

### Summary

#### L. M. Kolesnyk. **The Development of Ecotourism in Krasnopillya District With Used of Natural Reserve Fund.**

*The article discusses the prospects of tourism development using natural-reserve fund. It discusses a new kind of tourism activity – ecotourism. It contains cognitive information on objects the natural-reserve fund in Krasnopillya district.*

**Key words:** *natural-reserve fund, recreational needs, Krasnopillya district, ecotourism.*

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A.V. Shadrakou, I.N. Sharukho

### **REGIONAL ASPECTS OF AGROECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BREST REGION**

*The main purpose of the article is to study territorial characteristics of conditions and factors for agroecotourism development in Brest region on the basis of first appeared statistics indicators which reflect functionality of agroecofarmsteads from a perspective of administrative districts. The received scientific results are new as the main used indicators of agroecotourism development in view of administrative districts haven't been published before. The received data of the territorial organization of agro tourism can be used for the planning of the net of agroecofarmsteads well as for the development of tourism in the regions of Belarus in general.*

**Keywords:** *Agroecotourism, spatial characteristics, rural tourism, innovative agroecofarmsteads.*

**Introduction.** Tourism is one of the most important spheres of modern economy. This kind of activity aims meeting the needs of people in knowing history, culture, traditional and religious values of various countries and their peoples.

In different countries and regions tourism becomes an important activity and exerts wholesome influence on the development of other economy sectors, including hotel industry, transport and communications, building industry, agriculture, retail sales, manufacture and selling souvenirs and others. It is the catalyst of their development.

Belarus agro tourism attracts tourists with its traditions, housing decor in ethno style, the opportunity of fishing and hunting in Belarusian forests, national cuisine, silence and pure air. All these make conditions which with the correct approach could be used for the development of agroecotourism and get economic profit of it (Borzdova, Ustyushenko, 2013, p. 460-465).

Agricultural tourism (agro tourism, “green tourism”) is a broad notion and there is no generally accepted definition yet. From geographic point of view this is tourism outside the city limits at the territory of underpopulation. From the point of tourism product this is a set of various services from accommodation in a country



house, ecological tours, and adventure travels to the direct involvement into the life of local community (Molchan, 2009, p. 76-77).

In the world there is a shift from mass tourism to more meaningful types of travel. Three S (Sun-Sea-Sand) gave place to three L (Landscape-Lore-Leisure). And Belarus village has much to offer: rural scenery, traditional farm mode of life, rich traditions, and ecologically pure products (Halavach, Rubakhau, 2012, p. 51-56).

Successful development of agroecotourism in the region is possible only with the consideration of specific characteristics of Brest area, in particular bordering Poland and Ukraine. Direct proximity with foreign neighbors, where the sphere of agroecotourism is a long-standing tradition allows adopting the positive experience how to organize clients' hosting in rural steads. For example, in bordering Lublin province there are 12 agroecotourism associations, which unite 400 farmsteads, providing in general 3.5 thousand sleeping accommodations. Brest region has the potential for the development of cross-border tourism, for making the project and running the tourist routes, using the objects of farmsteads on its territory and abroad.

Having regard on the above, the aim of the research is to elicit spatial features of conditions and factors of agroecotourism development in Brest region.

**Main part.** Rural tourism was developed in the pre-war period in Western Belarus, which was a part of Poland in that time. Even an annual tour-guide "Summer in farmsteads of Eastern Lands" was published for these territories. As a rule, manors of small polish nobility were to let; one of them was the manor "Sviatsk". Agro tourism determined the employment of local people and formed a certain profit share of households (Sharukho, Demyanenko, 2012, p. 204-210).

First agro tourism farmsteads began to appear just in 2003. Belarusian public organization "Agro and eco-tourism" formed in November 2002 (today it is Belarus Public Association "Relaxation in village") gave the start to the development of tourism in rural area. By 2005 the number of farmsteads has multiplied; however, legislation didn't regulate this kind of service offer (Gribov, 2011, p. 32-36).

The impact to the development of agro tourism was given by Presidential Decree dated June 2, 2006 № 372 "On measures for development of rural tourism in Belarus". Declarative principle of agro farmsteads organization and expedited basis of activity were introduced (Omerakh., 2006). In 2006 34 agro farmsteads appeared (28 of them were organized by private individuals, 4 – by farm households). These economic agents concluded 195 service contracts in amount of 56 million rubles. For 2006 the services of agro farmsteads have been used by 1300 agro tourists, 33 of them were foreign tourists. Then the number of farmsteads was continuously growing and in 2013 it reached 2100.



