

INDICATOR MATRIX of Social Farms



Co-funded by
the European Union





Co-funded by
the European Union



The creation of these resources has been partially funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union under grant no. 2022-1-CZ01-KA210-ADU-000083310. This publication reflects the views of the authors. Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency, DZS, is responsible for the content nor liable for any losses or damage from using these resources.

This publication has been prepared within the project Eco-Social Farming

Project manager: Eliška Hudcová, hudcova.eliska@gmail.com

www.socialni-zemedelstvi.cz

Authors: Eliška Hudcová, Jan Moudrý, Tomáš Chovanec

Design and Layout: Tomáš Rychlý

Published: 2024

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA) License. To view a copy of the license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>



PROJECT PARTNERS:



Asociace
sociálního
zemědělství

Asociace sociálního zemědělství, z.s., Czech Republic
<http://www.socialni-zemedelstvi.cz>



DRUŽIVA

Druživa, o.z., Slovakia
<https://druziva.sk>



Petrarca - Europäische Akademie für Landschaftskultur
<https://www.soziale-landwirtschaft.de>



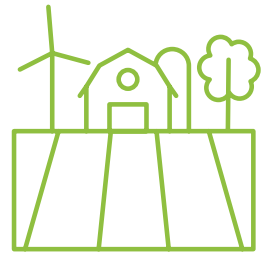
CONTENTS



ABOUT THE ECO-SOCIAL FARMING PROJECT	4
THE CONTENT OF THE SOCIAL FARMING MATRIX	5
DEFINING SOCIAL FARMING	6
DEFINING SOCIAL FARMS	8
CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION	9
ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS – ORGANIC FARMING AND BIODIVERSITY	11
SOCIAL WORK AND WELFARE ELEMENTS – SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION, WELL-BEING	13
ENVIRONMENTAL (ECOLOGICAL) SOCIAL WORK	15
CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS	16
ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS	17
SOCIAL WORK AND WELFARE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS	18
REFERENCES	20



ABOUT THE ECO-SOCIAL FARMING PROJECT



The Eco-Social Farming project presents the intersection of agriculture, social work, environmental aspects and democratic values. All these themes can be found on social farms and are likely to be put into the light. According to our assumptions, social farms are helping environments that contribute to the fight against climate change, enhance environmental aspects in social welfare, and strengthen social elements in agriculture from the local perspective.

The present project and partners from three European countries – Czech Republic, Germany and Slovakia gradually developed a set of data to show how these diverse disciplines can be put in one and performed on social farms. The data included the indicator matrix, farm visits, in-depth interviews with social farmers, roundtables, and online surveys. From this evidence, a final report was produced on how social farms create a Handbook on synergies of social farming and ecological goals for so-called "ecological inclusion". The next step would be to build on this set of documents and provide learning opportunities for all citizens and generations (education study curricula and courses), which would be the content of the follow-up project.

We claim that the support of social farms and the system of social farming can alleviate many problems that have appeared in the last decades, mostly in rural areas. These are, for example, lack of social services in the countryside, population decline in rural areas, brain drain, loss of biodiversity and poorer environment, loss of contact between man and nature, inaccessible food for poor people, little knowledge of civic and democratic values or the painful topic of climate change and social exclusion of diverse cohorts of people.

Social farms and their support should thus be a priority in agricultural, social and other European policies. The Eco-Social Farming project presents a piece in the mosaic that will strengthen this ecosystem and that can be further enriched. We also want to raise the environmental and social work profile, which is still neglected in many EU countries but plays a more critical role in the day-to-day life of marginalised people due to climate changes and other bouleversements. Social farms represent resilient places that can better withstand climate change.



