

Agritourism and sustainability: advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to propose a set of indicators to evaluate the role of agritourism in attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and inform future research efforts.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper comprehensively reviewed the literature to identify the contributions of agritourism to sustainable development following the Triple Bottom Line approach and then the SDGs to identify research gaps.

Findings – This paper developed a comprehensive inventory of 67 indicators to align agritourism research to each SDG at the farmers, local communities and visitors' levels. This paper found that some of these indicators have been extensively (7; e.g. increase profits and business value), limitedly (38; e.g. increase conservation of water bodies and resources) or never (22; e.g. adopt climate change mitigation strategies) investigated in the context of agritourism, which can inform future research initiatives.

Practical implications – The inventory offers a conceptual roadmap to deepen the investigation and inform outreach and policy initiatives on agritourism to enhance its alignment to SDGs. Specifically, scholars should prioritize investigating the limited or non-studied indicators to have a more holistic assessment of the contributions of agritourism to the SDGs.

Originality/value – The assessment inventory pioneers the foundations for investigating agritourism in the context of SDGs.

Keywords Benefits, Farm tourism, Indicators, Inventory, Impact, Rural tourism, SDGs, Triple bottom line

Paper type Conceptual paper

農業旅遊與永續發展：推動永續發展目標 (SDGs)

摘要

目的：我們提出了一套指標來評估農業旅遊在實現永續發展目標 (SDGs) 中的作用，並為未來的研究工作提供資訊。

設計/方法論/途徑：我們全面回顧了文獻，以確定農業旅遊對永續發展的貢獻，遵循三重底線方法，然後根據永續發展目標確定研究差距。

研究結果：我們制定了包含 67 項指標的綜合清單，使農業旅遊研究與農民、當地社區和遊客層面的每項永續發展目標保持一致。我們發現，其中一些指標已經在農業旅遊背景下進行了廣泛（7；例如，增加利潤和商業價值）、有限（38；例如，加強水體和資源保護）或從未（22；例如，採取氣候變遷緩解策略）調查，這可以為未來的研究舉措提供資訊。

原創性：我們的評估清單開創了在永續發展目標背景下調查農業旅遊的基礎。

启示：我們的清單提供了一個概念路線圖，以深化調查並為農業旅遊的外展和政策舉措提供信息，以加強其與可持續發展目標的一致性。具體而言，學者應優先研究有限或未研究的指標，以更全面地評估農業旅遊對永續發展目標的貢獻。

关键词 效益, 農場旅遊, 指標, 清單, 影響, 鄉村旅遊, 三重底線

文章类型 概念型論文

Agroturismo y sostenibilidad: avanzando hacia los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible (ODS)

Resumen

Propósito: Proponemos un inventario de indicadores para evaluar el rol del agroturismo en la consecución de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) para informar investigaciones futuras.



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Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Revisamos exhaustivamente la literatura sobre las contribuciones del agroturismo al desarrollo sostenible siguiendo el enfoque de la Triple Cuenta de Resultados y los ODS a fin de identificar vacíos de investigación.

Hallazgos: Desarrollamos un inventario comprensivo de 67 indicadores que alinean los beneficios del agroturismo con los ODS a nivel de agricultores, comunidades locales y visitantes. Identificamos que algunos de estos indicadores han sido investigados extensivamente (7; p. ej., aumento de las ganancias y el valor del negocio) o limitadamente (38; p. ej., mejoramiento de la conservación de cuerpos y recursos de agua), o nunca (22; p. ej., adopción de estrategias de mitigación del cambio climático) en el contexto del agroturismo, lo que puede informar futuras investigaciones.

Originalidad/valor: Nuestro inventario de evaluación sienta las bases para la investigación del agroturismo en el contexto de los ODS.

Implicancias: Nuestro inventario ofrece un mapa conceptual para profundizar la investigación del agroturismo e informar iniciativas de extensión y políticas para mejorar su alineación con los ODS. En concreto, investigadores deberían priorizar la investigación de los indicadores poco o no estudiados para tener una apreciación más holística de las contribuciones del agroturismo a los ODS.

Palabras clave Beneficios, Turismo agropecuario, Indicadores, Inventario, Impacto, Turismo rural, Triple Cuenta de Resultados

Tipo de papel Artículo conceptual

1. Introduction

Framed within the Brundtland Commission report on sustainable development ([World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987](#)), most studies concerning the sustainability of tourism have adopted the Triple Bottom Line approach to evaluate its economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. The broadness of the Brundtland report activated the use of countless indicators to measure those impacts, which, although methodologically convenient, were not conducive for comparisons—especially across regions—or to set industry benchmarks. In 2015, the United Nations took a step forward by adopting 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 that altogether aim for “peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future” ([United Nations, 2025a](#)). Building upon the social-economic-environment interconnection of sustainable development, the agenda for 2030 primary targets are ending poverty, improving health and education and reducing inequality while tackling climate change and saving oceans and forests ([United Nations, 2025b](#)).

