

1. Introduction

Agricultural production has more than tripled in the last 60 years, partly due to productivity-enhancing technologies, but also due to the Green Revolution, which has significantly increased the use of land, water and other natural resources for agricultural purposes. The same period witnessed a remarkable process of industrialization and globalization of agriculture and food. Looking to the future, the question is whether today's agricultural and food systems can meet the needs of the global population, but there are other questions. Can agricultural sectors and their rural roles be transformed in ways that provide more opportunities and better employment and income opportunities, for example, for disabled, socially excluded or young people and women?

Here you have the opportunity to take the advantage of social farming. This new direction, which is also beginning to develop in Czechia, is one of the possible forms of sustainable farming, where in addition to the production and sale of agricultural commodities, there is also the opportunity to offer new jobs on farms, provide social services, educational activities and various therapies for a wide range of people, not only with health and social disadvantages.

Social farming is a traditional and innovative form of agriculture, which is often introduced at the local level by both new and traditional farmers (Di Iacovo, 2020). It includes all activities that use agricultural resources (plants and animals) to support (or generate) therapy, rehabilitation, social inclusion, education and social services in rural areas. However, this is strictly related to farming activities, where (small) groups of people can stay and work together with family farmers and social workers. Social farming is a new and traditional concept. It is based on traditional rural self-help systems, which were well established in rural areas before the modernization of agriculture.

Social farming can offer appropriate solutions that meet the local needs of the population. In rural areas, flexibility and proximity, the size of the economy and informality are some of the keywords that characterize the use of agriculture and farms to provide services to local people and rural communities.

The paper focuses on the current state of social farming in Czechia and on the identification of its actors, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The findings are based on the analysis of political documents at various levels, on the opinions of experts, on some examples of good practices and on the questionnaire among members of the Agricultural Union of the Czech Republic, territorial branch Hradec Králové with the participation of 22 farms, carrying out in 2020.

2. Conceptualization of social entrepreneurship and social farming

Social entrepreneurship is a business activity that benefits society and the environment. It plays an important role in local development and often creates employment opportunities for people with health, social or cultural disadvantages. The profit is largely used for further development of the social enterprise. Making a profit and increasing public benefit is just as important as for a social enterprise.

The European Commission has developed sets of key features that set out the minimum conditions that an organization must meet to be classified as a social enterprise by the European Commission's definition². The following main features have been identified:

- the organization must be engaged in economic activity,
- it must pursue the main social objective directly expressed, which is beneficial to society,
- it must have restrictions on the distribution of profits and/or assets, thus giving priority to the social objective over the generation of profits,
- must have inclusive governance, which is characterized by participatory and/or democratic decision-making processes.

² Social Farming adopts a multifunctional view of agriculture that combines farming with social services/health care at local level. It can help to improve social and environmental awareness, in accordance with social and solidarity principles. European Economic and Social Committee, 2012.

According to European definitions, the social goal is superior to the economic goal, while in the Czech concept of social entrepreneurship, achieving profit is as important as increasing public benefit (Hromadová, Hanusová and Šťastná, 2017). In comparison with the European concept, the demand for higher environmental responsibility of Czech social enterprises can be considered positive. Compared to the social dimension, it tends to be weaker, but it seems that the effort to be kind to the environment has already become part of the Czech concept of social entrepreneurship (Dohnalová et al., 2018).

3. State of the art

Since 2017, environmental-social entrepreneurship has appeared in Czechia as another type of social entrepreneurship, which has a strengthened environmental principle in the form of solving a specific environmental problem, usually at the place of activity. For example, it is about the re-use of agricultural land and other activities based on the principles of circular economy and zero waste. Environmental-social entrepreneurship differs from organic farming in its social dimension (i.e., it employs groups of handicapped people – from the long-term unemployed to people caring for young children or people of pre-retirement age).

The concept of social farming is not legally defined in Czechia and a more precise definition of the issue and the establishment of a basic framework is still under preparation. Social farming activities can be very diverse, but they always have a link to agricultural activity and are intended for people who have permanent or temporary specific needs and the resulting restrictive opportunities for employment or society.

Social farming supports people in everyday life to interact with their community and environment and also with the development of their potential. Social farming in itself is not therapy and farmers are not in the position of therapists. A farm focused on social farming is not a specialized hospital. People can benefit from its support services and benefit from participating in non-clinical farming activities. They do real work and contribute to the local economy and community through their active involvement. The basic value of social farming is that it places great emphasis on relationships between people, develops relationships between farms, families, communities to build new social and cultural roles for people in the locality.

