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Agritourism Accommodation and the Revaluation of the Local Agrifood Product in the Context of Global Change

Martí Cors-Iglesias *, Xosé Antón Armesto-López and María Belén Gómez-Martín

Department of Geography, University of Barcelona, 08001 Barcelona, Spain; armesto@ub.edu (X.A.A.-L.); bgomez@ub.edu (M.B.G.-M.)
* Correspondence: marti.cors@ub.edu

Abstract: Faced with the current challenges of the climate emergency and global change, the revaluation of local products, their knowledge, consumption, and distribution is emerging as one of the strategic actions aimed at reducing the carbon footprint. Agritourism, as an activity that values everything that is related to the agricultural heritage and that enables direct contact between visitor and farmer, contributes to positioning and strengthening the local agrifood product in tourist destination areas and becomes another link in the production chains, promoting direct sales and the short distribution circuit of the products. This research aims to measure the presence of the local agrifood product in the context of agritourism developed in the Western Catalan Pyrenees (Spain). To do this, it analyses the presence of the local product and the ways used to incorporate it into the travel experience. It explores (through interviews) the opinions of the owners of agritourism farms/businesses in relation to the repercussions of the producer–consumer connection through food. To reach this goal, secondary sources are reviewed—bibliographical, statistics, and web pages—and a total of 26 interviews are carried out. In terms of the results, we highlight that in the Western Catalan Pyrenees, about 70% of agritourism accommodations include local products in their offer. Additionally, the professional project is strengthened by including the agrifood product in the offer's structure through catering and/or direct sale, generating positive dynamics among the rest of the producers in the area. However, only a small percentage of agritourism accommodations fully diversify their project with the production, consumption, and distribution of their own and local food. A total of four different profiles of agritourism are identified regarding agrifood products.

Keywords: agritourism; tourism; agricultural activities; local agrifood products; proprietor; Pyrenees; Spain

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1. Introduction

At present, the dominant agrifood model in operation is deeply globalised [1–3], and the production of foodstuffs is still the main role played today by farmers and livestock producers in our society. However, the pervasiveness of the productivist model since the 1950s [4], the resulting capitalisation of agricultural holdings, and the gradual ageing of farmers and livestock producers, compounded by some of the legal forms of land ownership in effect [5], pose a problem for the continuity of small and medium-sized agricultural holdings that have more limited output and do not have enough technical and human resources to be competitive within a globalised market [6]. As a consequence, the gradual but steady decline in the total number of farmers and livestock producers in most developed countries is a reality, and public institutions at a number of different levels are therefore pushing forward with a host of programmes, strategies, and measures in response [7–10]. The array of corrective measures and actions include on the one hand, efforts to diversify agricultural endeavours through the incorporation of some new activity, such as tourism, and, on the other hand, efforts to ensure agrifood output that is differentiated by quality and/or organic production methods. In short, such measures come in response to the challenges of today's climate emergency and could well be instrumentalised as strategies of mitigation and adaptation in the face of climate change.

To begin with, the physical environment itself has limitations, namely a shortage of level terrain. As a result, agricultural holdings in the mountains are traditionally the first to become marginal amid the onward momentum of mass agricultural production [11], with operators forced to adapt and/or redirect their efforts to secure their livelihoods. In Europe, for example, a series of measures began to take effect in the 1980s to promote multifunctionality across the countryside, eventually growing into a new framework for rural development policies [12,13]. One such measure is agritourism [14,15]. Agritourism has enjoyed a high degree of commitment and support from public institutions, especially back in the early stages of development [16]. Another strategy is to promote local agrifood products, whose value has been on the rise since the 1980s. In this regard, tourism can act as a vector of acceleration and strengthening through gastronomy [17] and direct sales in proven territorial contexts [18,19].

Against the backdrop laid out above, the present study aims to assess the scale and characteristics of local agrifood products within the context of agritourism accommodation in the Western Catalan Pyrenees region of Spain. To do so, this study will first analyse the presence of local products and the ways in which they can be built into the travel experience of tourists, followed second by an exploration—through interviews—of the opinions of proprietors of agricultural holdings and agritourism businesses in relation to the various impacts of the producer–consumer connection through food. The subject of study is the proprietors of agritourism lodgings, which, according to the Catalan tourism legislation, is circumscribed to a specific group of rural accommodation. The purpose of this work is to explore the role played by the agrifood product in the agritourism offer from the supply side. The main research hypothesis is that the local agrifood product introduces a differentiating variable in the offer that contributes to strengthening the agritourism project, and even more so within the current context of climate change.

Literature Review

The topic of agritourism, which has been the focus of extensive analysis from a variety of perspectives and viewpoints [16,20–25], corresponds to the tourism activities on offer from farmers and livestock producers [26,27], and it represents one of the various types of rural tourism. Indeed, agritourism can potentially interfere with the dynamics of the agricultural sector, becoming regarded as simply one among many development factors [28–32], especially for relatively disadvantaged rural areas and, in particular, rural areas in mountainous terrain [33–36].

The field of agritourism is broad enough to include a wide variety of tourism activities so that its boundaries prove fuzzy and open to debate [20,23,24,30,31,37–40]. Indeed, any definition of agritourism raises a number of questions over the bounds of its true nature. In this vein, the most commonly repeated questions include: Should agritourism be taken to encompass any leisure or tourism activities that are directly related to the agricultural sector, even if pursued outside of the physical context of agricultural holdings, such as museums, fairs, or events, which are not the responsibility of producers themselves? Or, in relation to the direct sales of farm products, should such direct sales be regarded as an activity of agritourism when the purchaser of the product is a local resident? This second question is the one that raises the most doubts on the matter, and the usual approach, in response, is to identify the source of the demand in order to clarify its inclusion within the boundaries of agritourism [25]. In addition, agritourism covers a host of activities conducted in the context of a farm or other agricultural holdings, and yet, as Tew and Barbieri [27] have pointed out, there are inconsistencies in the scope of the activities that it can cover. For example, the lists made by some authors include overnight accommodation, the provision of food and beverages (through catering or meal services), educational activities and awareness raising, the direct sales of agrifood products, and the scheduling of special events on the farm. Yet, other authors explicitly exclude some or most of these activities. In the face of such a wide variety of viewpoints, some researchers have tried to develop expansive systems of classification to account for the diversity and potential controversy of agritourism [41]. Along these lines, some typologies are defined on the basis of the degree and type of relationship that is established between tourism activity and agricultural activity. For example, such a typology might include the following categories: bed and breakfast in the farmhouse of a farm that is no longer in operation; bed and breakfast in a farmhouse of a working farm; accommodation with breakfast and other meals that feature products from a working farm; accommodation with breakfast and other meals that may include demonstrations of agricultural practices; and accommodation with breakfast and other meals that allow guests to take part in farm chores [23,42]. Other typologies are defined on the basis of the type of offer, e.g., lodgings, direct sales of products, educational activities, and recreational activities [40].