The sustainability of several types of niche tourism has been evaluated. Agritourism, broadly defined as educational and recreational activities offered in working agricultural settings ([Gil Arroyo et al., 2013](#)), is not an exception, given its capacity to contribute to all three pillars of sustainability ([Barbieri, 2013](#)). This growing niche tourism market is especially touted as a strategy to increase farmers’ economic standing and support economic development ([Tew and Barbieri, 2012](#); [Ciolac et al., 2019](#)), especially in rural communities ([Ammirato and Felicetti, 2014](#); [Lupi et al., 2017](#)). Evidence indicates that agritourism is conducive to natural, agricultural and cultural heritage, both tangible (e.g. infrastructure) and intangible (e.g. traditions) across different world regions, especially in less developed regions ([Ghidouche et al., 2021](#); [Nyagadza et al., 2024](#); [Sotomayor et al., 2019](#)). It is even posited that agritourism could contribute to reducing food insecurity (e.g. food preservation practice) and climate change adaptation ([Valdivia and Barbieri, 2014](#)), and to circular economies ([Ingrassia et al., 2023](#)).

Chiefly, strong evidence indicates that agritourism significantly contributes to the economic, socio-cultural and environmental pillars of sustainable development (e.g. [Baipai et al., 2023](#); [Barbieri, 2013](#)). Yet, the evaluation of agritourism in light of the SDGs is scant, limited in scope and indirect at its best. For example, [Ghidouche et al. \(2021\)](#) relied on a panel of experts to conclude that agritourism contributes to the SDGs related to poverty alleviation, reduction of inequalities, food security and preservation of water resources. Although meritorious, such assessments did not directly assess the contributions of agritourism to the

SDGs. Likewise, while job and income generation in rural areas can be loosely interpreted as no poverty (SDG 1) and improving agricultural literacy as quality education (SDG 4), the direct link between these effects of agritourism and SDGs has not been established. This lack of direct connection limits a comprehensive assessment of this type of agricultural enterprise to society, which, in turn, reduces the ability to design scholarly efforts that can inform outreach and advocacy efforts to support the sustainability of agritourism.

1.1 Methodological approach

This study aimed to identify direct links between the sociocultural, environmental and economic positive contributions (i.e. benefits) of agritourism to SDGs. Following [Vargo and Koskela-Huotari \(2020\)](#), who stressed starting conceptual papers with quality evidence on existing literature review, we first scouted the literature using various keywords (e.g. agritourism, farm tourism, farm holidays) to identify the wide range of benefits that agritourism yields. We then selected the relevant papers addressing the benefits of agritourism and aligned them to SDGs following the Triple Bottom Line approach according to [Jung et al. \(2024\)](#) classification.

Based on the scope of each SDG and the individual targets proposed by the [United Nations \(2025c\)](#), we then proposed a set of indicators (inventory) to help us identify the extent to which the contributions of agritourism to SDGs have been investigated concerning their providers (farmers), surrounding communities and society. During this inventory development, constant in-depth peer discussion of those targets helped us identify which could be achieved through agritourism (e.g. increase cultural awareness) and which ones could not (e.g. reduce violence). Ongoing peer discussions and multiple revisions of our proposed indicators with the extant literature allowed us to ensure the representativeness of our indicators to the SDGs targets and their comprehensiveness and validation in view of the extant literature. Our iterative process allowed us to categorize the evidence of agritourism contributions to SDGs as “Extensive,” “Limited” or “None.”

Our effort to pair the stated contributions of agritourism to each SDG helped us to identify existing research gaps that can inform future research. Filling knowledge gaps can strengthen policy and outreach efforts to support the contribution of agritourism in fostering sustainable development. Chiefly, our conceptual paper serves in the short run to guide scholars to investigate the unexplored but important indicators to achieve SDGs through agritourism rather than perpetuating the investigation of recurrent themes (e.g. farmers’ profits, heritage preservation). In the long run, expanding the research agenda of agritourism can support its on-the-ground contributions beyond the farm gates, thus supporting sustainable development, especially in rural regions. Expanding the research agenda of agritourism can also contribute to its theoretical development, which is still in development ([Barbieri, 2020](#)).

