how to cultivate tomato or how to hoe, a great majority of visitors come to find a way to escape from city life. There is always a suitable farm to meet the demands of visitors. For instance; while one can harvest hazelnut in Black Sea or mulberry in Kemaliye, the other can enjoy sea, forest and agriculture in Aegean or Mediterranean Region.

Table no 4

Coming tourist of disintegration farm basis (2007)

FARM	WILLİNG	GUEST
YAKABAĞ ÇİFTLİĞİ-FETHİYE	23	1
VEHBİ ERSÖZ-AFYON	17	
KNIDIA - DATÇA	13	3
BAYRAK-GÜMÜŞHACIKÖY	6	
PASTORAL VADI	6	
JADE-SAKARYA	4	
SERDAR TANAL-ELMALI	3	
DEDETEPE-KÜÇÜKKUYU	3	
LATİF YALÇINER-KEMALİYE	3	
KEMAL GÖRGÜN	3	
MUHTAR'IN ÇİFTLİĞİ-TERME	2	
YÜKSEL ERDOĞAN	2	
KÜÇÜKAĞA-NİKSAR	1	
BUĞDAY EVİ-İSTANBUL	1	
MELAHAT GÜLBİN	1	
PATİKA	1	
RASAYANA	1	
YAŞAM ÇİFTLİĞİ	1	
SAYDAM ÇİFTLİĞİ - ERZURUM		2
GÜRSEL TONBUL		1
SALİH ALKAYA-AĞLASUN		10
ŞABAN AKINCI		3
HASAN ÇINAR		2
AHMET YILMAZ		1
	91	23

Source: Genç Tur 2007

Since agricultural tourism is a new phenomenon for Turkey and people are not fully aware of such tourism style, tourists are informed about the requirement to respect the language, religion and traditions of local people and not to bring the pollution in the cities to these regions. You can do whatever you want in farms which serve as both an ecological agriculture center and a guesthouse. However, if you will stay in a room of a house as a guest, you must obey the rules applicable in that house (as stated in a Turkish proverb which means guest must agree with what is offered). In addition to guests, these requirements were also valid for the customers of old caravanserais. Unlike today's customers, the customers of these caravanserais were not always right. Thus, owners of the farms reserve the right to send back the visitors who do not comply with their life style. Because they exert every effort to entertain their guests as if they were relatives coming from a big city.

As well as Ta Tu Ta visitors, Ta Tu Ta farms must meet some criteria. Preparing rooms for the guests is not the only condition to be fulfilled by these farms. Doing ecological agriculture is important; however, what is more important is to do a kind of agriculture which is philosophically, scientifically and economically ecologic. Attention should be paid by these farms to not only do ecological agriculture but also to use everything at home according to ecological life.

Project officers give practical information – which has to be put into life within ecological life concept- to the owners of these farms. Project officers also control whether ecological agriculture is done or not.

Table no 5

No of the farms doing ecological agriculture on the basis of regions and provinces

Regions and Provinces	Districts	District
Aegean Region		
Manisa	Tekelioğlu	3
Aydın,	Kuşadası	1
Muğla,	Fethiye,Datça	11
Çanakkale	Küçükkuyu,Ayvacak	3
		Total: 18
Black Sea Region		
Artvin	Bokça	4
Rize	Hemşin	2
Gümüşhane	Kelkit	8
Tokat	Niksar	2
Amasya	Gümüşhacıköy	1
Samsun	Terme	1
Sinop	Kabalı	1
Kastamonu	Şenpazar	5
Düzce	Çilimli	1
		Total: 25

Mediterranean Region		
Antalya	Kemer,Elmalı	7
Burdur	Ağlasun	8
Isparta	Eğridir,Aksu	3
		Total: 17
Marmara Region		
İstanbul	Polonez Köy	1
Sakarya	Söğütlü-Maksudiye	1
Çanakkale	Eceabat,Lapseki	3
Yalova	Armutlu	1
		Total: 5
Eastern Anatolia Region		
Erzurum	Pasinlar	1
Erzincan	Kemaliye	4
		Total: 5

GOOD EXAMPLES OF ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURAL TOURISM PRACTICES IN TURKEY

Sampling method was used in the study. Information is given about selected farms to make subject clearer

