

## Rural tourism in the framework of agricultural diversification in Aktobe Region, Republic of Kazakhstan

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**Abstract:** In foreign countries, rural tourism is developing with a high rhythm. Kazakhstan also has excellent opportunities for the development of this type of tourism. Currently, rural tourism in Kazakhstan is not fully developed. The article deals with the issues of organising rural tourism based on agriculture in the Aktobe Region. The study aims to improve methodological approaches to rural tourism development as an innovative activity type in the context of agricultural diversification. Three methodological stages have been identified: assessing the potential for rural tourism development, identifying priority types and subtypes of rural tourism, and identifying priority and promising areas for rural tourism development. The work assessed the possibilities of rural tourism development in the districts of the Aktobe Region using the ranking method.

**Key Words:** *rural tourism, agriculture, rural development, ranking, rural districts, Aktobe Region.*

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### Introduction

The latest trends in the world tourism market are associated with the growing interest of tourists in new, unexplored tourist countries, such as Kazakhstan (Tleubaeva et al., 2022). The modern tourist is fascinated by unfamiliar customs and traditions, and the lifestyle of the local population is preserved, as a rule, in the countryside. Therefore, rural settlements can become attractive destinations for incoming tourists. In addition, rural tourism is also gaining popularity among domestic tourists (Sarfanova & Sarfanov, 2023; Dumitrache & Nae, 2023).

Rural tourism is a complex component in the structure of the territorial organisation of society. Directions for rural tourism development depend primarily on the state of the production and non-production subsystems of the territorial socio-economic system (Zhansagimova et al., 2022). The industrial sphere of rural tourism is represented by the agro-industrial complex (AIC)

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resources of the territory, and to a greater extent, rural tourism projects based on peasant farms and personal subsidiary farms are implemented in rural areas with agrarian specialisation (Aktymbayeva et al., 2017). One rural area has a different range, exclusive resources, unique products manufactured only in that area and favourable conditions for the mass production of products or services that determine its competitive advantages, economic prosperity basis and social well-being (Peira et al., 2021; Tulla et al., 2017). However, in many ways, the primary factors and local economic development conditions remain unclaimed or are used not to benefit the local population but in the interests of individuals and groups. Reasons include the underdevelopment of local self-government, the primitive technology level and organisational forms used, the inaccessibility of financial and natural resources for enterprising villagers, the lack of adequate development institutions, product distribution channels, the inability to derive economic benefit from the specifics of rural conditions and the advantages of the residents' skills.

Rural economic development is a pressing issue for many countries due to high unemployment, low farm incomes, youth depopulation and migration, skilled workers to cities (Mikhaylova et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023; Gao et al., 2023). Most often, such phenomena are due to the structure of the rural area's economy, which is determined by a significant dependence on one industry - agriculture (Mozgunov, 2010; Zyrianov & Semiglazova, 2021). Unfortunately, Kazakhstan is no exception. Similar problems are typical for rural areas of the country. Research by foreign scientists suggests that rural tourism can play an essential role in the development and revival of the economic base of disadvantaged regions (Sharpley, 2002; Lun et al., 2021). Today, tourism development in rural areas is supported in many countries due to its socio-cultural, economic, and spatial functions, as well as its positive impact on the preservation of the values of nature, culture and traditions, and national identity (Trukhachev, 2015; Kubal-Czerwińska et al., 2022; Priatmoko et al., 2023;).

Agricultural development requires sustainable sources of financing for the main sectors, which can be achieved by developing rural subsidiary production. Rural ancillary productions are an essential source of income directed to expand the primary production and improve the agricultural enterprise's financial stability. However, the problem lies in the rural subsidiary development industries, which most often require additional financial investments, which agriculture does not yet have. All this makes it necessary to look for innovative solutions to the problem; rural auxiliary production needs to be reformed, and new types should be developed, including rural tourism.

The urgency of the problem of ancillary development industries is determined by the need of the agricultural producer to increase production volumes, smooth out the seasonality of agricultural production, and search for additional sources of financing for the main activity. Ancillary industries are an integral part of rural life and agricultural production.

