

# GOOD PRACTICES HAVING AN IMPACT ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

examples of operations implemented under  
the operational plan of the Polish Rural Network



“European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas”.

A publication co-financed by the European Union as part of Scheme II of Technical Assistance “Polish Rural Network” of the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020. A publication commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.  
Managing Authority of the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 – Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

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Ladies and Gentlemen!

Rural areas take up the majority of the territory of our country, and most of us have both direct and indirect ties that connect us with them. Anything that affects their development has a very big impact on the entire nation.

The publication that you are now reading, offers numerous examples of best practices, collected across all of Poland. Efforts carried out in one place may be of use elsewhere – sometimes they may only require small modifications, and in other cases, they might be transferred directly to a new place. It is always important to have a positive example – one that is real and that has been successfully implemented at some point. Sometimes all it takes is a little inspiration. That is why promoting best practices is important – so that we do not reinvent the wheel and blaze trails that somebody already discovered.

The countryside and rural areas are constantly changing. This is a natural process; however, we need to make sure that the natural aspect of these areas remains natural for the future generations.

Demographic changes and changes in the Common Agricultural Policy require all of us to find the best ways to modernise Polish countryside in order to make the living conditions there comparable to the cities, while making our best efforts not to lose the most basic function of these areas. They have always been, and they still remain the place where we grow our own food. We need to be aware that our joint development as humanity is ever-hungry for new land for industrial processes. Agricultural soil will become more and more scarce – that is why we have to take great care of it and respect its needs, so that it will produce new crops for us in return.

I whole-heartedly recommend reading this publication and using the solutions presented by the authors. I also encourage you to be active in implementing your own ideas, which might as well inspire others one day.

Enjoy the reading!

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Ecology – from producer to consumer</b>
Implemented by:	Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
Lead time:	May 2020 – October 2020
Form of implementation:	contest, publication, exhibition stands, conference
Activity of NRN:	Activity 12: Identification, collection and dissemination of good practices having an impact on rural development
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 4: Restoring, protecting and strengthening ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry

## Organic farm – a win-win

**Organic farming is one of the new directions of farm development. It not only means environmentally friendly cultivation methods, but also translates into the quality and nutritional value of products being offered. This is why it is so important to promote this type of initiatives, both among local authorities and farmers themselves. How can the Ecology – from producer to consumer project change the image of organic farming in Poland?**

### Promotion of ecological activities on a large scale

The *Ecology – from producer to consumer* project assumed to reach both processors involved in the production of organic food and farmers for whom that production method can become a next step in the development of their farms. It is primarily about building awareness of how such facilities function, developing a culture of organic farming and placing food on market in a shortened supply chain.

Cooperation with local governments and authorities is also crucial. A better understanding of how such farms function specifically will translate into effective support for bottom-up agricultural initiatives.

### Eco-competition as part of the contest – how did it go?

The starting point for the activities as part of the *Ecology – from producer to consumer* project was the announcement of a contest for the best organic farm. The competition took place in two categories:

- organic commercial farm,
- ecology-environment.

### Who participated in the project?

Farmers from Podkarpackie Voivodeship could apply to participate. Each of the accepted entries had to meet relevant criteria set by the organisers. In this way, a group of 11 farms was selected to take part in the competition.

What did the jury evaluate? Each participant was evaluated in terms of the so-called basic package – obtaining min. 30 points qualified individual entities to participate in further categories.

As part of the basic package, the following were evaluated:

- compliance of running the activity with the regulations on organic farming,
- aesthetics of the farm,
- adapting equipment to the scale of production,
- balancing animal and plant production,
- care for non-productive elements of the environment,
- waste management.

Each of the two sub-categories also had additional evaluation criteria, including, inter alia, product range, yield, sales effectiveness, quality of products offered, biodiversity and support for education on organic farming.



Exhibition stands of participants of the operation during the Autumn Horticultural Market. Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.

The results of the contest were announced on 15 October 2020 in Boguchwała during the **Organic production from farm to table** conference. Here is the list of winners in the following categories:

In the **ecology-environment** category, the winning farms were:

- First place – Stanisław Jagiełło from Jelna, Leżajsk county,
- Second place – Łukasz Wiatrowski from Ożenna, Jasło county,
- Third place – Marian Pokrywka from Majdan Sieniawski, Przeworsk county.

In the **organic commercial farm** category, the winning farms were:

- First place – Marcin Dunaj from Lubla, Strzyżów county,
- Second place – Przemysław Żebracki from Bażanówka, Sanok county,
- Third place – Bartosz Mazur from Rączyna, Przeworsk county.

#### Promotion of organic farming among residents of the voivodeship

The initiators of the **Ecology – from producer to consumer** project did not stop with just the contest. It was the starting point for bringing the principles of organic farming closer to both farmers and local residents.

As a follow-up, the **Ecology – from farm to table** publication was prepared and distributed to nearly 700 farmers and agricultural advisers from Podkarpackie voivodeship. It was also given to participants of the conference in Boguchwała and to the local community.

An important point of the promotion was also the presentation of organic products. Project participants organised an exhibition stand which could be visited during the Open Door Days and the Autumn Horticulture Market in Boguchwała.

The whole event also became a unique opportunity for all the contestants to meet. The fair was a place to make new contacts and build business relationships in the context of developing organic farming. The event also helped to raise consumer awareness of local product labelling and certificates.



## What are Protected Geographical Indications?

Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) mean the name of a region or a specific place used to describe products of local agriculture. A product possesses specific quality, reputation or other characteristics attributed to its geographical origin. The production, processing or preparation of a product takes place in a strictly defined geographical area. “Geographical environment” is understood as the natural environment and human factors, including, among others, climate, water, soil quality or local know-how.



Lecture given by Mr. Marek Krzysztoforski from the Radom Agricultural Advisory Centre during the "Organic production from farm to table" conference. Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.

The culmination of the project was the **Organic farming from farm to table conference** in Boguchwała, where producers had the opportunity to present the principles of organic production. The meeting also addressed the development opportunities and chances offered by supporting innovation in rural areas.

#### **Growing importance of ecology in Poles' lives**

The interest in organic production continues to grow, especially among consumers who are looking for sources of quality and healthy products. This is good news for farmers who plan to include pro-environmental innovations in their farms. Growing demand is a guarantee of profit, and the ecological approach to production benefits everyone. Such initiatives translate into growing entrepreneurship in rural areas and influence the quality of life – also for city dwellers.

**Do you want to find out more?**

Feel free to contact us:  
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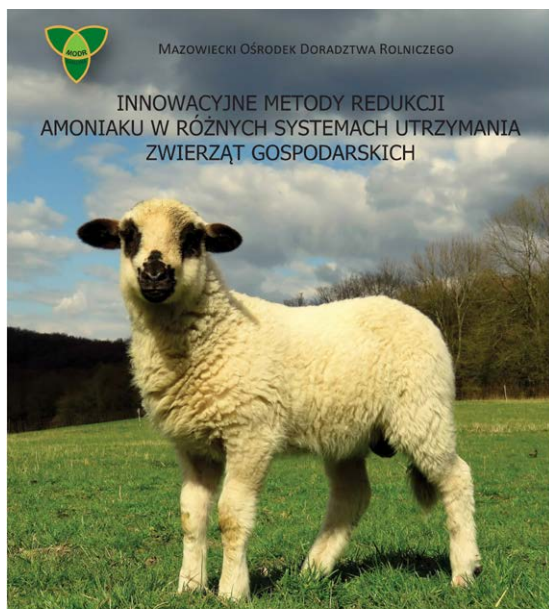


<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Innovative methods of ammonia reduction in various livestock support systems</b>
Implemented by:	Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre
Lead time:	November 2020 – December 2020
Form of implementation:	conference, publication
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Good practices in agriculture

Developing good habits and promoting innovation in agriculture is one of the most important missions that farm owners are facing nowadays. This is why more and more projects are being implemented to promote pro-environmental attitudes. One of them was the project called *Innovative methods of ammonia reduction in various livestock support systems*, carried out by the Mazowiecki Agricultural Advisory Centre.

The objective of the activity was to promote the sharing of knowledge and innovation in agriculture. All by raising awareness of agricultural producers of the importance of taking measures to reduce the formation of ammonia during agricultural and breeding works. The organisers wanted to spread information on good practices designed to reduce the formation of the chemical compound. The operation also enabled to create a network of contacts between agricultural producers and scientific institutions.



The cover of the “Innovative methods of ammonia reduction in various livestock support systems” brochure.

### A dose of knowledge for those interested

The target group of the project included mainly farmers and agricultural advisers, i.e. people potentially interested in reducing ammonia formation at farms.

### Ecology and modern agriculture

The interference with the nitrogen cycle is one of the natural consequences of agricultural activity. As such, it poses a threat to the equilibrium of ecosystems. Too much nitrogen causes ammonia to enter the environment. The NEC Directive (Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2016/2284) concerns the reduction of domestic emissions of certain contaminant types. Ammonia is one of them. To help reduce its release to the air, the initiative called “*Innovative methods of ammonia reduction in various livestock support systems*” was launched. As part of it, the organisers wanted to attract attention to the implementation of innovative, modern farming practices so as to reduce the production of ammonia at farms and, consequently, improve the way the environment functions.



## Why minimise ammonia production?

In the 20th century, the amount of ammonia released by humans increased several times compared to that in the pre-industrial period.

Agriculture in the EU is responsible for over 92% of all ammonia emissions, while in Poland this figure is 94%.

Livestock excreta management accounts for 78% of agricultural ammonia emissions, and mineral fertiliser consumption accounts for 22% of the same.



*A slide from the presentation of Dr. Elżbieta Sowula-Skrzyńska, Eng. on carbon-efficient storage methods.*

According to the assumptions of the operation, a conference was held on 23 November 2020, conducted in the form of a webinar divided into three thematic blocks. Among the lecturers were academic researchers of the Department of Production Systems and Environment of the National Research Institute of Animal Production in Balice.

Thematic blocks:

1. "Ammonia emission from animal production as a hazard to human health and of environmental contamination taking into account international and national legal regulations", Dr. Wojciech Krawczyk,
2. "Selection and effectiveness of the latest technological and nutritional methods of

ammonia mitigation in animal production", Dr. habil. Jacek Walczak,

3. "Economic dimension of ammonia emission reduction at farms with different animal production profiles", Dr. Elżbieta Sowula-Skrzyńska, Eng.

A publication authored by the conference lecturers was published in December 2020. The publication summarises and elaborates on the issues raised at the conference.

### **72 recipients – 72 successes. Innovation pays off!**

Both the conference and the publication, completed in cooperation with the National Research Institute of Animal Production, made it possible to provide interested parties with knowledge on the release of ammonia in connection with agricultural activities, particularly animal husbandry. Spreading slurry without splashing, ploughing manure within 12 hours of application, urea-based fertilisers – these are just a few ways to reduce emission. This is how practical methods were promoted to reduce the negative impact of agricultural activities on the environment.

The organisers managed to reach 72 people - farmers and agricultural advisers. It also proved possible to release the publication which was distributed throughout Mazovia.

All this is going to contribute to reducing the negative impact of ammonia on the environment and promoting good agricultural practices.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Modern agricultural production systems reducing environmental pollution</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów
<b>Lead time:</b>	June 2020 – December 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	films, online conference, conference film report
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## How to reduce environmental pollution? Meet future technologies

The project was aimed to disseminate knowledge on innovative solutions and good practices in reducing agricultural pollutant emissions to soil, water and air. Scheduled for 2021, the conference provided an opportunity to expand networks of contacts among the participants, to exchange knowledge and establish cooperation between science, consultancy and agricultural practice in knowledge transfer.

### Who participated in the project?

The project was attended by representatives of Agricultural Advisory Units, representatives of private advisory entities, representatives of Chambers of Agriculture, farmers and representatives of agricultural schools, dwellers of rural areas, representatives of scientific institutes, agricultural universities, and people interested in the subject of modern production systems.

” **Do you know that...**  
...agricultural biogas plants are special systems that produce a combustible gaseous mixture (called biogas) in the process of anaerobic fermentation. The combustible gaseous mixture consists in 45-75 per cent of methane, 35 per cent of carbon dioxide and traces of hydrogen sulphide or nitrogen compounds. Biogas can be used for combustion in so-called cogeneration units which enable to obtain electricity and useful heat simultaneously.

### **Biodynamic agriculture**

Biodynamic agriculture shows how nature can be protected and the environment used for the benefit of agriculture.

Biodynamic agriculture came into being as a result of an inspiration of Austrian thinker Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925). It is based on the anthroposophy he created, understood as spiritually developed cognition of man and nature.

The largest biodynamic farm in Poland, at the same time one of the largest in Europe, Juchowo

FARM in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship, operates in a closed loop system. Cows receive feed produced by the farmers. Manure produced at the farm is used to make compost which then goes to the fields.

### **The future of biogas plants in Poland**

In addition to production activities, environmentally friendly activities should be undertaken in rural areas, and production should be conducted in a sustainable manner.



*Agricultural biogas plants.  
Photo: Agricultural Advisory  
Centre in Brwinów.*

The domestic potential of agricultural biogas, viewed based on the size of arable land and the availability of agricultural waste, is comparable to that of Germany. However, primary energy production in 2012 from biogas coming from agricultural sources was several hundred times less in Poland than in Germany. Hence, the government is very determined to grow biogas plants in Poland. Government programmes prioritise the use of agricultural by-products, liquid and solid animal excreta and by-products and residues from food production in agri-food plants.



*How to store excreta to reduce water pollution?  
Photo: Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów.*

#### **Film showings for project participants**

The first stage of the project (of the three planned) consisted in making the following five films which promote environmental protection at farms:

1. Environmentally friendly biodynamic farm – Agriculture, like any other production activ-

ity, is a real hazard to the environment, and reducing that hazard is one of the priorities of modern food economy. The film shows correct solutions applied at farms that help reduce pollutant emissions to soil, water and air. The series begins with a presentation of a biodynamic farm.

2. How to store animal excreta to reduce water pollution? This episode shows good practices applied at farms. They have an impact both on reducing environmental pollution and on water protection (it is one of the most important issues in environmental protection resulting from the so-called Nitrates Directive). In 2018, a regulation came into force to reduce water pollution with nitrates that come from agricultural sources. Since then, farmers have had to comply with specific rules on soil conditioning with natural and mineral nitrogen fertilisers, storage of natural fertilisers and maintaining specific documentation.
3. Micro-organisms in animal nutrition and fertiliser management – The film demonstrates the potential use of effective organisms (commonly referred to as EMs) in agriculture. EMs are added to feed, silage and haylage, thus improving the digestibility of feed rations and for disinfection of premises and stalls where animals are kept. Patryk Szerfenberg, who, among others, breeds beef cattle, also discussed results that can be obtained by using microorganisms in agriculture.
4. Agricultural biogas plants – The film focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from animal production (even properly stored manure in heaps or slurry in reservoirs emits odorous compounds). The film shows alternative solutions, e.g. the use of manure and slurry as a substrate for a biogas plants (where fermentation results in digestate), being an excellent fertiliser having no unpleasant odour. Furthermore, a biogas plant also generates electricity and thermal energy. Its development is linked to the European climate and energy policies. The main purpose of a biogas plant is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote the development of renewable energy sources (RES) and improve energy efficiency. The film presents one of the few biogas plants in Poland. The

advantages and disadvantages of its use are discussed.

5. Animal and environmentally friendly poultry house – The film, among others, discusses innovative solutions to promote healthy chickens and protect the environment. They can significantly reduce or eliminate high emissions of gases, dust and unpleasant smells from a poultry house. The film also showed poultry houses in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, where, as part of the established EPI Operations Group – Safe Farm, research is underway to improve bed-

ding hygienic conditions and reduce odorous compound emissions to the environment.

**Follow the example of others –  
care for the environment!**

The farmers who featured in the above films demonstrated effective solutions applied at their farms. They were, therefore, a good example for others who are thinking of implementing similar measures at home. The films were also shown to advisers and shared online. It enabled them to reach a wide audience.

Films available at [youtube.com/CDRbrwinow](https://youtube.com/CDRbrwinow).

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
[sekretariat@cdr.gov.pl](mailto:sekretariat@cdr.gov.pl)  
<https://tinyurl.com/filmyCDR>

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Innovative development of renewable energy technologies in rural areas</b>
Implemented by:	Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Radom Branch
Lead time:	October 2020
Form of implementation:	online conference, preparation and publication of brochures
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## The countryside can be modern, too! Learn about innovative renewable energy technologies

The objective of the project was to transfer knowledge and good practices on innovative solutions in renewable energy technologies in rural areas. The project was designed to raise the participants' awareness of the necessity to fulfil Poland's obligations towards the European Union and also to halt climate change (15% clean energy production in 2020).

The project was also to facilitate making contact between representatives of advisory entities and

science, entrepreneurs, dwellers of rural areas and representatives of local governments.

### Who participated in the project?

The project was attended by representatives of advisory entities and science, farmers, entrepreneurs, representatives of government and local administration, and people interested in the topic.



### Do you know that...

...the largest biodynamic farm in Poland and Europe is Juchowo FARM in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship which operates in a closed loop system? Cows receive feed produced by the farmers, and compost is produced from the manure produced at the farm and then goes to the fields.

### What is biodynamic agriculture?

Biodynamic agriculture shows how nature can be protected and the environment used for the benefit of agriculture.

Biodynamic agriculture came into being as a result of an inspiration of Austrian thinker Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and is based on the anthroposophy he created, understood as spiritually developed cognition of man and nature.

Biodynamic agriculture ranks a level above organic farming. Farms that have opted for this business model apply soil conditioning based on compost enriched with so-called biodynamic preparations and perform field work in accordance with the biodynamic calendar.

### What is the purpose of agricultural biogas plants?

The development of agricultural biogas plants is linked to the European climate and energy policies. It aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable energy sources and improve energy efficiency. Biogas plants mainly use animal excreta as a substrate.

### We develop Polish villages!

As part of the operation, two-day (from 29 to 30 October 2020) online conferences entitled Innovative development of renewable energy technologies in rural areas were organised. There were 83 participants on the first day and 78 on the second day.



*The first page of the online conference brochure.  
Photo: Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów,  
Radom Branch.*

The conference was opened by the director of the Agricultural Advisory Centre, Radom Branch, Henryk Skórnicki. Iwona Obojska-Chomiczewska then presented the tasks of the Network for Innovation in Agriculture and in Rural Areas. Then, Professor Tomasz Stuczyński of the Catholic University of Lublin gave a lecture on Challenges in the development of RES in the light of the EU policies and presented, in a lecture on Support to RES in rural areas – opportunities and threats from the perspective of local interests, his own solutions concerning benefits for farmers coming from the development of RES technologies (especially photovoltaics).



*Prosumer photovoltaics with solar collectors.  
Photo: Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów,  
Radom Branch.*

Professor Jacek Dach of Poznań University of Life Sciences also presented his own innovative solutions in third-generation biogas plants. They have been patented and applied at the farm of the University of Life Sciences in Przybroda. The latest technological solutions in photovoltaics were presented by Bogdan Szymański of GLOBENERGIA Krakow. Bogdan Dams then had a presentation on innovative solutions in small Archimedes type hydro power plants. Arnold Rabięga presented opportunities for the development of energy clusters and energy cooperative societies in rural areas. Finally, Justyna Bator presented support for RES development in rural areas mainly by the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management: Termomodernizacja [Energy Renovation], Mój Prąd [My Electricity], Agro energia [Agro Energy].