The target groups of social farming can be the following:

- people with disabilities,
- young people and young adults who are neither in the process of education, preparation for employment nor employed – young people at risk of socio-pathological phenomena,
- young adults leaving alternative care facilities, age group 15–26,
- young people from socially disadvantaged families,
- homeless people,
- persons leaving institutions for institutional or protective education and persons leaving the service of a custodial sentence,
- victims of crime, victims of domestic violence,
- persons caring for a close person who, as a result of this care, find themselves at a disadvantage in access to the labour market,
- people diagnosed with substance abuse who have completed treatment,
- long-term unemployed persons

The social farm must be able to manage economic risks and be self-sufficient; the entrepreneur bears all responsibility for his/her business, which is associated with risk and guarantees the results of business activities (depending on the legal form of the entity) with his/her property. The concept of social farming is currently modern and innovative, responding mainly to the needs of the local community; however, it brings about a rediscovery and emphasis on the historical social function of agriculture and contributes to maintaining the local traditions and historical heritage of our ancestors.

Social farming has three dimensions:

- social – a social farm is a socially necessary and public benefit tool for job creation, education, activation, rehabilitation,
- economic – allows farmers to diversify their income; multifunctional agriculture contributes to the viability of rural areas; brings healthy, quality, seasonal food,
- organic – organic farming is mostly practiced along with soil quality and concerning local climate conditions, environmental benefits, animal welfare.

The use of social concepts in agriculture brings limitations in terms of material, technical, financial, which are different for each farm and which the farmer must take into account when preparing an economic plan for a new area of social entrepreneurship. This concerns material and technical facilities (such as barrier-free access), work procedures that must meet staffing abilities, personnel who must be qualified to work with disabled people or increased administrative burdens, as social farming is subject to additional controls.

On the other hand, social farming can bring some benefits to farmers, for example

- more efficient distribution of financial profit/losses,
- the emergence of new partnerships and cooperation not only between farmers but also within the framework of supplier-customer relations,
- cooperation with the local community, academia and other social and non-profit organizations,
- use of the advice in the field of subsidy support,
- the possibility of cooperation in the promotion of their products,
- more varied opportunities to meet and share experiences,
- support of the local community and economic stability of the region,
- possibility of voluntary help,
- the environmental dimension of related activities and the promotion of environmental protection.

In comparison with other EU countries, the number of social farms in Czechia is several dozens. The problem is that social farming is still not considered by legislation as an innovative approach to farming and social inclusion in rural areas is still not a priority. In many cases, social farming also faces low efficiency in the sale of its products, even though these sales are the primary source of income. Another obstacle is the insufficient financial reward for people working with healthy or socially handicapped ones.

Social farming is defined broadly as a process of social inclusion and empowerment of groups at risk of social exclusion (RSE) through their employment in agricultural activities (Tulla et al., 2018). Social (care) farming connects the agricultural and social sectors (Hassink, Grin and Hulsink, 2018). It presents the possibilities of integration of health and socially disadvantaged people into society through employment, rehabilitation and therapeutic care services (social services), leisure and educational activities in the environment of agricultural farms and other organizations effectively working in creating healthy communities in rural areas. The concept of social farming develops and innovates the agricultural production sector with its other components and supports other entities operating in rural areas in diversifying their activities – especially in marginal regions (Musolino et al., 2020). The relationship between agricultural and social dimensions might be very heterogeneous (Genova, et al., 2020).

The mission of social farming is not only the production and sale of agricultural products but also: the opportunity to offer new jobs on farms including migratory workers (Giarè et al., 2020) provide social services, educational activities and implement a variety of therapies for a wide range of people, especially health and social disadvantages. It also relates to the gender question of women farmers (Gramm, et al., 2019). It could even serve as a tool for fighting against crime (Elsen and Fazzi, 2021). Demands for social services in rural areas can be expected to grow (Parzonko, 2019).

The relationship between social farming and place-based social entrepreneurship is important (Hudcová et al., 2018 or Moriggi, 2020). Emphasis is placed on the active involvement of the client in agricultural activities and his participation in current farm production. The aim is to support and improve the quality of life of a person with special needs (García-Llorente et al., 2018) for his/her further employment in the labour market, or for maximum satisfaction of his/her needs. It is clear, that some public involvement is essential (Giarè et al., 2020). The main task in the field of education and community is to strengthen the general public's relationship with nature and the countryside. Community engagement seems to be crucial (Borgi et al., 2020). The willingness to pay for social farming products and services is also important (Torquati et al., 2019).