The concept of "auxiliary production" is interpreted by various authors in various ways. All concept definitions known in agrarian economics can be combined into several groups. According to Aref & Gill (2009), auxiliary productions are branches on an independent balance sheet within an agricultural enterprise and subsidiaries; Fleischer & Tchetchik (2005) understands the production subdivisions of agricultural enterprises serving the primary production as auxiliary productions. Ancillary industries are presented as production units of agricultural enterprises operating during periods free from main agricultural work (Eimermann, 2016; He et al., 2021).

The extensive type of development is suitable for modern Kazakhstan since using all possible farmland, including recreational resources, creates the necessary volumes of food consumption and a new type of service - agricultural and tourism services. At the same time, a significant part of agricultural production is focused on producing environmentally friendly products, and tourism activities are focused on maximising the provision of the industry with eco-tourism. A substantial increase in intensification can be achieved not only by increasing the volume of products produced but also by increasing its quality.

At the present stage of economic development, not only agricultural enterprises but also owners of personal subsidiary and peasant farms, as well as individual residents of rural settlements, began to engage in rural subsidiary production (Seken et al., 2019; Pashkov & Mazhitova, 2021; Ospanova et al., 2022;).

In the Aktobe Region, the state regulation system of rural tourism has practically not been formed. Even though at the state level, rural tourism is recognised as one of the priority types of tourism, tourism is not considered when addressing strategic issues of rural development. In many ways, this is due to unresolved conceptual issues determining the nature and types of rural tourism (Niyazbekova et al., 2019). The resource potential of the non-productive sphere is widely used in creating rural tourism projects in certain areas of the Aktobe Region (Niyazbayeva & Oteshova, 2020; Imanbayeva et al., 2022). The priority of using the potential of the non-productive sphere in these areas is due to the nature of development and agricultural use, the potential and limitations of agricultural development, and extensive zones of socio-economic depression in the Aktobe Region.

## **Study area**

Aktobe Region belongs to the western regions of Kazakhstan. This is the country's largest region; its area is 300.6 km<sup>2</sup>. The length is about 800 km from east to west and 700 km from north to south. The Aktobe Region borders Atyrau and West Kazakhstan in the west, Orenburg region of the Russian Federation in the north, Kostanay region in the northeast, Karaganda and Kyzylorda regions in the east and southeast, Karakalpak Autonomy (Republic of Uzbekistan) in the south. The region is divided into 12 districts and one city of regional subordination.

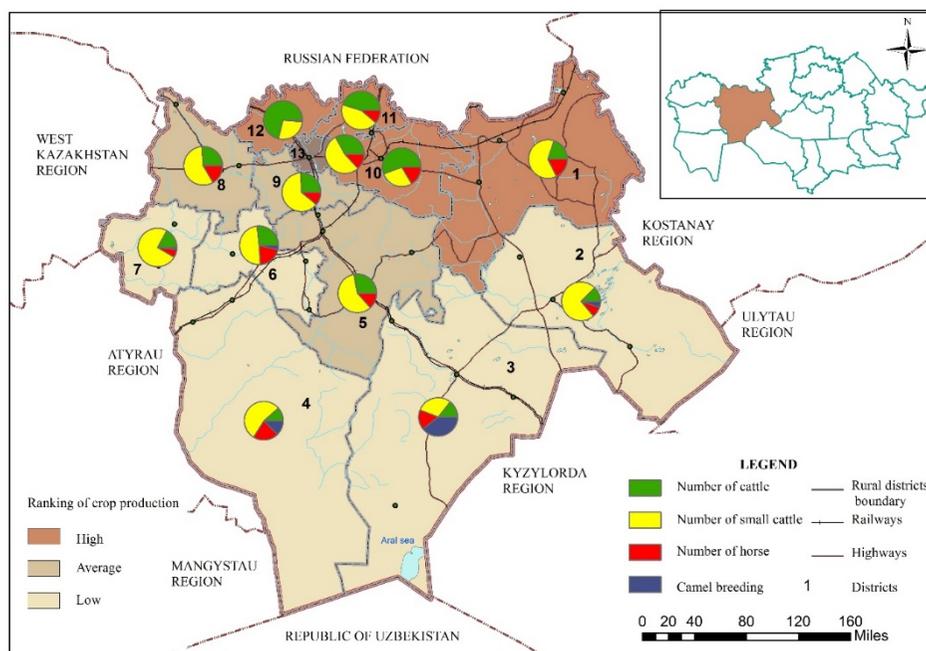
Crop production is one of the leading agriculture branches. In the volume of gross agricultural output, crop production is 35-40%. Particular attention is paid annually to work on diversifying the structure of sown areas to obtain stable and high-quality products and to ensure food security's safety. Traditionally, the main share of crops (77.4%) is found in four districts of the region, including Aitekebi (24.6%), Kargaly (21.7%), Martuk (16.7%) and Khromtau Districts (14.4%). Placing grain crops on more fertile lands, i.e., a soil quality score of 25 or more, makes it possible to obtain a stable crop of agricultural crops yearly (State Institution "DAaLR", 2023 b).

