

## **Annex II**

### *Cases description*



***Social/Care Farming in Belgium***  
**State of the Art for “So Far” project**  
***(Social Services in Multifunctional Farms)***  
**EU FPVI**

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# Family Farm Dirk and Anita Decoster - Baeyens

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*“The most important thing in care farming is to stay a farmer and not become a therapist”*

## Short description of the case study

### Some key words

- family farm
- mentally disabled
- dairy farm
- psychiatric patients
- countryside
- small scale

The farm of the family Baeyens-Decoster is a dairy farm in the region Pajottenland (Flanders, Belgium). They started with green care 3 years ago (2003), and since that moment, on average 3 people stay 1 day per week, during the whole year. The clients of the farm are psychiatric patients and people who are mentally disabled.

The clients appreciate the individual attention on the farm and the fact that they know that they have their own place. On the other hand, the green care on the farm gives the farm family a broader view on life, and they also look with new eyes to their own life situation. The conditions for success are the small scale of the project, the household atmosphere, the possibility to work with animals, and the idea of back to basic.

## Short description of the farm

The family farm is situated in ‘het Pajottenland’, in Flanders. It is a rural area in the neighbourhood of Brussels. The dairy farm consists of 90 cows and has a production quota of 504 000 litres of milk. The cows belong to a protected double purpose breed and the farmer gets a premium for the conservation of this breed. They cultivate 60 hectares of grass and corn. The green care on the farm is limited to 3 persons that work 1 day per week on the farm.

## Starting with green care

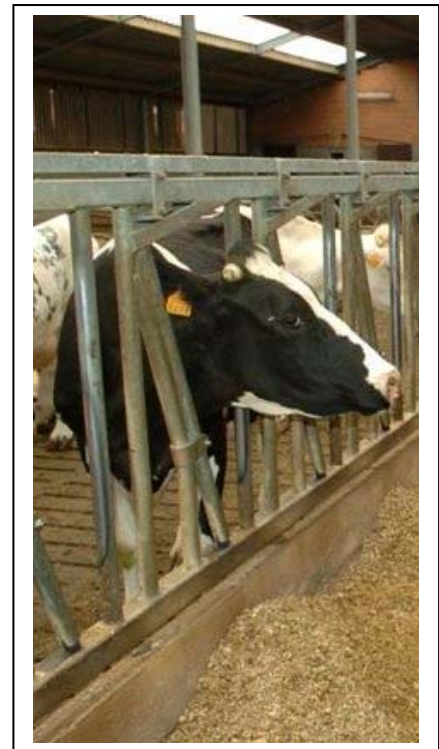
In 2003 they started with green care on the farm. The wife had studied social assistant and was working on the public centre of social welfare of the municipality. They read something about care farming and took contact with Rural Home Care (2002). First they had the idea to work with elderly people, but those people felt themselves inconvenient on the farm. Because of this reason, the first contacts didn't result in the start of green care on the farm.

One year later, in 2003, they get in touch with a centre for mentally disabled people. Since that moment 3 people are working on the farm 1 day per week. The clients are mentally disabled, but are living apart. They need a fixed structure regarding their tasks on the farm. The clients come to the farm on different days: they get individual attention, the work is adapted to their possibilities and they know that they have their own place on the farm.

## Motivation

Their interest in green care started from the education of the women. She wanted to stay at home and work at the farm, but still being involved in a broader network and meeting non-farming people. Their main motivations are the following:

- the gratitude of the clients, the fact that they feel good on the farm
- to have a broader view on life in general and life of the clients, and to look different to their own situation



*“The gratitude and the fact that clients feel good on the farm are an important motivation. You get something in return which you can't express in words ...”*

### A project based on quality, not on quantity...

The scale project has not increased during the last 3 years. The main occupation of the farming family stays agriculture. Less than 1% of the income is related with green care. One of the main principles of the farmer and the farmer's wife is that they never ask to the clients what happened with them. If there is something that they have to know in relation with the work on the farm, the supervisors will tell them.

The quality of the project is based on:

- The small scale of the project: each client comes 1 day per week from 9.30 till 13.30h. As they are the only client on that day, they get individual attention, the work is adapted to their possibilities (e.g. take care of the calves)
- The household atmosphere: clients feel at home on the farm.
- The possibility to work with animals: animals do not have prejudices, they do not ask questions...
- The idea of back to basic

The green care on the farm didn't ask for investments or changes on the farm. The clients are fit in the daily life. They work as a volunteer but a contract between the farmer, Rural Home Care and the institute of the clients is made in order to arrange responsibility and insurance.

**Table** – Main data related with green care on family farm Decoster-Baeyens

<b>Start of project</b>	2003
<b>Number of clients</b>	3 (both male and female)
<b>Numbers of days per client per week</b>	1 day per client per week
<b>Working hours of clients</b>	4 hours per day (9.30h – 13.30h)
<b>Payment of expenses</b>	10 € / half a day (meal included)
<b>Subsidies</b>	20 € / half a day
<b>Special investments</b>	-
<b>Financial importance agriculture – green</b>	agriculture: 99% green care: 1 %

### Problems, prospects and the key to success

Until now, they didn't experience any problems and the cooperation with the institute and Rural Home Care is very good. In the future, they will make a separate room for the clients, but there is no hurry: everything can grow in a smooth way. According to the farmer's wife, the key to success is stay yourself, and stay farmer: you don't have to work in a therapeutical way. The most important thing is that clients can participate in the daily life.