A brochure on Development of innovative renewable energy technologies in rural areas, which was published in 1000 copies, was also presented as part of the project. The brochure was distributed among

the project participants as well as Agricultural Advisory Centres, research institutes and universities.

### Conferences are conferences... but what were their effects?

As part of the project, 83 people were trained in innovative renewable energy technologies. The latest technological solutions on a national, European and global scale were presented. The project helped support the dynamic development of renewable energy technologies (mainly photovoltaics and the use of heat pumps) and the dynamic development of prosumer systems.

According to estimates by Polskie Sieci Energetyczne, the growth of photovoltaic systems connected last year was over 150 per cent higher than in the preceding year, of which prosumer systems accounted for the highest growth percentage. The total capacity of all photovoltaic systems in Q1 2021 reached 4.2 GW.

The conference participants appreciated very much both the organisation and the content of the conference.

Moreover, an added value of the project was also an increase in environmental awareness of the Polish

population, environmental protection, clean air and the creation of jobs in this sector in rural areas. The project supported the development of appropriate attitudes towards energy saving, energy efficiency and sustainable use of the environment.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
radom@cdr.gov.pl  
<https://tinyurl.com/OZEpub>



**Title of operation:** Innovative villages of Czuluchow Region as a chance for rural development

**Implemented by:** Czuluchow Region Local Action Group Association

**Lead time:** April 2020 – October 2020

**Form of implementation:** training, seminars, workshops, study trip, conference

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

## How can local tourism be supported? Project of Czuluchow Region innovative villages

A thematic village is a form of consolidating the activities of the local community around a specific product or a tourist attraction. This is not only an excellent way to boost the local economy, but also an alternative source of income for residents. The idea of supporting such initiatives came from the Czuluchow Region Local Action Group Association. An effect of those activities was the *Innovative villages of Czuluchow Region as a chance for rural development* project. How did it go and what results were achieved?

### Support programme for local tourism

According to the organisers, the main objective of the project was to increase the level of knowledge on the creation of thematic villages.

The intentions of the actions taken included:

- activation of the local community in implementing rural development initiatives;
- expanding the region's tourist offer and increasing its attractiveness;
- increase in tourist traffic in the area of the Czuluchow Region Local Action Group.

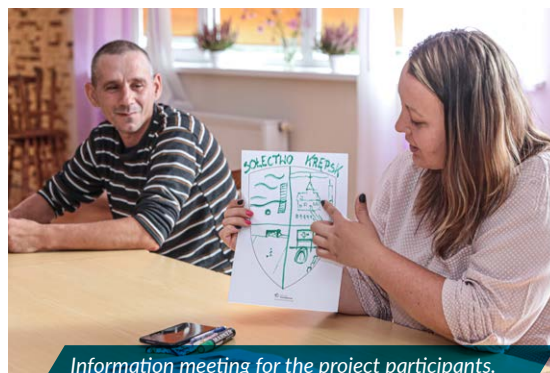
The aforesaid objectives are expected to translate into better promotion of rural areas as places for leisure, work, study and professional development. At the same time, they are a starting point for improving the quality of life of people living in the areas in question.

### Who participated in the project?

The target group consisted of local authorities, entrepreneurs, local associations and all residents actively involved in the community of Czuluchow County.

### How do thematic villages work?

The question was a starting point at the meeting kicking off the *Innovative villages of Czuluchow Region as a chance for rural development* project. It was attended by representatives of the villages of Mysligoszcz, Krępsk and Sokole. The goal: gaining knowledge on the principles and legal aspects of the operation of thematic villages. The meeting was facilitated by Krzysztof Szustek, a specialist in rural development and promotion and an animator for thematic villages



Information meeting for the project participants.  
Photo: Czuluchow Region Local Action Group Association.

The next item was two workshop meetings. During the activities, the participants had an opportunity to find out how such projects work in practice. Using concrete examples, they could learn about sources of funding for villages, methods of promotion and principles for creating attractive stay offers. In the meantime, they also worked to develop their own villages. During the workshops, they were to identify their distinctive features and attractions that have the potential to attract tourists.

Learning in practice, i.e. thematic villages from behind the scenes

In order to learn more about how thematic villages work, the project participants visited Lower Silesia.

**The trip included visits to:**

- Crazy Horse Ranch in Brunów;
- Sculpture village of Głuchowice;
- Stork Village in Niedźwiedzice;
- Czapple – Sand and Stone Village.

## ” In Głuchowice...

there are nearly 100 wooden sculptures. They were created in cooperation with the local community as part of a village renewal group and with invited artists from Poland and abroad. Most of them refer to the surnames of the residents. The sculptures are intended as a form of a tourist attraction for visitors. In addition, every year a sculptors' festival is organised in Głuchowice, where one can buy their own sculpture.

The crowning point of the project was a conference on **Smart villages as a chance for increasing social activity and rural development**. It concerned not only the very ideas for supporting entrepreneurship in smaller villages. The speakers also touched on issues related to funding under the changing form of the European Union policies. It is important in terms of creating new jobs and further development of thematic villages.

Finally, the participants had an opportunity to put the knowledge they had acquired into practice. During the workshops, they developed names for their own thematic villages:

- Village of Old Trades in Myślągoszcz,
- Land of Fun in Sokole,
- Village of Love in Krępsk.



Smithy in Myślągoszcz. Photo: Człuchów Region Local Action Group Association.

### Results with potential for the future

The *Innovative villages of Czluchów Region as a chance for rural development* project inspired the participants to come up with bottom-up initiatives to develop the tourist offer of their voivodeship. There was no shortage of practical knowledge and inspiration for using the neighbourhood assets to attract visitors.

It is worth emphasising that such activities not only influence the economy of the region but also unite the residents in a common goal. In areas where thematic villages exist there is growing involvement of residents and a desire to embellish, enrich and promote their own area.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:

[biuro@lgdzc.pl](mailto:biuro@lgdzc.pl)

[www.lgdzc.pl](http://www.lgdzc.pl)

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Agricultural retail – an innovative direction for promoting and selling apiculture products</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Lodz Agricultural Advisory Centre seated in Bratoszewice
<b>Lead time:</b>	February 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	conference
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Innovative training for apiary farms

The Lodz Agricultural Advisory Centre seated in Bratoszewice, in cooperation with the Voivodeship Association of Beekeepers in Lodz, organised a conference on Agricultural retail – an innovative direction for promoting and selling apiculture products. The main objective of the project was to develop and discuss innovative directions of promotion in the context of selling apiculture products.

Another assumption of the operation was the possibility of sharing experience between the participants and creating a space for dialogue. This enabled persons involved in the meeting to gain invaluable

knowledge on how to expand their business. The training was delivered as part of the Network for Innovation in Agriculture and Rural Areas.

### Beekeepers and experts in search of new directions

Engaged in the event were beekeepers, producers, agricultural advisers and promotion and sale specialists for AR (agricultural retail) of apiculture products. Academic researchers and residents of rural areas were also among the participants. The conference was attended by 100 people involved in the promotion, production and sale of apiculture products.



*Experts are clarifying the legal regulations related to AR. Photo: Lodz Agricultural Advisory Centre seated in Bratoszewice.*

### How to promote apiculture products under AR?

The conference took place on 29 February 2020 in Bratoszewice. The guiding theme of the meeting was innovative directions for the promotion and sales of apiculture products. The conference consisted of three valuable, substantive lectures prepared by: Barbara Sałata and Monika Mrożek – specialists of the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Radom Branch.

Among the issues raised were those related to safety requirements in food production, legal regulations and sales of products made. The conference participants learned about the individual stages of production and sales as well as responsibilities related to running a business.



*The conference participants – beekeepers, farmers, entrepreneurs. Photo: Lodz Agricultural Advisory Centre seated in Bratoszewice.*

It was also discussed what short supply chains are about. Thanks to the mechanism, farmers can sell their products without unnecessary intermediaries, thus achieving greater income. The lecturers also devoted a part of the meeting to an open discussion dedicated to agricultural retail. It became apparent that the legal requirements, obtaining the status, running documentation or rights and responsibilities involved are still unclear to many farmers.

### Knowledge is the key to growth

The project participants gained knowledge on how to conduct agricultural retail. The audience learned:

- what the legislation is about,
- how they should register their activities,



*The conference audience are eagerly taking notes of valuable knowledge. Photo: Lodz Agricultural Advisory Centre seated in Bratoszewice.*

The issues raised in the lecture are intended to help producers in the future to better manage their operations and to multiply their profits. The guiding themes included:

- mass production at the lowest possible cost,
- using market niches and increasing the value of production, i.a. through direct sales or small-scale processing.

- what safety requirements apply,
- what the sales channels are for apiary farm products within the framework of agricultural retail.

Valuable information will help entrepreneurs to multiply profits, find new business directions and reach customers interested in their products. This, in turn, will also translate into growth of farms in Łódzkie Voivodeship.



## Do you know what agricultural retail is about?

The system consists in selling products to the final consumer. Sales may not be made through intermediaries, except in a few situations, i.e. sales at fairs, festivities or exhibitions. Importantly, there are separate legal and tax regulations for it. The professional staff delivering the lecture helped to clarify many intricate legal issues to the participants, including:

- accounting of income obtained,
- meeting the sanitary conditions in buildings designed for production,
- keeping adequate records,
- marking of goods,
- production limits.

Apiary farms have been able to sell their products under AR since 2017.

### Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
[a.lichman@lodr-bratoszewice.pl](mailto:a.lichman@lodr-bratoszewice.pl)  
<https://tinyurl.com/RHDpszczoly>



<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>A distributed retention system as an element of water management</b>
Implemented by:	Opole Agricultural Advisory Centre in Łosiów
Lead time:	June 2020 – July 2020
Form of implementation:	online guide/tutorial
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## How to manage water wisely? We kick off zero waste!

The objective of the project was to propose ways to collect and use precipitation in flexible distributed systems, available to both households and businesses, building and road administrators, etc. The hosts of the event also wished to present the links between the annual precipitation cycle and long-term trends and possibilities to help flood risk reduction. The participants of the event were also to learn how to limit drought effects (by changing land use) and how to introduce “zero waste” micro-investments.

### Who participated in the project?

The project participants included farmers, owners of agro-tourism farms and facilities, agricultural advisers, entrepreneurs and residents of rural areas, people interested in innovative solutions in agriculture, employees of Agricultural Advisory units.

## What is zero waste?

Zero waste is the conservation of resources and designing and managing products in a way as to generate as little waste as possible and not to pollute the environment. The zero waste activity is ethical and economical not only for the planet but also for people. In “zero waste”, resources are used instead of creating new waste.

In Poland, we also have the ZERO WASTE Association which works to change the public awareness of resources:

- preventing waste at source;
- promoting a waste-free lifestyle and changing production and consumption patterns towards the circular economy.

The Polish ZERO WASTE Association follows its mission by providing knowledge and tools to support the activities of citizens, institutions and enterprises.

### What is precipitation?

Precipitation, which was the focus of the operation, is commonly referred to as “rainwater”. It is water that has fallen to the ground in the form of precipitation (for example, rain, hail or snow).

How to manage water wisely? Read the online tutorial!

As part of the operation, a project was organised being an interactive online tutorial which is available at [www.sir.oodr.pl](http://www.sir.oodr.pl).

Sytemy i poradniki ogrodnicze i uprawy roślin  
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Table of contents of the online tutorial.  
 Photo: Opole Agricultural Advisory  
 Centre in Łosiów.

The tutorial is a response to the problem of the intensifying phenomenon of drought which in agriculture has a particular influence on the level of agricultural production – especially plant production. The tutorial-type guidance document offers directions of how to optimise water management processes at farms and agro-tourism farms.

**Success of the tutorial**

The tutorial was posted at [www.sir.oodr.pl](http://www.sir.oodr.pl) on 13 July 2020, and by 18 May 2021, it was visited by 33,009 viewers as many as 126,353 times. There are about 200–350 hits per month. In 2021, there were 2,121 page views (540 different users).

The online tutorial consists of 92 clear pages and enjoys tremendous interest. It has also become a teaching material for all those interested in knowledge of water retention and management systems.

**Do you want to find out more?**

Feel free to contact us:  
 ewa.klekot@oodr.pl  
<https://tinyurl.com/WodaPodrecznik>



<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Promotion of direct sales from producer to customer</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Marshal's Office of Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw – NRN Regional Office
<b>Lead time:</b>	October 2020 – December 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	radio spots, TV spots, press articles
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 9: Supporting cooperation in the agricultural sector and implementation of joint investments by farmers
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

## Short chain – important goal

Short supply chains are the future of sales in the agricultural industry. By reducing the number of intermediaries required to deliver a product to consumers, the cost of the entire operation goes down and the comfort of the two parties increases.

The aim of the promotional project was to spread knowledge concerning short supply chains, their advantages and ways to implement them.



### KRÓTKIE ŁAŃCUCHY DOSTAW

*Short supply chains. Slider.*

#### Who is this project for?

The operation was open to both agricultural producers – potentially interested in ways to shorten the product's route to the customer – and consumers who care to get food straight from the farmer – natural, traditional, organic.

#### From farm to table

The shortening of supply chains has benefits for both producers and consumers. In order to make interested people realise this, a two-month operation called **Promotion of direct sales from producer to customer** was organised. It consisted of a variety of activities. They included:

1. Radio spots for broadcasting on local and regional radio stations;
2. TV spots for broadcasting in social media;
3. Press articles in regional weeklies and the monthly of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship Local Government.

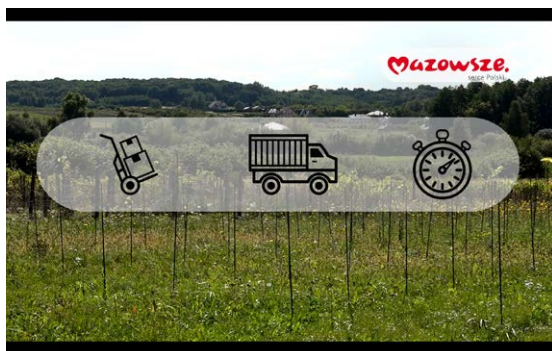
Radio spots were broadcast twice a day and TV spots every five days, on the special **WIEŚCI z Mazowsza [NEWS from Mazovia]** Facebook page. The material was also posted on the YouTube channel under the same name.

#### For the benefit of all!

As part of the operation, the participants were able to learn about different types of short-chain sales: from direct, in-farm sales to collective direct sales, online shopping, mass catering and even distribution to supermarkets. As the whole activity took place at the time of pandemic restrictions, attention was also paid to safety aspects.

# ” You do not know that!

- The materials prepared reached over 370,000 Facebook users!
- Short supply chains are developing throughout the European Union – not only in Poland
- The new sales model guarantees benefits for both producers and consumers
- While making the videos, members of the Mazovia Culinary Heritage Network and winners of the Laurel of the Marshal of Mazowieckie Voivodeship contest were visited
- The radio spots were aired 840 times in total over 20 days on 14 radio stations covering almost 100% of Mazowieckie Voivodeship.



Mazovia. Short supply chain. Photo: Marshal's Office of Mazowieckie Voivodeship in Warsaw – NRN Regional Office.

The topics covered included various aspects of short supply chains. Among other things, it was discussed how important it is for conscious consumers to read labels, descriptions and markings on products carefully.

## Knowledge is key!

Consumers were also able to find out what a short chain is really about. It enables to purchase a product either directly from the producer or processor, or much more quickly than in the traditional shop model.

**This also increases the flavour and health benefits of food. It is fresh and cheap.**

Modern marketplaces, agricultural markets, online shopping – all these are an important part of the new supply model. The producer gains time and money, whereas the customer gains a better price and a guarantee of freshness.

## Awareness is growing

The campaign has made a significant contribution to promoting short supply chains – both for the producer and the shopper. By spreading the content over several information channels, it was possible to reach a wide audience including different age groups. All this has the potential to translate directly into greater awareness of the market, ways of selling and advantages of shortening the supply chain.

## Do you want to find out more?

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**Title of operation:** Networking of consultancy, agricultural practice and science as a way to solve diagnosed problems in rural areas

**Implemented by:** Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań

**Lead time:** November 2020 – December 2020

**Form of implementation:** webinar, radio programme, TV film broadcast

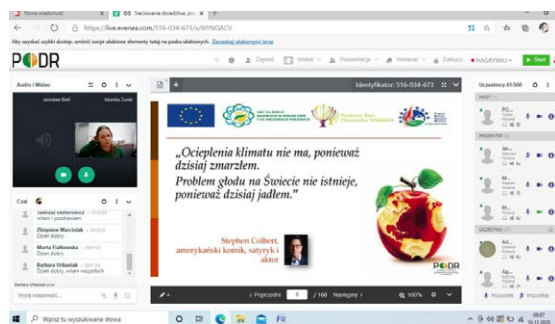
**Activity of NRN:** Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## How to weave this net?

The goal the project organisers set for themselves was to create a network of contacts and cooperation. The underlying objective is to improve the transfer of knowledge between agricultural theoreticians and practitioners. This bilateral relation was made possible by discussions, exchange of learnings and the opportunity to ask questions in the chat room provided by the organisers.

It offered an opportunity to promote innovation in agriculture, forestry and food production, to activate rural dwellers, to share information and knowledge in many directions, and to create a consultancy network for farmers and local communities.



*“Climate warming does not exist because I got cold today. The problem of hunger in the world does not exist because I ate today”.*

Networking of consultancy, agricultural practice and science as a way to solve diagnosed problems in rural areas. A fragment of the presentation.

### Who is this project for?

The project was addressed to dwellers of rural areas, farmers, advisers/specialists of the Pomorski

AAC, entrepreneurs of the agri-food sector, representatives of science and institutions related to the agricultural sector in Pomorskie Voivodeship.

### From an idea to a consultancy network

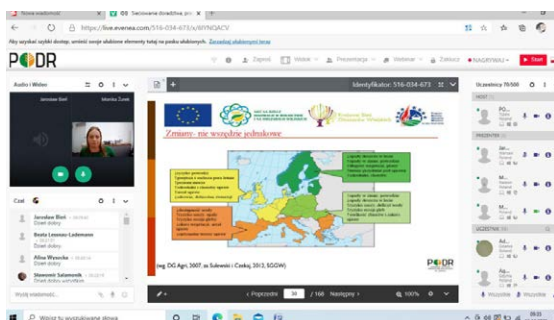
The operation referred to as *Networking of consultancy, agricultural practice and science as a way to solve diagnosed problems in rural areas* was implemented in multiple ways. Due to the epidemic restrictions, forms were chosen that minimised personal contact between the participants. This included an online training course, a radio programme and a film broadcast on TV.

As part of the webinar, three distinct thematic groups were identified. Those who were interested could take part in training entitled:

1. Agricultural production and climate change adaptation – the webinar discussed appropriate water management in plant cultivation, new techniques in cultivation and fertilisation, and the role of biological progress in counteracting biotic and abiotic stresses in rape and winter wheat cultivation. All this at the time of increasing climate change which has a tremendous impact on innovative farming techniques and practices. The webinar also provided information on how to adapt animal production to climate change. Yes, it was both an economic and ecological session.
2. Organic production and building consumer awareness – during this online training one could find out what an organic product is and what value it presents. The next stages were about eco-marketing, consumer profile and potential sales locations. It was also impor-

tant for the organisers to address the subjects of supply chain, building an eco-brand and labelling of eco-products.