Animal husbandry development is based on three main types of animals: large-horned cattle breeding, small-horned cattle breeding, horse breeding, and camel breeding. The number of animals in the region is 2,196,882, of which 1,286,172 are based on agricultural enterprises and peasant farms, and 880,710 are based on personal subsidiary farms. The total number of cattle is 344,019 based on agricultural enterprises and peasant farms; the leading regions in terms of the number of livestock are Kobda District (45,643 heads), Mugalzhar District

(44,281 heads), Alga District (39,593 heads), Khromtau District (34,613 heads), Aitekebi District (34,091 heads). The total number of livestock based on personal subsidiary farms is 250,278, and the leader is Baiganin District (27,254 heads). Small cattle are available in all types of farms. The total number is 1,282,594. The region with the most significant number of small cattle based on agricultural enterprises and peasant farms is Mugalzhar (61,218 heads) and based on personal subsidiary plots – Baiganin District (76,526) (State Institution "DAaLR", 2023 a).

Horse breeding in the region is the main direction of animal husbandry. The total number is 274,691. The district with the most significant number of small cattle based on agricultural enterprises and peasant farms is Shalkar (37,888 heads), and based on personal subsidiary plots - Baiganin District (9,488) (State Institution "DAaLR", 2023 a).

Only arid areas are engaged in camel farming in the region; in other areas, the camel breeding level is low due to climatic features. Camel farming is well developed in Baiganin, Shalkar, Irgiz, and the Uil Districts. Over the past three years, the growth rate of the camel population in our region has been low. This is because there is little demand for camel meat on the market. The total number of camels in the area is 17,465 heads. There are 11,006 heads in organised farms, and in personal subsidiary plots, there are 6,459 heads (State Institution "DAaLR", 2023 a). Crop production in the districts of the Aktobe Region is ranked depending on the acreage, and distribution diagrams by types of animal husbandry are also given (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Development of agriculture in the Aktobe Region. 1 - Aitekebi District, 2 - Irgiz District, 3 - Shalkar District, 4 - Baiganin District, 5 - Mugalzhar District, 6 - Temir District, 7 - Uil District, 8 - Kobda District, 9 - Alga District, 10 - Khromtau District, 11 - Kargaly District, 12 - Martuk District, 13 - Aktobe city

Source: Analysis Results 2023

Food self-sufficiency in the Aktobe Region is unevenly distributed and can be divided into five categories:

- 37% - 0: low self-sufficiency indicator. In our case, Alga District has a low-security indicator - 36.55%
- 38% - 87%: below the average self-sufficiency indicator (Khromtau, Temir, Shalkar, Mugalzhar, Kobda, Kargaly, Baiganin)
- 88% - 156%: the average self-sufficiency indicator (Irgiz District)
- 157% - 270%: a high self-sufficiency rate (Aitekebi District)
- 271% - 399%: the highest self-sufficiency indicator (Martuk District)

