

CHAPTER 7

THE CONTRIBUTION OF CARE FARMS TO LANDSCAPES OF THE FUTURE

A challenge of multifunctional agriculture

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Abstract. In the European context, multifunctionality is considered one of the goals of agriculture. It can present an alternative strategy besides the dominant trend to minimize labour input. Production of food can be combined with social functions, like providing space for recreation, the care for landscapes or the care for disabled or less privileged people. This chapter considers the question whether the approach to Farming for Health could also include care and therapy for nature and landscape. It appears from sociological surveys that landscape quality is generally associated with small-scale farming. On the other hand, the reasons for farmers to take care of nature and landscape consciously much depend on personal motivation. Traditional family farms usually have less time and financial support to integrate such aims than farms that integrate clients in their farming system. A survey among 48 German care farms with former drug addicts – only few of them traditional family farms – confirms that a majority of them regard landscape and nature management as preferred activities for their clients. The sense of handwork, the great variety of different tasks, natural rhythms of growth, the connection to nature and the contact with animals are reported as significant contributions to restore identity and self-esteem. Taking this seriously, Farming for Health has a large potential to enhance landscape quality.

Keywords: care farm; multifunctional; landscape quality; landscape perception

FARMING FOR HEALTH AND MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF AGRICULTURE

During a discussion about the term ‘Farming for Health’ at the conference in Vorden in April 2004 some of the participants stated that the problem with this term would be that ‘farming’ today is considered mainly *exploitation of the land*. The modern way of farming needs little labour compared to the situation only some decades ago but causes environmental problems as side-effect (Green and Vos 2001).

The term ‘Farming for Health’ (FH) summarizes a wide spectrum of different kinds of social agriculture, such as care farms that integrate disabled people or

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former drug addicts into their farming system, or farms that integrate children or pupils or older people (see other chapters in this book). But only some decades ago farming in general had many social functions and was less focused on the mere production of cash crops than today. Moreover, farming contributed to the diversity of rural or 'cultural' landscapes and their richness of species, whereas the image of modern farming techniques is that they are responsible for the decline of many plants and animals in the landscape.

Multifunctionality is considered one of the future goals of agriculture that could counterbalance a further reduction of expensive human labour (Dramstad and Sogge 2003). Such multi-functions can be to combine the production of food with social functions, like providing space for recreation, the care for landscapes or the care for disabled people (Lenhard et al. 1997; Keser and Van Elsen 1997). Could the approach to FH also include care and therapy for nature and landscapes? Are there already examples of combining such aspects of multifunctionality? And, first of all, can multifunctionality play a role in enhancing a feeling of identity?

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF AGRICULTURE AS SOLUTION FOR A LOSS OF IDENTITY?

Research suggests that the relationship people have with nature and landscape also forms their opinions about it and thus constitutes part of their identity. Loss of identity is one of the problems experienced in the care for former drug addicts and other less favoured groups in society. Referring to this relationship of people with nature and landscape, farmers in The Netherlands, for example, appear to have a predominantly functional landscape image with highest preference for well-kept nature with meadow birds and for grassland rich in flowers. Ecologists and tourists on the other hand prefer the more arcadian landscapes or the 'official' nature reserves, with rugged and water-rich nature. Farmers also much more appreciate the nature value of grasslands than ecologists (Aarts and Van Woerkum 1994).

But not only farmers have a functional relationship with landscape. Also lay people in their spare time can develop such a functional relationship, like, e.g., anglers, hunters, bird-sporters and landscape-management volunteers. Filius et al. (2000) put out 240 questionnaires (response 78%) in these groups. The results indicate that the definition of nature differs between these Dutch population groups, reflecting their personal experiences and needs (Figure 1). Whereas the vast majority of people regard swamps as real nature, almost half of the anglers have a different opinion. Especially birdwatchers are very critical of commonplace birds (starlings and pheasants), whereas meadow birds apparently symbolize pure nature for them.

