Care Farming State-of-the-Art
National Report

POLAND

Developed by Rural Development Department,
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1. Theoretical background of care farming in POLAND

Social farming, also known as green care or farming for health is an innovative approach integrating social services into the trend of multifunctional agriculture. Social farming faces a wide range of problems of contemporary civilization and responds to the social challenges implicated by social stratification, ageing, development of civilization-related diseases, including mental disorders and addictions, increasing pathologies, social dysfunctions and problems on the labor market. Farms, especially small with their unique attitudes, technical potential and usually having free social capital gain a new chance to fulfil functions complementing global educational, social or health care systems.

There is a specified potential for social farming concerning the demography situation and actual social care system, agricultural sector and trends in rural entrepreneurship development in Poland:

- Poland is a medium-sized Central-European country of the total land area 312 700 km² and population is 38.4 mln people. In terms of population and area Poland occupies 6th place in the EU-28. One of the most important challenges in Poland is unfavourable demographic trend, because of the significant increase in the proportion of elderly people in society. Currently in Poland there are almost 9 million people over 60, in 2020 the number of seniors will approach 10 million (25% of the population).

- The largest component of Polish economy is the service sector (64%), followed by industry (33.4%) and agriculture (2.6%). GDP growth was 3.94% in 2015 and GDP per capita in 2016 was 48.208 PLN. The total unemployment rate is decreasing and in 1st quarter 2017 it was 5.4% however generally, in rural areas unemployment rate is higher than in urban areas (6.0% / 5.0%).

- Rural areas, apart from their traditional roles as food producers, gained importance as the space for business operations not related to agriculture. In terms of the agricultural population, Poland holds 1st place in the European Union, as well as 2nd place (after Romania) in terms of the number of agricultural holdings. Polish agriculture is characterized by large fragmentation. The overall number of holdings is dominated by those of an area less than 10 ha (nearly 73%), which use 27.8% of cultivated land. Polish agriculture is characterized by a large differentiation in the regional configuration, determined by a number of factors, both agri-climatic and socio-economic. Therefore, in Poland there are specialized farms with large scale production and high efficiency but first of all there are small and medium size farms. For the second group the social farming could be potential opportunity for new source of income.

- Contemporary transformations in rural areas are characterised by an increase in social and economic activity of the inhabitants. The growing number of non-agricultural enterprises is one of the most significant trends and the importance of non-agricultural operations in rural holdings income increases. In 2014, more than 97% of national business entities conducting business activities in rural areas belonged to the private sector.

- There is slow, but visible popularization of the multifunctional farm model, especially in the group of small holdings. Non-agricultural businesses directly related to the holding were conducted by 3.2% of holdings producing mainly for the market and 2.3% – mainly for the needs of the household (including only 1.7% – only for own needs). Holdings...
producing mainly for own needs conduct mainly activities like: agritourism, handicraft, food processing and agricultural contract works while aquaculture, production of renewable energy and direct marketing were more popular among commodity holdings.

- Support for services stimulating the development of non-agricultural functions of agricultural holdings, like tourism, education, health care, etc. has been included in the “Strategy for responsible development until 2030” accepted by the Polish government in February 2017. It creates the new chances for the social farming sector development in Poland.

2. Care farm experiences in Poland

In the past few years the idea of social farming had been introduced in Poland. In spite of being a new concept there are a broad range of different practices that combine agriculture with professional social services for a longer time. There are the initiatives of private entities or charity, church or non-governmental organizations. Following the European Economic and Social Committee opinion by defining social agriculture for the report we have assumed four types of social farms, depending on the target group and diversified purposes:

- care farms providing care services,
- therapy farms undertaking therapeutic and re-educational activities,
- inclusive/social farms concerned about social and employment inclusion,
- educational/didactic farms undertaking pedagogical activities.

Recently the important discussion on innovative new concept of social farming and multisectoral policy challenges have been obtain in national projects.

- The pioneer initiative of SF at the national level was undertaken in early 2000’s by the Krakow Branch of Agricultural Advisory Center. Looking for a new employment opportunities for rural inhabitants and additional income for farmers AAC developed a concept of educational services as specialization of agritourist farms first, but then the concept was extended to educational services in agricultural farms in general. Project supported by the Polish Ministry of Agriculture allowed to identify existing educational farms initiatives as well as potential to develop in the future and to establish contacts and good practices exchange with European organizations with a greater degree of advancement in this field, such as French “Benvenue a la Ferme”, Austrian “Schule am dem Buernhof” or Swiss “Scuola in Fattoria”. The project which involved a group of interdisciplinary experts results in the creation in 2012 of the Polish National Educational Farms Network (described more detailed in chapter 3).

