

## Agricultural Activities and its Implication for Agric-Tourism Development in Ebo Farm Site in Yala Local Government Area, Cross River State

---

<sup>1</sup>Odey Christopher Lifu, <sup>2</sup>Ajoma Simon Okwoche &  
<sup>3</sup>Tawo Alfred Oyong  
<sup>1,2&3</sup>Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management,  
University of Cross River State

---

Article DOI: 10.48028/iiprds/ijsrssms.v7.i1.02

### Abstract

Agric-tourism is an important potential area to substitute national revenue generation, considering the important need for new forms of physical and social economic development tools in Nigeria. It is common knowledge that in the 1960s and 1970s, Nigeria was tagged as a country with a substantial agricultural economy. This period saw tremendous progress in the economy of the nation. Sadly, the growth of the agricultural sector has continued to decline over the years as a result of overdependence on petroleum products. A critical look into the agricultural activities and their implications for agric-tourism in Ebo community in Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria will be an eye opener to many and to the Government (Local, state, and Federal) levels. The objective of the study is to examine agricultural activity in Ebo Farm Site for agric-tourism development in Yala Local Government Area Cross State, Nigeria. The ethnographic method was adopted during these research processes, Information was collected through various data gathering techniques like semi structured interviews and open discussions, which were used as a primary research tool, in order to obtain villagers opinion on agric- tourism as well as agricultural activities in the locality. The result revealed that practice of farming activities, such as crop production, snail farming, fish production and dairy production within the Ebo people will offer lasting experiences and opportunities for the tourists, which will in turn generate revenue and increase the livelihood of the people.

**Keywords:** *Agricultural activities, Agric-tourism, Ebo farms site, Development*

*Corresponding Author:* Odey Christopher Lifu

### **Background to the Study**

Agric-tourism is any commercial enterprise that combines agriculture and tourism on a working farm, ranch, or other agribusiness operation. The Commonwealth of Kentucky (2011) defines agric-tourism as the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of pleasure, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. Furthermore, Agric-tourism is a rapidly emerging form of tourism in Europe and America due to the urgency of preventing the risk of low agricultural participation which could affect the economy of concerned countries (Kukorelli, 2011). Thus, promotion of agricultural activities through tourism is becoming a strong medium of encouraging participation in agriculture globally. Sadly, in Nigeria enough attention has not been given this area to attract the large population of the teeming unemployed youth to agriculture. Nigeria's economy is majorly based on crude oil. It accounts for 95% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (Uwakonye, 2006). Nigeria is at the risk of severe economic trauma if the petroleum sector fails to prosper. Thus, agric-tourism is also a vital potential area to substitute national income generation considering the prime need for new forms of physical and social economic development tools in Nigeria. It is common knowledge that in the 1960s and 1970s Nigeria was tagged as a country with a substantial agricultural economy. This period experiences tremendous progress in the economy of the nation. Sadly, to say, presently the growth of the agricultural sector has continued to decline over the years as a result of over dependence on petroleum products. A critical look into agricultural activities in Ebo community in Yala Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria will be an eye opener to many and to the Government (Local, State and Federal) level.

### **Research Objective**

To examine the agricultural activity in Ebo Farm Site for agric-tourism development in Yala Local Government Area Cross State, Nigeria.

### **Research Methodology**

The research method for this study was ethnographic in nature. Information was collected through various data gathering techniques like semi structured interview and open discussions which was used as a primary research tool, in order to obtain villagers opinion on agric-tourism as well as the potential of agric-tourism in the locality. The research approach utilised comprehensive literature review on the various related topics which were used to guide the research objectives. Finally, this study represents an exploratory approach, which intends to understand the potentials of agric-tourism development. Therefore, the data analysis was limited to thematic-subheadings.