The connection between care farming and health most often occurs in the literature (de Bruin et al., 2020) including human-animal relations (Gorman, 2019) to reduce stress (Thieleman et al., 2021) or coping with dementia (Zobena and Lāce, 2021 or Ibsen et al., 2018).

Of course, social farming is realized in the conditions of the changing European agriculture. There are certain general features of the transition of agriculture from the productive to post-productive phase (Robinson, 2004). Their common feature was evident in the loss of the central position of agriculture in rural society. The rural idyll is changing its meaning. The countryside is increasingly separating from agriculture.

Czech agriculture has undergone significant and multifaceted transformation changes over the last 30 years. Similarly, as in the European context, the most important of these was the transformation from productive to post-productive agriculture (Věžník et al., 2013). These changes, which are taking place in all developed countries, are conditioned by technological progress, the relocation of a large part of the production to the developing world and overall social development. Other transformational trends namely globalization, Europeanization, second demographical transition are related to these changes. New challenges are constantly emerging, which are not always the result of socio-political developments, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and global climate change.

The change from a central planning system to a market (respectively from a socialist to a capitalist system) meant a significant shift in management, motivation, freedom of decision-making and related responsibilities and opened up space for receiving experience and technology from Western states. However, the organizational structure of agricultural holdings has not changed much and most technological changes depend very little on the political system. Doucha and Divila (2008) presented five stages of the transformation of Czech agriculture: shock therapy (1990–1991), liberal phase (1992–1993), restructuring (1995–1997), pre-CAP (1998–2003), implementation of the CAP (2004–2005). After that, Czech agriculture became the standard integrated component of European agriculture. The second stage was marked by the involvement of Czech agriculture in the European framework, which culminated in the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with its benefits and problems.

Of course, changes in agriculture had an impact on the development of the Czech countryside. Today, agriculture is seen more like a multifunctional sector, the main aim of which is the sustainability of the rural landscape, in which agriculture is partly involved and for which it is responsible. The impact of agriculture on rural social development has fallen sharply. Working in agriculture is no longer the meaning of life, but working like any other. In contrast to ownership parceling, where the number of landowners has increased from 17.5 to 80 owners per 100 ha over the last 230 years (Sklenička et al., 2017), large agricultural holdings predominate in the organization of production. The share of economically active people working in agriculture in municipalities with less than 2,000 inhabitants was 6.5% according to the 2011 population census. Vaishar and Šťastná (2019) do not consider support for agriculture, but support for the development of human and social capital in rural areas as the key factor of rural development.

a. Politics for Social farming in the Czech Republic

Social farming falls under at least two ministries: the/ Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture. Therefore, there is no uniform policy in this area yet. The association Thematic

Network for the Social Economy (NGO) operates as an umbrella platform for the social economy in Czechia. Its concept contains five points:

- Involve official representatives of farmers in the preparation of legislation.
- Develop national and regional strategies to support the development of social farming. Not only the centre but also the regions must be the bearers of the strategies.
- Define systemic support for social farms within the strategies
- Provide systemic financial support to umbrella and support organizations, regional centres of the social economy and social farming.
- Ensure that farms with social farming have access to public procurement, including small-scale ones, which will allow the position of social farms to be better taken into account.

The strategies of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic concern social farming only indirectly, such as the development of the human and social potential of the countryside, the creation of jobs for people less able to apply on the labour market, the expansion of non-agricultural activities of agricultural enterprises and the like. The ministry has set up a working group for social farming. Some initiatives can be found in the Common Agricultural Policy for the period 2023–2027.

At present, some regions are already independently interested in the concept of social farming, as they are looking for ways to help small and medium-sized farmers contribute to a sustainable rural economy, to increase public interest in healthy seasonal foods. Last but not least, they see social farming as one of the ways to strengthen the supply of jobs for socially disadvantaged groups. But the regions are still looking for a way to address this issue. This fact may be the reason why the regions do not incorporate the concept of social farming into their development strategic plans – currently, they address the area of employment only through social entrepreneurship, and regional financial support is then targeted at social enterprises.

b. Community support for the social farming

Many activities can be implemented through local action groups (LAGs) of the LEADER Programme. These groups work under the method of the Community-Lead Local Development at present. Local action groups, which have also focused on supporting social farming as part of their strategies, distribute the funds allocated in this direction. At the same time, they offer assistance to farmers with the preparation of the project plan, or they refer applicants to relevant experts. Local action groups also help to promote the products of social farms on their territory and, where possible, purchase the products themselves.

