

# *Investigation and Research on the Development Status of “Agritainment” in Dabie Mountain Area*

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**Abstract:** Entering the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, Huanggang City takes the revitalization and development of Dabie Mountain and the realization of the "10-year leap-forward development" of the economic and social development pilot zone of Dabie Mountain Revolutionary Old Base Area as the core task. Under the guidance of this strategy, rural tourism has become a key force to promote the rural revitalization of Huanggang City. The rural tourism resources of Huanggang City are rich and diverse, with distinctive characteristics. It not only develops rapidly, but also has strong driving force and wide range of benefits. It has become an indispensable part of the tourism industry. By providing rich agricultural experience projects, unique rural culture and quality services, it has attracted a large number of tourists to come to experience. However, the development of “Agritainment” also faces many challenges. How to maintain rural characteristics, improve service quality, cope with market competition and other problems have become urgent problems to be solved in the development of “Agritainment”.

## **1. Overview of “Agritainment” in Dabie Mountain area**

The Dabie Mountains region is located in the middle of China, spanning Hubei, Anhui and Henan provinces, with a unique geographical location and beautiful natural environment. Here the terrain is high, the peaks of mountains, with rich natural resources and ecological landscape. The development of “Agritainment” in Dabie Mountain area of Huanggang is based on its unique geographical location and natural environment advantages.

The development of the "farmhouse joy" project in the Dabie Mountain area will benefit from its rich natural resources. With beautiful mountains and fresh air, it is an ideal place to relax away from the hustle and bustle of busy cities. Farmhouse agritainment holders make use of the local natural landscape, such as waterfalls, streams, tea gardens, etc., to provide visitors with the opportunity to get close to nature and experience rural life. Tourists can enjoy the fresh air here and feel the charm of nature, and experience the fun of picking and making farm dishes.

At the same time, Dabie Mountain area "Agritainment" also pay attention to the protection of ecological environment. Many have adopted eco-friendly business models, such as using organic fertilizers and reducing the use of chemical pesticides, to protect the local ecological environment. This concept of sustainable development has not only won the favor of tourists, but also laid the foundation for the long-term development of the local "farmhouse" industry.

The "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area has a unique geographical advantage. Located at the border of three provinces, it has convenient transportation and attracts a large number of tourists from surrounding cities. By providing diversified service content such as characteristic food, accommodation service and farming experience, the operators of "Agritainment" meet the different needs of tourists, and further enhance the attraction and competitiveness of "Agritainment".

Huanggang is located in the old revolutionary area, rich in Red Tourism resources, and the inexhaustible red revolution story in Dabie Mountain can well stimulate the growth of Red Tourism and drive the development of local "Agritainment".

To sum up, the geographical location and natural environment of Dabie Mountain region provide unique conditions for the development of "Agritainment". By making full use of the local natural and cultural resources and ecological environment advantages, the "Agritainment" in the Dabie Mountain area not only provides a unique leisure experience for tourists, but also makes a positive contribution to the development of the local economy and rural revitalization.

## 2. Definition and Development of "Agritainment"

"Agritainment", based on agricultural resources and rural culture, combines various elements such as tourism, leisure and entertainment to provide tourists with a form of tourism service that is close to nature and experiences rural life. It originated in Europe and the United States in the late 20th century, with the acceleration of urbanization and people's pursuit of leisure life, "Agritainment" has gradually become popular around the world.

"Agritainment" has undergone a transformation from a simple farm life experience to a comprehensive rural tourism integrating leisure, sightseeing and vacation. This change not only enriches the service content of "Agritainment", but also improves its market competitiveness. The global "farmhouse" market continues to expand and is expected to reach \$200 billion by 2025.

Since the 19th National Congress of the CPC made the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and the goal of building a beautiful China, the construction of beautiful villages and the realization of rural revitalization has been an important part of it. But in the process of implementation, there are some problems such as poor rural environment, high governance difficulty, low folk ethics, single industry and so on. Therefore, we should accelerate the development of rural economy, build beautiful villages, and help rural revitalization. The concept of tourism precision poverty alleviation as early as 2014, The State Council issued several opinions on promoting the reform of the tourism industry (Guofa [2014]31), the seventh "Strengthening rural tourism precision poverty alleviation" mentioned the importance of the development of rural tourism. Using scientific and effective methods and procedures for the actual target of tourism development to carry out precise poverty alleviation, prevent the return to poverty, promote development, so as to achieve tourism development goals; This theory also emphasizes the importance of rural independent development and farmers' participation in the development of local tourism. From the perspective of economics, the development of tourism is a cause of "benefit but no harm", which is of great benefit to farmers, rural poverty alleviation, prevention and return to poverty, and economic revitalization. The embryonic form of "Agritainment" tourism comes from rural tourism at home and abroad, and integrates the unique rural landscape and folk customs in China, so it has a distinct local brand. At the same time, it is also the inevitable product of people's