- In 2009 – 2012 Warsaw University of Life Sciences took part in the EU Leonardo da Vinci Project DIANA - Disability In sustainable Agriculture: a New Approach for training of practitioners (project number 504094-LLP-1-2009-1-IT-LEONARDO-LMP) leaded by the University in Boulogne. The field of the project was the training for the practitioners who work with mental or psychiatric disabled employed (or available to be employed) in agriculture. Project developed a curriculum for farmers being interested to integrate social work into their farming concept. Due to the DIANA project the professional training on using of horti-therapy in disabilities treatment in Poland were started. Now all main state agricultural universities in Poland (Krakow, Poznan, Olsztyn,
Lublin) offers horticultural therapy as courses, specializations on basic or postgraduate studies.

- The project “Care Farms - building the co-operation network” carried out by ACC Kraków in 2016-2017 was aimed to spread the idea of care farming among Polish agricultural advisors and farmers. Over the course of the project there were several trainings and meeting for people interested in care farming. Furthermore, a leaflet and brochure were published to inform about the concept of care farms in Poland. The project involved activities, like * Working on the concept of care farming in Poland, * Training for the agricultural advisors, * Information and training meeting for farmers and their family members, * Publication of the leaflet informing about the concept of care farming in Poland, * Research and complied report about interest in care farming among farmers and their family members. Project has started the wide discussion on creating system solutions in Poland that responds to the problem of the increasing number of elderly people requiring care including the potential of care farms.

- “Social Farming Best Practice Collection in Visegrad Countries” was the international project conducted in 2016-2017 by international team including ACC in Krakow. The overall objective was to collect and present social farming best-practices from Visegrad countries (V4: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) taking into account a number of key factors including comparable agricultural position in Europe in relation to geography and market factors, common structural conditions for achieving successful social farm systems-operation, similar difficulties and challenges stemming from pre-regime change practices and post-transition privatisation. A collection of V4 best-practices permits a constructive comparison study with the well-documented western and northern patterns, and is expected to assist in outlining the successful future operation of social farms under the legal framework of the Central and Eastern European Visegrad countries.

3. Brief description of significant case studies in POLAND

- **Case nr 1. – CARE FARMS – Care farms in Tuchola region**

  Kuyavian-Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre (KPODR) has undertaken activities related to the reorientation of farmworkers and their family members since 2008. Direct inspiration of actions for developing care farms in the region, were attempts of this type of activity undertaken in 2002-2004 in Podkarpacie and Lubelszczyzna region. In 2013 KPODR Minikowo began talks with the owners of agritourism farms from the area of Tuchola Forest affiliated to the Association of Agrotouristic Farms "Tuchola Forest" about the possibility of extending their activities with caring functions. In 2014, they began to prepare the concept of creating a care farms in Tuchola Forest based on the Dutch experience. They developed assumptions of care farms in Tuchola Forest (Individual Plans of Creation Care Farms), and made individual review of farms for compliance with the technical requirements of individual rooms and the entire space ultimately offered to the charges. They also made a preliminary financial analysis transform agricultural or working farm to caring activities. As a result of the described activities carried out within the international cooperation, farmers in Tuchola Forest attempt to create
care farms, in some cases very advanced, because already they take the first charges. They could be treat as models possible to implement in the existing legal status in Poland. Care farms in the Tuchola Forest are the experiment and basis to create other solutions, the implementation of social agriculture in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian region and Poland. For many agrotouristic farms this direction of specialization may become in the future a real opportunity for development, while acting an alternative form of care for the growing multitude of older people requiring support. The temporary project (2016-2018) is concern the creation and functioning of 15 nursing homes providing care to 75 people, 8 hours. daily, 5 days a week.

- Case nr 2 – THERAPY FARMS – Farm of Life [Farma Życia] in Więckowice

The Farm of Life, located in a small village near Krakow, has been developed by the Community of Hope Foundation, a non-governmental organization focused on the problems of adults with autism since 1998. It is the pioneer and the only residential centre for adults with autism in Poland to date. In this Social Enterprise adult autistic people are employed. This enterprise is aimed at picking fruits and vegetables and afterwards selling those products gathered on their ecological farm as well as selling their own preserves. Both packages and labels are going to be produced for mentioned products. Employers on Farm of Life are working on Ecological farm as well as in workshops: household (at the same time food processing plant) and production of packages. By participating in that long-term project, residents and other adults with autism are able to engage in vocational training to prepare them for the open job market, as well as participate in trade and handcraft workshops and work on an organic farm. Some of the clients also benefit from professional training and apprenticeships conducted outside the centre. In the years of its operation, the Farm has proven that this kind of solution is not only beneficial and effective, but that it is necessary. This unique project is very valuable to the society as it allow autistic people to become both part of the society and labour market. It has got also an ecological value.

