



# GOOD PRACTICES

HAVING AN IMPACT  
ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT



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



Ministerstwo Rolnictwa  
i Rozwoju Wsi



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In the face of rapid socio-economic change, the role and importance of rural areas in shaping the economy are becoming increasingly significant. It is undeniable that the countryside holds an important production function in the modern world, being an integral part of the broader economic mechanism of the country. It is here that agriculture develops, traditions are nurtured, food is produced, and animals are raised.

We are proud to present the fifth edition of this publication, which details the initiatives and operations carried out as part of the Operational Plan of the Polish Rural Network (PRN). These projects, implemented in 2022, are concrete examples of activities within the framework of the 2022–2023 plan. They demonstrate the dynamic development and innovations introduced in rural areas.

The projects implemented within the framework of the PRN OP are designed to activate rural inhabitants, support their entrepreneurship, and foster initiatives to develop and improve their quality of life. In preparing this brochure, we have paid particular attention to the tradition and values of the Polish countryside, juxtaposed with the spirit of modernity.

You will read about changes, the introduction of new technologies and ecological practices, as well as the preservation of customs and the continuation of what has been associated with rural areas for centuries. We discuss natural cultivation, the magical power of herbs, and products with unique flavours.

We invite you to read on!

# CABBAGE PICKLING, SPINNING YARN AND FEATHER STRIPPING – RITUALS FROM THE ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKIE COUNTRYSIDE

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Reviving old customs of the Świętokrzyskie countryside – ritual shows and regional folk music
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Kielce Countryside Museum
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Outdoor event
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 11: Activate villagers to undertake initiatives for social inclusion, especially the elderly, young people, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Seniors, adults, young people, people with disabilities, ethnic and national minorities
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Engaging the local community to promote the cultural heritage of the old countryside

Organisers of the 'Tastes of Autumn' event  
photo: Kielce Countryside Museum



Rural traditions have been shaped over many generations, creating a rich cultural heritage. They invariably fascinate and arouse interest not only among those who originate from a particular region but also among tourists who wish to discover unique aspects of rural life and culture. Preserving these traditions helps us to not only understand what life was like for our ancestors but also to see how these experiences have influenced our local communities today. The project entitled 'Reviving old customs of the Świętokrzyskie countryside – ritual shows and regional folk music' served this important purpose.

The project was carried out by the Kielce Countryside Museum, and its main objective was to engage local communities in activities aimed at promoting the cultural heritage of villages from the past. The Kielce Countryside Museum leveraged the knowledge and skills of individuals familiar with local traditions and rituals to present the customs associated with rural life that were once characteristic of the people living in the Kielce area. At the same time, the event promoted folk music from Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, featuring elements of the old dialect characteristic of the region.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia spans an area with more than 80 historical buildings, showcasing typical features of the former Kielce countryside, divided into six thematic sectors. In 1995, the area was officially entered into the register of immovable monuments.

## Who was the project for?

The project's event was aimed at people interested in the culture of the Kielce region – adults, young people, seniors, people with disabilities, as well as ethnic and national minorities.

## Wydarzenie, które przyciąga tłumy turystów

As part of the project, a folklore event entitled 'Tastes of Autumn' was organised, which attracted many tourists to the Ethnographic Park in Tokarnia, eager to explore local culture.

The centrepiece of the programme was a demonstration of rituals prepared by local Rural Women's Associations. These included activities such as cabbage pickling in a traditional barrel, spinning yarn on a spinning wheel, and feather stripping.

Folk bands from the Świętokrzyskie region also performed on stage, presenting local songs and chants. However, the event was not limited to performances, as there were also food tastings, including roast potatoes over a bonfire and soups made from autumn fruit and vegetables. In a cottage from Złotniki, visitors could observe the baking of traditional scones in an old oven.

In addition, the event featured demonstrations of traditional crafts, including blacksmithing, pottery, and weaving. Experienced promoters led workshops where visitors could learn how to make autumn bouquets.

The event also included a fair of local products and dishes, where members of the Świętokrzyskie Culinary Heritage Network, agritourism farms from the Świętokrzyskie region, regional food producers, Rural Women's Associations, and craftspeople presented their products. The event was an excellent opportunity to explore and enjoy the traditional flavours and crafts characteristic of the Świętokrzyskie region.



Presentation of traditional handicrafts,  
photo: Kielce Countryside Museum



Presentation of traditional regional products,  
photo: Kielce Countryside Museum

## Culture, Tradition, and the Flavours of the Świętokrzyskie region: Successes of the 'Tastes of Autumn' Event

Above all, the project contributed to social activation. Presentations of ritual shows and folk music involved the region's inhabitants and attracted visitors not only from different parts of Poland but also from abroad. Showcasing old rituals and folk music enriched with the local dialect contributed to the **preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage** of the Świętokrzyskie region.

The event also supported **local soloists and folk ensembles**, helping them to continue the musical traditions characteristic of the Świętokrzyskie region.

Folk music artists, playing historic folk instruments, contributed to preserving these precious heritages from being forgotten.

The event was attended by more than 100 exhibitors, representing local handicrafts, regional food producers, agritourism farms, and Rural Women's Associations, **promoting local products and crafts**.

The event attracted more than 3,500 participants, demonstrating its wide reach and popularity among the region's residents and visitors from outside the region.

The results of the 'Tastes of Autumn' project are an important contribution to the preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Świętokrzyskie region and the activation of local communities.

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# KURPIE CUSTOMS, OR THE TRADITION OF THE MAZOVIAN COUNTRYSIDE

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Traditions of the Mazovian countryside for tourism and education
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Mazowieckie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference, publication, video interviews and promotional films
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Tourists, residents of Mazowieckie Voivodeship, primary and secondary school teachers
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION:</b>	Promotion and popularisation of the traditions of the Mazovian countryside in the context of its potential for creating a tourist offer and supporting regional education.

Mazovia is a region that undoubtedly deserves more attention from both Polish and foreign tourists. This was also the aim of the project: 'Traditions of the Mazovian countryside for tourism and education'.

The project was primarily aimed at potential tourists and residents of the region. The target group also included teachers from primary and secondary schools, so they could share the information they acquired with their pupils and thereby contribute to promoting the region.

## Discover the artistic and practical treasures of Mazovia - the region's fascinating heritage

Mazovia, a region rich in history and culture, harbours countless treasures that blend practicality with artistic beauty. Let us discover these unique creations together:

### ► **The amber heritage of Kurpie**

The history of amber-making in Kurpie dates back to the 19th century. For years, amber was not only a valuable dowry but also an alternative currency. During the interwar period and until the 1970s, amber was used in exchange for goods such as salt or paraffin. Interestingly, amber was also offered as donations in churches.

### ► **Dłubanka - a traditional boat of Mazovia**

The dłubanka, made from a single piece of wood, is a boat up to several metres long, known for its manoeuvrability and lightness. It is used mainly on rivers and lakes. This unsinkable boat is an example of simplicity and practicality.

### ► **Mazovian ceramics - the art of clay**

The craft of ceramics in the Mazovian region is a tradition passed down from generation to generation. Each stage of creation - from the mechanical kneading of the clay, through manual shaping, to firing in the potter's kiln - testifies to the passion and skill of the craftsmen.

### ► **Korowaj - a symbol of community and tradition**

Korowaj, a ceremonial yeast bread, is an integral part of weddings in eastern Poland, especially in the borderlands of Mazovia and Podlasie regions. Baked by experienced korowaj makers, it symbolises

community and tradition. Baking korowaj is not only a craft but also an art – sometimes even requiring the dismantling of the oven to keep the shape of the dough intact!

► **Kurpie cut-outs – paper works of art**

Kurpie cut-outs, or decorative paper pieces, are a unique expression of the region’s artistic flair. These intricately cut, single-colour patterns, which adorn the interiors of houses, often depict floral and bird motifs, and are an important element of Green Kurpie culture.

Each of the above elements of Mazovia’s heritage is evidence of the cultural and artistic richness of the region, as well as the practical skills of its people. From amber crafts, traditional boats, ceramics, symbolic breads, to paper cut-outs, Mazovia is a treasure trove of tradition that continues to fascinate and inspire.

**Spotlight on the Mazovian countryside!**

The project’s activities included the creation of rich, multidimensional content showcasing the cultural heritage of Mazovia.

**Production of video interviews with the inhabitants of Mazovia**

- This series of interviews with local people, who speak passionately about their commitment to preserving local traditions, provides a real and living testimony to the region’s culture. From folklorists and artisans to guardians of dying trades, each person offered a unique perspective and story.

**Preparation of a guide entitled ‘Traditions of the Mazovian**

- **Countryside’** This comprehensive brochure, which serves as both a source of information and an inspiration for discovery, brought together extensive knowledge of the traditions and customs characteristic of the Mazovian countryside. The guide has become an essential resource for anyone wishing to explore and understand the local culture.

**Production of documentary films About Mazovia**

- These films took viewers on a journey through the picturesque corners of Mazovia, showcasing how traditions are cultivated and preserved. From crafts, music, and dance to regional cuisine, each film offered a journey into the richness and diversity of the region.

**Publication of articles about prominent figures from the Mazovia region**

- These publications invited readers into the world of fascinating individuals from Mazovia, including amber workers, boat makers, potters, korowaj makers, and musicians. Each of them served as an ambassador of their craft, sharing their passion and knowledge.

Video interviews, films, articles, and the guide were made available on social media and online platforms managed by MROT [Mazovian Regional Tourist Organisation], allowing the message to reach a wide audience.





Participants of the conference on 'Cultural Heritage as an opportunity to develop sustainable tourism and regional education',  
photo: Mazowieckie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



## Conference on 'Cultural Heritage as an opportunity to develop sustainable tourism and regional education'

This event was not only an opportunity to promote MROT's activities, but it also provided a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, encouraging innovative use of the region's cultural heritage in tourism development.

These diverse and creative activities of MROT have significantly contributed to the revitalisation and promotion of the rich culture of Mazovia, raising awareness of its heritage both locally and on a wider scale.

## Initiatives of the Mazovian Regional Tourist Organisation - revival and promotion of Mazovian culture

The Mazovian Regional Tourist Organisation (MROT) plays a key role in promoting the unique assets of Warsaw and Mazovia. MROT participates in the implementation of various tourism and cultural projects, becoming the main advocate for tourism in the region.

It not only promotes the region but also inspires people to discover its riches. MROT focuses on positioning Mazovia as a fashionable tourist destination, which should attract both residents of the capital city and tourists from further afield. The organisation makes a significant contribution to the development of the local economy and enhances the quality of life for its residents. MROT supports local organisations, governments, and entrepreneurs, developing tourism and promoting the region.

## Development of regional tourism in Mazovia - the impact of the Project

The project implemented in Mazovia has yielded significant benefits in the field of tourism. It has enriched participants' knowledge in key areas such as sustainable tourism and cultural tourism. The project effectively harnessed local potential to create tourism offerings in rural regions. It focused on engaging participants in exploring and developing innovative tourism products. The initiative highlighted the importance of increasing job opportunities in the tourism sector and related services, as well as the potential for increased income for agritourism farm owners, which could have a broader impact on the overall well-being of local communities. Participants had the opportunity to discover local traditions and gained an awareness of the region's cultural heritage. An increased sense of regional identity fostered local pride and attachment to tradition. Spreading knowledge of the region among teachers was also expected to lead to a richer and more engaging curriculum in schools, ultimately contributing to instilling respect for local values in the youngest residents.

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# HOW PEOPLE USED TO WORK? THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF VANISHING TRADES

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	How people used to work – workshops on vanishing trades
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	May–September 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Meeting (lecture) Workshops
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 11: Activate villagers to undertake initiatives for social inclusion, especially the elderly, young people, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Residents of the Zagórz municipality: children, adolescents, adults and older people, people with special needs, including people with disabilities
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	To present the wealth of vanishing elements of cultural heritage and to consolidate this heritage among the inhabitants of the Zagórz municipality

The initiative 'How people used to work' showcased the disappearing cultural wealth derived from folk traditions. It aimed to transmit and consolidate traditional values among the inhabitants of the Zagórz municipality, focusing on the preservation of tradition and the promotion of knowledge about professions that are rarely practised today, such as weaving, wickerwork, and ceramics. The workshop attracted 100 participants.



## A glimpse into vanishing trades

The exact number of disappearing professions is challenging to determine, as it fluctuates with technological advancements, socio-economic changes, and global market trends. Some occupations are losing significance due to automation, shifts in the economic structure, and evolving consumer preferences.

Examples of vanishing trades include traditional crafts, manufacturing occupations that have been automated, and those that have not kept pace with modern technologies, such as weaving, blacksmithing, wickerwork, ceramics, and tailoring.

Cultivating these vanishing professions can offer various benefits for individuals, local communities, and cultural heritage. It is also a way of activating older people, people with disabilities or young people into work. Traditional

products, due to their uniqueness and cultural significance, are highly sought after by tourists visiting the region. Among the greatest benefits of continuing to practise these dying trades is the protection of cultural heritage. It fosters local community building by restoring and maintaining traditional values and enhances cultural tourism, as workshops in traditional crafts can attract tourists. Moreover, it contributes to building cultural diversity, which strengthens local identity. The educational value and the acquisition of new skills are also significant, as is the sustainability aspect – traditional occupations are environmentally friendly and can emphasise this quality.

The disappearing professions most deeply rooted in the tradition and history of the Zagórz municipality are weaving, wickerwork, and ceramics. These crafts are an important part of the region's cultural heritage. In the past, mastering a craft was synonymous with securing a future. Skilled craftsmen were highly valued in every community. Today, their products survive primarily as tourist attractions or unique works of folk art. They have been marginalised by mass mechanical production, which often lacks the soul of handcrafted items. Consequently, the number of craftsmen is dwindling.

### **How to become a weaver, potter, or wicker maker? Workshops on the skills of disappearing professions**

As part of the project, the Municipal Centre for Culture and Sports in Zagórz organised three cycles of workshops, each focusing on a different craft: weaving, wickerwork, and ceramics. Participants were divided into three groups, with each group consisting of 10 people. The aim of these workshops was not only to introduce and practically teach the declining occupations but also to impart basic skills in weaving, ceramics, and wickerwork.

Lasting a total of 10 hours, divided into two 5-hour sessions, the weaving workshop introduced participants to weaving, one of the oldest crafts in the Podkarpackie region. The workshop began with a theoretical introduction to the world of weaving, followed by practical instruction on how to prepare a frame for weaving, manipulate the warp, and add decorative elements to a tapestry using coloured threads and strings.

The ceramics workshop, also spanning 10 hours over two sessions, under the guidance of a master ceramicist, allowed participants to create everyday vessels such as bowls, pots, and mugs. They learned various clay modelling and decorating techniques, gaining hands-on experience working with clay.



The result of ceramic workshops organised as part of the project 'How people used to work – workshops on vanishing trades'  
photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

Similarly, the wickerwork workshop lasted 10 hours, divided into two sessions. Participants were introduced to the traditional craft of wickerwork, using willow branches to create baskets under the guidance of an experienced craftsman. The workshop covered the history of the wickerwork profession, the cultivation and harvesting of wicker, and different weaving techniques.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT....

To make clay products more durable, some makers add chamotte flour. Making the clay less plastic reduces shrinkage and the likelihood of cracking when dry. However, it's important not to add too much, as excess flour can reduce the adhesion of the mortar and weaken its bonding power when dry.

### **Forgotten, yet appreciated, crafts!**

The results of the participants' work were showcased at a meeting titled 'Old country life', where visitors learned about the multiculturalism of rural areas, including the variety of costumes, architecture, and daily activities.

The lecture introduced attendees to old crafts and the lifestyle of the local rural community. The event was well-attended by invited guests, workshop participants, and many others interested in disappearing professions.

Lecture as part of the meeting on 'Old Country Life',  
concluding the workshop

photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



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# SECRETS OF TRADITIONAL FRUIT FARMING

## - DISCOVER THE HERITAGE OF LOCAL VARIETIES!

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Traditional varieties of fruit trees
<b>IMPLEMENTED B</b>	Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	February–December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	One-day workshop, brochure
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Residents of rural areas, farmers, agritourism owners, counsellors, individuals interested in running orchards based on traditional fruit tree varieties
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	To preserve the genetic diversity of plants by introducing traditional varieties in the Lower Silesian orchards, developing entrepreneurship and taking joint innovative action for the benefit of agriculture and rural areas, building consumer awareness for the production of quality products through the use of fewer plant protection products

The project aimed to pass on knowledge about traditional fruit farming and the most desirable varieties in the Lower Silesian region to local farmers. Participants learned how to introduce specific varieties and gained insights into the principles of running traditional orchards. The workshop not only provided knowledge about consumer preferences in the Lower Silesian market but also helped expand participants' networks.

### **Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre - organiser of the initiative**

The Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre (DODR) is an institution based in Dolnośląskie Voivodeship, dedicated to providing support and advice to farmers and those involved in agri-food production.

### **The Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre:**

- ▶ Offers farmers and agri-food producers access to specialist advice on plant and animal production, agrotechnology, farm management, financial management, and other agriculture-related areas;
- ▶ Conducts training courses, workshops, and conferences to help farmers improve their skills and implement modern technical and technological solutions in agri-food production;
- ▶ Engages in agricultural research projects aimed at developing new technologies, plant growing methods, and animal husbandry techniques;
- ▶ Promotes healthy eating, local agricultural products, and consumer education about agriculture and food production;
- ▶ Collaborates with various public institutions, including government bodies, local authorities, and other agricultural organisations, to jointly develop agriculture and rural areas.



## In the spirit of tradition and the local market

The workshop programme ranged from a theoretical introduction to the advantages of establishing traditional orchards and recognising different varieties, to practical aspects such as grafting techniques and choosing the right time to propagate fruit trees.

Participants also had the opportunity to learn about running organic orchards and to exchange experiences. This not only activated the community but also contributed to networking. The theoretical part of the workshop was led by Grzegorz Hodun from the Institute of Horticulture State Research Institute in Skierniewice.

Following the workshop, a brochure titled 'Traditional fruit tree varieties from the Lower Silesia region' was published. This brochure aimed to further disseminate knowledge on the subject and is distributed during various events organised by the

Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre.

## What has the workshop achieved?

### Discover the Results!

The workshop positively impacted the sustainable development of rural areas in Lower Silesia. The initiative attracted 15 participants who, through the knowledge and skills they acquired, were able to implement modern solutions in fruit farming. By also focusing on traditional fruit varieties, the workshop helped preserve the genetic diversity of fruit trees. Additionally, the dissemination of knowledge about innovations in this area has sparked greater interest in introducing local products to the market and has the potential to increase the number of operators in the small processing sector.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Arboretum of the University of Wrocław, located in Wojstawice near Niemcza, not only presents a collection of old cherry varieties but also offers visitors the chance to taste the fruit from dozens of these varieties during the season. This unique location combines both educational and experiential functions, offering direct contact with the diversity of nature. Additionally, the garden serves as a botanical sanctuary, protecting many rare, endangered, and threatened tree and shrub species, making it not only a tourist attraction but also an important centre for biodiversity conservation.

The palace in Kamieniec Ząbkowicki, besides its impressive architecture, holds a rich history connected to the Princess Marianne of the Netherlands, who once owned the estate. A distinctive feature of this location is its garden, which boasts a collection of old apple varieties, including the 'Prince Albert of Prussia' variety.