diversified tourism needs, increasing leisure time, gradually improving living standards and the intensification of "civilization disease" and "urban disease". It is a typical example of the transformation of tourism products from the sightseeing level to the higher holiday and leisure level. China's rural tourism began in the 1980s, it has been under the guidance of tourism poverty alleviation policy came into being, the academic circle thinks that it started late. The rural tourism development in all parts of China is developing in the integrated direction of integrating sightseeing, investigation, study, participation, health, leisure, vacation and entertainment. Among them, the rural tourism project with the highest participation rate and re-visit rate of domestic tourists is: the folk customs tourism with "living in the farm house, eating the farm meal, doing the farm work and enjoying the Agritainment; Farming and picking tourism which mainly focuses on harvesting various agricultural products; Rural festival tourism with folk traditional festival activities as the content. In Baidu Encyclopedia, Chen Qihua and Ji Jinxiong defined "Agritainment" as "the product of the combination of tourism and agriculture."

Under the background of rural revitalization, the tourism development of Huanggang Dabie Mountain region has ushered in unprecedented opportunities and potentials. The Dabie Mountain area of Huanggang City is located at the confluence of the Yangtze River and the Huaihe River. It is the confluence area of the north and south climate. Its unique natural resources and ecological environment provide strong support for the vigorous development of its tourism industry. In addition, as one of the three core areas of Dabie Mountain, Huanggang City also shoulders the task of building an important national ecological barrier, further highlighting its ecological value and tourism potential, and policy support for the development of Dabie Mountain "Agritainment" is unprecedented.

### 3. The development status of "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area

#### 3.1. The quantity and distribution of "Agritainment"

The quantity and distribution of "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area showed a booming trend. In recent years, the number of "Agritainment" in the Dabie Mountain area has shown a steady growth trend, from dozens a few years ago to hundreds today. This growing trend not only reflects the local popularity of "Agritainment", but also reflects the rapid development of rural tourism in the region.

*Table 1: Number of online marketing of "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountains of eastern Hubei (data from Meituan, Volkswagen, Flying pig and TikTok)*

YEAES	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
The qualities of Farmhouse Agritainment	16	18	113	118	206	260	455

In terms of distribution, the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area is mainly concentrated in the countryside and surrounding scenic spots with beautiful scenery and beautiful ecological environment. These areas not only have unique natural scenery, but also have profound cultural heritage, which provides unique conditions for the development of "Agritainment". For example, the village "Swallow Dam" located in the hinterland of Dabie Mountains, with its unique landscape and rich folk culture, attracts a large number of tourists to come to experience the "Agritainment".

In addition, the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area also presents the characteristics of

diversification. From the perspective of business model, some "Agritainment" mainly provides accommodation and catering services, while others carry out agricultural sightseeing and farming experience activities combined with local characteristics. In terms of service content, "Agritainment" also has its own characteristics, such as providing organic food produced by farmers and organizing tourists to participate in farm work. This diversified business model and service content not only meet the needs of different tourists, but also enrich the connotation of "Agritainment".

In the process of development, the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area also faces some challenges. With the increase of the number of "Farmhouse Agritainment", the market competition is becoming increasingly fierce, how to stand out in many "Farmhouse Agritainment" has become an urgent problem to be solved. At the same time, with the diversification and individuation of tourists' needs, how to improve service quality and competitiveness has also become an important topic for the development of "Agritainment".

The quantity and distribution show a vigorous development trend, but it also faces challenges such as market competition and service quality improvement.

### **3.2. The Management Mode and Service Contents of "Agritainment"**

In Dabie Mountain area, the management mode and service content of "Agritainment" show diversified and innovative characteristics. The operators of "Agritainment" combined with the local natural environment and cultural resources, launched their own unique service projects. For example, some "Agritainment" mainly provides authentic rural dishes, using rich local ingredients and traditional cooking skills, attracting a large number of tourists to come to taste.