3. Entrepreneurship, short supply chains, brand building, promotion – the training was on selling agricultural products in short supply chains. The participants could also learn more



*Networking of consultancy, agricultural practice and science as a way to solve diagnosed problems in rural areas. A fragment of the presentation.*

about agricultural retail, marketing issues as well as advertising and promotion.

Those interested in the training could decide for themselves which of the activities were the most interesting for them. Each group had a separate two-day training session with a facilitator and external lecturers.

The project also included creating a contact platform in the form of a mailbox. It allowed the trainees to contact lecturers for several days and obtain answers to questions they had in mind.

The project also included the creation of a radio programme. The seven-minute programme promoted the operation and the online training organised as part of it. Three times a day, for fourteen days, the spot appeared on a radio station in Pomorskie Voivodeship. The role of innovation in agriculture as an important element in the development of rural areas and farms themselves was emphasised there. The presentation was intended as an inspiration for the community interested in the subject. The audience learned what networking is, what its purpose is and in what form the training will be organised.



## Do you know it?

- Climate warming does not mean you will never get cold again! Average temperature rises apply to the entire globe – not necessarily your region.
- Excessive soil dusting may lead to dust storms! – and this is only one of potential effects.
- Breeding animals are exposed to heat stress, i.e. excessive overheating of the body, associated with high temperature and humidity. Climate change may exacerbate this problem.

The final element of the operation was the broadcast of the video material in cooperation with Telewizja Polska S.A. Field Branch in Gdańsk. An eight-minute broadcast on the project took place as part of the “In the garden and the farm” programme. It presents the role of the Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań as an institution supporting farmers in implementing innovative measures. Two model farms were also shown – the poultry farm of Mr. Zygmunt Stromski and the farm of Mr. Adam Spirewski. The farmers apply innovative solutions on a daily basis and implement modern technologies in their daily

work. It enables them to manage their farms even more effectively.

### **Building environmental awareness is very important – much remains to be done**

The trainees showed interest in the topics of modern farm management. They were keen to discuss the impact of promotion, distribution and labelling of organic products. The conclusions were simple: ecology is not difficult. In order for everyone to find that out, it is necessary to put on education and educate both farmers and customers. The number of questions that

arose at the meetings gave a clear signal that the topic is important, up-to-date and needs to be continued.

The training courses also enabled to make and consolidate contacts between their participants. And

it is the first step to knowledge sharing, development and implementing innovation.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
sekretariat@podr.pl  
<https://tinyurl.com/sieciowanie>

**Title of operation:** Innovative entrepreneurship solutions in rural areas – good examples from Lower Silesia and Lesser Poland

**Implemented by:** Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo

**Lead time:** April 2020 – October 2020

**Form of implementation:** study tour

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Rural tourism – an important element of promoting regions

The Polish countryside is an area with enormous potential – both for tourism and production. Supporting entrepreneurship among residents can translate into both improving their quality of life and the operation of the local economy. Supporting education in this respect was the aim of the implementers of the *Innovative entrepreneurship solutions in rural areas – good examples from Lower Silesia and Lesser Poland* project.

### How to support entrepreneurship in rural areas?

Education is fundamental in supporting initiatives and activating dwellers of rural areas. Therefore, the objective of the project was to familiarise the participants with various forms of entrepreneurship and ways of making use of the cultural and environmental values of the countryside.



A visit to the Grodziec Castle – a location where many local initiatives are pursued.

Photo: Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo.

### Who participated in the project?

Farmers, owners of tourist facilities, agricultural advisers and entrepreneurs living in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship were invited to participate in the project. A total of 24 participants took part in the study tour organised as part of the innovation support programme. Destination: Lesser Poland and Lower Silesia. The villages there were to serve as an example of the proper use of the tourist and production potential of the countryside.

### The Polish countryside... from behind the scenes

Rural tourism can adopt various shapes, one of which is the creation and development of culinary routes. Many Polish regions take pride in their local delicacies and products – it is a unique opportunity to use them as a form of promotion.

As part of the *Innovative entrepreneurship solutions in rural areas* project, the participants of the trip had an opportunity to visit the Flavours of Lower Silesia Culinary Route. It includes, inter alia:

- Villa Greta Restaurant in Dobków;
- Goat Meadow Łomnicki Cheese in Łomnica;
- Trout Dwelling in Mysłakowice;
- Dąbrówka Vineyard in Dąbrówka Szczępanowska.

Such places are not only a way of highlighting the distinctiveness of local cuisines and traditional recipes. They form a whole together with the other attractions of the region (museums, parks, castles, etc.) and help increase its attractiveness in the eyes of visitors. The development of the local cuisine also translates into increased income for smaller food producers and farm



Goat Meadow Łomnicki Cheese in Łomnica.  
 Photo: Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory  
 Centre in Minikowo.

owners. It is also about shortening supply chains and supporting processing initiatives.

The importance of culinary routes is also evidenced by the fact that tour operators are very keen to include that form of sightseeing in their tourist offers.

### Enotourism – travelling the wine route

Enotourism – a form of tourism focused on visiting places connected with wine production. Wine tourism is often combined with special events, tasting local cuisine and even the possibility of spending a night at a vineyard. Special wine routes, such as the Małopolski Wine Route, are a great help in getting to know vineyards.

### A haven of peace

In the context of tourism, it is also important to show the qualities of rural life. It is an extra incentive

that makes non-urban areas an even more attractive place for recreation and leisure. Educational farms contribute to this. This is a form of activity carried out by countryside dwellers, pursuing educational goals through meetings with children and youth. The project participants had an opportunity to visit:

- Angel Gallery in Dobków;
- Sudeten Educational Farm in Dobków;
- **Cherry Grove** Educational Farm in Kobyłczyna;
- Jędrzejkówka Farm in Laskowa;
- Miller’s Manor Educational Farm in Rudze.

Each of the above sites operates based on a different educational element and target group. Their diversity allowed to better understand the principles of operation of educational farms and the methods enabling to present individual aspects of rural life.

### From practice to action

Apart from sheer practical knowledge and guidance on the creation of tourist routes in rural areas, the participants also learned about methods of funding such initiatives. The activities presented during the trip were mostly related to the use of various funds and forms of funding – using EU funds and other sources.

The *Innovative entrepreneurship solutions in rural areas* project is also an excellent example of how bottom-up forms of cooperation between smaller entities and local people can have a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship and increased tourists’ interest in a given region.

**Do you want to find out more?**

Feel free to contact us:  
 sekretariat@kpodr.pl  
 www.kpodr.pl

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Dissemination and promotion of online platforms enabling sales of agricultural products</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>Lead time:</b>	June 2020 – November 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	media spots, top boards, posters
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 9: Supporting cooperation in the agricultural sector and implementation of joint investments by farmers
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 3: Supporting the organisation of food supply chain, including the processing and marketing of agricultural products, the promotion of animal welfare and managing risks in agriculture

## Polski e-bazarek [Polish e-bazaar] as an opportunity for farm growth

The internet is a tool whose potential is still not fully exploited. The rural economy is a perfect example of it. Launching innovation in this area can translate into better sales of agricultural products. This is why the *Polski e-bazarek [Polish e-bazaar]* online platform was created. Its popularisation has become an objective of the *Dissemination and promotion of online platforms enabling sales of agricultural products* project.

### The e-bazaar concept – why is it important?

The Polish e-bazaar is an online platform uniting farmers, food producers and many other entities offering or interested in buying specific products. It is an innovative form of sales that enables to shorten the food supply chain. In addition, it ensures support to selling agricultural products directly from farms, which translates into improvement in the financial situation of farmers and support for entrepreneurship in rural areas.

### Who is the project addressed to?

The Polish e-bazaar can be used by agricultural producers, processors of agri-food products, entrepreneurs and leaders of local communities offering agricultural products as well as consumers who can buy these products – as a matter of fact, the whole society!

### Need for project dissemination and promotion

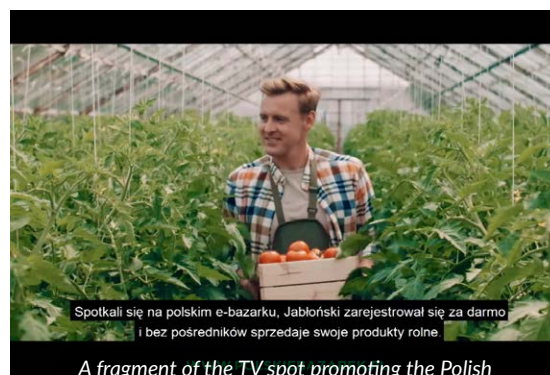
Appropriate promotion is also important for the correct operation of innovations such as the *e-bazaar*. The use of the internet as a tool to improve farm oper-

ations and facilitate distribution is still rare. Therefore, the initiators of the *Dissemination and promotion of online platforms enabling sales of agricultural products* project decided to reach for both new and traditional forms of communication.

### Some of the forms of promotion included:

- radio spots,
- TV spots,
- online advertising on websites,
- posters addressed to institutions supporting the information campaign.

The diversification of the forms of communication was aimed at reaching a diverse group of addressees of the project – agricultural producers, consumers and the general public.



A fragment of the TV spot promoting the Polish e-bazaar. Photo: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.



### How the information campaign went

The main objective of the promotional campaign for the **Polish e-bazaar** was to provide basic information about the project:

- What is the **Polish e-bazaar** portal?
- What is its functionality? What does it offer to users?
- Why is it worth using it?

The campaign was conducted in the form of 15- and 30-second TV and radio spots. The authors of the project also decided to use a top board shown in the online services of the Polish Television. A version of a poster promoting the **Polish e-bazaar** was also developed and distributed. The mission statement of the activity was: **you praise others, get to know your own**.

It is also worth mentioning the frequency of the spots themselves in the period from June to December 2020.

- radio spot: 56 broadcasts,
- TV spot: 325 broadcasts.

The advertisement in the form of a top board on TVP platforms had almost 2 million views.



A fragment of the TV spot presenting the logo and mission statement of the Polish e-bazaar. Photo: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

### How does a virtual bazaar work?

From [www.polskiebazarek.pl](http://www.polskiebazarek.pl), consumers can move to one of the 16 voivodship e-bazaars. All of them function in a very similar way. The website is very intuitive to use.

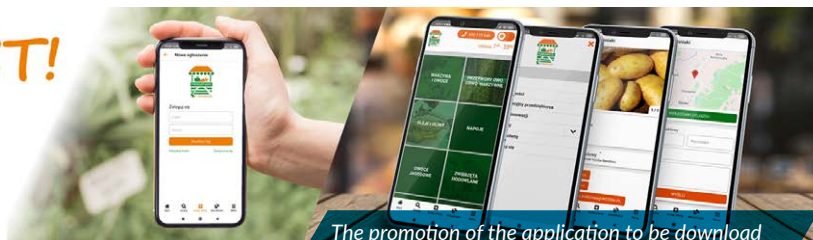
The first sales platform launched in 2020 was the Podkarpacki e-bazaar which was the inspiration to set up the Polish e-bazaar and the other voivodship e-bazaars. Platform users can also download a phone app.

JUŻ JEST!



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The promotion of the application to be download to a phone. Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.

## What will you buy at the virtual bazaar?

Only delices! Various oils, beverages, vegetables and fruit, dairy products, berries, breeding animals, flowers and nursery stock, services, preserve, cereals and beans, KGW (prepared dishes), honey and bee products, meat, cured meat and fish, certified products, bread and cereal products, sweets and sugar confectionery.

That is not all! The app also includes tourist and educational offers, seed and seedling materials, machinery and equipment, farming job offers and an additional “I want to buy” option where one can advertise as someone willing to buy particular goods or service. Then they will find what they are looking for more quickly and easily.

### **Polish e-bazaar – how can it change the countryside image?**

In the case of agriculture, computerisation is an ongoing process. The use of high technologies is not yet so widespread and can bring many tangible benefits.

One of the expected results of the campaign is to be shortening supply chains and encouraging consumers to reach for local products. It is also important in the context of the epidemic – when facing sales restrictions, the internet offers an extra channel for food distribution and provides a source of income.

The *Dissemination and promotion of online platforms enabling sales of agricultural products project* is also designed to promote healthy food coming from Polish producers and processors.

The e-bazaar itself is also another step towards growing entrepreneurship and bottom-up social initiatives undertaken in rural areas throughout Poland. It can also contribute to increasing demand for agricultural products offered by domestic producers.

#### **Remember!**

Thanks to the Polish e-bazaar:

- you will register your ad free of charge,
- you will get free-of-charge promotion,
- you will find interesting offers – not only from your voivodeship,
- You will sell your goods easily,
- you will buy products at producer's prices, with no margin.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

For additional information  
visit the website:  
<https://polskiebazarek.pl>

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>The evolution of agribusiness – innovations for sustainable agriculture</b>
Implemented by:	Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice
Lead time:	September 2020
Form of implementation:	conference
Activity of NRN:	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## The evolution of agribusiness! What is new in agriculture?

The objective of the project was to get familiar with the issues of innovation in agriculture and the possibilities of practical application of the methods and solutions presented, as well as to provide information on how to start cooperation with participants of agricultural markets.

The event also featured a presentation on the *Rural Development Programme 2014–2020* to motivate

the participants to actively develop their farms using European Union funds.

### Who attended the conference?

The conference was attended by 40 people, including: farmers and dwellers of rural areas as well as agricultural advisers from Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

## What is agribusiness?

Agribusiness is an enterprise linked to agriculture. It involves the production of final food products. Agribusiness begins with the sourcing of primary raw materials and ends with the preparation of finished food for the consumer.

Agribusiness includes, among other things, agriculture, buy-in of agricultural raw materials (storage and transport), fishing and forestry, food industry, food wholesale, retail and trade.



*A lecture for the conference participants.  
Photo: Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice.*

### Let us welcome the speakers!

The speakers included:

- Małgorzata Rychel of the Zachodniopomorski Regional Branch of the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture in Szczecin;
- Joanna Samborska of the National Agriculture Support Centre, Field Branch in Szczecin;
- Dr. Arkadiusz Sadowski of the University of Life Sciences in Poznań;
- Dr. Arkadiusz Malkowski of the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin.

The topics discussed at the conference included agricultural innovation networks, the European Innovation Partnership, support programmes in the years 2014–2020, the Food Platform, the innovation policy in rural areas, the economic impact of investing in farms.

### How did the conference go?

The conference took place on 22 September 2020 at the “Mały Młyn” Hotel in Stargard. The event featured lectures and a panel discussion on the topic of the *Evolution of Agribusiness*. Participants could also listen to a presentation entitled *Network*



Lecture for the conference participants.  
Photo: Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice.

*of innovation in agriculture – assumptions, creation of operational groups under the Cooperation measure*. It highlighted the possibilities of partnership networking in agriculture.

What's next? The speaker, Małgorzata Rychel from ZOR ARiMR Szczecin [*Zachodniopomorski Regional Department Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture*], presented the methods for managing rural development projects. In turn, Arkadiusz Malkowski, PhD, from the West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin, talked about how to properly plan local development taking into account the economic, social and environmental potential in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

### Farmers crave for innovation!

The event was attended by 40 people, including farmers and rural area residents from 18 counties in the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

The conference entitled *Evolution of Agribusiness – Innovations for Sustainable Agriculture* contributed to networking between farmers, agricultural consultants and scientific bodies.

All the issues discussed at the conference conveyed the importance and necessity of implementing innovation on farms. Participants also learned about the possibilities of co-financing and refunding the costs of investment activities.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
[row.barzkowice@home.pl](mailto:row.barzkowice@home.pl)  
<https://tinyurl.com/agrobiznesPDF>

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Virtual Field Day</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>Lead time:</b>	June 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	exhibition
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Move into the virtual world with the Podkarpackie Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała!

The aim of the project was to create a network of contacts between the farmers of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, consultancy entities, scientific institutions, entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector and other entities interested in implementing innovations in agriculture and rural areas.

The project was implemented in the form of an exhibition during which expertise and good practice in innovation implementation could be exchanged.

### Who has moved into the virtual world?

Farmers, forest owners, entrepreneurs, representatives of scientific and research units, entities representing new solutions of the agricultural industry (including crop, fruit, and horticultural plant agricul-

tural machinery and equipment as well as production means).



*Virtual Field Day in Podkarpacie.  
Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory  
Centre in Boguchwała.*

## ” Titbits of news!

- The Virtual Field Day event was linked to the National Field Days, taking place in 2020 at the Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo under the theme European Green Deal in the fields of Poland.
- The Virtual Field Day Live was viewed by 2,569 and the Conference by 1,862 people.
- The Virtual Field Day Youtube channel features videos posted on [eporady.podrb.pl](https://eporady.podrb.pl) related to the Virtual Field Day. For example, the video Presentation of Precision Farming Equipment by Case Unia Group Kiesel, which has 1158 views, and the video Traditional Orchard – 458 views. Link to the channel: <https://tinyurl.com/DniPola2020>

### **Virtually, tangibly! How did the project proceed?**

As part of the operation, an event was organised on the premises of the Experimental Field run by the Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała. At the event, the latest technological developments in agricultural work were presented and the experiences on animal breeding and cultivation of plants were shared.



*Lectures and interviews during the Virtual Field Day. Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.*

Participants admired the new agricultural equipment, modern plant protection solutions and drone monitoring of fields. They also took part in fairs of seedbed stock, crop means, agricultural, horticultural and beekeeping equipment.

There was more! Visitors to the event had a possibility to:

- become acquainted with research on many species and varieties of agricultural plants (including cereals, potatoes, winter oilseed rape, maize or broad bean plants) conducted in the experimental field of PAAC in Boguchwała;
- see the effects of plant protection products and fertilisers;
- become acquainted with a rich collection of herbs, spices and melliferous plants, energy willow clones, as well as old varieties of fruit trees – apple, pear, plum and cherry;

- see demonstrations of agricultural machinery at work;
- take advantage of expert technological advice – on-line;
- learn about the latest mechanisation solutions in crop production.

The event featured many innovative agricultural solutions. The virtual event was broadcast live via electronic communicators. Previously prepared recordings of the representatives of science and technology departments of the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała were also broadcast.

The virtual event emphasised the topic of water retention in the soil. In this way, the best solutions in agriculture were disseminated throughout Podkarpackie... and beyond.

The event promoted the Polish Corn Producers Association, which educates consumers on the health benefits of the plant and its products on a daily basis. As part of this promotion, participants were able to taste dishes and learn new flavours.

Much attention was also paid to the role of bees for agricultural biodiversity and the development of beekeeping in the Podkarpackie region. The event was conducted in a hybrid system. The organisers eagerly encouraged guests to attend the event.

### **The virtual project has passed the test!**

The outcome of the *Virtual Field Day* was the application of innovative solutions on farms, which have a major impact on competitiveness. Farmers were able to share contacts with the entrepreneurs, food producers and people and institutions from Podkarpackie which offer services to agriculture.