- Case nr 3 – THERAPY FARMS – PSHO Polish Donkey Breeders Association for the Development of Breeding and Onotherapy [Polskie stwarzyszenie Hodowców Oslów na rzecz Rozwoju Hodowli o Onoterapii]

Many new types of animal-assisted-therapy have appeared recently, with a growing importance of farm animals like bees, alpacas or donkeys. Onotherapy - donkey therapy - refers to a technique that uses the special character of donkeys in therapy. Thanks to donkey’s calm and confident temperament, hyperactive people or with behavioral or emotional problems manage to establish a form of "dialogue" and relationship which would otherwise remain inaccessible.

PSHO Association is a group of people from all over Poland, who have combined a common passion, life goals and priorities associated with donkey breeding. The need to exchange experience and knowledge gave birth to the idea of creating an organization that would associate and support the environment of breeders and donkey lovers.

The association works, among others, for: * popularizing the idea of breeding and onotherapy in society, * undertaking activities for the promotion and development of onotherapy in Poland, * actions for the development of tourism, agritourism, development and
strengthening of attitudes aimed at active spending of free time, eg. through donkey trips, sports activities with donkeys, onotherapy.

At the moment there are six farms breeding donkeys and mules under patronage of PSHO. In 2017 started the first professional onotherapy course in Poland "Fundamentals of Onotherapy", completed with a certificate approved by Ministry of Education.

**Case nr 4 – THERAPY FARMS – Open by Horse**

There has been a well-established importance of hippotherapy in prevention and rehabilitation, however “Open by Horse” - Horse Assisted Education is an innovative educational concept in which horses support the development of personal and professional competencies. It is a relatively new idea in Poland with growth perspective. It changes the approach to the notion of therapy that goes beyond work only with people with disabilities as well as give a new insights into the potential of horses in therapy. During workshops horses help people to experience their though, emotions and realize the way of acting.

The Open by Horse activities are undertaken by a few independent but cooperating centres in Poland now. Horse Assisted Education workshops are offered as a separate comprehensive training or they are a part of a wider program of stay on the farm. They usually last 8 – 16 hours. Exercises are performed individually, in pairs or in small groups and are tailored for the individual needs of the participants. Participants can be both, adults and children.

Horses are herd animals with a very well developed communication system expressed in body language. They are characterized of an unusual sensitivity to the signals coming from the environment and the speed of response. During the workshop horses perform the role of co-trainers giving direct feedback on the emotions, attitudes, efficiency of communication and the effectiveness of the participants actions in the workshops. Being in contact with horses helps to get to those decks of one's own psyche, which are not heard every day.

**Case nr 5 – INCLUSIVE FARMS – Settlement of Dun Teddy Bear [Osada Burego Misia]**

The Settlement of Dun Teddy Bear is a farm and a home for the disabled adults (called ‘dun teddy bears’) whose parents died or can’t care of them and for their healthy carers (called dun bears). There are usually 45 people living in the settlement, including 26 ‘dun teddy bears’. It is a charity initiative managed by the catholic community created and directed by the priest Czesław Marchewicz from the Resurrectionist Congregation. The community run the almost 40 hectares farm where they grow cereals and vegetables, breed cattle and small livestock.

The settlement is a well-organized farm that maintains its dependents from the processing and sale of agricultural crops. The settlement holds 20 Jersey and Simental dairy
cattle. Cows produce 200 liters of milk daily. The farm processes all this production in a cheese manufactory. There are various types of cheese produced. This process produces 180 liters of whey. It goes to several sows in the green paddocks and pigs. Pork from them is processed and sold as their own cold meats. They process the milk in its own cheese manufactory for self-supply and for trade. They also run agritourism. All the job is done by the community members and it is a part of their life. They share responsibilities according to their individual skills and abilities. Farming revalidates and restores of the natural riches of human life.

