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**THE ROLE OF HONEY EXHIBITION ON RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF ISTRIAN REGION  
(CROATIA)**

***ABSTRACT***

*Evaluation and exhibition of agricultural food products are one of the means how producers can confirm the quality of their products and present themselves to their regular and potential consumers. Farmers' markets have existed around the world for centuries but many of them disappeared with the appearance of supermarkets. In recent years, in Croatia an increase in the number of exhibition and trade show related to agricultural and food product has happened, but also the growing interest of farmers and buyers, local residents and tourists, to purchase such products. The paper considers the role of evaluation and events of honey in the Istrian region since the beginning of their uniting as a part of rural tourism. Evaluation and presentation of honey in Istria was first organized in the county exhibition VINISTRA in Porec in 199, until 2004 when the regional government decided that the event of honey can be organized independently. From the year 2006 honey event were moved to Pazin and organized under the title "Days of Honey". From a tourism perspective, exhibition of agricultural food products*

*have the potential to generate regular and repeat visits from high spending visitors who are seeking quality foods produced by local producers, in contrast to the products that can be found in supermarkets. In the paper, in order to determine the trends, standard statistical methods were used for data analyzing of the participation of beekeepers and honey at all evaluations over the past 13 years. In addition, participants' opinions and thinking about these events were analyzed as well as generally the role and possibilities of such events in the popularization and development of these activities on the promotion of the area in which the events are organized.*

**Key words:** *event management, honey, Istria, rural tourism, rural development*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

So far in our country there was very little research related to the particular manifestations and gastronomic events. On the other hand foods, agricultural products, especially the typical products are becoming increasingly attractive to visitors and tourists and even can be a reason to travel or visit, to family farms or towns in order to taste or to purchased the typical products. In Istria, these trends have been identified so there are wine roads, olive oil roads and various manifestations which in the center of attention have food or agricultural products.

This paper contributes a review of the background literature, examining the importance of event tourism in Istria, analyzing the role of food festivals in the tourist destinations offer, by analyzing the attitudes of participants' towards food festivals and the significance of gastronomic events in rural development.

The aim of the paper is to examine the role of evaluation and events of honey in the Istrian region since the beginning of their organization. Evaluation and presentation of honey in Istria was first organized in the county exhibition VINISTRA in Porec in 1997 and last until 2004 when the regional government decided that the event of honey can be organized independently. From the year 2006 honey event were moved in Pazin and organized under the title "Days of Honey". We considered that in the evaluation events was interesting to get the opinion of previous and potential participants of the exhibition, so we created the questionnaire and collected data and then analyzed their opinions on which conclusions are derived.

In Croatia, the topics of event management and event tourism were not a major area of scientific interest by a large number of domestic researchers, thus making the research challenge even greater.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1. Event Management and Event Tourism**

Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives. Both in private and in public, people feel the need to mark the important happenings in their lives, to celebrate the key moments (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2004). Different forms and types of events, from political rallies, sports competitions and parties, to religious celebrations, are civilization heritage which is thousands of years old (Lawrence, 2002). The question is asked how to explain the vast history of events? According to Getz (2005, p. 5.) "Events are a fundamental and essential human experience, both rooted in culture and at the same time helping to define our civilizations". The term "festival" has been used for hundreds of years and can be used to cover a multitude of events. According to Bowdin et al. (2004, p. 5):

"A festival was traditionally a time of celebration, relaxation and recuperation which often followed a period of hard physical labor, sowing or harvesting of crops. The essential feature of these festivals was the celebration or reaffirmation of community or culture."

Special events are best defined by their context. Getz (2005, p. 15) offers two definitions, one from the point of view of the event organizer, and the other from that of the customer, or guest:

"A special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programmes or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body. To the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for a leisure, social or cultural experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience."

Based on their research which explored and developed a definitional framework for special events, Jago and Shaw (1998, p. 28) suggested a definition of special events:

"A one-time or infrequently occurring event of limited duration that provides the consumer with a leisure and social opportunity beyond everyday experience."