In addition, agritourism has been tackled from social and economic perspectives. In economic terms, some authors have analysed the relative weight of agricultural and tourism activity within particular agritourism projects. For instance, agritourism on farms in central and northern Europe has shifted from being a secondary activity that supplements the agricultural endeavour to being the main activity of the whole operation [43]. In this respect, the evolving dynamics of agritourism can be influenced by a variety of parallel processes. Consider the differentiation and physical separation between tourism activity and agricultural activity on the one hand and the professionalisation and specialisation of the tourism project itself on the other. Faced with this reality, some authors believe that authentic agritourism must continue to be defined by specific criteria closely related to agriculture and supplier–consumer interactions [44]. Other authors point out that not only are the returns on agritourism constrained to the increase in revenue that can be garnered from the sale of a particular service, but also that there are other parameters that can prove beneficial for an agricultural holding in the medium to long term, such as the improved valuation of agrifood products and/or the diversification–deseasonalisation of income, which results in lower risk and, therefore, a higher degree of resilience [18,45]. In addition, the revenue that comes from agritourism gives a boost to local economies through sales taxes, local job generation, and support to local businesses [46]. If the focus shifts to social and gender-related effects, agritourism also plays an important role when farmers form networks and share experiences or when women take on a leading role in the development of particular agritourism projects. In this respect, the interaction among farmers, tourists, and local communities can have an influence on their well-being [47,48].

In relation to agrifood products, promoting the production and consumption of local, environmentally friendly, or organic produce is identified as one of the key pillars of sustainability and resilience strategies. The development of resilient agrifood systems that adopt an agroecological approach proves to be a matter of priority amid scenarios of crisis and uncertainty, such as the present one [49]. Thus, this new way of thinking about agricultural activity, together with new philosophies of investigation and consumption and political approaches that are more alternative in nature, can generate results that seek to respond to major questions about the likelihood of actually implementing sustainable agriculture, global land use, climate change, and food security. In this vein, any approach that focuses on agroecology or local production—or that combines the two—may be regarded as positive in the fight against climate change [50,51].

In the case of tourism activities, including agritourism, the separation that has traditionally been imposed between agriculture and tourism has given rise to a perception of food production merely as a supplementary activity for tourism and not as a cultural element that could itself be exploited as a tourism resource [52]. Nevertheless, concepts like local products, "proximity" products, and "zero kilometre" products, together with their interrelationship with tourism, can play a significant role in two senses: first, by bringing tourists closer to the underlying cultural substrate and physical reality of a place, and second, by limiting the emissions arising from long-distance agrifood chains.

Therefore, tourism, gastronomy, and culture are associated with the enhancement of heritage and its natural and cultural resources and respect for the environment.

In this sense, tourism related to food products represents an emerging component of the tourism industry and encompasses all the traditional values associated with new tourism trends: respect for culture and tradition, authenticity, and sustainability. It also strengthens local identities and a sense of community while providing a higher economic return than traditional tourism [53]. In the case of agritourism, the presence of local food and beverages and the existence of agrarian landscapes is an important reason for tourist visitation, and tourists are more likely to consume traditional products of the destination visited [54–56]. In this sense, the potential agritourism is manifested through the motivation expressed by the demand to participate in gastronomic experiences and to have contact with local products and their landscape. On the other hand, residents—their perception, support for the project, and attachment to the region—also play a key role in the promotion and development of a rural tourism destination based on local agrifood products [57].

By and large, the relationship between agritourism and agrifood products has been taken up more in North America than in Europe. In Canada, for example, agritourism tends to be interpreted from a wide-ranging, transversal perspective in which gastronomy, events, and the direct sales of produce all play a vital role in the success of agritourism [25,37,47]. In the United States, the approach of agritourism focuses primarily on market operators and demand, with the most frequently addressed aspects including recreational activities and the direct sales of produce on the farm [18,22,26,27,39,58,59]. In particular, the direct sales of produce in the US generate a significant amount of annual revenue [40]. By contrast, academics have paid less attention to the evidence of any potentially positive links between agritourism and products with protected designations of origin. However, a number of studies do support the positive effects of local products of quality on the development of agritourism [45,60,61]. First, rural areas with renowned agrifood products and highly valued gastronomic traditions have a greater ability to attract tourists, thereby benefiting local agritourism businesses. Second, agritourism facilities the direct sales of products on the farm, thereby benefiting producers and consumers alike, thanks to the elimination of intermediaries and a better flow of information related to the products' attributes of quality.

In short, agritourism has been identified not only as a source of revenue for farmers and livestock producers but also as an important market outlet for local agrifood products. Agritourism supplies a unique space for products to connect with consumers through the addition of local agrifood output into the tourism experience.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Area: The Catalan Western Pyrenees (Spain)

The study area, which measures 5229 sq km in surface area, is located in the northwest quadrant of Catalonia (Spain) and contains five districts: Alt Urgell, Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, and Val d'Aran (Figure 1). The area is predominantly mountainous, marked by typically Alpine landscapes in its northernmost reaches (that is, in Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, and Val d'Aran). Indeed, the terrain stands at more than 1000 metres of altitude over nearly three-quarters of the study area. The average population density is 10.5 inhabitants/sq km, and most of the municipalities do not exceed 2000 inhabitants, with the total population of the study area in 2020 reaching 54,751 inhabitants in total. As in other rural areas that are mountainous, the area has been affected by a steep demographic decline. The decline has been attenuated only thanks to the contribution of a small number of young, autochthonous individuals and the arrival of new inhabitants in the wake of the tourism boom at the end of the last century and the start of the present one. As a consequence, one of the top challenges of the region is to keep people on the land and commit to a more diversified development of the production model that is less dependent on tourism.

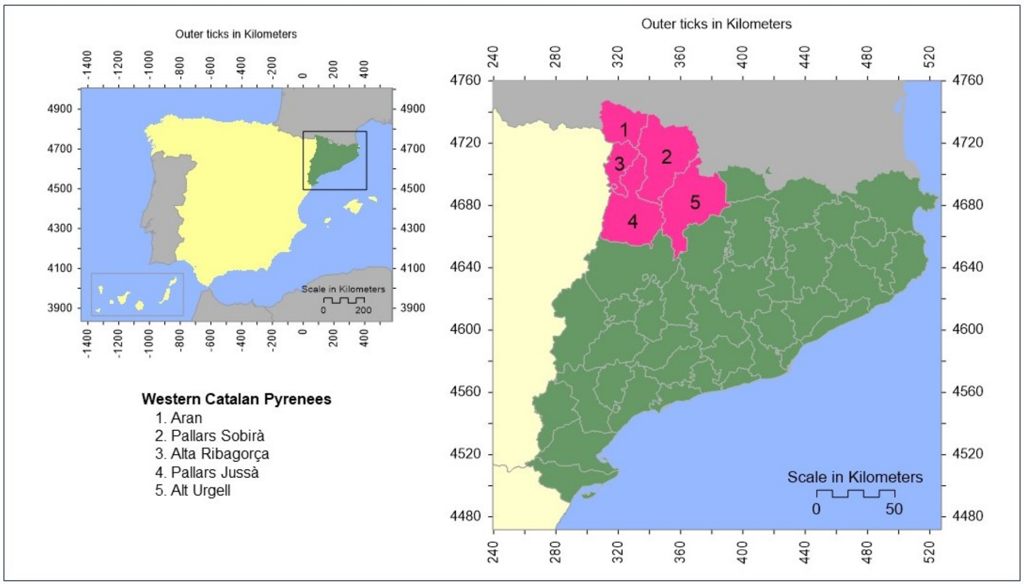


Figure 1. Location of the study area.

