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CARE-T-FARMS
**Care Activities Raising Employment and Training on Farm Adaptation to
Responsible and Mental-health Services**

**Care Farming State-of-the-Art
European Report**



<https://europa.eu/european-union/about-e-1>

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Introduction

1. Theoretical background of care farming at European level.

Care farming, also known as “green care”, “social farming”, "farming for health", and "green therapies", has taken on various forms and is organised in different ways in different European countries. There is great variety in the approaches to social farming across Europe, as well as in how it is connected to other sectors and the funding mechanisms that are used.

Care farming has taken on many different forms across Europe, broadly based around three different discourses; multifunctional agriculture, public health, and social inclusion. One could say that care farming is most established in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Italy.

Most research in the Netherlands focuses on care farming as part of the agricultural sector and as a new source of farm income. Great importance is also placed on interaction between participants and the farmers and their families. Care farming took off commercially in the Netherlands in the 1990s. It tends to operate on a service-based model. Engaging in care farming activities are seen as a type of social or health service and these activities are paid for directly or indirectly through health insurance. Similarities with the Dutch experience of social farming can be observed in Flanders (Belgium) and Slovenia.

In Germany and Austria, social farming is predominantly framed in the context of public health. Farmers provide the farm environment, which is seen as having a restorative effect, but the farmers themselves are generally not perceived as important contributors to the therapeutic process. Health professionals are usually directly involved in care farming activities in Germany and Austria. There are few ordinary farms involved in social farming, with most activities taking place in institutional farm settings.

A discourse of care farming in the context of social inclusion is dominant in Italy. Social farming is usually organised by social cooperatives in Italy. Participation in food production itself and the experience of being in nature is viewed as positive for individual well-being, social cohesion, and inclusion of marginal groups. Parallels can be drawn between the Italian approach to social farming and the French and Irish ones.

The way in which social farming is financed differs significantly from country to country. For instance, public funds may be directed towards farms (which is common in the Netherlands), social cooperatives (a common feature of





Italian social farming), or public bodies (often the case in Germany, Slovenia and Ireland).

2. Care farm experiences in at EU level

The relationship between the health and social benefits of nature is increasingly getting more recognition and this could be an advantage in getting greater recognition for care farming at the European level. For instance, DG Environment of the European Commission funded a study on the Health and Social Benefits of Nature which was published in 2016 and which documented initiatives from all over Europe that contribute to positive wellbeing through presence and interaction in nature, some of which included social farming.

Support for social farming at EU level has spanned across various funding programmes. For instance, the 2007-2013 programming period for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) included social farming as instrument of diversification, and the Social Fund also finances some social farming initiatives that are linked to inclusion.

Many transnational projects connected to social farming have also been funded by the EU for a number of years, demonstrating a good deal of interest in the topic at institutional level. Below you will find a summary of some projects connected to social farming that have received support from the European Union in recent years, and the various funding programmes that have supported them.

Project name: Social Services in Multifunctional Farms (So Far).

Programme: Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

Objective: To support the establishment of a new institutional environment for social farming and provide links between research and practitioners.

Partner countries: Italy, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Slovenia, and Ireland.

Duration: May 2006 – October 2008.

Project name: Disability In sustainable Agriculture: a New Approach for training of practitioners (DIANA).

Programme: Leonardo da Vinci - Lifelong learning (2007-2013).

Objective: Training for tutor and trainers who work with mentally ill or disabled employees in agriculture.





Partner countries: Italy, Germany, France, Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal.

Duration: November 2009 – 2012.

Project name: Multifunctional Agriculture in Europe – Social and Organic Impacts on Organic Farms (MAIE).



Programme: Lifelong Learning 2007-2013.

Objective: To make a curriculum to train farmers in social farming.

Partner countries: Italy, Finland, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Portugal, Netherlands, and Germany.

Duration: January 2011 – November 2013.

Project name: Social Farming Across Borders (SOFAB)



Programme: INTERREG IVA Programme (2007 - 2013).

Objective: To establish a network of service providers and users of social farming in the cross-border region of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Partner countries: Republic of Ireland and United Kingdom.

Duration: July 2011 – September 2014.

Project name: Inclusive Farming – Transfer of concepts, experiences, skills and training tools for Social Farming and eco-social inclusion (INCLUFAR).



Programme: Lifelong learning Programme.

Objective: To improve the quality of social farming through training measures.

Partner countries: Norway, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

Duration: October 2013 – September 2015.





Project name: Go Green & Care

Programme: Erasmus+.

Objective: The project objective was to build the competencies of VET organizations for providing Green Care education.



Partner countries: Finland, United Kingdom, Estonia, and Cyprus.

Duration: September 2014 – August 2016.

