An Examination of Agritourism Ontology between China & the US

Ming Gu, PhD
Jing Li, MS
Sheng Shu, BS
Shuangyu Xu, PhD
Carla Barbieri, PhD
Minzu University of China
North Carolina State University
Minzu University of China
North Carolina State University
North Carolina State University
What does agritourism mean?
About Agritourism

China (2013):
- 29 million farmers benefited from agritourism
- 270 billion RMB (US $44 billion) income annually

(China-daily, 2014)

US (2012):
- 33,161 farms participated in agritourism
- Over $704 million revenue from agritourism

(USDA, 2012)
About Agritourism - China

Evolution

1980s 1990s 2002 2010s

Sightseeing in rural areas

Farm-Family-Happy → Folk customs village → Coexistence

Leisure agricultural garden

Orchard
Fishing garden
Planting manor
Integrated

......
About Agritourism - China

Sightseeing in rural areas
- Canola
- Peach blossom
- Hot spring planting garden

Leisure gardens
- Orchard
- Fishing garden
- Integrated agricultural resort

Farm-Family-Happy & Folk customs villages
- Homestay
- Local meals
- U-pick
- Fishing
- Minority village
About Agritourism - US

Evolution

1900s

(dude Ranches)

1980s

(new Marketing & Distribution)

2000s

(local foods & farmers)

(map: Farm Distribution (Eastern Triangle, NC, US))

(Barbieri et al., 2008; Barbieri & Valdivia, 2010; Limerick, 2001)
About Agritourism - US

Broad variety based on farm resources

- On-Farm Stands (shops)
- Hayrides
- Farm Tours
- Pick-cut-gather your own
- Educational Tours
- Petting Zoo
- Festivals
- Weddings
- Cookouts/Barbecues
- Summer Camps
- Campgrounds
- Wineries & Wine Tasting
- Cottages & Cabins
- Sit-down Dining
- Farm/Ranch Vacations
- Bed & Breakfast

Low Development & Investment Required

High Development & Investment Required
Research Questions

How comparable is China & US regarding the...

- **Ontology** (definition) of agritourism
- **Practice** of agritourism?
Research Methods

- Systematic review of the agritourism literature

**Chinese Source**
- China National Knowledge Infrastructure - CNKI (2004-2014)
- ISI Web of Knowledge database

**American Sources**
- ISI Web of Knowledge database
- Google Scholar
## Number of studies found by keywords

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<th>China Journal articles</th>
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<th>US Reports</th>
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<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
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</table>
Research Methods

A variety of “agritourism” labels

Number of definitions (China) vs. Number of definitions (US)
Deconstructing the **Ontology** of Agritourism

1) Broad types of agricultural setting

- China
  - Farming
  - Forestry
  - Livestock
  - Fishing
  - Side-line production

- US
  - Farm
  - Ranch
  - Nursery
  - Forests

(Lan, 2010; Wen et al., 2011; Yang, 2006; Zhao, 2011)

(Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Sotomayor et al., 2014; USDA, 2012)
Deconstructing the **Ontology** of Agritourism

2) Working nature of the agricultural setting

China & US:
- Agritourism only occurs in working farms

Because...
- CH: There are NO non-working farms
- US: Farmers & visitors reject non-working facilities as agritourism

(Gil Arroyo et al., 2013; Lobo et al., 1999; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Nickerson et al., 2001; Tew & Barbieri, 2012)
Deconstructing the **Ontology** of Agritourism

3) Types of activities

<table>
<thead>
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<th>China</th>
<th>US</th>
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<td>1 Word “休闲娱乐”</td>
<td>Recreation/Entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>Education</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>Sales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor or farm recreation</td>
<td>Events, festivals, &amp; lodging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-educational tours</td>
<td>Direct sales</td>
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</table>

(Jin, 2010; Mao, 2004; Wang, 2008)

(Bruce & Holland, 2004; McKenzie & Wysocki, 2002; Gao et al., 2014; Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007; Tew & Barbieri, 2012)
Deconstructing the **Ontology** of Agritourism

4) Tourists’ motivations

### China
- Learn about rural areas
- Harmony between man & nature
- Seeking their roots
- Find one’s original simplicity

### US
- Experience rural environment
- Reconnect with the land
- Nostalgia (romanticized farm lifestyle)
- Local foods & farmers
- Going back to their roots

(Li, 2008; Wang et al., 2010; Zhang, 2007)  
(Bernardo, 2004; Che, 2006; Che et al., 2006)
Deconstructing the **Ontology** of Agritourism

5) Tourism indicators

China & US

- No mention of “travel”
- No defined minimum distance
- No defined minimum overnight days

(Gil Arroyo et al., 2013)
Deconstructing the Practice of Agritourism

1) Setting
- Rural areas
- Suburban areas
- Overlap with “rural tourism”
- Any type of agricultural setting
- Different from “rural tourism”

2) Operators & sponsors
- Collective farmers (guided by local governments)
- Large company driven
- Individual family farms
- Some organizational support

(Li, 2012; Liu, 2008; Wang, 2011)
Deconstructing the Practice of Agritourism

3) Distribution

![Diagram comparing Agritourism practices in China and the US](chart.png)
Deconstructing the Practice of Agritourism

4) Contact between tourists & farm

**China**
- Direct contact is prevalent
- Preventive consciousness is weak

**US**
- Indirect & direct contact
- Increased environmental awareness
5) Authenticity versus Staged

China
- Staged & authentic activities coexist
- Tourists & farmers prefer authentic experiences

US
- Staged & authentic activities coexist
- Farmers prefer staged authenticity (sanitary reasons)
- Tourists like both authentic & staged

(Gil Arroyo et al., 2013)
Deconstructing the Practice of Agritourism

6) Sanitation & safety

China

US
Conclusions

Ontology of Agritourism: Some elements are similar

- Agricultural setting
- Educational & recreational purposes
- Staged & authentic activities coexist

Practice of Agritourism: Distinct characters appear

- Operators are different
- Folk-customs are indispensable attributes in China
- Sanitary & safety issues are key in the US
Final Remarks

Similar Problems...

- Increased urbanization & rural depopulation
- Economic & social challenges affecting family farms
- Youth disconnection with rural settings, realities & importance

Similar Solution: Agritourism as a means to...

- Increase farm revenues & profits
- Preserve rural landscapes & biological services
- Maintain agricultural heritage & farming lifestyles
Final Remarks

But scholarly... Are we heading in the same direction?
Questions?

Thank You!

谢谢！