From a tourism viewpoint (Table 1), the low level of human pressure on the territory and the maintenance of extensive farming and livestock activities have made it possible to keep and preserve a natural and cultural heritage of undeniable value and appeal that has, over time, become the region's top economic resource. In the study area, snow tourism has acted as a genuine engine of economic dynamism for certain municipalities in Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, and Val d'Aran, generating intense activity associated with speculative processes in the real-estate sector [62,63]. Together with snow tourism, rural, cultural, and nature-based kinds of tourism have similarly reached high levels of development across the region, achieving particularly high tourism functionality rates in Alta Ribagorça, Pallars Sobirà, and Val d'Aran that reach between 1.5 and 2 bed places per inhabitant; this clearly shows the area's tourism monoculture. By contrast, the weight of tourism in the economy of the territory is lower in Pallars Jussà and Alt Urgell.

Table 1. Population and tourism offer in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, 2020.

District	Population (Inhabitants)	Population Density	No. of Bed Places in Regulated Tourism Accommodation	Tourism Function Rate [1]	No. of Alpine Ski Resorts
Alt Urgell	20,453	14.1	5634	27.5	-
Alta Ribagorça	3945	9.2	5752	145.8	1
Pallars Jussà	13,170	9.8	4382	33.3	-
Pallars Sobirà	7101	5.1	14,760	207.8	3
Val d'Aran	10,372	16.4	18,223	175.7	1
Catalan Western Pyrenees	55,041	10,5	48,751	88.6	5

[1] The tourism function rate is the relationship between the total number of beds in regulated tourist accommodation and the population.

While various types of tourism coexist across the region (snow tourism, nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, etc.), rural tourism stands out. Since the 1970s, rural tourism has come to be seen as one of the corrective measures that might well reverse the depopulation of the countryside and the demographic haemorrhaging of the high valleys of the Pyrenees, which are home to the comarcas that first pioneered the shift towards rural tourism and agritourism. This activity would begin to consolidate in the 1990s. Since 1983, agritourism has been regulated by law in Catalonia [16], and in accordance with current legislation (Decree 75/2020, of 4 August, on tourism in Catalonia), agritourism is identified with a specific group of rural accommodation for tourists known as "cases de pagès".

The proprietors of such accommodation earn their livelihoods from agricultural, livestock, or forestry-related activities, and their guests can learn about the tasks and activities that are involved. By contrast, the regulations do not provide for or specify the potential activities and services that can be carried out under the banner of agritourism, including the direct sales of products and/or any catering and meals, except in the case of breakfast, which must be provided when the accommodation involves rooms in a home. In this sense, there are notable differences with the legislation of other European countries, where there is their own regulation for agritourism. In the case of Italy, for example, its legislation (Law 96/2006) defines agritourism as the set of welcoming and hospitality activities carried out by agricultural entrepreneurs, which include the provision of food and beverages, mainly of their own and local products (preferably under quality brands), and the organisation of tastings of products from the farm.

The Catalan Western Pyrenees boasts one of the highest percentages of farmers and livestock producers engaged in tourism. The share can even surpass 5% of the holdings in districts such as Alta Ribagorça and Pallars Sobirà. As a result, the area's agritourism accommodation offering has been growing over the past three decades and now stands at 185 establishments and 1304 bed places, operated by a total of 87 proprietors. Each proprietor has an average of two establishments and 15 bed places designated for agritourism (Table 2).

Table 2. Size of agrito0rism offering—the percentage of holdings and accommodation—in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, 2019–2020.

District	% of Agricultural Holdings with Agritourism Activities	Agritourism Accommodation				
		No. of Propri-etors	No. of Lodgings	No. of Bed Places	Average No. of Lodgings Per Proprietor	Average No. of Bed Places Per Proprietor
Alt Urgell	2.7	15	23	203	1.5	13.5
Alta Ribagorça	16.9	12	35	220	2.9	18.3
Pallars Jussà	1.6	23	51	368	2.2	16
Pallars Sobirà	7.7	35	74	493	2.1	14.1
Val d'Aran	2.5	2	2	20	1.0	10
Catalan Western Pyrenees	3.7	87	185	1304	2.1	15

Regarding local foods and beverages and their recognition in terms of quality, Catalonia has a total of 26 products with different quality certificates (PDO, PGI, TSG, and GI). Three of the products are specific to the study area: cheese and butter from the districts of Alt Urgell and Cerdanya and veal from the Pyrenees. In addition, it also has a total of 12 products with an agrifood quality label, including cheese, veal, and lamb. Local products with a quality seal of approval are of particular interest in the area as they are the basis for gastronomic tourism and provide tourist products in the form of routes, as in the case of the district of Alt Urgell with the "Menga't l'Alt Urgell" Eat Alt Urgell initiative.

Agricultural activity, in contrast to tourism activity, continues to decline as a consequence of the waning economic viability of agricultural holdings and the lack of generational replacement. Between 1996 and 2011, the percentage of the population employed in the agricultural, livestock, and forestry-related sectors across the study area fell by nearly half, dropping from 11.2% to 6.4% of the active working population, and the same kind of trend also affected the total number of agricultural holdings, which has fallen sharply over the past three decades, plummeting from 4276 in 1989 to 1986 at present (agricultural census, 2020). In this respect, public policies designed to give incentives and support to the agricultural sector, commitments made to food products of quality through incentives for the ecological conversion of producers and/or the pursuit of other parallel activities (whether or not they are related to agricultural activity) may prove essential to safeguarding agricultural and livestock production in areas of mountainous terrain. For example, nearly one in five agricultural holdings with land in the Catalan Western Pyrenees had a "green" orientation in 2020 (Table 3), and livestock operations with extensive herds of cattle, goats, and sheep were most likely to implement such an orientation.

Table 3. Agricultural holdings with organic farming and livestock production in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, 2020.

