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# A Study on the Development of Leisure Agriculture in Liaoning Province

Wenwen ZHANG<sup>1</sup>, Erdong CHEN<sup>1\*</sup>, Yingjie HAO<sup>2</sup>

1. School of Business Administration, University of Science and Technology Liaoning, Anshan 114051, China; 2. Anshan Normal University, Anshan 114007, China

**Abstract** Leisure agriculture in foreign countries has a long history of over 100 years, and China's leisure agriculture started in the 1980s. With the earlier reform and opening up, Shenzhen first opened "Lychee Festival" in the macroscopic background, and leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province was also developed by leaps and bounds. This paper describes the basic situation of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province, analyzes the three stages of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province, and expounds the leisure agriculture in Liaoning's product development mode. Finally, it puts forward strategies for the development of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province, in order to contribute to the development of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province.

**Key words** Liaoning Province, Leisure agriculture, Development

## 1 Introduction

Leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province has been developed for nearly 30 years, and has formed a certain scale of industry. Liaoning Province has 61 tourism towns with characteristics, 105 professional tourism villages and 433 star farmhouses. There are 9 first-batch national agricultural tourism demonstration sites, and 25 second-batch national agricultural tourism demonstration points. There are a total of 37 national agricultural tourism demonstration points, and 8 provincial agricultural tourism demonstration sites. It has gradually formed all kinds of basic leisure agriculture product systems covering agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery. In order to promote the development of tourism and leisure agriculture, Tourism Bureau of Liaoning Province developed the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" for development of leisure agriculture and tourism and proposed the implementation of agricultural tourism project. In the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan" period, the revenue of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province was dramatically increased to a total of 1116 billion yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 20%. The province's per capita net income of farmers was also greatly increased, with an average annual growth rate of 1.5%, and the cumulative per capita income increased by 350 yuan. As for the rural tourism employment, 15 million farmers have directly engaged in tourism agriculture and more than 60 million people have indirectly engaged in tourism agriculture.

## 2 The development stage of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province

**2.1 The first stage: initial stage from 1978 to 1989** This stage was in the initial stage of reform and opening up, and the economic basis of Liaoning Province was still relatively backward, especially in the civil aviation, railway, road and shipping indus-

try which were directly related to tourism. At this stage, the vast majority of tourists in Liaoning Province, with low expectation of consumption, strove to meet the basic requirements of eating, wearing, and living, and failed to correctly understand leisure agriculture. The leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province never formed a certain scale of development, facilities were too simple, and management was extensive. Leisure agriculture lacked careful planning and demonstration, and was in a state of blindness. It was managed entirely by non-professional personnel. The leisure agriculture projects were naturally small, and leisure agriculture was still in its infancy.

**2.2 The second stage: growth stage from 1990 to 2000** The stage was from the planned economy to the market economy period in Liaoning Province, characterized by dramatic urban development, income increase and consumption structure change in Liaoning Province. After solving the problem of food and clothing, people had new requirements of sightseeing, leisure and tourism. At the same time, there was an urgent need to optimize rural industrial structure, expand employment for farmers and increase farmers' income. Leisure agriculture and tourism were combined to form "agricultural tourism" with characteristics. In this context, some of the rural areas and farmers in the suburbs of Shenyang, Dalian and Anshan used local agricultural resources and characteristic agricultural products, to open the sightseeing and leisure agriculture garden and carry out picking, fishing, picnicking and various other tourism activities. These leisure agriculture parks attracted a large number of urban residents to experience the agricultural production and peasant life and feel nature.

### 2.3 The third stage: driving stage from 2000 to the present

After the rapid development of leisure agriculture, the relationship between supply and demand tended to be eased, and the demand growth was slow, but the supply was developing rapidly, and the scale of leisure agriculture was expanding. At this stage, on the one hand, driven by economic interests, there were fre-

quent leisure agriculture economic activities and disputes; on the other hand, rapid expansion made the administrative mechanism fail to form corresponding legal framework and enforcement power, and the market was in a relatively disordered state.

### 3 Selection of product development models for the leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province

**3.1 Development model of agritainment** The development model of agritainment is popular in Liaoning Province, characterized by "eating farmers' rice, living in rural courtyard, doing farmers' job, and buying farm products". For example, 3 tourism townships are developed in Benxi, having 2 professional tourism villages, more than 160 "agritainment" households and 35 star "agritainment" households, and forming an obvious agritainment tourism industry chain.