Almost all districts of the region fully provide themselves with meat products (beef, lamb, horse meat, etc.). The leading regions for delivering meat products are Martuk District, which provides 689% of the total, and the Aitekebi District, which provides 573.9%. Martuk District is also a leader in the production of dairy products, providing 821% of its region. All districts of the region provide themselves with melons, gourds, and meat and dairy products, but Kargaly District is considered the leader, with 136.45%. Fruit self-sufficiency rates in the region are low. In this direction, Martuk District provides for itself by 41.6% and is in the lead among other districts (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Self-sufficiency in basic types of food products

Districts	Meat products %	Dairy %	Melon products %	Fruits %	Average value of self-sufficiency %
Alga	74.3	18.4	53.5	0	36.55
Aitekebi	573.9	64.6	9.2	9.8	164.375
Baiganin	294.5	29.8	10.4	0.4	83.775
Kargaly	90.5	107.4	136.45	3.6	84.4875
Kobda	121	115.5	80	31	86.875
Martuk	689	821	44.9	41.6	399
Mugalzhar	167.2	52	47	3.8	67.5
Uil	157.75	79	55	6	74.4375
Temir	189.7	38	18.9	0	61.65
Khromtau	71.2	37.9	39.9	0	37.25
Shalkar	179.1	45.2	52.9	2.35	69.8875
Irgiz	390.9	34.2	15.85	0	110.238

Source: Analysis Results 2023, processed after the State Institution "DAaLR" data

Branches of the economy, such as melon and vegetable cultivation and horticulture, are also developing in the region and can help rural as follows:

- in inclusion in excursion tours to the centres of melon growing, vegetable growing and horticulture;
- in the supply of agricultural products to rural tourism development centres;
- in creating a supply chain from producer to consumer due to the seasonality of this industry and the presence of constraining factors for its functioning in the agro-industrial complex of Aktobe Region.

Some industries in the Aktobe Region bring their agricultural product to the market. Among such agricultural sectors, beekeeping, rabbit breeding, and deer breeding can create competition in the farming market and become a resource base for rural tourism.

## Methodology

The purpose of the study is to analyse the situation of rural tourism development as a type of innovative activity in the conditions of agricultural diversification.

The study hypotheses were as follows: potential districts of Aktobe Region in the rural tourism development are determined by using the ranking method as a methodological approach; the importance of farms for the rural tourism organisation in Aktobe Region is determined.

In some rural areas of the Aktobe Region, the formation process of rural tourism as a tourism sector has begun in various forms and directions. The research process considers the prospects for applying the directions for rural tourism development based on the agro-industrial complex and existing rural tourism projects to identify the main trends in developing this non-agricultural industry.

The work uses traditional economic-geographical analysis, comparative-descriptive, mathematical-statistical, and cartographic methods. The data base of the study was made up of data from the Aktobe Regional Department of Agriculture and Land Relations and the Aktobe Regional Department of Statistics. The basis for the analysis was the program documents of regional bodies involved in developing rural areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, scientific literature, and analytical and statistical information from periodicals. ArcGis 10.5 was used to create the maps.

The need to allocate agricultural areas arose for several reasons. First, the region's districts have a high density of peasant and personal subsidiary plots. In this context, we need to understand their agricultural specialisations and the scope of rural tourism. Secondly, the rural tourism industry will achieve a more significant multiplier effect due to the functioning of at least two stably developing branches of agriculture in one territory.

Tourism in rural areas, organised based on peasant farms, can be characterised as an activity that provides an opportunity to get acquainted with rural life, local culture, customs and morals of rural residents, and spiritual and religious values of the country and its people. Developing peasant farms based on tourism in rural areas will significantly increase their profitability and improve the overall infrastructure of the rural regions. Determining the significance of peasant farms for rural tourism can be defined as a set of natural, socio-economic prerequisites for its organisation in a specific territory. The object of assessment was the districts of the Aktobe Region; the subject was the indices of the importance of peasant farms.