Project name: Social agriculture with a focus on beekeeping, fruit-growing and local production.

Programme: Erasmus+ Learning Mobility of Individuals.

Objective: Finding new ways to connect agriculture with cultivating interpersonal relationships.

Partner countries: Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland.

Duration: January 2015 – April 2015.

Project name: FARming as an employment opportunity for people with Mild Intellectual Disability (FARMID).

Programme: Erasmus+ - Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training.

Objective: To develop a training programme to equip farmers with the knowledge and skills to establish on-farm social enterprises with a special emphasis on the employment of people with mild intellectual disabilities.

Partner countries: Slovenia, Austria, Spain, Italy, and Belgium.

Duration: November 2017 – April 2020.

4. Institutions involved at European level





4.1 Institutions

Social or care farming is a complex practice from a policy perspective as it affects many different areas, including health, social, employment, and agricultural policy. These policies are each dealt with differently at EU level, depending on whether the main competencies lie at national or European level.

Health policy is still broadly determined at regional and national level and not at EU level. The EU can complement Member States' policies by helping to set and achieve shared objectives and by tackling shared challenges, such as the impact increased life expectancy will have on healthcare systems in the EU as a whole. However, health policy still remains a national competency on the whole and there is great variety all over Europe in terms of the provision of public services and how they are funded.

Within the European Commission, the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety is the department that is responsible for EU policy on health and for monitoring the implementation of related laws across the Member States. The Commissioner with responsibility for the leadership of this Directorate General in the 2014-2019 period is Vytenis Andriukaitis.

The cross-cutting nature of social farming across many policy domains means that it is important to involve a range of political actors in the topic. From a health perspective, MEPs from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament are those which can be considered most relevant for engaging with politically on the topic of care farming. However, given that healthcare is primarily a Member State competency, the importance of national political figures and institutions cannot be downplayed. See Annex I for a list of MEPs from the Disability Intergroup and their political parties. On 30 November 2017, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the implementation of the European disability strategy. The rapporteur for the file was Helga Stevens, co-president of the Disability Intergroup, and member of the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs. While the adopted text does not make specific reference to social farming, it mentions some key issues that are relevant for social farming and the CARE-T-FARMS project. For instance, the text called on “the Commission and the Member States to make full use of the European Reference Networks framework to develop, expand access to, multidisciplinary and specialised healthcare for persons with disability in general and, in particular, for those with rare disabilities”.

Employment and social policy is primarily the responsibility of national governments. The main involvement of the European Union in employment and social policy is through the Europe 2020 strategy which is implemented through the European semester. DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, under





the leadership of Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, is responsible for EU employment and social policy. The European semester is an annual process to promote policy coordination among EU institutions and Member States. The following headline objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy can be considered to be connected to social farming in one way or another:

- Increasing the employment rate of the population aged 20-64 to at least 75%.
- Reducing school drop-out rates to less than 10% and increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education to at least 40%.
- Lifting at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Agriculture is a policy area in which the European Union has a great deal of influence. It is one of the policy areas in which European integration is best illustrated. Not only does the European Union have a lot of influence on agricultural policy, but the budget for the Common Agricultural Policy (the agricultural policy for the EU), is the single biggest of any area. Rural development policy is one pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its overall objective is to enhance the competitiveness of rural areas, thereby contributing to the maintenance and creation of employment. Multifunctionality and a multi-sectoral approach are two key focus areas for rural development policy in Europe. Social farming is relevant for both of these, making it highly relevant at a European level and to discussions on reform of the CAP.

Due to the way social farming aligns with the focus areas for rural development policy at a European level, it makes it important to engage with the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, Commissioner Phil Hogan, and MEPs in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. A list of these MEPs is provided in Annex I.

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development recently wrote an Opinion for the for the Committee on Regional Development on lagging regions in the EU (2017/2208(INI)) in which they made reference to social farming (see below). This shows that political attention is being given to the social farming and the contribution it can make to rural areas.

“Highlights the social farming model and its potential to connect people in rural areas, and in particular bring farming closer to citizens; believes that this model is an important tool that offers a range of therapeutic support services to the local community while connecting farmers to the wider community;”

4.2 Legislation





There is no definition of social farming at European level, likely given the fact that it is an ever-evolving practice that has taken shape in different ways across the Member States.

However, there have also been a number of publications from European bodies on the subject of social farming, showing a degree of interest. In 2012, Luxembourgish member of the European Economic and Social Committee, Josiane Willems, wrote an own-initiative report entitled “Social farming: green care and social and health policies” which was later adopted. The report called for a definition of social farming to be made at European level to set out the activities that can be considered as social farming, and a framework and quality criteria that must be met to qualify for support. The report also called for attention to be given at European level to training people involved in social farming to improve skills and overall quality. This is something that has been addressed in various funding programmes, to the benefit of projects like CARE-T-FARMS.