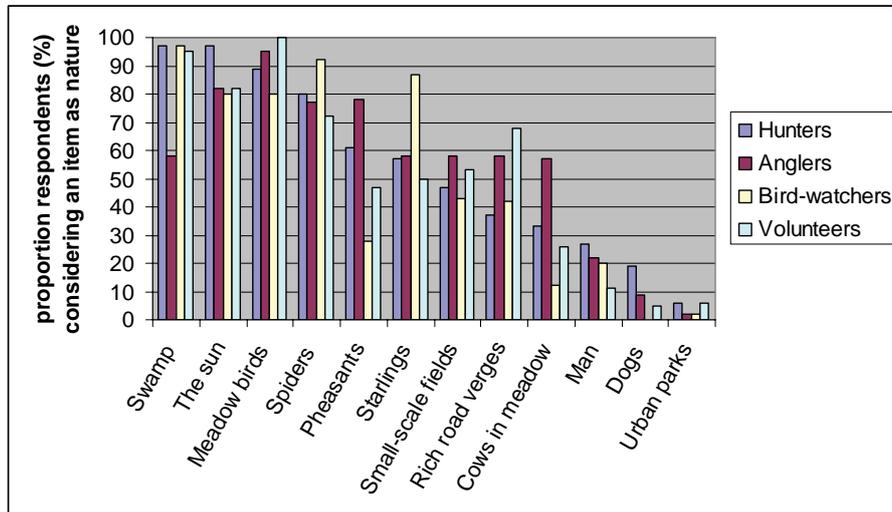


Figure 1. Proportion of respondents regarding an item as real nature (The Netherlands, source: Filius et al. 2000)

In general, hunters hold relatively anthropocentric values concerning nature and landscape (Table 1). They appreciate the functional or life-support aspects of the landscape much more than birdwatchers, who especially value the hedonistic and intrinsic values. The latter regard landscape partly as décor, but complemented with normative values on the importance of conserving valuable landscapes. Most interesting in the context of FH is the group of volunteers in landscape management activities. Their functional relationship with the landscape often concerns farmland and farmers. Surprisingly, their top priority are not meadow birds, but other, more Arcadian, features of landscape are also greatly appreciated (Figure 1). The relationship of all groups (except anglers) with agrarian landscapes seems to result in a greater appreciation of small-scale rural areas. This is exactly where FH can play a crucial role.

Table 1. Proportion of respondents agreeing with certain statements (The Netherlands, source: Filius et al. 2000)

Statements	General population (%)	Hunters (%)	Anglers (%)	Birdwatchers (%)	Volunteers (%)
People may change nature for their own needs	54	67	22	5	30
Mankind may rule over nature	22	36	23	3	0
Man-induced change of the environment causes serious difficulties	85	67	64	87	80

FARMING FOR HEALTHY LANDSCAPES

The appearance of cultural landscapes in Europe is strongly influenced by agriculture (Van der Ploeg et al. 2002). For example, about 50% of Germany's land is farmed land; including forestry even more than 80%. Today only 3% of the population is engaged in agriculture, creating the landscape for all others. Landscape is a production area for farmers. But landscape is also a place for living, working, home, experience, recreation, moving through and making connections.

In former times cultural landscapes were a by-product of an 'agri-culture' with lots of handwork, whereas today a diverse and aesthetic landscape is preserved and developed only by active decisions and means. Even on organic farms cultural landscapes do not appear automatically as by-products of organic farming methods.

The conversion to organic farming can be the starting point for higher biodiversity. The realization of this potential depends on whether the farmers recognize nature and landscape development as objectives of their farming style and whether they succeed to integrate these into their agricultural practice. During a project 'Optimizing nature conservation on organic farms' (supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds of the Federal Environmental Ministry) farms that implement approaches of nature conservation into their practice were investigated (Van Elsen et al. 2003): What are the intentions of these farmers to deal with questions of nature conservation and landscape development, and, furthermore, to create and develop their landscape actively? Which circumstances allow such initiatives? What are the motives behind them?

The following hypotheses were the starting point of this investigation:

- There are organic farms that are an exception among organic farms concerning their engagement in nature conservation and landscape development.
- The motives that lead to actions differ.
- Different ways of acting and different systems of knowledge are applied in order to find ideas and to realize means of landscape development.

Due to the lack of previous investigations an explorative approach was chosen. In various regions of Germany 13 interviews were carried out on organic farms belonging to different certifying organizations. A wide spectrum of farms with respect to size, geographical location, structure, social structure and assumed farmers' intentions were chosen. The interviews were elaborated using methods of qualitative social analysis (Mayring 1988; Strauss and Corbin 1996).