The following calculated indicators were compiled to determine the importance of peasant farms for the organisation of rural tourism:

$$I_{ipf} = (Sh_{tpf} + Sh_{fwf} + Sh_{pf} + Sh_{sv}) - Sh_p,$$

where,  $I_{ipf}$  = Index of the importance of peasant farms for rural tourism organisation.

$Sh_{ipf}$  = The share of citizens' land for conducting a peasant economy from the territory's total area. The descriptor "Share of citizens' land for farming out of the total area of the territory" was chosen for the above criterion. The higher the proportion of agricultural land, the more opportunities a rural district has for organising rural tourism and recreation.

$Sh_{f_{wf}}$  = The share of the forest lands of the water fund from the territory's total area. For the organisation of the studied type of recreational activity, attractive rural areas with picturesque nature are preferable. The descriptor "Proportion of the area of forests, lands of the water fund from the total area of the territory" The choice of the indicator is because picturesque, little-modified rural areas in the study region can only be found on lands covered with forests and belonging to the water fund and agricultural. The greater the share of such lands in the total area of the municipal district, the greater the degree of its natural attractiveness for agricultural recreants.

$Sh_{pf}$  = The share of peasant farms in the total number of economic entities. This descriptor was chosen following the principle: the more significant the proportion of peasant farms, the more opportunities there are to conserve and use the resources of the countryside, implement rural tourism and recreation projects and attract more tourists and vacationers.

$Sh_{sv}$  = The share of served visitors from the total number of visitors to the region. This criterion is based on the experience of rural districts in serving visitors to rural tourism and recreation. The rural districts where the localities are already involved in the organisation of rural tourism, serving visitors, have more experience in their organisation. The more practical experience serving visitors, the more socio-economic prerequisites and incentives there are for further successful development of the studied tourism and recreation type.

$Sh_p$  = The share of population density from the total population density of the region. Sparsely populated rural areas are very attractive for agro-recreants due to their relatively little-modified natural and cultural environment. In less densely populated areas, there are more opportunities to enjoy peace, quiet and agricultural activities in a healthy environment. Therefore, the lower the population density in the district, the more opportunities to find sparsely populated rural areas suitable for the organisation of rural tourism and recreation and attractive to tourists.

According to the selected descriptors, an index of the importance of peasant farms for the organisation of rural tourism was calculated, and a ranking was made (Clark & Chabrel, 2007; Cawley & Gillmor, 2008; Litvinenko, 2009).

## **Results**

As a result of the calculation (Table 2), the coefficient of importance of peasant farms for organising rural tourism in all areas is high and has high indices, above 100. The Kobda District has the highest significance index. In this area, there is a high proportion of the area of peasant farms (907,774 ha) of the total area of the territory (1,402,980 ha), as well as a high proportion of peasant farms (415 farms) of the total number of economic entities (452 households).