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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Participants during the workshop,  
photo: Agnieszka Krzeszewska

Workshop participants in the orchard featuring traditional varieties  
photo: Agnieszka Krzeszewska



# THE TANGLED ROOTS OF THE KAMIEŃ POMORSKI REGION

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	From entangled roots – A series of crafts and folk art workshops using nature in the rural areas of Kamień Pomorski municipality
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Workshops, meetings, films
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 11: Activate villagers to undertake initiatives for social inclusion, especially the elderly, young people, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Rural residents of the Kamień Pomorski municipality and pupils of rural schools in Kamień Pomorski Powiat, inhabitants of the so-called Recovered Territories – Western Pomerania (in the context of the lack of cultural unity), adults, the elderly and adolescents, early school-age children
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Exploring cultural traditions in terms of

The workshop series 'From tangled roots' is a project of profound socio-cultural significance, designed to explore and utilise the rich cultural traditions and natural resources of the Kamień Pomorski municipality area. The title 'From tangled roots' symbolises the diverse origins of the inhabitants and their shared desire to preserve and develop the region's folk traditions. Through these workshops, participants gained insights into the customs of the area's residents and the significant role that nature played in their daily lives. The project not only focused on creating aesthetic designs but also promoted a deep connection with nature and an appreciation of its benefits.

The workshops facilitated intergenerational exchange, with the project placing a strong emphasis on sharing knowledge. It encouraged the transmission of seniors' experience in material folk culture, thereby bringing together young people and adults to co-create and appreciate contemporary folk culture.

## A land rich in folk crafts

The core of the project was a series of thematic workshops held in villages throughout Kamień Pomorski municipality. Each meeting provided a unique opportunity to exchange experiences related to folk culture and local history. Participants shared family traditions and stories, often accompanied by photographs from their personal collections. These meetings aimed not only to support traditions but also to discuss the future of crafts and handicrafts in rural areas.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Kamień Pomorski municipality boasts a rich and varied history, with cultural influences stemming from its time as a land of reindeer hunters, Slavic strongholds, and Viking neighbours. It also played a key role in the Christianisation of the region and remained part of German territories until the end of the Second World War.

## Workshops were held in various villages, including:

- ▶ Rzewnowo: making incense sticks and candles from local plants,
- ▶ Chrzążczewo: a botanical walk, cooking, and making homemade cosmetics,
- ▶ Sibin: wicker basket weaving workshop,
- ▶ Miłachowo: ceramics workshops,
- ▶ Trzebieszewo: creating traditional Kamień Pomorski Easter eggs,
- ▶ Rozwarowo: natural textile dyeing workshops.

The workshops were led by individuals who have nurtured regional traditions with dedication and passion for many years. Their involvement provided participants with the opportunity not only to learn about but also to experience folk traditions, crafts, and the use of natural resources from their surroundings. Such grassroots initiatives can serve as a driving force for creativity and a commitment to tradition within the local community for years to come.



Commemorative photo of workshop participants in Rzewnowo  
photo: Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

## Workshop leaders included:

- ▶ Ms Natalia, also known as Płonka Podleśna,
- ▶ Ms Leokadia, who runs the *Wiklinowe Marzenie* [Wicker Dream] wickerwork workshop,
- ▶ Ms Nadia, an instructor at Kamieński Dom Kultury (KDK) [Kamień Pomorski Cultural Centre],
- ▶ Ms Anna, also an instructor at Kamieński Dom Kultury,
- ▶ Ms Ola, initiator of the *Dzikie Barwy* [Wild Colours] project, and author of a book and blog on natural textile dyeing.

The project was not solely focused on creating handicrafts; it also provided a delightful experience of community and togetherness. Refreshments, bonfires, music, and various forms of integration allowed villagers and visitors to get to know each other better and enjoy their time in a friendly atmosphere. This initiative was not just about acquiring new skills, but also about building stronger social bonds within the community.

## As the twig is bent...

The attractions during the workshops were designed for participants of all ages, including young people and early schoolchildren. While some of the crafts produced required a bit more skill and patience, the youngest participants also actively engaged in the activities.

A clear example of this enthusiasm was the Easter egg-making workshop, which garnered great interest. Children participated with commitment and determination, discovering the joy and creativity that comes with the tradition of egg decoration.

The final event of the project – a meeting with the Stawnianki Folk Group at primary schools in the local municipalities of Wolin and Świerzno, as well as in Kamień Pomorski – was also aimed at the youngest audiences.

For many pupils, this was their first opportunity to learn about and interact with traditional folk culture. The children not only had the chance to listen to the band's original songs but also to participate in workshops where they explored traditional flavours and learned how to use old household equipment.

Such events are more than just a fascinating experience for children; they serve as a gateway to the richness of folk traditions. Through direct contact with the crafts and customs of their ancestors, young participants have the chance to immerse themselves in the history of their community. This is not just a lesson in culture but also an inspiration to preserve folk heritage for the future, fostering an attitude of respect and understanding for traditions passed down through the generations.

### Project results

The 'From tangled roots' project has yielded significant results, serving as both a source of new skills and a tool for integrating villagers within the spirit of tradition. The collaborative process has not only provided a productive and interesting way to spend time but has also strengthened the social bonds within small rural communities.

This project offered a unique opportunity to experience folk culture up close, acting as a platform for exchanging experiences, integrating residents, and allowing them to benefit from the knowledge of specialists in areas that are otherwise difficult to access in daily life.

Strengthening interpersonal and intergenerational ties by tapping into the rich cultural heritage of the area is key to building a strong community, one that is ready to continue and develop the values passed down from generation to generation.



Commemorative photo of workshop participants in Rzewnowo  
photo: Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

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# WOMEN LEADERS DRIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE POLISH COUNTRYSIDE

<b>COMPLETION DATE:</b>	Women leaders of change in the Polish countryside
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Films
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 3: Collecting examples of operations implementing specific Programme priorities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Women of all ages from the Świętokrzyskie region
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Dissemination of positive examples of women's entrepreneurship and social activity

The 'Women leaders of change in the Polish countryside' project has played a crucial role in promoting and strengthening the role of women in the development of rural communities in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. Through this programme, numerous women have had the opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial and social initiatives. A documentary produced as part of the project brings to light the inspiring stories of eight women who, with the support of the programme, have become leaders of change in their localities. The film showcases how the actions and successes of these women not only contribute to the development of local rural communities but also serve as an inspiration for other women to actively participate in rural social and economic life.

The AGROEKOTON Association, which undertook the project, produced a documentary titled 'Women leaders of change in the Polish countryside', highlighting the stories of 8 women who participated in the Rural Development Programme (RDP). With the programme's support, these women were able to develop and engage in non-agricultural social activities, offering them an alternative to unemployment and an outlet to pursue their passions.

## Who participated in the project?

participants were women who manage their own businesses and act as leaders within non-governmental organisations. Notably, the documentary includes the director of a Local Action Group office, who played a key role in raising awareness and disseminating knowledge about available support for entrepreneurship in rural areas. The film is aimed at inspiring other women in rural areas who have not yet benefited from the RDP but are eager to seize the opportunity to develop their own businesses and social initiatives.



Residents of Bodzechów municipality  
photo: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office





Resident of Rzecznica Mokra village,  
photo: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

## Successful rural women. Entrepreneurship, passion and community

A key theme explored in the documentary is women's entrepreneurship. The film not only highlights the establishment of their own businesses but also underscores their ability to secure funding for activities within organisations and informal groups, which have significantly improved living conditions in local communities. Examples of such impactful activities include the development of public facilities, such as village community centres, which serve as important hubs for local residents.

The film not only showcased the diversity and success of women from various parts of the region, but also served as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience among these women leaders. What unites them is their entrepreneurship, creativity, and passion for personal growth, all of which contribute to the broader goal of rural development. The personal stories shared by these women are narratives that can inspire and motivate others living in rural communities. In addition, the documentary provided valuable insights into how to effectively utilise the support offered by the Rural Development Programme (RDP), thereby increasing interest and awareness of the available funds.

### Fruitful outcomes that offer hope for the future

The project yielded several positive results, one of the most significant being the creation of a documentary film that presents the stories and achievements of female representatives from 8 municipalities in the Świętokrzyskie area. The production of the film was made possible by the support of local communities, including Local Action Groups and Rural Women's Associations.



A frame from the documentary  
made by: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

One of the locations featured in the film is a tourist and recreational facility called the Nordic Walking Park. The project, aptly named 'March for health', is an innovative initiative that builds on ideas and solutions familiar elsewhere but brings a fresh approach to this particular area. The project harnessed the rich potential of local tourist, natural, historical, and cultural resources, as well as local products. The Nordic walking routes were designed with these in mind, offering an engaging tourist attraction for those wishing to explore the Świętokrzyskie region.

The project's implementation clearly demonstrated that women living in rural areas, despite facing challenges in accessing the labour market, investment opportunities, and training, are successfully overcoming these obstacles. The film has become an effective tool for highlighting women's creativity and entrepreneurship, drawing on positive examples from various municipalities in the Świętokrzyskie region. It has garnered numerous positive reviews, and in line with the project's objectives, the film's heroines have



The film's protagonist Ilona Płaneta  
photo: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

become a source of inspiration for other female residents of rural areas, where entrepreneurship is a crucial factor for development.

Notably, the film's heroines occupy diverse social and professional roles, ranging from business owners to leaders of non-governmental organisations. Their actions contribute significantly to the development of local communities and serve as role models for others.

Additionally, a key achievement of the project is the establishment of cooperation between its partner, the Polish Rural Network (PRN), and Local Action Groups as well as other NGOs from the Świętokrzyskie region. This collaboration opens up opportunities for these organisations to participate in other projects, thereby creating the potential for continued efforts in developing rural areas and supporting entrepreneurship in the region.

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# MAŁOPOLSKA ACTIVE WITHOUT BORDERS: JOBS IN RURAL AREAS!

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Active Without Borders
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	May–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Workshops
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 11: Activate villagers to undertake initiatives for social inclusion, especially the elderly, young people, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Older people, people with disabilities, young people, national minorities, people at risk of social exclusion
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Activation of rural residents to take development initiatives and create jobs

The 'Active without Borders' programme aimed to energise the residents of rural areas in Małopolska, encouraging them to take up initiatives related to rural development, particularly in creating new jobs. The programme sought to unite various social groups, providing them with equal opportunities for development and active participation in social life.

The primary beneficiaries of the programme were the inhabitants of the Biskupice municipality, often individuals with low material status who had experienced social isolation, increasing existential problems, and limited access to cultural events for many years.

The workshops organised as part of the project attracted 50 participants, meeting the target set during the planning phase. The programme included workshop sessions for these social groups and simultaneously initiated the creation of inspiring jobs in rural areas.

Thanks to 'Active Without Borders' a space was created where diverse social groups could collaborate on developing their rural areas and planning a better future

## The creations of Małopolska: celebrating the artistry of the region's countryside

The Małopolska countryside is rich with artistic treasures that reflect the region's history, culture, and spirit. Embroidery, ceramics, folk painting, sculpture, and other art forms are integral to Małopolska's artistic heritage, attracting art and culture enthusiasts from around the globe.



Intergenerational handicraft workshops as part of the 'Active Without Borders' Campaign  
photo: Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

## **Embroidery: weaving history in Małopolska**

Among the many popular handicrafts, embroidery holds a special place, particularly in the folk costumes of Małopolska, where it continues to be worn during festivals and regional rituals.

The Polish word for embroidery, haft, derived from the German words meaning 'to fasten' or 'to weld', is more than just a technique for decorating fabrics, leather, or felt – it is a vibrant narrative of Małopolska's rich cultural tradition. This art form has thrived in the region for centuries, with intricate designs passed down through generations. Delving into this history reveals the deep roots of the area's heritage.

The distinctiveness of embroidery lies in the meticulous hand-decoration of fabric. With the use of a needle, thread, and various accessories, intricate patterns emerge, transforming the fabric into a lively work of art. In Małopolska, this technique has evolved over the centuries, maintaining its authenticity and unique charm. From the mid-18th century onwards, embroidery became increasingly precise and detailed, aided by the introduction of looms and later tambour frames in 1828.

## **Ceramics: shaping the earth in Małopolska**

Ceramics in Małopolska is far more than just clay products; it represents the true art of shaping the earth into extraordinary works of beauty. This craft is deeply rooted in the region's culture and history. The word 'ceramics' comes from the Greek keramos, meaning clay or earth, symbolising the harmonious blend of nature and human creativity.

In the ceramics of Małopolska, one finds a unique appreciation for the beauty of nature, intertwined with traditional patterns and techniques. Each ceramic piece, carefully fired in well-prepared clay, becomes a work of art that reflects the history and soul of the region. This heritage has been preserved over centuries and continues to inspire contemporary artists and craftsmen to create distinctive works.

In conclusion, both embroidery and ceramics are more than just craft techniques; they are cultural treasures of Małopolska. These noble arts, whether through the decoration of fabric or the moulding of clay, tell a living story of this beautiful region's rich history, tradition, and spirit.

## **How does the Biskupice Municipality Cultural Centre nurture the region?**

The Biskupice Municipality Cultural Centre is a magical place where culture and art intertwine with a genuine care for the people of the region. It is not merely an offering of attractions, but the very heart and soul of the community, dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and fostering the development of its residents.

As the custodian of cultural heritage, the Cultural Centre of Biskupice operates on many levels – from safeguarding tradition and folk art to promoting local artists, organising cultural and educational events, and creating spaces where talents and passions can flourish.

The meetings and workshops organised by the Centre provide opportunities to learn new skills and bring the local community together. Each event offers a wonderful chance to forge new friendships, share experiences, and build strong interpersonal connections. Thanks to the Centre's efforts, the Biskupice region is becoming a place where culture thrives, with the people playing an active role in shaping the unique spirit of this land.



Handicrafts made during the 'Active Without Borders' Campaign  
photo: Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



## Preserving heritage and uniting the community: Culture and development in the villages of Małopolska

The mission of the Biskupice Municipality Cultural Centre project is to promote the cultural heritage of the picturesque villages of Małopolska, uniting the community while preserving unique regional traditions and revitalising them within the region.

The activities are focused on diversity. Folk handicraft workshops, such as embroidery and pottery making, were organised to ensure that skills passed down by local masters are preserved for future generations, highlighting the importance of so-called 'declining occupations'. Additionally, workshops on traditional cooking were held, as rediscovering regional recipes not only celebrates tradition but also promotes local products and motivates the community to engage in rural development.

The objective of the workshop series was to encourage people to contribute to the development of rural areas and to create new job opportunities. To achieve this, the entire community was involved – elderly individuals, young people, those with disabilities, national minorities, and anyone who wished to counteract social exclusion and collectively shape the future of Małopolska's villages.

The 'Active Without Borders' project was designed to address the socio-cultural needs of villagers and was a successful attempt to preserve heritage and unite generations. It is also a step towards a brighter future for Małopolska.

### Outcomes of the 'Active Without Borders' workshop

It is important to highlight that the workshop meetings were not limited to short-term effects; they have generated lasting benefits for both the participants and the local community as a whole. Some of the most significant outcomes include:

- ▶ **Development of local community relationships:**

The workshops enabled participants to forge new relationships and friendships, both within their peer group and across generations. This has fostered a stronger and more cohesive community, promoting growth through the exchange of ideas and experiences.

- ▶ **Increased knowledge and awareness:**

The workshops provided practical knowledge and also raised participants' awareness in various areas, from culture to education and the economy.

- ▶ **Enhanced self-esteem:**

Through the tasks undertaken, participants gained confidence, developed new skills, and acquired valuable experiences, which in turn increased their self-esteem and broadened their perspectives.



Cooking Course of Old Polish Cuisine as part of the 'Active Without Borders' Campaign, photo: Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



- ▶ **Counteracting marginalisation:**  
The project's activities helped to combat the cultural and educational marginalisation and social exclusion faced by some residents of the region. The project included diverse social groups, such as the elderly, the disabled, youth, and national minorities with low economic status.
- ▶ **Preventing mental illness:**  
Social activities and workshops had a positive impact on the mental health of participants, aiding in the prevention of mental illnesses.
- ▶ **Enhancing artistic experiences:**  
The art workshops and activities contributed to the development of aesthetic sensitivity and creativity, fostering ingenuity and the introduction of new initiatives in the region.
- ▶ **Activating rural inhabitants and creating jobs:**  
The project's activities, such as intergenerational workshops and learning on declining occupations, promote the creation of new jobs.
- ▶ Additionally, the project led to unintended effects, such as establishing contact with individuals who had not previously engaged with cultural institutions. This opens new opportunities for the development of the community in Małopolskie Voivodeship and Biskupice municipality.

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# CAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AFFECT LONGEVITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE?

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Anti-ageing – how agricultural products impact the longevity and quality of life
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	November 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between actors in rural development, exchange and dissemination of the results of rural development activities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Women, inhabitants of a village in Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship, representatives of organisations and institutions supporting rural development
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Improving rural women's knowledge of how to grow, breed, process, and preserve agricultural produce to enhance their health benefits.

The term **'anti-ageing'** refers to the idea that certain foodstuffs can help delay or mitigate the aging processes of the body. This view is based on the assumption that certain nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and other substances in food have a beneficial effect on the health, appearance and general condition of the body, leading to a better quality of life and potentially longer life.

The project aimed to increase rural women's knowledge of methods of growing, breeding, processing, and preserving agricultural products in a way that highlights their health benefits. Participants were to learn about the potential ability of agricultural products to support healthy ageing by providing nutrients that can protect against age-related diseases and support overall well-being.

## Human health sprouts from the soil

The conference focused on issues related to the growing, breeding, processing, and preserving agricultural products. The series of technical presentations began with a lecture on **'Human Health Sprouts from the Soil'**, in which the speaker emphasised that after the Second World War, Polish agriculture began to use artificial fertilisers and chemical PPPs. It was noted that this led to the excessive chemicalisation of agriculture and its transformation into large-scale mass production.

The second lecture, **'Organic Food Improves Quality and Longevity of Life'**, emphasised the importance of agricultural produce methods for crop quality. Scientific research confirms that eating organic food reduces the risk of cancer, overweight, obesity, metabolic disorders and cardiovascular disease. It has also been observed



Participants during the Anti-ageing seminar  
photo: Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Ancient cereals are rich in flavonoids, which have antioxidant properties. This helps protect the body against cancer, slows ageing, and boosts immunity.

The oldest form of wild wheat is einkorn, which is considered a medicinal plant. Ancient grains are higher in protein, fibre and vitamins and lower in contaminants.

that pregnant women who eat organic food are less likely to suffer from pre-eclampsia, and their children have a lower risk of skin allergies and hypospadias.

The next presentation, **'Health benefits of ancient grains'**, discussed the health benefits of wheats such as einkorn, emmer, and spelt. The conference also included a presentation on **the effects of organic food on**

**hormones, fertility, and mental health.** It was noted that personalised medicine, which focuses on prevention, individualised approaches and minimising the side effects of drugs, is becoming increasingly important in developed countries. One method of improving health is herbal medicine, which, combined with a diet based on healthy agricultural products, is becoming important in regulating health.

### Organic farming in the service of health

During the presentation 'Start with Yourself: Simple Ways to Health and Beauty,' the speaker encouraged the participants to draw inspiration from grandmother's traditions and organic farming, and to use Polish (dead-nettle, marigold, yarrow) and foreign herbs (turmeric, gotu kola) in personal cultivation. The lecture on 'Colorectal Cancer and Nutrition' highlighted that colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer worldwide, with a higher risk in industrialised countries. Protective factors mentioned included fibre, calcium, milk, dairy products, garlic, fish, antioxidants, flavonoids, folates, selenium, and physical activity.

