

CONSUMER'S PREFERENCES FOR APITOURISM

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Environmental damage and climatic crises are forcing humanity to adapt to the current productive and economic system. A relevant sector in the Spanish economy is tourism, whose activity is vulnerable to climate change and at the same time, contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases and ecosystems deterioration. The challenge of developing a sustainable tourism model is not easy since it involves ecological protection, economic development, and social benefits for local communities. The aim of this study is to analyze consumer preferences for apitourism activities and their willingness to pay. These activities intend to be a complementary touristic service to the beekeeper's work, to support their incomes. The scope of the study is Teruel where ecotourism might contribute to stimulating depressed and depopulated rural areas. The methodology used was a hypothetical choice experiment using a labeled design. Attributes correspond with five apitourism activities belonging to different groups of leisure possibilities: cultural, sport, gastronomy, nature, and wellness. An online questionnaire was prepared and sent to participants. The target group of consumers was from Cataluña, Madrid, Pays Vasco, Valencia, and Aragon, being these territories the main areas from which tourism comes in Aragon. In this work, we present the results from a preliminary sample of 100 individuals using a random parameter logit model to estimate preferences for different types of apitourism activities. Results show a higher preference for hiking, wellness, and honey tastings activities. The study might contribute with helpful information for beekeepers to make decisions to implement complementary activities to their main economic activity.

Keywords: apiculture, choice experiment, ecotourism