

Abstract

Agri-tourism Linkages in Jamaica: A Case Study of the Negril Tourism Industry and its Market Linkages with Domestic Agriculture.

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Studies have shown that the unrestricted growth of tourism in many small island developing states over previous years has failed to alleviate their economic problems. Instead, this heavy reliance on tourism by these developing states has resulted in high rates of foreign exchange leakages and a failure to integrate the industry with other sectors of their economy. Yet, if destination countries, particularly those in the Caribbean, are to maximize benefits from tourism development, ways must be found to increase backward economic linkages, including utilizing local food products in the tourism industry. This dissertation explores the complex and multifaceted relationship that exists between tourism and local agriculture in Jamaica by focusing particularly on the Negril tourism industry and its existing relationship with the local food supply network. The research also highlights the socio-economic and geographical factors that characterize various local food supply areas and systems.

The research is informed by primary data collected through a series of surveys, focus groups, case studies and in-depth interviews between various key players within Negril's local food supply chain. In addition, extensive secondary research was carried out to provide both background information and shape the theoretical framework that underpins the study. Ultimately, the thesis argues that no significant link exists between the tourism industry and local agriculture in Jamaica. Majority of the food consumed by the hospitality industry are in fact imported and the bulk of local produce supplied to the industry are procured from a complex, yet unplanned network of purveyors. The particular arrangement is filled with myriad problems including a lack of communication between farmers and tourist food representatives, inconsistencies in food quality and quantity, vulnerability to natural hazards and fluctuating food prices.

Keywords: *Kevon Christopher Rhiney; Agriculture; Tourism; Agri-tourism linkages; Negril; Jamaica.*