Svobodný statek na soutoku, Czechia



THE CONTENT OF THE SOCIAL FARMING MATRIX



The Indicator matrix of social farms represents a practical tool to indicate individual actions people on social farms take to empower and enhance their environmental, social and community resiliency and democratic attitudes. The aim is to get a list of all activities to know the social farms' environmental/social/civic responsibility measures. During the preparatory phase, the specific elements of social farms that relate to ecology and minimise negative environmental impacts were collected based on the project partners' previous expertise and non-participatory observations of tens of European social farms. These elements and related topics were discussed on farms during the in-depth interviews (focus group interviews) in the Czech Republic, Germany, and Slovakia. The focus group was conducted each time on the farm, working with different participants (people with intellectual disabilities, people with

drug addiction history, people with alcohol addiction history and no income). Each time, the group was relatively homogenous, consisting of social farming experts (theorists and academics) and agricultural profession leaders and therapists from the selected social farms. The focus groups took place in April 2023 (Czechia), October 2023 (Germany), and April 2024 (Slovakia) and the Indicator Matrix was gradually extended. Feedback on the Indicator Matrix was also provided by participants at the Roundtables in the Czech Republic (August 2023) and Germany (May 2024). The last Roundtable took place in Slovakia in October 2024, where the project results were presented, and the discussion results could not be integrated into the present text due to the project's end.

In the Indicator matrix, three dimensions of social farms (civic and democratic elements, environmental elements, and social work and welfare elements) were created as a list of activities that assessed the individual dimensions. This text thus contains a short introduction to social farming in general, and later, the understanding of three dimensions of social farms with sub-categories is described below.

An Online survey based on the results of this Indicator matrix of social farms, In-depth interviews with social farmers, Roundtables and Farm visits were carried out. It helped to reach the project objective: recognise the essential social aspects of agriculture, disseminate them across the farm(ers) (mainstreaming of an idea), and identify how social work can apply the environmental elements in its practice.



Svobodný statek na soutoku, Czechia



DEFINING SOCIAL FARMING



Although definitions always impoverish the richness of ideas and concepts and enclose them in frameworks that hinder creativity and development, we nevertheless use some of the definitions of social farming as a concept, and consequently of social farms, to illustrate a terminological field in which to operate.

Social farming has received attention in recent years, and its development has been funded by EU programmes in different projects. A list of such projects is presented in the report from the Focus Group – Social Farming and Innovation supported by the EU CAP Network in 2022-2023; see the list of relevant projects in Annex 3 of the Report. [1]



die Fleckenbühler, Germany



INDICATOR MATRIX OF SOCIAL FARMS

For this project, we have selected the following presenting social farming:

"Use commercial farms and agricultural landscapes as a base for promoting mental and physical health through normal farming activities. Specifically, providing a structured, supervised programme of health, vocational, social and farm-related activities for vulnerable people." (Murray et al., 2019: 14).

"Set of activities using agricultural resources, both plant and animal, to create an adequate environment for differently disabled or socially disadvantaged people and the general public, provide them with employment opportunities, and assist their integration into society. [...] In this sense, the aim is to create conditions within the farm or farming activities that enable people with special needs to participate in normal farming activities to ensure their development and support and to improve their well-being." (NAT/539-EESC-2012-1236: 4)[2]

"Innovative, inclusive, participatory and generative model of agricultural practices that delivers recreational, educational and assistance services. It aims at the social and labour inclusion of disadvantaged people, who through social agricultural practices can contribute to food and agricultural production." (Di Iacovo and O'Connor, 2009: 11)

In general, each definition tends to narrow the term of social farming. This has a philosophical background, as it goes back to the controversy between the nominalists and the realists in the Middle Ages. The realists would have handled social farming as a growing idea. At the same time, the nominalists would have reduced to a specific frame within a definition. The latter confers security while estimating social farming as a developing idea, allowing us to include all realities that fit the idea of social farming. Nevertheless, some frameworks must be introduced to establish a common language and understanding of the project aims.



Svobodný statek na soutoku, Czechia





DEFINING SOCIAL FARMS

Social farming is implemented on social farms. Social farms are settings or projects offering diverse activities for people experiencing various life challenges due to their mental and physical health issues or complex social backgrounds in a farm environment. They aim to enhance the quality of life of people we call "participants" or "target groups" in this project. Depending on the participants, social farms offer paid workplaces, work rehabilitation, beneficial day activities in non-formal settings, and a green environment.

