

Care farming includes using farms, farm work and animals, and agricultural and horticultural activities for improving human health and quality of life. It has its roots in involving patients in farm and agricultural work within large health and social care institutions in the past. It also originates from rural self-help systems, which used to employ disadvantaged individuals on farms. Modern care farming is a part of multifunctional agriculture, which offers services beyond mere production of food and fabric. From the care part it comes from the search for new possibilities of therapy, rehabilitation and integration of disabled and disadvantaged people, within the process of deinstitutionalisation of care. Some countries have developed this concept with research conducted at both national and international levels. Care farming has been mostly a bottom-up approach that arose spontaneously from individuals' and organizations' pursuits. If the number of care farming providers is higher in a country they tend to create a network to cooperate better and share experience. I describe the situation in Norway and the United Kingdom.

Care farming is provided by farms or social/health care organizations as a means of service. Frequent target groups are people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, physical disability, social disadvantaged, elderly, children, offenders, addicts. Care farming helps them by influencing their mind and body functions, as a meaningful occupation, by giving them the opportunity to practise social, work related and specific skills.

Care farming is not well known in the Czech Republic, although it does run at some places, especially within social and health care services.

In the empirical part I used qualitative research to compare experience of particular care farming providers in the Czech Republic and in the United Kingdom. I recognised some factors influencing the general conditions for care farming in both countries. The approach proved quite individual in different providers but connected by similar aims.