An entire global industry of festivals and events has evolved and developed since the early 1990s. According to Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond & McMahon-Beattie (2004) the phenomenal growth, coupled with increased consumer awareness and choice, requires the industry to manage the sector effectively and efficiently to ensure sustained development and growth in the future. Event management is a fast-growing professional area (Hede, Jago & Deery, 2002) in which tourists make a potential market

and tourist destinations become basic stakeholders in the process of event attracting and/or organization. Event management encompasses the planning and production of all types of events, including meetings and conventions, exhibitions, festivals and other cultural celebrations, sport competitions, entertainment spectacles, private functions, and numerous other special events (Getz, 2005). Throughout the world, the event industry records the highest growth and development within the tourist economic system. Goldbatt (2000) mentions four turning points which influenced the sudden growth of the event industry. The first turning point relates to the growth in world population and the second relates to technology advancement, which lead to individuals seeking greater experience in order to balance the influence of technology on their lives. The third turning point relates to the income inflow, which, on average, is limited in younger event participants as opposed to older participants. The last and the fourth turning point is closely associated with income and work position and relates to leisure. These four turning points: ageing, technology, income and time have dramatically influenced the growth in demand for a wide spectrum of events worldwide. Additional evidence of the event sector growing and maturing is in an increasing number of published scientific and expert articles, the number of scientific conferences held, workshops and summits on that topic, as well as an increasing number of events being staged in tourist destinations.

The concept of “event tourism” had not been widely used until the end of the '80s, when the New Zealand Tourist Office mentioned for the first time this term, publishing that it concerned a significant and fast growing segment of international tourism, following which a framework for its planning was developed (Getz, 2008). It is not surprising therefore that, even in an extremely complex economic system such as tourism which has itself relatively recently become the subject of wider and more comprehensive scientific interest, event research is a relatively new research area. Event tourism (Vukonić & Čavlek, 2001, p. 200) represents:

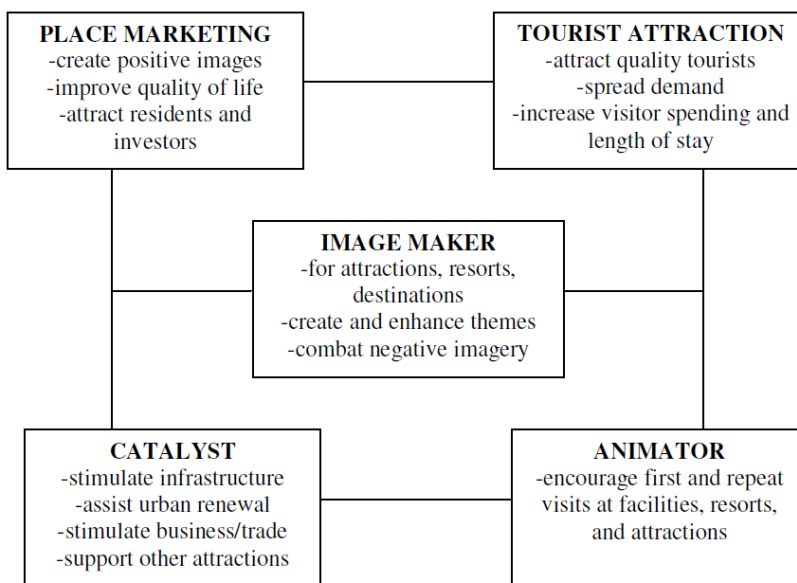
“All forms of tourist traffic motivated by the staging of different events of cultural, scientific, business, sports, entertainment and similar character and content.”

Event tourism is a term used mostly in tourism literature to describe a destination development and marketing strategy to realize all the potential economic benefits of events (Getz, 2005). In tourist destination offers, there are an increasing number of special events, whose creation and implementation are conditioned by strategic reasons, first of all, of an economic nature (Getz, 2007). However, the role of events in destination tourist offers is also significant due to their tourist, social and cultural functions (Getz, 2008), as well as their role in local and regional development

(Wood, 2005; Whitford, 2009; O’Sullivan, Pickernell & Senyard, 2009). Tourist event functions are manifested through the expansion of the destination tourist market (Priporas, 2005), extension of tourist stays in destinations, destination image building (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules & Ali, 2002; Xing & Chalip, 2006; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), enabling better destination promotion (Richards & Wilson, 2002; McDonnell & Gebhardt, 2002), attracting investment into destinations (Schulenkorf, 2010) and as an element of attraction and animation in the destination (Derret, 2002). By means of events, at the same time, the local culture, tradition and customs are evaluated (Hong, 2010), participant entertainment and recreation are ensured, social cohesion, cultural and social advancement (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Derret, 2000) as well as rural revitalization (Kenyon & Bank of I D.E.A.S, 2002). According to Lawrence (2002) such events are a useful way to strengthen otherwise weak community structures in a specific location and they also help to improve community togetherness, to increase social and cultural understanding and to improve community identity and self-confidence. Figure 1. shows the main tourism and economic roles of events.

**Figure 1**

**Economic and tourism roles of events**



Source: Getz, D.: Event Management & Event Tourism, 2nd Edition, Cognizant Communication Corporation, New York, 2005, p. 13.