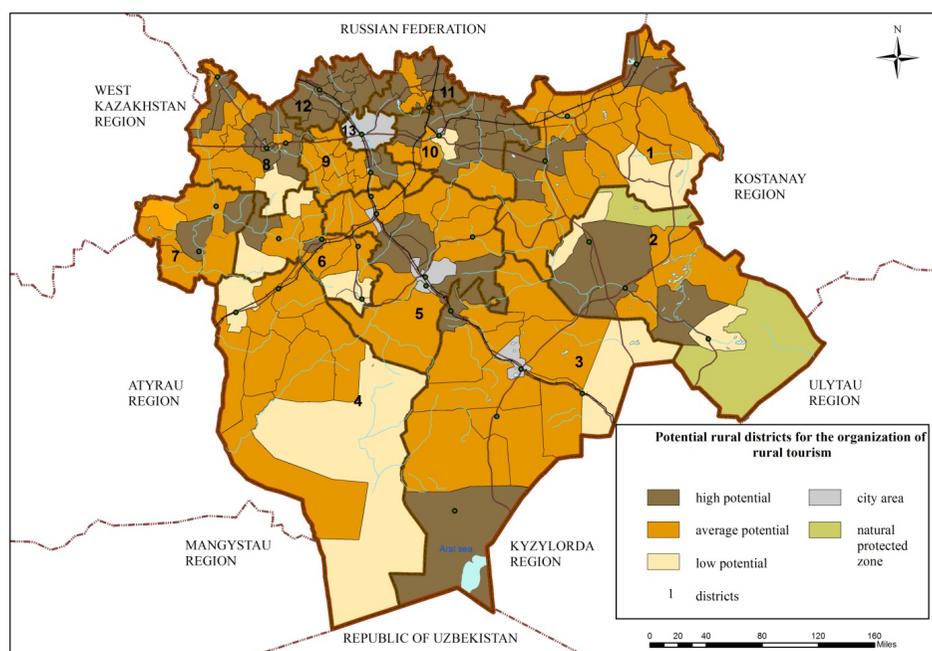
An analysis of the functioning of industries in the agro-industrial complex of the Aktobe Region enables us to conclude that the main specificity of the Aktobe Region as an agricultural region is the decentralisation of the agricultural sector, which manifests itself in the priority of small-scale production in the overall structure. This fact is an indisputable advantage of the region as an arena for rural tourism. Small-scale livestock production is developing mainly in the population's households in the dairy profile sector; peasant farms produce meat and sheep products in significant volumes. The horse breeding industry is developing based on large enterprises. Small-scale crop production is developing in the grain farming sector; vegetable growing is produced in households.

**Table 2.** Indicators of the importance of peasant farms for the organisation of rural tourism

Districts	$Sh_{ipf}$	$Sh_{fuf}$	$Sh_{pf}$	$Sh_{sv}$	$Sh_p$	$I_{ipf}$	Rank
Kobda	64.7	1.17	91.8	2.1	4.8	164.57	1
Alga	53.7	0.6	85.8	0.1	21.02	161.22	2
Martuk	47.5	1.4	92.1	0.2	16.5	157.7	3
Mugalzhar	45.4	2.06	94.4	2.8	8.3	152.96	4
Khromtau	42.2	0.7	91.4	3.3	12.1	149.7	5
Uil	45.5	2.6	92.2	0.2	5.9	146.4	6
Temir	54.4	1.8	96.4	0.2	10.8	142	7
Shalkar	39.7	0.5	97.7	1.3	2.7	141.9	8
Baiganin	23.7	0.1	93.8	1.14	1.35	120.09	9
Aitekebi	26.5	0.5	91.4	3.5	2.4	119.5	10
Kargaly	35.1	1.7	87.9	0.04	12.5	112.24	11
Irgiz	20.7	0.19	86.1	1.3	1.31	109.6	12

Source: Analysis Results 2023

Based on our analysis, promising agricultural areas for the development of rural tourism in the context of the current socio-economic conditions were identified. Figure 2 classifies potential rural districts, districts of the Aktobe Region, for organising rural tourism based on peasant and personal subsidiary plots.



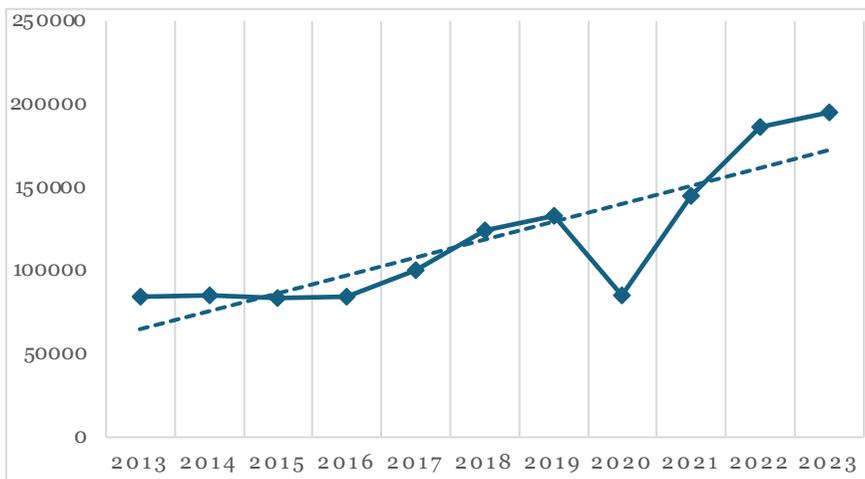
**Figure 2.** Potential rural districts for the organisation of rural tourism on the basis of peasant and personal subsidiary plots. 1 - Aitekebi District, 2 - Irgiz District, 3 - Shalkar District, 4 - Baiganin District, 5 - Mugalzhar District, 6 - Temir District, 7 - Uil District, 8 - Kobda District, 9 - Alga District, 10 - Khromtau District, 11 - Kargaly District, 12 - Martuk District, 13 - Aktobe city