Any farm as an agricultural entity should comply with the following basic principles.

The farm is an agricultural entrepreneur under the Agriculture Act,[3] which owes:

- a) at least one hectare of agricultural land is registered in the land use records according to the user relationships under the Agriculture Act,
- b) at least one large livestock unit in the central register of livestock according to the specified conversion coefficient.

The entity must possess the characteristics listed above to be understood as a social farm and many other benefits presented in different categories to find the link between social farms, the environment, social work, and other priorities the Eco-Social Farming project addresses.

The categories in which we intended to find the impacts of social farms were:

1. Civic and democratic elements (community development and participation)
2. Environmental elements (ecology, agroecology, climate, water, and biodiversity protection)
3. Social work and welfare elements (social work, social integration and inclusion, well-being)

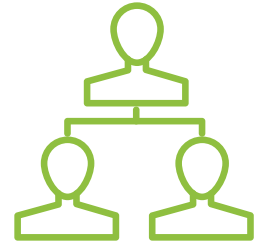
Selected elements enhancing the understanding of the Eco-Social Farming project are discussed in the following text.



die Fleckenbühler, Germany



CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC ELEMENTS – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION



Svobodný statek na Soutoku, Czechia

We believe that the values of civil society and the social participation of all community representatives are fundamental prerequisites for maintaining democracy and the value foundations of the European Union. Rural areas are more likely inhabited by people with lower economic and educational competence, which can lead to unsystematic beliefs about social processes.

In contrast, social farms are hubs of democracy and civic engagement. We present a basic description of what the Civic and Democratic elements are in this project.

Civil society is an abstract term that refers to voluntary citizens active in a sphere between the State, the for-profit sector, and the family. Civil society performs essential functions:

- It prevents the State from intruding into a sphere that does not belong to it, i.e. into public interests and activities of citizens.
- Through the institutions of civil society, the political sphere receives the most reliable feedback signals because citizens draw attention to problems with their activities, which exist in society, which they feel are significant (e.g. in the field of ecology, unavailability of social services), and thereby forcing politicians to deal with them.
- It is a school of democracy. It enables citizens to participate in decision-making and specific problem solutions. In this sense, civil society functions as a corrective element (often even as a counterweight) to the influence of the State.
- It also strengthens the consciousness of belonging and the responsibility of citizens for "their things".



INDICATOR MATRIX OF SOCIAL FARMS

Democracy is only as strong as a developed and functioning civil society because such a society guarantees against the temptation of each State to become omnipotent and works against the possible degenerative tendency of democracy to become a tyranny of the majority.

Civil society enables individual groups to exercise their interests through the rich and internal structuring of civil society organisations. It represents a space in which citizens are aware of their common interests and horizontally act through organised groups often called "civil society organisations" (associations, social organisations, churches, trade unions, foundations, etc.) independently of the State.

All social organisations and institutions can be assigned by sector to the public/state sector, the private market and the rest (third) sector – refers to the definition of the third/civil society, which includes "organisations founded by people on a voluntary basis, whose aim is to monitor the social and community beneficial goals" (Ridley-Duff, Seanor, 2008, In Taylor, 2010). Another definition includes the frequently used "(non-governmental) non-profit organisation" (non-profit sector), whose potential profit is not accumulated but reinvested in the organisation or community to fulfil its positive mission and support its social usefulness (Nicholls, 2006). All organisations described in this way share the same specific characteristics:

- a)** they are organised - either they have a specific organisational structure (internal rules of the organisation, regular meetings, norms, membership, etc.) or a formalised/institutionalised structure;
- b)** have a private character and are independent of the State – they are not organisational components of the state or local governments;

- c)** are self-governing – state institutions or market-based private companies do not manage them; they have their own control and management tools, but representatives of the State or private sector can be members of, for example, administrative or supervisory boards;
- d)** they do not distribute profit – their goal is not profit, and they reinvest any surpluses in the organisation for fulfilling its mission or in the community;
- e)** are voluntary - certain activities of the organisation should be carried out voluntarily; at the same time, voluntary means non-compulsory, i.e. that membership is not forced by law or norms of the given organisation, donations and other support are voluntary and is not conditioned by other benefits in the organisation (Skovajsa et al., 2010: 38-39).

