



The entire project group: Kick-off meeting, Wilhelmglücksbrunn in Kreuzburg (Germany)

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The MAIE Project and Vision

The MAIE project „Multifunctional Agriculture in Europe – Social and Ecological Impacts on Organic Farms“ consists of representatives from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Finland and Germany.

Our vision is to develop a variety of ways of spreading knowledge about social farming by:

- promoting the social farming movement,
- supporting rural areas to work in well-organized networks,
- developing fields of social work in combination with agriculture, and
- establishing links between movements and activities in Europe.

Multifunctional agriculture and social farming provides opportunities for individual personal development and promotes quality of life. It fosters a sustainable approach to managing nature and the revitalisation of rural areas. Social farming involves many individuals working together according to common ideals and social values to develop small-scale alternatives to highly rationalised farming and fierce competition on prices.

In the long term, multifunctional agriculture opens up the prospect of a potential paradigm shift.



Multifunctional Agriculture in Europe

Social and Ecological
Impacts on Organic Farms

www.maie-project.eu

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Innovative Project Character



PICTURE: THURINGER OCHOERZ E.V.

Antoniusheim in Fulda (Germany)

The aim of this project is to develop a new multilingual curriculum on multifunctional agriculture using an e-learning format (80 hours online/40 hours practical training on a social farm), culminating in an International Summer School as a pilot-course and the development of Competence Centres on Social Farming in each country, as well as a trans-national virtual Competence Centre. The basis of our work is a prior analysis of training needs. Using a questionnaire to be completed by a consortium of experts (Focus Group) in each country, a final “expert text” and curriculum will be developed. During this process practitioners and scientists throughout Europe will work together and learn from each other through an exchange of ideas, practical solutions and experience with a view to developing innovative ideas and solutions suitable for practical application. The project supports the training and qualification of different target groups (farmers, social workers and trainers in the health, social work and justice sectors) working on social farms. We will employ innovative methodologies to support multifunctional farming approaches across Europe. All partners will benefit from each other through trans-national exchange and the mutual development of the social farming movement in each participating country.

What is Multifunctional Agriculture?

Agriculture is no longer solely about the process of food production. The modern day role of agriculture must take into account:

- influences resulting from market liberalisation,
- changes in consumer preferences and consumer concerns,
- the emergence of low-cost producer countries on the global market,
- the relationship between nature, tradition, recreation, culture and the historical background of land use.

Traditional mixed farming is augmented by a variety of different activities including social and educational activities, health and healing services, eco-tourism, cultural opportunities, (preventative) environmental conservation or the active marketing of farming produce. Agriculture becomes multifunctional.¹



PICTURE: THURINGER OCHOERZ E.V.

Biohof Aga in Gera (Germany)

¹ Van Huylenbroek, Guido/Durand, Guy: Multifunctional agriculture: A new paradigm for European agriculture and rural development, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., Hampshire 2003

Defining Social Farming

Social farming is one field of multifunctional agriculture, that includes:

- health and healing services,
- education and therapy,
- rehabilitation and social fields.



PICTURE: MIT

Elonkierto Park in Jokioinen (Finland)

Organic farming offers numerous possibilities for people to participate in the daily routine of farms, for example through gardening or animal husbandry. Social farming encompasses agricultural cooperatives and market gardens that aim to integrate different sections of society, for example disabled or mentally handicapped people, long-term unemployed persons, drug addicts or socially disadvantaged people, people with chronic psychological difficulties, delinquents, children and juveniles with behavioural and learning difficulties. In addition there are farms that focus on integrating old people, schoolchildren or nursery school children. The aim of social farming is to provide a better, more inclusive quality of life.²

² www.soziale-landwirtschaft.de/pettrarca_media/rundbriefe/Projektrundbrief

Social Farming in Europe³

The degree to which social farming has developed throughout Europe differs according to the situation in the respective country.

Pioneer status – several projects are being developed that implement social farming concepts:

- Slovenia
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic

Moderately developed status – the number and diversity of social farming projects is growing, specific user networks are developing and consolidating but political backing and financial support is not yet guaranteed:

- France
- Finland
- Portugal
- Germany

Well developed status – the health and healing sector has discovered social farming as source of therapy and employment, farmers have realised that it offers a potential source of income and have made fields accessible, the statutory framework is well developed and subsidies are becoming available:

- Italy
- The Netherlands

Officially recognized status – scientists, stakeholders and representatives of ministries of health, agriculture and employment are co-operating; social farming initiatives are supported by policy:

- Norway

³ Hassink, Jan / van Dijk, Maijken: Farming for Health across Europe – Comparison between countries, and recommendations for a research and policy agenda in Farming for Health, R. J. Bogers / Frontis – Wageningen International Nucleus for Strategic Expertise – Wageningen University and Research Centre, Wageningen, The Netherlands 2005.