

# Social farming across Europe

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- Developing training materials for (future) social farmers on how the farm environment can be best used for specific target groups
- 8 Target groups
- More than 40 interviews and multiple days of participatory observations of each partner country at different farms





- Lead to teaching materials for universities and organisations in social farming
- Pilot phase: next week at the university of Neubrandenburg
- Next year: training materials will be available on: [www.sofaredu.eu](http://www.sofaredu.eu)



 FOREST-BASED CARE

SOCIAL AGRICULTURE 



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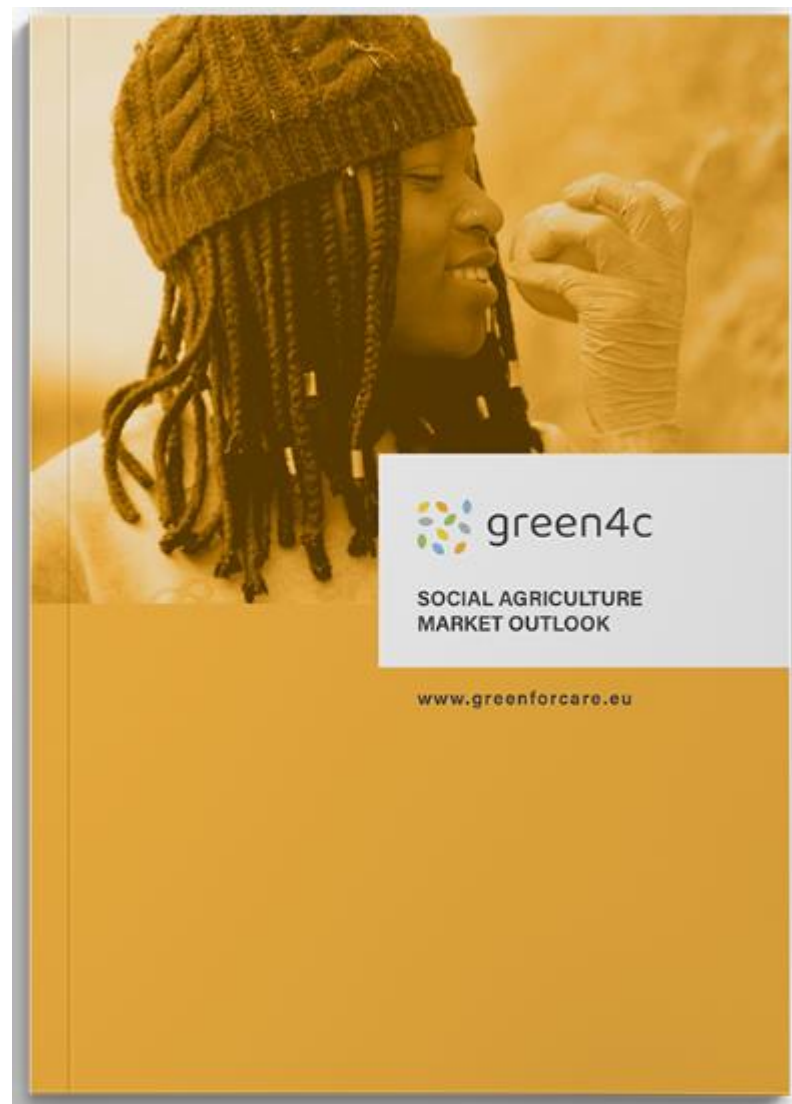


The purpose of the Green4C project is to contribute to the development of **Green Care entrepreneurial opportunities** for students, researchers, professionals, as well as practitioners to promote nature-based solutions for health, well-being, and social inclusion.



# Market outlook report

- Developments of the social farming sector in Europe
- Future prospects of the social farming sector in Europe
- [www.green4c.eu](http://www.green4c.eu)



# European perspective of social farming



- Social agriculture is a fast growing sector in Europe
- Different developments and systems in different countries
- Innovate sector: combines health care, education and social services with agricultural production.

# European perspective of social farming

Social farming builds on the concept of:

- A more inclusive agricultural sector
- In some countries to more sustainable production systems such as organic farming
- In some countries ties in with developments in health care





# Some numbers

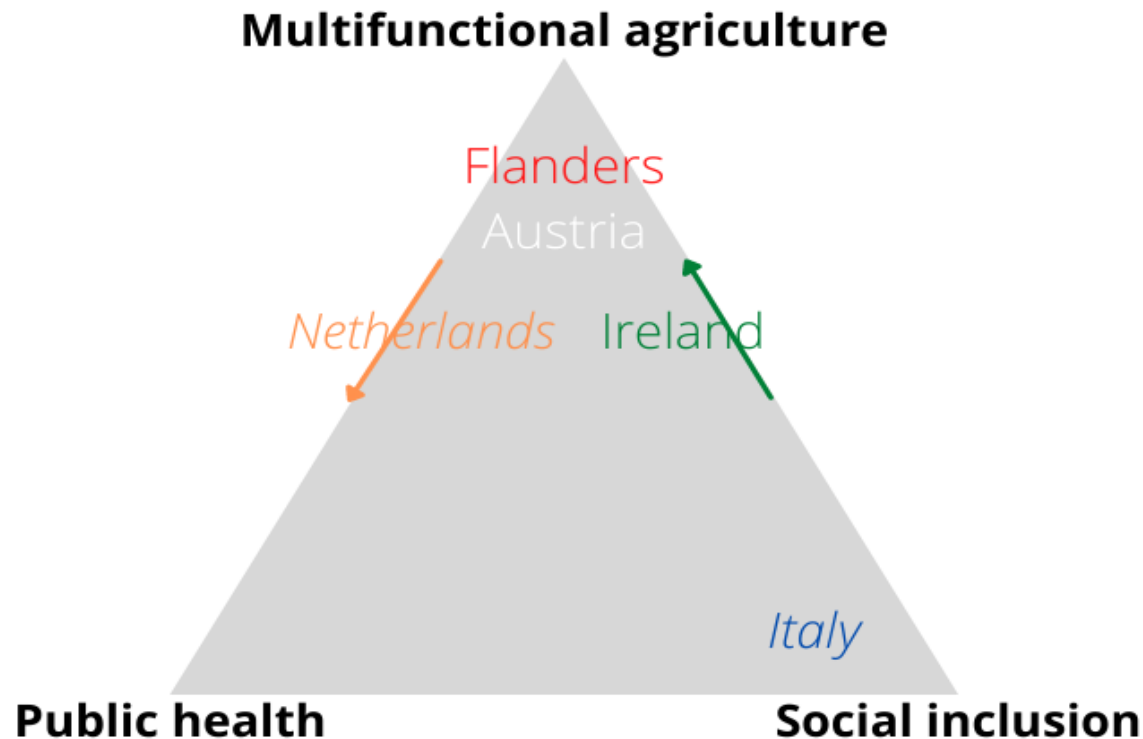
Country/ Region	Number of social farms represented by main national/regional association(s) (2020)	Estimated number of social farms at national/regional level ( 2020)
<b>Netherlands</b>	850	1250
<b>Flanders (Belgium)</b>	979	1000
<b>Italy</b>	228	3000
<b>Austria</b>	536	699
<b>Ireland</b>	175	195