The lecture 'What to Know – What We Find on a Product Label' emphasised the importance of accurate and clear information on food labels. Meanwhile, the presentation 'Nutrition = Exercise = Stress-Free Living' made the audience aware of how a lack of knowledge about nutrition and an unhealthy lifestyle, including improper diet and ignorance of the origin of raw materials (e.g., crops grown on contaminated soil, use of herbicides and pesticides, animal feed with antibiotics, excessive use of preservatives), contribute to chronic ailments and lifestyle diseases. It was stressed that insufficient consumer education in these areas can be a precursor to many societal ailments.

### Project results

The project brought very positive results: 150 women, including farmers, members of Rural Women's Associations, and rural community leaders, participated in the conference and gained valuable information. Their knowledge about the production and preparation of food within the framework of Farm Wives Associations' activities under the law significantly expanded. Participants gained a better understanding of how their products could affect consumers' health, learned how to properly label packaging and inform about allergens. Additionally, they gained knowledge on how to use functional foods to prevent various ailments.



Lecturer for the Anti-ageing conference  
photo: Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

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# POLISH BEEKEEPERS WITH A CHANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Apitherapy as an opportunity for innovative development in rural areas
<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Minikowo
<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	August–September 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference, Study visit
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Beekeepers, farmers, owners of agritourism and rural tourism facilities, rural residents, agricultural advisory representatives, teachers and academic researchers interested in apitherapy and apitourism.
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Fostering innovation in agriculture, food production, forestry, and rural areas

With the fast and intense pace of life, more and more people are looking for alternatives to popular solutions – in nutrition, therapy, and tourism.

The desire to return to nature is becoming a common trend, and the fascination with natural products is strongly influencing consumer choices and lifestyles. Healthy eating and natural therapies are becoming increasingly attractive to those seeking balance and harmony in their environment.

This trend represents an excellent opportunity for rural residents. By capitalising on this interest, they can actively contribute to the development of their community and support the local labour market.

**The Apitherapy project aims to encourage rural entrepreneurs to innovate in agriculture, food production, and forestry. New development opportunities can awaken the entrepreneurial spirit in residents of smaller towns and attract new interest to rural areas.**

## What are apitherapy and apitourism?

Apitherapy is a branch of alternative medicine that focuses on the treatment and prevention of various health problems using bee products. Natural substances such as honey, propolis, pollen, and bee venom are rich in beneficial health properties, making apitherapy increasingly popular as a supplement to conventional treatment methods.

Apitourism, also linked to beekeeping as a traditional craft, encompasses a wide range of



Workshop on the production of homemade cosmetics in Pucer Apiary  
photo: Anna Dykczyńska

attractions. Apitourism activities can include visits to apiaries, participation in beekeeping workshops, honey tasting and visits to open-air museums and exhibitions dedicated to the craft.

### **Apitherapy - an innovative boost for beekeeping**

The benefits of apitherapy and apitourism include:

- ▶ Broad applicability in different types of activities,
- ▶ Extending the basic function of apiaries,
- ▶ Diversification of income sources for beekeepers,
- ▶ Promotion of bee products,
- ▶ Business development and job creation.

More about the benefits and practical uses of apitherapy were discussed by speakers at the open-air conference 'Apitherapy as a chance for innovative development of apiaries'. The programme consisted of 3 presentations:

- ▶ 'Apitourism as an innovative form of expanding the offer of apiaries' by Dr Barbara Woś from the Opole University of Technology,
- ▶ 'Apitherapy in beekeeping practice - a new source of income, a new challenge' by Adrian Stankiewicz, senior beekeeping specialist in KPODR Minikowo,
- ▶ 'Lesser known bee products used in apitherapy' by MSc Elżbieta Kaśków from the series 'Nature and Us'.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about the versatile uses of bee products, including their health benefits and techniques for obtaining them.

Adrian Stankiewicz shared his observations on the beneficial effects of bee products on clients, while Elżbieta Kaśków discussed bee therapy and the production of herbal honeys. Attendees could also closely examine the speakers' products.

Practical information and business development tips for apitourism were also provided. Dr Barbara Woś explained how to create tourist services and packages, and identify organisations to assist in preparing such endeavours.

### **Apitourism from a practical perspective**

After the theoretical part, it was time for practice. During a three-day study visit, participants had the unique chance to immerse themselves in the world of apitourism. The trip covered several sites in Mazowieckie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeships, where apitherapy has become a real method for income diversification. Places like the Miodowa Manufaktura, Pasięka Edukacyjna Urle, and Pucer Apiary inspired beekeepers to diversify their activities and agritourism owners to see new development opportunities.

The visits provided opportunities for exchanging experiences, establishing contacts, and gaining new practical knowledge. Workshops led by specialists in beekeeping, aromatherapy, and the production of cosmetics based on bee products equipped participants with specific skills they can successfully apply in their businesses.

#### **DID YOU KNOW THAT...**

The beneficial properties of bee products have been used since ancient times. The recipe for the Egyptian incense Kyphi dates back to 1500 BC. Its uses were many and varied - from religious rituals to disinfecting homes and adding a pleasant scent to clothing. It is believed to be the world's first commercial perfume.



Commemorative photo of the trip participants with the apiary owner, Mr Krzysztof Wieczorek  
photo: Anna Dykczyńska



## Project summary

A total of 129 participants took part in the project. During the conference and study visit, they had the opportunity to learn about practical examples of apitourism offerings focused on apitherapeutic services in beekeeping practice.

The group trip and meetings with apitourism entrepreneurs provided participants with specific guidelines for creating tourist packages related to beekeeping. The project also served as a source of extensive knowledge about the wide applications of bee products.

The project was also an opportunity for networking and exchanging experiences among participants. Discussions with the owners of the visited sites and lecturers ensured an inspiring exchange of ideas and practical insights. The project's effectiveness is also reflected in the group's ability to compare the development levels of the centres they visited, adding value for all involved parties.

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# ATLAS OF OPPORTUNITIES – YOUR PASSPORT TO SUCCESS! DISCOVER THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF RURAL AREAS

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Mazovian countryside. Atlas of opportunities – your passport to success
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Mazowieckie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Publication
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Mazowieckie Voivodeship residents, actively farming or seeking professional development
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Entrepreneurial development based on the tourist potential of rural areas

The project by “TERAZ MAZOWSZE” [NOW MAZOVIA] focused on fostering entrepreneurship among the rural residents of Mazowieckie Voivodeship. This initiative showcased the tourism potential of these areas in a comprehensive publication. It was released in a print run of 2,000 copies and made available online. The atlas aimed to impart knowledge on the development and establishment of tourism businesses, with particular emphasis on agritourism. The published work serves as an inspiration for initiating and diversifying tourism activities in rural areas. Simultaneously, it supports the development of Mazovian villages, such as creating more jobs in the leisure sector and counteracting the depopulation of these regions. The project also aimed to create

and cultivate a favourable image of rural areas and to impart knowledge on sustainable development.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

A significant tourist attraction in northern Mazovia is the Gothic castle in Ciechanów, which has existed for over seven hundred years. It is the only fortress of the Mazovian princes that was not conquered during the Middle Ages. Today, the historic castle walls house museum rooms.

Mazovia has enormous potential for the development of rural tourism, including agritourism. This is facilitated by its natural qualities, as well as a great diversity of attractions and landscapes. The region's landscape features include upland elevations, numerous lakes,

extensive meadows, glacial erratics scattered across the terrain left by the Scandinavian ice sheet, dune areas, and the valleys of major rivers such as the Vistula, Bug, and Narew.

## Agritourism

Agritourism is a form of green tourism. It aims for healthy relaxation in harmony with nature, while promoting pro-ecological values. It allows for additional income in rural areas, supports the development of these regions, and promotes the countryside.

Agritourism services are not considered a business activity if offered by individuals engaged in agricultural activities on their own farms. Importantly, full ownership of the farm is not required to conduct agritourism; having it under civil law agreements such as lease or lending is sufficient.

Agritourism benefits from tax advantages and preferential forms of taxation. At the same time, it does not have to meet the conditions applicable to organisations providing tourism services. However, it is worth noting that the scope of this activity, subject to preferential tax conditions, is limited. Offering additional services requires taxation. It is also necessary to register lodging facilities with the municipal records and meet specific technical, sanitary, and fire safety criteria.

The development of agritourism is linked to European rural development policy. The European Union recognises the trend of creating green tourism and offers support in establishing agritourism farms. The European Federation of Farm and Village Tourism, EuroGîtes, brings together rural and agritourism organisations across Europe.

Agritourism is not only relaxation in harmony with nature but also the active promotion of green tourism, the propagation of ecological values, preventing the depopulation of rural areas, and the promotion of these regions. It is worth noting that agritourism does not depend on specific location requirements; however, certain conditions can facilitate its development. These include an unspoiled natural environment, low levels of urbanisation and industrialisation, and well-developed technical and social infrastructure.

**Alongside tourism activities in rural areas, agritourism entails environmentally friendly practices and the promotion of ecological values. Therefore, an agritourism farm can have much in common with ecotourism. Many agritourism hosts, especially those whose farms are located in or near protected areas, show a marked interest in environmental issues and use, for example, renewable energy sources.**

### **‘Atlas of possibilities’**

The atlas serves as an effective tool that significantly enhances knowledge about Mazovia’s tourism potential and presents the principles of establishing and developing tourism businesses, with an emphasis on agritourism.

The publication inspires the diversification of current activities, which, in turn, promotes the development of Mazovian villages, generates new jobs, builds a positive image of the area, and counteracts rural depopulation.

With the information obtained, farmers can learn how to enhance their rural tourism offerings, tailor them to market needs, and adhere to sustainable development principles.

### **Building a sense of community and preventing the depopulation of Mazovian villages!**

Agritourism promotes the values and culture of rural areas. It raises awareness of responsibility for the environment and the inhabited area. At the same time, it builds a sense of community and local identity.

The feeling of belonging is crucial for the desire to remain in the countryside and engage in local development. Additionally, by creating new jobs and opportunities for additional income, agritourism provides the local community with the means to sustain themselves, thus preventing migration to cities in search of employment. This, in turn, reduces the depopulation of rural areas.

The publication ‘Mazovian countryside. Atlas of opportunities – your passport to success’ inspires action, teaches how to undertake diverse activities, and provides numerous opportunities for the development of tourism in



Cover page of ‘Mazovian countryside. Atlas of opportunities – your passport to success’ photo: Mazowieckie Voivodeship Marshal’s Office

rural areas. It encourages the use of the strengths of the Mazovian countryside and responsibility for one's 'small homeland.'

### **What else does the “TERAZ MAZOWSZE” [NOW MAZOVIA] foundation do?**

The foundation was established to broadly promote Mazovia, including its history, tourist attractions, and natural wealth. It places particular emphasis on educational activities, supporting initiatives related to preserving and disseminating national values and traditions. Its efforts also focus on building local patriotism and the identity of residents, which in turn strengthens national and civic awareness among the people of Mazovia.

The activities and achievements of the “TERAZ MAZOWSZE” foundation include:

- ▶ Numerous documentaries and films promoting the region on internet portals;
- ▶ Introduction of the first regional internet television, Mazowsze.tv;
- ▶ Creation of a mobile app for tourist trails in Mazovia;
- ▶ Development of three routes in Mazovia and five routes in Warsaw;
- ▶ Integration of cultural and tourism promotion, e.g., by publishing two paper and e-book versions of guides for the Mazovian Literary Trail. The publication combines a journey through the trails of Mazovian writers with the promotion of Mazovia's natural, historical, and cultural assets;
- ▶ Educational activities in EDUCO;
- ▶ Implementation of educational projects, such as 'School career guidance system in Wieliszew Municipality' and 'Cybersecurity threats';
- ▶ Creation of over 30 lectures and films mainly used by teachers in youth work;
- ▶ Recording and providing a series of 10 lectures aimed at primary school teachers in Mazovia, enhancing their qualifications in career guidance;
- ▶ Publishing the tourist map 'Water trails of Mazovia';
- ▶ Publishing the ecological guide 'Forest understorey in the forests of Mazovia – edible plants';
- ▶ Publishing the illustrated album '20 Years of Norwid Awards' awarded annually by the Sejmik of Mazowieckie Voivodeship.

### **Publications are one thing... but what are the outcomes?**

During the implementation of the task, a publication titled 'Mazovian countryside. Atlas of opportunities – a document enabling success' was created. To create it, research was conducted based on observations of described farms. The publication also included professional photographs. The material was printed in 2,000 copies.

As a result, the project increased the knowledge level of rural residents in Mazowieckie Voivodeship. They learned how to utilise the potential of rural areas for entrepreneurial development, especially in terms of leisure activities

#### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Feel free to contact us:

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# SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HANDS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION!

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Entrepreneurial taste of Lower Silesian countryside
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	April–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	10 press articles, 15 educational films, 4 promotional banners, 25 informational and promotional graphics
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 13: Promotion of sustainable rural development
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 3: Promoting food chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Dolnośląskie Voivodeship rural residents using the internet and social media
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Encouraging young countryside residents to stay and invest in rural areas

The 'Entrepreneurial taste of Lower Silesian countryside' project was primarily aimed at individuals and entities that use the internet and social media. This group includes:

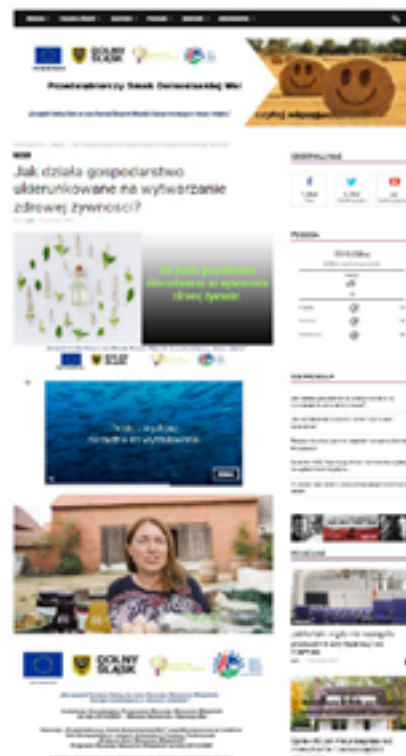
- ▶ Dolnośląskie Voivodeship rural residents;
- ▶ Young and enterprising farmers who are engaged in agri-food production and are a key element in the local food supply chain;
- ▶ Consumers from both rural and urban areas interested in a healthy lifestyle, supporting local producers, and sustainable development.

## Promoting local agriculture - project objectives

The project aimed to actively engage various groups – from local residents to government institutions – in implementing initiatives for rural development. A crucial aspect of the project was raising social awareness about current rural development policies and informing about available financial support measures.

These steps aimed to better utilise available resources and opportunities by beneficiaries. The project focused on educating and informing the public about the local food market, emphasising the benefits of buying from local farmers, understanding the concept of a short supply chain, and the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The project also aimed to show how purchasing local products impacts the economy and consumer health. This highlights the importance of supporting local producers and consuming products from the nearby area, positively affecting both the local economy and public health.



Information and promotional banner and graphics based on the film.  
Author: Małgorzata Molenda.  
Author of the film: Piotr Polarski



'Entrepreneurial taste of Lower Silesian countryside' focuses on increasing social engagement and awareness in rural development while promoting local agri-food production and its positive impact on the economy and health.

### How was the project implemented?

This project centred on a comprehensive educational and informational campaign related to agriculture, agri-food production, and agricultural ecology. The campaign lasted from April to the end of October 2022. The project's activities garnered significant interest among the readers of the portal [wdolnymyslasku.com](http://wdolnymyslasku.com) and addressed the need for specialised education in supporting the food supply chain, processing and marketing agricultural products, promoting animal welfare, and managing risk in agriculture.

### The main activities in the project included:

#### Articles online: [www.wdolnymyslasku.com](http://www.wdolnymyslasku.com):

Publication of 10 articles on project-related topics, including:

- ▶ local products for dietitians,
- ▶ encouraging residents of the agglomeration to use the offerings of small agricultural producers,
- ▶ cooperation with local organisations to utilise unconventional sales venues, promote local products through food trucks,
- ▶ involving hotels and the tourism industry in the offerings of agricultural producers.

#### Educational documentaries:

Preparation and publication of 15 educational documentary films on topics such as:

- ▶ Direct product sales,
- ▶ Innovative use of equipment in local production,
- ▶ Activities of organic farms,
- ▶ Agribusiness development,
- ▶ Collaboration with scientific institutions to boost agricultural production,
- ▶ Promotion of regional culinary heritage.

#### Promotional and informational materials:

- ▶ Development and publication of 4 banners and 25 informational and promotional graphics on the portal to advertise the project.

The aim of these activities was to strengthen the economic potential of those involved in agriculture and those interested in entering this sector. They had a direct impact on rural development and reinforced the rural influence on urban areas through education, information, and the promotion of agricultural know-how.



Information and promotional banner  
 Author: Małgorzata Molenda.  
 Graphics related to article 'Creating a regional brand by building on the achievements of local food producers'.  
 Author: Karolina Brzemkowska

## What does the Lower Silesian Institute of Agricultural Advisory Services do?

The Korfanty Institute in Lower Silesia is a cultural and educational institution. Its main tasks focus on research, projects, and creating programmes for socio-cultural animation and cultural education. The Institute also promotes ecology and sustainable development in the Polish countryside.

## Entrepreneurial taste of Lower Silesian countryside – project results

The project results included a number of key points:

- ▶ Promotion of rural areas,
- ▶ Dissemination of knowledge about the agricultural and agri-food industry,
- ▶ Educating farmers,
- ▶ Promoting organic farming and healthy food.

In addition, the project enabled farmers and film participants to get to know each other and to use film productions as a means of promotion.

## Do you like the Polish countryside? Get to know these terms!

### ▶ ART – Agricultural Retail Trade

– is a specific form of retail trade, which in the Polish legal system has separate regulations concerning the supervision of official food control bodies and tax preferences. Under the ART, the sale of produced food may take place directly to final consumers. From 1 January 2019, this trade may also involve retail establishments located in a limited area. This allows for more flexibility in the sale of agricultural products directly by producers.

### ▶ NSCA – National Support Centre for Agriculture

– an institution created from the merger of the Agricultural Market Agency and the Agricultural Property Agency. Its main tasks include managing agricultural properties owned by the State Treasury (including sales and leases, free transfers of land, and non-repayable financial assistance). The NSCA is also responsible for overseeing companies crucial to the national economy, issuing decisions regarding private land transactions, promoting Polish agri-food products both domestically and abroad, and developing and disseminating information related to the implementation of active agricultural policy.



Information and promotional banner.  
Author: Małgorzata Molenda.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The internet, as the main communication tool, is crucial in achieving the project's goals because it is currently the dominant source of information, especially in rural areas. The portal [wdolnyslasku.com](http://wdolnyslasku.com), with up to 1 million unique users nationwide and 100 thousand in Lower Silesia annually, serves as an important communication medium with the target group, allowing effective and rapid dissemination of information on the project. Do you like the Polish countryside? Get to know these terms!

### ▶ **RTK (Real-Time Kinematic) Signal**

– is a satellite measurement method that uses signals to accurately determine positions in real-time. It uses observational data sent from a base station to correct the position determined by a mobile receiver.

The RTK method is widely used in modern agriculture, particularly in the precise navigation of agricultural machinery such as tractors and combines, allowing for more efficient and accurate fieldwork operations.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Feel free to contact us:

- ▶ [marketing@wdolnyslasku.com](mailto:marketing@wdolnyslasku.com)
- ▶ [www.wdolnyslasku.com](http://www.wdolnyslasku.com)

# AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS IN WARMIA AND MASURIA: YOUR ROLE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Demonstration of innovation in agriculture in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Olsztyn
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	TV broadcast
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, rural residents, farm advisory representatives, employees of companies and institutions working in the field of agriculture
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Demonstration of good practices for the implementation of innovations in crop and livestock production and processing

A fascinating journey through innovations in plant and animal production, as well as processing in Warmia and Masuria – this was the idea behind the campaign ‘Demonstration of innovation in agriculture in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship’. The main goal of the initiative was not only to showcase modern practices but also to inspire farmers, rural residents, and agricultural entrepreneurs to engage creatively in agriculture and other fields.