The inhabitants of the settlement live in four different buildings, eat together and spend their free time in four living rooms. The community is divided into small groups run by one caregiver (dun bear). These small families are included in the draft of duties, which concern the preparation of meals, cleaning their rooms and the common space of life. Small groups decide on their leisure time, planning to go to the cinema, cafes or shopping.

Daily household chores according to the schedule of duties are both everyday life and social inclusion:
* Work on the farm that gives the rhythm of everyday life, * Food processing baking a bread, fruit drying, juice making, tomato and ketchup cooking, herbs drying, celery and parsley freezing, pickle of vegetables, * Work at the cheese manufactory, * A holiday camp, when to the settlement another ‘dun teddy bears’ with their families arrive from different parts of Poland for common holidays, * Touristic excursions, sometimes abroad using the money earned from the sale of crops and services.

The essence of the initiative is the conviction that people should create small communities that give them identity and affiliation and thus relationships in a large community, social inclusion.

CASE nr 6 – DIDACTIC FARMS – Polish National Educational Farms Network
[Ogólnopolska Sieć Zagród Edukacyjnych]

The concept of an educational farm and its market identification under the name of ‘Zagroda Edukacyjna’ [educational farm] was defined as a result of a national project in 2011. An educational farm is defined as a facility located in a rural area and providing educational activities based on agricultural and rural potential, especially in crop production, animal production, food processing, ecological and consumer awareness, rural culture heritage, traditional professions, handicrafts and folk arts. The facility should have farm animals or crop plantations for presentation to groups of children and youth, who visit the farm as part of their
school curriculum or as part of their extracurricular activities, or the animals or plantations should be shown as a tourist attraction to families with children or to individual adult travelers. Every educational farm provides at least two of subjects pointed below:

1. **Educational programmes in crop production** help participants to discover, feel and experience the biodiversity of the world of plants, learn about traditional and modern cultivation methods, lifecycles, dependences between farming systems and natural ecosystems. This involves a wide range of discoveries of shapes, forms, colours, smells and tastes as well as lifecycles and metabolisms.

2. **Education in animal production** encompasses learning about the life of animals, sightseeing tours of farm buildings, learning about appliances and tools, breeding systems, the use of animals and their vital functions. The programme is adjusted to schoolchildren’s age. Contact with animals teaches children to be sensitive and selfless, trains them how to take on responsibilities and stimulates their cognitive needs.

3. **Education in crop processing** encompasses presentations and workshops showing milk, meat, cereals and seasonally, vegetables and fruit and their way from the production and harvesting of the raw material to the final attractive dainty or utility item. The activities teach not only the processing methods, but they also teach respect for the producer’s work by experiencing the production effort.

4. **Education in ecological and consumer awareness** provides information about the origin and nutritional value of the farm products. This type of education teaches participants how
to distinguish between natural and highly processed industrial products and it develops their consumer habits.

5. **Education in rural material culture heritage, traditional professions, handicrafts and folk arts** is based on the richness of material and spiritual culture of rural areas. It offers attractive activities involving artistic, culinary or even entertainment practice.

The didactic programs take the form of demonstrations, workshops and exercises. The visit on an educational farm can last just a few hours or can be organized as a multi-day stay in a farm with accommodation.

The Polish National Educational Farms Network is coordinated by the Agricultural Advisory Centre, Krakow Branch. The ACC qualifies and admits new members to the Network and runs a database of educational farms on the Network website, provides members with knowledge and methodological materials, organizes periodic trainings and promotes the educational farm offer at promotional events, fairs and by mass-media. The AAC manages the "Zagroda Edukacyjna" brand and takes care of consistent visualization (according to the decision of the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland, since 2014 the wordmark ‘EDUCATIONAL FARM’ and its logo have been protected by law).

There are 240 certified Educational Farms all over the country to the date. It is estimated that ca. 20% of the educational farms has already provided or is able to provide the therapeutic activities for people with disabilities.

4. **Institutions involved in case of regional or national systems and legislation**

The **social care system** in Poland consists of units of central and local administration in cooperation with e.g. NGO-s. The concept and strategy of social policy as well as legal regulation and defining standards services provided by social assistance are created by the Minister of Family, Labor and Social Policy. The local administration is as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative area</th>
<th>Municipalities and communes</th>
<th>Districts (poviats)</th>
<th>Provinces (voivodships)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible institution</strong></td>
<td>SOCIAL ASSISTANCE CENTRES</td>
<td>Poviats CENTRES FOR FAMILY SUPPORT</td>
<td>REGIONALA SOCIAL POLICY CENTRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignments</strong></td>
<td>payment of cash benefits</td>
<td>payment of cash benefits</td>
<td>cooperation with providers and organisers of social assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-financial assistance</td>
<td>non-financial assistance</td>
<td>supervising the quality of activities and observation of standards of social services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own study