### **Background Information/Study Area**

Woleche Ebo Farm Site is located in Yala Government Area of Cross River State Nigeria. The farm settlement is one of the largest expenses in the Woleche Ebo community. The topographic nature of the farm settlement made it possible for people (farmers) to carry out agricultural activities on a daily basis. The farm site has so many ecotourism features which are in line with agric tourism. Amongst the potentials of the Ebo farm site includes; the Woleche Ebo river basin, the Ebo monolith site, woleche Ebo rock, the Ebo hill and countless

streams surrounding the farm settlement. The farm settlement produces crop like cassava, yam, rice, vegetables, fruits and bush animals like rabbits, grass cutter, monkeys, bush pig and different kinds of birds. The unique nature of the farm settlement has continued to draw neighbouring village dwellers and visitors to the place; hence yams, vegetables, rice, bush meats, fish are in large demand from the host community and outsiders.

### Data Presentation/Findings

The qualitative data were analysed thematically based on the information obtained during the interview with the farm workers Mr. Daniel Echuku retired civil servant and oil palm harvester Mr. Ogbaji Gabriel. This data was complemented with the field survey.

**Table 1:** Thematic analysis of the interview conducted for the farm managers and workers

Variables	Responses
Farm activities	<b>Crop production</b> : oil palm, cassava, rice, groundnut, yam, maize, pepper, okra, plantain. <b>Fruits:</b> pawpaw, cashew, mango, Guava. <b>Vegetables and herbs:</b> Green leaf, Moringa ( <i>Moringa oleifera</i> ), Amaranth, African Eggplant ( <i>Vignia unguiculata</i> ), Roselle hibiscus. <b>Animal production:</b> rearing of poultry for slaughter and breeding, breeding of rabbits, fish production, pig breeding, guinea fowlrearing, foreign turkey rearing, snail cultivation, fish farming, chicken and egg production, as well as goat rearing.
Number of workers and their level of education	Over 50 workers Both experienced and Unskilled
Would visitors be allowed on farm?	Yes, but on a segmented land different from farmed land due to the bio-security measures
Facilities	Rice processing hunt Yam homestead Honey processing centre
Infrastructures	Shelter built on farm area Segmented relaxation points under the tree canopies Rural family houses or room for visitors Water supply containers
Natural features	River Streams Rock shelters Hills

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

The interview shows that the art of farming activities, such as crop production, snail farming, fish production and dairy will offer sustainable experience and favourable circumstances for the tourists. There is an urgent requirement to increase the skill and level of education of the staff encountered during the course of the study to conform with agric-tourism globally practise, owing to the fact that the industry is a relatively a new concept, especially in this part of Nigeria. This is in an accordance with opinion of Kiper (2013) which opined that ecotourism is a somewhat new management techniques and one that need thorough and well-focused training of staff that are lacking in the field of environmental analysis and education; trail design and maintenance; impact monitoring techniques, including limits of acceptable change; visitor management techniques; communication and human relations skills; accounting; fundraising and public relations; and extension techniques. However, the restriction placed by some farm management not to allow visitors to access their farms due to the bio-insecurity issues is likely to impact influx to the farms negatively. The case of bio-insecurity highlighted can be easily mitigated if the right organisation given the task of ensuring bio-safety in Nigeria is included. Security of bio resources in the country is part of the mandate of the Nigeria Bio- safety management agency. Parry (2005) asserted that a poor number of tourists' take in on-farms activities is widely due to the restriction of their inability to approach. The responses gathered from the informant (the farm workers) were consummate with field experience. It is geared toward establishing the state of manmade facilities, such as accessibility, relaxation and accommodation (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Field observation.

S/N	EBO Farm Site
	<p>It was observed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— road accessibility to the farm is in excellent condition;</li> <li>— products, such as eggs, snails, fish, chicken, turkey, are being sold to locals and visitors or neighbouring villagers;</li> <li>— encroachment is low as there are few Buildings around the farm.</li> </ul>



**Plate 1:** the researcher at Ebo River side

It was noticed that the access to the farms is in good condition and farm products are made available to the residence and outsiders. Encroachment is one of the major factors that will likely affect the expansion in future. Also, the data gathered from the field survey serves as a yardstick for classification of the mentioned on-farm agricultural activities as either available or unavailable (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Classification of the identified potential agric-tourism activities