2. Agritourism benefits: the triple bottom approach

Following the Triple Bottom Line approach, the extant literature consistently refers to agritourism as an important determinant of sustainable development by outlining a mix of economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits ([Barbieri, 2013](#); [Kazlouski et al., 2020](#); [Musa and Chin, 2022](#)). Those benefits have been identified throughout the world in regions spanning different development standing. For example, agritourism’s contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage has been reported in the USA ([LaPan and Barbieri, 2014](#)) and among indigenous communities in Peru ([Sotomayor et al., 2019](#)). There is also evidence to support agritourism’s role in the conservation of the natural environment in Thailand, Romania and Italy ([Ciolac et al., 2019](#); [Tseng et al., 2019](#)), among others. Typifying the agritourism benefits is somewhat vague because they tend to be intertwined or convoluted. For example, the contribution of agritourism to community development can

be dismembered into strengthening job creation (economic), social capital development (socio-cultural) and natural resource conservation (environmental). Thus, we have dismembered stated benefits or placed them in the dimension where they fit best.

2.1 Economic benefits

Given the emphasis on agritourism as a development strategy, it is unsurprising that economic benefits have been the most investigated (Ndhlovu and Dube, 2024), thus reported in the literature (Table 1). The economic contributions of agritourism can be discussed from the individual (provider) and community/regional (destination) perspectives. At the provider level, the greatest economic benefit is the increase of farm revenues and profits, either directly, such as entrance or experience fees (Barbieri, 2013; Das and Rainey, 2010; Giaccio *et al.*, 2018; He *et al.*, 2019; Lupi *et al.*, 2017; Lyon, 2013; Streifeneder, 2016) or indirectly, notably by increasing the direct sales of farm products (Tew and Barbieri, 2012). Agritourism also creates paid jobs for family members, which in turn reduces undesired off-farm, especially among the women and youth of the farm household (Barbieri, 2013; Giaccio *et al.*, 2018). Agritourism also stimulates

Table 1 Agritourism benefits through the sustainability Triple Bottom Line approach

<i>Benefits by dimensions</i>	<i>Sources</i>
<i>Economic line</i>	
Income generation or increase	Barbieri (2013); Brinkley (2012); Che (2007); Das and Rainey (2010); He <i>et al.</i> (2019); Lupi <i>et al.</i> (2017); Lyon (2013); Schmidt <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Job creation	Tew and Barbieri (2012); Schilling <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Stops labor migration	Kondoh and Kurata (2021)
Strengthening of local food systems	Brune <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Entrepreneurship	Annes and Wright (2015); Halim <i>et al.</i> (2020); He <i>et al.</i> (2019); Lyon (2013); Naidoo and Sharpley (2016); Ohe (2020); Savage <i>et al.</i> (2022); Yu and Spencer (2021)
Local economic growth	Călina <i>et al.</i> (2017); Lyon (2013); Srisomyong and Meyer (2015)
<i>Socio-cultural line</i>	
Heritage preservation	Călina <i>et al.</i> (2017); Che (2006, 2007); LaPan and Barbieri (2014); Lyon (2013); Testa <i>et al.</i> (2019); Yu and Spencer (2021)
Individual health	Hassink <i>et al.</i> (2010); Leck <i>et al.</i> (2015); Pedersen <i>et al.</i> (2016)
Women empowerment	Annes and Wright (2015); Bhatta <i>et al.</i> (2020); Halim <i>et al.</i> (2020); Hashimoto and Telfer (2021); Savage <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Community well-being	Călina <i>et al.</i> (2017); Lyon (2013); Naidoo and Sharpley (2016); Schmidt <i>et al.</i> (2022); Yu and Spencer (2021)
Social capital building	Srisomyong and Meyer (2015); Yu and Spencer (2021)
Depopulation control or decrease	Lupi <i>et al.</i> (2017)
Network development	Li and Barbieri (2020); Wang <i>et al.</i> (2021); Yu and Spencer (2021)
<i>Environmental line</i>	
Landscape preservation	He <i>et al.</i> (2019); Hung <i>et al.</i> (2022); Lupi <i>et al.</i> (2017)
Infrastructure development	Călina <i>et al.</i> (2017); Fanelli and Romagnoli (2020); Schmidt <i>et al.</i> (2022)
Adoption of sustainable farming practices	Mastronardi <i>et al.</i> (2015); Naidoo and Sharpley (2016); Valdivia <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Natural resources conservation	Ghidouche <i>et al.</i> , 2021; Mastronardi <i>et al.</i> (2015); Naidoo and Sharpley (2016); Valdivia <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Agricultural resources conservation	Gao <i>et al.</i> (2014); Mastronardi <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Source(s): Authors' own work	

entrepreneurship of other income-generating ventures (Das and Rainey, 2010; He *et al.*, 2019; Lupi *et al.*, 2017; Ohe, 2020; Lyon, 2013; Musa and Chin, 2022; Schmidt *et al.*, 2022; Schilling *et al.*, 2012). These can stem directly from farm production (e.g. value-added processing) or resources (e.g. hunting easements, historic repurposing) or indirectly through the offering of educational (e.g. internships, exchange programs, workshops) and ancillary (e.g. landscaping) services (Barbieri *et al.*, 2008; Chen *et al.*, 2020).