At present time for competitive market grouping of tourism services in the framework of Government Program of Tourism Development in the Republic of Belarus in 2011-2015 (further – Governmental Program) the effective strategy to promote national tours has been maintained; the strategy is focused on key directions of tourist market (Demyanenko, Sharukho, 2012, p. 12-14).

One of the priorities is to raise investments into tourist industry, including the construction of motorway service objects as well as collective and individual accommodation facilities in administrative districts of the country. In this regard the types of tourism based on nature potential of the country, including agroecotourism, are extra essential (Tarasenko, 2014, p. 6-7).

The development of educational, recreational, ecological, scientific, eventful and other types of tourism is closely connected to the organization of tours in small towns and special protected territories.

According to the law of the Republic of Belarus “About Tourism” and Government Program of Tourism Development in the Republic of Belarus agro tourism is determined as one of the priorities of tourism development in the country. It is intended to involve natural and human potential of Belarusian village to the benefit of its residents, people of the republic and multiple foreign guests (Zakon., 2007).

Despite the limited number of indicators of rural tourism development in the context of administrative districts of the Republic of Belarus, for the first time in recent years there has been the opportunity to explore the territorial organization of rural tourism and to identify the main features of its spatial development in Belarus (Sharukho, Demyanenko, 2011, p. 47-49). The basic indicators of agroecotourism development in the districts of Brest region for 2014 are shown in Table 1.

In 2014 257 agricultural farmsteads were registered in the region. Thus, the number of registered agroecofarmsteads from 2010 till 2014 grew from 151 to 228. The highest density of agroecofarmsteads is typical for the close-to-capital Brest region, which is located at the crossroads of the most important traffic arteries of Zhabinka district and Kamenetsk district, associated with the National park "Belovezhskaya Puscha".

The analysis of the proportion of Brest region area and the number of agroecofarmsteads in the districts of the whole region importance allows us to determine the agroecofarmsteads coverage in the corresponding districts.

In Brest region the largest area is covered by Stolin (10,3%), Pinsk(10,0%), Ivacevichy (9,2%) districts, the smallest area is by Liahovichy and Malorita districts (4,2% each). So, the largest coverage by agroecofarmsteads is in Kamenetsk and Brest districts.

Table 1

**Main indicators of agroecotourism development in the districts of Brest region in 2014**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Total number of agro farmsteads</b>	<b>Relative share of the district in the total number of agro farmsteads of the region, %</b>	<b>Agro farmsteads coverage per 10000 people</b>	<b>Relative share of innovative farmsteads, %</b>
Brest region, total	257	100	1,6	54,1
Baranovichi	19	7,4	0,9	78,9
Bereza	11	4,3	1,7	72,7
Brest	46	17,9	1,2	45,7
Gantsevichy	4	1,6	1,4	75,0
Drogichin	10	3,9	2,5	40,0
Zhabinka	11	4,3	4,5	63,6
Ivanovo	15	5,8	3,6	53,3
Ivacevichy	8	3,1	1,4	75,0
Kamenetsk	42	16,3	11,3	57,1
Kobrin	21	8,2	2,4	61,9
Luninets	13	5,1	1,9	46,2
Liahovichy	4	1,6	1,4	50,0
Malorita	8	3,1	3,2	25,0
Pinsk	19	7,4	1	57,9
Pruzhan'y	19	7,4	3,8	26,3
Stolin	7	2,7	0,9	57,1

The volume of tourist services demand of agroecotourism is also determined by demographic factors, first and foremost, population size. The nature of the resettlement of the population is also of a great value to determine the level of tourism demand.

The largest number of population is in Brest and Pinsk districts which 26% (366, 0 thousand people) и 13% (181 thousand people) of the whole number of population in Brest region relatively. These areas have a significant industrial and agricultural potential. In most districts there is a clear correlation between the population size and the number of agroecofarmsteads. The greatest disproportion of this correlation is in Kamenetsk district with a small population (37 thousand people) and the largest number of agroecofarmsteads in the region (34).