The vast majority of municipalities have no idea what social farming is. If they have already formed a view of this activity, then they perceive it as a social enterprise with jobs for the disabled. But that's a very narrow view. At the same time, the mayor is a very strong and influential authority in motivating the local community. At present, this potential is untapped for social farming.

A community-supported partnership (developed in Czechia since 2015) is between the farmer and the consumer, in which the risks and benefits of agriculture are shared. As part of a long-term commitment, it is run by local people from local sources based on the principles of solidarity, economic location, sustainability, self-sufficiency and environmental considerations. Community-supported agriculture requires an active approach from both the farmer/producer and the consumer and creates more favourable food supply/customer relationships – enabling consumers to obtain local, healthy and most environmentally friendly food.

Small-scale farming allows for a more personal approach not only to the landscape but also to the people. Farmers and consumers create their partnership concerning the possibilities of each of the members, their operation is based on mutual trust and the principle of solidarity:

- the solidarity of the community with the farmer is expressed by the farmer's advance payment for the whole season, thus the farmer has sales and earnings and can better plan the season,

- the amount of the payment is set in such a way as to ensure a dignified life for the farmer,
- The community supports the maintenance of jobs in rural agriculture, and thus the stability of the local economy.

c. Education activities and demonstration farms

One of the important forms of support for social farming is the transfer of knowledge. The history of organized agricultural demonstration activities dates back to the Austro-Hungarian period (Šťastná et al., 2019). At that time, education was provided by a relatively dense network of secondary agricultural schools, which was established in the 1880s. Agricultural universities were founded in Brno (1919) and Prague (1952). Agricultural associations and agricultural companies were mainly involved in disseminating knowledge in agriculture. The later period (1924–1952) is related to the activities of the Czechoslovak Agricultural Academy (the third in Europe after Sweden and France). The socialist period was associated with centralized control of agriculture. On the other hand, the management of agricultural cooperatives became university-educated, so the knowledge acquisition strategy was sophisticated and centrally managed. In addition to research and education, academics play a role in putting new knowledge into practice and raising public awareness.

The results of the analysis of demonstration farms in Czechia show that the exchange of knowledge and information is increasingly focused on productive technologies, less on non-productive and multifunctional activities. The question is, to what extent does such an approach contribute to the sustainability of agriculture? In Czech conditions, moreover, sustainability is often understood primarily as ecological or environmental sustainability, which conflicts with the economic pillars.

The main specificity of Czech agriculture lies in the fact that the average farm size (approximately 130 ha) is by far the largest in the EU. Most agricultural land is run by tenants, not the owners. The owners are individuals with small areas of land. Tenants represent large agricultural enterprises, whose management is usually university-educated. This fact also has an impact on demonstration activities, which are relatively at a high professional level. On the other hand, farms with less than 500 hectares and less, dispose of significantly worse information coverage. The specifics of Czech farmers are little experience with the marketing of agricultural products because Czech agriculture has always been mainly production-oriented. The products were mostly delivered to large customers. Another factor that requires knowledge is involvement in non-productive activities. Agri-tourism, organic farming and social farming began to develop only after the transformation and subsequent stabilization of the sector at the turn of the millennium.

School gardens, established according to the Imperial Education Act in 1869, have a certain significance for agricultural education. These gardens were used primarily for teaching, and their economic effect was secondary. Gardening, protected by the Czech Gardening Union also plays a role. The Association brings together about 139,000 members in 3,000 basic organizations, making it the largest non-political grouping in the Czech Republic. They cultivate more than 9,000 ha of land, of it 6,000 ha in garden colonies. These activities contribute to the creation of a relationship between a large part of the Czech population and agriculture, although employment in this sector has already fallen below 2.5%. Due to the size and character of the gardens, their importance is more social, healthy, anti-stress, while food production is more complementary.

4. Good practices

Květná Zahrada³ (Flower Garden) in the municipality Květná, district Svitavy, provides one of the successful examples of employing disadvantaged people in agriculture, horticulture and landscape care. It provides effective help and support to vulnerable and at-risk children and their families, young people who leave school for institutional or protective care after coming of age, return from other youth

³ kvetnazahrada.cz

care facilities, imprisonment, protective treatment or are in a difficult life situation – without shelter, help and support needed. Since 2009, Květná Zahrada has been dedicated to social entrepreneurship, focused mainly on the employment of socially risky and endangered young people, people with disabilities, people from other socio-cultural backgrounds. Their work is based on the principles of mutual respect and an honest effort to achieve the best possible result.

