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## **AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS: POSSIBILITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGROTOURISM\*\***

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### **Abstract**

Agrotourism, a form of tourism that falls within the framework of rural tourism, is based on the tourism taking place on farms with the possibility of doing work with the owners of the farm with this being seen as a leisure activity, educational in nature and of interest to members of many groups. The importance of this kind of tourism resides in the possibility of complementing the income generated from the farm with income produced by the tourism, as well as assuring the conservation of the environment and the agricultural system in which it takes place. The objective of this paper is to highlight the possibilities for the development of agrotourism in areas where it has had little impact, from the perspective of agricultural entrepreneurs and their willingness to diversify their traditional activities and make them compatible with tourism. A survey of 494 entrepreneurs carried out in Extremadura (Spain) shows the existence of a positive attitude to the development of tourism (80%), though these same entrepreneurs also show some reluctance to actually participate in it themselves. From this survey it can be seen that although this kind of tourism has great potential in the area with interesting benefits related to increasing the income and quality of life of the agricultural entrepreneur (74%), as well as the preservation of the landscape and rural heritage (71%), it still faces many challenges.

*Key words:* agricultural diversification, agrotourism, environmental sustainability, tourism management

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