The project has also popularised pro-innovative attitudes in the sphere of agriculture and food production and identified new ways of selling through the so-called short supply chains. This is an extremely important initiative that has reduced the number of intermediaries needed to deliver the final product to the customer.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

Feel free to contact us:  
[malgorzata.wilk@podrb.pl](mailto:malgorzata.wilk@podrb.pl)  
<https://dzienpola.podrb.pl/>

**Title of operation:** Promotion of animal breeding – alpacas – an cutting-edge initiative for agrotourism farms in Lubuskie Voivodeship

**Implemented by:** Lubuskie Agricultural Advisory Centre in Kalsko

**Lead time:** July 2020 – December 2020

**Form of implementation:** training, demonstration, film screening, printed information material in the form of a brochure

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 5: Searching for the NRN co-operation partners as part of the "Cooperation" measure referred to in Article 3(1)(13) of the Act on Support for Rural Development with the participation of EAFRD funds under RDP 2014–2020 and facilitation of this cooperation

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Alpacas – exceptional companions, devoted friends

Dog and cat are considered man's best furry friends. They are an integral part of many homes. They endow their owners with trust and love. But is it possible to develop such a close bond with an exotic pet? Can a playful animal from the camel family win a man's heart? What role can it play on the farm? A training course, prepared by the Lubuski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Kalsko, was devoted to those unique animals – alpacas.

### Meet alpacas up close

Its main project was to disseminate knowledge about alpaca breeding and the benefits of raising animals at agrotourism farms. In this respect, the sale of wool and its products as well as alpaca therapy offer particular opportunities. Another objective of the operation was to identify needs in the field of innovative alpaca breeding and to popularise modern and practical knowledge on the subject. As part of the

programme, training sessions were prepared which included an animal show and the use of alpacas in tourism and recreation.

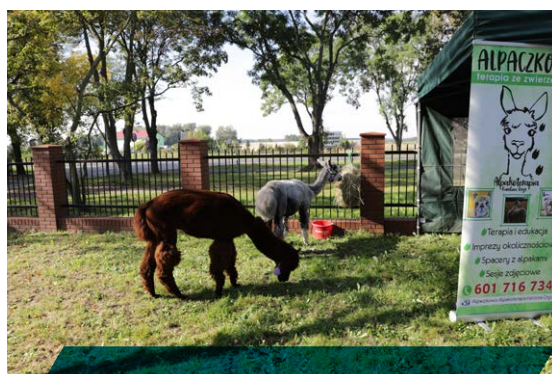
### Who was the project addressed at?

The project has benefited the residents of rural areas, in particular owners of agrotourism farms who breed alpacas or are planning to establish such a farm. Due to the growing interest in the animals, the project was also aimed at farmers or owners of educational homesteads. The knowledge that was passed on was particularly useful for those considering alpaca breeding as an alternative source of income for their farm.

The training materials prepared broadened the knowledge on the use of animals in tourism and recreation as well as alpaca therapy. In this way, the project has also benefited therapists who are involved in animal therapy or who wish to broaden their competences.

### Who are those exotic newcomers from South America?

Alpacas are a species domesticated by the Incas' ancestors 4–5 thousand years BC. They are native to the Andean Highlands. Because of their exceptional wool, ideal for making high quality fabrics, they became the favourite animal of the Incas and an essential part of their culture. So where did they come from in Poland? The first herd came to our country in 2004. To this day, alpaca farms are rare, although they are becoming increasingly popular. For this reason, it can be a good idea for a hobby, business or additional source of income.



*Huacaya breed alpacas, the main protagonists of the project. Photo: Sylwia Wawrzyniak-Bodnar.*

Alpacas adapt very well to diverse conditions. Their wool protects against low temperatures in winter and gives off heat to the environment in summer. They are intelligent animals that learn quickly, have a friendly disposition and get used to their owners. They feed on grass and plants, while their soft hooves fertilise the pastures and do not damage the sward.

In Poland, alpacas are bred to provide high-quality fibre and are also used in agrotourism, for recreation and therapy. There are two breeding varieties of alpacas: Huacaya and Suri. Although the animals seem cute and maintenance-free, keeping them requires specialist knowledge, commitment and patience.

## Do you know that...

- alpacas are related to llamas, but are about 1.5 m shorter and have shorter muzzles;
- at the time of the Incan civilisation, wearing alpaca fibre fabrics was reserved exclusively for royalty and nobility;
- alpacas are friendly not only to people but also to other animals – dogs, cats, horses, sheep or goats;
- happy and eager to interact, the alpaca makes a sound similar to clucking;
- alpacas spit on other animals in the herd when they are excited, afraid or want to show dominance;
- alpaca wool is hypoallergenic and warmer than sheep wool;
- alpaca fur is incredibly soft and does not retain water, making it the second strongest animal fibre after mohair
- alpacas are very sociable, gentle and curious and can be trained quite easily.

### Promotion of alpaca breeding in theory and practice

The operation *Promotion of animal breeding – alpacas as an cutting-edge initiative for agrotourism farms* was implemented in the LAAC in Kalsko. Lectures, training and alpaca demonstrations were carried out for the project. The first part of the training consisted of lectures given by Karolina Gryś, M.Sc. – who is an zootechnician by education, certified as an alpaca therapist and qualified as a teacher. Fascinating and substantive lectures were given on the breeding of alpacas and their use in therapy for healthy and disabled people, children or adults. The participants of the training could also learn a lot about the health and care of alpacas, including housing conditions, feeding, breeding or grooming procedures. Everyone had the opportunity to get close to the animals, get to know them or even feed them their favourite treat.

In the second part of the project, a presentation of Huacaya alpacas took place, led by Karolina Gryś, M.Sc. The participants were presented with information on the characteristics of alpacas, their adaptation to breeding, proper nutrition and daily care. The



Ms Karolina Gryś, M.Sc., shares her knowledge with the participants of the presentation. Photo: Sylwia Wawrzyniak-Bodnar.

alpacas showed their friendly and gentle disposition, which makes them perfect therapy animals. Why?

- Contact with alpacas helps in the treatment of children who, under the influence of these animals, increase their motor development and boost their self-esteem.



- Their company has a beneficial effect on humans, it calms and relieves stress.
- Their spontaneous behaviour brings a smile to patients' faces.
- Playing, stroking and feeding animals has a positive effect on emotions.
- They are great for treating people with depression, autism, ADHD, anxiety, Down syndrome or anxiety disorders.

### **Training materials for alpaca lovers**

As part of the cooperation with the speaker, an educational film and information materials were produced, which are a compendium of knowledge on alpaca breeding. It has been possible to gather information on good practice and breeding tips in this accessible format. From the brochures and films you can learn about the behaviour of alpacas or their use in agrotourism. A total of 200 copies of the brochures were produced and distributed among farmers, rural residents, professionals and others interested in the topic. In turn, the film was posted, among others, on the website of LAAC in Kalsko ([www.lodr.pl](http://www.lodr.pl)) and in social media.



*Alpaca named Elfik in all its glory. Photo: Sylwia Wawrzyniak-Bodnar.*

The implementation of the project has led to an increased interest in alpaca breeding in the Lubuskie Voivodeship, particularly among agritourism farms and educational farms. There has also been an increase in knowledge about the care of these exotic animals and the business opportunities that come with breeding.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

Feel free to contact us:  
[sekretariat@lodr.pl](mailto:sekretariat@lodr.pl), [a.zajda-sipa@lodr.pl](mailto:a.zajda-sipa@lodr.pl)  
[www.lodr.pl](http://www.lodr.pl)

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Guidebook to the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Marshal's Office of Lubuskie Voivodeship, the NRN Regional Secretariat
<b>Lead time:</b>	June 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	publication (folder), map
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Discover the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship

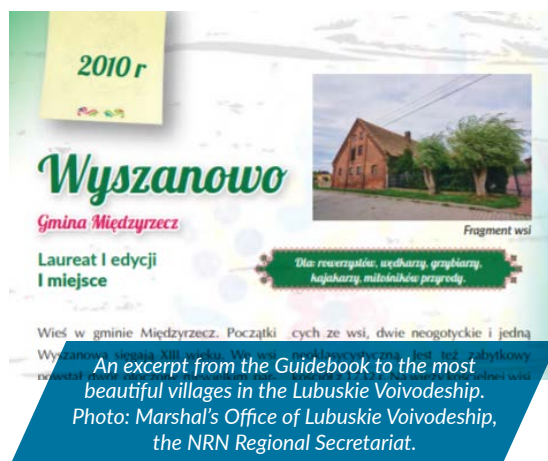
The aim of the *Guidebook to the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship* was to acquaint readers with the villages which won the *Most Beautiful Village* in the *Lubuskie Voivodeship* competition in 2010–2019. The villages of the Lubuskie Voivodeship were shown as ideal places for relaxation and fun. They also encouraged participation in the competition in future years.

### Who benefited from the Guidebook to the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship?

Residents of the most beautiful villages awarded in the competition and people who went there for an active holiday.

### What is the Most Beautiful Village in the Lubuskie Voivodeship contest about?

The Most Beautiful Village in the Lubuskie Voivodeship is a cyclical competition organised by the NRN Regional Secretariat since 2010. Villages are judged in the competition both on the basis of the aesthetics of the village, cleanliness, tidiness, as well as on the basis of the activity of its inhabitants. The



involvement of local people in village life and everyday life is taken into account.

The Commission strongly emphasises the cultivation of traditions and the development of the village in its broadest sense, the transmission of values and customs. Creating space for new ideas that unite residents of both older and younger generations is also an important aspect of the evaluation.

## Do you know that...

...there are more than 1050 villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship?

Popowo (a village in the Bledzew municipality, Krosno powiat) is famous for its impressive luminous decorations which are installed before Christmas since 2007. For this reason, Popowo is called the Lubuskie Las Vegas.

Lubuskie has its own ghost, which found its way into the "Polish Ghosts" catalogue. It all started in 1820 when the financial councillor Harlem came to Łagów. While spending the night in the castle, he saw a monastic knight (Łagów was a castle of the Joannites) surrounded by fire. In the relevant report, he wrote that the figure reminded him of the 16th century Commodore Andreas von Schlieben immortalised on a tombstone in the vestry of the local church. Officials were exceptionally lucky with this spirit, as it was later seen by, among others, an inspector from Słońsk.



Cover of the Guidebook to the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship.  
Photo: Marshal's Office of Lubuskie Voivodeship, the NRN Regional Secretariat.

### Take the guidebook and set off on your journey!

As part of the operation, the Marshal's Office of Lubuskie Voivodeship published a printed guidebook listing the winners of the *Most Beautiful Village in the Lubuskie Voivodeship* competition.

The guidebook encourages you to visit the countryside in the Lubuskie Voivodeship and get to know its various attractions. It contains photos and information about the prize-winning town, among other things:

- Address details;
- A brief historical note with information about the monuments;

- Sports activities (e.g. canoeing, cycle paths, running routes, walking routes, horse riding);
- Nature information (e.g. nature trails, natural monuments, fauna and flora);
- Accommodation;
- Information on the local products available;
- Information on local folk groups, periodical events in the village, etc.

The Guidebook to *to the most beautiful villages in the Lubuskie Voivodeship* also includes a map which will help you quickly and efficiently find the ideal place for you – both in terms of location and the other qualities highlighted above. The inhabitants of the Lubuskie villages willingly participated in the preparation of the materials for publication in the guidebook. They shared information, interesting facts and photographs from their home archives.

### More and more tourists in the Lubuskie Voivodeship!

The outcome of the project was an increased interest in active recreation in the villages of the Lubuskie Voivodeship! Enquiries about the next edition of the *Most Beautiful Village in the Lubuskie Voivodeship* competition from representatives of small Lubuskie villages also emerged. The guidebook very quickly reached a wide audience. The organisers plan to transfer it to the screen and release a series of films on the most beautiful villages.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
[j.pilecka@lubuskie.pl](mailto:j.pilecka@lubuskie.pl)  
[ksow@lubuskie.pl](mailto:ksow@lubuskie.pl)  
<https://tinyurl.com/lubuskie>

<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Narrow-gauge railway – a local product affecting the promotion and development of rural areas</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Municipality and Town of Stawiszyn
<b>Lead time:</b>	July 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	meeting, conference
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Narrow-gauge railway – attraction for tourists, pride for residents

The narrow-gauge railway in the municipality and town of Stawiszyn is a local attraction that attracts tourists and brings joy to the people of the region. The narrow-gauge railway runs along the Zbiersk-Petryki route and enjoys growing interest from year to year. For this reason, the municipality of Stawiszyn makes numerous efforts to promote it as a local product. An important aim of the project is to exchange experience and raise awareness of the potential of narrow-gauge railways. Promoting it as a local product can contribute to rural development in the region.

### Narrow-gauge railway – not only for tourists

The commune and town of Stawiszyn received funding from the Marshal's Office of Wielkopolskie Voivodeship under the Polish Rural Network for the implementation of the project *Narrow-Gauge Railway*

*– a local product with an impact on the promotion and development of rural areas.*

The project involving the promotion of the narrow-gauge railway was attended primarily by the residents of the municipality and town of Stawiszyn and residents of the Kalisz Poviát.

Among the participants were railway enthusiasts, representatives of territorial units and local government, as well as employees of promotion departments or representatives of local organisations and associations. The joint meeting of experts and local residents was an opportunity to exchange insights and experiences, and to raise awareness among institutions, organisations and entrepreneurs of the potential that lies in the narrow-gauge railway. It was also an opportunity to integrate railway enthusiasts.



Antique train running along the Zbiersk-Petryny route. Photo: Poviát Authority Office in Kalisz.

## Narrow-gauge railway in Poland – some interesting facts

- Narrow-gauge railways are a network of railway lines distinguished by narrow-gauge tracks of less than 1435 mm.
- Narrow-gauge railways have been built in Poland since the 19th century.
- The Upper Silesian Narrow-Gauge Railway is the oldest continuously operating railway network in Poland.
- Narrow-gauge networks were mostly built for local industry, i.e. metallurgy, mining.
- World War I contributed to the rapid development of the railway network – the railway was used for military purposes.
- In 2016, nearly 395 km of narrow gauge railway in Poland were in operation.
- Today, the narrow-gauge railway is primarily of tourist and historical value.

### Kaliska Narrow-gauge Railway

Narrow-gauge railways were once an important part of the landscape. They fulfilled transport and industrial functions. Nowadays, narrow-gauge railways are disappearing due to their deteriorating technical condition. However, they are of inestimable historic value, so it is worth caring for the remaining parts of the network.

The Kaliska Narrow-gauge Railway was originally a network connecting Kalisz with Turek, Opatów and Russów. The railway along the route runs on narrow-gauge tracks with a gauge of 750 mm. It was built between 1914 and 1917. Shortly after the war it was taken over by the Kalisz Poviats. The trains were mainly used for industrial purposes or transporting cargo. In the 1950s, for example, the Kalisz railway transported building materials to the emerging mining and energy

complex in Turek. It was then used to transport residual fuel oil to the power plant in Adamów.

Currently the Kaliska Narrow-gauge Railway operates in the spring and summer along the Zbiersk–Petryki section. Approximately 300–500 people can use it during one weekend.

### Popularisation of the narrow-gauge railway among residents and enthusiasts

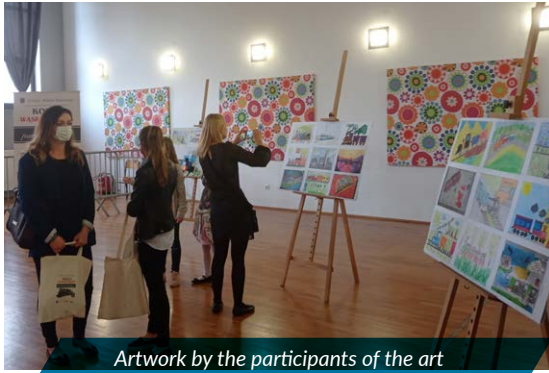
The narrow-gauge railway running along the Zbiersk–Petryki route may become a landmark of the region and an attraction that will increase tourist traffic in the Kalisz Poviats. For this reason, Stawiszyn Municipality has decided to promote it as a local product. One of the important promotional activities with this intention was a conference and meeting, organised on 2 and 3 October 2020. An exhibition of model narrow-gauge railways is also planned for these days. In turn, a meeting of narrow-gauge railway enthusiasts was held at the local Community Centre in Zbiersk. Former and current railway employees were among the participants. Participants exchanged memories and anecdotes from various periods of the narrow-gauge railway operation.

### How much fun and joy can a narrow-gauge railway provide?

A unique exhibition of models, hand-made by model-makers from different parts of Poland, was opened to the inhabitants of the municipality. Each element has been prepared with the utmost care. Visitors to the exhibition could see how much fun and smiles come from contact with the models and



*Model of the railway station – fragment of the exhibition prepared as part of the project. Photo source: UGiM Stawiszyn [Municipal and Town Office].*



Artwork by the participants of the art competition. Photo: UGiM Stawiszyn [Municipal and Town Office]

the simulation of railway traffic. The event was also accompanied by free demonstration train rides and fun activities for children. The exhibition was organised by the Municipality and Town of Stawiszyn, the Zbiersk Local Railway Association and the H0e87PL modelling group.

For the youngest railway enthusiasts, an art competition was organised entitled ***Railways through the eyes of a child***. The winners received their prizes from the hands of the Mayor of Stawiszyn, Grzegorz Kaczmarek. The awarded works were then presented to the oldest railway employees. All the pictures were made with full commitment. The works of the young participants could be admired during the exhibition.

## Do you want to find out more?

Feel free to contact us:  
[sekretariat@stawiszyn.pl](mailto:sekretariat@stawiszyn.pl)  
<https://tinyurl.com/makietykolejek>

**Title of operation:** Honey production based on the cultivation of melliferous plants on land of low agricultural suitability

**Implemented by:** Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa

**Lead time:** October 2020

**Form of implementation:** conference

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 5: Searching for the NRN co-operation partners as part of the "Cooperation" measure referred to in Article 3(1)(13) of the Act on Support for Rural Development with the participation of EAFRD funds under RDP 2014–2020 and facilitation of this cooperation

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## A land flowing with honey...

Honey is a real treasure of nature. This is known to the employees of the Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre, who have organised an action entitled *Honey production based on the cultivation of melliferous plants on land of low agricultural suitability*. The project objectives were multi-level and extensive. Firstly, the organisers wanted to disseminate and exchange knowledge on the innovative solutions in agriculture. They particularly focused on information on the use of melliferous plants for food production in areas of low agricultural suitability. Another objective was to learn and implement good practices. Finally, networking and cooperation and the creation of operational groups between farmers, advisory bodies, entrepreneurs and scientific entities.

### Who was the project addressed at?

The target group of the project were members of beekeeping circles and a beekeeping group operating at the Agricultural and General Education School Complex in Żywiec (ZSAiO). But not only. The conference was also open to farmers and their households, agricultural consultants, educational workers, rural inhabitants and representatives of agricultural organisations and members of the Beskid Association of Beekeepers "Bartnik" and the Beskid Association for Rural Development and Population Education.

### From plants to honeycomb

The project included a one-day conference with three presentations.

