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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRITOURISM IN VÂLCEA COUNTY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes the evolution of agritourism in Vâlcea County, highlighting the fact that this sector has experienced significant growth during the period under review, driven by the area's exceptional natural and cultural potential, as well as by the diversification of tourism infrastructure. The increase in the number of tourist accommodation facilities, in accommodation capacity, and in tourist arrivals reflects the consolidation of rural tourism and agritourism as activities complementary to the local economy. In this context, the paper addresses agritourism as an essential factor in sustainable development, analyzing its role in revitalizing the rural environment and in capitalizing on local resources.

### • Introduction

Agritourism is one of the most important ways to make the most of rural areas, contributing both to the economic development of local communities and to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage. It combines tourism with agricultural activities, offering tourists the opportunity to experience authentic rural life and come into direct contact with local traditions and customs.

This paper analyzes the evolution of agrotourism in Vâlcea County, a county with significant potential for the development of this form of tourism, due to the diversified natural setting, authentic traditions and agricultural activities specific to the area.

The varied relief, cultural heritage and the existence of localities with well-preserved traditions, such as Horezu and Vaideeni, offer favorable premises for the development of this sector.

### • Material and method

In order to complete this study, research methods specific to the fields of tourism and rural development were employed, which enabled an analysis of the evolution of agritourism in Vâlcea County and the identification of the main directions for the development of this sector.

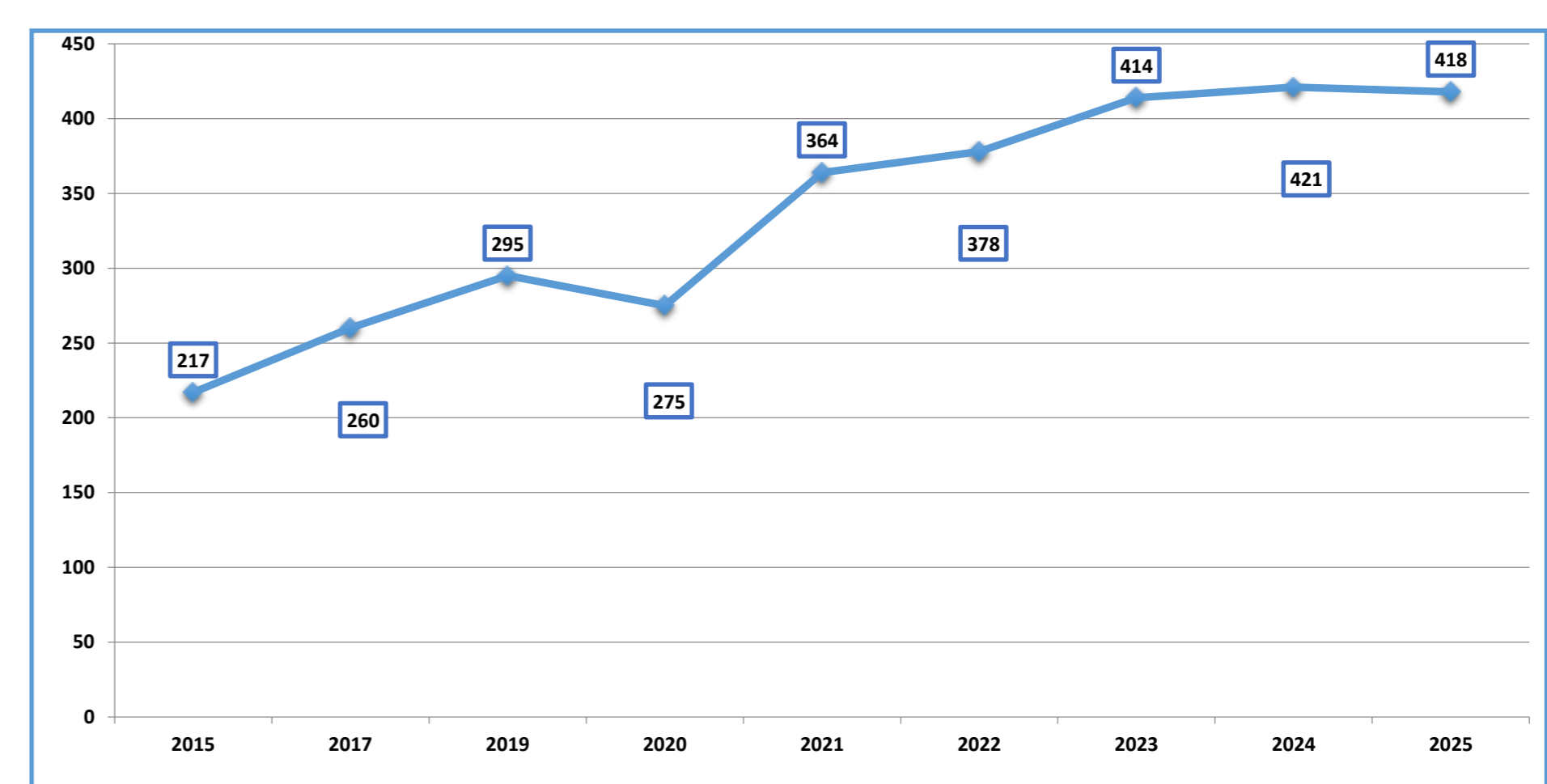
### • Results and discussions

Vâlcea County is located in the central-southern part of Romania, in the Getic Subcarpathian area, with an area of approximately 5,765 km<sup>2</sup>.

The county's relief is very varied, consisting of mountainous, hilly and depressional areas, which favors the development of diversified economic activities.

In order to highlight the level of development of agritourism in Vâlcea County, the main elements regarding the evolution of agritourism infrastructure and tourist circulation are analyzed below.

The development of tourist infrastructure is an important element in supporting tourist and agritourism activities, contributing to increasing the attractiveness of a tourist destination. Table 1 presents the evolution of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in Vâlcea County, during the period 2015–2025.



**Table 1.** The evolution of tourist reception structures with accommodation functions in Vâlcea County,

Analyzing the data presented, a significant increase in the total number of tourist reception structures is observed, from 217 units in 2015 to 418 units in 2025. This increase highlights the continuous development of tourist activities and the increased interest in capitalizing on the tourist and rural potential of the county.

another important indicator in assessing the level of development of tourism activity is the number of tourist arrivals. Therefore, the table below presents the evolution of tourist arrivals in tourist reception structures in Vâlcea County, during the period 2015–2025, by tourist categories

**Table 1. Evolution of arrivals, by type of tourists, in Vâlcea County in the period 2015-2025**

	- Number									
Types of tourists	2015	2017	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	-
<b>Total</b>	286892	357423	423279	243002	389399	442825	487293	534534	467369	-
<b>Romanians</b>	278403	346477	412900	240056	383008	433973	479421	526168	458246	-
<b>Foreigners</b>	8489	10946	10379	2946	6391	8852	7872	8366	9123	-

Analyzing the data presented above, an increase in the total number of tourist arrivals is observed, from 286,892 tourists in 2015 to 467,369 tourists in 2025.

### • Conclusions

Agritourism contributes significantly to the development of the rural environment in Vâlcea County, by capitalizing on the natural and cultural resources of the area. The analysis highlights a positive evolution of agritourism activity, reflected in the increase in tourist reception structures, accommodation capacity and tourist arrivals.