



Vlaams Ruraal Netwerk

Invitation to the conference

**Linking rural development and
social farming**

Mechelen (Flanders, Belgium)

30th of September & 1st of October 2010

organised by Flemish Rural Network
with support from Steunpunt Groene Zorg

Conference program

Wednesday 29 September 2010

Possible arrival of participants

Transport from Brussels National Airport to the conference venue at 17.00 – registration is required.

19.00 Social dinner offered by the Flemish Rural Network
Restaurant De Kraanbrug, Persoonshoek 9, 2800 Mechelen

Thursday 30 September 2010

9.00 *Registration and coffee*

9.30 *Plenary introduction*

- **Welcome and introduction on Rural Development**

Johan Verstrynge - Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Flemish Government, Belgium

The EC Council Regulation 1698/2005 sets out a framework for National Strategy Documents and Rural Development Programs for the period 2007-2013. An overall view of rural development policy in past, present and future times will be presented.

- **Introduction on Social Farming**

Deirdre O'Connor - University College Dublin, Ireland

The theme of Social Farming crystallized during the last years. This is mainly the result of the "Community of Practice Social Farming"-activities and the EU-financed projects "So Far" and "COST-action on Social Farming".

- **Goals of this meeting: explanatory note on the workshops**

Koen Wellemans - Flemish Rural Network, Belgium

The focus of this conference lies on identifying possible elements of convergence between Social Farming and Rural Development. In the workshops we will brainstorm on how one can support the other. As a starting point, the overview paper on Social Farming, made by the European Network for Rural Development in cooperation with the National Rural Networks, will be presented.

Coffee break

10.45 *Workshops*

- **Workshop 1: Networking activities in the start-up phase of Social Farming**

Key issue in this workshop is how Rural Development Programs can support networking activities.

Especially in the start-up of a Social Farming initiative, networking is of great importance: going from idea to realisation, getting the right people together, knowing the possibilities as well as the bottlenecks, ... Both formal and informal networks can be usefull in this phase. As



several Member States are in the start-up phase, it may be interesting to hear from the pioneers how networks and networking have helped the realisation of Social Farming.

Moderator: Deirdre O' Connor - University College Dublin, Ireland

Case studies from the Netherlands (IJsbrand Snoeij) & United Kingdom (Rachel Hine)

Moderated debate

- **Workshop 2: Financial aspects of Social Farming**

The key issue in this workshop is to identify the Social Farming elements that could be financed by Rural Development Programs.

Social farming activities have a financial impact on the farm. Besides financing the activity, other elements can also be financed: matching of farmers and clients, coaching, training, networking, start-up projects, ... Member States can have a different idea on the financing of the costs. Some points of view will be presented and discussed.

Moderator: Joost Dessen - Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research, Flemish Government, Belgium

Case studies from Italy (Francesco di Iacovo) and the Netherlands (Jan Hassink)

Moderated debate

- **Workshop 3: Quality issues on Social Farming**

The key issue in this workshop is to see if and what quality requirements are needed to justify support from the Rural Development Programs.

Government support often requires some basic quality standards. What standards do Member States use and how are they implemented?

Moderator: Dorit Haubenhofer - University of Vienna, Austria

Case studies from Flanders (Els Roelof & Hilde Weckhuysen) & Austria (Silke Scholl)

Moderated debate

12.00 Lunch offered by the Flemish Rural Network

13.00 Field visits organised by Steunpunt Groene Zorg

- **Theme 1: Pioneers**

No policy without pioneers! The installation of legislative or organisational frameworks is a result of what some people have started before. In this excursion you can meet some of these starters. Where did they get the inspiration from? What were difficulties and where could they find some help? This excursion gives an overview of different types of farms with social objectives.

- **Theme 2: Linking agriculture and social welfare**

Introducing the concept of social farming incites both sectors, welfare and agriculture, to tune in their offer and demand. Farmers who decided to work together with people with special needs reconsider the objectives of the entrepreneurship.

From the side of the welfare institutions one can observe methodological adaptations.

Cooperation with social farms gives new prospects for social inclusion and coaching youngsters and adults with special needs.

We will visit a small farm. The farmer works with different target groups and we will have a discussion with social workers about this issue.



- **Theme 3: Welfare-enhancing & therapeutical effects**

The potential qualities of care farms will be proved during this excursion. Providing care farms is not only in function of time occupation. In some cases the observation of behaviour on the social farm can provide a diagnostic contribution. It even can be introduced as an additional methodology during therapeutic treatment. Furthermore social farms seem to be excellent settings for the development of social skills.

During the visit of a social farm social workers will present you the contribution of social farming to the wellbeing of their clients. You will hear testimonies from the psychiatric sector as well as from a support centre for pupils.

19.00 Social dinner offered by the Flemish Rural Network



Friday 1 October 2010

9.00 Coffee

9.30 Continuation of the workshops

- **Workshop 1: Networking activities in the start-up phase of Social Farming**
Case study from Flanders (Toon Hamans)
Moderated debate
- **Workshop 2: Financial aspects of Social Farming**
Case study from Flanders (Koen Wellemans)
Moderated debate
- **Workshop 3: Quality issues on Social Farming**
Case study from Finland (Mari Louhi-Lehtiö)
Moderated debate

Coffee break

11.30 Plenary round-up

- **Remarks of Community of Practice Farming for Health**
Dorine Ruter – ETC Foundation, the Netherlands
- **Remarks of National Rural Networks for Rural Development**
Mara Lai - European Network for Rural Development Contact Point
- **Concluding remarks**
Patricia De Clercq - Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Flemish Government, Belgium

12.30 Lunch offered by the Flemish Rural Network

14.00 Transport to Brussels National Airport (registration is required)



General information

Participants

The number of participants will be limited to 150.

Focus groups for invitations: National Rural Networks, national experts on social farming, members of Community of Practice Farming for Health

Meeting venue

LAMOT-centre (www.lamot-mechelen.be) , Van Beethovenstraat 8-10, 2800 Mechelen (Belgium).

Arrivals & departures

Mechelen is situated at appr. 30 km from Brussels and Brussels National Airport.

Information on Mechelen: <http://www.toerismemechelen.be> (in Dutch, English, French, German)

Information on Brussels National Airport: <http://www.brusselsairport.be> (in Dutch, English, French)

See also: "To and from the airport": http://www.brusselsairport.be/en/parking_transport/to-and-from/

The Flemish Rural Network organises bus transport from the airport to the conference venue on Wednesday 29th of September at 17h00 (preliminary registration is required).

Bus transport from the venue to the airport will leave at 14h00 on Friday 1st of October. Registration for this transport is required. Please consider the obviously occurring of traffic jams on this road when booking your outward flight.

Accommodation

Hotels must be booked and paid by the participants, but a list of hotels in the proximity of the conference venue can be found on www.ruraalnetwerk.be.

Language

The working language will be **English**. Only during the field visits simultaneous translation Dutch-English will be available where necessary.

Registration

Please complete the Conference Registration form and send it to ruraalnetwerk@vlaanderen.be before the **17th of September 2010**.

For additional information please contact us at

e-mail: ruraalnetwerk@vlaanderen.be

tel: 0032 2 552 77 17