The ratio of the populations of the districts in Brest area and number of farmsteads in the region is represented by the common agroecofarmsteads utilization factor to 10000 of the district inhabitants. The densest coverage by agroecofarmsteads is also in Kamenetsk (9,2 to 10000 citizens) due to understandable reasons. The least



covered districts are Pinsk (0,8), Baranovichi(0,9) and Brest (0,5). It is explained by the significant area of Pinsk district 3, 3 thousand. km<sup>2</sup> (10,0% of the region's area), and a big number of population in Baranovichi and Brest districts – 210,3 and 366,0 thousand people relatively.

As mentioned above the volume of tourist services and agroecofarmsteads' location depend on demographic factors. On the territory of Brest region there is a characteristic difficult demographic situation as in the whole in rural areas of Belarus: death rate exceeds the birth rate, aging of population; that drew attention to the special role of agro-tourism as an important factor for sustainable socio-demographic and economic development of the region, especially in its rural territories.

To analyze the rate of the population of rural areas in Brest region and the number of agroecofarmsteads, general utilization factor of farmsteads to 10000 inhabitants of rural area. The absolute leader according to this indicator is Kamenets district (14.6), then there is Brest district with a significant under run (8.4), and Drogichin(8,1), Malorita (7,6), Zhabinka (7,0) districts. Outsiders are Gancevichi district (three registered farmsteads) and Stolin district, where the size of rural population approaches 52 thousand people.

To analyze the rate of population size in urban area in Brest region and the number of agroecofarmsteads, the general utilization factor of farmsteads per 10000 people of urban settlements has been worked out.

Kamenets district is the leader of this index (28.8) due to a low level of population size and a significant number of agroecofarmsteads. In Brest, Baranovichi and Pinsk districts the farmsteads' utilization factor is one of the lowest (about 1.0-1.1 to 10 000 town dwellers) due to a big number of citizens.

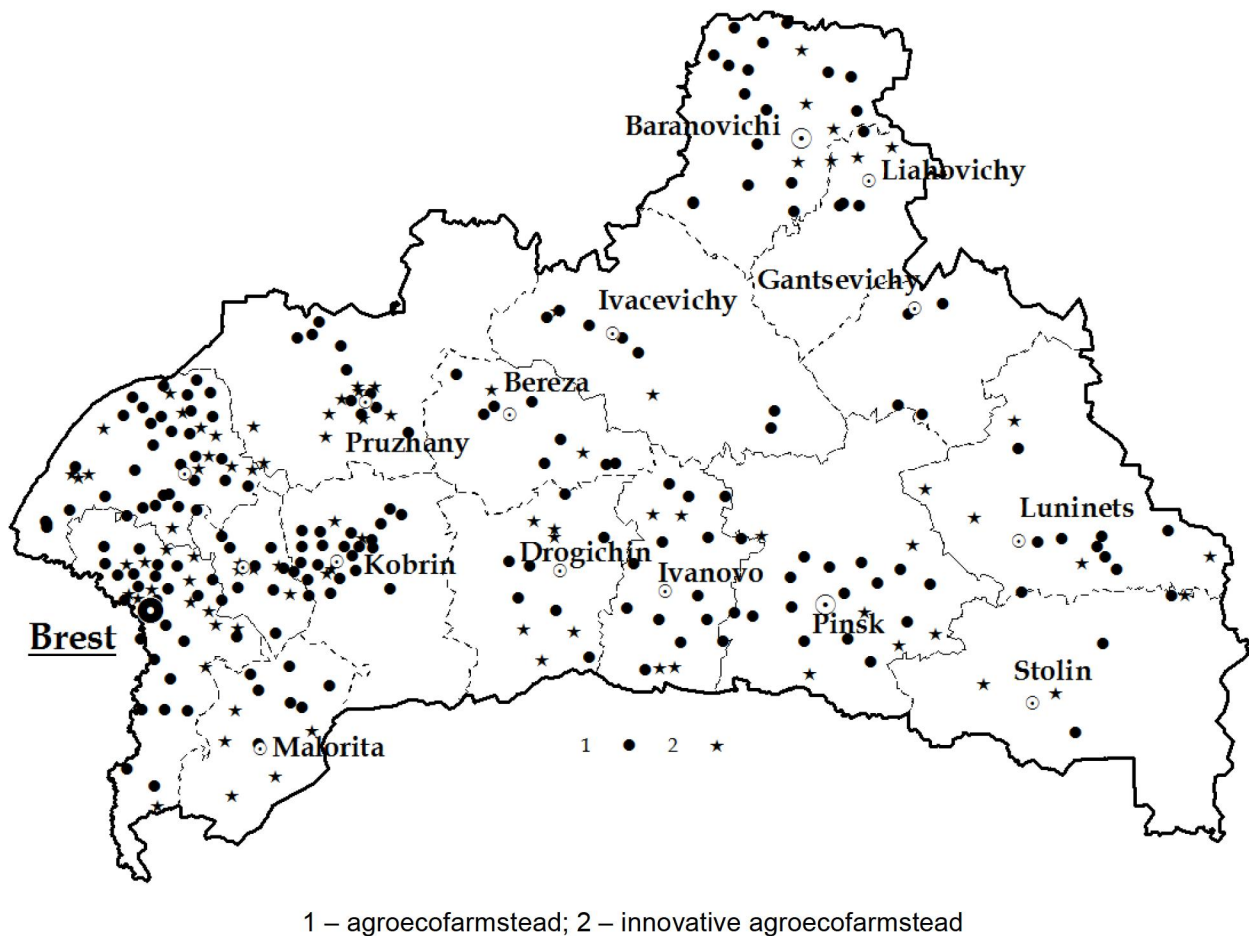
One of the most important indicators of agroecotourism development of the researched region is the share of innovative farmsteads. In this research innovative farmsteads are the entities of agro tourism which use Internet to promote the tour product in such a way that a potential tourist could get full information of a farmstead (descriptions of service, entertainment, pictures and other materials).