Holdings with Farmland	**No. of "Green" Holdings**	**% of Total**	**No. of "Green" Hectares**	**% of Total**
	590	27	61,148	18.2
Holdings with Livestock Production	**No. of "Green" Holdings**	**% of total**	**No. of "Green" Head of Livestock**	**% of total**
Cattle	201	36.4	14,409	23.7
Sheep	42	18.6	29,492	29.7
Goats	44	24.3	3834	48.4

2.2. Methods

The first step in the research involved a bibliographic search and review, bolstered by the consultation and use of statistical sources, in order to characterise the phenomenon in the study area. The main criterion used for the bibliographic search was the introduction of key words in the Google Scholar search engine, without territorial limitation, prioritising the selection of those articles published in indexed journals. Official sources were also used to consult specific data and reports. Then, a detailed analysis of the agritourism accommodation identified in the study area was carried out using a variety of sources, including the official guidebook of rural tourism establishments in Catalonia, the register of producers signed up to proximity sales under the sponsorship of the Government of Catalonia, and the web pages of agritourism operators. As a starting point, the official guidebook of rural tourism establishments in Catalonia was examined to identify and locate the existing agritourism accommodation in the study area, as well as some of the main characteristics of the accommodation, such as the number of rooms and places, the type of room, and board options. Similarly, the register of producers signed up to a proximity sales initiative under the sponsorship of the Government of Catalonia was examined to identify and locate the agricultural holdings engaged in direct sales of products on the farm so that the information could be cross-checked against the information on agritourism accommodation identified earlier.

Next, the research proceeded to a second level of investigation that consisted of extracting information from the web pages of each of the agritourism operations identified and located in the five comarcas in the study area. The data extraction made it possible, first, to identify the elements that made up the agritourism offer—accommodation, catering and meals, activities, type of agricultural holding, etc.—and explore their respective characteristics, and second, to focus on an analysis of the features of the agrifood output, such as (1) the type of service offered in connection with catering—breakfast, lunch, dinner, tastings—and the gastronomic offer; (2) the type of activity linked to the processing and marketing of products—gift baskets, direct sales, and sales in local shops—and the characteristic of own products; and (3) activities linked to the agricultural holding, such as farm tours, taking part in agricultural chores, etc. This second level of information helps in determining the scope, type, and amount of agrifood products and their characteristics in relation to all agritourism accommodation in the Catalan Western Pyrenees.

Next, the research made use of semi-structured interviews, which were administered to the proprietors of agritourism accommodation in the study area. The interviews included items that sought information on (1) the profile of each interviewed proprietor; (2) the profile of their agricultural holding; (3) the profile of their tourism business; (4) the main reasons behind their agritourism business; (5) the characteristics of the agritourism activities on offer; (6) the relative importance of agrifood products in the agritourism offering; and

(7) the various impacts of the producer–consumer connection through food and their views of current regulations. The interviews, which were conducted on-site or, in some cases, over the telephone, took place between October and December 2019, shortly before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The total number of interviews (E) was 26, and the interviewed individuals were selected at random out of the total of 87 proprietors of agritourism operations identified in the study area. For this research, it was considered that the minimum threshold of proprietors interviewed should be around 30% of the total number of proprietors identified. In the case of the proprietors who were called by telephone, around 20% did not accept the interview, which meant that other proprietors had to be called until the number of interviews reached 26. The results obtained indicate trends, which from the case study can be representative of other analogous territories.

3. Results

3.1. Profile of the Interviewees and Defining Traits of Their Agricultural Holdings and Agritourism Businesses

A descriptive analysis of the profile of the interviewees finds that 53.3% are women and 46.7% are men. Of all the interviewees, 3.6% are under 40 years of age, 53.6% are between 40 and 55 years of age, and 42.8% are over 55 years of age. The average age is 50. As for birthplace, 60.7% of interviewees were born in the municipality where they now live, 10.7% were born in another municipality in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, and the remaining 28.6% were born outside the region.

With respect to the land of the agricultural holdings in question (measured in hectares), 12% of interviewees stated that their holding is less than 10 ha, 42.8% of interviewees put their holding at between 10 and 50 ha, 21.2% of interviewees put their holding at between 50 and 100 ha, and the remaining 24% state that their holding is greater than 100 ha. As for the production orientation of their operations, 80% of interviewees indicate that they are livestock producers. There is a prevalence of extensive beef cattle production, with 57% of interviewees operating livestock operations that have an average of 70 head of cattle per holding and an output that is distinctly "green". Extensive stockbreeding of horses and sheep is present in 30% of the interviewees' livestock operations, with an average of 30 horses per holding. In contrast, the presence of other types of stock, such as dairy cattle or hogs, is much less common (<15% of the interviewees with livestock holdings). With respect to the physical location of the agritourism businesses, 80.8% of interviewees stated that they are located at elevations greater than 1000 metres above sea level, with an average altitude of 1128 metres across all of the interviewees' holdings.

As for their agritourism accommodation, 61.6% of interviewees say that their first establishment predates the year 2000, thereby confirming the long tradition of agritourism in the area, whereas only 15.3% of interviewees say that their accommodation dates to after 2010. On the other hand, 23.1% of interviewees have opened new lodgings over the years, thereby expanding the total number of places on offer. As one of the interviewees explains: "We have carried on with the activity that our parents started in 1980, first serving meals and then letting tourists spend the night; now we have expanded the business and put a hotel in the stables" (E24). Lastly, the total average number of places on offer among the interviewed proprietors is 14.8; and, in relation to the type of accommodation, 46.2% of interviewees offer rooms, 38.4% offer the rental of an entire dwelling, and 14.4% offer both types of accommodation.

3.2. Motivations of Interviewees

The reasons behind the interviewees' commitment to agritourism include economics. Of the 26 interviewees, 18 indicate that they engage in agritourism out of economic necessity, with the aim of safeguarding their agricultural activity. For the majority of them, agritourism is only a way to supplement their income and help them carry on with their main activity, agriculture. As a few of the interviewees argued: "I devote myself to agritourism to be able to survive in the mountains, because I cannot make a living solely from livestock producing" (E19); "we cannot live on livestock production alone, we need the tourism" (E13); "tourism is only a supplementary thing for me, because I'm a taxi driver in the Aigüestortes National Park in the summer and I drive a school bus during the rest of the year" (E22). In short, their comments reflect a very traditional logic of action, the same one that incentivised the birth of agritourism and persists even now in agritourism operations run by people over 55 years of age.

They also cite another argument that relates to family and employment. The following statement puts it well: "We carry on doing what our parents did, they were the first ones in the valley to take up agritourism" (E14). In a mountainous, rural setting, tourism is perceived as a genuine source of employment and professional development, especially for women. For example, 7 of the 26 interviewees are women originally from outside the region who have seen an opportunity in agritourism to pursue their personal and professional lives.