The assistance and support group are: the homeless, the unemployed, the disabled and the dependent people, the poor, the elderly, families and children, and victims of natural and
ecological disasters. The social assistance is aimed to social integration, social inclusion, greater activity and independence. The assistance and support is offered in various forms such as cash benefits (permanent, periodical and purpose benefit) and non-financial assistance (e.g. social work, care services, specialist counselling)

Chart: State agricultural advisory system in Poland

As far as social farming is concerned, the role of the state agricultural advisory system should be emphasized. In particular, the promoter of activities aimed at promoting the agricultural function of the agricultural sector is Agricultural Advisory Centre (AAC) in Brwinow Branch in Cracow, which co-operates with all regional advisory centers in Poland. So far, a network of educational farms has been developed. Currently, there are taken the action aimed to create the network of care farms dedicated primarily to the elderly people. The details of these two types of project are presented in the previous sections. The concept of care farm in Poland assumes that the social care and services are provided on the basis of the farm infrastructure and they are connected with agricultural activities (the farm should have animals and agricultural crops). The care farm need to be established according to existing law rules.

5. Care farm services (performed or planned) and beneficiaries

Improving the availability of social services is one of the objectives in the state government document “Polish Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020 with the perspective until 2030”. The document contains, among others, two strategic social projects, which could be important for the development of social farming:

- “Social policy towards the elderly 2030. Security * Participation * Solidarity” - reform of care for dependent persons, including: elaborating criteria for assessing dependence, regulating the principles of financing care services, developing a strategy for the deinstitutionalization of services and developing formal care in home and semi-stationary settings.
- “(NO) Self-reliant” - integrated bundles of social services for dependent people, which will reduce the risk of excessive care for informal caregivers (supportive care, "rest respite" care, substitute care) and enable them to combine social and professional activity with care.
The strategy assumes support for the development of social functions of farms, combining multifunctional agriculture and social (or health) services at the local level, enabling the diversification of farmers' incomes combined with a wider range of social services for the elderly and the disabled.

6. Social farming more requested services and typologies of workers involved

The challenge of today is the issue of care and support for dependent people due to their age, disability and illness. There is a growing need to support care for dependents and a wide range of environmental services (care and assistance), as well as support for families and real caregivers in their care and educational role. These activities should be directed primarily at activities related to social integration. On the one hand, it is important to provide care, therapeutic or educational support to people in need of special support (e.g. disabled people), and secondly, to relieve and enable professional activation of dependent people currently burdened with caring responsibilities for dependent persons (children, adults with disabilities, parents).

An important role in this regard is the day care facilities that can be successfully created also on the basis of agricultural holdings. According to European experience care farms could provide a various care services for the wide range of target groups: * mentally disabled, * people with reduced mobility, * the elderly disabled mentally / physically, * people with brain damage resulting e.g. as a result of accident or illness such as dementia (Alzheimer), * people with mental health problems, * reintegration of (former) prisoners, * reintegration of addicts (e.g. drugs, alcohol), * people suffering from autism, * child care (before and after school hours), * difficult youth, * the long-term unemployed, * people with occupational burnout and even * people seeking asylum.

7. Balance of Competences and Training Needs Analysis

Opinions of agricultural advisors on the needs of training related to care farms were collected as part of the project entitled "Care farms - building a cooperation network" implemented by the Agricultural Advisory Center in Brwinów, Cracow Branch in January 2017. 40 respondents participated in the study. Expected training topics are as follow: * Care facilities operating in rural areas, * Every insurance, in particular legal regulations, * Practical examples related to co-financing and practical conduct of a similar facility, * Family farms, *Financing of welfare farms from the state budget, * Legal aspects, * Study trip to care homes, * A farm care - an example of day and day care in various forms - foundation, association, and economic activity, *Forms of classes for children in care homes, * The tutor of the elderly person, * Organizational and legal conditions of care homes, * Adaptation of the farmer's house to house processing as part of agricultural retail trade, * Local brands based on traditional products as a factor of rural development * Legal forms of a guardianship and co-financing of this type of activity, * Therapies on the farm, * Psychology - how to persuade farmers to look after them, * More realistic forms and financing, *Economic activities in the field of care, administration of medicines, SANEPID, *Accommodation requirements for care on the farm.
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