All events are created for some purpose and, depending on what it is, there are different types and sizes of events. We distinguish four fundamental event categories. The first event category is made up of cultural celebrations (carnivals, festivals, religious events, folk celebrations), political and state events (summits, royal occasions, political events, VIP visits) and art and entertainment events (concerts, shows, exhibitions). The second category is made up of business and sales events (meetings, conventions, presentations, fairs) and educational and scientific events (conferences, seminars, consultations). The third event category is represented by sports competitions and recreational events (professional/amateur competitions, entertainment games), while the last category is made up of private events (weddings, parties, socializing) (Bodwin et al., 2004, Getz, 2005). Some events are dedicated to public celebrations and are usually composed of a wide diversity in their programming, trying to nurture civil pride and togetherness, while others are planned and held for the purposes of competition, enjoyment, entertainment, business or socializing. Events and special events can be categorized by size into mega-events, regional events, important events and smaller events (Van Der Wagner & Carlos, 2008). Mega-events are the biggest events directed towards the international market and have an international character. They include the Olympic Games, Football World Cup and Superbowl. For their goal, regional events have to increase tourist interest in a specific destination, whether it be a region, a town, a tourist location or tourist resort. An example is the Motovun film festival, which is held in Motovun. The concept of important events includes events which facilitate great financial benefits, arouse big community interest and attract large numbers of participants. An example is the Chinese New Year celebrations. The last category includes smaller events of a local character, which are held in almost every town and tourist location throughout the developed world. On such events, the organizers gain experience in the organization and management of various historical, cultural, music and other events.

Until recently, little attention was paid to the impacts which events have on the society and environment. However, as the society increasingly begins to understand those impacts, event management faces a challenge to become more responsible in its decision making, as well as to generate results which are sustainable. Event management key participants, organizers, sponsors, local government and self-government, visitors and event participants, as well as the local population, have the ethical and moral obligation to make events socially, economically and environmentally responsible (Getz, 2005), whilst responsible and sustainable events should attract moral tourists (Getz, 2009). As their goal, all of them together ought to create a unique, authentic,

nature oriented, high quality destination product, which will be sustainable in the long-term, out of numerous destination attractions. As sustainable events can also be defined as events which can limitlessly last without exploitation of or causing damage to dependable resources, as well as events which, by being staged, encourage positive changes on society and the environment in which they take place. The organizations which are faced by great challenges when it come to large events which include a large number of people have the key role in the planning and organization of sustainable events. However, the biggest event sustainability challenge represents the change in attitudes in the sense of the prevailing economic prejudices which are present in the area of event responsibility and sustainability. Overcoming of that challenge is possible as both the organizers and hosts increasingly understand the economic benefits which can be the result of adopting environmental management strategies (Bowdin, et al., 2004).

## **2.2. Culinary tourism and rural development**

Culinary tourism is a niche area of tourism studies that has grown rapidly in recent years in terms of tourism research and tourism product development. The culinary tourism niche market presents a new venture for destination marketing, which can improve the attractiveness of a destination without necessarily involving major new product development. According to Hall (2006, p. 303):

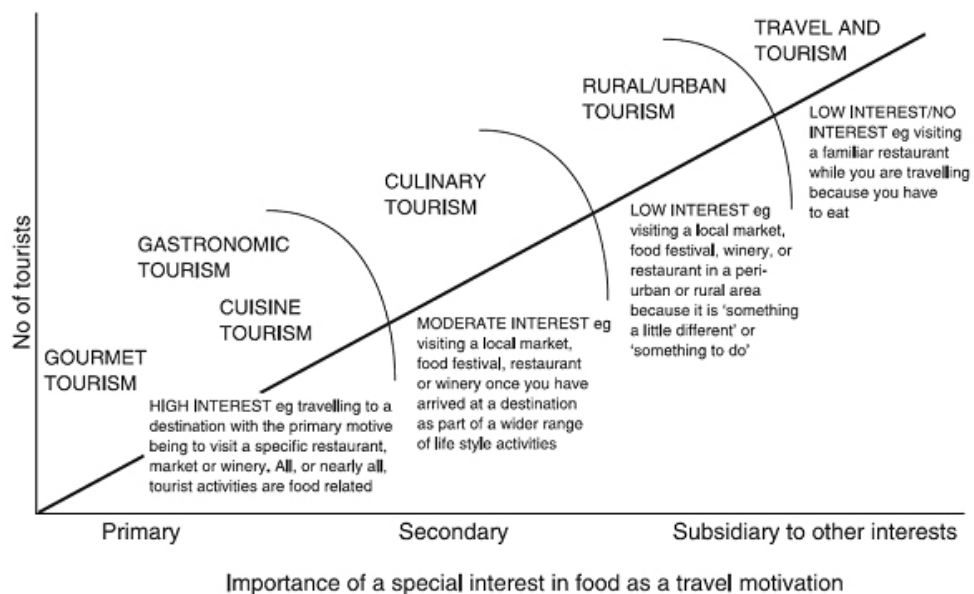
“Culinary tourism is typically regarded as especially important in rural areas because the relationship between food and tourism represents a significant opportunity for product and marketing development as well as for rural diversification and is often encouraged through the intervention of national and regional public agencies.”

