Action 866
Green Care in Agriculture

Participating countries: AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, FI, GR, IL, IS, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, SI, SE, TR, UK
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Working Group 1: Health effects of Green care
The aim is to coordinate research and develop new research in biological, medical and health sciences for the purpose of gaining new insight into the effects of various types of Green care on various aspects of physical and mental health and quality of life of clients.

The work will include conceptual and theoretical discussions and developments, as well as discussions on research methodologies.

The milestones are to: (1) Develop a conceptual framework and theoretical models for the health promoting mechanisms of Green care, (2) Compare and discuss ongoing research projects related to health effects on clients, (3) Establish a set of good research methodologies, (4) Develop a joint research project between some participating countries, and (5) Develop a research program on health effects for clients of Green care.

Working Group 2: Economics of Green care
The aim is to coordinate research and develop new research on economics and management of Green care farming. This includes the cost-benefit effectiveness of Green care on the micro, mezzo and macro levels within the framework of multifunctional agriculture, market based versus governmental based economics, marketability of public goods and positive agricultural externalities, as well as measurements of the positive externalities of Animal Assisted Therapy and Horticultural Therapy.

The milestones are to: (1) Develop a methodology to determine the economic benefits of Green care services for farmers, for other parts of the agricultural sector and for the health and social care sectors, and also the social returns of such services, (2) Develop systems to support Green care regionally and nationally, and (3) Develop a research program on economics of Green care.

Working Group 3: Policies of Green care

to discuss how Green care fits into current and future national health and social care systems. This includes the organisation of the Green care system and the building up of the network behind the health and social care systems. A further aim is to discuss how rural development is affected; creation of new jobs and strengthening of the economic viability of rural communities, those of less-favoured and remote rural areas in particular.

The milestones are to: (1) Define terms and concepts for the different services of Green care, (2) Evaluate the contribution of Green care to rural and agricultural policies, but also policies in health care and social care, and (3) Develop a research program on policies of Green care.

Main Achievements:

• Started with 14 countries autumn 2006, now 20 countries are involved.
• Two workshops (Brussels 2006, Thessaloniki 2008) and one conference (Vienna 2007) are held.
• Proceedings book with full papers from the first conference is published in 2007.
• A special issue of the Journal of Therapeutic Communities is published October 2008 with articles on the theoretical framework behind health effects of Green care services.
• Limited ongoing research in many countries, but the Action stimulates new research applications and international cooperation on research.