



# STAY

Still Tourism Around Yard

## NATIONAL REPORT OF AGROTOURISM IN CZECH REPUBLIC

April 2023



This publication was produced as part of the Erasmus+ project "Still Tourism Around Yard" (STAY), within the KA220-VET 2022 call. The contents reflect the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project Number: 2022-1-SI01-KA220-VET-000087663

**Editors:** Zdenka Nosková (ASZ), Eduard Uher (ASZ), Lucie Ficková (ASZ)



**Contributors:** Lucia Tacconi (CIA Toscana), Cosimo Righini (CIA Toscana)

**Proofreading:** Daniel Monteleone (ELO)



#### **Social Media**

[www.twitter.com/StayProjectEU](https://www.twitter.com/StayProjectEU)



#### **Project web site**

[www.stay-erasmus.eu](http://www.stay-erasmus.eu)





## CONTENTS

1. Overview of Agrotourism in the Czech Republic	1
1.1. Development	1
1.2. Statistics	2
1.3. Regions	3
2. Legislation and Regulation	4
2.1. Definition of Rural Tourism and Agrotourism	4
2.2. Bureaucracy	5
2.3. Requirements	7
2.4. Main Barriers	8
2.5. Opportunities	9
3. Relevant data regarding agrotourism	10
3.1. Education	13
3.2. Overall Evaluation	15
4. SWOT Analysis	16
References	18



## 1. Overview of Agritourism in the Czech Republic

### 1.1. Development

The development of agrotourism in the Czech Republic can only be spoken of since the 1990s. Due to the nature of the landscape and historical events (nationalization, the way of farming, prohibition of entrepreneurship, etc.), agrotourism in the Czech Republic did not have the same conditions as in countries where farming on family farms was not forcibly restricted. After 1989, it was not possible to simply transplant foreign experience into our conditions and freely build on a tradition that had been forcibly interrupted. There was a lack of farming families with a family farm background who could start offering similar services.

Agritourism has great potential and sense in the Czech Republic. At present, it is estimated that only about 60% of its potential is used and is receiving increased attention from both the general public and farmers, but it is far from reaching its potential. There is a wide variation in the quality and range of services provided by agrotourism establishments. The general public often has a distorted idea of what agrotourism has to offer and the quality of its services. It has a very promising future if some work is done to improve the quality of services, improve the marketing of specific facilities (especially the websites of individual farms) and present itself to the public under a common quality brand (for example Holidays in the Countryside). A common brand and its communication help to bring guests not only from the Czech Republic but also from abroad.

There is not any specific program from the national government aimed at promoting agrotourism. Agritourism is included in rural tourism, which has received increased attention in the last 3 years, but it is more of a minor marketing support at the national and international levels. Agritourism can also play an important role in the general public's perception of agricultural issues and farmers - improving relationships, understanding the functioning of family farms, caring for the environment, etc.

The role of agrotourism in the rural sector and the economy as a whole can be significant. Agritourism can be seen as an alternative source of income for farmers, especially in rural areas where diversification opportunities are limited. In addition, it can contribute to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, which is a key factor in the development of rural tourism.

When targeting stakeholders, it is proposed to highlight the potential role of agrotourism in the development of rural areas. Agritourism can create networks between farms and provide

services such as farm care. In addition, it can contribute to the appreciation of cultural and natural heritage in rural areas. It is therefore important to involve universities involved in rural development analysis or other research institutes, regional and local authorities, rural development bodies, municipalities and associations in the development of agrotourism.



© Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky, z.s.

## 1.2. Statistics

In 2013, according to a survey by the Czech Statistical Office, 645 agricultural businesses in the Czech Republic offered tourism, accommodation, and other recreational activities, compared to 351 in 2016. Other data on the number of agricultural entrepreneurs offering tourism services, accommodation, and other recreational activities are not currently available. Data on establishments offering farm experience services (recreational farms) are also not tracked. The reason for the "gap" in the Czech Statistical Office data may be due to the absence of a methodology for monitoring agrotourism establishments.