The results show that the motives of the farmers are exceptionally intrinsic in nature. Especially their relation to nature is very important. Two types can be identified, one of an 'intimacy' relation to nature, which is characterized by a close connection to nature and landscape including feelings and the ability of 'living within'. The other type is characterized by a 'more distant' relationship to nature. This confirms earlier research on the relationship of people with landscape and nature (e.g. Van den Berg 1999; Luginbühl 2001).

With respect to the reasons for acting, again two types can be found: the protection of endangered plant and animal species and biotopes on the one hand and a phenomenological approach with a strong connection and reflection of own experiences on the other. Such farmers more strongly have the whole farm in mind.

One interesting result was that traditional family farms usually have less time and financial support to integrate such aims than farms that work together with clients in their farming system.

CARE FARMS FOR FORMER DRUG ADDICTS

Based on these results an investigation was set up in 2004/2005 to get an overview of German farms integrating former drug addicts and their therapy, and of the engagement of such farms in landscape development and nature conservation (Günther 2005). The benefit of such farms for society is quite obvious: working on a farm can offer new perspectives for addicted people and can support therapy, which makes integration of these clients into society easier. The hypothesis of the investigation was that, at the same time, such care farms can also contribute to landscape development and nature conservation.

Ninety-seven questionnaires were sent to care farms with former drug addicts all over Germany. Fifty-two per cent of these could be used for the survey, 28 % of the institutions did not answer and 16 % answered that the amount of their farming activities was not comparable to a full size farm.

Table 2 shows the size of the farms that integrate clients. The smallest farm has a therapeutic garden of 200 m² with a glasshouse; the biggest is 230 ha; the average is 36 ha. Of these farms 40% are organic and 44% conventional.

Table 2. Size of the farms that integrate clients (n = 48)

Size of the farmland		< 1 ha	≥ 1 and < 10 ha	≥10 and < 50 ha	≥ 50 ha
Number of farms		7	18	10	13
Proportion of total surveyed (%)		14.0	36.0	20.0	26.0
Area of farmland (ha)		0.52	4.30	20.64	102.48
Area of arable land (ha)		0.31	1.43	9.25	46.93
Area of grassland (ha)		0.07	2.80	11.01	53.32
Structure	Parcels united	5	11	2	5
	Parcels partly united	0	1	6	5
	Parcels spread	0	4	1	3
Method	Organic	3	5	3	9
	Conventional	1	12	6	3
	Other	2	1	2	1

Almost all of these farms belong to a hospital or an institution for rehabilitation or social therapy. They receive an important amount of their income for these therapeutic activities; the income of the agricultural products is mainly used to

finance the farm. Most of the farms grow labour-intensive crops like vegetables and potatoes. Only farms larger than 10 ha grow cereals.

The farms keep a great variety of different animals. Often small animals like chickens, geese, ducks and rabbits are kept but also pigs. Dairy cows seem less suited for clients due to the high standards and the whole dairy system being rather sophisticated and requiring precise work. Many of the products are used for own consumption, but especially on the organic farms direct selling to consumers and the use of the products for manufacturing (bakery, cheese production, etc.) also play an important role.

On most farms 5-10 or 11-20 clients are integrated (Figure 2). Only few farms integrate clients into traditional family farms. In most cases the clients stay on the farms for several months, often up to one year.