1. The first one was about mountainous and foothill areas, analysing them in terms of their potential for increasing honey yields through



Lecturer – Zbigniew Kołtowski, Ph. D., Beekeeping Establishment in Puławy. Photo: Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa.



Lecturer Waclaw Nogaś, M.Sc. Photo: Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa.

# ” You don't know that yet!

The saying “busy as a bee” has a scientific justification. To collect 1 kg of honey, honeybees must visit:

- 225,600 linden flowers, making 160,000 nectar flights with a total weight of 4,000 g, with a sugar content of about 20%, and evaporating another 3,000 g of water from the nectar in the hive;
- 36,800 winter rapeseed flowers, make 80,000 flights for nectar weighing 2,000 g with a sugar concentration of about 40%;
- 2,133,600 blue phacelia flowers, make 106,800 nectar flights with a total weight of 2,700 g and a sugar concentration of about 30%;
- approximately 2,000,000 robinia flowers;
- approximately 4,000,000 sainfoin flowers;
- approximately 7,000,000 white clover flowers

the cultivation of melliferous plants – especially in those areas with low agricultural suitability. Participants had the chance to find out which plants provide the best food base for bees. Particular emphasis was placed on plants that occur naturally in forests or roadsides.

2. The second lecture dealt with the development of beekeeping in the Żywiec Poviát. Traditional honey from the Żywiec region was also an important part of the presentation. Participants were able to learn about the registration rules for products with a specific origin and a traditional formula that has been cultivated over the years. At the moment, there are 5 honeys on the List of Traditional Products of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Śląskie Voivodeship: Miód Ziemi Żywickiej [*Honey from the*

*Żywiec Land*], Miód z nektaru kwiat juraskich [*Honey from the Jurassic Flower Nectar*], Miód rzepakowy Ziemi Cieszyńskiej [*Rape-seed Honey of the Cieszyńska Land*], Miód lipowo-spadziowy Ziemi Cieszyńskiej [*Linden-Honeydew Honeyand from the Cieszyńska Land*] and Miód z gminy Porąbka [*Honey from the Porąbka Municipality*]. The audience was able to get to know individual honeys and learn more about their health-promoting properties.

3. The final, third lecture concerned the future of beekeeping and presented potential directions for its development. Information on the problems faced by beekeepers today was also an important part of the speech. Among other things, there was talk of measures under the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 entitled *Cooperation*. Participants were able



Conference materials. Photo: Silesian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa.



to find out how the programme helps to increase farm profitability through innovation – including in honey production.

### **First step towards the establishment of EPI groups**

The aim of the project was, among other things, to exchange knowledge between the parties involved in the production and marketing of honey. And this objective has been achieved. The conference provided an opportunity for a broader presentation of beekeeping issues and promotion of activities related to honey production. Thanks to the lectures, all those

interested had the chance to deepen their knowledge of the different stages of the process and, potentially, to make a decision on investing in the beekeeping business. An important element of the conference was also the promotion of bee conservation as extremely important for the survival and functioning of the ecosystem.

The meetings held in the framework of the conference were the first step towards the creation of the EIP Operational Groups and the implementation of their intentions and plans under the **Cooperation** measure.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Honey enriched with herbs and fruits as a new product for honey processing in the Podkarpacie region</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	University of Rzeszow
<b>Lead time:</b>	April 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	training, publication, research
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Honey and herb production – for taste and health

The health-promoting properties of honey and herbs have been known for years. However, this is not an area of focus for manufacturers. In the meantime, a thorough exploration of this issue can expand the product portfolio of smaller manufacturers and open the way for new solutions and formulations. Researchers from the University of Rzeszow took this initiative. How can an exploration of honey translate into a wealth of local produce?

### Scientifically-supported product knowledge

The main objective of the creators of the project *Honey enriched with herbs and fruits as a new product for honey processing in the Podkarpacie region* was to present scientific evidence on the effectiveness of combining honey and herbs in treating diseases as well as their health-promoting properties.

Conducting such analyses does not only translate into an increased knowledge of the individual components. Based on the results obtained, their best application can be identified and new innovative products can be launched on the market.

This has not only scientific implications – educating producers on new solutions in honey and herb production also translates into economic development in rural areas. New local products can become a trademark of the region and support local tourism.

### Who participated in the project?

The project activities were targeted at beekeepers, honey processors and producers of herbs, fruits and natural medicines.



Lecture led by Professor Małgorzata Dżugan, Head of the Department of Food Chemistry and Toxicology at the University of Rzeszów. Photo: University of Rzeszów.

### How did the research go?

In the research conducted under the project, the scientists focused on the analysis of three main products – bee glue, bee bread and bee pollen. Among other things, their antioxidant and antibacterial properties were taken into account. Their microbiological purity was also assessed. Selected ingredients were also tested for biological activity against extracts of herbs and fruits grown in the Podkarpacie Voivodeship and beyond.

The research carried out formed the basis for further work, i.e. the manufacture of new products and detailed analysis of their properties. Under laboratory conditions, it has been possible to produce honeys enriched with the addition of herbs, fruits and other bee products, including various forms of additives.

The products thus obtained were checked for:

- profiles of phenolic compounds,
- antioxidant activity – 3 methods DPPH, FRAP and TPC,
- antimicrobial activity – 2 diffusion and microdilution methods.

Laboratory analysis was successful – the tests showed a significant increase in biological activity of the modified products in relation to the initial honeys.



Excerpt from a lecture on Medicinal plants from near and far conducted by Iwona Wawer from the Department of Herbal Medicine at the Carpathian State University in Krosno. Photo: University of Rzeszów.



## Medicinal use of honey and herbs

Apifitotherapy is the name used to describe the combination of herbal products with therapy based on the use of bee products. Honey and herbs are ingredients that are easily absorbed by the body. They have antibacterial properties, affect metabolism and cleanse the body of toxins. They provide natural support for the immune system and are also increasingly used in traditional medicine.

### New recipes – how to promote them among manufacturers?

Conducting research is one thing, but it is also important to popularise new recipes among local producers. Therefore, the second stage of the project *Honey enriched with herbs and fruits as a new product for honey processing in the Podkarpacie region* included a series of lectures discussing the effects of the work of University of Rzeszów researchers.

The on-line training took place via the ZOOM platform and was attended by 121 beekeepers, bee product processors and herb producers. Participants also received a monograph in the form of a publication entitled *Apifitotherapy – synergistic effects of honey and medicinal plants*.

### Cooperation in support of processing

The main benefit of the project *Honey enriched with herbs and fruits as a new product for honey processing in the Podkarpacie region* is to open the way for cooperation between scientists and local producers and farm owners.

This exchange of information translates into the development of processing knowledge and an expansion of the range of products available on the market. Promotion of apifitotherapy in the Podkarpacie Voivodeship is a new direction for the region. Smaller manufacturers also benefit – they can find a production niche in which they can promote their brand and region.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Herbal production as an additional source of income on a farm</b>
Implemented by:	Małopolski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Karniowice
Lead time:	September 2020
Form of implementation:	study tour
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Small initiatives straight from nature – about supporting herbal production in rural areas

Regional manufacturing is not just about large factories and farms. Entrepreneurial spirit can also be demonstrated by private individuals in the case of which a small-scale production can support the household budget. Herbal products are one such initiative. Why is it worth supporting it and what benefits can it bring to the region?

### Sale of products – not only production but also promotion

The primary objective of the measures undertaken as part of the Małopolski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Karniowice was to promote herbal production as an additional form of income for small farms in the Malopolskie Voivodeship.



Gospodarstwo Upraw Ekologicznych Danowiec.pl in Danowiec. Photo: Ilona Maczek.

The project itself was not limited to the promotion of herbal production. The finished product must also find buyers and reach customers. Therefore, the participants of the tour also learned the ins and outs of running a farm and distributing their own products.

### Who participated in the project?

The project was attended by farmers and representatives of institutions and organisations working for agriculture, employees of Agricultural Advisory units. The tour was attended by a total of 25 participants.

### Local manufacturing from the inside out

The project was implemented in the form of a 3-day study tour organised from 7 to 9 September 2020.

The first point was a visit to the Hyzop Herb Garden. On the scene, its owner Anna Olejnicka-Górczewska presented a collection of over 300 species of herbs to visitors. Participants were able to gain information on their characteristics, origin, cultivation methods and use.

The visit also included talks on *Organic Farming using ecological methods* and *Using Herbs for Health, Beauty and Taste*. Finally, there was a tasting of dishes and herbal preparations, for which the products of the Hyzop Herbal Garden were used.

## What are educational farms?

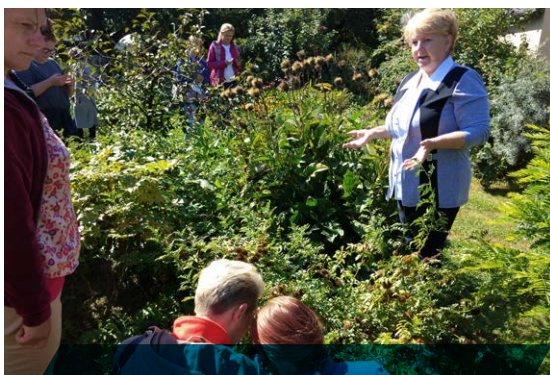
An educational farm – a form of farm operating in a rural area. It is usually run by local residents and welcomes children and young people as part of school programmes and out-of-school activities, pursuing at least two of the following educational objectives:

- education on crop production,
- education on livestock production,
- education on the processing of agricultural products,
- environmental and consumer awareness education,
- education on rural material culture heritage, traditional professions, folk handicraft and art,
- form of sightseeing for tourist offers.

### Education in support of innovation

On the following day, the project visited the Medicinal Plant Garden of the Institute of Natural Fibres and Medicinal Plants in Plewiska near Poznań. The meeting was chaired by dr hab. Waldemar Buchwald, prof. of INFMP. It began with a visit to the Systematics Department, which includes 416 species of herbs and plants. The aim of the meeting was to show the systematic division of medicinal plants and the active compounds they contain.

Each participant also received a booklet describing the *Varieties of Medicinal Plants*. It contains the characteristics of 22 varieties of medicinal plants obtained at the Institute between 1947 and 2016. The visit itself was also intended to show the participants that the INFMP is an important and reliable source of knowledge on cultivation, properties of herbs and new directions of development of herbal medicine.



Hyzop Herb Orchard educational farm  
Photo: Ilona Maczek.

### Local products in foreign distribution

The next point of the tour was a visit to the Mielcarz vegetable drying farm in Dobrzyca. It is the largest herb farm in Poland, founded in 2019 by Wojciech Mielcarz. It specialises in harvesting and drying parsley, among other plants. The products are then prepared for sale and distributed mainly on foreign markets. During the meeting, participants were able to learn about the successive stages of production and the most important issues related to the agricultural technology of herbs.

The final point of the project tour was a visit to the Danowiec.pl Organic Farm in Danowiec. Its owner, Barbara Byrka-Lewandowska, introduced the participants to the methods of growing and harvesting lavender. Moreover, the meeting also covered issues related to the cultivation of Damask rose, calendula, garden sage thyme and many others. The hostess also presented the stages of the lavender hydrolate production. The visit culminated in the presentation of the farm products – their use in care and health-promoting properties.

### Herbal production – is it the future of rural farms?

The project study tour provided participants with comprehensive knowledge on the cultivation, production and distribution of herbs and plants. Production itself can also take various forms and, along with selling its own products, the farm can also pursue an educational mission. This also translates into diversification of income sources.

Creating a successful brand is also no longer such a big challenge. A farm does not have to rely on traditional recipes or regional recognition to be successful. In addition, more and more institutions are looking

favourably on bottom-up initiatives. Local authorities are open to working with farmers and institutions such as the INFMP are willing to share knowledge with those interested.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Creation of a local product brand for the Piotrków Poviát as a key to rural development</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Piotrków Poviát
<b>Lead time:</b>	March 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	workshops and a conference
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Local product brand for the Piotrków Poviát – all for the good of the region

Local products are an important element of the image of the little homeland. Positive perceptions of the area translate into greater external interest and well-being for the residents. As part of the project, a strategy was developed for the creation and promotion of the Local Product Brand of the Piotrków Poviát, which will serve to build a positive image of the region. In turn, the holding of expert workshops and conferences helped to set the right directions for future tasks and social actions.

### Why care about a local product brand?

During the operation a space was created to discuss the image of the region as a liveable and development-friendly place. A series of meetings with representatives of the local authorities, entrepreneurs, local producers and residents enabled the exchange of ideas and the building of a knowledge base. **The workshop provided valuable information on the process of building a local brand strategy.** The operation culminated in a lecture at which the results of a survey on local identity of residents of the Piotrków Poviát were presented.

### All together for the good of the little homeland

The operation prepared was a participatory process. In this way, every person involved in the life of the Piotrków Poviát could be involved in the project of building the local brand strategy. An expert company with extensive experience in marketing and promotion of the region and local authorities was also appointed to implement the objective. Collaboration



*Inhabitants of the Piotrków Poviát – project participants. Photo: Piotrków Poviát.*

between experts, members of local government, local authorities and residents made it possible to map out future local development activities.

The workshops and conference were attended by residents of the Piotrków Poviát, in particular entrepreneurs, producers and manufacturers, local authorities, as well as representatives of associations, members of Farmers' Wives Associations and social activists. This amounts to around 120 workshop participants and 100 conference listeners.

Why bet on integration? Including all members of the local community in joint measures is extremely beneficial for the region. This approach deepens the bonds between residents. Integration and involvement also have a positive impact on rural development and quality of life.

### How to create a local product brand from scratch?

The workshop programme included creating an image and promoting local companies and local government, discussing social changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and discussing the potential of the Piotrków Poviát. Numerous discussions were devoted to the distinctive features of the region, including traditions, products and customs. Topics related to local food products and tourist values of the Piotrków Land were particularly frequently discussed.

Participants also had the opportunity to talk about the region characteristics that make the rural areas attractive places to live and develop professionally. Four thematic blocks were implemented during the workshop:

- Knowledge of food quality systems;
- Promotion of quality of life in the countryside or promotion of the countryside as a place to live and develop professionally;
- Supporting the creation of partnership networks concerning agriculture and rural areas by raising awareness in this field;
- Dissemination of knowledge on local development planning, taking into account the



*Participants of the workshop on the creation of a local product brand for the Piotrków Poviát.  
Photo: Piotrków Poviát.*

economic, social and environmental potential of the area.

Numerous materials and valuable feedback from the workshop participants were collected during the meetings, and were later on presented at the conference. On their basis, it will be possible to prepare the publication of the strategy of creation and promotion of the Local Product Brand of the Piotrków Poviát.

## Do you know what the Piotrków Poviát is famous for?

Residents can be proud! The Piotrków Land impresses with its picturesque landscapes and interesting, complex history. Its beauty is attracting more and more piqued tourists. A few days spent among the rustle of the forests is enough to fall in love with this place. What is worth knowing about this place?

- The Piotrków Poviát is located in the southern part of the Łódzkie Voivodeship.
- It consists of 11 municipalities and the seat of the authorities is the city of Piotrków Trybunalski.
- The region is distinguished by gorgeous forests in the Pilica River valley.
- The Sulejowski Reservoir on the Pilica River attracts water sports enthusiasts from all over Poland.
- Numerous monuments make excellent destinations for trips, including the manor houses in Cieszanowice, Lubiatów, Milejów and Szarbsk, the defensive manor house in Bąkowa Góra, St. Florian's Church and the Cistercian Abbey Complex in Sulejów, the palace complex in Wolbórz, the palaces in Bujny and in Niechcice, and the Norbertine Monastery Complex in Witów.
- It is impossible to get bored here. Numerous hiking, cycling and horse riding trails pass through the region.
- The heart of the region is Piotrków Trybunalski, which was granted town rights in the 13th century.
- It was here that the first assemblies of the Polish Sejm, the first bicameral parliament, and the sessions of the Crown Tribunal were held.
- For gourmets of the regional cuisine, we recommend the "zalewajka" – a soup made of cabbage and ribs, "prażoki", Piotrków marzipans, lard with additives, and local brews.



### What do we love the Piotrków Poviát for?

The workshop was followed by a conference with a lecture on rural development and local product branding. Then the results of the questionnaire about the local identity of the inhabitants of the Piotrków Poviát were presented. The survey was conducted on a sample of 166 residents. The results made it possible to distinguish the characteristics of the region with which the inhabitants particularly identify themselves. The virtues of the Piotrków Poviát include the friendliness of its people, closeness to nature, commitment to tradition and richness of local products.

The meeting was concluded with a summary of the operation, detailing the plan for future local and rural development measures. Moreover, participation in the workshops and conference enabled the flourishing of new contacts and cooperation between the participants.

### Local brand and its long-term effects

The aim of implementing the local brand is to support and develop rural areas in the Piotrków Poviát, based on economic, social, historical, environmental and cultural heritage resources. A strong regional

brand also allows local products to be promoted effectively. Thanks to it, they are associated with high quality, ecological values and cultivation of local traditions. In the long term, this will attract tourists and investors from all over Poland and increase the competitiveness of local products, services and businesses. In turn, it will be a source of pride for the residents.



*Residents of the Piotrków Poviát listening to the conference.  
Photo: Piotrków Poviát.*

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>The art of creating bonsai as an example of seeking alternative development opportunities</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	State Forest National Forest Holding Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate with its registered office in Ruciane Nida
<b>Lead time:</b>	September 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	workshops, lecture tour
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 5: Supporting resource efficiency and the shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry industries

## Invite bonsai into your home

Being surrounded by plants helps people feel calmer and relaxed, by reducing their anxiety levels. Moreover, the company of plants, whether at home or at work, helps improve memory and concentration by 20%. Care of plants is also an interesting and engaging hobby. Their enthusiasts are eagerly searching for new species that will work best in a domestic environment.

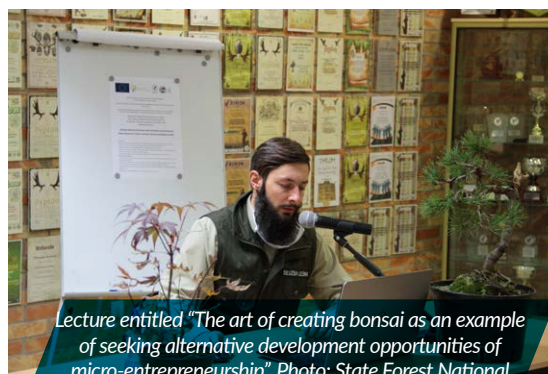
How can plant breeders and retailers respond to the needs of people who want to surround themselves with special and unique plants in their home? Creating bonsai trees can be an original and profitable business idea. It is a unique art, with a beautiful and long history. Both gardening and forestry enthusiasts and lovers of the East Asian culture can appreciate the beauty of bonsai. This unique project has been prepared exactly for them.

### **The art of making bonsai – a hobby and a business idea**

An operation devoted to the art of creating bonsai was prepared by people connected to the Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate. Its aim was to draw the attention of the local community to the potential inherent in the natural environment around us. One such possibility is the creation of bonsai, the art of miniaturising trees or shrubs. They are grown in suitably sized, flat containers. The training and lectures prepared helped to deepen the knowledge of preparation for tree cultivation as well as tree pruning and care.