Destinations also reap the economic benefits of agritourism development. It accelerates rural development by increasing the destination tax base (Das and Rainey, 2010) and stimulating collaboration across tourism professionals, extension officers and destination management organizations (Schmidt *et al.*, 2022). In doing so, a major effect is employment generation, especially among youth, that in turn reduces—and can even stop—labor exodus (Kondoh and Kurata, 2021; Schilling *et al.*, 2012; Tew and Barbieri, 2012). Talent retention, along with increased farm entrepreneurship, revitalizes local economies. Agritourism also strengthens local food systems by stimulating the purchase of locally grown/produced goods, sustainable purchasing behaviors and advocacy efforts among the public (Brune *et al.*, 2021). The growth of some destinations due to agritourism development may incentivize investments in public services (e.g. potable water, internet, electricity) that can contribute to or trigger the economic growth of the region (Das and Rainey, 2010; Kubickova and Campbell, 2020). Such investments will also spill over into a mix of socio-cultural benefits (e.g. locals' well-being improvement, increased social capital), which further illustrate the interconnection among the agritourism outputs.

2.2 Socio-cultural benefits

The most cited socio-cultural benefit that agritourism yields is heritage preservation, a major factor of pride, especially among indigenous and culturally cohesive communities. Agritourism providers can preserve tangible heritage, especially historic buildings and old-fashioned equipment, by repurposing their offerings (e.g. converting barns into wedding chapels) or enhancing their décor (LaPan and Barbieri, 2014; Ohe, 2020). Yet, agritourism has a huge impact on the preservation of intangible heritage, notably by incorporating oral traditions (e.g. myths, rituals) into their branding and storytelling, recovering ancestral foods and culinary techniques and restoring festivities and ceremonies to offer as staple offerings (Ghidouche *et al.*, 2021; Sotomayor *et al.*, 2019; Testa *et al.*, 2019). Such utilitarian use of heritage amplifies cultural awareness among the public, which is vital for communities whose richness may risk dilution over time, such as Hawaiians in the USA (Yu and Spencer, 2021), Quechuas in Peru (Sotomayor *et al.*, 2019) and Mayas in Guatemala (Lyon, 2013).

Evidence indicates that agritourism enriches individuals directly or indirectly, notably by empowering visitors with disabilities (physical and mental) or supporting the social reinsertion of vulnerable individuals (e.g. veterans, ex-prisoners). Agricultural therapeutic services (e.g. horseback riding), rehabilitation (e.g. substance abuse) and social services (e.g. supervised employment) offered in social or care farms can improve participants' physical and mental health, notably reducing anxiety, depression and perceived stress (Hassink *et al.*, 2010; Pedersen *et al.*, 2016) and support personal development and social interactions (Leck *et al.*, 2015).

On the provider's side, in addition to economic empowerment (e.g. increased revenues, entrepreneurship, power to decide how to invest their earnings), agritourism provides women the opportunity to enhance their technical skills (psychological empowerment), increase their recognition from their peers, family and the public (social empowerment) and undertake leadership roles (political empowerment), to name a few (Annes and Wright, 2015; Gil Arroyo *et al.*, 2019; Halim *et al.*, 2020; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2021; Savage *et al.*, 2022; Yu and Spencer, 2021). Agritourism also improves positive attitudes especially when hosting individuals that society marginalizes (Hassink *et al.*, 2010). The entrepreneurship treadmill that agritourism ignites, both within the farm and at the destination, stimulates

social capital and mutual trust (Ohe, 2020) as it creates the necessity for agritourism providers at different entrepreneurial stages to collaborate and learn amongst them (bonding) and to connect with other stakeholders in the destination, such as local restaurateurs (bridging). Extending the farmer's network ensures the chances of agritourism success as it facilitates the exchange of resources among providers and their ability to overcome challenges (Li and Barbieri, 2020; Savage *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2021).