Official information and statistics on agrotourism in the Czech Republic cannot be found also due to the unwillingness of current institutions at the national level to monitor the sector and the unwillingness of agrotourism service providers to communicate information about themselves. A suitable solution would be to find a consensus on what to monitor within agrotourism so that providers are not burdened with additional reports and questionnaires. Alternatively, only track data that will serve a specific purpose, such as marketing, tracking visitor numbers to monitor the effectiveness of specific activities and campaigns, etc.

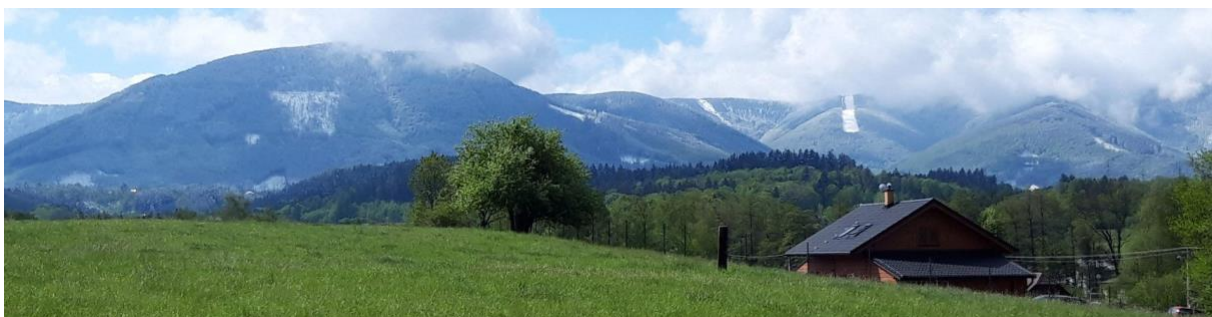
## 1.3. Regions

Most regions of the Czech Republic have favourable conditions for the development of agrotourism. Although some regions have areas with more fertile agricultural land than others, these are not regions where conditions are not suitable for the development of agrotourism. In general, the regions with the most fertile agricultural land are more involved in agricultural production and less in agrotourism, although there may be exceptions.

In general, agrotourism is more in demand in big cities as there are more families with children who want to go on holiday to the countryside. Also, companies are demanding team building and so on. The financial possibilities of the target groups, the need for relaxation in nature, etc. play a role, too. However, these are only estimates, as these data are not statistically monitored in the Czech Republic in any way.

Among the regions with the highest number of agrotourism facilities per km<sup>2</sup> are Vysočina, South Bohemia, and Liberec regions. If we count also wineries offering accommodation and tastings of their products, the South Moravian Region is also one of the agritourist facilities. Approximately only half of the regions of the Czech Republic have prepared a detailed analysis of the offer of rural tourism and agrotourism on their territory.

As model destinations at the national and international level, in terms of agrotourism, we can consider Vysočina region and the Kralovehradecky region, which have actively started to cooperate on comprehensive marketing support for rural tourism and agrotourism facilities at the national level. At the international level, there are Norway, Austria, Italy, and Scotland and their support of agrotourism and rural tourism at the national level, and marketing support of a single brand at the national level.



© Farma Menšík

In the Czech Republic, we can list the Menšíkovi farm as an example of good practice in the field of agrotourism:



They have nice accommodation that is part of the farm but with sufficient privacy for guests and owners. They offer the possibility to tour the farm, play elements for children made of natural materials, nice surroundings of the farm, products from the farm, and accessible shops with regional products. They also have a quality website, social media profiles, BIO certification, Holidays in the Countryside certification and Beskydy Original Product certification, and they work with regional and national partners (<https://www.farma-mensik.cz/>).



© Farma Menšík

## 2. Legislation and Regulation

### 2.1. Definition of Rural Tourism and Agritourism

The activity, as a separate type of business activity, is neither defined nor regulated in the Czech Republic. However, it is covered by legislation that is common to all providers of accommodation and catering services and other experiential activities, as well as the processing of products on the farm.

There is no uniform definition of agrotourism as a form of tourism in the Czech Republic. However, for tourism, the following definition was agreed upon by the stakeholders, including the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of Agriculture in the creation of the "Strategy for the Development of Rural Tourism in the Czech Republic 2018 - 2025: „As

agrotourism is one of the major forms of rural tourism and is often confused with it, the working group also agreed on the wording and use of a definition for agrotourism.”<sup>1</sup>

**Rural tourism** is a form of sustainable tourism that is directly linked to nature, landscape, active rest, relaxation, knowledge, traditions, folklore, and authentic rural atmosphere. It includes both multi-day stays with recreational activities and accommodation in private or smaller group accommodation as well as one-day recreational activities in the countryside.