A concept similar to culinary tourism is food tourism. Food tourism can be defined as visits to restaurants, wine or olive oil tasting venues, food festivals, primary and secondary food producers (Hall & Mitchell, 2006). Food tourism can also be viewed as a subsidiary of cultural tourism, with local cuisine as a product of the local culture and of the natural environment. Hall and Mitchell (2006, p.137) offers two perspectives, one from the perspective of the consumer, and one from a tourism production perspective:

“From the perspective of the consumer, food is an integral component of daily life and therefore of travel. From a tourism perspective, food offers potential for firm and destination marketing opportunities, specialized tourism products based on food experiences, and the possibility of enhancing economic linkages between tourism and agricultural production.”

**Figure 2**

## Culinary tourism as niche and special interest tourism



Source: Hall, C.M. & Mitchell, R. (2004): Gastronomic tourism, Comparing food and wine tourism experiences, In Novelli, M.: Niche Tourism, Contemporary issues, trend and cases, Elsevier, Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 74.

Based on the results of the research conducted in Australia, Tourism Queensland (2003, p.1) holds that, from the regional aspect, food tourism can be divided into a rural and an urban/city experience:

“The urban/city experience usually presents travellers with a wide variety of food tourism products, and convenience in the form of restaurant precincts and culturally distinct cuisine. Rural food tourism on the other hand is not usually considered as a developed tourism product. Activities such as visits to farms and farmers’ markets, fruit picking and agricultural farm accommodation may provide important supplemental activities to struggling rural areas.”

Apart from numerous tourist, economic, social and cultural event functions, food festivals, such as the exhibition of agricultural food products, enable the participants, who are also at the same time the producers, to build their image and promote and sell their own products, to establish relationships with other producers who participate in the exhibition, as well as to take part in the competition part of the event.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

The role of food festivals and their role in rural development in Istria to our knowledge was not studied. Food festivals in Istria became more and more important part of rural tourism. The aim of the paper was to investigate and determine the role of food festivals in Istria on rural development and especially on the example of honey festivals.

The task of the paper was to examine the main characteristics of food festivals in Istria and in particular to analyze the role of the festival "Days of Honey". For this purpose data was obtained from all honey festivals in Istria from 1998 to 2011. During this time there were changes in number and type of honey which were given to examination which was analyzed and interpreted in the paper. Additionally, we conducted the primary research for beekeepers who are attending school of beekeeping held in Pazin in May 2011. In total 40 questionnaires were collected.

For the field research, the questionnaire with 30 opened and close-ended questions has been prepared. The questionnaire was divided into several parts. The information asked from the respondents included socio-demographic variables (gender, age, level of education), general questions about beekeeping and the questions about importance to some statements about food festivals like "Days of Honey". Reasons for participation in exhibitions included 6 statements about promotion, relationship with other producers, image, sale, competition, and competitive nature of manifestations. Importance of elements that respondents considering before making a decision about participation included 12 statements about visitors motives, technical support, financial support, about organizer, media, cost and tradition. For evaluation of statements importance 7 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 7, were for example 1= totally irrelevant while 7= highly important was used. Obtained data were analysed with standard statistical methods, descriptive statistics. For data analysing SPSS statistical software and MS Excel were used.

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1. Analysis of food festivals in Istria**

Culinary tourism in Istria is particularly emphasized as one of the priorities of sustainable tourism development and, accordingly, the picture of culinary tourism is defined by the set guidelines (Dropulić Ružić, Luk, Saftić, Težak, Trošt, 2011, p. 364):