Source: Analysis Results 2023

A study of the regulatory framework in rural tourism development shows that a state policy for developing rural tourism has not been formed at the regional

level in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Even though in the state tourism policy, rural tourism is mentioned as one of the traditional and promising types of tourism on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, an interpretation of rural tourism is not given, and subtypes of rural tourism, priority regions for its development documents are not defined. Measures to support projects in the field of rural tourism have not been developed. There is no integration of various ministries and departments responsible for developing agriculture, tourism, rural areas, etc.

Nevertheless, the tourist flow to the region has increased significantly in the last decade. This is due to tourists' recognition of unique attractions in rural areas. If we analyse the flow of tourists in the Aktope Region over the past ten years, then over the six years from 2013 to 2019, we can observe a moderate growth rate in the flow of tourists (from 84,258 visitors to 133,417 visitors). However, due to the 2020 pandemic, the dynamics of the flow of tourists decreased by 36%. From 2021 to 2023, this indicator changes again towards growth (from 145,023 visitors to 195,326 visitors) (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Dynamics of tourist flow over the last ten years (Processed after the (Bureau of National Statistics (BNU) data)

Source: Analysis Results 2023

## Discussions

In the livestock sector, beef and dairy cattle breeding, horse breeding, and sheep breeding can significantly organise rural tourism in the Aktope Region. However, there are also constraints to developing these directions as a product of rural tourism. Among the main problems faced by these industries are the following:

- a) lack of processing enterprises in the region;
- b) the costs of transporting meat in live weight;
- c) costs associated with the sale of livestock products;
- d) orientation of the market to export and support of large-scale;
- e) high costs for the implementation of sanitary and epidemiological regulations.

In the livestock sector, farms specialise in dairy and beef cattle breeding, sheep breeding, horse breeding and poultry farming with varying degrees of production capacity and work efficiency in the overall structure of the AIC.

Dairy cattle breeding in the Aktobe Region are subject to general trends in the country but have differences in the structure of milk production in the region's farms. Dairy cattle breeding develops based on livestock, small cattle, horses, and camels. The population's need for dairy products is satisfied by 83% due to its production. Two hundred forty large agricultural producers (28 agricultural enterprises and 212 peasant farms) are engaged in dairy farming in the region. A feature of the dairy industry is the high share of households in milk production.

According to the 2023 data, 103,998.3 tons of milk are produced annually in the region, of which 53,696.8 tons are in peasant farms (52%) and 50,301.5 tons in personal subsidiary plots (48%).

The Republic of Kazakhstan has unique resources for the development of rural tourism, which can be successfully supplemented with balneological services based on the use of the properties of shubat (camel milk) and koumiss treatment (includes saumal therapy and koumiss therapy: saumal is mare milk, koumiss is dairy product similar to kefir, made from mare milk). In the Aktobe Region, there is great potential to develop rural tourism in the koumiss treatment and shubat industries. Koumiss treatment is the general name for a healing process that uses fresh mare's milk (saumal) and koumiss. Improving the health of the body with the help of mare's milk and koumiss has gained momentum very quickly since the pandemic in Kazakhstan, although it has been known since ancient times. The period of koumiss treatment starts in May and lasts until autumn. Saumal (fresh mare's milk) has several beneficial properties, including a rich source of protein, vitamins, and minerals. Shubat (camel milk) can be recommended for people suffering from many diseases, including the autoimmune system (Vukolov, 2018). The functioning of enterprises that produce koumiss and saumal, shubat lies in the fact that the family business produces small volumes of high-quality koumiss, selling products mainly for sale. The production owners are constantly looking for ways to reach a solvent audience by selling koumiss and saumal, shubat through dairy stores, dairy boutiques and direct sales to tourists and sightseers. According to the above work principle, peasant farms are organised in rural areas of the Aktobe Region.