In 2014 the total number of agroecofarmsteads in Brest region was 257. 139 (54.7%) of them are innovative. A largest number of agroecofarmsteads using modern technologies for the promotion of their tourist product are situated in Brest, Kamenets and Kobrin districts, which corresponds to their quantity in the mentioned districts. And in 11 of 16 administrative districts of Brest region the share of innovative agro farmsteads exceeds 50% (Fig. 1).

One of the most important conditions for the effective development of agroecotourism is the necessity to consider the opinions of its main agents (tourists and farm-



steads' owners) according to key directions of this type of tourism. In order to study the distribution of the importance of information sources on the service provision in the sphere of agroecotourism for potential consumers of tourist product of various age groups in Brest region (256 people) a questionnaire survey was conducted. As the sources, most conducive for awareness raising the respondents named Web-sites and Internet blogs (22%), information in mass media (22%), and print media (16%). According to the potential consumers of tourist products significant information sources are: specialized catalogs (9%), sending proposals by e-mail (8%), and personal suggestions (8%). The lowest demand sources are public associations (5%), specialized clubs membership (3%), other sources (2%).



**Fig. 1. Allocation of agroecofarmsteads including innovative ones on the territory of Brest region in 2014**

At the same time the most conducive way to inform of the agro tourism services, the agroecofarmsteads' owners called the information from mass media and printed products (16%) as well as Web-sites and Internet blogs (13%). Significant information sources by the opinion of the respondents are specialized catalogs (11%), public associations (12%) and personal suggestions (12%). The least demand is of



such sources of information as specialized clubs membership (7%), sending proposals by e-mail (1%), and others (7%).

According to the interview of agroecofarmsteads owners in Brest region it was found out the tourists' demands on the conveniences in the room (where only one group of tourist is living), rooms for 2-3 and 3-6 people are low (56%, 27%, 48% correspondingly). Yet, the preferences of tourists for the conveniences in the building were marked of medium and high level of relevance equally (36%).

Accommodation is closely connected to the opportunity of getting food at the place of stay. At the same time by the opinion of farmsteads owners, tourists demand on breakfast, 3-4 times meal, national or ethnic cuisine is not of high level relevance (21% and 16% correspondingly).

The survey results showed that the places of attractions within walking distance are not the priority requirements of tourists – 53%. At the same time the places of attractions within public transport reach, entertainment (active leisure), and the ability to see life and customs of local population was mentioned by respondents as requiring of medium relevance – 37%, 39% and 42%, respectively.