# Some numbers

Of the countries where it is available, we see that:

- In most countries, we see that the number of participants coming to social farms is growing (NL: 35.000, Italy: 15.000, Flanders: 2050)
- Growth in revenues (f.i. NL revenues of the joint regional social agriculture organisations have increased from 11.3 million euros in 2011 to 88.6 million euros in 2018. At the moment the total revenues of the sector is estimated at 250 million euros, 200k on average per social farm)
- But conclusion: in many countries, data from the SF sector are still unavailable

# European perspective: different frameworks/discourses in social farming



Source: Green4C social agriculture market-outlook report (2021, Briers, O'Connor, Elings et al.)

# Multifunctional agriculture framework

- Social farming (SF) is one of the multifunctional activities of a farm
- SF takes place on a private or family farm
- Combination of commercial farming activities and care activities
- SF is an economic activity
- Farmer or farmer's wife are the supervisor
- Farmers are paid for care activities
- Farmers are mostly no health care professionals
- Ireland, Flanders and The Netherlands



# Public health framework

- Social farming refers to activities that fall under health promotion, rehabilitation and therapy
- Focus is on care services
- Private or institutional farms (e.g hospital gardens)
- Farmer provides the green environment
- Green environment is seen as therapeutic for people with special needs
- Farmer has no role in supervision
- Professionals interacting with participants are health professionals or work supervisors
- Professionals are formally employed and receive wages. Farmers might receive payment for providing farm setting
- Germany, Austria and the UK



# Social inclusion framework

- Social farming contributes to the reintegration of vulnerable people in society by offering activities on the farm
- Focus is social inclusion
- Private farms, co-operatives or institutional farms
- Supervision by farmer or social services
- Participants are paid and sometimes the farmer
- Italy



# Funding



Influenced by different welfare models

The Netherlands:

- Number of social farms increased because of innovations in financial structure of the healthcare sector
- Personal budgets
- Neo-liberal reforms of health care sector gave social farmers opportunity to have an accreditation and have direct contracts with municipalities
- **1998: 75    2022: 1300**
- Annual revenues of the SF sector increased from 11.3 million euros in 2011 till 88.6 million in 2018

# Funding



## Italy:

- Funding for social farming (SF) comes mainly from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development but no data available on the specific amount
- SF activities are not reimbursed by public health care systems
- Often the participants are paid rather than the farmers





# Funding



## Flanders (Belgium):

- In 2017 a personal budget scheme was introduced
- But mostly farmers receive a Compensation of the Flemish Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for offering SF activities
- 40 euros per day irrespective of the number of participants taken onto their farms



# Quality assurance and certification



Differences between countries

The Netherlands:

- Federation of Care Farms, quality systems since 2000
- Quality mark, farmers need to comply with laws and regulations and with every 3 years an audit

Flanders (Belgium)

- Quality is guaranteed by co-operation between social farmer and a care or welfare organisation



# Quality assurance and certification

## Italy:

- No national-level quality label
- Regions developed regional laws and regulations that allow farms to apply to be officially registered
- Registered farmers are more visible to public organisations
- They receive preferential treatment when accessing local markets or school and hospital canteens



# Future of social farming in Europe: broadening of target groups and activities

- Historically focused on activities for people with disabilities or mental health issues
- Recently increase of demand from other groups: elderly, school drop-outs, refugees, school children
- Changing demand also different types of social entrepreneurs and business models are needed
- Discussants stressed the unique role of and contact with ordinary farmers and their families
- Diversification in terms of participants profiles will allow for other sources of funding

# Future of social farming in Europe: visibility

- Importance of communication
- Social farming not only beneficial for participants but also (economically) beneficial for farmers and rural areas
- Positive image of agriculture
- Play a role in communicating the role of farming in food production
- Important role of national federations of care farmers to disseminate best practices and develop evidence base on the social farming sector

# Future of social farming in Europe: open up to a wider audience

- Social agriculture can play an important role in making green spaces more accessible not only for people with disabilities but to the wider public



# Future of social farming in Europe



- Hackathon Green4C 17<sup>th</sup> of November in Wageningen
- Challenge: think of innovative ways to open up the social agricultural sector to a wider audience
- Think along with us!

# Thank you for your attention!



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