There are also real-estate arguments related to conserving a property and turning a profit. Arguments of this sort crop up in nearly every interview. Indeed, half of all interviewees are completely in agreement with the idea that conserving and making money from their property is one of the main reasons for embarking on an agritourism endeavour. Similarly, 11 of the 26 interviewees raised the opportunity to make a return on the location—the Pyrenees as a tourism destination—to get started and/or continue their agritourism operation. Lastly, only 5 of the 26 interviewees drew a connection between agritourism and a new life project. In this case, the interviewees do not originally come from the countryside, and they are in the younger age group, spanning from 35 to 50 years of age. As one of the interviewees put it: "I was looking for a new activity, I'm an industrial engineer, I was working in Barcelona and I wanted to live outside the city" (E7).

3.3. Presence of Agrifood Products in Agritourism Offerings

The current trend in agritourism in the Pyrenees is similar to the trend in other tourism activities in the area: quality and sustainability are the two main strands. Following the same logic, the changes that have befallen agritourism include not only the modernisation and expansion of facilities aimed at overnight stays but also the promotion of local agrifood products as a distinctive hallmark of the territory. Thus, based on their respective web pages, 60 of the 87 identified proprietors of agritourism accommodation in the Catalan Western Pyrenees build agrifood products into their offerings; this is a relatively high figure that suggests the importance of the role that agrifood products can play in agritourism. By contrast, the remaining third, specifically 27 out of 87 proprietors, make no reference whatsoever to any agrifood products, and their agritourism operations are focused basically on overnight accommodation.

The formulas and strategies adopted in relation to the introduction of agrifood products in agritourism are very diverse, and any of them may well be present in the accommodation offer itself. The most common and well-known approach involves gastronomy and catering. Another possible approach, which is clearly on the upswing in recent years, concerns the marketing of agrifood products through proximity sales, whether through direct sales on the farm or through sales in local shops. Lastly, there are other more informal actions that do not always appear on the web pages, such as welcome gift baskets of products, farm tours, or direct sales of an unregulated nature.

Of the 60 identified proprietors who make reference to agrifood products in their agritourism offer (Table 4), the most frequently used approach is catering or meals. In this case, 32 proprietors note that they offer breakfast, which explicitly includes the use of their own produce and/or local produce. As a general rule, the breakfast service is not very demanding from a technical or labour viewpoint and can prove to be a very effective strategy since it is often the first contact between the guest and local produce. As for the remaining catering services covering lunch and/or dinner, they are less prevalent in the agritourism businesses in the area. Indeed, only 15 proprietors mention them. In this case, there would be a higher level of requirements in terms of time, manpower, facilities, and culinary skills than in the case of breakfast. However, it would also represent a formula through which agrifood products could have a clearer, more direct impact on the agritourism offer as a whole, acting as a differentiating factor in relation to other agritourism businesses. It is also the case that eight proprietors have an eating establishment that operates independently and in parallel with their agritourism accommodation. In reality, this is not at all unusual in the study area because most small villages in the mountains do not have any other restaurants or cafes.

Table 4. Presence of agrifood products among the proprietors of agritourism accommodation in the Western Catalan Pyrenees by type of service/activity.

Type of Service/Activity		No. of Proprietors	% of Total No. of Proprietors Linked to Some of the Listed Services [1]	% of Total No. of Proprietors [2]
Catering services	Breakfast for guests only	32	53.3	36.8
	Lunch and/or dinner for guests only	15	25.0	17.2
	Restaurant	8	13.3	9.2
Proximity sales	Direct sales of products	17	28.3	19.5
	Sales through local shops	6	10.0	6.9
Gift baskets of products		12	20.00	13.8
Farm tours		16	26.7	18.4

[1] The total number of proprietors linked to some of the listed services is 60. [2] The total number of proprietors is 87.

With respect to the proximity sales of products by agricultural producers, it should be noted that it is not yet a widespread practice in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, partly owing to the idiosyncrasy of the local model of agricultural production. Specifically, the local production model is very much focused on meat and dairy, which calls for special processing facilities such as fixed or mobile workrooms and slaughter units that are not always affordable for livestock producers. According to the data in the register of producers who have signed up for the proximity sales initiative of the Government of Catalonia, the study area has as many as seven proprietors with agritourism accommodation who are taking part. By contrast, however, when information is extracted from the consulted web pages, the figure rises to 13, which suggests that a portion of the direct sales do not carry an approved seal attesting to proximity sales. As part of the practices involved in proximity sales, the direct sales of products on the farm is the most common for seven of the identified proprietors, followed by the sales of products through local shops for six proprietors, who are mainly located in the comarcas with greater livestock production, namely Alta Ribagorça and Val d'Aran.

Lastly, the research has identified up to 12 agritourism businesses that offer a gift basket of products to their guests on arrival and 16 that advertise an opportunity to tour their agricultural operations as part of the stay. These figures translate into relatively low percentages at less than 20% of the region's agritourism businesses, but they reflect actions that are by and large informal and subject to seasonal products. As a result, they are merely suggestive of the actual scope of such activities across the agritourism sector.

With respect to the results obtained from the interviews (Table 5), 17 of the 26 interviewees note the presence of agrifood produce in some way in their offering of services and activities. By contrast, the remaining nine interviewees note that it is not present. In percentage terms, the figures are similar to those for the overall sample of proprietors in the region. For example, agrifood produce is mainly built into the breakfast service (11 out of 26 interviewees), followed by lunch and/or dinner at the accommodation (seven of the interviewees). The number of interviewees engaged in direct sales is only three, and the number engaged in sales through local shops is only slightly higher at four. In this respect, it is important to note that a portion of the interviewed proprietors are livestock producers in Alta Ribagorça and Val d'Aran, where direct selling is still in the early stages. Lastly, gift baskets and farm tours are services and activities that five and six interviewees, respectively, mentioned providing, although the figures in percentage terms are not significant in either case.

Table 5. Presence of agrifood products among the interviewed proprietors of agritourism accommodation in the Western Catalan Pyrenees by type of service/activity.

Type of Service/Activity		No. of Interviewees	% of Total No. of Interviewees [1]
Catering services	Breakfast for guests only	11	42.3
	Lunch and/or dinner for guests only	7	26.9
	Restaurant	1	3.9
Proximity sales	Direct sales of products	3	11.5
	Sales through local shops	4	15.4
Gift baskets of products		5	19.2
Farm tours		6	23.1

[1] The total number of interviewed individuals is 26.

3.4. Class and Typology of Agrifood Products

The class and typology of agrifood products on offer at agritourism accommodation in the Catalan Western Pyrenees are directly related to the productive orientation of the agricultural holdings and, on balance, the agroforestry landscape and bioclimatic capabilities that exist in the area. In this respect, the most recent agricultural census in 2020 indicates that 54% of agricultural holdings in the study area have livestock with a clear predominance of extensive beef cattle, except in the vicinity of Seu d'Urgell, where there are herds of dairy cattle thanks to the presence of a major dairy cooperative. Stocks of sheep and horses are also present in the region, reflecting an agricultural landscape of summer grazing on high-mountain pastures. As a consequence, the local products most commonly on offer from the interviewed proprietors are built around meat and dairy, as well as wild fruits from the local forests. In the Pallars Jussà district, with a predominance of agriculture, local products such as olive oil and wine are present in the driest sectors.