General agric-tourism Classification	Agric-tourism Activities	EBO farm Site
Direct agricultural sales or marketing	Direct on-farm sales Market store	Available
Educational tourism/experience	Farm tour Farm work demos	Available
On-farm entertainment	Event on Farm (Moonlight stories, folklores etc) Animal rides	Available
Hospitality service	Farm made foods/restaurant Farm camping	Available
Outdoor recreation	Farm hunting Fishing Bird watching Hiking path	Available
Community indigenous knowledge	Pottery making house Wood carving house	Available



**Plate 2:** (a) the researcher at Ebo Farm site. (b) homestead at the Farm site

According to Walke's (2013) broad categorization, ecotourism and agric-tourism activities in the Ebo community both fall under this category. The requirement for the management of these farms to encourage available agric-tourism activities and to make appropriate provisions for those that are not is justified by this classification. For instance, in order for tourists to be able to eat at the farm-made foods/restaurant, it is necessary to regularly support the production of various food crop varieties. Additionally, this will increase farmer revenue and



strengthen the farm's economy. This backs up Kotic's and Rohana's (2015) findings that the expansion of farm-based activities and the provision of goods like food and fruits for the Visitors could help farmers decide how to use agric-tourism strategies to create additional cash to support their farming operations. Since they are easily accessible, it was assumed that the farmers are now engaging in direct agricultural marketing or sales (direct on-farm sales and market outlets). There are additional facilities that support educational tourism and experiences, such as farm tours and agricultural skill demonstrations.



**Plate 3:** The Ebo River

### **Discussion**

The findings of the study indicate that the farm site in the Ebo community is still engaged in agricultural production rather than preserving their land just as a tourist attraction for landscaping. While the host community still engages in farming, the emphasis is not on the typical commodity crops connected to production agriculture. Crops including corn, rice, cassava, yams, vegetables, herbs, and fresh fruits are among the produce items grown on the farm. This makes sense, though, given the distinctive and experiential options available in the development of specialty crops, which would be less appealing in the context of the massive monoculture typical of the production of commodity crops. The Ebo Farm Site has some characteristics in common with old-fashioned family farms. Most farms are privately owned and run. Farmers engaged in agricultural activities are mostly youth and lower average age. The lower average age for the farm workers in this study deserves further exploration, as it may be suggesting either the incorporation of new skills within a younger generation of farmers or the farm diversification to facilitate succession of the business among family members. The lower average age may also be suggesting the entrance of younger people into the farming business and a more entrepreneurial approach to production agriculture.

Results also indicate that farm employees believe agric-tourism will be crucial for achieving a variety of marketing, personal, and social objectives. The most significant objectives that agric-tourism will serve are thought to be educating the host community about agriculture and improving quality of life for the farm family. It was not surprising that there was a focus on

bringing in new clients given the host community's goal in boosting agricultural sales and visitor counts. The study also supports the idea that, as previously proposed, agric-tourism is an effective way to draw tourists to the farm who will then purchase other agricultural products. The value of promoting and supporting agriculture can be shown in how the host community is educated about it and how the farm family's quality of life is improved preserving the rural and agricultural lifestyle for those living on the farm and in the surrounding area.

The pleasant scenery at Ebo Farm, meanwhile, provides visitors a feeling of being near to nature. The farm has a variety of facilities, such as a rice processing arena, a yam shop, a honey processing center, a storage and preservation house, and more. Additionally, the introduction of crop species that are uncommon in this region of the world has made the Ebo farm site unique; the farm features a number of hybrid mango stands, a plantation of plantains, a groundnut farm, etc. The farm's animal farming operations include the raising of chicken (layers and broilers), guinea hens, fish, foreign turkeys, snails, pigs, and more. Additionally, the farmers raise cat fish (*Clarias batrachus*) in roughly 10 fish ponds (Samuel, 2022 pers.com). Another intriguing aspect of the site is the farm's restaurant, which serves meals and regional drinks such as wine and burukotu (fermented millet grains blended with various seasonings). The farm has the ability and potential to attract future tourists as it now stands. The research's findings show that a substantial number of individuals visit the farm (Paul, 2022 pers.com). The number of visitors or guests at the destination each week is typically less than 30, according to data from key informant interviews. The bulk of tourists, according to research data, are mostly involved in education (research, field excursions).