Bonsai is an art originating in China, which has also been adopted and developed in Japan and Korea. The technique combines gardening with Asian aesthetics and philosophy of minimalism. The term “bon-

sai” literally means “plant in a container”. The aim of creating miniature trees is to achieve a pot plant that reflects the nature of the tree. Knowledge of different growing and care techniques allows the creation of trees in a variety of imaginative shapes.



*Lecture entitled “The art of creating bonsai as an example of seeking alternative development opportunities of micro-entrepreneurship”. Photo: State Forest National Forest Holding Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate with its registered office in Ruciane Nida.*

### **Who was the project designed for?**

The project devoted to the creation of bonsai benefited the inhabitants of rural areas in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship, as well as the representatives of the Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate, secondary school pupils, representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises in the horticultural, nursery and tourism industries, and people with a hobby interest in the art of bonsai. The workshop could also benefit people who are looking for new career paths or personal development and want to enrich their existing knowledge.

### Is it possible to create bonsai based on the native species?

Within the framework of the operation *The art of creating bonsai as an example of seeking alternative development opportunities*, two workshops and one lecture tour were held. The workshop was aimed to show the audience how bonsai art can be created us-

ing the native species. The first part of the operation was the preparation and organisation of a workshop tour for eight representatives of the Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate. The workshop involved imparting knowledge on how to create bonsai using the surrounding nature. Workshop participants also learned about plant care.



## What is worth knowing about the art of growing bonsai?

- Most plants are suitable for growing bonsai, but those that have small leaves and form flexible stems work best.
- Bonsai is a complex technique that can take several years to master.
- You don't have to go to Asia to get seeds for bonsai as you can also use local species, i.e. maple, oak, beech, white spruce, birch, pine, chaenomeles, and rhododendron ficus.
- Caring for bonsai involves numerous procedures, including planting the plants in flat pots, regular wire trimming or pruning of stems and roots.

### Growing bonsai as an alternative business idea

The second workshop was prepared for a wider audience. The training was designed to transfer the knowledge gained during the previous tour. It was also an opportunity to talk about what growing, shaping and caring for bonsai trees entails. The next part of the training included a lecture on entrepreneurship. During these activities the target group was able to work on a business concept.

Growing and selling bonsai can provide an alternative development opportunity for micro-entrepreneurship – so the knowledge on tree cultivation can be translated into a business idea, especially on the local market. Participants in the workshop learned about the potential of niche production of unique goods in rural areas and how to prepare for such activities and their promotion. Growing bonsai works out as a profitable main or side business.

The final part of the operation were practical classes on the technique of forming bonsai trees. The participants of the training trip had the opportunity to visit the historic Zdzisław Boroński Seed Extraction Plant in Ruciane Nida, where they learned about seed extraction and seed storage. They also learned the basics of caring for a tree and had the opportunity to take the first steps in creating bonsai themselves.



*Secondary school students, participants of the workshops on growing bonsai trees. Photo: State Forest National Forest Holding Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate with its registered office in Ruciane Nida.*

### Project outcomes

The main objective of the operation was to transfer valuable knowledge and experience in creating bonsai as a unique local product. The transfer of knowledge was intended to encourage the rural population to open new business activity units, including such from the nursery and horticulture industries based on native species.

It is also worth emphasising the additional value of the operation, which turned out to be broadening the horizons of the recipients by familiarising them with the principles of the bonsai philosophy. The specifics of creating bonsai trees showed the participants the role of striving for perfection and assiduity. The transmission of these values was particularly important given the age of the participants of the operation. They were predominantly young people, school pupils or young people preparing to start their first job. Therefore, the workshop also provided an opportunity for these people to be shown an idea for their future career path.



*Souvenir photo of the bonsai making workshop participants. Photo: State Forest National Forest Holding Maskulińskie Forest Inspectorate with its registered office in Ruciane Nida.*

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Publication on cheese-making</b>
Implemented by:	Regional Unit of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship NRN
Lead time:	December 2020
Form of implementation:	book publishing house
Activity of NRN:	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 3: Supporting the organisation of food supply chain, including the processing and marketing of agricultural products, the promotion of animal welfare and managing risks in agriculture

## Home-made cheese

Cheese should not only be associated with France, but also with Poland! To make this happen, a project was set up to promote knowledge about home-made cheese production. The organisers also wanted to raise awareness among both producers and consumers – so that they became familiar with cheese-making technologies and their taste and health benefits. To this end, a publication entitled *Traditional Cheese-making* was produced as a consequence of the previous educational activities.

### A dose of knowledge for farmers – and so much more!

The project target group included farmers, producers and small processors – all potentially interested in learning about cheese production methods.

### Cheese pleasures – how did the action go?

It all started in 2019, when a series of training sessions were held for the local community in rural areas of Masovia. Farmers, agrotourism operators, schoolchildren and the representatives of local authorities – all had the opportunity to meet during nineteen lectures on the production of organic products based on the raw materials from their own farms. The three training courses were on good dairy practices, milk processing and cheese dairy business activity. They were the first step towards the 2020 project. As part of this training, a guide book *Traditional cheese-making* was produced. The publication includes a history of cheese and cheese-making and tells about cheese-making technology. The book also offers recipes for home-made, self-made cheese using traditional methods.



The art of cheese-making. Photo: Regional Unit of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship NRN.



The art of cheese-making. Photo: Regional Unit of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship NRN.

## Cheese trivia:

1. Cheese-making is as old as the world. References to cheese-making appear in all the old books of ancient civilisations – the Sumerians, Greeks and Romans made cheese. In Rome alone, in its heyday, there were dozens of cheese-making dairies. Goat cheese was particularly prized, as it was attributed particular taste and health qualities. The philosopher Epicurus used to say that happiness is: good wine, a group of warm-hearted friends and goat cheese’.
2. The longest tradition of cheese-making in Poland is held by the Mennonites, a hard-working and very thrifty people who arrived in Żuławy Wiślane five hundred years ago. They were the ones who introduced the tradition of cheese-making, culinary arts and construction to this land.
3. Rennet was probably the first enzyme used in traditional food production. There are many legends circulating in the cheese-making world about its discovery, the most famous of which is the story of a Sumerian shepherd who poured milk into a jug made from the stomach of a sheep and marched across the desert. The heat and the minimal amount of rennet contained in the walls of this improvised vessel caused the milk to coagulate and separate into proteins and whey. This is how, by chance, the cheese was made, which can now be pressed in the mould and stored for weeks.
4. In times gone by, cheese ripening took place in caves or dugouts, where it was cool and sufficient level of humidity. Even today, some types of cheese, such as roquefort, ripen in old rock caves.

### Tasty and healthy project outcomes

The 2019 training courses attracted around 150 people who had the chance to learn about both theory and practice relating to cheese production. Participants listened to lectures and took part in experiential activities, during which they had the chance to make their own cheeses. The training included meetings and discussions with practitioners, lectures and talks. It was this workshop that led to a large increase in interest in the subject.

As a result, a publication entitled *Traditional Cheese-making* was produced in 2020, riding the wave of interest in the subject, which allowed it to reach an even larger audience. The book was initially sent to the Masovian Farmers’ Wives Association. It is planned to distribute it further at outdoor events, meetings and training sessions. All this has resulted – and continues to result – in an increased interest in the subject of cheese production using traditional methods.



*The art of cheese-making. Photo: Regional Unit of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship NRN.*

**Do it yourself!**  
**A cheese maker's culinary idea –**  
**cheesy marshmallow**

The recipe comes from Kazakhstan. This is a great idea for a very nutritious and valuable dish for children which is of course delicious!

Ingredients:

- 15 dag of medium-compact curd grain, if you don't have milk and rennet you can replace it with the same amount of bought non-sour whey cheese or even better capri cheese or similar.
- two tablespoons of bee honey
- teaspoon of gelatine
- ground cinnamon
- ¼ of a vanilla stick
- coconut shavings
- chocolate coating 10 dag
- 2 tbsp butter

Method of preparation:

Mix 15 dag of cheese grains, whey cheese or capri cheese thoroughly with honey, a pinch of cinnamon and grated vanilla, add gelatine dissolved in 3–4 tablespoons of hot water. Place the mixture in the fridge for an hour to firm up a little. After this time, form prune-sized balls, coat in coconut shavings and again place in the fridge for several minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the chocolate topping by heating it over steam, adding butter to give it a more flowing consistency. Pour the prepared topping over the cold balls (you can sprinkle them with almond flakes immediately afterwards). Serve with nuts, dried fruit and grapes.

**Do you want to find out more?**

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**Title of operation:** Examples of good practices in the field of regional culinary heritage – organisation of two study tours: for current and potential members of the Małopolska Culinary Heritage Network in the Opolskie Voivodeship

**Implemented by:** Rural Development Institute

**Lead time:** February 2020 – July 2020

**Form of implementation:** study tour

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Delicious promotion of regional culinary heritage

The operation entitled *Examples of good practices in the field of regional culinary heritage – organisation of two study tours: for current and potential members of the Małopolska Culinary Heritage Network in the Opolskie Voivodeship* was aimed at deepening and exchanging culinary knowledge among the participants of the tour. The organisers focused mainly on promoting innovative solutions in food processing and production. Information was provided by practitioners – producers, processors and retailers.

The participants of the study tours were to learn about the benefits of registering products in the Culinary Heritage Network. This influences the development and promotion of the natural food market, cooperation between network members, and strengthening of local identity. This makes it possible to increase the culinary attractiveness of the region and increase the interest of producers and consumers in natural food.



Photo: Rural Development Institute.

### Who was this project for?

The target group of the project included current and potential members of the Małopolska Culinary Heritage Network. This group includes food producers, processors, owners of catering and hospitality facilities and agri-food retailers.



Photo: Rural Development Institute.

### How did the project proceed?

The success of the operation was based on the commitment of the Rural Development Institute staff who were involved in organising the study tours. The project creators wanted the range of farms and production or processing entities visited to be as wide as possible. Both small businesses and large family farms participated in the operation. This gave farm owners from the Małopolskie Voivodeship a chance to meet similar farmers and entrepreneurs from the Opolskie Voivodeship. This led to an exchange of knowledge



## Find out more!

- The idea of a European Regional Culinary Heritage Network originated and developed on the Danish island of Bornholm and in the south-eastern Skåne in Sweden in 1995
- The Regional Culinary Heritage is to promote the production and marketing of local food and highlight its qualities
- There are currently 46 regions from 13 European countries associated with the European Culinary Heritage Network.

and experience regarding the functioning of the Culinary Heritage Network in the region.

The trips gave participants the chance to learn about all stages of growing, processing, producing and selling food – the most important element of culinary heritage. An important part of the project was to learn about innovative, cutting-edge solutions to facilitate work at all stages.

Thanks to the study tours, an opportunity has arisen to develop entrepreneurship in rural areas.



Photo: Rural Development Institute.

### Will this flour make bread?

Two study tours were organised as part of the project – each for 25 people. The participants – as planned – increased their knowledge and exchanged experiences with other representatives of rural areas. By focusing on the region's culinary heritage, those who took part in the operation learned how important all the successive stages of farming and processing are.

The organisers envisage an increase in the number of members of the Małopolska Culinary Heritage Network – all company representatives invited to the event declared submission of their application in the near future. This is another step towards promoting regional culinary culture and activating people in rural areas. The members of the network actively participate in the development of the market and the promotion of natural food, being also part of a larger organisation – the European Regional Culinary Heritage Network.

This is a milestone on the road to spreading local customs, food culture and regional delicacies.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Growing topinambour – health and beauty from nature as a way of the rural areas development</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Agricultural Chamber in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship
<b>Lead time:</b>	October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	study tour and conference
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Topinambour cultivation in Polish villages – sheer health and beauty from nature

The aim of the project was to increase knowledge among inhabitants of rural areas of Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship on growing topinambour (Jerusalem artichoke) and possibilities of obtaining a market for it, obtaining topinambour seedlings as well as growing, contracting and purchasing topinambour by means of a study tour to the Organic company in Sieniawa. It is a producer of powdered and concentrated topinambour juice based on a patented method of extraction).

### Who learned how to grow topinambour?

The event was attended by 120 people, i.e. inhabitants of rural areas from the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. They are active in the rural environment, interested in development, open and ready to cooperative with other farmers.

## Did you know that...

...powdered topinambour concentrate (with vitamin C protection), can be used in the treatment and prevention of many illnesses and diseases. Topinambour is also called Jerusalem artichoke, sunroot, sunchoke, wild sunflower, or earth apple. It contains vitamins A, B6, C, E, K, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid and many others. It also contains precious minerals such as magnesium, iron, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium and zinc.

Topinambour lowers blood sugar levels and cholesterol, regulates blood pressure and digestive system function, supports nervous system function, cleanses the body and prevents colon diseases.



Topinambour from the root.  
Photo: Agricultural Chamber in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.



Study tour to the Organic company  
Photo: Agricultural Chamber in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.

### Topinambour is the future of agriculture!

Two meetings were organised as part of the operation. The first meeting was attended by 120 people. Participants were introduced to the topics of topinambour cultivation and the climate and soil requirements. They also learned about the energy and medicinal properties of the plant and how to use it on the farm.

The second meeting took the form of a study tour to the Organic company in Sieniawa with 35 participants. During the tour, it was possible to learn about the cultivation of topinambour, to purchase seedlings and to establish cooperation with Organic on a contracting basis. The topics of ecology and the benefits of cultivating this plant in Poland were also discussed.

### As many as 120 people learned about growing topinambours!

Thanks to the operation entitled "**Growing topinambour – health and beauty from nature as a way the rural areas development**", as many as 120 inhabitants of the **rural areas** in the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship were able to learn about growing topinambour in Poland and acquire a commercial outlet for it.

Participants also learned how to purchase topinambour seedlings and how to carry out contracting. Moreover, they were able to immediately establish a permanent cooperation with the producer of the topinambour juice (Organic company).

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Family farms at the time of globalisation</b>
Implemented by:	National Council of Agricultural Chambers
Lead time:	June 2020 – October 2020
Form of implementation:	conference, workshops
Activity of NRN:	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 3: Supporting the organisation of food supply chain, including the processing and marketing of agricultural products, the promotion of animal welfare and managing risks in agriculture

## Family farms at the time of globalisation

A family farm is a type of farm which is run personally by an individual farmer. It may consist of 1 to 300 hectares of agricultural land. The Minister of Agriculture emphasises that small family farms occupy an important place among farms. The future of modern agriculture and the development of rural areas depends on their progress. Each of such farms can apply for European or domestic funding.

Family farms ensure food security and are a source of financial, social and cultural capital. The aspect of implementing new technologies so that they can maintain their competitiveness in the market is also important. This is particularly important in the face of globalisation.

### Supporting family farms as a key to rural development

The operation called *Family farms at the time of globalisation* is addressed to farmers who need to extend their knowledge of the possibilities and solutions necessary to strengthen the market position of their farms. The project paid particular attention to the need to improve qualifications and implement innovative solutions and technologies. Investing in the growth of one's farm and one's own competences will help to strengthen the competitive advantage of particular individuals. This is the only way to cope with the competitive pressure on the global market.

### Family farms – directions and opportunities for development

The training for farmers consisted of a two-day conference and workshops for 100 people, delivered by the National Council of Agricultural Chambers. The



The conference and workshop participants at the Windsor Hotel. Photo: [www.krir.pl](http://www.krir.pl)

event was organised on 9–10 September 2020 at the Windsor Hotel in Jachranka.

The objective of the conference and workshops was to exchange knowledge and experience on innovative technologies and ways to stay competitive in the market. During the conference, experts discussed 6 key issues:

1. Definition of a family farm in international terms;
2. Challenges of globalisation and the development/competitiveness of family farms in Poland;
3. Risk management instruments in agriculture;
4. Efficient *Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System* (AKIS) as a determinant of competitiveness of Polish family farms;



## Do you know what globalisation is?

Globalisation is the process of merging national economies, manifested in the dynamic growth of international trade. This phenomenon increases the movement of capital and services on a global scale. It also deepens interdependences between individual economies and accelerates technological progress. Globalisation exerts a tremendous impact on economic, social and cultural change.

Transformations are also taking place in the rural environment. There are numerous challenges involved. One of them is the attempt to preserve local identity while participating in global processes. Farmers must, therefore, face new challenges. In what way?

- Polish agriculture is becoming increasingly dependent on international competition.
- Farmers want to grow to make their products and services competitive on a domestic and global scale.
- Farms are more and more curious and open to innovations coming from the world.
- Globalisation also accelerates the pace of economic exchanges between countries, which has an effect on the dynamic of exports and imports.
- Investing in training and knowledge is essential for farmers to be able to adapt to, and benefit from the changes taking place.
- In globalisation, the rural community should see new opportunities for rural development rather than threats.

5. Team-based forms of agricultural activity as an opportunity to strengthen the competitive position of family farms;
6. Agroecology as an opportunity for the development of family farms in the light of the European Green Deal concept.

The workshop activities took place in smaller groups and were facilitated by the distinguished experts visiting the conference. Importantly, the participants from the whole country participated in the activities. The recruitment for the project was a responsibility of: Lublin Agricultural Chamber, Pomorska Agricultural Chamber and the Agricultural Chamber of Łódzkie Voivodeship.

### New skills for the development of family farms

The operation enabled the participants to gain valuable theoretical and practical knowledge. Thus, the farmers were prepared to implement innovative changes to their family farms. The meetings offered a possibility to thoroughly discuss the issues of globalisation from the point of view of family farms and the opportunities created by technological progress.

It is worth highlighting the conclusions that the experts and participants drew from the meeting:

- financial and consultancy support for small farms should be increased,
- production should be oriented towards a changing demand structure,
- collective actions by farmers to reduce production costs and increase their share in added value are an essential element of a development strategy,
- it is necessary to improve productive effectiveness and innovation, as well as to develop precision farming and good consultancy so that agriculture can best fit into the European Green Deal,
- further development of foreign trade, strengthening the position of Polish brands of agricultural and food products and gaining quality advantages should be important development factors.



Industry experts share their knowledge on the role of globalisation in the development of family farms. Photo: [www.krir.pl](http://www.krir.pl)

Thanks to the conference, the farmers gained new knowledge that they can translate into reorganising their farms. Each participant had an opportunity to learn new things about:

- optimising the use of environmental resources,
- preserving the genetic diversity of plants and animals,
- entrepreneurship development based on knowledge of small-scale local processing and green economy development,
- creating new jobs,
- implementing competitive and innovative solutions that will strengthen the position of a family farm on the domestic and global market.



*The participants of the conference in Jachranka are listening to the experts' speeches.*  
Photo: [www.krir.pl](http://www.krir.pl)

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Demonstration farms as a tool to support knowledge transfer</b>
Implemented by:	Wielkopolski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Poznań
Lead time:	September 2020 – December 2020
Form of implementation:	films
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Learning always commands a good price!