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8. European Economic and Social Committee, 2012, Opinion on Social farming: green care and social and health policies (own-initiative opinion).





Annex I. List of MEPs in the European Parliament Disability Intergroup

Name	Member State	Position	Political Group
Helga STEVENS	Belgium	Intergroup co-President	ECR Vice-chair
Kostadinka KUNEVA	Greece	Intergroup co-President	GUE/NGL
Ádám Kósa	Hungary	Intergroup co-President	EPP
Olga SEHNALOVÁ	Czech Republic	Intergroup co-President	S&D
Jana ŽITŇANSKÁ	Slovakia	Intergroup VP	ECR
Marek PLURA	Poland	Intergroup VP	EPP
Rosa ESTARÀS FERRAGUT	Spain	Intergroup VP	EPP
Indrek TARAND	Estonia	Intergroup VP	Greens/EFA
Martina ANDERSON	United Kingdom	Intergroup VP	GUE/NGL
Brando BENIFEI	Italy	Intergroup VP	S&D
Michela GIUFFRIDA	Italy	Intergroup VP	S&D
Marian HARKIN	Ireland	Intergroup VP	ALDE
Cecilia WIKSTRÖM	Sweden	Member	ALDE
Beatriz BECERRA BASTERRECHEA	Spain	Member	ALDE
Catherine BEARDER	UK	Member	ALDE
Rikke KARLSSON	Denmark	Member	ECR
Arne GERICKE	Germany	Member	ECR
Brian CROWLEY	Ireland	Member	ECR Bureau member
Bill ETHERIDGE	United Kingdom	Member	EFDD
Heinz K. BECKER	Austria	Member	EPP
Ivo BELET	Belgium	Member	EPP
Michaela ŠOJDROVÁ	Czech Republic	Member	EPP
Pavel SVOBODA	Czech Republic	Member	EPP
Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE	Spain	Member	EPP
Tunne KELAM	Estonia	Member	EPP
Sirpa PIETIKÄINEN	Finland	Member	EPP
Dieter-Lebrecht KOCH	Germany	Member	EPP
Andor DELI	Hungary	Member	EPP
Andrea BOCSKOR	Hungary	Member	EPP
György HÖLVÉNYI	Hungary	Member	EPP





György SCHÖPFLIN	Hungary	Member	EPP
Ildiko GÁLL-PELCZ	Hungary	Member	EPP
József SZÁJER	Hungary	Member	EPP Vice-chair
Kinga GÁL	Hungary	Member	EPP
László TÓKÉS	Hungary	Member	EPP
Norbert ERDŐS	Hungary	Member	EPP
Tamás DEUTSCH	Hungary	Member	EPP
Brian HAYES	Ireland	Member	EPP
Deirdre CLUNE	Ireland	Member	EPP
Elisabetta GARDINI	Italy	Member	EPP
Remo SERNAGIOTTO	Italy	Member	EPP
Roberta METSOLA	Malta	Member	EPP
Therese COMODINI CACHIA	Malta	Member	EPP
Róza Gräfin von THUN UND HOHENSTEIN	Poland	Member	EPP
Carlos COELHO	Portugal	Member	EPP
José Manuel FERNANDES	Portugal	Member	EPP
Nuno MELO	Portugal	Member	EPP
Csaba SÓGOR	Romania	Member	EPP
Iuliu WINKLER	Romania	Member	EPP
Pál CSÁKY	Slovakia	Member	EPP
Miroslav MIKOLÁŠIK	Slovakia	Member	EPP
Alojz PETERLE	Slovenia	Member	EPP
Agustín DÍAZ DE MERA GARCÍA CONSUEGRA	Spain	Member	EPP
Esteban GONZÁLEZ PONS	Spain	Member	EPP Vice-chair
Esther HERRANZ GARCÍA	Spain	Member	EPP
Francisco José MILLÁN MON	Spain	Member	EPP
Gabriel MATO	Spain	Member	EPP
Luis de GRANDES PASCUAL	Spain	Member	EPP
Pilar AYUSO	Spain	Member	EPP
Pilar del CASTILLO VERA	Spain	Member	EPP
Santiago FISAS AYXELÀ	Spain	Member	EPP
Teresa JIMÉNEZ- BECERRIL BARRIO	Spain	Member	EPP
Verónica LOPE FONTAGNÉ	Spain	Member	EPP