In addition to food, Dabie Mountain area "Farmhouse Agritainment" also provides a wealth of leisure experience activities. Visitors can participate in farming, picking, making handicrafts and other farming activities here to feel the fun of rural life. These activities not only increase the appeal of the "farmhouse", but also provide visitors with the opportunity to get close to nature. According to the survey, tourists who participate in these activities are generally more satisfied, and they say that such experiences make them more relaxed and happy.

In terms of service, the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area also pays attention to improving the quality of service. By training staff and optimizing service processes, they ensure that visitors feel warm and comfortable in the process of enjoying the service. At the same time, they also use the Internet to strengthen online marketing promotion and brand building, improving visibility and influence. These measures have laid a solid foundation for the sustainable development of "Agritainment".

## **4. Problems and Challenges of "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain Area**

### **4.1. Problems Existing in the Development of "Agritainment"**

There are some problems in the development of "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area. Among them, the most prominent is the inconsistency of service quality and standardization. Due to the lack of unified management standards and training systems, the service quality of "Farmhouse Agritainment" is uneven, affecting the overall experience of visitors. For example, some "Farmhouse Agritainment" has hidden dangers in health and safety, which brings potential threats to the health of tourists. In addition, "Farmhouse Agritainment" lacks innovation in terms of dish taste and service quality, which is difficult to meet the increasingly diverse needs of tourists.

In order to improve service quality and competitiveness, they need to establish a unified management standard and training system. Through the development of clear health, safety and

other standards, to ensure that "Farmhouse Agritainment" can meet the basic requirements in all aspects. At the same time, strengthen the training of practitioners, improve their service awareness and skill level, to provide tourists with more quality services. In addition, "Farmhouse Agritainment" should also pay attention to innovation, and constantly introduce new dishes and new services to meet the different needs of tourists.

Another problem is the lack of brand building and marketing promotion of Farmhouse Agritainment. Due to the lack of effective brand strategy and marketing means, many Agritainments in the market is not high visibility, it is difficult to attract more tourists. Therefore, "Farmhouse Agritainment" needs to strengthen brand building and marketing promotion efforts. By creating a unique brand image and reputation, improve tourists' awareness and trust in "Farmhouse Agritainment". At the same time, new media platforms such as the Internet are used for marketing and promotion to expand the visibility and influence of "Farmhouse Agritainment".

In addition, those Agritainment houses are also facing fierce market competition, diversified tourist demand and other challenges. In order to cope with these challenges, "Farmhouse Agritainment" needs to continuously improve its competitiveness. Attract more tourists by optimizing service, improving dish quality and innovating business model. At the same time, pay attention to the feedback of tourists and changes in demand, timely adjust the business strategy and service content to meet the different needs of tourists.

To sum up, there are some problems in the development of "Farmhouse Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area, such as inconsistent service quality and standardization, insufficient brand building and marketing promotion. In order to solve these problems, "Farmhouse Agritainment" needs to establish a unified management standard and training system, strengthen brand building and marketing promotion efforts, and enhance their competitiveness. Only in this way can we promote the sustainable and healthy development of the "Agritainment" industry in Dabie Mountain area.

#### **4.2. Challenges and Difficulties Faced by Farmhouse Agritainment**

In the course of its development, farm family agritainment in Dabie Mountain area faces many challenges and difficulties. First of all, the market competition is fierce, the number of "Farmhouse Agritainment" is large, but the service quality and characteristics are different, resulting in diversified customer choices, and the competition between "Farmhouse Agritainment" is fierce. Statistics show that the number of "Farmhouse Agritainment" in the Dabie Mountain area has increased by nearly 200% in the past five years, but less than 20% of them can maintain stable passenger flow and profit. This shows that Farmhouse Agritainment still needs to be strengthened in providing differentiated services and improving quality.

Secondly, there are shortcomings in brand building and marketing promotion of Farmhouse Agritainment. Many "Farmhouse Agritainment" lack a clear brand positioning and marketing strategy, resulting in low visibility, difficult to attract more customers. Although some "Farmhouse Agritainment" has a unique natural landscape and rich agricultural experience projects, due to the lack of effective publicity means, resulting in limited customer flow. Therefore, strengthening brand building and marketing promotion is crucial to the development of "Agritainment".

In addition, Farmhouse Agritainment also faces challenges in terms of service quality and personnel quality. Some "Farmhouse Agritainment" in the service process has poor attitude, unstable service quality and other problems, affecting the customer's consumption experience. At the same time, the quality of "Farmhouse Agritainment" practitioners is uneven, and the lack of professional training and management also restricts the improvement of the service quality of "Farmhouse Agritainment". Therefore, improving the quality of service and personnel quality is one of the urgent problems to be solved by Farmhouse Agritainment.