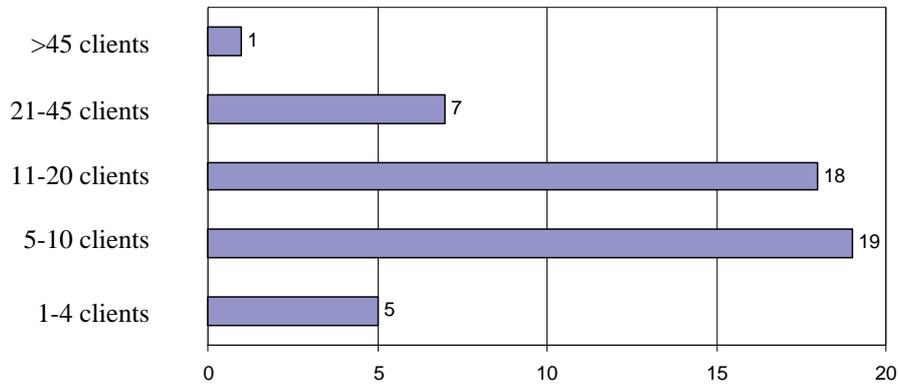


Figure 2. Number of clients (former drug addicts) on the farms

The main aim to integrate former drug addicts into the farms is to offer them economically relevant work and a meaningful occupation with therapeutic effects (Figure 3). Also the capabilities of the clients to live an independent life will be supported. Almost all questionnaires state that the qualities of work on farms are especially suited to reach that goal, like transparency of the sense of handwork, a great variety of different tasks, natural rhythms of growth, the connection to nature and the contact to animals.

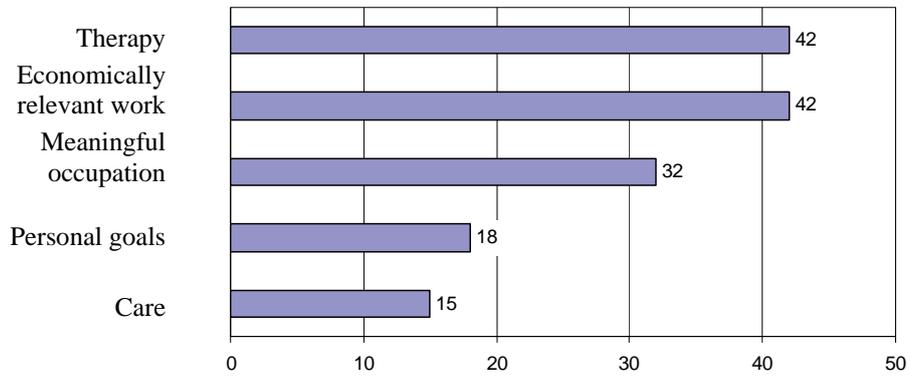


Figure 3. Functions and aims of agricultural work for clients (as percentage of clients reporting)

The clients are mainly occupied in labour-intensive fields of activities, like keeping animals, gardening and also landscape care (Figure 4). Integrating clients also influences the structure of the farm: a large amount of handwork, a diversity of different fields of activities, and simple structures of the schemes of work are needed to deliver a sufficient occupation for the clients. Also enough time for care is needed to combine the therapeutic goals with food production.

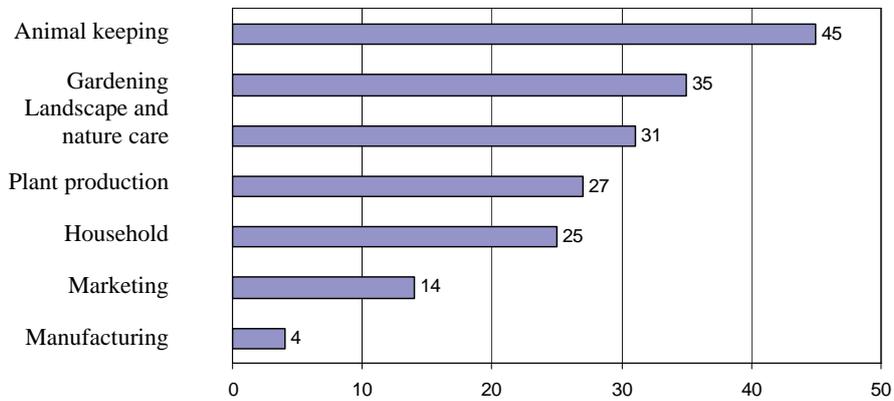


Figure 4. Occupation of clients on the farms (percentage of clients engaged)

CARE FOR LANDSCAPE AND NATURE DEVELOPMENT ON CARE FARMS FOR ADDICTED CLIENTS

In general, the examined institutions show a great interest in landscape care as a field of activity for their clients. More than 70% of the farms deal with such activities, especially planting hedgerows or taking care for orchards and for different biotopes. Furthermore, clients work in the forest and care for the surroundings of the institutional buildings and public places. Concerning these activities there are small differences between organic and conventional farms.