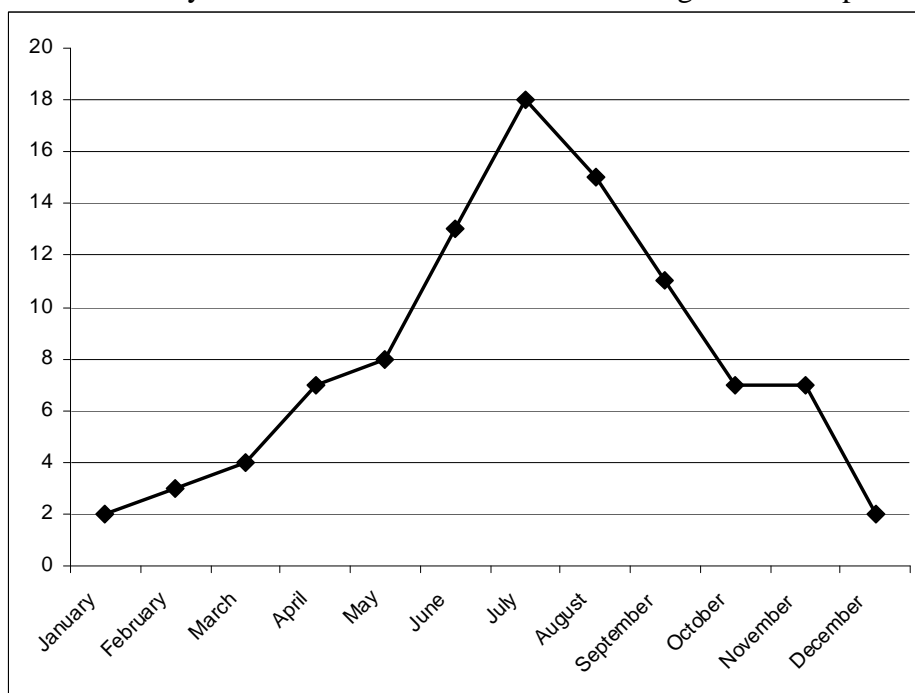
1. promotion of Istria as a recognizable and quality gastronomic destination;
2. promotion and tourist assessment of typical and original gastronomic products;
3. linking up of the largest possible number of quality caterers;
4. extension and enrichment of the tourist season;
5. Istria – a gastronomic weekend destination;
6. monitoring of world trends in tourism and gastronomy;
7. traditional heritage preservation, re-assessment of original Istrian recipes;
8. redirection of tourist flows to the central part of Istria;
9. encourage the development of good table culture and cuisine;
10. healthy eating – Mediterranean diet; and
11. linking of the primary sector with work-intensive tourist business.

One of the research goals is contained in obtaining reliable results on the fundamental characteristics of food festivals in the tourist destination of Istria. An attempt was made to gather data on the structure of food festivals according to the event time and geographic division scopes within seven clusters existing in Istria.

The research results indicate that in Istria, during the year 2011, a total of 72 food festivals will be held and that the most significant part of them will take place in the summer months (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

Analysis of food festivals in Istria according to time scope

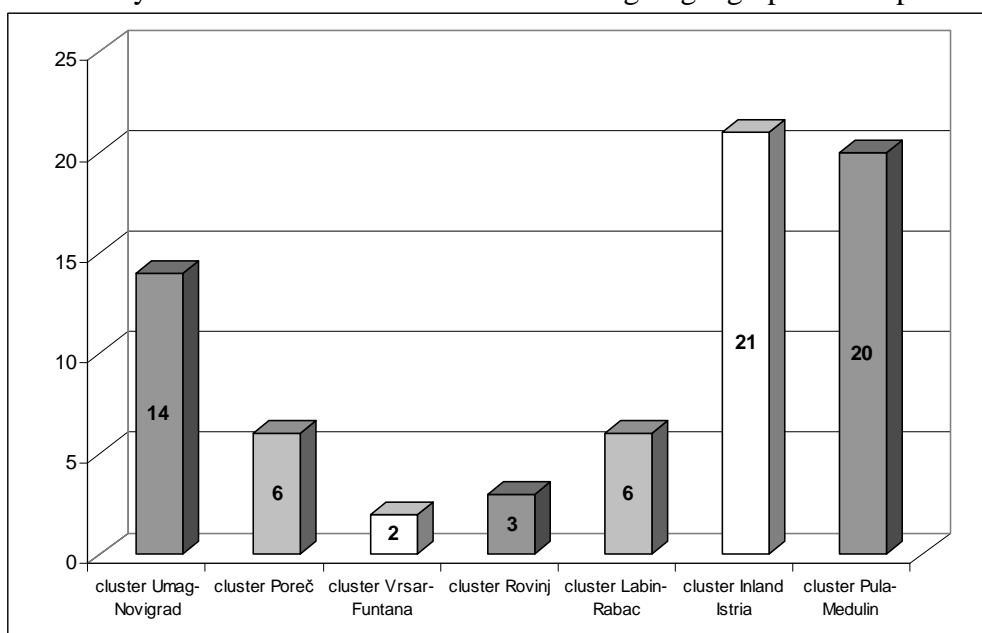


Source: adjusted according to Orlić, I. (2011): Regional identity in contemporary tourist offer of Istria, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy Croatia