**Agritourism** is specified as a form of rural tourism that is run by agriculture entrepreneurs in primary agricultural production. In addition to the direct exploitation of nature, rural landscape and authentic culture it is characterised by a direct relationship to agricultural work or farmstead with an agricultural function.

From the perspective of rural tourism, the countryside is any environment that does not have the characteristics of a city or an industrial area.

## 2.2. Bureaucracy

The level of bureaucracy in the Czech Republic has long been identified as a problematic aspect of the further development of society and its prosperity. The most serious consequence of excessive administrative burden is generally considered to be the undesirable impact on business. The multiplicity of various requirements, which can rarely be fulfilled perfectly and completely, leads to corruption, resignation towards their fulfilment, or attempts to circumvent them.

Legislation on rural tourism, and agrotourism in particular, consists of a large number of regulations that concern both tourism and agriculture itself. The situation is further complicated by the different approaches taken by authorities and institutions to interpreting and enforcing the various laws.

A table of a selection of legislation relating to accommodation services:

<b>Decree No. 501/2006 Coll. on general technical requirements for land use</b>
---

---

<sup>1</sup> Strategy for the Development of Rural Tourism in the Czech Republic 2018-2025: <https://www.svazvta.cz/homepage/26-03-19/strategie-rozvoje-venkovskeho-cestovniho-ruchu-v-cr-2018-2025>



<b>Building Act No. 183/2006 Coll</b>
<b>Trade Act No. 455/1991 Coll</b>
<b>Income Tax Act No. 586/1992 Coll</b>
<b>Act on Sales Records 112/2016 Coll</b>
<b>Civil Code No. 89/2012 Coll</b>
<b>Local Fees Act No. 565/1990 Coll</b>
<b>Act on Radio and Television Fees No. 348/2005 Coll</b>
<b>Copyright Act No. 121/2000 Coll</b>
<b>Act on the Residence of Foreigners on the Territory of the Czech Republic No. 326/1999 Coll</b>
<b>Labour Code No. 262/2006 Coll</b>
<b>Act on Ensuring Other Conditions of Occupational Safety and Health and Related Regulations No. 309/2006 Coll</b>
<b>Act on Fire Protection No. 133/1985 Coll</b>
<b>Decree on Fire Prevention No. 246/2001 Coll</b>
<b>Act on the Protection of Public Health No. 258/2000 Coll</b>
<b>Consumer Protection Act No. 634/1992 Coll</b>
<b>General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)</b>

A further selection of legislation that applies only to catering, yard sales, and food in general: (In addition to binding European legislation, the issue of hygiene in catering establishments is also addressed in related Czech legislation.)

<b>Public Health Protection Act No. 258/2000 Coll</b>
<b>Act on Food and Tobacco Products No. 110/1997 Coll</b>
<b>Decree on hygiene requirements for catering services and the principles of personal and operational hygiene in epidemiologically serious activities No. 137/2004 Coll</b>
<b>Decree of the Ministry of Health on hygiene requirements for products intended to come into contact with food and foodstuffs, as amended No 38/2001 Coll</b>
<b>Decree No. 252/2004 Coll. laying down the hygiene requirements for drinking and hot water and the frequency and scope of inspection of drinking water</b>
<b>Act No 379/2005 Coll. on measures to protect against damage caused by tobacco products, alcohol, and other addictive substances</b>

Yard sales are, among other things, considered by:

<b>Veterinary Act 166/1999 Coll</b>
-------------------------------------

<b>Decree on veterinary and sanitary requirements for animal products not regulated by directly applicable European Community regulations No. 289/2007 Coll</b>
---

<b>Decree on the adaptation of veterinary and hygiene requirements for certain food businesses handling animal products No 128/2009 Coll</b>
--

The sale of service packages (tours) is covered by:

<b>Act on Certain Conditions of Business in the Field of Tourism No. 159/1999 Coll</b>
--

Concerning legislation and regulations, there are too many of them and the rules are often unclear or contradictory. For example, it would be helpful to amend the legislation on farm food so that it is possible to bake a fruit cake for guests with seasonal fruit, or bread, without a need to have an approved factory.