One of the sample farms is located in Maksudiye Village of Söğütlü District, Sakarya Province, Marmara Region. Maksudye Village is a Ciscassian village and Jade Farm in Maksudiye is named after a Ciscassian dynasty. The owner of the farm started, on his own efforts, ecological production three years age on 180 decare of fruit and 20 decare of vegetable land where conventional agriculture was performed for 28 years. Certified ecological production is performed in this 200 decare-land which constitutes of 2000 quince trees, 2000 apple trees, 2000 pear trees, plum trees, vegetables as well most of other crop fields. Products produced in this farm are put up for sale in organic product market set up on Saturdays in Şişli District of İstanbul and in local markets.

Visitors accommodate in a separate, three-room guesthouse with flush-toilette and hot water (Fig no 3-4). Farm is open only to volunteer tourists. Visitors are accepted only for the six month period between March-October. Volunteers can accommodate in this farm free of charge, but they have to help in daily farm works. They can stay in the farm minimum for a week.

Volunteers coming in the 3rd, 4th and 5th months help in collecting pruned branches, planting vegetables, preparing natural drugs, mowing, under-tree processing; ones coming in the 6th month help in trapping trees and handling vegetables; ones coming in the 7th month help in thinning fruits and handling vegetables; ones coming in the 8th month help in picking plumps and handling vegetables; ones coming in the 9th month help in picking apples and; ones coming in the 10th month help in picking quince (Fig no 5-6).



Fig. no 3. An english tourist doing ecotourism in Jade Farm



Fig. no 4. Ecological plants in the kitchen of the guesthouse of the farm

Thuya eco-board has five rooms for totally 15 TaTuTa visitors. Three bathrooms, WC and hot-water are provided for the visitors. While uncertified ecological agriculture was performed since 1996, required farm certification has been obtained recently. The board is surrounded by various fruit trees and a rosary. In case of demand, some activities such as art and photograph workshop, glass-wooden painting, trekking, riding and food production are carried out. Board presents food from Ottoman Cuisine and various world cuisines as well as vegetarian food, 80% of which are prepared using organic products.

Thuya is surrounded by countless historical and natural beauties. Ancient monasteries in the northwest part of the Village and in Selimiye Village (a close destination), wide walks, historical calabrian pines in Fıstıklı, traditional Turkish and Greek houses in Armutlu, Esenköy Waterfall, Gemlik Umurbey Museum, İznik Lake, Yalova-Altınova-Hersek Village (The last Silk Road destination is Asia) really worth visiting.



Fig. no 5-6. Fruit and vegetable gardens in the farm

Ağlasun Town of Burdur Province in Mediterranean Region is the first place where the ecological agricultural tourism started in Turkey. As well as the ecological rose oil produced since 1990; carpet weaving and fruit and vegetable cultivation activities are performed in Ağlasun Town. 8 of 25 farms involved in “ecological farm visits” program are located in Ağlasun. This town accepts guests at any time of the year. In Ağlasun, where carpet weaving business is still carried out, ecological roses are produced since 1990 by using the system established by NuKa firm and, rose oil is obtained from these roses via conventional methods. A hundred percent of the rose oil produced is exported. Recently, farmers exert efforts to apply ecological agriculture method to all fruit and vegetable cultivation activities (such as cherry and apple production) carried out in the area and to find markets for these products. An open

market is set up on Fridays in Ağlasun Town, where small-size animal husbandry plays a complementary role in ecological production.



Fig. no 7. A view from Thuya Eco-Board (Yalova)

For instance: Ali Baştuğ Farm accommodates its guests in 3-person capacity rooms of the house. Guests have their meals with the family. Family makes its living by selling the ecological roses they grow since 1990 and the products they grow in their greenhouses. They meet most of the household need from their gardens and greenhouses.

Rasayana Farm in Mediterranean Region can also be given as a good example. This farm is located in Geyikbayırı Village of Antalya Province. Geyikbayırı Village - located in the skirts of Termessos Mountains - is 1 km to the natural and historical site area. A 20 km footpath takes you to Termessos National Park. The area presents many interesting examples of conventional and natural life styles. Saklıkent skiing center, King Road passing through the village, caves, tablelands, conventional-style wooden houses built to store wheat and watermills are important touristic places to visit. Typical Mediterranean climate is enjoyed in the region; hot and dry summers and cool and rainy winters.