Half of the examined institutions think that farms with clients are especially suited for activities related to nature conservation and landscape care (Figure 5). More than 60% of the farms are active in protection and management of biodiversity. Concrete measures are the conservation of species-rich grassland, the care for orchards with rare or local varieties and also keeping rare and endangered animal husbandry breeds. Eighty-five per cent of the organic and 50% of the conventional farms integrate such activities into their system.

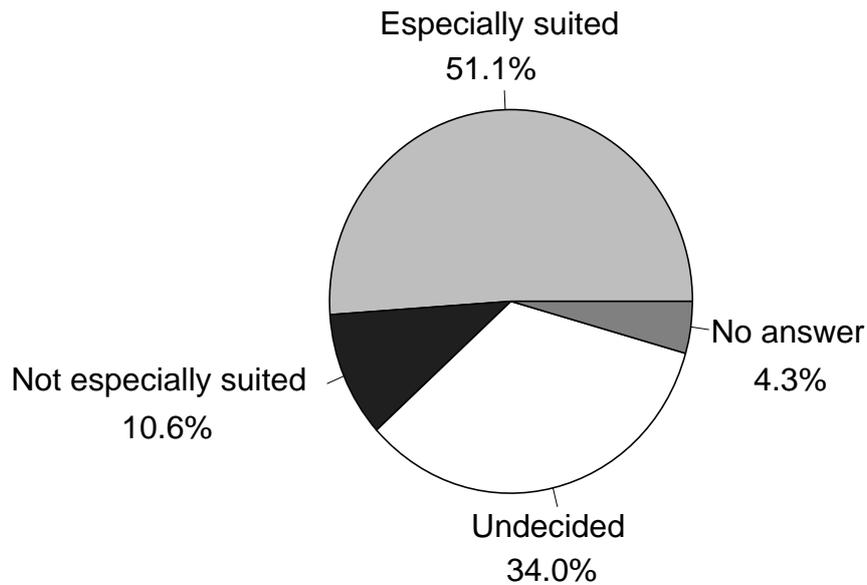


Figure 5. Are farms with clients especially suited for activities in nature conservation and landscape care? ($n = 57$)

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE: PETRARCA – THE EUROPEAN
ACADEMY FOR THE CULTURE OF LANDSCAPE

The European Academy for the Culture of Landscape (Petarcarca) was founded in October 2000 (<http://www.petarcarca.info/>). The initiative is reflected in the ‘Landscape manifesto’ which was created at the international conference ‘The Culture of the European Landscape as a Task’ (Bockemühl et al. 2000; Pedroli 2000) and has a strong inspiration source in the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe (2000). Petarcarca is an independent, non-governmental organization, registered at the Louis Bolk Institute (Driebergen, The Netherlands) as a multi-centred international initiative. The registration in other European countries is in preparation.

Several members of Petarcarca are engaged in a new culture of landscape through organic farming. One basis is the EU concerted action ‘The Landscape and Nature Production Capacity of Organic/Sustainable Types of Agriculture’ (1993-1997), in which 25 participants from 9 European countries worked on the assessment of sustainable land use for the cultural landscape (Van Mansvelt and Stobbelaar 1997; Van Mansvelt and Van der Lubbe 1999).

One main topic of Petarcarca’s work is the participatory approach of organic farms where farmers not only produce healthy food but also strive for a diverse and aesthetically pleasing landscape. In landscape seminars which include many stakeholders the participants are ‘helped to help themselves’ in work on aspects of planning and development of their cultural landscape.

Petarcarca’s work is connected to the intention to evaluate nature conservation and cultural landscape as marketable products of agriculture. One of the aims is the appreciation of these products of organic farms not only by society but also by farmers. This development is held back by ideologies striving for maximization of production, considering agri-environmental schemes primarily an income support for farms. Landscape seminars on farms are seen as an approach to create examples of farms that integrate the aims of nature conservation into organic farming. This means a bottom-up approach for a sustainable development of European landscapes. People living and working on farms become connected to their places, to nature and to the landscape. Farms become seed points for a sustainable landscape development. In combination with FH, approaches like this can lead towards new perspectives for sustainable farming for healthy people and for healthy landscapes. Care farms are especially suited to combine these two issues of multifunctional agriculture.

Exemplary of this approach are the seminars with people of the ‘Bioland-Ranch Zempow’ (Schäkel and Schürger 2001).

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