Heidi HAUTALA	Finland	Member	Greens/EFA Vice-chair
Pascal DURAND	France	Member	Greens/EFA
Ian HUDGHTON	United Kingdom	Member	Greens/EFA
Jean LAMBERT	United Kingdom	Member	Greens/EFA
Davor ŠKRLEC	Croatia	Member	Greens/EFA
Neoklis SYLIKIOTIS	Cyprus	Member	GUE/NGL Vice-chair
Matt CARTHY	Ireland	Member	GUE/NGL
Malin BJÖRK	Sweden	Member	GUE/NGL Vice-chair
Marisa MATIAS	Portugal	Member	GUE/NGL
Marie-Christine ARNAUTU	France	Member	ENF
Mara BIZZOTTO	Italy	Member	ENF
Lampros FOUNTOULIS	Greece	Member	NI
Costas MAVRIDES	Cyprus	Member	S&D
Demetris PAPADAKIS	Cyprus	Member	S&D
Ole CHRISTENSEN	Denmark	Member	S&D
Sylvie GUILLAUME	France	Member	S&D
Jutta STEINRUCK	Germany	Member	S&D
Ulrike RODUST	Germany	Member	S&D
Nessa CHILDERS	Ireland	Member	S&D
Caterina CHINNICI	Italy	Member	S&D
Enrico GASBARRA	Italy	Member	S&D
Elena GENTILE	Italy	Member	S&D
Luigi MORGANO	Italy	Member	S&D
Patrizia TOIA	Italy	Member	S&D
Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ	Lithuania	Member	S&D
Miriam Dalli	Malta	Member	S&D
Maria GRAPINI	Romania	Member	S&D
Victor NEGRESCU	Romania	Member	S&D
Inmaculada RODRÍGUEZ- PIÑERO FERNÁNDEZ	Spain	Member	S&D
Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ	Spain	Member	S&D
Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR	Spain	Member	S&D
Sergio GUTIÉRREZ PRIETO	Spain	Member	S&D
Anna HEDH	Sweden	Member	S&D
Soraya POST	Sweden	Member	S&D
Anneliese DODDS	United Kingdom	Member	S&D
Linda McAVAN	United Kingdom	Member	S&D





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Lucy ANDERSON	United Kingdom	Member	S&D
Siôn SIMON	United Kingdom	Member	S&D
Theresa GRIFFIN	United Kingdom	Member	S&D





Annex II. List of MEPs in the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

Name	Member State	Position	Political Group
Czesław Adam SIEKIERSKI	Poland	Chair	EPP
Paolo DE CASTRO	Italy	Vice-Chair	S&D
Zbigniew KUŹMIUK	Poland	Vice-Chair	ECR
Clara Eugenia AGUILERA GARCÍA	Spain	Vice-Chair	S&D
John Stuart AGNEW	United Kingdom	Member	EFD
Eric ANDRIEU	France	Member	S&D
Richard ASHWORTH	United Kingdom	Member	ECR
José BOVÉ	France	Member	Greens/EFA
Daniel BUDA	Romania	Member	EPP
Nicola CAPUTO	Italy	Member	S&D
Matt CARTHY	Ireland	Member	GUE/NGL
Michel DANTIN	France	Member	EPP
Jean-Paul DENANOT	France	Member	S&D
Albert DESS	Germany	Member	EPP
Diane DODDS	United Kingdom	Member	NI
Jørn DOHRMANN	Denmark	Member	ECR
Herbert DORFMANN	Italy	Member	EPP
Norbert ERDŐS	Hungary	Member	EPP
Luke Ming FLANAGAN	Ireland	Member	GUE/NGL
Beata GOSIEWSKA	Poland	Member	ECR
Martin HÄUSLING	Germany	Member	Greens/EFA
Anja HAZEKAMP	Netherlands	Member	GUE/NGL
Esther HERRANZ GARCÍA	Spain	Member	EPP
Jan HUITEMA	Netherlands	Member	ALDE
Peter JAHR	Germany	Member	EPP
Ivan JAKOVČIĆ	Croatia	Member	ALDE
Jarosław KALINOWSKI	Poland	Member	EPP
Norbert LINS	Germany	Member	EPP
Philippe LOISEAU	France	Member	MENF
Mairead McGUINNESS	Ireland	Member	EPP
Nuno MELO	Portugal	Member	EPP
Giulia MOI	Italy	Member	EFD
Ulrike MÜLLER	Germany	Member	ALDE
James NICHOLSON	United Kingdom	Member	ECR
Maria NOICHL	Germany	Member	S&D
Marijana PETIR	Croatia	Member	EPP
Laurențiu REBEGA	Romania	Member	ENF





Jens ROHDE	Denmark	Member	ALDE
Bronis ROPE	Lithuania	Member	Greens/EFA
Maria Lidia SENRA RODRÍGUEZ	Spain	Member	GUE/NGL
Ricardo SERRÃO SANTOS	Portugal	Member	S&D
Tibor SZANYI	Hungary	Member	S&D
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