An important means of socialization and resocialization is the social farm, which is the basis of many activities of the social enterprise and a place through which almost all employees from the target groups of social entrepreneurship pass. Contact with animals, caring for them, working outdoors in any weather can give people much more than hours of therapy and talking. The farm manages 20 hectares of land, it is focused on crop and animal production (cattle, poultry, rabbits, pigs, goats); the inhabitants of the farm grow pumpkins, keep draft horses and work with them in the forest; they pellet horse manure, which they apply to meadows, gardens and fields, etc. On the farm, they make cheese, process fruit in the cider and kiln, and make jams. They run a local shop in which, in addition to ordinary goods, they also offer the products of the surrounding farmers. The farm uses many products in its kitchen, where they prepare lunches and dinners for those from a wide area. In the renovated part of the farm, in the building of the former plow yard, they offer 24 beds for agri-tourism.

The farm has a number of sponsors from the public sphere, business entities, foundations and private persons, the most important of which is Czech Savings Bank. The company implements or is involved in thirteen projects co-financed by the European Union. It also implements three regional projects: A resocialization program for children at the hazard of a risky way of life, Community life is the basis and the Establishment of a boarding department of the Svitavy Regional Care Center.

The mission of the company **POMOC Týn nad Vltavou** (district České Budějovice) is to build spiritual and social integration centres, where people with health, social or other disadvantages will live, work and to educate with healthy people. The farms and agricultural operations that are closely connected with the POMOC Týn nad Vltavou association are Sady sv. Prokopa and Dvůr Čihovice farm. They employ about 200 people with various types of disadvantages. POMOC Týn nad Vltavou in cooperation with the Home of St. Agnes provides social services focused on sheltered housing, home for the elderly, sheltered workshops (gardeners, auxiliary works and maintenance, wood processing, technical work and transport), provides various types of therapies for a wide range of disadvantaged people; contribute to the social inclusion of different target groups.

Within the Rural Development Program 2014–2020, in the measure aimed at supporting investments in agricultural enterprises, the project Modernization in the orchards – Jarošovice Horticulture and Nurseries, has been realized. The Špejchar klub social center including accommodation possibilities was built to organize social events at which disabled citizens and non-disabled people could meet. However, in more than twenty years of operation, the program of the Špejchar klub cultural and social center has partially changed and its main activities are now educational and training events, including agrotourism.

To date, nine specific projects have been completed, including rural development in the micro-region. In 2000, in cooperation with a French partner, the Partenariat association was founded with the aim of transferring the experience of French social farms to Czechia. The company has 8 sponsors. Due to the location, one of them is the Temelín Nuclear Power Plant.

The main commodity of the company **LEVANDIA** (municipality Starovičky, district Břeclav) is lavender – from the cultivation of the herb, processing to the production of the final product and its sale. The farm was found in 2014 in a vine-growing area. The key values of the company include respect for the landscape, traditions, belonging to nature and the region. The company operates under the bio-certificate. Very high-quality flowers are used for the production of food, decorative, relaxation and cosmetic products. The farm also organizes excursions for schools. The company strives to supply its products to health stores, florists and gift shops.

A large part of the products is created in a local sheltered workshop, which mainly employs people with various forms of disability. Sheltered employment in the labour market (with a share of more than 50% of employees with disabilities) creates jobs for 12 people with disabilities. The Lavender and Herb Farm /

Employment of the Disabled project was implemented under the 2014–2020 Rural Development Program, a measure aimed at supporting the start-up of young farmers.



Fig 1. Another example of social agriculture is the Free Farm Na soutoku, which is connected to the Camphill ecological center of České Kopisty (district Litoměřice). Photo: the authors

5. Discussion

Social farming will take place in the context of the new stage of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, which should enter into force in 2023. Its essential components will be the Green Deal Strategy for Europe and the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. Like other policies and spheres of social life, agriculture was affected first by the COVID 19 pandemic and then by Russian aggression against Ukraine. These circumstances draw attention back to the issues of Europe's self-sufficiency – in this case in food production.