Generally, the organisations provide humanitarian, social, educational, and ecological services or organisations aiming at societal or political changes. Usually, they are grassroots and small organisations with flat organisational structures founded for the needs of local communities (self-help and organised resistance). Indeed, a developed and functioning civil society makes it possible to solve several problems without becoming the subject of a political struggle. Civil society nonetheless requires responsible and independent decision-making by citizens of their common interests. It needs a public that is mature enough to be able to protect and fully use all its rights.

Not all social farms perform themselves as non-profits as they operate as business entities but with socially beneficial purposes. At this point, they are characterised as social enterprises. All of them are subjects of civil society as they highlight local challenges and issues, from the needs of the most fragile population to the requirements of local solidarity and fair economy to environmental and nature protection tasks. Thus, social farms behave responsibly for the public interest, and the report shows below what was found during the project's lifespan.



ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS – ORGANIC FARMING AND BIODIVERSITY



The environmental elements in this project are mainly linked to agriculture. Most agricultural activities are settled in a permanent place in the landscape. Thus, they are interconnected to the area's environmental possibilities, climate, and soils. On the other hand, the characteristics of the surrounding environment have a significant impact on agriculture. The country's social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects influence agriculture.

Most often, we encounter landscapes with intensive agriculture. Intensification measures have various environmental impacts. For example, the shortening and simplification of crop rotations, the reduction of crop diversity, and the specialisation into monocultures of high-yielding varieties lead to a decline in diversity at the local and landscape level. This status quo leads to a local reduction in soil organic matter and globally to an increase in erosion and a decrease in the water retention capacity of the landscape.

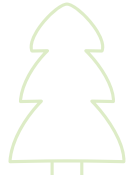
Using larger, heavier, and more powerful machinery leads to soil compaction. Such machinery requires enlarging plots and removing partitions, boundaries, and other barriers for higher efficiency. As a result, the landscape is homogenised in time and space, the soil is locally compacted, with lower organic matter, and it reduces water and nutrient infiltration, which raises the risk of water and air erosion.

Increased input of mineral fertilisers in intensive agriculture increases pesticide content (herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, plant growth regulators, etc.). These measures encourage eutrophication of the waters. Locally, invertebrate populations, especially pollinators and predators, are directly

damaged, contributing to the fragmentation of their populations. On the contrary, it brings the spread of invasive species, homogenises the landscape, and suppresses biodiversity.



Field visit, Germany



INDICATOR MATRIX OF SOCIAL FARMS

Conversion of permanent and temporary grass and clover crops to arable land and use of deep ploughing instead of reduced tillage technologies lead to soil compaction, loss of organic matter, and reduced water infiltration. By synchronising many operations on soils, much of the landscape lacks vegetation for a significant part of the year. Moreover, habitat fragmentation and barriers to erosion are reduced.

In the intensive agricultural system, fields are drained, and the runoff increases. Stream banks accelerate runoff, reducing floodplains. This type of land management increases the risk of drought and flooding; the risk is empowered by the homogenisation of the landscape and the synchronisation of water demand. (Tscharnatke et al., 2005 In Frouz, J., & Frouzová, J., 2021: 173).