According to the interviewees' responses, prominent local products include, on the one hand, fresh and unprocessed seasonal produce from gardens and farmyards: vegetables, eggs, rabbits, and chickens (nine interviewees), as well as jams and preserves (10 interviewees). On the other hand, fresh and processed dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yoghurt (five interviewees), as well as meat such as veal, lamb, horse and cold cuts and pâtés (nine interviewees) processed elsewhere and served to customers in cooked dishes or through sales in local shops. In addition, the interviewees also note that their veal carries the distinction of being organic.

In terms of the typology of produce, 16 of the 17 interviewees who build produce into their offer state that the produce is their own and/or it is processed by them. In this respect, the results reveal a very strong presence of own and/or local produce in agritourism, with a particularly significant presence of own produce. In response to the questionnaire item asking, "what percentage of products offered to guests are your own, local or others in the different services that your provide?", the overall average responses from the same 17 proprietors are as follows (Table 6): 55% of the agrifood produce used in catering services and gift baskets are of own origin, 31.5% are products of local origin, and only 13.5% are identified as neither own nor local products and correspond instead to products that are not produced or processed in the study area, such as coffee, tea, sugar, rice, pasta, etc.

Table 6. Typology of agrifood products on offer (in %) by the proprietors of agritourism accommodation in the Western Catalan Pyrenees, by type of service.

Type of Service	Own Products (%)	Local Products (%)	Other (%)
Breakfast for guests only	26.3	47.5	26.2
Lunch and/or dinner for guests only	67.5	17.5	15
Gift baskets of products	77.5	22.5	0
Overall	55	31.5	13.5

Both own and local products are very much present in the gastronomy on offer at the accommodation establishments. Indeed, they are especially prevalent in endeavours related to the direct distribution and marketing of products through gift baskets and direct sales.

As noted earlier, the specific circumstances of each territory influence the class and type of products on offer. When a particular product of their own is not available, proprietors turn to local products as an alternative. In such cases, local products play an important role in agritourism and in services like breakfast, which involves nearly 50% of the products on offer. As one of the interviewees remarks: "Over 75% of our products are local and come from the same municipality or neighbouring municipalities here in Val d'Aran; and as our own product, we offer horsemeat to guests in the meals that we serve" (E13).

Another issue to highlight is the agreement of interviewees on the geographic boundaries of local products. According to their responses, all interviewees concur in associating local products with "proximity" products, but they differ in the territorial reach of the idea. For example, four of the interviewees limited local products to products produced and/or processed in the same municipality or neighbouring municipalities. By contrast, 11 of the interviewees associate the notion with products produced and/or processed in the same comarca or district, even if the raw material comes from elsewhere. Lastly, two interviewees expanded the range of local products to up to 50 kilometres in every direction. Thus, in line with their understanding of the notion of local products, the interviewees point out that such products can come from other agricultural holdings in the municipality and/or comarca as well as from specialist shops in the area, that is, purchased directly from producers or in specialist shops. Other examples appear in responses such as the following: "Between 80% and 90% of products come from neighbouring villages in the comarca, from cheese dairies and from other specialist shops" (E12); "we buy produce directly from the producer and also in the farm shop in Barruera, and there are no local products that we buy in the supermarket" (E15); "we try to buy 100% of our produce in specialist shops in the municipality or comarca that know the produce well, so that we don't have to go to the supermarket" (E9). In short, the responses illustrate the short distribution circuit of products that can occur at the local level and that the proprietors of agritourism accommodation can help to encourage through their practices. It is also the case that several interviewees belong to a farmers' cooperative, which is not common in the study area but does reinforce practices of this sort since the cooperative members engage in mutual buying and selling.

3.5. Distribution and Marketing of Agrifood Products

In relation to agrifood products that are produced or processed in agritourism operations and their subsequent distribution and marketing, 3 of the interviewees say that they engage in direct sales. They draw a sharp distinction between direct sales on the agricultural holding itself and sales through their own farm shop elsewhere. In the first case, one interviewee notes: "We have a dairy operation and the only service that we offer to our customers, apart from the rental of rural accommodation, is the direct sales of our raw milk" (E3). In the second case, by contrast, two interviewees say the following: "In our farm shop, we not only sell jams and preserves of our own making as well as different varieties of potatoes, eggs, olives, pâtés and herbs, but we also sell other organic products that are local, such as vegetables, cold meats, cheese, natural meat, spirits and liqueurs, etc., all under the umbrella of direct sales" (E5); "we have an artisan to make jams out of the berries that we pick in our own orchard, we also preserve mushrooms, and we sell both the jams and the preserves directly in our farm shop with a registered own label" (E14), among the remaining interviewees that do not engage in direct sales, four process products and distribute them in local shops. One interviewee made the following remark in this regard: "We sell organic veal through a butcher's shop in the village, since direct sales are complicated in our area because we would need our own butcher; that's why we recommend to our customers where to buy the organic veal" (E15).

Additional strategies identified in relation to the distribution and marketing of products among the proprietors of agritourism accommodation include producer collaboration networks under various legal formulas, such as farmers' cooperatives, producers' associations, etc. The results of the present study point to a low level of membership among the interviewed proprietors. However, some belong to a network and indicate that such networks play an important role in the distribution of local products in the region where their tourism destination is located. As two interviewees put it: "We belong to the Menga't l'Alt Urgell cooperative, which has 25 members, and we sell a great deal through the coop, for example, we prepare 1700 batches of products at Christmastime and distribute them through the coop" (E5); "as members of the livestock producers' association of Alta Ribagorça, many of us sell our products through small shops in the comarca" (E15). A fitting illustration of the key role that cooperatives can play in the marketing of local products is that one of the farmers' cooperatives has launched its own tourism product based on the creation of seven gastronomic routes through the comarca of Alt Urgell, thereby setting an example of how agrifood products can help to articulate a whole tourism product.

3.6. Profile of Agritourism Projects in Relation to Agrifood Products

In response to questions about the profiles of their agritourism projects, the interviewees indicated that there are four different profiles as they relate to agrifood products (Table 7), taking as our frame of reference the agritourism classification put forward by Phillip, Hunter, and Blackstock [23] and Ferreira and Sánchez-Martín [64]. To design the classification, we have taken into account (a) the type of offer provided related to the agrifood product, (b) the role played by agrifood products in the structure of the offer, and (c) the provision of one or more services linked to the agrifood product within the same agritourism project. The results in Table 7 come from the exhaustive review of the 87 agritourism proprietors in the region through the websites (column 2) and the responses of the interviewees (column 4).

