

# Identifying the characteristics of “Agricultural Heritage Systems Tourism”: The perspectives of hosts and guests

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Recognition towards Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) has been increasing in response to the global trends that reinforce traditional agricultural systems for global environmental conservation. As an effective adaptation tool to promote agricultural heritage systems’ “dynamic conservation”, Agricultural Heritage System Tourism (AHST) has been practiced and researched mainly in the East Asian region. While varieties of terms and concepts of tourism in GIAHS sites are mentioned in their proposals or/and action plans, common understandings of AHST is still minimal. Therefore, this study aims to identify the characteristics of AHST, for the stakeholders of existing GIAHS sites to set the direction of tourism development, as well as for the stakeholders of potential GIAHS sites to develop proposals and action plans for future designation.

The research framework is conceptualized from the aspects of hosts and guests of tourism. The characteristics of AHST are clarified by comparison with Japanese-style Green Tourism (GT) through the surveys to the experts of GIAHS, actual hosts and guests in AHST site, Noto’s satoyama & satoumi, Ishikawa and in GT site, Nantan City, Kyoto in Japan.

The study found out following four characteristics of AHST: 1) Hosts provides food and landscapes associated with local traditional knowledge as recreational/educational tourism services at designated Agricultural Heritage Systems sites to guests, mainly from the urban areas taking part in AHST less than five times a year.; 2) Hosts’ enterprise of recreational/educational tourism services or sales of agricultural, forestry and fishery products would self-sustain as a supplementary income source of agriculture, forestry and fishing or a primary income source of tourism.; 3) The purposes of the visit of guests are not only enjoying rural resources but also learning local traditional agriculture, forestry and fishery and associated agri-biodiversity and culture.; and 4) As “Experts” of AHST, government agencies and educational/research institutes play roles to conduct regular monitoring to check the quality and quantity of AHST to prevent them from disturbing the dynamic conservation of Agricultural Heritage Systems. Moreover, they are also suggested to support hosts to develop recreational/educational programs to learn local traditional agriculture, forestry and fishery and associated agri-biodiversity and culture.

The findings can be referred by stakeholders of existing GIAHS sites to utilize the designation for their tourism promotion, as well as by the stakeholders of potential GIAHS sites to develop proposals and action plans for their future appointment. It also helps practitioners and researchers of GIAHS develop monitoring framework of GIAHS concerning tourism development.