## 2.3. Requirements

To operate agrotourism, farmers must meet certain requirements regarding hygiene, safety, and visitor accommodation and obtain the necessary permits from competent authorities. However, there is a lack of funds for marketing support of agrotourism facilities at the national and international levels. The Ministry of Regional Development argues that agrotourism is purely the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture as it relates to agriculture, while the Ministry of Agriculture argues that agrotourism is a form of tourism and that it falls under the agenda of the Ministry of Regional Development. Thus, there has never been a solution or agreement between the ministries on the financing of marketing support for agrotourism as a form of tourism.

Neither the Ministry of Agriculture nor CzechTourism, an agency that focuses mainly on tourism marketing in the Czech Republic, has an overview of the legislation concerning agrotourism. In any case, the legislation is unclear, there are a large number of different regulations and it often depends on the interpretation of a particular office at the regional level. Agritourism offers a large number of different experiential activities that are popular and sought after, but often beyond the boundaries of "holiday" - e. g. riding guests on a tractor, showing them the operation of the farm, taking them to the stables, baking them a

cake to welcome them, even if the hosts do not have a professionally equipped kitchen. What is common on family farms abroad is not "legally" possible in the Czech Republic.

Since 1997, the Association of Rural Tourism and Agritourism (Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky), which manages the Holiday in the Country (Prázdniny na venkově) brand, has been involved in the marketing activities of agrotourism facilities and improving the quality of services. This professional association is a member of the Association of Private Farming of the Czech Republic and cooperates closely with the CzechTourism agency and its regional coordinators.



## 2.4. Main Barriers

The main barriers to starting an agrotourism business are:

In the context of a functional family farm, they are human resources and complex legislation. Many popular agrotourism activities (animals, production facilities, security, farm food) are legislatively very problematic. In cases where someone wants to start from scratch, the whole concept of the farm and linking it to agrotourism is very challenging. Entrepreneurs do not have sufficient agricultural knowledge and skills of agrotourism service providers, marketing knowledge, etc. Then human resources, finance, and legislation are also an issue.

Agrotourism is a growing and important sector in the Czech Republic. Although the sector has been growing steadily in recent years, hosts and stakeholders in agrotourism still face several challenges. One of the key challenges is the lack of investment in infrastructure, marketing and a consistent and clear legislative anchor. For example, many agrotourism accommodation facilities are located in rural areas and may not have easy access to transport, which can make it difficult for visitors to reach them. This is compounded by the fact that many hosts do not have the necessary marketing skills to effectively promote their business.

Another challenge facing the industry is the increasing competition from other forms of tourism. While agrotourism has traditionally been seen as a way to escape crowds and enjoy

a more authentic experience, there are now many other types of tourism that offer similar experiences.

## 2.5. Opportunities

Despite the challenges, there are also several opportunities for the agrotourism sector in the Czech Republic. One of the key opportunities is the growing demand for experiential tourism. Visitors are increasingly looking for unique and authentic experiences that allow them to connect with the local culture and community. Agrotourism can provide these experiences by offering visitors the opportunity to stay with local hosts, learn about traditional farming practices and sample local food and drink.

To take advantage of these opportunities and address the challenges facing the sector, stakeholders in the agrotourism sector in the Czech Republic need to work together. Collaboration between farmers, entrepreneurs, public authorities and tour operators will be key in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the sector and developing strategies to address them. Research institutes and universities can also play an important role by providing training and educational programs to improve the skills and knowledge of agrotourism hosts.



© Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky, z.s.

### 3. Relevant data regarding agrotourism

The number of agrotourism establishments depends on whether in agrotourism we count only establishments where accommodation is available or also those that offer experiences in the form of excursions, guided tours, experiential programs, or purchases in a farm shop with refreshments, etc. If we consider only agrotourism businesses, it is not officially monitored, but the expert estimate is between 600 – 1.000.

The number of beds in accommodation facilities is monitored by the Czech Statistical Office, but it does not work with small accommodation providers such as private accommodation. Also, agrotourism is not tracked separately in the number of beds.