Table 7. Profile of agritourism accommodation in the Catalan Western Pyrenees.

Profile of Agritourism on Offer (Groups)	No. of Proprietors	% of Total No. of Proprietors	No. of Interviewees
Group 1. No relationship with agrifood products	27	31.0	9
Group 2. Bed and breakfast/gift basket of products	23	26.4	7
Group 3. Accommodation and catering or meals/proximity sales (just one of the offers)	29	33.3	8
Group 4. Accommodation and catering or meals and proximity sales	8	9.3	2

The first profile is made up of agritourism businesses that have no relation to agrifood products. Roughly 31% of agritourism businesses in the region and nine interviewees belong to this category. Their offering corresponds solely to overnight accommodation and/or the rental of an entire rural dwelling.

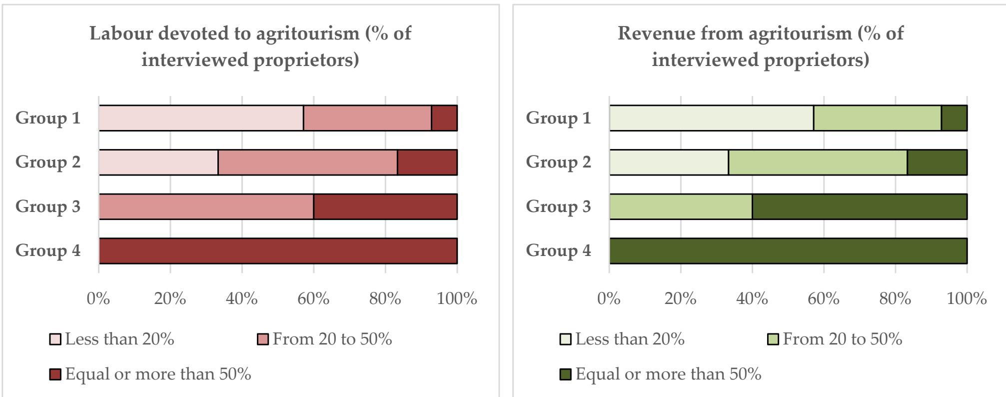
The second profile is made up of agritourism endeavours in which agrifood products play a minor and/or secondary role within the overall offer. Examples include establishments that serve breakfast and/or informally give products to guests, typically in the form of a gift basket on arrival. In this case, 26.4% of the agritourism businesses in the region and seven interviewees belong to the second group.

A third profile of agritourism businesses is characterised by a heightened role of agrifood products in the structure of the offer, whether there is a complete service of catering and meals, or gastronomy is an important feature of the offer, or there is a parallel structure to market own products through proximity sales. Within this third profile, two subgroups can be distinguished: the first one corresponds to those agritourism businesses which, together with the accommodation, provide catering or meals service, and the second one, which, in addition to the accommodation, offers direct sales service, aimed both at the establishment's customers and at outsiders. Although the two types of offers are different in nature, they are not provided at the same time in the same agritourism and, therefore, the weight of the agrifood product within the tourist business as a whole would be similar. A third of the proprietors in the study area (33.3%) and eight interviewees fit in the third group. The number of proprietors who offer a catering service alongside their accommodation is slightly higher than those who offer direct sales.

Lastly, a fourth profile of agritourism accommodation involves the use of agrifood products as the backbone of the tourism project and the main differentiating factor in relation to other businesses; this is a type of agritourism whose strategy in terms of quality, professionalism, and sustainability involves the promotion and use of own and local agrifood products in various aspects of the offer: knowledge (through tours of agricultural operations); consumption (gastronomy), and marketing (direct sales). Activities offered in the same agritourism project. In this case, the respective proprietors believe strongly in the promotion and consumption of their own and/or local products as a strategic aspect of development and sustainability. In the Catalan Western Pyrenees, the presence of the fourth agritourism profile is minor, sitting at less than 10% of proprietors and only two interviewees. Nevertheless, the fourth profile is often used as a way to refer to agritourism as a whole since the establishments serve as role models, benchmarks, and sources of good practices for local development and sustainability.

3.7. Main Impacts of the Producer–Consumer Connection through Food

The provision of services connected to agrifood products has a direct impact on the actual size of an agritourism project in employment terms, e.g., hours of labour, and in economic terms, e.g., amount of revenue (Figure 2). On the basis of these two parameters, agritourism typically becomes a supplementary activity in the case of the first two accommodation profiles, whose hours of labour and amount of revenue tend not to exceed 50% of the total, according to the responses of interviewees belonging to the two groups. By contrast, as new services are added to the accommodation offering, such as catering and meals, sales of products, etc., the percentages grow to reach and even surpass 50% of total hours and revenue for interviewees in the fourth group. In these cases, agritourism grows to become the interviewees' main activity or an activity at least as important as their agricultural activity.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 2. Labour and economic dimension of agritourism accommodation interviewees in the Catalan Western Pyrenees, by accommodation profile (groups 1–4): (**a**) labour devoted to agritourism; (**b**) revenue from agritourism.

To conclude the present section, the interviewees were asked the following question: What do you understand by agritourism, and what do you associate it with? The responses are not uniform. Among other factors, they vary in terms of the nature and characteristics of the offer. For example, proprietors who belong to the fourth profile of agritourism projects, which involve a very prominent role for agrifood products in the nature and characteristics of their offering, associate agritourism primarily with agrifood activity and only secondarily with overnight accommodation. They are also highly critical of the regulations that currently govern the sector, which basically focuses on regulating the features of the accommodation—e.g., a pre-1957 building located in the countryside, with a maximum capacity of 20 bed places—and the room and board options—i.e., staying in rooms or rental of an entire dwelling. As one interviewee in the group puts it, "Agritourism is a space that relates local products, agriculture, livestock and the natural environment, and the agrifood product plays an important core role in agritourism. In this respect, the regulations should recognize the specific nature of agritourism, introducing the subject of agrifood production so that customers know that they are going to be eating products from the land and the place" (E5). Similarly, other proprietors of agritourism accommodation who offer a catering or meals service and/or engage in direct sales (the third profile) relate agritourism with gastronomy and local products. However, on this occasion, the overnight accommodation bears a greater weight in their identification of agritourism. They are also critical of the current regulations. For example, two interviewees respond as follows: "Agritourism offers a tourist accommodation service as a key option within an agricultural operation, but agritourism is much broader for me and the regulations should take into account the agrifood question, which is something different" (E14); "agritourism are those people in the countryside who devote themselves to agriculture and livestock and who supplement their efforts with tourism, a tourism that helps in looking after the territory and in which agrifood products play a leading role, since they are products from the territory and you know where they come from; in addition, the regulations have evolved badly since at the very beginning they were identified with agritourism, but now engaging in authentic agritourism is not distinguished from offering a rural house for rent" (E13). Thus, these two profiles of interviewees believe that agrifood products should play a greater role in agritourism and that more opportunities should be provided for direct sales on the farm. By contrast, for the other interviewees in the first and second groups, agritourism is associated primarily with overnight accommodation and not agrifood products, which they do not associate with the accommodation offering: "Agritourism is the person who has a rural house and is also a farmer" (E3); this is an interpretation of agritourism that matches the current regulations in Catalonia.