The number of events will be slightly reduced in the period between September and March, while at the beginning of spring, a slight increase in the number of food festivals is recorded. The analyzed events are geographically directed to the cluster of Inland Istria (29.2%), cluster Pula–Medulin (27.8%) and to the cluster Umag–Novigrad (19.4%) (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

Analysis of food festivals in Istria according to geographical scope



Source: adjusted according to Orlić, I. (2011): Regional identity in contemporary tourist offer of Istria, (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy, Croatia

Taking into consideration the fact of the high tourist development of the Istrian west coast, a low number of food festivals held in the clusters of Poreč (8.3%), Vrsar – Funtana (2.8%), and the cluster of Rovinj (4.2%) are surprising. While, due to somewhat poorer tourist development of the Istrian east coast, the low number of food festivals held in the cluster of Labin–Rabac is justified up to a point (8.3%). The results of the research of Istrian food festivals, as well as of previous research from that area (Bessière, 1998; Hall, 2006, according to Hall & Mitchell, 2000) confirm the role of culinary tourism and food festivals in rural development, destination competitiveness, renewal of rural parts, as well as their revitalization and preservation of tradition.

#### **4.2. Honey exhibition and festivals in Istria**

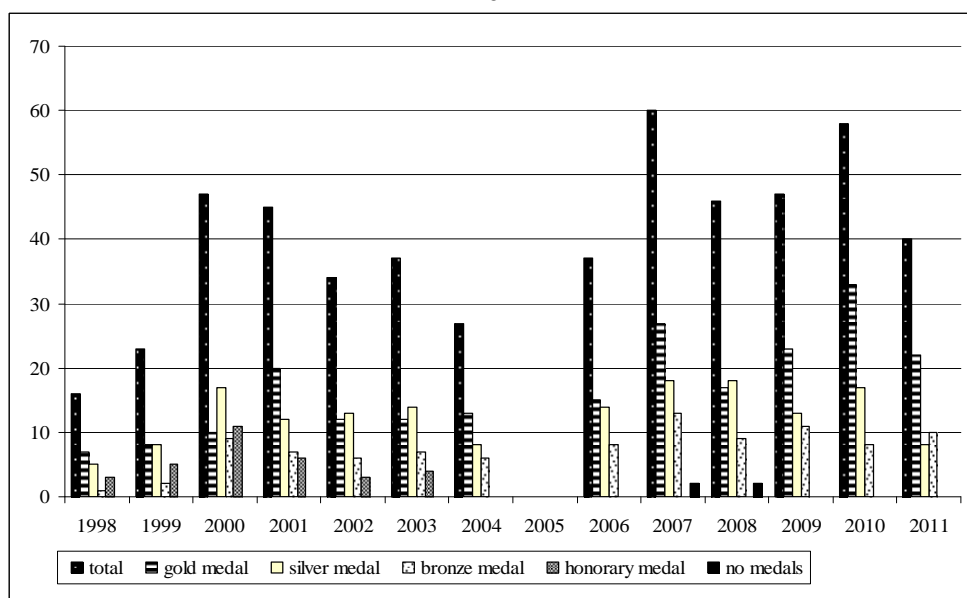
Evaluation and presentation of honey in Istria was first organized in the county exhibition VINISTRA held in Porec in the year 1998. That year under the common exhibitions was held 5<sup>th</sup> International exhibition of wines and winemaking equipment. On this exhibition the wine, strong alcohol drink

and bottles design were examined and represented for the 5<sup>th</sup> time. Olive oil was examined for 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Cheese was evaluated 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row. Istrian prosciutto 2<sup>nd</sup> year and this was the first year of evaluation and representation of honey (Vinistra, 1998). Evaluations of these products continued until 2004. In 2005 the evaluations of the honey were not held. From 2006 the evaluation of honey was organized in Pazin as independent exhibition and evaluation under the name "Days of honey".

In 2011 was held 6<sup>th</sup> time in a row "Days of honey" on which among other were introduced the initiative on proclaiming the town Pazin as a town of honey and regarding the fact that this year Beekeeping society from Pazin celebrates 100 anniversary of existence. The number of applicants and types of honey at the beginning were small but the exhibition soon became a very interesting event for beekeepers and visitors. In Figure 5 it can be seen the total number of applicants for the evaluation of honey, and won gold, silver and bronze medals. It should be noted that honey is a specific product that in generally is not processed, except in the case of a creamy honey, but the skills of beekeepers get to a product specific characteristics, such as for example acacia honey, which satisfies the Regulations on the quality of honey. Elimination of honey may be related to a fact that in a sample of honey is more pollen grains of other plants, which means that characteristics of honey are not entirely in terms of high sensory value, or typical for acacia. Of course this does not mean that the honey has a lower nutritional value, it just do not deserve the top ranking for honey of acacia.