Guest profiles are mostly families with children (especially in high season). In low season they are groups of friends, corporate and family events and celebrations, in the case of specific offers - horse riding, products from the farm, as well as target groups with appropriate interests and preferences.

Economic data are not tracked separately for agrotourism. Recently it is not possible to predict or estimate trends due to Covid and inflation. We are already tracking changes in guest behaviour according to how holidays are booked, off-season vacancies, etc.

Agrotourism holidays must offer the quality of service that today's travellers demand, especially the quality of sleep and sanitary facilities. It is also very important that adequate marketing support is given to agrotourism at regional and national levels. Also reduced legislative and bureaucratic burdens.

Digitalization in the agrotourism sector is currently completely insufficient. However, in the Czech Republic, access to the Internet is generally very good. Of course, there are places where the signal is worse, but this is not a problem that would significantly affect the development of agrotourism in the Czech Republic regions.

See the tables below:

<i>Agricultural holdings</i>	
<b>26,246</b>	<b>Agricultural holdings, total of which:</b>
21,354	<i>Without non-agricultural activities</i>
4,892	<i>Carrying out non-agricultural activity</i>
3,685	<i>Only one</i>
944	<i>Two</i>
263	<i>Three and more</i>
	<b>Selected non-agricultural activities</b>
645	<i>Tourism, accommodation and other activities for leisure time</i>
80	<i>Handicraft</i>
1,188	<i>Processing of farm product</i>
451	<i>Renewable energy production</i>
295	<i>Wood processing</i>
74	<i>Aquaculture</i>
	<i>Contractual work</i>
1,681	<i>Agricultural work for other holdings</i>
1,092	<i>Non-agricultural work</i>
806	<i>Forestry</i>
147	<i>Other</i>

<sup>2</sup>

<i>Agricultural holdings</i>	
<b>26,525</b>	<b>Agricultural holdings, total of which:</b>
23,099	<i>Surveyed holdings<sup>2)</sup></i>
19,757	<i>Without other gainful activities</i>
3,343	<i>Carrying out other gainful activity</i>
2,938	<i>Only one</i>
350	<i>Two</i>
55	<i>Three and more</i>
	<b>Selected other gainful activities</b>
39	<i>Provision of health, social or educational services</i>
351	<i>Tourism, accommodation and other activities for leisure time</i>
65	<i>Handicraft</i>
365	<i>Processing of farm product</i>
152	<i>Renewable energy production</i>
210	<i>Wood processing</i>
41	<i>Aquaculture</i>

<sup>2</sup> Czech Statistical Office: a structural survey in agriculture - 2013

	<i>Contractual work</i>
1,144	<i>Agricultural work for other holdings</i>
525	<i>Non-agricultural work</i>
665	<i>Forestry</i>
260	<i>Other</i>
	<sup>3)</sup> <i>Holdings of natural persons where the holder is also the manager.</i>

3

According to the Czech Statistical Office, 645 agricultural entrepreneurs offered tourism, accommodation and other recreational activities in the Czech Republic in 2013, compared to 351 in 2016. No other data on the number of agricultural entrepreneurs offering tourism, accommodation and other recreational activities are currently available. Data on establishments offering farm experience services (recreational farms) are also not tracked. The reason for the "drop" in the Czech Statistical Office data may be due to the absence of a methodology for monitoring agro-tourism establishments.



© Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky, z.s.

<sup>3</sup> Czech Statistical Office: a structural survey in agriculture - 2016



### 3.1. Education

In the Czech Republic, it is often academic education that is hardly applicable in practice, unless a person needs to independently seek solutions for their agrotourism facility, its development, or establishment. Various courses and seminars (presentations and online) are offered on an ongoing basis, but this is not systematic training. For example, it is often a problem with announced courses and other forms of training that participants sign up for but end up not attending due to the situation on the farm (around animals, inspections, etc.). If the training has more than one course, they never attend all of them. Training is not compulsory and there is no interest in imposing additional obligations on agrotourism providers. It is most effective to counsel individual applicants.

The quality of literature about agrotourism in the Czech Republic is very pure or we don't know about it. But of course, one can draw on a wide range of literature on service quality, marketing, communication, experience, etc.