During the research, a rating was compiled in the Aktobe Region for providing koumiss and camel milk health services. As a result, areas with high potential for delivering koumiss treatment services are Shalkar, Mugalzhar, Kobda, Baiganin Districts; areas with average potential Alga, Aiteke bi, Irgyz, Uil, Temir Districts; the potential is relatively below average: these include Kargaly, Martuk, Khromtau Districts. The production of shubat in the region is carried out by the Shalkar, Baiganin, Yrgyz, Temir and Uil Districts (Table 3).

The combination of promising agricultural branches within the same region will be the most advantageous for developing rural tourism. The entrepreneur can create tourist and ecological farms offering diverse services, such as petting zoos filled with animals (cows, goats, sheep, bulls, camels, horses) and poultry (chickens, geese, ducks, etc.).

In the agricultural sector of the Aktobe Region, new areas of activity are emerging that can complement the range of proposals for rural tourism, such as beekeeping, rabbit breeding, and maral breeding, and conditions are being created for the restoration of traditional agricultural sectors (sheep breeding, horse breeding and camel breeding).

**Table 3.** Ranking of koumiss and shubat production in districts of Aktobe Region

Districts	Koumiss production		Districts	Shubat production	
	No. of horses	Rank		No. of camels	Rank
Irgiz	46,302	1	Shalkar	13,599	1
Uil	34,966	2	Baiganin	2,165	2
Martuk	29,206	3	Irgiz	1,041	3
Kargaly	26,602	4	Temir	577	4
Baiganin	23,958	5	Uil	83	5
Khromtau	22,673	6	Mugalzhar	-	-
Temir	19,561	7	Khromtau	-	-
Aitekebi	17,713	8	Alga	-	-
Alga	17,444	9	Martuk	-	-
Shalkar	16,985	10	Kargaly	-	-
Mugalzhar	7,564	11	Aitekebi	-	-
Kobda	6,346	12	Kobda	-	-

Source: Analysis Results 2023, processed after the State Institution "DAaLR" data

Such transformations, reorientation of the agricultural market, and changes in state priorities in agriculture affect the development of the agro-industrial sector of the region's economy and the development of rural tourism in these territories. Perhaps in the near future, other types of agricultural activities and, accordingly, directions for developing rural tourism in the conditions of the territorial socio-economic system of the Aktobe Region will become a priority.

The format of providing tourist and excursion services on peasant farms is diverse and can be presented in the following variations:

- functioning of mini-hotels and related infrastructure (swimming pool, playgrounds, barbecue, gazebos, sports equipment, cafes, canteens) on the territory of enterprises focused on receiving tourists for a long time.
- involvement in the production of saumal and shubat (national drink made from camel milk) in excursion programs to taste and purchase related products organised by regional tour operators.

## Conclusions

Based on the study, it is possible to demonstrate the potential for the development of the following rural tourism trends in the Aktobe Region because rural tourism as a sector of the economy is born in the micro-segment based on micro-enterprises with an average number of employees of less than 50 people and it develops without subsidies and support from regional and local authorities. Rural tourism is developing in the agricultural sectors and acts as an additional type of activity, not the main one, for agricultural enterprises in the Aktobe Region. Financial opportunities and the entrepreneurial intention of the farmer determine the direction of activity in rural tourism. In this regard, we note that rural areas with a developed agrarian specialization are characterised by functioning rural tourism in specific agricultural sectors, specifically small farming (peasant and personal subsidiary plots).

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