2.3 Environmental benefits

The environmental contribution of agritourism spans the natural (e.g. wildlife), agricultural (e.g. heirloom varieties) and built (e.g. infrastructure) elements of the ecosystem. Agritourism enhances the natural heritage of an area by maintaining biological corridors, conserving water resources and beautifying the surrounding landscapes (Barbieri, 2013; Fanelli and Romagnoli, 2020; Ghidouche *et al.*, 2021). In turn, the enhancement of natural resources in farmlands becomes a strong pull factor (Gao *et al.*, 2014; Lupi *et al.*, 2017) and increases visitors' perceived satisfaction (Fanelli and Romagnoli, 2020), spilling over the contributions of agritourism to rural communities (Hatan *et al.*, 2021). Agritourism also contributes to preserving agricultural resources, notably heirloom varieties of seeds, crops and animals (Gao *et al.*, 2014; Mastronardi *et al.*, 2015), as well as other associated cultural resources, such as ancestral farming practices and historical infrastructure (Barbieri *et al.*, 2020).

Agritourism can also help to offset or reduce the negative impacts of intensive agriculture (Che, 2006). For example, visitors' interests in the conservation of natural (e.g. water, biodiversity) and agricultural (e.g. ancestral practices, soil) resources increase farmers' awareness of the environmental impacts of agriculture and encourage the adoption of eco-friendly agriculture, such as responsible chemical use, extensive livestock grazing or agroforestry (Călina *et al.*, 2017; Che, 2006; Ciolac *et al.*, 2019; Gao *et al.*, 2014; Mastronardi *et al.*, 2015; Valdivia *et al.*, 2012). Agritourism promotes the purchase of local products and reduces visitors' willingness to consume processed food (Brune *et al.*, 2021; Kim *et al.*, 2019). In turn, these effects amplify environmental benefits by reducing transportation distance and promoting ethical production. Finally, the mushrooming and clustering (e.g. wine trails) of agritourism offerings, especially nearby urban clusters, entices public investments to develop or improve infrastructure (e.g. transportation networks) and utility services (e.g. drinking water, electricity) that also enhances the quality of life among locals (Gil Arroyo *et al.*, 2019; He *et al.*, 2019; Kubickova and Campbell, 2020).

3. Agritourism through the Sustainable Development Goals lens: a proposed inventory

Although the literature focused on the Triple Bottom Line Approach strongly supports the contribution of agritourism to sustainability, such evidence is less likely to establish applicability to different SDGs, given their idealistic narrative along with the lack of measurement indicators. For example, Quality Education (SDG 4) is a commendable aspiration. But quality is subjective and contextually influenced. It may imply enhancing cultural and art appreciation or increasing children's access to school. Arguably, the high satisfaction that agritourism providers report when educating their visitors (Tew and Barbieri, 2012) fits to suggest Quality Education (SDG 4). So does the increased agricultural literacy after children engage in agritourism, especially when contextualized to the local reality, such as seasonal produce and types of crops (Barbieri *et al.*, 2022, 2023). However, in view of a lack of specific indicators, these quality assessments would depend on the importance the evaluator (e.g. the researcher) assigns to this specific knowledge (e.g. agricultural literacy, local food awareness).

In addition, most agritourism contributions can be, at best, broadly or indirectly aligned to the SDGs because of the lack of indicators to measure each goal. For example, the agricultural core of agritourism –food production– could be a catalyst for Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and, more indirectly, for Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), given the nutritional values of fresh food consumption. Although agritourism strengthens local food systems by increasing intentions to buy local foods and enhancing desires to advocate and support local farmers (Brune *et al.*, 2021) and individuals-agriculture interactions reduce participant's stress and anxiety levels (Hassink *et al.*, 2010; Leck *et al.*, 2015; Pedersen *et al.*, 2016), the direct contribution of agritourism to reducing hunger and other human health-related issues has not been directly evaluated. Conversely, although agritourism's contribution to preserving natural, cultural and agricultural heritages has been documented extensively (Călina *et al.*, 2017; LaPan and Barbieri, 2014; Lyon, 2013; Testa *et al.*, 2019; Yu and Spencer, 2021), it is unclear whether such contributions support—and if so, to what degree—Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) and Life on Land (SDG 15).

Similar compound—yet unclear—contributions of agritourism to different SDGs related to women's economic, political, psychological and social empowerment as they could be aligned with Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), beyond contribution to No Poverty (SDG 1), whereas the effect of agritourism to retain youth in the family farm can align with Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) beyond No Poverty (SDG 1). Such compound is exacerbated with the inclusive statements in most of the SDGs (e.g. “for all”, “at all ages”). Thus, we have excluded them to reduce their intersectionality, especially with Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10). Doing so can allow a holistic evaluation of agritourism, thus validating the claimed intersectional contributions of agritourism (Ammirato and Felicetti, 2014; Barbieri, 2013).