### 3.2. Overall Evaluation

Agrotourism is very important for rural development, as it provides employment opportunities, as well as landscape care, the development of creativity and friendly behaviour, employment opportunities on family farms and for non-farmers, and the creation and marketing of new farm products and the possibility of diversification. However, there are many constraints and barriers such as legislation, capital, human resources. Agrotourism is not for everyone - family farms, although well organised, restrict the life of the permanent residents and the running of the farm. And not everyone is necessarily comfortable with this, as it means to have strangers in your yard all season long.

The agrotourism sector within the Czech Republic could improve in the following areas:

- Marketing at regional and national levels - involvement in the national brand Holiday in the Countryside.
- Quality websites of individual facilities.
- Offer and management of experiential services.
- Quality of accommodation services.
- More varied offers of products and food from the farm.



© Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky, z.s.

## 4. SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of organizations at national and regional levels interested in the development of agrotourism in the Czech Republic;</li> <li>- Long-term cooperation of entities focused on the development of agrotourism in the Czech Republic. -Human potential (capable, hard-working and imaginative people);</li> <li>- Sufficient coverage of the territory with family farms with a prerequisite for the development of agrotourism services;</li> <li>- High level of security in the Czech Republic.</li> <li>- Sufficient rural areas with very favourable conditions for tourism;</li> <li>- Picturesque rural landscape;</li> <li>- High-quality environment;</li> <li>- An extensive network of marked hiking trails, cycling routes, the existence of wine trails, riding trails, and cross-country skiing trails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of statistical data relevant to rural tourism;</li> <li>-Missing statistical data for agrotourism;</li> <li>-Lack of data to monitor trends in the behavior of agrotourism and rural tourism participants in the Czech Republic;</li> <li>-The uneven quality of agrotourism services.</li> <li>-A market distorted by subsidies - expectations of agrotourism service providers (free marketing, consulting, education, certification, etc.);</li> <li>-High burden on agrotourism service providers due to a large amount of unclear legislation;</li> <li>-Congestion in some rural tourist centres.</li> <li>-Inaccessibility of rural tourism/agrotourism destinations - most rural tourism destinations are only accessible by private car;</li> <li>-Lack of qualified staff;</li> <li>-Outside the main tourist centres, rural tourism infrastructure is often inadequate;</li> <li>-Reluctance to participate in training;</li> <li>- Lack of a stable multi-source funding model for organizations to work together to develop agrotourism in the Czech Republic;</li> </ul>

	- Ineffective and insufficient marketing of agrotourism, service providers, tourist products, etc.
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Growing demand for experiential tourism. Looking for unique and authentic experiences by tourists;</li> <li>- Interest in staying with locals, learning about traditional farming practices, and sampling local food and drinks;</li> <li>- Collaboration among farmers;</li> <li>- Improving the skills and knowledge about agrotourism;</li> <li>- Better income for farmers;</li> <li>- Interest in ecotourism and sustainability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Legislation burden;</li> <li>- A challenge in insufficient knowledge;</li> <li>- Lack of investment in infrastructure;</li> <li>- Increasing competition from other forms of tourism;</li> <li>- Inflation;</li> <li>- Economic and political uncertainty.</li> </ul>

## References

Act No. 252/1997 on the Support of Rural Development, § 14(1)(j). Retrieved from <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/1997-252>

Czech Tourism. Czech Republic Travel Manual. Retrieved from <https://www.czechtourism.com/home/>

Strategy for the Development of Rural Tourism in the Czech Republic 2018-2025, available from: <https://www.svazvta.cz/homepage/26-03-19/strategie-rozvoje-venkovskeho-cestovniho-ruchu-v-cr-2018-2025>

Czech Statistical Office: a structural survey in agriculture - 2013, available from: [https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/270151-14-n\\_2014-01](https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/270151-14-n_2014-01)

Czech Statistical Office: a structural survey in agriculture - 2016, available from: <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/zemedelstvi-celkem>

Data based on interview with Ms Ing. Zdeňka Nosková, the Chairwoman of the Association of Rural Tourism and Agritourism, z.s. (Svaz venkovské turistiky a agroturistiky, z.s. – SVTA): <https://www.svazvta.cz/>