On the other hand, to the question: What role should the agrifood product have within agritourism? There is much more unanimity in the answers, and the majority of interviewees, regardless of the group to which they belong, respond that the role of local products should be important in agritourism (Table 8).

Table 8. Answers to the question: What role should agrifood products have?

Groups	Answers
Group 1.	"In the district there is an association that promotes local products, and sometimes I have attended a meeting" (E4).
Group 2.	"It should have more importance than it has since it represents our territory" (E11)
Group 3.	"It should have the maximum possible prominence since our tourism takes care of the territory" (E13)
Group 4.	"It has to play a central role since our activity has to do with local agrifood products" (E5)

4. Discussion

Given the current challenges of the climate emergency and the planet's sustainability, a renewed appreciation and knowledge of local products, their consumption, and distribution clearly stand as one of the strategic actions that can help in the mitigation of global warming [50,51]. Agritourism, as an activity that promotes everything related to our agricultural heritage and makes direct contact possible between guests and farmers, helps to position and strengthen local agrifood products in tourism destination areas [45,55]. Indeed, it is becoming one more link in today's production chains, boosting direct sales and promoting a short distribution circuit for products [54].

To strengthen agritourism as a professional and business project, it is necessary to build agrifood products into the structure of the offer, including catering and meal services and/or direct sales [18,25,40,53]. Nonetheless, only a small percentage of businesses complement and diversify their tourism project with the production, consumption, and distribution of agrifood products. Bolstering this strategy would not only benefit the territory and its sustainability [32,46,53]. However, it would also have a positive impact on agritourism accommodation as a whole, positioning it as an example of good practices and resilience in the face of a highly globalised and competitive tourism market [45,49].

In the specific case of agritourism accommodation in Catalonia (Spain), the current regulations have tended to prioritise aspects linked to overnight stays while disregarding other aspects that are more closely related to the nature of agricultural holdings and their agrifood products [16]. As a result, the traditional lack of connection between tourism and agrifood products has not benefited the appearance of own and/or local products in certain tourist accommodation services or in agritourism more broadly [52]. For instance, a large number of establishments do not put agrifood products into their offering. Indeed, the figure comes to only a third of all agritourism businesses in the Catalan Western Pyrenees.

By contrast, among the proprietors who choose to introduce agrifood products as part of their accommodation offering, a high presence of own and local products can be detected. The very nature of agritourism a priori favours the presence of products of this sort within the various aspects of the offering, such as catering and meal services, gift baskets of products, direct sales, etc. Activities of a gastronomic or commercial nature furnish the most common avenues to incorporate own and local products in agritourism. Indeed, they help to define the unique character of the tourism project through the promotion of local agrifood products [46,59]. The breakfast service provides a first point of contact and exchange between farmer and guest, specifically through discovery and sampling, since it is the most commonly provided service among the proprietors of agritourism accommodation. In addition, direct sales on the farm, which has traditionally been informal, has become well established as an ascendant activity since its formal recognition within the legal framework. In agritourism accommodation, direct sales are typically a parallel activity pursued separately from the establishment itself. In the case of the Catalan Western Pyrenees, direct sales also run into an added difficulty, which is that many agricultural operations primarily involve livestock, and any meat products must be processed elsewhere.

The prominent role that is played by products of own and local origin among proprietors who seek to put agrifood products squarely within the definition of agritourism has effects on the identity of their tourism businesses in terms of territoriality, uniqueness, and authenticity [53,61]. It also acts as a key vector of differentiation for consumers in relation to other lodgings that do not build agrifood products into their offerings. Indeed, own and local products generate a number of direct impacts in terms of sustainability since they encourage the purchase and consumption of proximity products [45,54,55], which in turn give rise to a smaller carbon footprint by shortening distribution channels and transport distances. Significantly, among the proprietors who choose to offer a catering or meals service, both the ways in which they purchase products (directly from the farmer and in specialist shops) and the places where they purchase them (in the same municipality and neighbouring municipalities) contribute to strengthening the short distribution circuits of products, eliminating intermediaries and invigorating local enterprises and agricultural holdings in the area. In addition, the collaboration networks of agricultural producers play a very important role in product promotion and distribution strategies, as the proprietors of agritourism businesses who are members of such networks can attest. In short, these efforts result in a whole range of actions leading towards a more sustainable development model for agriculture and tourism that releases lower CO_2 emissions into the atmosphere and results in savings of energy and fuel in the purchase and distribution of products.

5. Conclusions

The current trend of agritourism in the Pyrenees is similar to that of the rest of the tourist activities in the area: quality and sustainability are the two main strands. Under this logic of action, the changes that have occurred within agritourism include the modernisation and expansion of the facilities for overnight stays and the valorisation of the local agrifood product as a distinctive hallmark of the area. In the Catalan Western Pyrenees, nearly 70% of proprietors of agritourism incorporate agrifood products into their offer. The formulas and strategies adopted in relation to the agrifood product are diverse, but the most common of them all is the one related to gastronomy and catering in the accommodation itself. Activities related to the commercialisation of agrifood products (direct sales on the farm or through sales in local shops) are less present among the proprietors of rural accommodations. However, their existence contributes to strengthening the producer-consumer (farmer-tourist) connection in tourist destination areas. Another remarkable aspect is the majority presence of local products in agritourism, which contributes to strengthening the networks of local producers in the area and minimising the negative impacts derived from transport.

In Catalonia, the current legislative framework on agritourism does not explicitly provide that agritourism accommodations must incorporate agrifood products into their offer, so one out of every two proprietors do not contemplate it, or it is not an important element for their business. On the other hand, almost the other half of proprietors, who belong to groups 3 and 4 of the identified profiles, directly link agritourism with local agrifood products, this being one of the pillars of so-called "authentic agritourism". In addition, in these cases, there is a direct impact on the real dimensions—economic and labour—of the agritourism project.

Consequently, the initial hypothesis is confirmed in that the local agrifood product contributes to strengthening agritourism and the producer-consumer connection, with local food being a key vector of reference and differentiation (authentic agritourism) in relation to the rest of the agritourism accommodations. In the study area, the presence of agrifood products in accommodation is uneven. A special contribution of this research has proposed the identification of up to four different profiles of agritourism in relation to the agrifood product. The local product has another derivative in agrotourism: in the distribution-marketing processes, it contributes to reducing the carbon footprint. For these reasons, and given the current context of global change, we believe that the revaluation of local products is beyond doubt within agritourism. Our future research focuses on continuing the topic discussed with comparative studies with other rural and mountain tourist destinations.

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