Intensification in livestock production also negatively impacts the ecosystems. The increasing density of grazing animals leads to pressure on natural ecosystems. Intensive grazing brings the loss of natural habitats, damage to vegetation, and increased erosion, which starts a spiral of degradation of soils and entire ecosystems. Intensification of livestock production also increases concentrations of livestock and often leads to reduced grazing. This process, in turn, leads to the disappearance of extensive pastures and a decline in demand for forage, resulting in the abandonment of grasslands, especially in marginal areas. These intensified practices threaten the loss of valuable, species-rich habitats of extensive grassland, to which much of the diversity of the cultural landscape is linked. In addition, livestock production is responsible for 65% of anthropogenic nitrogen and 65% of anthropogenic ammonia production (FAO, 2006 In Frouz, Frouzová, 2021: 217).

Social farming is mainly connected to bioproduction and organic agriculture, which are generally characterised by the prohibition of chemically synthetic pesticides, fast-dissolving mineral fertilisers, the exclusion of GMOs, and counting on the welfare of farm animals, natural cycles and dependencies.

Land cultivated under the organic farming regime has a significantly higher content of organic matter, deeper topsoil, a higher content of semi-saccharides, lower ploughing resistance and less soil erosion. Organic farming practices have lower nitrogen losses per unit area and support more species, larger populations, and a range of organisms. Organic products consume less energy per unit of production than most plant products due to the absence of nitrogen fertilisers and pesticides. The same applies to livestock production, where energy consumption per production unit is lower than in conventional agriculture, where inputs are expensive. Because the total volume of production in organic farming is small, the consumption associated with building and operating infrastructure is also lower. Organic farming promotes biodiversity and preserves or restores soil fertility but at the cost of lower yields (Frouz, Frouzová, 2021: 224-225. According to the definition, organic farming is characterised as follows: "Organic Agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems, and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic Agriculture combines tradition, innovation, and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and good quality of life for all involved." (IFOAM, 2008)

Many social farmers operate in an organic farming regime, especially abroad. However, many also follow these instructions but do not have the certification of an ecological farmer due to administrative and other demands. With their production, some farms respond, for example, to protecting one animal species or the entire biotope. For all of them, quality management in the landscape responds to the needs of future generations.



SOCIAL WORK AND WELFARE ELEMENTS – SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION, WELL-BEING



Social farming involves the safe support for people with special needs. Help and support are specific as they do not occur in a formalised and institutional facility but in the informal environment of the farm and green surroundings. Also, participants are often accompanied by other support workers, different from social workers, therapists, or health professionals, who are farmers, volunteers, students, and others. As a complex field, these approaches nevertheless belong to the field of social work, as they create social assistance and elements of welfare.

Social work is, by definition, a professional scientific discipline and a field of practical activity, which, through specialised working methods, ensures the implementation of human care on a professional basis. It is based on the principles of solidarity, non-discrimination, personal rights, freedom, dignity and participation, which are enshrined in international treaties (such as the United Nations Charter, 1945; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; European Convention on Human Rights, 1950). A professional discipline is bound by the social worker's code of ethics, which varies according to cultural, political, religious and other national contexts.

The International Federation of Social Workers defines social work in the Global definition: "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human

rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels." (IFSW, 2014)



Dobrý pastier, Slovakia



The general purpose of social work includes detecting, explaining, mitigating and solving social problems (Matoušek, 2008) and aims to:

- Support the participant's ability to solve problems, adapt to and evolve (the participant can be an individual, family, group, community);
- Provide participants with agencies that can provide resources, services and opportunities;
- Help participant support systems operate humanely and efficiently;
- Develop and improve social policy.

Social work is delimited by its place in the larger social environment at any given time. External economic, social, and political forces influence it similarly. Nevertheless, it is a practical activity based on social solidarity and the ideal of fulfilling individual human potential. At the same time, the participant and their roles should always be at the centre of the helping profession, which social work undoubtedly is. Therefore, specific demands are placed on social workers. These include physical and mental fitness, intelligence, communication skills, attention to clients, trustworthiness and empathy. The emotional burden is high for these workers because they often encounter negative, minimal or no response (Matoušek, 2008: 140).