Villagers who rejected migrating into big cities live off tourism, olive production and animal husbandry. It is possible to see carpets weaved from animal hair in the tableland of the village, where the culture of Turkish nomads prevails. One of the most important features of Geyikbayırı Village is that it is the most important rock climbing area in Turkey. The board is 200 meters to the rock climbing point where rock climbing activities are heavily carried out in spring, autumn and winter months.

Mountain house where guests will accommodate is located in the middle of a 40.000 m² ecological production area. It is furnished with typical Ottoman-style furniture and reflects old Turkish traditions. It provides a comfortable, peaceful and silent atmosphere and presents a wonderful mountain and tableland landscape. In

addition, guests can use the kitchen at any time. It is also possible to set up a camp or a tent in the open space. Guests can take part in daily farm works such as hoeing, handling soil, breaking stones, picking vegetables and handling trees. Tableland tours are organized to give visitors information about herbs.



Fig. no 8. Ali and Fadime Baştuğ in their house constructed according to conventional methods (www.kesfetmekicinbak.com)



Fig. no 9. Rasayana mountain house and organically produced artichokes (Antalya)



Fig. no 10. Rasayana mountain house and organically produced artichokes (Antalya) - details

CONCLUSION

Turkey has a high potential for agriculture and tourism. What provides Turkey with such high potential is the geographical features it has. Most of the areas in Turkey are still intact from agricultural and touristic aspect since many economically-weak farmers could not do conventional agriculture. In addition, many areas suitable for ecological tourism have remained untouched as the most popular tourism style is still limited to sun-sand-sea tourism. Such reasons turn Turkey into an advantageous country for both ecological agriculture and ecological tourism. When the two components -agriculture and tourism- are considered together to achieve rural development, it will be much easier and more rentable to activate this potential. **Ecological agricultural tourism** comes up within the framework of this integrative approach. These two economic activities support each other.

Taking into consideration that 623 thousand 174 farmers¹⁴ (ETO) do organic agriculture today in the world, it is obvious Turkey is far behind the world. On the other hand, raising consumer awareness and enlarging domestic market will trigger the development of organic agriculture in Turkey. Turkey is quite rich in cultural products as well. Each region has unique cultural richness. Regions are rich particularly in handicrafts and local foods. It is observed that handicrafts and foods based on thousands of years of traditional knowledge and experience are still alive today and are increasingly demanded in today's globalizing world. Food made from local agricultural products or the handicrafts unique to that region are the factors that can promote ecological agricultural tourism. For instance; guesthouses to be opened for ecological tourism purposes and daily tourism tours will contribute into marketing process of ecological agricultural products.

Ecological agricultural tourism can enable an agricultural production and tourism activity that respect nature and human beings. Rural development can be achieved, in turn, immigration can be stopped.

¹⁴ Ekolojik Tarım Organizasyonu Derneği (ETO) 2008

Education and accurate informing are the most important measures to be taken so as to develop ecological agricultural tourism. To this end, education should be given not only to primary and secondary education level but also to academic level. As a matter of fact, ecological agriculture courses are given in the high schools in Greece and there is a 3-year license program on ecological agriculture (animal husbandry and field crops) in Chott Meriem, Tunisia. Steps have been taken by volunteer groups to open an ecology and tourism high school in Aksu District of Isparta Province. The objective of the project is to establish the first ecology faculty in Turkey.

Technical personnel and institutions which will provide technical information to entrepreneurs who will undertake ecological agricultural tourism should be generalized with the support from the public sector.

The number of the open markets where ecological products are sold should be increased. Because it is almost a tradition for any person of any income group to go to an open market to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.¹⁵

Turkey should utilize the opportunities provided by its geographical location (being close to Europe, Middle East and Turkic Republics) to create new markets. Turkey should also benefit from its advantage of product diversity and closeness to European markets.

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¹⁵ H.S.Kayahan, 2001, *Ekolojik Tarımda İç Pazarın Gelişimi*, 14-16 Kasım 2001, Türkiye II. Ekolojik Tarım Sempozyumu, s.28, İzmir