3.1 Agritourism assessment inventory: integrating Sustainable Development Goals into the Triple Bottom Approach

Chiefly, asserting whether agritourism contributes to the SDGs is difficult because of the aspirational narrative of the SDGs as well as the unclarity of indicators to evaluate them. Thus, we propose that agritourism is evaluated in the future through specific indicators that can elucidate whether agritourism accomplishes each SDG. Specifically, we propose 67 indicators that can initially guide future assessments of agritourism based on the SDGs as they best fit with the environmental (Table 2), social (Table 3) and economic (Table 4) pillars of sustainability (Jung *et al.*, 2024). Our proposed indicators can be tied to the farm family, local people and farm visitors. Yet, in some instances, such connectivity is not clear (thus marked questionable “?”) and may depend on the evaluator's perspective. For example, the support of applied technology development (SDG 9) can evidently be evaluated at the farm level and surrounding community. However, its extension to farm visitors (e.g. adoption of a vine trellis for home gardening) may be applicable if the evaluation focuses on farms offering gardening education. Likewise, the extent to which an indicator reaches a community may be dependent on the extent of agritourism development, the level to which agritourism providers are embedded in their communities, or when measuring community-based agritourism initiatives. We further suggest that to move forward the scholarship of agritourism, future research efforts should prioritize, in order, based on whether there is none, limited, or extensive evidence of how agritourism benefits the farm family, local people and farm visitors.

In developing the measurement indicators, we sought to disentangle the interconnectivity of the agritourism effects stated in the literature. For example, we were able to separately align the economic development indicators of income generation, job creation and entrepreneurship to No Poverty (SDG 1), Local Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), respectively. We also propose some indicators for

Table 2 Definition of environmental-related SDGs, proposed indicators and evidence of effect related to agritourism

Environmental-related SDGs (Definitions) ¹	Proposed indicators	Target population			Evidence of effect
		Farm family	Locals	Visitors	
6. Clean Water and Sanitation (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation)	Adopt water conservation practices	✓		?	Extensive
	Increase access to safe and affordable drinking water	✓	?		Limited
	Increase access to hygiene and sanitation (e.g. bathrooms)	✓	?		Limited
	Improve water quality (e.g. proper disposal of chemicals)	✓	✓		None
7. Affordable and Clean Energy (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy)	Adopt renewable energy sources (e.g. solar panels)	✓	?		None
	Update energy-efficient and clean technology (e.g. biofuels)	✓			None
12. Responsible Consumption & Production (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns)	Increase sustainable production patterns (e.g. reduce unnecessary chemical use)	✓			Limited
	Adopt sustainable management practices	✓	✓	?	Limited
	Reduce food waste from production to consumption	✓	✓	✓	Limited
	Strengthening of local food systems		✓		Limited
	Increase consumption of locally produced foods		✓	✓	Limited
	(Re)connect food producers and consumers	✓	✓	✓	Limited
	Increase resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and disasters	✓	?		Limited
	Adopt climate change mitigation strategies	✓	?	?	None
14. Life Below Water (Conserve and sustainably use water bodies and resources for sustainable development)	Increase climate-related awareness	✓	✓	✓	None
	Decrease water pollution from land-based activities (e.g. fertilizers runoff)	✓	?	?	None
	Increase conservation of water bodies and resources	✓	?	?	Limited
	Adopt sustainable aquaculture and fishing management	✓			None
	Adopt ethical and sustainable harvesting practices	✓	✓		Limited
	Increase economic benefits from the sustainable use of water bodies and resources	✓	✓		Limited
15. Life on Land (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests and halt biodiversity loss and land degradation)	Conserve landscapes and their associated ecosystems	✓	✓		Extensive
	Adopt sustainable forest management practices	✓			Limited
	Adopt practices to restore degraded land and soil (e.g. reforestation)	✓	✓	?	Limited
	Conserve natural habitats, biodiversity and wildlife	✓	✓		Extensive

Note(s): ¹United Nations (2025c)

Source(s): Authors' own work

SDGs that may not seem directly related to agritourism. For example, Life Below Water (SDG 14) which focuses on the conservation and sustainably use of the oceans, seas and marine resources, is indirectly applicable to typical forms of agritourism (e.g. reducing polluted water run-off) but most directly to agriculture in marine spaces (i.e. mariculture), such as oyster cultivation. Similarly, Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11) targets