**Figure 5**

Number of honey and medals on exhibitions of honey in Istria from 1998 to 2011

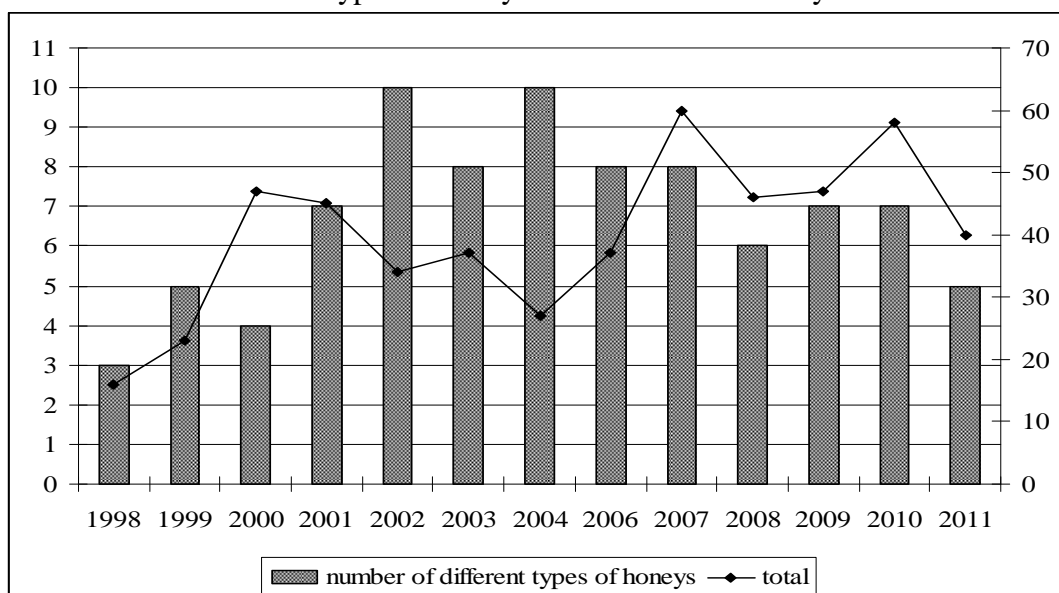


Source: Catalog of „Vinistra“ from 1998-2004 and Catalog of „Days of Honey“ from 2006-2011

From figure 5 it can be seen that the first year there was a total of 16 applications of honeys of which 7 get gold medals, 5 silver medals and three honorary medals. The number of applications on the evaluation of honey has increased so in the third year 47 samples were registered. Most samples of honey were in year 2007 with 60 samples of honey, while this year 40 samples were registered. It can be said that the quality of honey was stable and the number of gold medals in the total number of applicants in recent years were increasing.

**Figure 6**

Number of different types of honey on exhibitions of honey in Istria



Source: Catalogue of Vinistra from 1998 – 2004, and Catalog of „Days of Honey“ from 2006-2011

Over the years the number of different types of honey increased. The first year 3 types of honey were evaluated: acacia, sage and chestnut trees. In 2002 and 2004 10 different types of honeys were reported. In 2011, 5 different types of honey were evaluated, honeys from: acacia, sage, floral honey, honeydew (medljika) and honey from the ivy (figure 6).

### 4.3. Opinion of beekeepers about honey festivals in Istria

#### 4.3.1. Sample characteristics

From the total respondents, 12.5% were women and 87.5% were men. According to age group, in the sample were 25% (10 respondents) in the age group from 46-66 years, followed by the age group of 26-35 years 20% (8 respondents), from 36-45 and 56-65 age category were 7 respondents or 17.5%, in age group up to 25 years of age were 15% (6 respondents) and in the age group over 66 years were 5% or 2 respondents. According to the highest level of education most of them had secondary education 50% (20 respondents), followed with a college degree 30% (12 respondents), and high school diploma 17.5% (7 respondents) and with primary education 2.5% (1 respondent). Participants of beekeeping school were beekeeper beginners in relation to those who are involved in beekeeping for 40 years. On average,

participants were involved in beekeeping for about 9 years ( $M = 8.95$ ,  $SD = 9.69$ ). Beekeepers have 4-150 hives with average about 29 hives per beekeeper ( $M = 28.76$ ,  $SD = 35.17$ ). Type of hives which are commonly used were LR (Langstroth-Root) in 72.5% of cases, AZ (Alberti - Žnidaršić) hive 15%, the combined LR and AZ using 5%, the combined LR and DB (Dadan Blat) 2.5% and 5% is not declared the hive type. The respondents have hives throughout the Istria region.