Finally, Agriculture also faces challenges in terms of sustainable development. With the development of tourism, the number of "Farmhouse Agritainment" is increasing, but some "Farmhouse Agritainment" ignore the problems of environmental protection and sustainable development in the process of operation. For example, some "Agritainment" destroys the natural environment and affects the ecological balance when developing tourism resources. Therefore, in the process of development, "Agritainment" should pay attention to environmental protection and sustainable development, and achieve win-win economic and social benefits.

To sum up, Farmhouse Agritainment in Dabie Mountain area is facing many challenges and difficulties in the process of development. In order to meet these challenges, Farmhouse Agritainment needs to continuously improve service quality and competitiveness, strengthen brand building and marketing promotion, promote industrial upgrading and innovative development, and pay attention to environmental protection and sustainable development. Only in this way can the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area stand out in the fierce market competition and achieve sustainable development.

## **5. Suggestions for Developing Agritainments in Dabie Mountain Area**

### **5.1 Improve the Service Quality and Competitiveness**

Improving the service quality and competitiveness of Farmhouse Agritainments is the key to the development of Farmhouse Agritainments in Dabie Mountain area. At present, with the increasing demand of consumers for rural tourism, "Agritainment" as an important part of rural tourism, is facing a huge market opportunity. However, in order to stand out in the fierce market competition, we must constantly improve the quality of service and competitiveness.

Improving the quality of service is the basis for enhancing the competitiveness of Agritainments. "Farmhouse Agritainments" should focus on providing personalized and differentiated services to meet the needs of different tourists. For example, it can introduce special dishes, provide farming experience, hold folk activities, etc., so that tourists can enjoy the natural scenery at the same time, but also feel the charm of rural culture. In addition, "Farmhouse" should also strengthen staff training, improve service awareness and skill level, to ensure that tourists can enjoy professional and thoughtful service.

Branding is an important way to enhance the competitiveness of Farmhouse Agritainments. "Farmhouse" should pay attention to brand building, by creating a unique brand image and reputation, to attract more tourists to come to spend. Brand awareness and reputation can be improved by participating in tourism festivals and holding special theme activities. At the same time, Farmhouse Agritainment should also pay attention to word-of-mouth marketing, actively spread positive information through tourist evaluation, social media and other channels, and establish a good brand image.

### **5.2. Promote the Industrial Upgrading and Innovative Development**

To promote the industrial upgrading and innovative development of Farmhouse Agritainments in Dabie Mountain area is the key to enhance the overall competitiveness and market position of Farmhouse Agritainments in the region. At present, with the continuous upgrading of consumers' demand for rural tourism experience, Agritainment, as an important part of rural tourism, needs to meet the market demand through industrial upgrading and innovative development.

In terms of industrial upgrading, the Agritainments in Dabie Mountain area can learn from advanced rural tourism development models at home and abroad, combine local natural resources and cultural characteristics, and create unique tourism products. By the introduction of modern

agricultural technology, the development of tourism agriculture, experience agriculture and other new agricultural formats, to enrich the "Agritainment" product line. At the same time, strengthen the infrastructure construction of Agritainments, improve the quality of service and environmental quality, and provide tourists with a more comfortable and convenient travel experience.

In terms of innovation and development, the "Agritainment" in Dabie Mountain area can use Internet thinking to explore the combination of online and offline marketing model. Through the construction of official websites, social media platforms and other online channels, expand the visibility and influence of Farmhouse Agritainments. At the same time, combined with big data analysis technology, accurately grasp the needs of tourists, and provide personalized tourism services. In addition, advanced technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality can be introduced to create an immersive travel experience for tourists and enhance their satisfaction and loyalty.

In the process of implementing industrial upgrading and innovative development, the Agritainments in Dabie Mountain area can learn from successful cases at home and abroad, and carry out localized transformation in combination with local conditions. Such as, through the introduction of advanced agricultural technology and management mode, improve the added value of agricultural products, and build agricultural products brands with local characteristics. At the same time, combining the local history, culture and folk customs, the development of tourism projects with cultural connotations, to attract more tourists to come to experience.

In addition, the "farm family music" in the Dabie Mountain area can also expand the industrial chain and achieve diversified development through cross-border cooperation with other industries. It will cooperate with related industries such as catering, accommodation and entertainment to create comprehensive rural tourism destinations. Through cooperation with e-commerce platforms, we can achieve integrated development of online and offline, broaden sales channels, and improve market competitiveness.

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