

COST Action 866:

# Green Care in Agriculture

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# What is COST?

COST means European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technological Research.

COST is an intergovernmental European framework for international cooperation between nationally funded research activities. COST creates scientific networks and enables scientists to collaborate in a wide spectrum of activities in research and technology. COST activities are administered by the COST Office.

For more information, see: <http://www.cost.esf.org/>

# Objectives of the Action

- The main objective of the Action is to increase the scientific knowledge on how to implement Green care in agriculture most efficiently in order to improve mental and physical health, as well as quality of life, of humans.

This objective requires the following:

- Establishing a well-functioning **multidisciplinary scientific network** of scientists working on topics of relevance to Green care.
- Establishing three **working groups** of scientists working on more specialized scientific topics of relevance to Green care.
- Development of an **international research program within Green care**, to be offered to EU (FP7) and national research councils.
- Improving the **relevance, effectiveness, and quality of ongoing and new research** within Green care in Europe.

# Organisation of the Action

**Management Committee (MC) and three Working Groups (WGs):**

- **MC:** Chair: Bjarne O. Braastad (N), Vice-Chair: Christos Gallis (GR)
  
- **WG1: Health effects of Green care**
  - Chair: Joe Sempik (UK), Vice-Chair: Patrik Grahn (S)
  
- **WG2: Economics of Green care**
  - Chair: Saverio Senni (I), Vice-Chair: Henrik Saxe (DK)
  
- **WG3: Policies related to Green care**
  - Chair: Thomas van Elsen (D), Vice-Chair: Jan Hassink (NL)

# Organisation of the Action

- **Management Community (MC) and three Working Groups (WGs):**

- **WG1: Health effects of Green care**

Coordinate research and develop new research in biological, medical and health sciences. Conceptual and theoretical discussions and developments. Research methodologies.

- **WG2: Economics of Green care**

Coordinate research and develop new research on economics and management of Green care farming. Cost-benefit effectiveness of Green care on micro, mezzo and macro levels, and marketability.

- **WG3: Policies related to Green care**

Discuss how Green care fits into current and future national health and social care systems. Organisation of the Green care system and the networks. How rural development is affected.

# Multidisciplinary work

## ■ Sciences involved in the Action:

Animal science, ethology, horticulture, forestry, landscape architecture, landscape ecology, agricultural economics, psychiatry, psychology, nursing, occupational therapy, sociology, and social economics.

## ■ Others involved:

Farmers, social workers, policy makers, client organisations

# Countries participating

<u>Country</u>	<u>No. of experts (not updated)</u>	
Austria	4	
Belgium	6	
Denmark	4	
Finland	5	
Germany	6	
Greece	3	
Iceland	3	
Ireland	1	
Italy	8	
Malta	2	
Netherlands	12	
Norway	14	
Poland	1	
Slovenia	3	
Sweden	4	
Switzerland	1	
Turkey	1	
United Kingdom	6	
		<u>In total:</u>
		18 countries
		150 experts,

# How to work and Time plan

- Plenary seminars and meetings
- WG workshops and conferences
  - Next: Vienna, Austria 20-22 June 2007 – 95 participants
- Short-term scientific missions (STSM):
  - Aim: to exchange five young researchers (PhDs, postdocs) within the frame of the COST Action, each for a few weeks.
- Website [www.umb.no/greencare](http://www.umb.no/greencare)
- Time plan (2006-2010)
  - Each of four years: A plenary meeting and WG workshops
  - Last year also: A dissemination seminar could be held if funding is obtained.



## Website: [www.umb.no/greencare](http://www.umb.no/greencare)

- Information and results of the Action work will be presented on a public website. This will include:
- **reports** of seminars and **minutes** of meetings,
- **publications** and **publication lists** from participants,
- **contributions** to other related conferences,
- **links** to relevant organisations,
- **expert list** – name, expertise, address, e-mail
- **research group** presentations
- **final report** that will include a **proposal for research programs** on Green care.

# Conclusions

- Green Care in Agriculture: much practical experience, but limited scientific documentation is available.
- Multidisciplinary scientific effort is essential to develop green services as part of a multifunctional agriculture.
- A network of enthusiastic experts is established, to coordinate ongoing research, develop concepts and terms, theories, research methods, and a research programme.

# **COST Strategic Workshop**

## **“Health and the Natural Outdoors**

### **- Research needs to promote human health ”**

**Cyprus, 19-21 April 2007**

- **COST Action 866 – Green care in agriculture**
- **COST Action E39 – Forests, trees and human health and wellbeing**
- **COST Domain Biomedicine and molecular biosciences**
- **WHO**
- **European Commission**

#### **Aim:**

to increase knowledge on the actual and potential contributions of forestry, agriculture and the natural outdoors in general to health and quality of life of humans – input to EUs FP7 – Health programme

## COST Strategic Workshop – Working groups

- Health related products from natural sources
- Human-animal interactions and green care
- Therapeutic interactions: plants and landscapes, garden therapy
- Land use, accessibility to green areas and health effects
- Settlements and localities: health and nature where we live
- Health policies and economics

## COST Strategic Workshop – Recommendations I

- The **salutogenic (i.e. positive) effects of nature on human health and wellbeing** need wider recognition.
- A **more persuasive evidence base** is needed on the links between natural outdoor environments and human health and wellbeing.
- Future research requires **common theoretical frameworks and more robust methodologies**.
- More knowledge is needed about **health-related products and commodities from nature**.
- The **therapeutic and mainstream application of human contacts with wild and domesticated animals and plants** needs further study, and processes at work need better understanding.

## COST Strategic Workshop – Recommendations II

- **Cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary research** is needed, following a ‘joined-up’ approach.
- As research on health effects of the natural outdoors is still dispersed, **international networking and collaboration** should be strengthened.
- Relationships between the natural outdoors and human health need to be considered in **public policy**.
- Tools and strategies for the integration of health aspects into **urban planning and greenspace management** need to be developed.
- Better **tools for integration** of health benefits are needed, such as **economic models** which can value costs involved and quality-of-life outcomes whilst also quantifying direct health impacts.



Green care in Agriculture