#### 4.3.2. Participation on honey festivals

Of the total respondents, 72.5% (29 respondents) did not before participated on exhibitions, 22.5% (9 respondents) has participated in evaluations and 5% (2 respondents) was not declared. On average, this was  $M = 0.9$  ( $SD = 2.02$ ), per respondent. One respondent has participated 10 times in the evaluation what was the maximum in this sample. To the question how important consider participation on exhibitions the respondents have given an average grade 5 ( $SD = 1.62$ ), ie 40% of respondents gave a rating of 5, while 32.5% gave grade 6 and 7 which means that the respondents believe that the participation in exhibitions is very important. In the next table were offered to statements of the reasons for participating on exhibitions.

**Table 1**

What are the reasons for participation on exhibitions (1= totally irrelevant while 7= highly important)

Rank		Mean	SD
1.	Promotion	5,18	1,69
2.	Building relationships with other producers	4,85	1,61
3.	Image building	4,58	1,85
4.	Sales of own products	4,50	2,17
5.	Get acquainted with competition	4,25	1,77
6.	The competitive nature of manifestations	3,48	2,03

Source: Research results

How respondents rate the reasons for participating on exhibition can be seen in table 1. Promotion was one of the most important reasons to participate in exhibitions with an average grade of 5.18, followed by building relationships with other producers, then building the image and in the fourth place the sale of its products. Respondent's least important reason was the competitive nature of manifestations which they grade in average as 3.48 grades.



What elements are important to respondents in making decisions about participation on exhibitions such as "Days of honey", are listed in table 2 according to rank.

**Table 2**

The importance of the elements in the decision about participation on exhibitions such as "Days of honey" (1= totally irrelevant while 7= highly

Rank		Mean	SD
1.	Knowing the motives for visiting (vacation, entertainment, learning through exhibitions, tasting food and beverage, quality time spent with family and friends ...)	4,58	1,92
2.	Technical support of manifestations organizer	4,25	2,01
3.	Knowledge of financial and organizational support from the County	4,15	2,19
4.	Knowledge of financial and organizational support from a local government	4,15	2,15
5.	Knowledge of organizer, the host - the community, sponsors, media partners, other participants	4,00	1,88
6.	Forecasts of the number of visitors (domestic and foreign)	3,98	1,94
7.	Costs of participation on the event (the stand costs, costs of design / decoration)	3,90	1,88
8.	Knowing the profile of visitors (age, gender, profession, education, income, state / city of arrival)	3,83	1,72
9.	Knowing the financial support of sponsors	3,80	2,03
10.	Media coverage of manifestations	3,75	1,97
11.	Staff costs for the event (salaries, fees, travel expenses)	3,65	1,67
12.	Tradition (number of years that manifestation has been held)	3,15	2,05

important)

Source: Research results

Respondent's were offered elements that were supposed to evaluate as most important, which is often mentioned in literature. As most important respondents rated knowledge of the motives for visiting with an average grade of 4.58, the technical support of organizer (M = 4.25) and knowledge of financial and organizational support of county and local government (M = 4.15). Other elements were rate as less important and as the least important element for respondents were tradition (M=3,15).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The research determined that in Istria exist several food festivals and in 2011 will be organized 72 festivals. Most of them are taking place in less developed tourist areas, namely in tourism develop areas has less number of food festivals. It can be said that the research results point out that the role of culinary tourism and food festivals have positive impact on development as it was point out by other researchers in the paper. Furthermore most of the food festivals were organized in the summer months. "Days of honey" were held in February. At that time beekeepers don't have a lot of work with the bees but also at that time is a *dead* season and event is a good chance to attract visitors. Regardless of the reasons it can be concluded that the number of participants in the evaluation and participation in honey festival was more or less balanced, while on the other hand the number of visitors according to organizer increases every year (Rimanić, 2011). The main reasons for participation on exhibitions for beekeepers were promotion and building relationships with other producers, while competitors' character of manifestations was less important. The most important element in the decision on the participation for beekeepers was knowledge of the motives of visitors, and support of county and local governments. These were important insights for future organizers of the honey festival.

In the end, it can be concluded that honey exhibition has an important role in the development of the Istrian rural areas, ie, Pazin in which honey festival is organize and beyond, and in two main ways. First it motivates the arrival of visitors to the destination, which in February, probably would not have been visited by many people, and opens the possibility of promoting and selling products from local beekeepers in the area.

#### Further research

Based on the obtained results it would be interesting to explore the tourist and visitors motives for visiting, which beekeepers themselves have highlighted as an important element in deciding to participate.

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