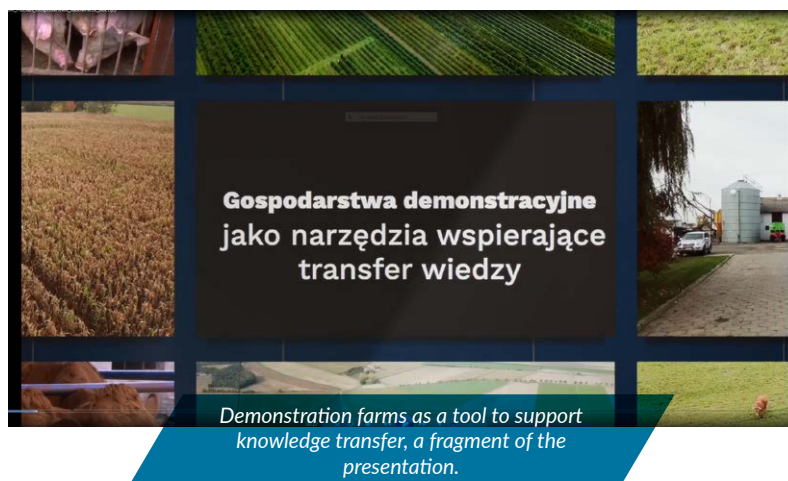
The *Demonstration farms as a tool to support knowledge transfer* operation was aimed at facilitating knowledge sharing with respect to modern agricultural production. The organisers also focused on the promotion of good practices in the area of modern solutions, using the activities of demonstration farms as an example.

### Who is this project for?

The project was addressed to those living in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship, including: agricultural producers, dwellers of rural areas, employees of Agricultural Advisory units and people interested in the subject.

### 92 farms in the network

It all started in 2012 when a network of demonstration farms was established on the initiative of the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Poznań. Today, after 9 years, the network consists of as many as 92 farms. It comprises both actual farms and those operating under research institutions and agricultural schools. The group also includes individual farmers – those keeping dairy and beef cattle and animals of the porcine species, as well as horse and broiler breeders, those focused on plant production as well as fish farms, fruit-growing, agri-tourism and organic farms, and even producers of bulbs and ornamental flowers. Therefore, it is safe to say that the network of demonstration farms consists of a broad portfolio of agricultural entities with different business profiles.



# ” You don't know that yet!

- Demonstration farms were established to support development and knowledge exchange and to disseminate good practices – both agricultural and production ones. The emphasis here is also on innovative solutions to make work easier and, at the same time, to take Polish farms into a new era. This is where innovations are implemented and where the transition from theory to farming practice takes place.
- Due to promoting demonstration farms, the farmers can draw inspiration from more experienced agricultural entrepreneurs. It is the first step towards large-scale change.

The subject of the *Demonstration farms as a tool to support knowledge transfer* operation included the production of six films. They showed the activities of selected entities engaged in agricultural activity – plant, animal or fruit-growing farming. The films showcased exemplary farms that can serve as examples for other farmers striving for change.

The following films were made as part of the project:

- Demonstration Farm. Orchard farm” - the subject of the film is the activity of a specialist, high-yield fruit-growing farm equipped with a modern storage base adapted to its needs – a cold store with a controlled atmosphere composition.
- Demonstration Farm. Cattle breeding” – the film presents a farm specialising in Limousine and Charolaise beef cattle. The owners are focused on producing breeding bulls and heifers. They regularly implement innovative breeding practices, including the use of embryo transfer. The high genetic level of the animals enables to sell breeding heifers and bulls.
- Demonstration Farm. Plant production” and “Demonstration Farm. Irrigation in potato cultivation” – the films present the activities of a company which deals with crops, combined with animal breeding. The dominant plant for the owners is the food potato for chips and fries. Innovative solutions stand out in the farm owners' activities. They include, among other things, the simplified cultivation

method – no-till system – of cereals and the cultivation of potatoes for early harvest.

- Demonstration Farm. Production of animals of the porcine species” – the film presents the production of animals of the porcine species at a farm that does animal and plant breeding and provides agricultural services.
- Demonstration Farm. Maize cultivation” – the subject of the film is the activity of a farm producing maize, oilseed rape and cereals. The innovation solution which stands out is the cultivation of maize under biodegradable film, resulting in earlier and higher yields. Ecology and economics in one!

All the films prepared as part of the project can be viewed on the website of the Wielkopolski AAC in Poznań: <http://wodr.poznan.pl/sir/filmy>





**The effect? More knowledge  
for those interested**

The project, as intended, served to promote modern solutions in agriculture. The films have disseminated good practices, becoming an inspiration for

farm owners in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. Thanks to the contribution of the participants, owners of demonstration farms, more people could learn about innovative methods in cattle breeding, plant production and fruit farming.

**Do you want to find out more?**

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>6th National Rally of Educational Farms</b>
Implemented by:	Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Krakow Branch
Lead time:	October 2020 – December 2020
Form of implementation:	conference
Activity of NRN:	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Educational Farms go!

Educational Farms attract more and more interest every year. No wonder as they create an image of the countryside that everyone would like to see. Modern, friendly, ecological. The network serves to disseminate the idea of on-farm education. In order to promote it even more, the “6<sup>th</sup> National Rally of Educational Farms” project was created. They may become a way of diversifying rural dwellers’ sources of income and introducing sustainable rural development and multifunctional agriculture. Another objective is to increase stakeholder participation in the implementation of rural development initiatives.

### Who has benefited from the project?

Countryside dwellers – including farmers and entrepreneurs of the agri-food industry running or preparing to run an educational farm, in particular members of the Polish Nationwide Network of Edu-



6<sup>th</sup> National Rally of Educational Farms, an advertising banner.

ational Farms, advisers to Agricultural Advisory units; representatives of scientific centres and government administration.

### 1 conference, 38 days, 256 participants signed in

The virtual synchronous/asynchronous conference entitled *6<sup>th</sup> National Rally of Educational Farms* included 38 days and was attended by as many as 256 signed-in participants. Due to the epidemic situation, the event was conducted online.

The first part of the event took place from 24 November to 30 December 2020. It was a so-called asynchronous conference. It consisted in providing access to self-instruction materials and interactive content.

The second part of the project was a synchronous, real-time conference. The online event took place on 8 December 2020.



6<sup>th</sup> National Rally of Educational Farms.  
Photo: Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Krakow Branch.

## Find out more!

- The Polish Nationwide Network of Educational Farms is a pioneering social farming project in Poland, initiated and coordinated by the Agricultural Advisory Centre, Krakow Branch.
- The plenty of themes of the educational activities as part of the Educational Farms centre around issues related to agriculture and rural life in its broadest sense and are intended to familiarise the public with the work of farmers and the origin of food. Environmental, ecological, consumer and regional education, including topics related to rural cultural heritage, is an important part of the activities.
- The activities as part of the Educational Farms include e.g. A possibility to take part in alpaca therapy, see traditional apiaries, see how farms operate, stroke cows and relax in nature!
- The way Educational Farms operate in the network ensures a transparent image, distinguishing educational services of the member farms in the market, fosters better use of resources, directs the qualitative development of educational programmes, attracts external resources, and increases the effectiveness of promotional activities.

Those two elements were integral parts of one larger whole. All the events took place on a special online platform, available at: <https://6-zlot-osze.pl>. The participants signed in with their assigned logins and passwords.

The topics that were discussed during the 6th National Rally of Educational Farms:

- Education: the participants had access to online training on life in rural areas. The completion of the training was evidenced by a certificate issued by the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów, Krakow Branch.
- Inspirations: this section featured lectures, presentations and films on rural themes. They explained to the participants different aspects of rural life and practices related to agricultural activity.
- Information and promotion: the materials included in this section provided information on the activities of the educational farms and the events that took place in the last two years.
- Science: here the participants could find scientific studies on educational farms and their activities.
- Integration: the integration section enabled to meet other participants of the Rally, its organisers and experts. A special chat room was set up and a forum for discussing and sharing observations was created.

- Culture: and after the online integration, spending time together. In this section, there were proposals for cultural events that could become a meeting place for the participants.

The highlight and the most important part of the project was the synchronous conference.

On 8 December 2020, it was broadcast live from a studio in Krakow. Each participant could attend lectures given by experts. Seven interactive discussion sessions in the following disciplines were held in parallel:

1. Agroecology and permaculture: methods and principles of practical education,
2. Formal and legal aspects of the operation of Educational Farms,
3. Activation methods offered by Educational Farms,
4. A local product in the portfolio of Educational Farms,
5. Native breeds of livestock in education,
6. Smart Villages in education,
7. Using the brand of a place and the local brand in the promotional activities of Educational Farms.

A set of thematic e-guides was also provided to all the participants.

### **Pioneering initiative in the Polish countryside**

The Educational Farms are themselves a pioneering initiative in the field of social farming. Organised

periodically, the Rally is one of the most important tools for communication and development of the project. Every year, it increases the development potential of social farming in Poland, creating new opportunities for the management of rural resources. It is an excellent way to improve the socio-economic situation of rural areas in the country.

The 2020 Rally was very positively received by the participants. Although its format was slightly different from previous years (epidemic restrictions forced the organisers to organise an online conference), those who took part in it rated the substantive level of lectures and materials available on the internet platform very high.

*"The conference prepared as usual in a very professional way, with much useful information and a number of interesting lectures. However, in my opinion, the real-time training format is irreplaceable".*



VI National Rally of Educational Farms, a fragment of the conference.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Conference on Agriculture in the context of changes to the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber
<b>Lead time:</b>	October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	conference
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## What is new in agriculture? Change, change, change!

The objective of the project was to provide information and knowledge on the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020 in light of upcoming regulatory changes.

The conference participants were also able to exchange knowledge with entities participating in rural development and learn more about planned changes in agriculture.

### Who participated in the project?

Farmers from Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship (women and men, 50 people), people living in rural areas and employees of the Agricultural Chamber and institutions around agriculture.

### When did the conference take place?

The conference on *agriculture in the context of changes to the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020* was held on 15 and 16 October 2020 at the Hotel Senator in Dźwirzyno. The participants had an opportunity to learn about the needs of the farming community, speak out in the forum, talk about problems they face on a daily basis and find out about changes being planned in agriculture.

### Conferences, discussions, lectures...

On the first day, after the guests were welcomed by Andrzej Karbowy, President of the Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber, Professor Czesław Nowak presented the topics of *Common Agricultural Policy after 2020 – Polish priorities* and *Social change and the role of rural women in view of the new CAP*.



Conference of the Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber, the executive table. Photo: Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber.

Next, the chairperson and the delegates of the County Councils of the Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber discussed the subject of *Prospects for the development of farms of Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship based on the assumptions of the CAP after 2020 – working out conclusions*. Afterwards, there was a lively discussion between the conference participants and the speakers.

### How important is the role of women in agriculture? Workshops

On the second day, Danuta Lebioda, Vice-Chair of the Women's Committee at Copa-Cogeca, conducted a workshop on *Information on the activities of the COPA-COGECA Women's Committee in the context of the new CAP*.



Conference of the Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber, participants during the pandemic.  
Photo: Zachodniopomorska Agricultural Chamber.

“Sustainable development in the world is not possible without the participation of women who represent a quarter of the world’s population. Even if there are different levels of development in societies around the world, women still face various challenges.” - reads the presentation by Danuta Lebioda of COPA-COGECA.

The workshop was followed by discussions and then a wrap-up and conclusion of the conference.

## ” You know that...

...COPA represents over 22 million farmers and their families. COGECA defends the interests of European agri-food, forestry and fishing cooperatives. COPA and COGECA are the united voice of farmers and agricultural cooperatives in the European Union. Their goal is to care for the common good of European agriculture which should be sustainable, innovative and competitive. It will guarantee food security for as many as 500 million people throughout Europe.

### What is the problem of the contemporary countryside?

According to the data in Professor Czesław Nowak’s 2020 presentation on *Common Agricultural Policy after 2020 – social change and the role of rural women in view of the New CAP*, only 25 per cent of people in Europe live in the countryside. The problems of the contemporary countryside include depopulation and the disappearance of traditional social ties.

### The conference was attended by 50 people!

The conference on *Agriculture in the context of changes to the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020* was attended by 50 people. The participants established new relations, shared knowledge and experience and planned the implementation of the principles learned on their farms.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest</b>
Implemented by:	Marshal's Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship
Lead time:	November 2020
Form of implementation:	contest
Activity of NRN:	Activity 11: Activation of rural dwellers for taking social inclusion initiatives, in particular for the elderly, youth, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

## How to fall in love with a bee? Apiculture Knowledge Contest

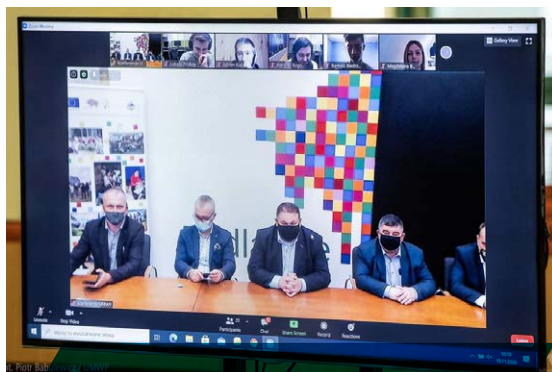
The Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest was organised to disseminate beekeeping knowledge, especially among representatives of the young generation. The organisers of the contest wanted to popularise the role of honey bees in the environment among secondary school students. Raising awareness of how bees can function in today's industrialised agricultural model also was an important element of the project. The idea was that young people should feel encouraged to observe the life of bees, their habits and the bee environment and to learn about melliferous plants and apiculture. An important goal of the contest was also the promotion of apiculture products and their role in human health.

### Schoolchildren about bees

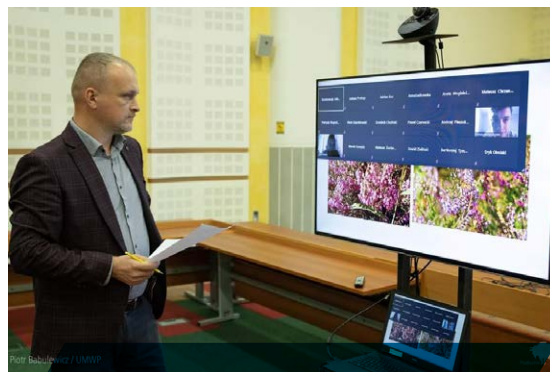
The target group of the project included secondary school students from Podlaskie Voivodeship. It was for them that the Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest was organised.

### Get the ball rolling, bee testers!

The Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest was organised by the Marshal's Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship. The contest was held for the third time already and its aim was, among other things, raising awareness of apiculture and providing information on the importance of bees in the ecosystem. In 2020, due to the pandemic restrictions, the event was held online.



Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest  
Photo: Marshal's Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship.



Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest.  
Photo: Marshal's Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship.

The first stage of the contest consisted in completing a written test including 45 questions. Raised were issues such as how the bee body is built, what the active mode of insects and their physical capabilities are. The second part of the contest consisted in recognising plants shown in photographs.

The contest jury was made up of the following apiculture experts: Mariusz Chachuła, Tomasz Kędziora, Jarosław Stępień, Wojciech Tryzna. They assessed answers to questions for written answers and knowledge of melliferous plants.

## Find out more!

- Each bee colony consists of three types of insects: queen, workers and drones. However, workers may “convert” by changing their tasks – it requires them to (literally) rebuild their brains!
- Foraging bees share tasks. Some collect nectar only, others are involved in collecting pollen.
- Bees can contact each other in two ways – with pheromones and dance!

### Knowledge goes out into the world

Among the objectives of the project was promoting knowledge of apiculture, information on beekeeping, honey production and its impact on health. The contest was a way to promote that knowledge among

young people – secondary school students from Podlasie. And the objectives have been achieved.

Eighteen students from eight schools participated in the contest. There were 5 prizewinners in the group, who demonstrated the most extensive knowledge.



Voivodeship Apiculture Knowledge Contest.  
Photo: Marshal's Office of Podlaskie Voivodeship.

### The Apiculture Knowledge Contest helped pass on the apiculture passion to young people

In preparation for taking part in the contest, they studied available materials, consulted experts and learned the secrets of bee life. Importantly, they also absorbed knowledge about honey and the health effects of apiculture products.

The secondary school students learned a lot about how bees function in their natural environment and in industrialised agriculture. Learning about the factors that are hazardous to the insects and how to protect bees was also an important part of the preparation. All this was encouragement to observe the life of bees and their fascinating customs.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Agro-Eco-Tourist Green Summer 2020 contest</b>
Implemented by:	Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice
Lead time:	June 2020 – September 2020
Form of implementation:	contest
Activity of NRN:	Activity 3: Collecting examples of operations implementing the individual Programme priorities
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 2: Improvement of competitiveness of all the types of farming and increasing farm profitability

## Where to go for a holiday? We already know!

The objective of the project was to improve the quality of services provided at farms by selecting and promoting the best rural tourist facilities.

### Who participated in the contest for the best rural tourist facility?

Owners of agri-tourist farms in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship and facilities which have benefited from EU funds for agri-tourism and tourism.

## And do you know that...

...Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship was established in 1999 by way of merging former Szczecin Voivodeship, Koszalin Voivodeship and parts of Słupsk, Piła and Gorzów Voivodeships.

...as much as 35% of Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship is covered by forests.

...there are approximately 3,000 natural monuments in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

...there are two national parks in Zachodniopomorskie Province: Wolin National Park and Drawa National Park. In addition, there are also landscape parks: Lower Oder Valley National Park, Valley of Love, Drawa and Ina National Parks, Barlinek-Gorzów Landscape Park, Szczecin Landscape Park.

West Pomerania is also known for its health spas in Świnoujście, Kamień Pomorski, Kołobrzeg, Połczyn Zdrój and Dąbki.

### What is the contest about?

The *Agro-Eco-Tourist "Green Summer" 2020* contest ran in the following two categories:

1. Selecting the best farm where tourist services are an additional source of income.
2. Selecting the best establishment (e.g. pension, inn) providing tourist services which are the basic but not necessarily the only source of income (e.g. pisciculture, stud farm, horse riding school and organic food production).

The participants were recruited to the target group by way of disseminating information to various

Agri-Tourism Associations and County Agricultural Advisory Teams in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

The contest was communicated by preparing documents for the participants (e.g. announcement, contest regulations, application form) and by placing ads on the NRN Partner's website and on platforms of additional NRN Partners.

In the promotional materials (A-3 posters and a banner display), logotypes including the European Union logo, the NRN logo and the RDP logo for 2014-2020 were placed. The contest was conducted



*Contest – manorial style.*  
Photo: Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice.



*Contest award ceremony.*  
Photo: Zachodniopomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice.

with the participation of three additional NRN Partners: Local Action Groups (Centre for Rural Initiatives LAG in Łobez; **Lakeland Leader** Association in Barlinek, and Rural Development Initiative (WIR) Association in Stargard).

#### **How did the contest start?**

The *Agro-Eco-Tourist “Green Summer” 2020 contest* was announced on 1 June 2020. The deadline for participation was 18 June 2020. Then, visits to the qualified farms in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship took place from 24 to 26 June 2020.

#### **The winners of the contest are champions of tourism!**

The results of the contest were announced on 2 September 2020 at [www.zodr.pl](http://www.zodr.pl). The contest was summarised and the financial prizes (cheques) and

diplomas were presented to the contest winners during the Horticulture and Apiculture Exhibition in Barzkowice on 26 September 2020. The winners were distinguished for the high quality of services provided, the farm standard, investments, attractions, price competitiveness, activity in promoting their agri-tourist offer and high creativity.