The task was carried out in such a way as to reach a wide audience. With the involvement of many people from the region, six compelling episodes of a television programme were created and aired on TVP 3 Olsztyn, revealing the secrets of innovative farmers and entrepreneurs from Warmia and Masuria. The episodes thoroughly demonstrated the modern technologies and solutions used in plant and animal production and how farmers are implementing innovations to increase the efficiency of their farms. Through inspiring success stories, viewers learned how to make positive changes in agriculture and rural life. They also saw that their role is crucial to the development of these beautiful rural areas!

## Did you know that... powder is the novel solution?

To run a modern farm, it's essential to stay updated with innovations in the industry. Among these, natural and ecological fertilisers that directly impact the healthy development of crops deserve special attention. The first notable fertiliser is **horn shavings powder**. This product is durable and rich in nitrogen. It also contains hydrogen, carbon, and oxygen, as well as traces of sulphur. The powder is made from ground and shredded cattle horns, which provide valuable nutrients to plants. One of the key components of this fertiliser is keratin – a fibrous protein found in animal feathers, horns, and nails. Horn shavings powder retains moisture, providing long-term nourishment to plants, which is especially useful during drought periods. Another significant advantage is that the risk of over-fertilising crops is minimal.

The second fertiliser of note is **bovine haemoglobin powder**, which is applied as a foliar spray. This water-soluble powder contains free left-handed amino acids that act as bio stimulants for plants. It is a source of nitrogen (14%) and iron which helps to improve soil condition and plant growth. This product enriches the soil and protects it from disease, resulting in increased productivity of horticultural crops. Haemoglobin powder is particularly useful during the growing season when soil nutrients are rapidly depleted. It replenishes these nutrients and ensures that the soil continues to nourish the roots.

### **Warmińsko-Mazurski Ośrodek Doradztwa Rolniczego w Olsztynie - twórcze rozwiązania dla rozwoju rolnictwa i wsi**

The Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre, based in the picturesque town of Olsztyn, is a place where farming is an art and the countryside is full of life. The centre's guiding idea is not only agricultural advice but also creating innovative solutions that improve the quality of rural life and increase farmers' incomes. Experts at the centre provide substantive support and conduct training to help develop farms, increase market competitiveness, and support the sustainable development of rural areas. They create projects that enhance the qualifications of farmers and other rural residents.

The centre operates under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, demonstrating the specialists' commitment to developing agriculture and rural areas in Poland, with a focus on the local region of Warmia and Masuria.

### **Innovative agriculture on the air - Your Role in the development of Warmia and Masuria**

A completely new way to reach audiences with fascinating topics on rural innovations was through a series of short television programmes, each lasting about 10 minutes, aired on TVP 3 Olsztyn. The series had a dual purpose - to spark interest in agricultural innovations and to provide valuable knowledge on the subject. Each episode of the programme was unique. They were filmed on farms or at enterprises implementing innovations. Each episode featured opinions and research presented by experts, market practitioners, and scientists from renowned research institutions, including the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn and staff from the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Olsztyn, who are recognised leaders in agricultural advisory.



Making of an episode of Your Role  
- biologisation of agriculture  
photo: Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre based in Olsztyn

The Your Role series covered topics such as:

- ▶ **Biologisation of agriculture:** Highlighting the benefits of biologisation and showcasing how probiotechnology is used in agriculture.
- ▶ **Demonstration farms:** Exploring the world of agricultural farms operating within a network in Warmia and Masuria, discovering the practices and innovations occurring there.
- ▶ **Innovative non-agricultural activities:** Featuring the backstage of food trucks that use local farmers' products and presenting an interesting method of biomass acquisition using a homemade tool.
- ▶ **Food from farmers:** Emphasising the idea of an agricultural processing incubator and promoting related activities. This incubator is an enterprise that provides the necessary infrastructure for local agricultural producers and processors to process their products.





**Making of an episode of Your Role  
- biologisation of agriculture**

photo: Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship  
Agricultural Advisory Centre based in Olsztyn

- ▶ **Innovations in plant protection:** Presenting methods of the Integrated Pest Management System, a key element of sustainable agriculture.
- ▶ **Collaboration:** Showcasing innovative projects and initiatives of operational groups and short supply chains in the agriculture of the Warmia and Masuria region.

**How was Your Role received by viewers?**

The series attracted an average of 25,000 viewers per episode, with record numbers reaching up to 30,000 viewers, according to research by MillwardBrown. This not only proves the popularity of the project but also highlights the growing awareness among rural residents about the possibilities of implementing innovative ventures in agriculture.

It's important to remember that the series aimed not only to provide knowledge but also to inspire through visually appealing content. During the programme, participants had the opportunity to present their creative ideas and innovative implementations. The series challenged entrenched perceptions of 'innovations in agriculture'. Many of the Your Role protagonists were unaware of the potential and significance of their ventures until informed by experts. This helped demystify seemingly daunting innovations, making them accessible for every farmer to implement.

One of the most significant aspects of the aired series was the establishment of partnerships among the programme participants to promote innovation. An example of such collaboration is the project of ecological demonstration farms based on probiotechnology in agriculture, realised by the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre and Probiotics Polska, in cooperation with local farms. These inspiring modern solutions and collaborations add additional value to the local community living in Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship.

**NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Feel free to contact us:

- ▶ [p.karaszkievicz@w-modr.pl](mailto:p.karaszkievicz@w-modr.pl)
- ▶ [www.youtube.com/@wmodrolszty5946](http://www.youtube.com/@wmodrolszty5946)

# GREEN INNOVATIONS: ECOLOGICAL REVOLUTION IN LUBAŃ – CULTIVATION, PROCESSING, AND DISTRIBUTION

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovation in the cultivation, processing, and distribution of organic products with elements of agroforestry
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference, competition
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 5: Seeking PRN partners for cooperation under the ‘Cooperation’ measure referred to in Article 3(1)(13) of the Act on supporting rural development with the participation of the EAFRD under the RDP and facilitating this cooperation.
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, agricultural advisory representatives, representatives of companies supporting rural development, regional and local communities, academia, rural residents
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Implementation of innovative methods in organic processing and agriculture

In recent years, awareness of the importance of sustainable development and ecological food production methods has significantly increased. In response to these changing needs and societal expectations, an innovative project was initiated to revolutionise the organic farming sector. This ambitious programme, focusing on collaboration and knowledge exchange among various professional groups – from producers and processors to advisors and specialists – aims to create a new quality in organic agriculture. Characterised by a dynamic approach to education and cooperation, this operation opens new horizons for the agricultural sector, emphasising the importance of innovation and sustainable development.

## Ecological approaches and good practices bear fruit!

The initiative undertaken by the Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań began with preparations for a competition for the best organic farm in the voivodeship. The collection of applications for the first stage of the competition started in June 2022. Farmers from across Pomorskie Voivodeship with a current organic certification could participate in the competition.

The next stage involved evaluating the submitted organic farms by a competition committee appointed by the Director of the Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań. As a result, laureates from



Presentation of the laureates of the voivodeship stage and the BioPomorze Board

photo: Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Lubań



Discussion panel among conference participants  
photo: Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre in Lubań

Pomorskie Voivodeship were selected to advance to the second, national stage of the competition.

The competition awarded not only first and second places but also two third places and two additional distinctions. On 12 October 2022, a conference was organised at the Centre's office in Lubań to summarise the competition results and present the winners with their diplomas and awards. During the ceremony, illustrated examples of effective cultivation, processing, and distribution methods of organic products were presented, based on observations made on farms participating in the current and previous editions of the competition.

The conference also introduced the winners who secured the first place

and were nominated to represent Pomorskie Voivodeship at the national stage, discussing the unique features of their farms. There was also a discussion on innovations and challenges facing organic farming, and a film titled *Innowacyjny element w systemie ekologicznym* [Innovative Element in the Ecological System] was shown.

### Impressive project results

Participants in the project gained knowledge about the principles of organic production and the use of innovative technologies. Initiatives in agroforestry were also presented, focusing on supporting smaller organic farms to enable them to enter the market. The conference encouraged collaboration and innovation, especially in the field of high-quality products. This endeavour can significantly enhance the competitiveness and diversity of products in Pomorskie Voivodeship.

The project created opportunities for establishing connections between farmers, entrepreneurs, and advisors.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The invention and development of organic farming are often attributed to three authors who wrote key works on the subject in the 1940s.

Sir Albert Howard – Considered the father of modern organic farming, Sir Albert Howard wrote *An Agricultural Testament* (1940), in which he described his organic farming methods based on observations made in India. His work had a tremendous impact on the development of organic farming, particularly his approach to composting and soil health.

J.I. Rodale – Jerome Irving Rodale, an American pioneer of organic farming, founded Rodale Press, a publishing house promoting a healthy lifestyle and organic farming. His book *Organic Gardening and Farming*, published in the 1940s, significantly contributed to popularising the idea of organic farming in the United States.

Lady Eve Balfour – In 1943, she published *The Living Soil*, which resulted from the Haughley Experiment, the first long-term comparative study of organic and conventional farming. Her work contributed to the development and understanding of organic farming, particularly in the context of soil health and the impact of farming practices on the environment.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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- ▶ [podr.pl/relacje-post/relacja-z-konferencji-podsumowujacej-konkurs-na-najlepsze-gospodarstwo-ekologiczne-w-wojewodztwie-pomorskim-w-roku-2022/](http://podr.pl/relacje-post/relacja-z-konferencji-podsumowujacej-konkurs-na-najlepsze-gospodarstwo-ekologiczne-w-wojewodztwie-pomorskim-w-roku-2022/)

# PODLASIE AGRITOURISM CONFERENCE

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Podlasie Agritourism Conference
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podlaskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 6: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between actors in rural development, exchange and dissemination of the results of rural development activities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Agritourism facilities, institutions
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Dissemination of good processing practices in the short distribution chain and promotion of local and regional products



Opening of the Podlasie Agritourism Conference  
photo: Dariusz Jurkowski

The aim of the project was to disseminate effective methods and good practices beneficial for promoting processing within the short supply chain in Podlaskie Voivodeship. Additionally, this initiative aimed to actively promote local and regional products, highlighting their uniqueness and value to the local community and economy. The conference served also to raise participants' awareness of the valuable tourist assets of their region. It sought answers on how they could leverage the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Podlasie to improve quality of life and create new jobs in rural areas.

## Agritourism as an enduring tourism trend

Agritourism, also rapidly developing in the Podlasie region, maintains its position as one of the main trends in the tourism industry. The interest in authentic experiences, closeness to nature, and the opportunity to learn about traditional rural life makes rural tourism increasingly popular. Visits to agritourism farms, where one can directly experience agricultural work, learn about local customs, and taste regional specialities, attract both domestic and international tourists. Podlaskie Voivodeship, with its rich cultural and natural heritage, is an ideal place for the development of this form of tourism, which offers not only relaxation, but also education about sustainable and ecological ways of living.

## A conference full of practical knowledge and examples

The conference focused on several key areas crucial for the development of rural tourism in Podlasie. 91 participants had the opportunity to expand their knowledge on various topics, including the state and

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Podlaskie Voivodeship is home to the Green Lungs of Poland. This unique area is characterised by its exceptional environmental purity and rich natural landscapes. Special attractions include national parks such as the Biebrza and Białowieża National Parks, where one can admire unique fauna and flora, including the last primeval lowland forests in Europe and the habitat of the European bison. The Green Lungs of Poland is the perfect destination for tourists seeking tranquillity, natural beauty, and authentic cultural experiences.

prospects of tourism development in Podlaskie Voivodeship, helping them better understand the current situation and future development opportunities. The conference also addressed the topic of rural tourism products based on network cooperation, highlighting the importance of collaboration among various entities such as accommodation providers, tourism organisations, national and landscape parks, forest districts, and local governments.

Another important aspect was the sessions on effective marketing and presentation of the region's assets, where examples of successful promotional activities carried out by agritourism associations from all over Poland were presented. Participants also had the opportunity to learn more about initiatives to increase the attractiveness of staying on agritourism farms. Discussing culinary heritage as a potential flagship tourism product for rural areas, along with local food and products as tourist attractions, was also a significant aspect of the conference, highlighting the role of regional products in attracting tourists. The issue of adapting the rural tourism offer to the new regulations on tourism services was also discussed, as well as the importance of nature in creating the image of a rural tourism product. Finally, 'Majątek Morgi' was presented as an example of a well-functioning agritourism establishment.

## Project results

Attendees of the Podlasie Agritourism Conference engaged in expert-led discussion panels, acquiring comprehensive insights into rural tourism management and promotion. The sessions focused on marketing rural tourism products and constructing a positive image using local natural and environmental resources. Additionally, experts discussed the adaptation of the tourism offer to current legal regulations. The conference provided participants with not only valuable information but also inspiration for the further development of agri-tourism in the region.



Marta Grzelak, President of the Local Tourism Organisation, 'Region of the Białowieża Forest'  
photo: Dariusz Jurkowski

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# DISCOVERING LOCAL CHEESE TREASURES

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovative technologies in dairy production
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa
<b>COMPLETION DATE:</b>	April 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Workshops
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Producers, rural residents, advisory representatives, and others interested in implementing innovations in agriculture
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Knowledge transfer in dairy processing

The project aimed to train dairy processing producers from Śląskie Voivodeship. The project's goal was to expand their knowledge of modern technologies, enhance their competencies and build a network of business contacts. The project increased the efficiency of local enterprises and helped them to test innovative technologies in practice. The workshops lasted for three days and combined both theoretical and practical elements. The initiative was organised at the 'Wańczykówka' farm, a modern cheese dairy whose products were awarded silver and bronze medals at the World Cheese Awards in Trondheim in 2023. A total of 4,500 cheeses competed in the event! The owners of the 'Wańczykówka' farm regularly use modern technologies, which they were eager to showcase to the workshop participants.

## The world's oldest cheese

Archaeological research has shown that as early as 7,500 years ago, during the Neolithic era in Kujawy, a cheese similar in appearance to mozzarella was being produced. Cheese production was closely linked to the domestication of goats, sheep and cattle for household farming.

## Cheese is one of the most popular dairy products, alongside yogurt and kefir.

Based on the technology used in the production process and the maturation time, cheeses can be divided into:

- ▶ rennet cheeses,
- ▶ acid-set cheeses,
- ▶ rennet-acid-set cheeses,
- ▶ whey cheeses.

## Selection of bacteria, modern equipment, and the ABC principle in cheesemaking - workshop highlights

The workshops were organised by the Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa from 21 to 23 April 2022 and were held at the 'Wańczykówka' cheese farm. During the three-day event, the owners of 'Wańczykówka' introduced participants to the world of modern cheese production. On the first day, Mr. Sylwester Wańczyk gave participants a tour of the cheese dairy and showcased the equipment used in the production process.

Mr. Wańczyk presenting one of his cheese products to the participants  
photo: Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa



The rest of the day was dedicated to acquiring theoretical knowledge, including topics such as:

- ▶ the key aspects of production,
- ▶ production and staff hygiene,
- ▶ production discipline,
- ▶ the quality of sourced raw materials,
- ▶ the production of rennet-acid-set cheeses.

The theoretical part seamlessly transitioned into practical training, during which participants, under Mr. Wańczyk's guidance, began the process of making feta cheese. On the second day, the focus was on rennet cheeses. Participants were introduced to the theoretical aspects and followed a step-by-step demonstration of the Gouda cheese production process presented by Mr. Wańczyk.

The goal of the workshops was not only to gain practical knowledge about innovations in cheese production but also to understand the sales and marketing aspects. In line with this, participants also attended lectures by:

- ▶ Krzysztof Solorz, Director of the Business Incubator in Kamienna Góra. Mr. Solorz presented the possibilities of a sales platform that brings together farmers;
- ▶ Beata Lebiedzińska, a veterinarian at the Voivodeship Inspection Facility. During her lecture, Ms. Lebiedzińska discussed the process of registering a dairy processing plant and explained how to collaborate with supervisory authorities.

Later in the day, participants also learned about the yogurt production process, using both cow's milk and goat's milk. Practical experience was not lacking here either! Each participant had the opportunity to select appropriate bacteria, measure pH levels and observe various qualities such as texture, taste, appearance, aroma, consistency and product stability.

Participants had the opportunity to apply their newfound knowledge in practice by preparing various yogurt samples. The session culminated with an introduction to the nuances of cheese care and storage, as well as the completion and assessment of their own feta cheese production. The third day was dedicated to summarising the new knowledge and participant networking.



Participants at the 'Wańczykówka' farm's cheese dairy  
photo: Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa

## The Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa - What do they do on a daily basis?

The Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa is an institution dedicated to providing a variety of services and advice to farmers and those involved in the agricultural sector.

The Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Częstochowa:

- ▶ supports and advises farmers on efficient farming practices, crop cultivation technologies, animal husbandry, and farm management;
- ▶ organises training and workshops for farmers, sharing the latest information and practices related to agriculture, agro-technics and natural resource management;
- ▶ engages in various research and experimental projects aimed at improving agricultural technologies and developing new practices in agri-food production;
- ▶ promotes local agricultural products and food, encouraging farmers to produce high-quality and traditional products;
- ▶ monitors changes in the agricultural market and adjusts its activities and advice to help farmers adapt to new challenges and trends.

## Long-term collaborations and new processing ventures - what were the outcomes of the workshops?

Sharing knowledge about modern technologies used in dairy production will enable local producers in Śląskie Voivodeship to modernise their facilities, expand their range of products to include new and more diverse options and introduce new methods of work organisation and effective marketing strategies.

Participating in the workshops also helped participants enhance their skills in this field and positively influenced the development of long-term collaborations, as evidenced by the business relationship maintained between participants who own processing facilities and Mr. Sylwester Wańczyk, particularly in the area of technological consultancy in processing.

Participants also collaborate by sharing knowledge and experience, as well as exchanging raw materials such as milk and animal feed.

After the workshops, one of the participants also decided to start an Agricultural Retail Trade (RHD) business in the dairy processing sector and sell cheeses.



**Cheese production process**  
photo: Śląskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre in Częstochowa

### NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT?

Discover more at:

- ▶ [j.brzozowska@odr.net.pl](mailto:j.brzozowska@odr.net.pl)
- ▶ [www.czwa.odr.net.pl](http://www.czwa.odr.net.pl)

# BEEF INSPIRATIONS

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Beef Inspirations
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Mazowieckie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Study visit
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, rural residents, representatives of agricultural advisory units
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Knowledge and innovation transfer in agriculture related to beef cattle breeding

'Beef Inspirations' (Wołowe inspiracje) is a unique initiative aimed at supporting the transfer of knowledge and innovation in agriculture, primarily focused on beef cattle breeding.

The project was driven by the idea of developing this branch of agricultural production based on three key values: animal welfare, sustainable development and climate protection.

The project's format aims to raise awareness among agricultural producers about these important issues. At the same time, it provides additional support in building and expanding networks between scientific institutions, agricultural advisory services and the farmers themselves.

## A modern approach to cattle breeding

Participants of the study visit organised as part of the project discovered how industrial cattle farms can impact their surroundings. Over the course of two days, they closely examined various aspects of conducting sustainable rural activities.

On the first day, they visited Tomasz Rasiński's farm in Mogowo. Mr. Rasiński's farm is an excellent example of how an innovative approach can not only be environmentally friendly but also help reduce costs.