Although the intentions to adopt the new principles of the Common Agricultural Policy⁴ do not directly mention social farming, a number of principles, if properly applied, could affect the positive development of social farming. These include support for small farmers and their more equal market position, social conditionality of labor law in agriculture, support for the cultivation of vegetables, fruit and vines. Although this may not always be the rule, it can be assumed that social farming enterprises will go in this direction. On the other hand, there will probably be few holding companies dedicated to intensive conventional agriculture under rules of social farming. However, social inclusion was one of the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy in the period 2014–2020 and it can be expected that a similar objective will appear in the future CAP.

Another aspect of the future common agricultural policy will be increased rural support. According to Nicolosi et al. (2021), social farming is an element of resilience in rural development and contributes to the sustainable development of rural areas (Lafranchi and Gianetto, 2014). Tulla et al. (2017) recall that while the Green Revolution has marginalized and depopulated rural areas, social farming is returning society to agriculture and food production, thus ensuring sustainable rural development. Social farming by its very nature contributes to the improvement of community life, especially in relation to vulnerable groups and their integration into society (Murray et al., 2019).

⁴ A Greener and Fairer CAP (Factsheet from February 2022)

6. Conclusion

The article summarizes the current situation and the main problems of social farming in Czechia. The development of this sector of agricultural activities is still in its infancy. Due to the small number of truly social farms, it has not yet been possible to base the analysis on data, but it stands on the individual experiences of the academic sphere and practice.

Social farming is still an unknown concept in Czechia. Related to this, there is society's very low awareness of the service options it offers. Innovative projects in social farming are often developed in an isolated way without knowledge of similar projects or exchange of experience between them. Public authorities should recognize and support social farming to be able to gain permanent access to funding that covers various aspects of this type of farming.

The main barrier to development is probably the current product focus of Czech agriculture, oriented towards large customers. If the non-economic focus of agricultural products is promoted, organic farming and agri-tourism are usually in use. The size structure of crucial agricultural producers is also a disadvantage. The issue is divided between at least two ministries, where greater coordination would be needed. The terminology used can also be a problem, as social farming is associated almost solely with green care, i.e., people with disabilities, which significantly narrows the possibilities.

The public sector, academics and farmers need to work together to successfully implement the concept of social farming in agricultural practice. For the time being, the following proposals may be the basis for a joint discussion:

- Involve representatives of social farmers in the preparation of legislation.
- Develop national and regional strategies to support the development of social farming.
- Within the strategies, define system support for farmers focused on social farming.
- Address the terminology of social farming/farm concerning common terms in Czechia and the issue of large agricultural entities.
- Provide systemic financial support to umbrella and support organizations, regional social farming centres.
- Ensure that farms with social farming have access to public procurement, including small-scale procurement, which will allow the position of social farms to be better taken into account.
- Support the creation of a network of cooperating organizations, a network of regional products.
- Implement system education and awareness – opportunities for multifunctional agriculture and social services, impact entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship with added non-economic benefits).
- Support detailed preparations of the project plan (consulting, education, subsidies).
- Establish a precise definition of what the project is to achieve, a social/environmental benefit – the impact of the project.
- Address possible financial support to employers that will enable workers from target groups to improve their qualifications
- Address possible financial support for the manager who takes care of the target group on the farm.
- Include among the criteria for project evaluation the share of employees from disadvantaged target groups and cooperation with organizations providing social services.
- To enable pre-financing of the projects themselves from the sources of investors, in case of project success subsequently complete reimbursement from public sources.
- Provide a soft loan, a long-term guarantee or a reduction in social security contributions.

The demand for social farming will likely increase in the future. On the one hand, these requirements will be based on the agriculture itself, which aims at multi-functionality (Nowack et al., 2021). In addition to landscaping, increasing biodiversity, organic farming and agri-tourism, social farming can also play a role in this process – all the more so as it can work well with these agricultural trends.

The second pressure may come from the needs of rural development, which is changing significantly. The rural idyll, connected with the agrarian way of life, typical of family and neighbourhood help, is disappearing (Sutherland, 2020). The countryside is rapidly urbanizing, which means, among other things, that many responsibilities are shifting from family to society. At the same time, the number of households of individuals and socially excluded persons is growing and ageing is in progress.

The third trend is the growing importance of caring for disadvantaged and socially excluded citizens concerning human rights ideology. International migration trends and asylum policy can also have an impact.

Therefore, it will be highly desirable for academics to pay attention to social farming in the future as well. In addition to the development of social farming as such, it will be very important to study the related conditions, circumstances and regional contexts.

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