Among other requirements, which are highly relevant (60%) and very popular among tourists, riding at a horse riding hall (in agroecofarmstead "Stable Yard" (Konniy Dvor)), active recreation – fishing, hunting, barbecues, walks in the woods to gather mushrooms, berries, herbs, vacation on the lake, sauna (agroecofarmstead "Forest Lake", "Silver stream").

The analysis of agro tourists' requirements towards accommodation and entertainment at agroecofarmsteads allowed eliciting that there is not enough of just nature and picturesque landscapes for tourist product consumers; absolute majority prefers active leisure. Requirements towards living conditions are not highly essential and that is different from the requirements towards entertainment and leisure.

For a more objective study of tourism opportunities of Brest region on the development of rural tourism SWOT-analysis was held. The owners of agroecofarmsteads, members of working initiative group "Geoinformation system of agroecotourism development in Brest and Grodno regions" in the framework of UNDP project in the Republic of Belarus, interested community. To make the analysis a very important principle was upheld – the participation of broad population of the region (Table 2).

The carried SWOT-analysis allows distinguishing the strongest areas of the tourist potential of Brest and Grodno regions. First of all the natural diversity, favorable natural and climatic conditions for recreation, the development of tourism and ag-



riculture, ecologically clean territory, favorable geographical location promote the development of trans boundary and trans regional cooperation.

Table 2

**SWOT-analysis of tourism opportunities of Brest region.**

<b>STRONG POINTS</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>Grade</b>
1. Natural diversity (80,3%).	8,03	1. Advertisement improvement (80,7%).	8,07
2. Favorable nature and climatic conditions for recreation, tourism and agriculture development (85,4%).	8,54	2. Improvement of cultural and entertainment activities (66,7%).	6,67
3. Ecologically clean territory (65,8%).	6,58	3. Building up new premises (62,1%,).	6,21
4. Favorable geographic location encourages the development of trans boundary and trans regional cooperation (90,1%).	9,01	4. Creation and promotion of own local brand (57,7%).	5,77
5. High human potential (55%).	5,5	5. Participation in training workshops on running events, tourist service, and accommodation's outfitting (55%).	5,5
6. The existence of available human resources (50,7%).	5,07	6. Housing improvement of the existing premises (42,9%).	4,29
7. Developed transport infrastructure (75,4%).	7,54		
8. Strong recreational traditions in rural area (85,6%).	8,56		
<b>Average score</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>Average score</b>	<b>6,01</b>
<b>WEAK POINTS</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>THREATS</b>	<b>Grade</b>
1. Lack of financial resources (80,6%).	8,06	1. Weak innovative culture of the society (80,3%).	8,03
2. Food product's price advance (67,1%).	6,71	2. Legislative imperfection, it is not adapted to the Europe Union standards (50,6%).	5,06
3. Price advance of the energy carriers (62,4%).	6,24	3. Lack of the level of the development of education for agricultural producers (75,4%).	7,54
4. Visa regime (70,7%).	7,07	4. Lack of specialists in tourist area (65,2%).	6,52
5. Natural environment conditions and ecological conditions of living (48,2%).	4,82	5. No system of available distant education for businessmen (85%).	8,5
6. The absence of the support from the local authorities (40,6%).	4,06	6. Complicated credit system (50,4%).	5,04
7. The absence of the support from the Government of the republic (35,3%).	3,53	7. Currency fluctuation (85%).	8,5
8. Population makeup according to sex and age and employment structure (29,5%).	2,95	8. Building up the Nuclear Electro station (65,5%).	6,55
9. Administrative barriers (29,2%).	2,92		
<b>Average score</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>Average score</b>	<b>7</b>

To schedule this diagram all the indexes have been assigned with scores –from 1 to 10 (Fig. 2).

One of the positive moments for agroecotourism development in Brest and Grodno regions is the fact that the triangles, which reflect Strengths – Opportunities and Strengths- Threats are the largest in size. It explains that there is a great potential



of agro ecological tourism development in the region and it can be carried out by far-sighted use of the resources.