Cooperation within the RDP programme resulted in the introduction of new technology in animal feeding. This reduced the fattening period for cattle from 24 to 20-22 months. The operation involved implementing better methods of animal health care, feeding and monitoring, which improved the efficiency of calf breeding. Changes were also made



Free-range breeding of Polish Red cattle  
Visit to Piotr Rydel's farm

photo: Mazowieckie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

In the 1960s, the population of red cattle in Poland was around 2 million. Today, this breed is under protection – in 1999, the protected population comprised 150 cows. By 2022, this number had increased to 2,625 cows in the dairy assessment and 1,483 in the meat assessment.



Project participants visiting Tomasz Rasiński's farm  
photo: Mazowieckie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

in the final fattening phase to achieve a uniform and consistent end product.

The second innovation in Mr. Rasiński's breeding system is the fattening of bullocks. This technique produces meat with superior marbling, highly valued in the culinary industry. In the breeding process, a bloodless castration method is also used, which involves placing elastic bands around the spermatic cord.

### Environmentally impactful breeding

The second part of the study visit involved visiting the farm of Agnieszka Prochal and Piotr Rydel. This farm prioritises regenerative agriculture principles and minimising environmental impact, with a particular focus on reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The owners employ methods such as free-range animal husbandry and bale grazing systems. However, the true hallmark of this breeding system is the exceptional focus on small-scale water retention and the greater-than-anticipated benefits it has brought.

Due to small-scale water retention, rainwater is held for longer periods, which has raised groundwater levels. Water run-off has also slowed down, making the local areas more hospitable to protected species of birds and amphibians. The beneficial effects of implemented solutions, such as bale grazing and small-scale water retention, are evident in the permanent grasslands.

What results can be expected?

The 'Beef Inspirations' project has proven to be an extremely effective way to gain knowledge. Through these visits, participants have enhanced their skills in breeding, feeding, cattle health and herd management.

They can apply the knowledge gained to their own breeding system to improve productivity and efficiency. An important benefit is also the planned implementation of practices that improve cattle living conditions, which will contribute to better health and productivity of the animals.

In addition, the project yielded the unquantifiable benefit of establishing new business contacts. These relationships may lead to future collaborations, genetic exchange of cattle or access to new markets.

Participants returned motivated to implement changes and improvements, which is crucial for the development of their farms. The lively discussions among participants indicate that the programme effectively covered various aspects of cattle production. Participation in these visits is expected to inspire innovative ideas, contributing to the further development of cattle breeding in Poland.



Group photo of participants during the visit to Piotr Rydel's farm  
photo: Mazowieckie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

#### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# INNOVATIVE APIARY AND AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO BEEKEEPING

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovative approach to beekeeping
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	April – September 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Workshops, apitherapy house, training, demonstration, film, podcasts
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Beekeepers, agricultural advisors, professionals and hobbyists managing apiaries of various production scales from Opolskie Voivodeship, individuals interested in the subject, and members of beekeeping circles
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Promotion of solutions for establishing and managing your own apiary

The operation by the Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre aimed to promote innovative solutions designed to facilitate and streamline beekeeping activities. This initiative particularly supports novice beekeepers in establishing and managing their own apiaries. By organising a series of workshops, practical training sessions, and a honey extraction demonstration during the beekeeping season, the project created opportunities for those interested in working with bees to expand their knowledge. The program included gaining and deepening knowledge on apiary management from the ground up, utilising modern beekeeping equipment and accessories.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Opole region is famous for its diverse honeys. The region is home to numerous nectar-producing plants. The most common honeys from the Opole region are multi-floral, rapeseed, linden, buckwheat and acacia honey.

Collaboration with experienced beekeepers provided the opportunity to convey expert knowledge both practically during workshops and theoretically during training sessions. Participants were introduced to current solutions aimed at maintaining the strength of bee colonies and supporting bee health, contributing to optimal honey harvests.

An additional goal of the operation was to purchase and install an apitherapy house as part of the existing mini apiary at the Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Łosiów. The apitherapy house was an integral part of the planned workshops and training sessions, which included activities for novice beekeepers, covering various stages of apiary work such as creating nucleus colonies and placing them in new hives that make up the apitherapy house. These efforts also aimed to raise health awareness among the public.

## Apitherapy – What is it?

The modern market and the ongoing challenge of providing adequate forage and proper nutrition for bees make it necessary to consider the economic aspects of beekeeping. Managing an apiary with innovative solutions can address this issue. One such modern option is investing in apitherapy.

Apitherapy is a branch of alternative medicine that uses bee products for therapeutic and preventive purposes. This therapy employs various bee substances to achieve different healing and therapeutic effects. The method is based both on traditional folk practices and, in some cases, on contemporary scientific research.

A house designed for apitherapy is a special space equipped with a bed that ensures complete safety during beehive therapy sessions. The interior is infused with the scent of honey and propolis, along with the hum of thousands of bees, which has a beneficial impact on health and is known as a healing 'bee therapy'.

**Apitherapy offers numerous benefits, as bee products have antibacterial, antiviral and anti-inflammatory properties. Regular use can effectively strengthen the immune system and act preventively, reducing the risk of infections.**

Apitherapy utilises, among other things:

- ▶ honey,
- ▶ bee venom,
- ▶ pollen,
- ▶ bee pollen flour,
- ▶ wax,
- ▶ royal jelly,
- ▶ propolis.

Honey extraction demonstration organised as part of the 'Innovative Approach to Beekeeping' project  
photo: Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre



This method has no contraindications, and medicine has recorded numerous cases of successfully treating various ailments, such as degenerative diseases, joint problems, asthma, insomnia, respiratory diseases, heart conditions and more. Using the apitherapy house also serves as a form of disease prevention, supporting the body's regeneration and strengthening overall health.

**When setting up an apiary and starting to adopt innovative solutions, it is important to remember the obligation to register apiaries, as required by the Act of 11 March 2004 on protection of animal health and eradication of infectious animal diseases.**

According to a 2021 report by the Institute of Horticulture, Poland had approximately 2.01 million bee colonies. However, the number of apiaries in Opolskie Voivodeship was significantly lower than in other regions (one of the lowest in Poland). Promoting innovative solutions, such as apitherapy, can be a stimulus for developing bee-based businesses while also contributing to increasing the bee population in the Opole region.

### **What else does the Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre do?**

The Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre organises exhibitions promoting the region as well as workshops and training sessions for farmers. It also provides advisory services in the areas of crop production,

Workshops organised as part of the 'Innovative Approach to Beekeeping' project  
photo: Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre



animal husbandry, ecology and environment, economics and rural development. Many of the centre's activities also aim to foster social engagement and encourage entrepreneurship.

### **What were the outcomes of the 'Innovative Approach to Beekeeping' project?**

As part of the project, an apitherapy house was purchased and integrated into the existing apiary. The house is regularly inhabited by bee colonies and equipped with essential tools used during beekeeping training and workshops.

The 'Innovative Approach to Beekeeping' initiative also included the recording of four podcasts on the following topics:

- ▶ apitherapy;
- ▶ apiphytochemistry;
- ▶ environmental threats to beekeeping;
- ▶ bee nutrition.

A short film was also created, concisely presenting the basics of starting an apiary.

Additionally, as part of the project, a honey extraction workshop was organised for 15 participants, each receiving a jar of honey and professional beekeeping literature. Training on innovative solutions in beekeeping was conducted, involving 50 participants. Furthermore, a series of 15 workshops were held, with 120 participants actively engaged in inspections, feeding and treating bee colonies throughout the beekeeping season at the Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre's apiary.

The project facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience across various levels of education and expertise in working with bees.

#### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

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# THE FUTURE OF BEEKEEPING – HOW INNOVATIONS SUPPORT THE HONEY INDUSTRY?

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovative beekeeping
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Short film
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Facilitating knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Beekeepers, apiary operators, individuals interested in beekeeping, associations, unions, beekeeping cooperatives and producer groups, representatives of scientific institutions and employees of agricultural advisory units
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Support for beekeepers, introduction of innovations in beekeeping

The 'Innovative beekeeping' project aimed to introduce innovation in the industry and support beekeepers in developing their activities. Beekeeping, a demanding and specialised field, presents beekeepers with numerous challenges that require knowledge about bees, nectar-producing plants, economics and processing.

The initiative addressed these challenges by introducing modern solutions and innovations in various aspects of beekeeping, such as:

- ▶ **Breeding innovations:** introducing reproductive and breeding apiaries to would enable more efficient bee breeding.
- ▶ **Technological solutions:** Implementing cutting-edge technologies in the production of honey and other bee products.
- ▶ **Commercial beekeeping:** Developing production apiaries and bee product processing to better meet market demands.
- ▶ **Management and marketing in the honey industry:** Enhancing management and marketing skills to better manage apiaries and promote bee products.
- ▶ **Knowledge and public awareness:** Raising the level of knowledge and public awareness about beekeeping, including current opportunities and challenges in the industry.
- ▶ **Ecology:** Maintaining and increasing the number of apiaries, which has a direct impact on the environment through plant pollination and supporting biodiversity.

The project promoted supporting beekeeping traditions while also adapting them to modern realities and challenges. Through an innovative approach to beekeeping, the initiative aimed not only to improve breeding



**Hive inspection and replacement**  
photo: Marek Pięta

and production practices but also to contribute to the sustainable development of agriculture, forestry and rural areas. Another important aspect was to enhance the attractiveness of beekeeping as a profession, which could help reduce population outflow from rural areas and strengthen the demographic position of these regions.

The project aimed not only to provide direct support to beekeepers but also to carry out extensive educational and promotional activities to raise public awareness and develop the beekeeping sector as an important element of the agricultural ecosystem and the natural environment.

### How was the ‘Innovative beekeeping’ project carried out?

In the series of videos ‘How to become a beekeeper’, methods for setting up and running your own apiary from scratch were presented. Each episode focused on different aspects of beekeeping, covering topics such as beekeeping ethics, the history of bees and practical tips for their breeding. The series serves as a practical guide to help interested individuals understand what is needed to run an apiary effectively.

Each episode covers different aspects of beekeeping, ranging from basic to more advanced topics. Every video gradually introduces viewers to the world of beekeeping, providing theoretical knowledge and useful tips. What topics are covered in the ‘How to become a beekeeper’ series?

### What topics are covered in the ‘How to become a beekeeper’ series?

- ▶ Episode 0 – Introduction to the educational video series
- ▶ Episode 1 – Basics
- ▶ Episode 2 – Technical accessories for apiaries
- ▶ Episode 3 – Year-round beekeeping activities
- ▶ Episode 4 – How to start your first apiary
- ▶ Episode 5 – Wintering bee colonies
- ▶ Episode 6 – Hive inspection and replacement in practice
- ▶ Episode 7 – Honey harvesting: the first rapeseed nectar flow
- ▶ Episode 8 – Honey harvesting: bee escape and radial honey extractor
- ▶ Episode 9 – Replacing queen bees
- ▶ Episode 10 – Emergency queen cells

### Results of the ‘Innovative beekeeping’ project

The project resulted in the release of a series of videos that serves as a comprehensive guide to beekeeping. Each of the 10 episodes focuses on different aspects of beekeeping – from beekeeping ethics to the history of bees.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Most of the footage was shot in the apiary of the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice. This apiary consists of 16 production colonies and serves as a developmental apiary.

The honey bee appeared on Earth about 100 million years ago!



**Honey harvesting – extracting rapeseed honey**  
photo: Marek Pięta



Viewers have the opportunity to learn about beekeeping both theoretically and practically. The episodes are available on the Centre's website ([www.zodr.pl](http://www.zodr.pl)) and on the YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@jakzostacpszczelarzem3463>).

The video series has gained significant popularity, with 5,800 subscribers and an impressive 340,708 views on the YouTube channel. They provide a valuable source of knowledge for those interested in starting (or developing) their beekeeping journey

### And that's not all! Discover the benefits of honey

**Properties of rapeseed honey** – This honey supports the heart and cardiovascular system, helps lower bad cholesterol levels and aids in wound healing. Its valuable properties also support the functioning of the liver and urinary system. Additionally, it helps reduce stomach inflammation, nausea and heartburn symptoms.

**Benefits of phacelia honey** – Phacelia honey is renowned for its health-promoting effects. Rich in magnesium and iron, it positively influences the development of internal organs. It also supports the cardiovascular system, skin and digestive system. Additionally, it has antibacterial properties and supports liver function.

**Characteristics of linden honey** – Linden honey, known for its distinctive taste and strong aroma of linden flowers, is valued for both its flavour and medicinal properties. It is particularly recommended for colds, respiratory infections and as an immune system booster.

### Queen bees

Queen bees play a crucial role in every bee colony. They are responsible for passing on traits to their offspring that are suitable for the conditions in the apiary and the direction of honey production.

Important characteristics of a queen bee include:

- ▶ honey production capacity: the queen's ability to create a colony with high honey production,
- ▶ proper development: the queen's capacity to efficiently develop the bee colony,
- ▶ swarm prevention: the queen's tendency to avoid swarming, which is desirable for maintaining colony stability,
- ▶ gentleness: the queen's influence on the behaviour of the bees, which is important for the safety of beekeepers.

The age of a queen bee significantly affects her productivity. Young queens are more fertile and produce more eggs, resulting in stronger colonies. As the queen ages, her fertility declines (laying 30-50% fewer eggs than a one-year-old queen).

This leads to a reduction in the number of bees in the colony and may also increase the colony's tendency to be aggressive. Therefore, it is recommended to regularly replace older queens with younger ones. In stationary apiaries, where conditions are less intensive, queen replacement is recommended every two years. In contrast, in migratory apiaries, where production is more intensive, queens are replaced annually to ensure continuous development and maintain the strength of the bee colony.



**Regular queen replacement is crucial for maintaining healthy, strong and productive bee colonies, which in turn affects the efficiency and productivity of the apiary.**

### **Polish beekeeping unveiled - learn key terms!**

**Beekeeping year** – The beekeeping year is the period associated with bee breeding, typically spanning from the preparation of bees for wintering, i.e. August-September of one calendar year to August-September of the following year. This is a crucial time in the life cycle of an apiary, during which beekeepers prepare their bee colonies for wintering and ensure their well-being.



Technical accessories  
photo: Marek Pięta

**Wielkopolski type hives** – These are one of the types of bee hives characterised by a frame 36 cm wide and 26 cm high (external dimensions excluding the top bar). They are most commonly vertical hives, constructed from two or more 10-frame bodies. Sometimes, half-bodies (supers) are used, which are shortened to half the height. The choice of the appropriate type of hive affects the organisation and management of the apiary.

**Vented inner cover (powałka)** – The vented inner cover is the top part of the hive, located beneath the outer cover, serving

as its 'ceiling'. It is not present in all hives but is particularly important in polystyrene hives. The vented inner cover plays a role in ventilating the bee nest and can also be used for feeding bees through round holes.

**Embedding foundation (wtapianie węzy)** – Embedding foundation is the process of attaching a thin sheet of wax with the beginnings of bee cells, called foundation (węza), into frames. This can be done using a heated spur embedder or by passing a low voltage current through wires fixed in the frames, which heats them and allows them to melt into the foundation. Foundation sheets are available in pre-cut sizes tailored to different types of bee hives.

**Queen cells (Mateczniki)** – Queen cells are specialised cells in the comb designed for rearing young queen bees. They are usually built on the sides or bottom of the comb. Queen cells differ from the cells used for rearing worker bees or drones (males) in terms of structure, size and orientation. Queen cells are crucial in beekeeping because the quality and characteristics of the queen bees reared in them directly affect the health and productivity of the entire apiary.

#### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Feel free to contact us:

- ▶ [mierzejewska@zodr.pl](mailto:mierzejewska@zodr.pl)
- ▶ [www.youtube.com/@jakzostacpszczelarzem3463](https://www.youtube.com/@jakzostacpszczelarzem3463)

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE PROTECTION STRATEGIES IN AGRICULTURE IN PODKARPACIE VOIVODESHIP

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Examples of technical and technological solutions in farms impacting climate and environment
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	April–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference, film
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 3: Collecting examples of operations implementing specific Programme priorities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Residents of Podkarpackie Voivodeship interested in the broad concept of environmental and climate protection in agricultural production
<b>PROJECT OBJECTIVE</b>	To present examples of technical and technological solutions in farms

The initiatives conducted by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała aimed to showcase fascinating technical and technological solutions applied in agriculture within the Podkarpackie Voivodeship that have a positive impact on the environment and climate. These initiatives were intended to inspire other local farmers to implement similar solutions. The details and outcomes of the project are outlined below.

## What ecological farming methods can be found in the Podkarpace region?

Agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship is popular due to its vast expanses of arable land and the resulting agricultural opportunities. Consequently, there is a continuous search for methods that improve farming practices while being environmentally friendly. Strip-till farming technology is gaining popularity in Poland among medium and large farms. Introduced for the first time in the United States, it is now also becoming significant in our country.

The strip-till method is used for growing various crops such as wheat, sunflower, buckwheat, rapeseed, potatoes, sugar beets and vegetables. Before implementing this method, it is necessary to control deep-rooted weeds and adjust the soil in terms of pH and nutrients.

The most important feature of the strip-till method is the one-pass process, which allows for multiple tasks to be performed simultaneously, resulting in reduced costs and fuel consumption. The soil is loosened to a depth of 30 cm, and seeds and fertilisers are applied in narrow strips occupying only 1/3 of the field's surface. The remaining 2/3 are left untilled and covered with crop residues. This helps maintain the natural fertility of the soil and protects it from erosion. Strip-till is a modern approach to agriculture that is becoming a key component of sustainable farming practices, reducing costs and environmental impact.

## Rescuing local ecosystems: houses for beneficial insects

For years, there has been an alarming decline in the population of beneficial insects, which has a significant impact on local ecosystems. These helpful insects play a crucial role in maintaining nature's balance.

Unfortunately, the use of plant protection products increasingly destroys their natural habitats. However, there are ways to help these insects and restore their populations. Planting nectar-producing plants, creating flower meadows, and building insect houses are effective measures to support and revive beneficial insect populations.

Insect houses provide not only shelter but also a place for insects to overwinter and protection from adverse weather conditions. These houses can be built from planks, bamboo tubes, reeds, wood, straw, moss and other materials.

It's worth noting that these types of houses help attract beneficial insects to the garden, such as:

- ▶ red mason bees – excellent pollinators that protect plants from pests,
- ▶ green lacewings: predatory insects that hunt pests,
- ▶ ladybirds: allies in the fight against plant pests,
- ▶ hoverflies: beneficial flies,
- ▶ bumblebees: large insects that aid in pollinating many plants.

By building insect houses, we provide support for beneficial insects, which aligns with the principles of ecological farming that prioritise the care of the natural environment and climate.

## Skuteczna walka z chwastami w rolnictwie ekologicznym

Weeds pose a significant challenge to crop yields, competing for essential resources. Their rapid growth and spread can reduce harvests. However, there are effective methods for combating them in organic farming.

Basic principles of weed control:

- ▶ **Proper crop rotation:** growing different types of plants at different times.
- ▶ **Cultivation of catch crops:** Plants like phacelia, buckwheat or mustard can reduce the number of weeds.
- ▶ **Variety selection:** choosing varieties that grow quickly and have good nutrient uptake.
- ▶ **Seed quality:** preventing the introduction of weed seeds with crop seeds,
- ▶ **Mulching:** covering the soil surface with organic matter.
- ▶ **Care for field margins and grasslands:** preventing the spread of weeds around cultivated areas.