**3.2 Development model of rural folk experience** Liaoning Province is a traditional agricultural province, having a long history of agricultural development, and there are differences in the way of life in rural areas. In most areas, people plant dry crops of corn, sorghum, *etc.*, and the regional differences in diet are not very big. The regional distribution of the minority nationalities in Liaoning Province is different from in the eastern and western regions. Differences are also appearing. Different regional environment and ethnic types form a wide range of rural folk customs. Different cities, regions and counties have the unique local characteristics. In addition, due to the rapid development of modern social productive forces and highly developed science and technology, the production means of original agriculture is slowly disappearing. Developing local folk leisure agriculture can not only effectively solve issues concerning agriculture, countryside and farmers and improve agricultural industrial structure in Liaoning Province, but also preserve the old farming folk culture in Liaoning Province, which is conducive to the heritage of traditional agricultural production in Liaoning Province.

**3.3 Development model of picking** Most picking leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province takes the city as the basis, and is in the suburbs having convenient transportation. Urban residents can not only feel the beautiful rural scenery, but also pick fresh fruits and vegetables on weekend. Before leaving, they can also pick fresh green pollution-free agricultural products. In the short term, it aims to use less money to feel closer to nature, so as to achieve the purpose of physical and mental relaxation. In the face of strong tourist market and urban residents' high-grade needs, with the help of national and provincial preferential policy, Liaoning's picking leisure agriculture gradually expands scale. By the development model of picking, it can meet various needs of urban residents for fruits, vegetables and service projects.

**3.4 Development mode of popular science education** It uses the agricultural sightseeing garden, agricultural science and technology park, agricultural product exhibition hall, and agricultural expo garden or museum, to provide visitors with tourism activities of agricultural history, and agricultural knowledge. Taking the

modern high-tech facilities, production processes, technology and others as the selling point, and compared with traditional mode of agricultural production, it makes visitors understand the change of agricultural production, and makes them learn the new technology, grasp the old traditional activities and achieve effective practice during a visit. At the same time, it has some educational value for the students. The development mode of the popular science education is the combination of the traditional agricultural production mode and the modern science and technology. Here are some typical examples including Shenyang Agricultural Expo Garden, Dalian Stone River Modern Agricultural Park, Dalian Hong Feng Enterprise Group Co., Ltd., Benxi Green Ecological Park, *etc.*

**3.5 Development mode of leasing farm** The farmers will lease land to the public to plant grain, flowers, fruits, vegetables and other crop types. It can make the public experience the agricultural production process, and enjoy the pleasure of farming mainly from the leisure experience. By doing farm work hosted by the providers of agricultural land on holidays or in the harvest season, tourists can feel the joy of harvest in the labor. For example, Anshan City builds the rural plantation welcomed by the public in the suburbs, and through the small farmland, people can experience "no pains, no gains", thus it is really a very fresh taste of leisure.

### 4 Recommendations for the development of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province

**4.1 Paying attention to the exploration and protection of the rural culture** Farming culture and folk culture in the rural areas are rich and colorful, with a strong local flavor and a strong cultural taste, so it is necessary to implement the combination of rural cultural resource development, protection, and inheritance. Leisure agriculture must be combined with the local context of Liaoning Province. There is a need to study, explore and highlight the characteristics of Liaoning, and use the "Liaoning characteristics" to attract tourists, especially foreign tourists.

**4.2 Establishing a good business management idea** Improving the management level and enhancing the development potential of leisure agriculture is the fundamental guarantee for the sustainable and healthy development of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province. Therefore, the management of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province needs to pay close attention to the following points. (i) It is necessary to firmly establish the concept of integrity management. Leisure agriculture needs to make full use of the most convincing language about "good faith service", to win the favor and support of tourists, so that leisure agriculture has a high degree of integrity. (ii) It is necessary to firmly establish the concept of "staff is god". Leisure agriculture should carry out the "people-oriented management" to the staff, so that all the staff regard farm as their home, and work hard for the healthy development of leisure agriculture. (iii) It is necessary to firmly establish the concept of "agriculture-oriented leisure agriculture". For construction and management of leisure agriculture, it is necessary to