Social work often uses social integration and social inclusion to present the optimal goal of supporting participants. Other social work terminology covers participation, empowerment, and recovery.

Inclusion is understood as integration, incorporation, socialisation, unification, and wholeness. The definition adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) states integration as a tool of social rehabilitation, the ability of a person to participate in usual social relations and integrate into society (WHO, 2023).

Integration can be understood as a state where a disabled person has come to terms with their disability, lives and cooperates with people without disabilities, and creates specific values that society recognises as equal, significant and necessary for society. The entire process of social integration of persons with disabilities is declared by four primary factors: biological, psychological, social and spiritual (WHO, 2020). Inclusion and integration are primarily concerned with fulfilling a full-fledged social life, healthy and disabled in symbiosis. The most crucial point for determining the degree of integration of an individual is the quality and interconnectedness of his/her relationships in society.

According to what has been said so far, we can conclude that the integration of people with disabilities, including people with mental health challenges and complex social backgrounds, is not only a matter for them but for the whole of society. It is a two-way process where health and health impairments influence each other in respecting both sides' unique needs and possibilities. The acceptance, solidarity and support level mirrors a society's maturity level.

Another important term connected to social farming and social work is well-being. The Oxford English Dictionary defines well-being as "the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy." It includes happiness, how satisfied people are with their lives, how they can cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, contribute to their community and have their sense of purpose. It is also about how people feel and function, personally and socially, and how they evaluate their lives. Well-being covers more traditional mental health measures, such as symptoms of illness; external conditions, such as income, housing, and social networks; and a person's internal resources, such as optimism, resilience and self-esteem. Furthermore, people's views of their well-being are balanced with quality of life indicators, such as health, physical activity, social interaction, and how well they manage daily.



ENVIRONMENTAL (ECOLOGICAL) SOCIAL WORK



Finally, in the Eco-Social Farming project, we want to raise awareness about how much social farming fulfils the academic discussion on environmental (ecological) social work. How does the literature grasp this concept?

According to our premise, social farming, environmental, and social work are directly declared, which is the concept that has become widespread in social work in recent decades in some countries. The concept narrowly relates to environmental justice, which has developed since the 70s as a reaction to the negative impact of human activities on the planet Earth. Next to social justice, as an ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same fundamental rights, protections, opportunities, obligations, and social benefits (Barker, 2003), environmental justice is relevant for human dignity and well-being in a spatial context and that this right to clean environment was not shared equally. It was observed that poor communities and people with disadvantaged backgrounds are highly inequitable in sharing the environmental harms and suffer the most from pollution problems or ecological risks. A poor living environment is associated with lower chances of future success, social mobility, lower education, employment and higher status. At the centre of the idea of environmental justice is the minimisation of ecological harms and equal distribution of environmental benefits, such as clean water, species integrity, climate stability, and so on, in such a manner as to bring about the best for the most significant number of people (Besthorn, 2013: 35). Taking a step further, the concept of ecological justice notes the solid connection for mutual respect and interdependence between humans and nature. It reverses the anthropocentricity to a partnership between

humans and nature. At the heart of this idea is that all human and non-human species are entitled to a just and equal claim to existence that ensures their well-being.

Social farming embodies these very ideas of environmental (ecological) justice. Social farms offer even the most vulnerable a temporary or permanent dignified living place. As cultural islands, social farms provide security, healthy food, water and landscape access, social life, and variable services. They are also learning places where people with and without disabilities learn about interrelations and dependencies among and with humans and nature. In a profound sense, partnership and interdependence develop here. These measures, too, can be called ecological inclusion. That is when the social farm improves people's quality of life. Still, people also create a healthy environment through their actions. They care for animals by hand and are in close contact with the soil and living organisms. Participants can observe the process of life and protect it. They experience a role reversal from the person being cared for to the person doing the caring that gives them meaning and purpose in their lives.