When weeds do appear, various methods can be employed, such as tillage, weeding, burning, mowing or grazing. There are also unconventional methods, including working at night during the 'dark moon' phase, which reduces the number of germinating weeds due to the lack of light, as well as weed seed burning.

It is important to remember that weeds also play a positive role in the ecosystem. They protect the soil from erosion and provide habitat for beneficial insects. Some weeds have medicinal properties and can be used in natural medicine.

### **What does the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała do on a daily basis?**

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre (PODR) in Boguchwała is dedicated to assisting farmers and advancing rural development. Its activities include:

- ▶ Organising training sessions, conferences and other events.
- ▶ Providing advice on modern agricultural technologies, farm economics, organic production and entrepreneurship development.
- ▶ Implementing and promoting the results of scientific research.
- ▶ Showcasing breeding and production achievements at exhibitions and fairs.
- ▶ Assisting in the preparation of documents for applying for financial support from various sources, including EU funds.

Conference 'Examples of technical and technological solutions in farms impacting climate and the natural environment'

photo: Edyta Bosek



The goal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre is to increase farmers' incomes, improve the competitiveness of agricultural holdings and promote innovation and the quality of agricultural products in local markets.

### **Developing farms from the Podkarpackie region in the spirit of ecology!**

As part of the project, a conference titled 'Examples of technical and technological solutions in farms impacting climate and environment' was organised, attended by 100 people interested in agricultural innovations. During the presentations, the

operation of agricultural machinery that positively impacts environmental protection and farm efficiency was demonstrated. Additionally, five examples of farms that effectively combine technical innovations with environmental care were presented. The conference took place on 25 June 2022 in Boguchwała.

Another initiative during the campaign was the creation of a professional film titled 'The impact of technical investments in farms on climate and the natural environment'. The film showcases five different farms that exemplify actions affecting environmental protection within the framework of RDP activities. The technical and technological solutions discussed (both in the film and during the conference) include: production of energy from renewable sources (photovoltaics), fertiliser spreaders, environmentally friendly fertilisation methods (slurry tanker), and applying fertiliser at planting (seeding unit, seed drill). The film's audience included conference participants and visitors to agricultural events organised by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała. The film is also continuously available online on the Centre's website.



## Podkarpace region riding the ecological wave: results of ongoing initiatives

The initiative by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała was primarily aimed at residents of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship who are engaged in agriculture and interested in environmental and climate protection. It was crucial to reach those willing to invest in modern technical and technological solutions. During the conference, meetings were held with farmers from the Podkarpace region who had implemented innovations in their farms thanks to the 2014-2020 RDP. By showcasing these projects,



Participants of the conference 'Examples of technical and technological solutions in farms impacting climate and the natural environment'  
photo: Edyta Bosek

a convincing message was sent about the positive impact of modern solutions on the environment and climate. This helped to raise participants' awareness on these issues and disseminate knowledge about conducting agricultural activities with minimal impact on the local natural environment and climate.

In the film, examples of farmers conducting ecological activities were also presented. The film garnered significant interest from viewers both during the campaign and after it ended, thanks to its availability on the Advisory Centre's website.

Both forms of knowledge presentation – the conference and the film – motivated participants to implement new technological solutions in their

farms, thereby contributing to the rural development. The conference, thanks to the partnership with the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture, also facilitated the exchange of experience. Moreover, participants gained knowledge about applying for financial support from the RDP.

In summary, the conference and film positively influenced farmers' plans to implement ecological solutions, thereby contributing to the rural development. This initiative also provided excellent support in transferring knowledge and innovative technologies in agriculture, as well as promoting modernised farms in the Podkarpace region.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# THE FUTURE OF VITICULTURE: INNOVATIONS IN CULTIVATION, PROTECTION AND CARE WITH A FOCUS ON SOIL QUALITY

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovations in vine cultivation, protection and care considering the impact of soil on fruit quality parameters and yield
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Lubuskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Kalsk
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	November 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference and demonstration
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 5: Seeking PRN partners for cooperation under the 'Cooperation' measure referred to in Article 3(1)(13) of the Act on supporting rural development with the participation of the EAFRD funds under the RDP and facilitating this cooperation
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Participants of the Thematic Team Meetings for Winemakers, farmers, rural residents, agri-food entrepreneurs, winemakers, representatives of scientific institutions, local governments and advisory organisations
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	To familiarise participants with the latest solutions in grapevine production, protection and care, to enhance knowledge of vineyard establishment, to outline development directions, and to promote these practices



Participants of the Wine Conference  
photo: Ewelina Mularczyk-Sienkowska

The development of the wine sector is not only the art of crafting exquisite wines but also a process of continuous improvement and adaptation to changing market conditions and demands. Therefore, in the context of today's agricultural and food challenges, delving into the latest solutions in grapevine production, protection and care is crucial. The 3rd Wine Conference titled 'Innovations in vine cultivation, protection and

care considering the impact of soil on fruit quality parameters and yield' is a project that aims not only to provide information but also to promote innovative solutions and best practices in viticulture in our region. We will also analyse the identified needs and challenges faced by winegrowers. Join us in exploring this fascinating field, which combines tradition with modernity and opens new perspectives for the future of agriculture and food production.

## Who participated in the project?

The project garnered significant interest and active participation from various groups involved in viticulture and wine production. Participants included members of the Thematic Winemakers Group – true enthusiasts and experts in wine production. There were also farmers, rural residents, agri-food entrepreneurs, vineyard owners and wine producers, as well as representatives of scientific institutions and local governments.

These diverse groups brought their unique perspectives and expertise, enriching discussions and contributing to the effective development of innovations in viticulture and wine production.

## Wine, soil and passion: a fascinating journey into the world of winemaking

On 18-19 November 2022, Kalsko became the stage for the fascinating 3rd Wine Conference, under the theme 'Innovations in vine cultivation, protection and care considering the impact of soil on fruit quality parameters and yield'. The event was a true celebration for winemakers from the Lubuskie region, who had the opportunity to delve into topics crucial to their profession.

The conference featured talks by prominent experts, including:

- ▶ **Prof. Pavel Pavlousek from Mendel University in Brno** – In his lecture, he discussed vineyard maintenance practices, highlighting common mistakes and emphasising the benefits of properly conducted activities. He elaborated on the importance of summer maintenance work and its impact on the quality and health of the grapes, as well as the final quality of the wine. The lecture also covered grapevine fertilisation, with a special focus on the influence of nitrogen on varietal aromatic thiols. Professor Pavlousek also stressed the importance of inter-row greening in the vineyard, organic fertilisation and foliar feeding. Additionally, he provided insights into PIWI grape varieties (Pilzwiderstandsfähig), a new generation of fungus-resistant hybrids that could be beneficial for our region.
- ▶ **Associate Professor Andrzej Greinert, PhD, Eng., from the University of Zielona Góra** – He presented a topic related to the role of soil in plant life and the factors influencing its fertility. He highlighted the differences in solar radiation energy input at various latitudes, which impact the formation of climate zones. These climate zones, in turn, determine plant zones, which, combined with water availability

and the type of underlying rocks, result in the creation of diverse soil zones. The lecture also included information on the functions, fertility, productivity and richness of soil, as well as its natural role in creating living conditions for plants, including grapevines. Dr. Greinert also addressed issues related to the rooting of grapevines and the selection of suitable soil sites.



Łukasz Pietrasik, owner of the 'Łukasz' Vineyard in Wityń  
photo: Ewelina Mularczyk-Sienkowska



'Łukasz' Vineyard in Wityń  
photo: Ewelina Mularczyk-Sienkowska

- ▶ **Prof. Tadeusz Baranowski, PhD, from the University of Life Sciences in Poznań** – He captured the audience’s attention with his lecture on vineyards around the world and oenotourism, i.e. visiting wine-growing regions. He shared his oenotourism adventures, spanning destinations from Lesotho to China, Canada, Georgia, Crimea, Moldova, Turkey, Armenia and Odessa. He spoke about local customs, wine tasting techniques, viticulture forms and wine production processes, illustrating his stories with numerous photographs.

During the conference, fascinating events enriched our knowledge and passion for winemaking. The first of these events was the Amateur Wine Competition, where 28 winemakers showcased their products, including 11 white, 4 rosé and 13 red wines. It was an opportunity to discover a variety of flavours and experience extraordinary wine compositions.

Another highlight was the screening of a documentary covering the history and development of winemaking in the Lubuskie region from 2005 to 2022. This film enriched our knowledge of the region’s history and helped us understand how viticulture has evolved in this area. The invaluable memories shared by Prof. Tadeusz Baranowski and Assoc. Prof. Izabela Wojewoda, PhD, Eng., provided a wealth of information.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Proper fertilisation of vines, including the use of intercropping, plays a crucial role in ensuring the excellent taste of wine and maintaining the good health of the vines. The quality of the soil significantly impacts the quality of the harvested fruit and overall yield, making it essential to understand the factors that influence soil fertility.

On the second day of the conference, we had the opportunity to visit the ‘Łukasz’ Vineyard in Wityń, near Świebodzin. This unique vineyard was established by the Pietrasik family in 2009 and covers an area of 3 hectares. Leszek Pietrasik, its owner, shared the story of its founding and provided valuable tips on grapevine care and the farm’s development plans. These were inspiring moments, where we could understand how passion and dedication can transform a small vineyard into a true treasure.

Additionally, Zuzanna Pietrasik-Snowball, co-owner of the vineyard, shared insights about organising oenotourism and her successes in promoting the Lubuskie region as a destination rich in wine-related attractions. This event not only provided valuable knowledge and inspiration but also offered an opportunity to share our passion and experience in winemaking.

### Project results

The project yielded significant results, contributing to the development and promotion of winemaking and oenotourism in the Lubuskie region. The two-day conference attracted 50 participants, addressing topics aligned with the needs of local winemakers. Attendees learned about the latest technologies in vine cultivation that impact wine quality. Additionally, an operational group, ‘Lubuskie Regional Wines’, was established as part of the project.

Overall, the project enriched participants’ knowledge and experience, creating a foundation for the continued development of winemaking in the region and promoting Lubuskie as an appealing destination for wine and oenotourism enthusiasts.

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# INNOVATIVE STRAWBERRY CULTIVATION IN GUTTER SYSTEMS AND UNDER CANOPIES

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Innovative technologies for growing strawberries in gutter systems and under canopies
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Modliszewice
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	September 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Study visit
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>PRIORYTET PROW</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Strawberry producers, farmers interested in strawberry cultivation, representatives of advisory bodies, agricultural schools, institutions and bodies active in the development of the horticultural sector
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Enhancing the competitiveness and profitability of the Świętokrzyskie strawberry growers' sector

Lecture in the auditorium of the University of Agriculture in Kraków for the participants of the study visit  
photo: archive of ŚODR



Poland is one of the largest producers and exporters of strawberries in Europe. With growing expertise in cultivation and the adoption of modern agricultural technologies, strawberry farming can become even more efficient. The aim of this project was to enhance the competitiveness and profitability of the strawberry-growing sector in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. This goal was pursued by showcasing modern methods, technologies, and techniques for strawberry production, particularly focusing on the gutter system and cultivation under canopies. The primary objective was to increase both the quantity and quality of strawberry yields while enabling local producers to implement these new technological solutions on their own farms.

## The lecture segment: a wealth of knowledge

The event began with a series of lectures held at Hugo Kołłątaj Agricultural University in Kraków. Participants were presented with three insightful lectures:

- ▶ **'Conditions for strawberry cultivation in the soilless system under canopies – opportunities and threats'**  
– Professor Monika Bieniasz, PhD, Eng., highlighted the key factors for successful strawberry cultivation, emphasising the importance of selecting an appropriate site, using healthy seedlings, proper fertilisation, plant protection, and effective pollination. She also explained the differences between long-day and day-neutral strawberries and discussed the advantages of growing strawberries in coconut substrate under canopies.
- ▶ **'Influence of storage conditions on the quality and shelf life of repeatedly fruiting strawberries'**  
– Professor Jan Błaszczuk, PhD, presented findings from experiments aimed at optimising strawberry storage. He demonstrated that fruit harvested later in the season tends to have better quality and shelf



## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Modern methods of growing strawberries in suspended gutter systems, in coconut substrate, and in high plastic tunnels represent a significant advancement in agriculture. This innovative system allows for precise control of plant growth conditions, including temperature, humidity, and sunlight.

The necessary nutrients can be supplied to the plants automatically, ensuring high-quality, healthy strawberries and efficient production. The fruit is harvested, cooled, sorted, and packed according to consumer requirements, saving both time and production resources.

life. He also showcased the benefits of controlled atmosphere storage, which positively impacts the appearance, firmness, and longevity of strawberries.

- ▶ **‘Possibilities of ecological strawberry protection in soilless cultivation’** – Professor Jacek Nawrocki, PhD, explored the factors influencing crop health, identifying symptoms of diseases and pests in strawberries, and discussed methods for their control. He emphasised the importance of monitoring, proper plant nutrition, and other integrated plant protection practices in strawberry cultivation. Początek formularza

## Visit to a strawberry plantation - innovation in practice

After the lectures, participants had the chance to see modern strawberry farming systems in action. They visited the town of Bochnia near Kraków, where they observed large-scale strawberry cultivation in suspended gutter systems within coconut substrate. The impressive complex of 97 plastic tunnels, covering an 8-hectare area, made a strong impression on the visitors.

The tunnels are equipped with automatic ventilation and computer systems that adjust to weather changes. Strawberries are grown in suspended gutters filled with coconut substrate, with the computer controlling the plants’ mineral nutrition. Plant protection is managed through a combination of biological and chemical preparations. The strawberry harvest begins in May and continues until October.

## Results and positive evaluation of the project

The project primarily succeeded in enhancing participants’ knowledge of horticultural production, particularly in strawberry cultivation. It provided an opportunity for participants to familiarise themselves with modern cultivation methods, including the gutter system and canopy growing. Additionally, the project facilitated an active exchange of expertise and best practices between farmers and university representatives. Participants expressed high satisfaction with the opportunity to learn about modern cultivation systems, as reflected in their positive evaluations of the programme. Looking ahead, it is anticipated that producers will apply these innovative solutions on their own farms, thereby increasing the competitiveness and profitability of the strawberry sector in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.



Strawberry plantation in the town of Czechy near Kraków  
photo: archives of ŚODR Modliszewice

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# EKOGALA IN THE SERVICE OF ORGANIC FOOD AND PROMOTION OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	EKOGALA – international trade fair for quality products and foods
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June–December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Trade fair
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 10: Organisation and participation in fairs, thematic exhibitions to present the achievements and promotion of the Polish countryside at home and abroad
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Exhibitors, quality food producers from Poland and abroad
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Promotion of quality products and foods



Exhibitor stands at the Ekogala fair  
photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

The Ekogala fair was organised to promote high-quality food products, including organic offerings and those recognised by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. The event aimed to create sales opportunities at both the retail and wholesale levels, providing an excellent platform for business relationships between producers and distributors of organic food and products. It also served as a valuable opportunity for participants to learn about new trends and technologies in the industry and to exchange experiences. As a result, participation in Ekogala is both educational and promotional, contributing to marketing efforts and fostering engagement within the sector.

Ekogala also featured various events such as competitions, educational panels, and conferences.

The fair seeks to integrate agricultural producers, processors, and distributors of organic food from Poland and other countries. Ekogala is an outstanding opportunity to showcase organic and traditional food products as well as to explore ideas related to rural tourism and agrotourism.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship fair in the field of organic farming is one of the largest events of its kind in Poland and all of Eastern Europe. This is due to the vigorous activities undertaken over the years to develop organic agriculture and raise awareness in this area!



Examples of exhibitors' products  
photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

**Ekogala sees an increasing number of exhibitors and visitors every year, which beautifully illustrates the evolving consumer demand for quality and organic food.**

This growth fuels the development of the organic food production sector, observable in the Polish market, where new farms specialising in organic production are emerging, and more farmers are converting their crops to organic methods.

### **What does the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Self-Government do on a daily basis?**

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship Self-Government is a public administration body operating at the provincial level,

dealing with a broad range of issues across various sectors related to the management of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Here are some of the areas it covers:

- ▶ **Regional development:** the self-government works on the region's development strategy, undertakes measures to improve residents' living conditions, develops infrastructure, promotes the region, and attracts investments.
- ▶ **Education:** it manages and supervises the education system at the voivodeship level, supports the development of educational institutions, and promotes education, science, and culture.
- ▶ **Health:** the self-government organises and finances health services in the voivodeship, ensures the availability of healthcare, and promotes healthy lifestyles.
- ▶ **Culture and sport:** it supports the development of culture and sport, organises cultural and sporting events, and finances related projects.
- ▶ **Transport and infrastructure:** the self-government invests in developing road, rail, air, and other transport infrastructure in the region.
- ▶ **Economy:** it supports entrepreneurship and the local economy's development by providing financial support, training, and promoting investment.
- ▶ **Environmental protection:** the self-government works to protect the environment, promotes green initiatives, and develops sustainable development strategies.
- ▶ **Security:** it manages services responsible for public safety and supports efforts to ensure the safety of the region's residents.
- ▶ **Social care:** the self-government organises and finances social care services and works to support those in need.

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship Self-Government is responsible for many other issues related to the region's development and functioning. Its activities and competences are wide-ranging and aim to improve the quality of life for residents and the economic and social development of the voivodeship.



Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship speaking on stage  
photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office

## A treat for everyone: highlights from Ekogala

Ekogala was organised as a two-day fair, providing Polish and international producers of organic food and products registered with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development the opportunity to showcase their offerings. The exhibitors also included those specialising in herbal medicine and its benefits for human health.

Each exhibitor was provided with a dedicated exhibition stand. The organisers ensured extensive promotional activities, including billboards, posters, invitations, greeters, and advertising spots. Prizes and accommodation were arranged

for the winners and participants of the 16th European Culinary Competition, and Krosno State Forests generously provided Christmas trees for every visitor.

## As part of Ekogala, the 5th 'Green Umbrella' Conference for Beekeepers, Foresters, and Ecologists was held concurrently, featuring a discussion on 'Apitherapy in Prevention and Treatment'.

Attendees could also listen to lectures on various health-related topics, including:

- ▶ 'The effect of bee products on strengthening the immune system' by MD Arkadiusz Kapliński, PhD;
- ▶ 'Differentiated activity of honey depending on varieties and geographical origin' by Małgorzata Dżugan, PhD, Professor of the University of Rzeszów;
- ▶ 'Propolis in Treatment and Prevention' by Michał Miłek, PhD;
- ▶ 'Health-promoting effects of bee pollen flour based on clinical studies' by Elżbieta Kędzia, M.Sc., Eng.;
- ▶ 'Drone brood in the prevention of osteoporosis' by Ewelina Sidor, M.Sc., Eng.

Ekogala also provided entertainment for the youngest visitors, with Mr. Krzysztof Bałton from the EKO-BAŁON ecological apiary delivering an engaging lecture for kindergarten and primary school pupils on the work of bees.

## The fair also featured the 14th European Culinary Competition for catering schools.

Given that the event took place in December, the Christmas spirit was very much present. Ekogala included a special Christmas Island where visitors could enjoy demonstrations of Christmas Eve cooking, gingerbread decorating, and festive table setting.

14th European Culinary Competition award ceremony  
photo: Podkarpackie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



### Ekogala - a summary of the fair

More than 100 exhibitors participated in the fair, which attracted 12,000 visitors. Surveys conducted after the event revealed that some exhibitors had successfully established initial business contracts. The conclusions drawn from Ekogala confirm that interest in certified organic products is continually growing, and that such initiatives provide an excellent platform for showcasing these offerings. The increasing demand for healthy products is significantly impacting the growth of entrepreneurship in rural areas and the development of the organic economy. Agri-tourism farms and educational facilities were also able to present themselves at Ekogala, enhancing the appeal of rural areas.

