

RURAL TOURISM IN VILLARRICA'S (CHILE) COMMUNE. INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Rural tourism is an activity that is emerging as an engine for the development of rural communities which is a complement to their traditional productive activities allowing them to use the cultural, culinary, historic and scenic resources available. Based on this premises the research aimed to analyze the role of public institutions, their relationships with local entrepreneurs and in turn, characterize the small farmers engaged in rural tourism, know their perception of local government institutions and, the limitations and benefits that characterize their activity. For this semi-structured interviews were conducted with government officials as well as tourism entrepreneurs who were selected through the snowball technique. The main results show the bad perception people have of public management, which is considered as limiting the exercise of the activity, the existence of rules that are not applicable to the rural economy. However, despite the negative perception of the public officials, they consider that rural tourism has reported an improvement in their life quality as well as strengthen their cultural identity.

KEYWORDS: *rural tourism, tourism entrepreneurs, public institutions, Villarrica, Chile.*