The following part of the Indicator matrix contains the three identified dimensions/categories of social farms (civic and democratic elements, environmental elements, and social work and welfare elements), with the overall background thoughts standing above and behind social farming in each category. The set is further developed into a list of concrete actions extending the background aspects.



CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS



THE OVERALL IDEAS (VISION, MISSION, MOTIVATION, BACKGROUND)

- **Respect for diversity**
- **General engagement**
- **Cultural connection and creativity**
- **Attentiveness to local individual and societal difficulties**
- **Civic and democratic norms and values**
- **Valuing diversity**
- **Innovative approaches for society – overlap agricultural society**
- **Different attitudes toward forces of the mainstream market**
- **Partnership with public bodies**
- **Empowerment of solidarity and interest in common issues**



CONCRETE ACTIONS

- Participation and empowering
- Addressing injustices
- Sharing decision-making with affected people – fostering participation
- Democratic discussion
- Involvement in solving local problems
- Respect for the people involved
- Defending human rights and dignity
- Partnership with the local councils
- Competence hierarchy in some places is based on internal discussions and includes others
- Engagement in dealing with local problems (inaccessibility of services or goods, lack of job offers)
- Writing petitions
- Media release on social farming
- Community linked activities
- Opinion leader in various topics – social integration, lack of social services, agriculture
- Connection to art, music, theatre, and craft
- Raising public awareness about problematic issues Support of countryside lifestyle
- Festivals and open-door events
- Activism
- Public discussions
- Education
- Freedom in a decision-making
- Participating in local communities (i.e., apple juice production for the village)
Social farm as the way how to fight against social isolation
- Flat (non-hierarchical) decision-making process
- Presentation of a human as a social being, we rely on each other
- Take into account different opinion - democratisation



ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS



THE OVERALL IDEAS (VISION, MISSION, MOTIVATION, BACKGROUND)

- **Attitude of care of nature**
- **Doing farming organically**
- **Holistic thinking**
- **Care of the landscape**
- **Renewal of the contact with nature**
- **Nature as a gift**



CONCRETE ACTIONS

- Water retention in the landscape - building ponds, small water bodies, aquatic biotopes
- Short supply chains (limited food miles and lower CO₂ footprint)
- Systematic reuse of tools and machinery: nothing is thrown away
- Composting
- Organic farming processes
- Green manure, limitation of artificial fertilisers
- Draws Photovoltaic panels
Special care for precious biotopes
- Rainwater management on buildings and the farm yard
- Handwork
- Diversity of activities that diversify the farm management
- Animal welfare at the same level as human welfare
- Closed farm management cycle
- Less input from the outside and more resiliency
- Diversified production
Distribution on local markets/ canteens
- Attitude to the soil as the gift
- Less use of agrichemicals
- Positive work with landscape
- Permanent structures in the landscape – hedgerows, trees, flower stripes, fallow lands)
- Consideration of the value of the landscape elements (use of branches for feeding animals)
- Use of landscape elements in a logical way
- Environmental education of school classes on social farms
- Internal use of production – fostering self-sufficiency and closed farm cycles
- Raise awareness of the environmental aspect (water management, reuse, composting, etc.) among participants
- Processed local-grown production



SOCIAL WORK AND WELFARE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL FARMS



THE OVERALL IDEAS (VISION, MISSION, MOTIVATION, BACKGROUND)

- **Open door system – acceptance of humankind's diversity**
- **Multidisciplinary cooperation**
- **Valuing diversity**
- **Individualised care**
- **Solidarity**
- **Social responsibility**
- **Maturity of the society**
- **New and effective ways of doing things**