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# FOR THE SAKE OF BIODIVERSITY

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Biodiversity conservation. Pollinator-friendly gardening
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Booklet
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Supporting knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Beekeepers, professionals and hobbyists managing apiaries of various production scales from Opolskie Voivodeship, individuals interested in the subject, and members of beekeeping circles, agricultural advisors, and other individuals with an interest in the topic
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Raising awareness of planting planning in domestic gardens and agriculturally undeveloped areas

In today's rapidly developing world, maintaining biodiversity has become an increasingly crucial task. Biodiversity plays a significant role in preserving environmental harmony and balance. Unfortunately, it is under threat due to human activities, particularly in the context of agricultural intensification.

**Why is biodiversity so important? It is a key component of ecosystems, contributing to nature's stability, adaptability to environmental changes, and biological balance. For this reason, taking action to protect it is essential.**

The 'Protecting Biodiversity' project was established to raise awareness among rural residents about the importance of biodiversity. Its goal was to educate local communities on the critical role biodiversity plays in the environment, marking a step toward a sustainable approach to rural economies that promotes harmonious coexistence between humans and nature.

## How to care for biodiversity?

The booklet created as part of the 'Protecting Biodiversity' programme serves as a valuable guide for those living in rural areas. Inside, readers can find a comprehensive resource on how to plan plantings in home gardens and agriculturally undeveloped areas. Promoting such grassroots initiatives further contributes to biodiversity conservation. By involving rural communities, a range of benefits are achieved, such as the creation of natural



The programme was addressed to people who run apiaries professionally or as a hobby  
photo: Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre



Education is an important element  
in biodiversity awareness  
photo: Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre

habitats for diverse plant and animal species, improved conditions for pollinating insects, and increased populations of organisms beneficial to ecosystems.

In addition to detailed descriptions of melliferous plants, the booklet provides practical tools to support backyard gardening enthusiasts. A calendar included in the publication offers a way to plan work in the home honey garden. This tool not only facilitates the organisation of activities, but also helps to coordinate work with plant flowering cycles, which in turn promotes the optimal use of available nectar resources by bees and other pollinating insects.

### Where is the booklet still available?

The booklet, published in December 2022, has been distributed to various participant groups in initiatives organised by the Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre (OODR). It is available during training sessions, workshops, conferences, and study trips related to beekeeping. Additionally, the booklet is accessible at information and promotion stands during trade fairs. For those who prefer an electronic format, the e-book is permanently available for download from the OODR website ([www.oodr.pl](http://www.oodr.pl)).

The target group for this initiative includes beekeepers – both professional and hobbyists – of various production scales operating in the Opolskie Voivodeship. Additionally, the booklet is aimed at people interested in beekeeping, members of beekeeping circles, agricultural advisors, and anyone seeking to expand their knowledge on the subject.

### A further step towards environmental harmony

The 'Biodiversity in the Home Garden' project was a great success, winning first place in a nationwide competition for the best publication by voivodeship agricultural advisory agencies, organised by the Agricultural Advisory Centre in Brwinów. This exceptional achievement was recognised with a financial award from the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The booklet, being the main product of this initiative, not only enriches knowledge on biodiversity but also provides valuable educational material for the inhabitants of the Opolskie Voivodeship.

Thanks to its distinction in a nationwide competition, the booklet has become more than just a local resource; it now serves as an inspiration for other regions. This is an excellent example of how local initiatives can contribute to national environmental awareness, providing a positive impact on educating the public about conservation issues.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The topic of biodiversity conservation is relevant not only to rural areas but also to urban spaces. One such initiative is the creation of flower meadows, which aim to increase plant diversity, positively impacting both the ecosystem and city dwellers.

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# EFFICIENT AGRICULTURE CAN BE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Environmentally friendly agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship fields
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	May–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference, workshops, demonstrations
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 6: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between actors in rural development, exchange and dissemination of the results of rural development activities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, beekeepers, agricultural advisors, university students and students of agricultural schools, rural residents, individuals interested in healthy and economical nutrition, as well as representatives of research institutions and higher education institutions
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Improving knowledge on how to carry out crop production using environmentally friendly methods

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre based in Boguchwała, in collaboration with the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture, has set out to equip farmers across the Podkarpackie voivodeship with essential information and practical knowledge on how to conduct crop production using safe and environmentally friendly practices.

This initiative was also designed to introduce participants to issues related to agricultural mechanisation and biodiversity. Given the increasing impact of climate change on crop production, the programme also covered this vital topic, with a focus on enhancing the knowledge of agricultural producers in the field of organic farming.

## What about the weeds?

Conducting soil analysis to determine nutrient content and pH is crucial for accurately assessing the nutritional needs of crops. Pests is the general term used to describe diseases, harmful organisms and weeds that have a negative impact on crop yields. They are agents that can lead to reduced crop yield and quality.

Regular inspection and testing of plantations to detect pests and assess overall plant health help minimise the risk of potential damage and reduce unnecessary use of chemicals.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Wild plants, often considered undesirable weeds in gardens, can actually be used in the kitchen or for home cosmetics production. Edible nettle, common dandelion, ribwort, wood sorrel, ground-ivy, chickweed, and many other weeds are valuable sources of nutrients and vitamins. These plants can add variety to dishes such as soups (e.g. nettle soup), sauces (e.g. ribwort plantain pesto), roasts (e.g. chicken with ground-ivy), syrups (dandelion syrup), or cakes (dandelion cake).

## Sustainable agriculture

Reasonable use of plant protection products and fertilisers introduces plant growers to the principles of sustainable agriculture. Limiting pesticide and fertiliser use positively impacts the production of healthy food while contributing to environmental protection.

The balance between economic viability and ecological responsibility is the cornerstone of sustainable agriculture, which aims to produce safe, high-quality agricultural products while safeguarding the environment and improving the socio-economic conditions of farmers, workers, and local communities. Animal health and welfare are also key priorities.

Among the less obvious advantages of sustainable agriculture are:



Workshops organised as part of the operation 'Environmentally friendly agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship fields' photo: Anna Bielańska

- ▶ efficient use of natural resources;
- ▶ production of healthier food;
- ▶ community building through support for local communities;
- ▶ protection of biodiversity;
- ▶ minimising waste and inefficiencies;
- ▶ increasing resilience to climate change;
- ▶ protecting soil fertility.

These benefits make sustainable agriculture an increasingly sought-after model of food production, addressing contemporary challenges by

simultaneously protecting the environment and providing healthy food for society.

Sustainable agricultural practices reduce the negative impact of agricultural production on the environment by minimising water, soil, and air pollution, reducing soil erosion, and promoting biodiversity conservation.

Importantly, sustainable agricultural production is a significant aspect of the common agricultural policy of European Union countries, chosen to combat climate change, protect natural resources, and enhance biodiversity within the Union. The European Union supports organic farming by awarding the EU Organic Award in seven categories.

## How does the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała support organic farming?

The 'Environmentally friendly agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship fields' project is just one of many initiatives by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre. Conferences, training sessions, competitions, and agricultural events are regularly organised to promote modern agriculture, innovative solutions, and the concept of sustainable agriculture. Furthermore, the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre's activities include:

- ▶ Publishing and information services;
- ▶ Advice on innovative technologies in crop production, farm economics and management, ecological production methods, and the promotion of processing development;
- ▶ Support for agricultural entrepreneurship and marketing;
- ▶ Implementation and promotion of scientific research results in practice;



Demonstration field during a workshop organised as part of the 'operation Environmentally friendly agriculture' photo: Anna Bielańska



- ▶ Promotional activities – showcasing industry achievements, best breeding and production results, and product exhibitions at trade shows and fairs;
- ▶ Preparation of economic, financial, and technological studies, as well as assisting clients in completing applications and other documents necessary for applying for aid financed or co-financed by European Union funds or other institutions.

### Developing environmentally friendly Polish agriculture!

The conference dedicated to the rational use of plant protection products and fertilisers brought substantial benefits, particularly to those involved in crop production. Participants gained valuable insights into sustainable agriculture, focusing on the limited use of pesticides and fertilisers, which ensures the production of healthy food while safeguarding the environment.

The cooking workshop, which centred on using wild plants and minimising food waste, comprised a theoretical segment on identifying wild edible plants and a practical session where participants prepared dishes from these plants. Additionally, strategies for effectively utilising food leftovers were discussed.

- ▶ The workshop on recognising pests in crops emphasised the importance of identifying harmful organisms that affect plant yields. The theoretical portion covered the basics of pest recognition, while the practical part enabled participants to apply this knowledge in real-world settings.
- ▶ Demonstrations on optimal plant fertilisation and the use of plant protection products were also divided into theoretical and practical sections. The theoretical segment focused on the operation of technical equipment in field conditions, while the practical part involved analysing data from this equipment, with particular attention to the application of fertilisers and plant protection products.

- ▶ Demonstrations of various beekeeping solutions allowed participants to gain hands-on experience with hive construction and the tools used in the extraction of honey, bee pollen, and wax. The operation not only provided essential knowledge but also encouraged the effective implementation of beekeeping practices.



Results of the cooking workshop based on the use of wild plants photo: Anna Bielańska



Participants during lectures conducted as part of the project 'Environmentally friendly agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship fields'

photo: Anna Bielańska



## What were the results of the project?

The project 'Environmentally friendly agriculture in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship fields' yielded numerous educational and practical outcomes, significantly impacting farmers and agricultural producers. The initiative included a conference and practical workshops, where participants expanded their knowledge of environmentally friendly agriculture, and the rational protection and fertilisation of agricultural crops. Key partners, including the National Support Centre for Agriculture and the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture, were instrumental in preparing the experimental field, promoting the event, and recruiting participants.

This collaboration was vital to the operation's success, with results that exceeded initial expectations and helped to integrate the agricultural community in the Podkarpackie region.

The project focused not only on education but also on providing agricultural producers with access to innovative solutions aimed at reducing the use of plant protection products and fertilisers. This approach facilitated knowledge exchange among participants, promoting integration and cooperation. Participants gained insights into actions to reduce pests, initiatives to enhance profitability, and optimal agricultural solutions.

The audience was encouraged to engage in environmental initiatives, develop skills in identifying pests, and embrace healthy food practices. The project also contributed to the dissemination of research findings and scientific advancements, which in turn improved the profitability and competitiveness of farms, as well as the production of safe food. Additionally, it facilitated the transfer of knowledge within rural areas, promoting social integration and economic development. A notable outcome of the project was the exchange of experiences among farmers in Podkarpackie Voivodeship and the establishment of new contacts.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# RURAL HOSPITALITY IN HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT!

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	In harmony with nature – a study visit to present new concepts for activating rural residents involved in agri-tourism and educational activities
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	July–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Study visit, publication
<b>PRN ACTIVITY:</b>	Activity 11: Activate villagers to undertake initiatives for social inclusion, especially the elderly, young people, the disabled, national minorities and other socially excluded people
<b>RDP PRIORITY:</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, individuals, representatives of governmental, local agricultural institutions and institutions related to agriculture
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Raising awareness of the operation of educational homesteads

The project ‘In harmony with nature’ showcased the operation of agricultural holdings with educational, caregiving, and agri-tourism functions. As part of the initiative, a group of 45 participants embarked on a study tour to the north-western region of Poland, where they had the opportunity to learn about the functioning of educational homesteads.



Toskania Kociewska 2 farm  
photo: Paweł Leżański

This initiative was organised by the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre based in Boguchwała, in cooperation with the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture. The study visit, which took place in Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Pomorskie, and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeships, provided participants with valuable insights into multifunctional farms.

## Key project activities - supporting sustainable development of rural farms

Agri-tourism, educational, and care farms are vital activities within rural environments. These ventures not only fulfil social objectives but also contribute significantly to the development of rural areas. As part of the project, an online publication titled ‘In harmony with nature’ was prepared.

The Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture played a crucial role in selecting participants, promoting the operation, and making information available on its website. Efforts were made throughout the project to choose locations and farms based on their capacity to provide social services and their attractiveness to tourists.

The Toskania Kociewska Foundation engages in various non-agricultural activities, including agri-tourism, a care farm, and an educational homestead. A notable feature of the farm's activities is onotherapy, a therapeutic approach involving donkeys, which is particularly welcoming for those at risk of social exclusion.

In Świecie Poviast, the themed village of Jania Góra, known as the Bread Village, has become a popular tourist destination. Due to the region's agricultural heritage, the village was developed to promote the local culture of bread-making, as well as the village of Jania Góra and Świetakowo municipality.

On 23 May 2009, a ceremony marked the first lighting of the bread oven, with an old threshing machine used to demonstrate traditional threshing methods, bringing the long-lost harvest traditions back to life. An added attraction for tourists are the wooden plaques inscribed with the word 'bread' in various languages, which are displayed on the houses in Jania Góra.

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

In the municipality of Nowe, there is a small lake known as the Witches' Lake, where, according to local legends, witches' rituals and executions were once performed. This secluded lake is located away from the town. Along Witches' Alley, visitors can admire sculptures resembling water nymphs, inspired by the Art Nouveau style, characteristic of artists such as Alfons Mucha and Gustav Klimt. This artistic project was created by Danuta Jankiewicz from the Nowe municipality.

In the village of Bochlin, at the Toskania Kociewska farm, there is an American truck in the yard that offers accommodation for five people. The vehicle is fully equipped and provides guests with a 1970s-style bathroom and kitchen.



Rąciąski Młyn farm  
photo: Magda Żytka

### Results and benefits of the project for the development of the Polish countryside

Wyjazd studyjny był kluczowym elementem osiągnięcia celu operacji. Było The study visit was a pivotal component in achieving the objectives of the operation. It provided participants with valuable insights into various forms of entrepreneurship in rural areas, such as education, agri-tourism, and care services, as well as an understanding of the legal regulations governing these activities.

The implementation of the project positively impacted several areas, including the development of local communities, the bridging of

generational gaps, the promotion of traditional values and cultural heritage, and the enhancement of the farming profession's prestige. By encouraging the introduction of new initiatives and services, the project aimed to inspire the younger generation to remain in rural areas.

The project also laid the groundwork for continued cooperation and experience-sharing among participants.

### List of terms used in the project

**Educational homestead:** An initiative undertaken by the rural community in rural areas that provides opportunities for hosting children and young people participating in school and after-school programmes. The principal aim was to achieve at least two of the following educational objectives:

- ▶ Education related to plant cultivation.
- ▶ Education on animal husbandry.



Toskania Kociewska 2 farm  
photo: Klaudia Konieczna

- ▶ Education related to the processing of agricultural products.
- ▶ Education on ecological issues and consumer awareness.
- ▶ Education on rural cultural heritage, traditional professions, handicrafts, and folk art.

**Agri-tourism:** A form of tourism offering various services in rural areas, including accommodation, meals, and activities such as fishing and horse riding. It allows guests to participate in farm-related activities, providing a genuine rural experience.

**Care farm:** A farm that provides care and social inclusion support services using its infrastructure and agricultural resources.

**Carefarming:** An activity designed for farmers seeking new income sources while also wishing to assist individuals facing challenging life situations..



#### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# EDUCATIONAL HOMESTEADS: SUPPORTING FARM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

<b>TITLE</b>	Educational homestead – a good example of agricultural diversification in rural areas
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Łódź Agricultural Advisory Centre in Bratoszewice
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Study visit
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Owners of educational homesteads, farmers, rural residents, individuals interested in undertaking educational activities, employees of agricultural advisory units
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Improving knowledge on the establishment and operation of educational homesteads

The 'Educational Homestead' project was designed to assist owners of agri-tourism farms in establishing educational homesteads. This initiative leverages the resources of the farm to provide additional educational activities, creating a new income stream for the farm.

## What was the project

As part of the project, a study trip to the Śląskie Voivodeship was organised. Participants had the chance to explore the operation of educational homesteads connected through the 'Educational Homestead Trail of Śląskie Voivodeship'. Each farm visited hosted thematic workshops, allowing participants to gain new knowledge and share insights with the owners. Some of the locations visited included:

- ▶ **Niezapominajka Educational Homestead**  
Participants attended a workshop on oil pressing. The owner, Mr Mirosław Ślęzak, who also serves as the President of the Educational Homestead Trail of Śląskie Voivodeship, shared his experience of setting up the educational trail and provided guidance on how to approach such a project.
- ▶ **Owczarkowa Zagroda Educational Homestead**  
This farm offers a tranquil environment surrounded by animals, including ornamental birds, pheasants, rabbits, geese, and alpacas. Here, participants engaged in a workshop where they created scented wardrobe hangers using soy wax and dried petals.
- ▶ **Maciejówka Educational Homestead**  
Participants had the opportunity to take part in a felting workshop. This farm specialises in workshops with artistic and culinary themes, offering insights into traditional rural life, such as butter and cheese making, bread baking, and regional handicrafts.



Works made by participants of the study visit to the Maciejówka Educational Homestead, photo: Justyna Kożuchowska



- ▶ **Stefanówka Educational Homestead**  
At this location, participants joined a floristry workshop. The homestead offers a wide range of educational activities, including Welsh pony breeding, regional culture, and various culinary classes such as baking bread, cookies, and pizza, as well as dairy processing, preserve preparation, and traditional Polish dishes. The farm is home to many animals, including goats, sheep, cows, horses, and alpacas.
- ▶ **Wierus Fruit and Nursery Farm**  
During the workshop, participants toured the orchard and had the opportunity to squeeze and taste freshly pressed apple juice.

### Main objectives of the project

The initiative aimed to demonstrate the educational opportunities that come with running a farm. The workshop programme also provided participants with an understanding of the process involved in establishing an educational homestead. Facilitators highlighted the wide range of educational aspects that can be incorporated into such an enterprise, encouraging participants to consider various possibilities when planning their own projects.



Felting workshop at the Maciejówka Educational Homestead photo: Justyna Kożuchowska

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

An educational homestead is a rural initiative designed to meet at least two of the following educational objectives:

Education in crop production

Education in animal production

Education in crop processing

Education in environmental and consumer awareness

Education on rural material culture, traditional professions, handicrafts, and folk art.

An educational homestead should feature agricultural crops or animals that can be demonstrated to children and young people during educational workshops.



Alpacas at the Owczarkowa Zagroda Educational Homestead  
photo: Justyna Kożuchowska

### Benefits for the participants

The programme attracted 30 individuals interested in establishing their own educational homesteads. The study trip facilitated networking between the hosts of the visited homesteads, potential future owners of similar ventures, and representatives from advisory and scientific fields. These newly formed connections are intended to promote the exchange of knowledge and ideas, fostering innovation in educational initiatives across the rural areas of Łódzkie Voivodeship.

Following the training, participants completed an evaluation questionnaire, which indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programme. Many expressed a keen interest in participating

in similar initiatives in the future. The visits to the educational homesteads were particularly praised for providing new insights and being a highly engaging experience.

Information about the opportunity to visit these educational homesteads was also made available on the Łódź Agricultural Advisory Centre, ensuring that it reached a wide audience.

#### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# ON CLOSE TERMS WITH ECOLOGY!

<b>TITLE</b>	On close terms with ecology in Opolskie Voivodeship
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Opolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	May–August 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Environmental workshops
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 6: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between actors in rural development, exchange and dissemination of the results of rural development activities
<b>RDP PRIORITY:</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Children in primary school grades I–III
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Promoting rural areas in the Opolskie Voivodeship through the presentation of tourism potential and culinary and cultural heritage of the Opole region

Environmental workshops  
photo: Piotr Kobiela



The project targeted primary school children in grades I–III, with the objective of promoting environmental awareness while also highlighting the rural areas of Opolskie Voivodeship, showcasing their tourism potential, and celebrating their cultural heritage.