According to information from key informant interviews, there are typically fewer than 30 visitors or guests at the destination each week, an observation from the research. According to research findings that were observed, the majority of visitors to the site have an educational connection (research, field trips, etc.). This might be due to the farm's close proximity to one academic facility. This may be due to the fact that the farm is located adjacent to one academic institution (CRUTECH, Ogoja) and is two hours' journey from the farm settlement. As further proof, the Farm is able to entice visitors thanks to the range of agricultural techniques it uses. One of these is an integrated farming system, which integrates many farming techniques that seem to work well together. For example, plantain trees are positioned to provide shade around the fish pond. Additionally, it was found that farm animal excrement is used as manure (fertilizer) for crops. Source (Michael, 2022 pers.com) claims.

In Cross River State, Nigeria, the farm hopes to establish itself as a major hub for economic activities involving agricultural products. When the farm's facilities were examined, it became clear how wealthy the estate was as a travel destination. The practice of tourism makes it abundantly evident that amenities must be taken into account before any tourism enterprise can succeed. According to data gathered from the host community, tourism activities at the destination have been able to positively impact the socio-economic activities of the community. This is because tourism opens up opportunities for job creation, the redistribution of resources through commerce, and the integration of urban and rural areas (Micheal, 2022

pers.com). These advantages extend to the transport unit as well, and individuals take part in economically oriented activities, boosting the local economy. According to the study's findings, agriculture may offer attractions, leisure activities, and educational opportunities in addition to supplying food and other natural products for tourists to consume. Another farm in Cross River State that could be able to support its community through investments in agricultural tourism is Ebo Farm Settlement.

The host community has consistently decided that the benefits of agric-tourism are great and that the sector should be grown. This concurs with Sevgi's (2011) assertion that the growth of agric-tourism should be primarily promoted on farmlands and that it has made a significant contribution to the rural development model, particularly in reducing the poverty of women in Kosbucagi Village. This is also consistent with the conclusions of Malkanthi (2011) as one of the factors that most nations across the world promote agric-tourism for in order to sustainably improve rural areas. A viable rural development strategy that can be used to diversify Nigeria's economy and create jobs is agric-tourism for young people and raise the standard of living in the neighborhood. The development of agric-tourism and other all-encompassing programs to combat poverty at the rural level would enhance the standard of living and financial stability of the locals in developing nations, particularly those who live close to ecotourism hotspots (Oladeji & Omotayo, 2013). Most respondents believed that agricultural tourism would be a successful business for Ebo community residents. For those who would be interested in investing in agric-tourism in the Ebo Farm Settlement, this is a really strong foundation upon which to grow. According to Van der Ploeg and Renting (2004), agric-tourism is seen as a way to support economic diversification efforts and preserve agricultural operations.

According to the study, agricultural tourism may give local farmers the chance to boost their income and bring in money for the neighborhood through connections with artisans and community guest houses. The respondents suggested that increasing local food production might lead to greater food security in the research area. The richness and distinctiveness of the traditional food crops grown in the research area will also be highlighted by agric-tourism. The farm property offers a significant potential for developing local and regional markets as well as public-private partnerships that can support sustainable agriculture and the community of Ebo's economic diversity. It may be possible to persuade young people who are rushing to metropolitan areas in quest of career prospects to stay in the rural area and engage themselves in agricultural activities that will generate income through tourist's visitation to the farm site.