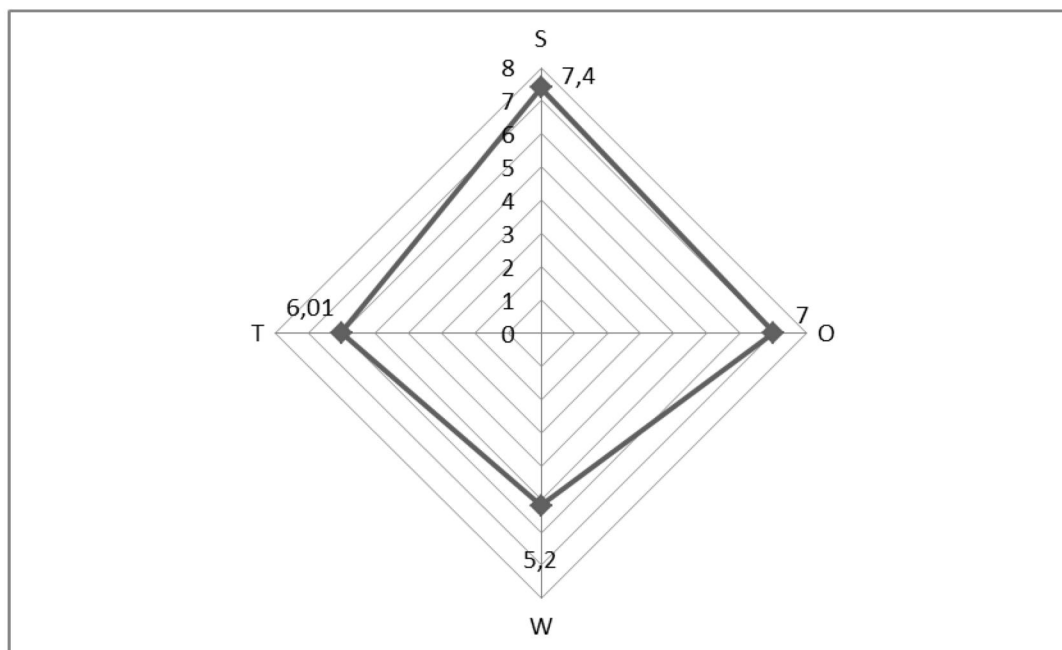


Fig.2. The result of SWOT-analysis of tourism opportunities in Brest region

**Conclusion.** The conducted research allowed receiving the following scientific results.

1. Spatial distribution of agroecofarmsteads of the studied region has uneven character. They attract to big cities and tourist objects. A clear correlation is seen between the number of population and the number of agroecofarmsteads. The greatest disparity in this ratio is observed in Kamenets and Smorgon districts with advanced density of agroecofarmsteads. Similar tendencies are observed between the regions according to agroecofarmsteads utilization factor per 10000 people: in Brest region this index doesn't exceed 5.0 in 15 of 16 districts (Kamenets district – 11.3); at the same time in Grodno region there are only 2 districts (Korelichi and Zelva) which get over 5.0. Thus in the studied regions 6 districts don't reach the value of agroecofarmsteads utilization factor per 10000 people equal one (Baranovich and Stolin districts (Brest region) and Volkovysk, Berestovitsa, Grodno, Slonim districts (Grodno region)). The highest density of agroecofarmsteads is characteristic of suburban Brest and Grodno regions with high demographic and labor potentials, located at the intersection of major highways of Zhabinka district and Kamenets district which is confined to the National Park "Belovezhskaya Puscha" and Korelichi district with Mir Castle on its territory.

2. As a part of the study 139 innovative agroecofarmsteads which use Internet technologies for tourism product promotion have been identified (54.7% of the total



number of agroecofarmsteads of the region). The largest number of them is located in Ivanovo, Kamenets and Pinsk districts. According to this indicator Maloryta and Pruzhany districts are the outsiders with a significant gap.

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### Анотація

О.В. Шадратов, І.М. Шаруха. **Регіональні аспекти розвитку агроекотуризму у Брестській області.**

Основна мета статті полягає у вивченні територіальних характеристик умов і факторів розвитку агроекотуризму в Брестській області на основі новітніх статистичних даних, що відображають функціонування агроекосадиб у розрізі адміністративних районів. Отримані наукові результати є новими, оскільки основні використані показники розвитку агроекотуризму, з урахуванням адміністративних районів раніше не публікувалися. Отримані дані щодо територіальної організації агротуризму можуть бути використані для планування мережі агроекосадиб, а також для розвитку туризму в регіонах Білорусі в цілому.

**Ключові слова:** агроекотуризм, просторові характеристики, сільський туризм, інноваційні агроекосадиби.

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