As part of the initiative, two training cycles were conducted, each consisting of 10 workshops. These workshops aimed to introduce participants to ecological concepts and demonstrate how to care for nature. The design and content of the workshops were specifically tailored to engage a young audience.

## Segregating and reducing plastic waste

One of the workshops focused on the challenge of reducing plastic waste. The children were tasked with stopping the 'Plastic Monster' from hoarding plastic waste. Acting as superheroes, they used the information they learned about plastic production, its history, and smart shopping habits to reduce waste.

## The role of vegetation in the ecosystem

In another workshop, the children learned about ecosystems, among other things. To make the learning process more enjoyable, the workshop included

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

An ecosystem is an ecological system composed of various species of plants and animals, along with the processes that occur between them and their non-living environment. In an ecosystem, the environment affects the organisms living within it, and the organisms, in turn, influence the environment. Examples of ecosystems include forests, meadows, swamps, jungles, oceans, cultivated fields, and pine plantations.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

A single plastic bottle takes about 500 years to decompose.  
Plastic waste dumped into seas and rivers is a major cause of death for birds and aquatic mammals.  
18 trees are needed to produce one tonne of paper.

a game with pictures of plants and animals, using a hula hoop and threads to create connections between them.

During the workshop, topics such as the following were covered: How do plants produce oxygen and influence human well-being? Why are plants planted along roads and in cities? Can plants serve as natural pollution barriers? How can plants be used to monitor humidity levels in homes? Each child also had the opportunity to create a green painting from collected stones, plants, and sticks, a green installation using plastic waste, or a mini forest in a jar.



Environmental workshops 'Forest in a jar'  
photo: Piotr Kobiela



Environmental workshops 'Forest in a jar'  
photo: Piotr Kobiela

## Knowledge gained from the workshop

The children left the workshops with an enriched understanding of ecosystems, the relationship between plants, animals, and humans, and how to care for the environment to ensure its longevity.

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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# NOT ONLY TASTY AND HEALTHY, BUT ALSO BEAUTIFUL!

## FOOD DECORATION WORKSHOP

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	The art of carving – food decoration workshop
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	April–October 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Workshop
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 6: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between actors in rural development, exchange and dissemination of the results of rural development activities
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Representatives of Rural Women's Associations, owners of agri-tourism farms, farmers interested in starting agri-tourism activity, representatives of the PRN Partner and additional PRN Partner
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Enhancing participants' knowledge and skills in fruit and vegetable decoration

Participants during the carving workshop  
photo: Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



It's long been understood that we eat not just with our mouths but with our eyes too. The aesthetics of food play a significant role in gastronomy and, more broadly, in tourism. One captivating method of food decoration is carving – the art of sculpting fruit and vegetables – which was the focus of workshops organised by the Turystyczna Podkova Local Action Group Association.

The goal of this initiative was to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in creating fruit and vegetable decorations through a series of workshops. Additionally, the project aimed to promote equal opportunities, particularly for women, in supporting local development. It also encouraged participants to explore supplementary income streams beyond agriculture, utilising the skills acquired during the workshops.

### Target audience

The workshop was designed for various groups interested in advancing agri-tourism and local initiatives. Participants included members of Rural Women's Associations, representatives of the PRN partner, owners of existing agri-tourism farms, and farmers considering similar ventures.

A total of 75 participants from seven different municipalities in Małopolskie Voivodeship, including Dobczyce, Lubień, Pcim, Raciechowice, Siepraw, Tokarnia, and Wiśniowa, took part in the workshop. These communes are within the operational area of the PRN Partner.

### Radish flowers and a banana dolphin - carving in practice

During the workshop, participants delved into the world of artistic food decoration, learning the techniques and principles of carving. Under the guidance of Anna Górlńska, the participants crafted unique decorations such as



## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The art of carving originated in the Far East, with roots tracing back to antiquity. This technique is particularly well-developed in Japan, where it is known as mikimono.

Initially, carving involved simple decoration of fruit and vegetables, but over time, the craft evolved to include intricate shapes created with specialised knives. In some countries, there are even carving festivals, although carving is most commonly associated with other events – such as Halloween, when pumpkins are carved.

flowers made from radishes, carrots, courgettes, cabbage, beetroot, and even spicy chilli peppers. Other creations included a pear hedgehog with grapes, a swan made from an apple, a teddy bear carved from an orange, and a dolphin sculpted from a banana.

These vibrant fruit and vegetable compositions are not only visually appealing but also serve practical purposes in agri-tourism activities. They

enable participants to showcase their culinary creations in an eye-catching way at various events such as harvest festivals, exhibitions, and fairs. The workshop has become a platform for learning and practice, as well as a space for the exchange of experience, knowledge, and inspiration between participants.

### What were the project results?

The effects of the operation include the following achievements:

- ▶ putting the newly acquired skills into practice by owners of agritourism farms in order to enrich their tourist offer and improve the quality of services;
- ▶ practical application of the newly acquired skills by members of Rural Women's Associations to decorate tables and dishes at regional food competitions and during various events such as fairs, harvest festivals, and other events promoting the region;
- ▶ increasing the qualifications of those involved in rural tourism;
- ▶ the transfer of acquired skills by workshop participants to others.

Networking between the participants and the project partners was an additional value, creating opportunities for further cooperation on future projects. By implementing the project again, the PRN partner recognised the huge potential in the local community and the importance of integrating the local community.

Results of the participants' work  
photo: Małopolskie Voivodeship Marshal's Office



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# EFFECTIVE HERBS, EFFECTIVELY ON HERBS! CONFERENCE AT THE PODKARPACIE VOIVODESHIP AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY CENTRE

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Effectiveness of herbs for use in natural cosmetics and cooking
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Boguchwała
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	March 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Conference
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, academia, institutions supporting agriculture, persons interested in the proposed subject
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Supporting networking between farmers, advisors, representatives of scientific institutions, and representatives of agricultural institutions

The event aimed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences among farmers, advisors, and representatives of scientific and agricultural institutions. Its primary objective was to implement innovations related to the cultivation and application of herbs in rural areas. Herbalism was intended to enhance the attractiveness of agritourism farms. Participants were encouraged to use herbs in households and cosmetics, with a particular emphasis on their use in cooking – adding unique flavour qualities to dishes.

## Herbs as part of the regional brand

The participants learned that herbs can be an excellent element in creating a regional brand and promoting Podkarpackie Voivodeship. This is an important part of local culture, offering opportunities for visibility both in domestic and international markets.

## Conference on herbs

As part of the project, a conference for 350 people was organised. Key topics included:

- ▶ Herbs in cosmetics,
- ▶ The use of herbs in cooking,
- ▶ The role of herbs in aesthetic medicine,
- ▶ A diet rich in herbs.

The significant historical and future importance of herbs was highlighted, showing how herbalism can influence the development and promotion of rural areas.

The conference was held in a hybrid format. A studio was set up



Conference: Effectiveness of herbs for use in natural cosmetics and cooking  
photo: Małgorzata Wilk

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Herb growing has become increasingly profitable over the years. In the Podkarpackie region, it is approaching the profitability of basic cereal, root, and oilseed crops.

at the Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre, from where presentations were broadcast via YouTube and WebEX. This allowed participation from 21 Poviats Agricultural Advisory Teams. All attendees also received essential training materials.

## Why herbs?

Knowing that we have products that are not only healthy, but also capable of strengthening the local brand, can significantly help the development of agricultural holdings and agrotourism farms. Consumers are increasingly demanding organic, healthy food grown to the highest standards. Herbalism meets these needs. It is not only used in gastronomy – although it gives dishes a unique taste and character – but also has health benefits and applications in medicine and cosmetics.

Live streaming of the conference: Effectiveness of herbs for use in natural cosmetics and cooking  
photo: Małgorzata Wilk



Conference: Effectiveness of herbs for use in natural cosmetics and cooking  
photo: Małgorzata Wilk



## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Phytotherapy (herbal medicine) is defined in one definition as a branch of medicine and pharmacology that deals with the use of herbs in the prevention and treatment of diseases. Herbal medicines are made from natural or processed raw materials.

The conference facilitated knowledge exchange and aimed at networking and establishing cooperation between existing organic farms and processing plants with those looking to develop in this direction.

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# ŚWIĘTOKRZYSKA KUŹNIA SMAKÓW – ON A CULINARY TRAIL

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Supporting the development of the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków culinary trail as a tool for branding high-quality local food products
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Modliszewice
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June–December 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Training, conference, certification, entities verification, website update
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 2: Networking activities for advisers and services supporting the implementation of innovation in rural areas
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 1: Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry, and rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	Farmers, traditional foodstuff producers, owners of agritourism farms, small scale food producers, entrepreneurs, members of Farm Wives Associations, representatives of agricultural advisory units in Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, representatives of bodies and organs supporting agriculture and rural areas, interested in the subject
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Establishing cooperation and networking among local producers of regional and traditional foods from Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship

The project aimed to facilitate cooperation and relationship-building among local producers of regional and traditional food from Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship.

The activities utilised the local brand and supported the development of the culinary trail ‘Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków’ (ŚKS®), which is an innovative tourist product.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków is one of the largest culinary trails in Poland. The project involves 103 establishments, including 15 restaurants and 11 agritourism farms. The remaining participants are traditional product producers.

At the same time, it aimed to transfer knowledge about novel solutions in the production, promotion, and sale of such food products and establish business contacts among the involved parties.

Interestingly, each restaurant on the trail features a special menu: ‘Regional Cuisine Dishes – Świętokrzyskie Flavours’. But that’s not all!



In the restaurants and agritourism farms belonging to Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków, you can find the so-called Kredens Świętokrzyski, a place in the form of a cupboard, shelf, or a type of stand showcasing traditional products. This form promotes local products better and fosters business contacts.

Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków is a patented and registered trademark.

### **The Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Modliszewice - What do they do on a daily basis?**

The Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre in Modliszewice is an institution that provides various services for agriculture, including advice related to the development of this sector.

The Centre:

- ▶ oferuje wsparcie i porady rolnikom w zakresie uprawy roślin, hodowli zwierząt, agrotechniki, zarządzania  
Offers support and advice to farmers on crop cultivation, animal husbandry, agronomy, farm management, and financial planning;
- ▶ Organises training and workshops for farmers, providing up-to-date information and best practices related to agriculture and food production;
- ▶ Promotes local agricultural products and food, encouraging farmers to produce high-quality traditional products;
- ▶ Supports projects and initiatives aimed at developing rural infrastructure, rural tourism, and agritourism.

### **It was intensive - training, conference, and certification!**

As part of the project, verification and subsequent certification of new entities joining the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków were carried out. 27 new entities were certified.

Additionally, a training session: **'Development of the High-Quality Food Product Market Based on the Functioning of the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków Culinary Trail'** was held for all interested parties. Participation was mandatory for entities seeking certification.

During the training, participants gained new knowledge, shared experiences, and established business contacts.

The penultimate stage of the project was the **conference 'Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków - local brand'**, which was attended by 100 people. The conference was an opportunity to taste the products of new companies joining



Certification participants  
photo: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre in Modliszewice



the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków and to receive certificates and plaques with the logo of the culinary trail. The conference included presentations and networking opportunities, allowing participants to expand their knowledge and establish collaborations.

The project concluded with an update of the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków website ([www.swietokrzyskakuzniasmakow.pl](http://www.swietokrzyskakuzniasmakow.pl)).

### **Project summary - what has been achieved?**

One of the most significant achievements of the project was the updating of the database of institutions belonging to the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków culinary trail. This has enabled the expansion of the offer, increased the attractiveness of the local brand and achieved national recognition as the culinary showcase of the region.

The logo of the Świętokrzyska Kuźnia Smaków itself became more recognisable, and products bearing this symbol are perceived by consumers as high-quality products with exceptional taste qualities.



Preserves  
photo: Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship Agricultural  
Advisory Centre in Modliszewice

#### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

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- ▶ [gwia@sodr.pl](mailto:gwia@sodr.pl)
- ▶ [www.swietokrzyskakuzniasmakow.pl](http://www.swietokrzyskakuzniasmakow.pl)

# HOW TO PROMOTE LOCAL PRODUCTS AND BRANDS? 'ON THE PLUM TRAIL'

<b>TITLE OF OPERATION</b>	Promotion of the local product and brand on the example of the Plum Trail – exchange of good practices
<b>IMPLEMENTED BY</b>	'Podkowa' Local Action Group
<b>COMPLETION DATE</b>	June–September 2022
<b>FORM OF IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Study visit
<b>PRN ACTIVITY</b>	Activity 4: Training and networking activities for Local Action Groups (LAGs), including provision of technical assistance for inter-territorial and international cooperation
<b>RDP PRIORITY</b>	Priority 6: Supporting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	LAG members, representatives of Rural Women's Associations, local associations, as well as farmers, entrepreneurs, and residents interested in the visits
<b>OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATION</b>	Good practices for local product and private label operations

The study visit showcased effective actions related to local products and building one's brand within the 'Na śliwkowym szlaku' [On the Plum Trail] Association. The initiative involved 31 representatives from the Local Action Group (LAG) 'Podkowa' and 'Przymierze Jeziorsko' Association.

The freeze-drying process consists of three stages: freezing, sublimation, and desorption. The device used for this preservation method is called a freeze-dryer. Freeze-dried regional food can be an excellent idea for a local business.



Carpatina freeze-dried fruits  
photo: Paulina Stańczyk

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Freeze-drying is an effective preservation method valued for its delicacy. In this process, water is removed from a frozen product through the sublimation of ice, meaning the ice turns directly into water vapour, bypassing the liquid phase. The entire process takes place at low temperatures and reduced pressure, making it the most economical preservation method.

## Local products

Local products have an advantage over imported ones as they are not transported over long distances, preserving their freshness and being harvested at maturity. This allows for full enjoyment of their taste and nutritional value. Additionally,

Participants of the study visit to a homestead in Pacany  
photo: Paulina Stańczyk



supporting local suppliers builds demand for specific goods and helps the regional market.

Polish regional and traditional products can be protected by the European Union. To obtain such protection, an application for registration must be submitted. Geographical indications within the EU establish intellectual property rights for specific products whose properties are inextricably linked to the region where they are produced.

The practical knowledge of local producers can be an enormous support for those starting their own production in the region. Therefore, it is worth taking advantage of projects such as 'Promotion of local product and brand based on the example of the Plum Trail – exchange

of good practices,' which enable the exchange of experiences, methods, promotion strategies, and conclusions with more experienced farmers and entrepreneurs.

### Helpful contacts

Establishing contacts among local business groups is typical networking, building beneficial relationships where both parties benefit and achieve their goals. Networking is based on trust and skill-sharing. Examples of such activities can be industry meetings and events, conferences, study trips, fairs, or product exhibitions. Especially valuable during such conferences are conversations, exchange of views, and expanding contacts.

For knowledge exchange, study visits are recommended as they offer an educational programme, meetings with other entrepreneurs, and often include a tourist and entertainment programme. Attractions are meant to foster integration within the industry and build a network of trusted contacts.

### What does a study visit look like? The 'On the Plum Trail' project

A large group of residents from the Local Action Groups 'Podkowa' and 'Przymierze Jeziorsko' participated in a fascinating study visit to the area of activity of the Local Action Group 'Na Śliwkowym Szlaku' [On the Plum Trail]. The pleasure of exploring hospitable Małopolska was made possible through fruitful partnerships and funding from the European Union's Technical Assistance Scheme II under the Polish Rural Network.

Observation tower on Szpilówka  
photo: Paulina Stańczyk



The initiative showcased effective practices in promoting local products, regional culture, tourism, brand creation, and entrepreneurship in rural areas, based on the use of local resources. On the first day, participants visited the Manor in Korzenna, where they met with a representative from the Korzenna Cultural Centre.



They visited the Culinary Incubator in Korzenna, where they participated in its launch and tasted local products. They met with the 'Mogilskie Cisy' Association and tasted Korzenna gingerbread. They toured the highest observation tower in Małopolska, a result of an EU-funded investment project. They also attended a regional dinner, where the Plum Trail own brand was presented.

On the second day, there was a meeting with a representative of the Wczoraj Dziś i Jutro Association, where the 'Plum Trail Inspirations' were presented. There was also a lecture on local products and the principles of obtaining Plum Trail®

certification, using the example of the Gródek-Rożnów voyage. Participants met with the owner of the Roztoka – Brzeziny mill settlement and visited the mill settlement and a field of organic spelt cultivation. There was also a meeting with representatives of the Stowarzyszenie Wiedza i Rozwój and the Stowarzyszenie Przyjaciół Ziemi Czchowskiej, dedicated to a military-historical educational trail. The participants visited the Jaśkowy Orchard and met with the owners of the Nowizny Vineyard. A visit to Zagroda na Pacanach resulted in a presentation of the comprehensive local brand PACANOWE POLE® and local product workshops under the slogan 'Purple frenzy – plum handicrafts and more'.

The third day provided an opportunity to enjoy breakfast prepared with local products. Participants visited a fruit and vegetables processing plant, a coffee roasting facility where they tasted local coffee, and an orchard farm specialising in dried plums production.

### **Effects of the study visit by 'Podkowa' Local Action Group**

The participants were fully engaged and actively participated in meetings and fruitful discussions with representatives of the 'On the Plum Trail' Association. They asked many questions, built fruitful relationships, established cooperation, and shared their valuable experiences and contacts.

The project partners collaborated excellently at various stages, participating in the development of the application for selection of operations, recruiting participants, and actively promoting and informing about the project on their websites and through various means of communication, including the popular social media platform Facebook.

The objectives of increasing knowledge of local products, brand management, and harnessing the potential of rural areas were achieved. An added value of the project was the emergence of promising ideas and the desire to undertake joint projects by the local action groups involved in the project.

In summary surveys, 97% of the participants stated that the study visit met their expectations to a very high degree and 3% to a high degree. The usefulness of the information gained in terms of improving skills and knowledge was also rated very high by 97% of respondents and high by 3%. The same ratings were given for the content preparation of the visit.

The organisers also asked participants about their interest in possible future projects of this kind. The most frequently mentioned topics for future training and workshops were handicrafts and fruit drying. There was also considerable interest in healthy eating, grape growing, and wine making.

#### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

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## Wykaz skrótów w dokumencie

KGW – Rural Women’s Association

EDUCO – Non-Public Educational Institution EDUCO

PODR – Podkarpackie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

PRN – Polish Rural Network

EU – European Union

Associate PhD – Associate Professor

M.Sc., Eng. – master of sciences, engineer

RDP/RDP 2014–2020 – Rural Development Programme for 2014–2020

MROT – Mazovian Regional Tourist Organisation

PZERiI – Polski Związek Emerytów, Rencistów i Inwalidów (Polish Association of Pensioners and Handicapped)

DODR – Dolnośląskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

KPODR – Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

IBA – Important Bird Area

ART – Agricultural Retail Trade

NSCA – National Support Centre for Agriculture

RTK – Real-Time Kinematic

TVP – Telewizja Polska S.A.

mln – million

MD – medical doctor

PhD – doctor of philosophy

cm – centimetre

UR – University of Rzeszów

M.Sc., Eng. – master of sciences, engineer

OODR – Opolskie Voivodeship Agricultural Advisory Centre

PIR – Podkarpackie Voivodeship Chamber of Agriculture

LAG – local action group

KDK – Kamieński Dom Kultury (Kamień Pomorski Cultural Centre)

PIWI – Pilzwiderstandsfähig



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