CONCRETE ACTIONS

- Paid work integration places
- Social services - sheltered housing, supported housing
- Complete change for people with intellectual disability
- Psychosocial care
- Supporting actions
- High quality of services
- Individual approach to participants
- School visits with children with special needs
- Space for creativity
- Non-formal care activities
- Care for individual needs
- Giving meaning to all involved activities
- Promoting long school attendance of youth
- Summer camps for socially excluded NEETs
- Feeling of interdependency
- Diverse and individualised activities
- Environmental education
- Proudness about the participant's work
- Sheltered workshops
- The presence of a social worker/pedagogue on a farm
- Spiritual growth and needs of the soul
- Training in soft/social skills for farmers
- Continuous work with participants
- Participants can actively care (about plants, animals, landscape, and other participants) rather than being cared
- Helping participants with issues outside of the farm
- Respite care for non-formal home caregivers
- People with special needs feel important and valued
- Respecting the personality of the people involved
- Connecting people from the "outer world"
- Respect for the involved people



Based on these extended and concretised aspects, the Eco-Social Farming project team developed a set of questions that discussed social farms with farmers in the in-depth interview, enabling upscaling of the results for further use in the online survey. The aim was to get the results about how social farming is linked to environmental, and social work, how vital the ecological inputs are, and at what point the participants are involved in the right to a healthy environment. The completed results are presented in the Handbook on Synergies of Social Farming and Ecological Goals.



Dobrý Pastier, Slovakia





REFERENCES

Act No. 252/2007, On Agriculture, § 2e Coll. Online. Zákony pro lidi. Available at: [252/1997 Sb. Zákon o zemědělství \(zakonyprolidi.cz\)](https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/252-1997-Sb.-Zakon-o-zemedelstvi) [2024-07-09].

Barker, R.L. (2003). *Social Work Dictionary* (4th edition). Washington DC: NASW Press.

Besthorn, F. H. (2013). Radical equalitarian ecological justice: A social work call to action. In Gray, M., Coates, J., & Hetherington, T., *Environmental Social Work*. London and New York: Routledge.

Di Iacovo, F. and O'Connor, D. (2009). *Supporting Policies for Social Farming in Europe*. Progressing Multifunctionality in Responsive Rural Areas. Firenze: ARSIA.

Disability. Online. World Health Organisation 7.3.2023. Available at: [Disability \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability) [2024-07-10]

Focus Group Social farming and innovation. Online. Innovation and Knowledge Exchange. EU CAP Network, 2023. Available at: [Focus Group' Social farming and innovations' | EU CAP Network \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/focus-group-social-farming-innovations).

Frouz, J., & Frouzová, J (2021). *Aplikovaná ekologie*. Praha: Univerzita Karlova: Nakladatelství Karolinum.

Global definition of social work. Online. International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work July 2014. Available at: [Global Definition of Social Work – International Federation of Social Workers \(ifsw.org\)](https://www.ifsw.org/global-definition-of-social-work) [2023-01-16].

Matoušek, O. (2008). *Slovník sociální práce*. Praha: Portál.

Murray, J. et al. (2019). The impact of care farms on quality of life, depression and anxiety among different population groups: A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*. Vol 15 (4), 1-61. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1061>

Nicholls, A., ed. (2006). *Social Entrepreneurship. New Models of Sustainable Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press.



INDICATOR MATRIX OF SOCIAL FARMS

Organic agriculture. Online. IFOAM – Organics International, 2008. Available at: [Definition of Organic Agriculture | IFOAM](#). [2024-07-09].

Palliative care. Online] World Health Organization 5. 8. 2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/palliative-care>. [2024-3-17].

Social Farming. Online. European Economic and Social Committee. Available at: [EESC Opinion: Social farming | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](#) [2023-01-16].

Taylor, R., ed. (2010). *Third Sector Research*. New York and Dordrecht: Springer.

[1] Focus Group Social farming and innovation (online). Innovation and Knowledge Exchange. EU CAP Network, 2023. Available at: [Focus Group' Social farming and innovations' | EU CAP Network \(europa.eu\)](#).

[2] Available from [EESC Opinion: Social farming | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](#) [2023-01-16].

[3] Agricultural entrepreneurs are applicable under the law of the countries of the partner organisations. In the Czech Republic, this is Act No. 252/2007, § 2e, Coll.





Co-funded by
the European Union

