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ASSESSING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE: THE EXAMPLE OF LEISURE FARMS IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

This study explores the sustainable development of organic farms and organic farming in Taiwan by analyzing leisure services and the relationship between farmers and their entrepreneurial goals. Internet searches were used to identify 120 organic leisure farms in Taiwan with their own websites, which were subjected to content analysis. The researchers then mailed questionnaires to each Taiwanese organic farm for which a full mailing address could be located. A total of 403 valid questionnaires were obtained. Analysis of the results shows that the websites of Taiwan’s organic leisure farms feature content related to three main areas: tourism and leisure, the farming experience, and environmental education. Three types of content important to organic farms are correlated with the business objectives of farmers: the non-economic objectives of farm operators are categorized into “family relationships” and “individual pursuits,” whereas their economic objectives are categorized into “profitability” and “marketing opportunities.” Finally, this study suggests that organic leisure farming, in addition to combining tourism and leisure, helping the environment, and fulfilling educational needs, significantly improves farm operators’ family relationships and individual pursuits, increases profitability, and provides additional marketing opportunities.

Key words: leisure farms, organic agriculture, organic farming, sustainable development

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