

Agritourism, a growing trend among SA farmers

According to Statistics SA, despite water shortages and the increase in fuel prices, the South African economy grew by 1.3% in 2017, with the agriculture industry experiencing a growth of 17.7% over the past year.



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While these figures relate to farmers making money from their produce, it's worth noting that South Africa's farmers are becoming more entrepreneurial and looking for innovative ways to make extra money. This is reflected in those using Airbnb to generate some extra income. Many farmers are finding they have buildings on their premises, which they can transform into accommodation.

This creates an extra source of income, diversifies business and brings in a new type of work – welcoming people from around the world.

In many ways, farms have become ideal for Airbnb guests. Set in beautiful countrysides, farms serve as excellent stops between destinations on long road trips and offer a unique insight into rural life. For travellers looking for an authentic, local experience, farm stays offer the perfect chance to meet local communities away from the typical tourist hotspots.

Expanding on experiences

Farm owner and Airbnb host Jacqui Pols says she has long used Airbnb when travelling around South Africa and overseas and has always loved staying in local homes. "Based on my own experiences, I thought it would be a nice platform to market my cottages on. We have had people stay in our cottages from all over the world. In this way, we have met many interesting people from around the world. Some of these people (now friends) have invited us to visit them in their homes when travelling to their country."

Benefits of listing on such booking platforms include reviews from guests, exposure to new potential guests around the world and extra income. In Mpumalanga, host Pieter Erasmus adds: "We were not expecting anything to happen. The biggest benefit, however, is the springboard to develop our farm into a tourism business."

"This is a fantastic way for visitors and locals to experience parts of South Africa that they would otherwise miss," says Velma Corcoran, country manager for Airbnb South Africa.

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