focus on the planting and breeding industry and vigorously develop leisure industry to make the planting and breeding industry and tourism form a good complementary relationship, otherwise the leisure agriculture will lose the development foundation. (iv) It is necessary to firmly establish the concept of "innovation as vitality". There is a need to use innovative ideas and innovative thinking to construct and manage the leisure agriculture, and use new farm and new leisure activities to attract tourists and make tourists have fresh feeling. (v) It is necessary to firmly establish the concept of " $1 + 1 > 2$ ". Leisure agriculture in the process of operation needs to focus on two aspects: one is to focus on cooperation with other types of leisure agriculture; the other one is to focus on good image of the farms and Liaoning's tourism enterprises to improve brand management, chain management and cooperative management.

**4.3 Establishing demonstration points and increasing government support** Each city (county, district) should establish one or two demonstration points, and the government needs to give project grants, and focus on the road renovation, drainage, street lighting, public toilets and other public facilities construction, in order to promote the effective construction of leisure agriculture.

**4.4 Training professional personnel and improving the level of management** Leisure agriculture is a new industry, covering agriculture, ecological environment, tourism, leisure, cultural and other multi-disciplinary knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to train professional personnel having knowledge system, to improve the management level, guarantee reliability, response and safety in leisure agriculture, and provide product service. Talent advantage of Liaoning Province can rely on the province's Tourism Colleges (Northeast University of Finance and Economics, Liaoning University, Liaoning Normal University, Shenyang Normal University, Liaoning University of Science and Technology, Anshan Normal College) to carry out effective service skills training, and the training can adopt the on-site training, classroom training to explain in a vivid way. The training content includes service etiquette, agricultural operation and management, basic leisure science, service management, *etc.* It is necessary to hire experts to provide scientific planning and implement program to establish a set of service management norms, enhance culture and operation mechanism, and promote the quality of service, so as to lay the foundation for the development of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province.

**4.5 Establishing and perfecting leisure agriculture association** There is an urgent need to establish leisure agriculture association in Liaoning Province, implement the self-discipline management of the industry, and enhance self-regulation of the association. (i) Tourism Bureau of Liaoning Province should offer more power to let leisure agriculture associations participate in government industry management and enhance the authority of the association. When time is propitious, the leisure agriculture association will be given certain financial support. (ii) The leisure agriculture association should take the initiative and give full play to the role of the association in policy advocacy and advice, coordination

of relations, industry training, industry self-regulation, publicity, promotion and other aspects. The association of leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province should organize relevant workers to engage in leisure agriculture management, service, promotion, management and organization research; develop industry standards, and strengthen industry self-regulation; strengthen Liaoning's leisure agricultural practice summary and theoretical research to promote the exchange of experience; carry out the internal and external co-operation, and share leisure agricultural resources in Liaoning Province. (iii) It is necessary to establish a brand for the leisure farm in Liaoning Province and create a model to improve the overall quality of the farm, in order to further promote faster and better development of the leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province. Leisure agriculture associations should carry out evaluation of star leisure farm, and formulate the star leisure farm evaluation details (participating objects of star leisure farms, star standard leisure farm, star time for evaluation of the leisure farm, five-star leisure farm responsibility).

**4.6 Strengthening publicity and promotion efforts** There is a need to highlight the characteristics, strengthen publicity and promotion efforts. In order to improve the popularity of leisure agricultural tourism in Liaoning Province, it is necessary to use various means to carry out targeted publicity, and firmly establish the concept of "more publicity and promotion efforts, bigger tourist market". All parties should take a variety of effective forms of publicity and promotion to develop leisure agriculture in Liaoning Province.

**4.7 Improving the planning and approval system** In view of low level of leisure agriculture at present, it is recommended that Liaoning provincial government should take the following measures for rectification: (i) evaluating and integrating the Liaoning provincial and municipal enterprises, building the sanatorium institutions around the reservoir area, conference center, training center, and carrying out rectification of the low management level; (ii) closing down some holiday villages with water pollution, preventing and controlling river pollution and soil erosion, avoiding excessive extraction of geothermal water; (iii) prohibiting any form of leisure agricultural project in mountains, rivers and steep slope areas; (iv) establishing the future plans for the development of leisure agriculture in accordance with the scientific proof of relevant departments and experts.

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