Table 3 Definition of social-related SDGs, proposed indicators and evidence of effect related to agritourism

Social-related SDGs (Definitions) ¹	Proposed indicators	Target population			Evidence of effect
		Farm family	Locals	Visitors	
1. No Poverty (<i>End poverty in all its forms</i>)	Increase income above the poverty level	✓	✓		None
	Increase access to economic and financial resources	✓			Limited
	Increase economic resilience	✓	?		Limited
	Increase effective and targeted capacity-building	✓	✓		Limited
2. Zero Hunger (<i>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture</i>)	Reach the minimum level of nutrient consumption	✓	?		None
	Increase consumption of nutritious foods	✓	✓	✓	None
	Adoption of sustainable agricultural practices	✓			Extensive
	Stewardship of agricultural genetic biodiversity	✓			Limited
3. Good Health & Well-being (<i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being</i>)	Reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals	✓	?	✓	None
	Improve physical and mental health (e.g. therapeutic services)	✓	?	✓	Limited
	Improve sociability	✓		✓	Limited
	Increase active living	✓		✓	Limited
	Ability to have proper health coverage	✓			None
4. Quality Education (<i>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, promote lifelong learning opportunities</i>)	Increase access of kids and youth to formal education	✓			Limited
	Increase agricultural literacy and skills		?	✓	Limited
	Enhance professional skills, traits and competencies	✓		?	Limited
5. Gender Equality (<i>Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i>)	Increase number of women farmers	✓			None
	Increase land ownership among women	✓			None
	Women empowerment	✓	?	?	Extensive
	Increase women's recognition to agriculture	✓			Limited
10. Reduced Inequalities (<i>Reduced inequality within and among countries</i>)	Increase diversity, inclusion and equity	✓		✓	Limited
	Increase representation of minority groups in decision-making	✓			Limited
	Increase cultural awareness	✓	✓	✓	None
	Decrease outmigration	✓	✓		Limited
16. Peace, Justice, & Strong Institutions (<i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies; provide justice for all; build effective, accountable & inclusive institutions</i>)	Strengthen producers' recognition and dignity	✓	?		None
	Promote harmonious and inclusive communities		✓		None
	Fortify agriculture and community-based associations	✓	?		None

Note(s): ¹United Nations (2025c)

Source(s): Authors' own work

cities and settlements as inclusive and safe, also indirectly applicable through farmers' ability to afford safe housing and access to safe and inclusive transportation networks.

Our proposed indicators are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to pave the path toward a more accurate assessment of the effect of agritourism on fulfilling SDGs. We also acknowledge that some of the proposed indicators may fit in with various goals, thus we have opted for the closest match. For example, we believe that women empowerment better aligns

Table 4 Definition of economic-related SDGs, proposed indicators and evidence of effect related to agritourism

Economic-related SDGs (Definitions) ¹	Proposed indicators	Target population			Evidence of effect
		Farm family	Locals	Visitors	
8. Decent Work & Economic Growth (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; productive employment and decent work)	Create paid jobs	✓	✓		Limited
	Increase profits and business value	✓	✓		Extensive
	Strengthen labor rights (e.g. safe practices, job security)	✓	✓		None
	Increase sustainable production	✓	✓		Limited
9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation)	Build quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure	✓	✓		Limited
	Foster entrepreneurial innovation	✓	✓	✓	Limited
	Enhance resource utilization	✓	✓	✓	Limited
	Support the development of applied technologies	✓	✓	?	None
11. Sustainable Cities & Communities (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable)	Conserve tangible and intangible heritage	✓	✓	?	Extensive
	Increase access to adequate, safe and affordable housing	✓	?		None
	Enhance the transportation network system	✓	✓	?	Limited
	Increase access to safe and inclusive green spaces	✓	?	✓	Limited
	Upgrade waste management systems	✓	?		Limited
	Increase collaboration among stakeholders	✓	✓		Limited
17. Partnership for the Goals (Strengthen the means of implementation & revitalize partnerships for sustainable development)	Increase access to information and technology	✓			Limited
	Increase producers' access to markets	✓			None

Note(s): ¹United Nations (2025c)

Source(s): Authors' own work

with Gender Equality (SDG 5) than with Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10) within countries. We have also omitted indicators that do not organically fit with an SDG (e.g. reduced maternity mortality, end epidemics, inclusive sustainable urbanization settlements). Beyond proposing measurement indicators to assess the sustainability of agritourism, our efforts are intended to point out research gaps that can inform future scholarship efforts. For example, regarding Climate Action (SDG 13), the role of agritourism as an adaptation strategy has been limitedly proposed (Valdivia and Barbieri, 2014), whereas no evidence exists regarding its mitigation effect, which merits a close examination.