#### **The singled out farms have become an inspiration!**

The contest has contributed to raising the quality of services at agri-tourist farms in rural areas and has promoted good practices among service providers. This has helped to identify good solutions from the winners and promote them as the right examples for others.

The singled out farms have also become an inspiration for joint actions in the promotion of agri-tourism in Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

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<https://zodr.pl>

**Title of operation:** Supporting the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas by improving knowledge and skills in the field of small-scale local processing or in the field of green economy development, including the creation of new jobs

**Implemented by:** Dolnośląska Zielona Dolina Sp. z o.o.

**Lead time:** February 2020 – October 2020

**Form of implementation:** audit (certification) process, industry conference, workshops

**Activity of NRN:** Activity 6: Facilitating the exchange of knowledge between entities participating in rural development and exchanging and disseminating results of activities for that development

**Priority of RDP 2014–2020:** Priority 2: Improvement of competitiveness of all the types of farming and increasing farm profitability

## Knowledge transfer as key to success

Why is knowledge sharing important for local communities and producers? The success of rural areas is determined by joint efforts of community members. The more prosperous production plants there are, the greater not only the prosperity of residents, but also the recognition of the region. This, in turn, translates into greater interest from tourists and investors. A project to support the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas was carried out precisely for this purpose. The knowledge transferred during the activities with experts will help entrepreneurs implement innovative strategies.

### Programme of innovative training for entrepreneurs from Lower Silesia

The extensive programme prepared as part of the operation was designed to support local entrepreneurs in implementing rural development initiatives. Thanks to the activities prepared, interesting workshops and conferences were held. The valuable training courses taught the participants how to effectively support sales of their products. The industry conferences, on their part, were devoted to topics related to business management and making one's mark on the regional market. Zielona Dolina certificates were also presented during the conference.

The participants in the workshops and conferences were people interested in developing their businesses, promoting regional products and finding new channels for reaching customers. They were also dwellers of rural areas who are aware that the promotion and sales of local products is a key element for the development of rural areas.



*Dr. Tomasz Zawadzki, lecturing to the conference participants. Photo: Dolnośląska Zielona Dolina Sp. z o.o.*

### Green Valley certificate for the best regional products

The project to support the development of entrepreneurship was opened with the awarding of Green Valley certificates to agricultural producers and food processors from Lower Silesia. In this way, unique regional products from local and organic farms were singled out. The event was attended by local producers who had applied in advance. A honour can be given to products or services that:

- come from the agri-food or animal breeding sector, with particular consideration for bio-production,
- were made using the highest quality, select, natural, regional ingredients,
- can be a showcase of Lower Silesia.

### Who was awarded?

The certification committee was guided by clear rules and strict instructions. It was composed of representatives of Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences and made its decision based on the documentation received and the audit carried out. The '10' mark was awarded to: Muscaris Semi-dry wine, Regent Dry wine, Rose Semi-sweet wine, Solaris Semi-dry wine, Wild Boar Kabanos sausage, Fettina cheese with garlic and ramson, Forest Honey, Red-haired Cossack cheese, Polyflorar Honey and Lime Honey.



Green Valley certificate presentation ceremony.  
Photo: Dolnośląska Zielona Dolina Sp. z o.o.

## Do you know what nutrition certificates are?

- Polish food can be labelled with numerous certificates: European, national and local ones. The awarding process is strictly regulated and credible, which means that accolades conferred have a significant impact on the popularity of the product.
- Every food producer should take an interest in the certificates. Why? Such awards promote local food, support entrepreneurs and help build recognition for regional brands.
- Appreciative consumers are increasingly paying attention to certification. It tells them that a product is organically grown, has a safe composition and health-promoting properties. This has an increasing influence on making shopping decisions.
- The number of Polish companies with food certificates is growing continuously. Winning them increases confidence on the part of business partners. The success of the brand can also help create new jobs and reduce production costs.
- Certification programmes are designed to help producers bring their cultures, breeding and food production up to organic standards that guarantee quality, taste and safety for consumers.

### How to build a sales network in the food industry?

The second part of the operation was the conference on *Satisfying needs, making profits – marketing and sales in the agri-food industry*, addressed to agricultural producers and food processors from Lower Silesia. The meeting enabled the participants to learn about business issues that will help them develop their businesses. The programme consisted of two lectures. The first was given by Dr. Tomasz Zawadzki, a co-owner of the Xawery Miodowy and Canper Poland brands. The experts explained step by step many issues including:

- how to introduce products to large retail chains,

- what are alternative forms of sales,
- how to acquire non-traditional distribution outlets,
- how to scale up one's business,
- how to optimise operating costs,
- how to do proper pricing,
- which advertising channels to use.

### The role of a marketing strategy in promoting local business

The other lecture was given by Dr. Marek Zielniński, the founder of Smart Business Solutions and co-founder of Centrum B2B. The lecture on *Effective marketing activities: how to avoid mistakes in planning marketing strategies?* addressed issues of creating and

implementing marketing strategies. The expert devoted particularly much time to issues such as:

- setting marketing targets,
- data collection,
- customer differentiation between B2B and B2C markets,
- communication and promotion using multiple channels,
- personalisation of marketing activities,
- analysing and drawing conclusions from activities carried out.

The lecture was at the same time an introduction to a workshop for agricultural producers and food processors from Lower Silesia. The training was delivered by Dr. Marek Zieliński and Cezary Hurka, CEO of Advertiva Advertising Agency. The participants' main task was to develop a strategy for their business.

### **What are the effects of training for entrepreneurs?**

A specially prepared training programme contributed to the exchange of knowledge on the latest trends in building sales growth. The participants in the conference and workshop will be able to apply the skills they have acquired in the future and improve the competitiveness and profitability of their businesses. In the long term, the new knowledge will have a pos-



*The participants in the workshop on developing promotion strategies for agri-food products.  
Photo: Dolnośląska Zielona Dolina Sp. z o.o.*

itive impact on the socio-economic development of rural areas as well as on the visibility and awareness of regional products among consumers.

Regional products play an important role in supporting rural areas. Their success contributes to employment diversification and increases agricultural producers' income. It also fits in with the needs of modern consumers. The different taste of products bought at a marketplace or at an agri-tourist farm is quite an attraction for locals and tourists alike.

## **Do you want to find out more?**

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Local Water Partnerships</b>
Implemented by:	Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo
Lead time:	April 2020 – December 2020
Form of implementation:	meeting
Activity of NRN:	Activity 2: Activities to create a network of contacts for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Water partnerships for the benefit of all

Proper water management is of great importance, especially for rural areas. Apart from the recreational aspect, it also influences the effects of local production activity, breeding, the success of cultures and much more. It is, therefore, necessary to support initiatives that will educate and identify new prospects in the administration of those resources. The **Local Water Partnerships** project is intended as a first step towards better management of water reservoirs.

### What are Local Water Partnerships?

The objective of the **Local Water Partnerships** project was to initiate cooperation and create a network of contacts between the local community and institutions and authorities in the field of water management in rural areas. As part of the project, pilot Local Water Partnerships were established in the counties of Sępólno and Nakło. They included representatives of public administration, farmers, Agricultural Advisory and science.

Each of the established teams was to learn about each other's range of local activities related to water management. The **LWP** members were also to diagnose the situation in terms of the needs and problems faced by farms and county residents. Their analysis provided a starting point for the search for new possibilities and solutions, the dissemination of good practices and water efficiency in agriculture and rural areas.

### Who participated in the project?

The project participants included representatives of the National Water Management Authority "Wody Polskie", public administration, water company, agricultural chamber, state forest administration, national

and landscape parks, scientific institutes and agricultural universities as well as NGOs. In addition, the meetings were attended by local farmers, fish pond owners and other people interested in the topic.



LWP meeting at the Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo. Photo: Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo.

### What challenges must be faced?

As part of the **Local Water Partnerships** project, 12 meetings were held in Sępólno and Nakło counties to initiate cooperation and create a network of contacts between the local community and administrative bodies. A total of 258 participants took part in the project, and local authorities and residents were also invited to cooperate.

During the meetings, the participants had an opportunity to learn about the **Local Water Partnerships** project assumptions. They included getting familiar with the local hydrological condition, information on activities undertaken as part of protection tasks and

plans of the forest inspectorate and the Krajna Landscape Park related to the areas.

The **LWP** meetings were intended to provide a perspective on the issue of water administration – both from the standpoint of the local authorities and the community. Everyone had a chance to have their say and, on the basis of the issues raised, it proved possible to draw up a list of issues to be tackled by the project.

They include:

- collection and use of rainwater,
- increase in biodiversity in local water bodies,
- solving drought problems,
- rational use of existing water resources,
- use of water for fishing purposes,
- beaver population reduction.

Formal issues are also important for the local communities. The participants requested simplification and acceleration of administrative procedures to support bottom-up initiatives. This also applies to funding activities and supporting the development of agricultural infrastructure.

The originator of the **Local Water Partnerships** project is Dr. Ryszard Kamiński, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development from 2019 to 2021.

### Importance of cooperation between local operators

During the **Local Water Partnerships** meetings, it was possible to emphasise the importance of residents sharing information and cooperating with the local authorities. Working together enables to better focus on current issues and effectively find solutions. In this way, one of the main objectives of the **LPW** project was achieved. The establishment and development of a network of contacts significantly speeds up the response of the local authorities, which enables real water management issues to be tackled effectively.



Activities in the field at the Runowo Forest Inspectorate. Photo: Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo.

Information about activities as part of the **LWP** was publicised by the local press. Based on the meetings, two articles were written and published in the **Wieś Kujawsko-Pomorska** monthly.

- Local Water Partnerships (LPW) – in Sępólno and Nakło counties.
- Local Water Partnerships in Sępólno and Nakło counties – initial experiences and plans for the future; an interview with Ryszard Zarudzki, Director of the Kujawsko-Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo.

### Local Water Partnerships – what outcomes should be expected?

The **Local Water Partnerships** meetings provided a starting point for discussions on how to better manage and exploit the potential of water management. Based on those, 2 detailed summary reports were produced. In addition, the issues discussed during the **Local Water Partnerships** meetings were used as source material to develop scenarios for training workshops in Sępólno and Nakło counties.

**Do you want to find out more?**

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Active oldie –care farms as a form of activation of seniors in rural areas. Getting to know good practices from abroad</b>
<b>Implemented by:</b>	Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>Lead time:</b>	March 2020 – October 2020
<b>Form of implementation:</b>	study visit
<b>Activity of NRN:</b>	Activity 11: Activation of rural dwellers for taking social inclusion initiatives, in particular for the elderly, youth, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>Priority of RDP 2014–2020:</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

## Good practices in supporting the elderly

The activation of older people is to prevent the social exclusion of seniors and at the same time improve their quality of life. For this purpose, the **Active oldie** project was put in place in Boguchwała. Its authors want to introduce the participants to good practices of running care farms following the example of centres operating in Italy.

### Who participated in the project?

45 participants from the following 4 voivodeships participated in the **Active oldie –care farms as a form of activation of seniors in rural areas. Getting to know good practices from abroad** project:

- Podkarpackie,
- Lubelskie,
- Małopolskie,
- Śląskie.

Among those invited were representatives of e.g. local government and government institutions, representatives of agricultural institutions, people responsible for implementing new initiatives in rural areas and actual farmers.

The project took the form of a seven-day study visit to Italy, during which the participants had an opportunity to learn more about forms of activating seniors and running care farms in rural areas. The purpose of all this was to effectively transplant the knowledge gained onto Polish soil.

### Direction: Italy

In the case of the **Active oldie** project, the direction of the study visit was not accidental. Italian care farms are famous for their good practices and unique initia-

tives supporting the social engagement of the elderly and others. The farms there are well developed and thriving organisations. The participants were able to gain knowledge and experience based on well-functioning and proven solutions.



Visit to the Agriverde care farm.  
Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała.

### The care farm as a foundation of new initiatives

As the project participants could find out, many care farms in Italy are not only responsible for activating older people but also contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas. Some of the centres visited perform, among other things, production activities and thus try to build intergenerational dialogue in smaller towns and villages.

Examples of such activities are:

- Cascina Clarabella – a farm dedicated to plant production.



- Cascina Basalganella – its owners are involved in growing vegetables, fruit, animal breeding and renewable energy.
- Agriverde - a care farm active in producing organic food and looking for new outlets.
- Corte Di Vitriola – a social farming pilot project has been implemented at the centre.
- Ruggi Andrea – a multifunctional care farm whose main activity is agricultural processing.
- S. Anna SRL – the centre makes its living out of livestock and organic production. It also breeds grazing cattle and, in addition, is a producer of cured meats, salami, wine and fruit.

## Not only for seniors

Italian care farms do not limit themselves to caring for seniors from smaller towns and villages only. They also offer help to people with disabilities, impairments and those struggling with problems such as addictions.

Care farms are an idea dating back to the 19th century, although they only gained popularity in Europe in the 1990s. In Poland, there are 25 centres in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship as part of the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Regional Operational Programme 2014–2020 project.

### Farm organisation from behind the scenes

The visit to Italy enabled to see the centres from a functional and financing point of view. In most cases, funds used for care and maintenance come from the sales of agricultural products.

Some farms also operate thanks to partnerships with external non-profit organisations, such as Cascina Aguazzarina. Others, such as Casino della Villa, offer various forms of activation through a one-off service, the so-called day stay.

### The future of activation of seniors in Poland

The *Active oldie* project is not only intended to encourage action against the exclusion of older people. It also proves that such initiatives may have a direct impact on growing entrepreneurship and innovation of a region. The growth of entrepreneurship in the countryside has both its economic and tourist aspects.



*Cascina Aguazzarina care farm.  
Photo: Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre  
in Boguchwała.*

Let us hope that in time the knowledge and contacts brought from the Apennine Peninsula will bear fruit in breakthrough ventures in the Polish voivodeships.

## Do you want to find out more?

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<b>Title of operation:</b>	<b>Local Processing Incubators as an opportunity for cooperation in the agricultural sector</b>
Implemented by:	Local Action Group for the Development of Municipalities of Lublin County – “Land Around Lublin”
Lead time:	October 2020
Form of implementation:	conference, workshops
Activity of NRN:	Activity 9: Supporting cooperation in the agricultural sector and implementation of joint investments by farmers
Priority of RDP 2014–2020:	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas

## Better together! Incubators and cooperation in the agricultural sector

The increased interest in cooperation and partnership between farmers, producers and processors was supposed to help find new and common ways of development. In this context, local processing incubators played a special role. The unique, jointly organised events were a space for dialogue, sharing experiences and discussion on the distribution of quality food produced regionally.

### Local Processing Incubators – project objective

The project prepared by the “Land Around Lublin” Local Action Group included the organisation of a conference and workshops. The planned events took place in Pszczela Wola. It is where the first apiculture incubator in Poland was set up. The organisers indicated that the main objective to be achieved by the project should be to strengthen cooperation and partnership between the participants.

### Who participated in the project?

The participants in the project were employees of the agricultural sector in Lubelskie Voivodeship, including farmers, beekeepers and food producers. Next to them, the meetings and activities were attended by people who have an impact on the production,



*The conference was organised in the country's first and only Apiculture Products Processing Incubator. Photo: “Land Around Lublin” Local Action Group.*

processing and distribution of quality food, taking into account the activities of local processing incubators. They were representatives of: non-governmental organisations, catering establishments, agricultural product processing, food industry, local government and public institutions, as well as students of agricultural schools.



## Do you know what incubators are?

A local processing incubator should be regarded as a food business in which activities related to the production, processing or distribution of food, as appropriate, are carried out. An incubator is a production/processing plant that can be made available for the production/processing of food to different types of food business operators. An incubator should be duly registered or registered and approved by a competent official food control authority, as appropriate, depending on the intended use of the establishment. An incubator must also meet hygienic requirements appropriate for the scope of activities carried out there. "Processing" means any activity that substantially transforms the initial product, including heating, smoking, salting, maturing, drying, marinating, extraction, extrusion or a combination of these processes.

The conference and workshops as a space for developing ties

As part of the project, a conference was organised on Local Processing Incubators as an opportunity for cooperation in the agricultural sector on 4 October 2020. Then, on 6 and 8 October 2020, the **Apiculture – handicrafts and cuisine** workshop took place.

The first part of the operation was the conference during which information was provided on the role of incubators. Their greatest advantage was identified as the establishment and development of cooperation between representatives of sectors that have an influence on the availability of quality food on the market. During the lectures, the participants could learn:

- how to effectively promote their products (mainly honey and its products),
- how to market them,
- how direct sales and agricultural retail work,
- what impact the development of public spaces has on environmental protection, with particular emphasis on bees.

The conference concluded with a discussion and exchange of insights among the participants. During the panel discussion, representatives of various sectors (including science, NGOs and tourism) put forward their ideas for taking advantage of the opportunities offered by an incubator. Among its advantages, singled out in particular was initiating actions aimed at cooperation for the production, processing and distribution of high-quality products.

The theoretical part was complemented by culinary and handicraft workshops organised in the Incu-

bator. During the beeswax candle-making workshop, the participants acquired knowledge on apiculture products made of honeycomb wax.



*Each participant could make candles and wax figures themselves.*

*Photo: "Land Around Lublin" Local Action Group.*

### **A guaranteed effect!**

The organisation of the conference in the country's first Apiculture Products Processing Incubator and the presentation of its portfolio increased the participants' interest in cooperation and undertaking activities with the use of the Incubator.

In turn, the participants in the beeswax workshop acquired valuable knowledge of the use of aesthetic and health values of candles in commerce, medicine, tourism and gastronomy. **The information gained can help residents of rural areas develop a new passion and, in the long term, a profitable niche business.**

The culinary workshop was mainly based on the use of honey in gastronomy. Each participant learned many interesting facts about the dietary and flavour qualities of dishes prepared with the sweet additive.

They could also make their own dish, dessert or herbal tincture using honey. The workshop enabled to present the practical role of incubators in the preparation and marketing of high-quality local products.



## Do you know what beeswax can be used for?

- Beeswax is a product that can be used in many ways. Due to its health-promoting properties, it is used in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, but also for the production of aromatic candles.
- Beeswax candles are characterised by a mild, honey and propolis scent. They negatively ionise the air around us, which has a soothing and relaxing effect on us.
- A beeswax candle is not only a source of pleasant light, but also helps to remove harmful odours, such as e.g. cigarette smoke, from the surrounding air.

## Do you want to find out more?

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## List of abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation/acronym	Abbreviation/acronym explanation
AAC	Agricultural Advisory Centre
Dr.	doctor
EPC directive	Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council
EPI	European Partners for Innovation
habil.	habilitated
INFMP	Institute of Natural Fibres and Medicinal Plants
NRN	National Rural Network, Polish Rural Network
LAAC, Lubuski AAC	Lubuski Agricultural Advisory Centre
LWP	Local Water Partnerships
i.a.	inter alia
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
e.g.	for example
RES	renewable energy sources
PGI	Protected Geographical Indications
c.	called
Podkarpacki AAC	Podkarpacki Agricultural Advisory Centre
RDP	Rural Development Programme
e.	entitled
AR	agricultural retail
NRN Regional Secretariat	NRN – National Rural Network, Polish Rural Network
TVP	Polish Television
EU	European Union
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
ZAO	Zachodniopomorska Audit Office
GACS	Group of Agronomic and Comprehensive Schools

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