In addition to lowering rural-urban migration, this will encourage the preservation of agricultural land in the host community and an increase in crop output. Banking services were mentioned by respondents as another service that will assist the economy and emerge as a result of the multiplier effect. However, agric-tourism will offer the chance to sell farm products directly to tourists and other visitors. Social impacts are modifications to locals' standard of living that result from tourism-related activity (Wall & Mathiason, 2006). Programs that promote agriculture as a kind of tourism help towns make the most of their natural, historical, and cultural assets. They can also assist to foster a sense of civic pride and



enhance the local population's quality of life (Karabati, 2009). Lowering poverty is an improvement in society.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher "examines agricultural activity in Ebo Farm Site for agric-tourism development in Yala Local Government Area Cross State, Nigeria" is the stated research objective in this study. If the host town takes the right steps, agric-tourism could be advantageous because it could increase farm income and aid in the development of farm employees. By providing opportunities and increasing capacity, the host community views the farm workers as an essential component of the enterprise. By taking advantage of these opportunities, the farm workers can ultimately improve their own and their children's futures. The present justification for the Ebo community's diversification into agric-tourism would be the requirement for generating extra revenue. However, as described in the international literature, by providing a haven for city people and fostering a genuine experience, it might put agri-tourism in a stronger position for development in the State.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The study has demonstrated that agricultural tourism can be developed in the Ebo Farm Site in the Yala Local Government Area of Cross State if significant stakeholders (NGOs, government agencies, educators, etc.) work together to foster the local community's understanding of agricultural tourism and to promote its growth and sustainability. Once more, the study has shown to be helpful; as a result, it displays several ecological aspects of the farm settlement, including a river, streams, rocks (monoliths), animals, a hill, and cattle husbandry. This demonstrates how both agricultural tourism and ecotourism improve the watershed region in different ways. The study also revealed that the farm site is beneficial for business travelers who tend to concentrate primarily on purchasing readily available agricultural products as well as significant for medical travelers because the farm site provides medicinal herbs used to treat a variety of disorders. Finally, the study has without a doubt shown that the Ebo Farm Site is ideal for agricultural tourism in all respects.

### **References**

- Daniel, O. E. (2023). Oral tradition. Farmer
- Knezevic, M. (2011). *Agrotourism as a generator for regional development*. Retrieved from [www.cceol.com](http://www.cceol.com)
- Kiper, T. (2013). Land use planning regarding sustainable development through agric-tourism: Şarköy example. *Journal of Agricultural Biotechnology and Sustainable Development*, 3(8), 171-181.
- Karabati, S., Dogan, E., Pinar, M. & Celik, L. M. (2009). Socio-economic effects of agri-tourism on local communities in turkey: The case of Aglasun. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 10(2), 129–142

- Kukorelli, I. Z. (2011). *Tourism and agriculture in Hungary post-productivist transition or new functions in rural space, tourism and agriculture new geographies of consumption, production and rural restructuring*. 2011 USA and Canada: Routledge.
- Kosic, K. (2015). Key principles of rural tourism households' development strategy: Case study of Vojvodina. *Economics of Agriculture*, 62(4), 975–988. DOI: 10.5937/Ekopolj1504975k.
- Malkanathi, S. H. P. & Routry, J. K. (2011). Potential for agric-tourism development: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 6(1), 45-57.
- Rohana, P. M. (2015). Agri tourism as a risk management strategy in rural agriculture sector: With special reference to developing countries. *The Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 11(1), 1–12.
- Ogar, G. O. (2023). Oral tradition. Palm nut harvest.
- Oladeji, S. O., & Omotayo, K. (2013). Ecotourism industry a panacea for sustainable economic development in rural communities: case study of Osse river park, Ondo-State, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(8), 72–93.
- Sevgi, T. R. (2011). An application of a women-oriented agro-tourism rural development model in improving the local economy. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(22), 9714–9723.
- Uwakonye, H. (2006). The impact of oil and gas production on the Nigerian economy: A rural sector econometric model. *IBERJ*, 2.
- Van der Ploeg, J. D., Renting, H., Brunori, G., Knickel, K., Mannion, J., Marsden, T., de Roest, K., Sevilla-Guzman, E. & Ventura, F. (2004). Rural development: From practices and policies towards theory. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 40(4), 391-408.
- Walker, M. A. (2009). *Agric-tourism: Ideas and Resources*. Virginia Cooperative Extension. Publication 310-004 Produced by Communications and Marketing, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Walker, S. G. (2013). *Critical study of agro-tourism industry in Maharashtra*. Symbiosis International University, Pune.