4. Discussion

Our examination of the current state of research on agritourism sustainability reveals a few key insights carrying both theoretical and practical implications. First, although literature provides a wealth of evidence of the sociocultural, environmental and economic benefits of agritourism (e.g. Baipai *et al.*, 2023; Barbieri, 2013; Ghidouche *et al.*, 2021; Ingrassia *et al.*, 2023), this information remains scattered. As such, our foundational review of the literature presents a novel and comprehensive framework that can serve to position future research in agritourism sustainability. Second, building upon our foundational review, our examination reveals significant gaps in knowledge about how the lack of integrated research on agritourism benefits aligns with the SDGs. This gap hinders the advancement of agritourism scholarship, thus limiting both theory-building and practical applications, such as outreach efforts and policy initiatives.

Assigning the benefits of agritourism to the three pillars of sustainability (first step) was relatively straightforward, primarily due to how scholars have positioned them. For example,

the decrease in off-farm employment is commonly identified as an economic indicator. However, aligning those contributions with the SDGs was nearly impossible due to the subjectivity and convolution of their narratives, further compounded by the absence of clear measurement indicators. Thus, our proposed 67 indicators (third step) are designed to support the future thematic evaluation of agritourism's contribution to SDGs, capturing the various economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits that welcoming visitors to farms brings to farmers, surrounding communities and overall society. By identifying the extent of evidence (Extensive, Limited or None) related to different target populations (farm families, locals, visitors) for each indicator, we have aimed to tailor our proposed indicators to various contexts while minimizing the intersectionality across SDGs.

In interpreting and operationalizing our proposed indicators, we caution against a few shortcomings. First, we took a positive approach by focusing on the benefits that agritourism yield, as stated in the literature. Yet, sustainability calls for balancing those benefits (e.g. economic stimulation) with detriments (e.g. increased living costs) that may come along. Second, we crafted theoretical measurements in isolation from contextual factors that may be interplayed on the ground. For example, the suitability of agritourism to increase farm revenues and create jobs, especially for women and youth, is almost uncontested (Barbieri, 2013; Das and Rainey, 2010; He *et al.*, 2019; Lupi *et al.*, 2017; Lyon, 2013; Savage *et al.*, 2022; Schmidt *et al.*, 2022), both contributions may or may not align with No Poverty (SDG 1). If job creation comes along with marginal salary and gentrification, then it may not contribute to poverty alleviation. On the contrary, if job creation comes along with the reversion of youth exodus in depopulated rural areas, then it can reflect poverty alleviation.

We caution that our goal was not to develop an exhaustive measurement inventory or discuss the most suitable methodological approaches for evaluating agritourism sustainability in SDGs. Rather, propose an initial roadmap to strategically evaluate the contribution of agritourism to SDGs. Thus, future studies should consider adapting or expanding our indicators and choosing the most suitable methodology to align SDGs with their agritourism research's contextual attributes. Doing so can support the validation of our proposed inventory.

5. Conclusions

In this conceptual paper, we assessed agritourism's potential to contribute to the SDGs. By bringing together a strong scholarly expertise in agritourism and sustainability and a diverse perspective from different regions (Americas, Asia and Europe), our intention was to critically discuss the contributions of agritourism to SDGs to guide future research. Drawing on the dispersed evidence of agritourism's socio-cultural, environmental and economic benefits (Triple Bottom Line approach of Sustainable Development) and the gap in research directly linking these benefits to the SDGs, we proposed a set of 67 agritourism-related indicators to guide future research in alignment with SDGs. While formulating the indicators, individual SDGs and their targets were reviewed within the context of agritourism and their contribution linked to the Triple Bottom Line approach of Sustainable Development using universal SDGs and their targets established by the United Nations, which were discussed for their accuracy in measuring individual SDGs among authors and validated them through the literature survey reaching for consensus. We further stress the practicality of these indicators by summarizing the extent of indirect evidence that is available in the literature and identifying the target populations (farm families, locals, visitors) for which each indicator should be evaluated. In doing so, our proposed inventory offers a conceptual roadmap to deepen the thematic investigation of agritourism, aiming to strengthen its theoretical foundations and inform outreach and policy initiatives to bolster its sustainability potential. Specifically, we suggest that agritourism researchers should prioritize covering the under or limitedly studied indicators to have a more holistic picture of the contributions of agritourism to the SDGs. Yet, as a conceptual proposition, it calls for future research to validate it in practice.

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