

# Social Farming activities for local communities

Educational services for children and day centres



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# The aspects we will address.....

- ✓ What is Social Farming and the benefits for the community.
- ✓ Early childhood education services: definitions, benefits, examples.
- ✓ Day care centres (definition, examples, benefits).
- ✓ Conclusions.



# Social farming and Law No. 141/2015

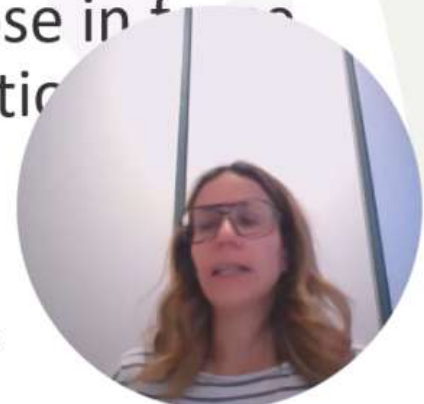
Law no. 141 'Provisions on social farming' defines the type of activity (Art. 1), the aims to be pursued, the subjects eligible to operate in this sector, the procedures for public recognition of operators and the identification of beneficiaries.

Social farming (SF) is a set of practices that combine agricultural activity with social, educational and therapeutic services. The objective is to promote social inclusion, improve people's well-being and support the development of local communities. SF activities include agri-nurseries, day care centres, social gardens, training and employment programmes for disadvantaged people.



# Social Farming

According to the national regulations on Social Farming, children's services in rural areas are among the activities envisaged in point b) of Article 2 of Law 141/2015, which concerns the 'social and service provision and activities for local communities through the use of the tangible and intangible resources of agriculture to promote, accompany and implement actions aimed at the development of skills and capacities, social and labour inclusion, recreation and useful services for everyday life. However, the regulations to which children's services refer for their management and organisation are those in force at regional level concerning children's services and multifunctional agriculture and/or social agriculture.





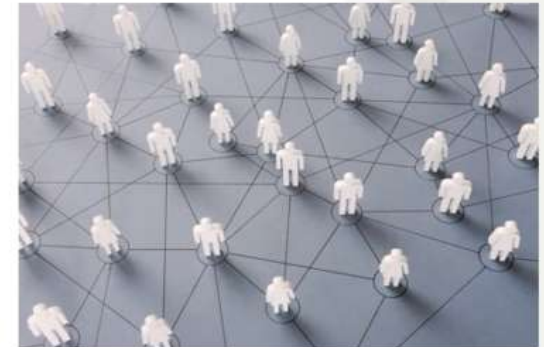
# The Benefits of Social Farming (SF)

## Social Benefits

**Social Inclusion:** SF promotes the integration of disadvantaged people, such as the disabled, elderly, migrants and people with mental health problems, offering them opportunities for active participation in the community.

**Psychological Well-being:** Agricultural activities and contact with nature have positive effects on psychological well-being, reducing stress and improving mood.

**Skills Development:** SF offers opportunities for learning and developing practical and social skills, improving the self-esteem and autonomy of those involved.



# The Benefits of Social Farming (SF)

## Economic Benefits

**Job Creation:** SF creates jobs in rural areas, contributing to local economic development and reducing unemployment.

**Support for Farms:** SF activities can diversify the income sources of farms, making them more resilient and sustainable.

**Reduction of Social Costs:** The labour and social inclusion of disadvantaged people can reduce the costs associated with social and health services.



# Educational services for early childhood

- ✓ Agri nest, a facility built within a farm for children up to three years of age;
- ✓ Agri kindergarten, a facility for children between three and six years of age, also located on a farm;
- ✓ Agri nanny, a person who offers a care service to children between three months and three years of age in a home located on a farm.







# The Agri-nests

Agri-nests are socio-educational and parenting support services aimed at children aged between 3 months and 3 years. They differ from traditional nurseries because they are offered by and on farms, which offer children educational experiences integrated with agricultural activities. Children participate in various activities such as animal care, vegetable growing and creative workshops.



In fact, the farm uses its own spaces, production cycles, products and know-how (expertise), to enable children to experience direct, experiential and tactile contact with nature.



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According to an online survey conducted in 2022, the distribution of active agri nests in Italy as of 1 June 2022, is concentrated in the Northern regions, followed by the Centre and finally the South and Islands

# The Agri-nests in Italy

Regione	n. attività	valore %
Calabria	1	1%
Campania	4	5%
Emilia - Romagna	3	4%
Friuli Venezia-Giulia	2	3%
Lazio	10	14%
Lombardia	13	18%
Marche	9	12%
Piemonte	11	15%
Puglia	1	1%
Sardegna	1	1%
Sicilia	3	4%
Toscana	3	4%
Trentino-Alto Adige	1	1%
Umbria	1	1%
Veneto	10	14%
<b>TOT.</b>	<b>73</b>	
Nord	40	
Centro	23	
Sud e Isole	10	
<b>TOT.</b>	<b>73</b>	



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# Structural Requirements



- ✓ Rooms - (located on the ground floor, open-air areas for exclusive use of the nest, reception rooms)
- ✓ Bathroom area adequate and proportionate to the number of children
- ✓ Safety of premises (e.g. fire prevention, absence of architectural barriers)



# How a farm can become an agri-nest?

In order to become agri nests, farms must fulfil a number of specific requirements that guarantee safety, space adequacy and the quality of the services offered.

- Structural Requirements
- Personnel Requirements
- Environmental Requirements





# Personnel Requirements

- ✓ Educators - (continuous training, presence of a pedagogical plan, the number must be proportionate to the presence of children, figure of the coordinator with operational functions).
- ✓ Other support figures (e.g. professionals of various kinds involved in teaching and care activities).



# Environmental Requirements



- ✓ Adequate and safe green spaces for children.
- ✓ Materials (e.g. use of non-toxic materials).







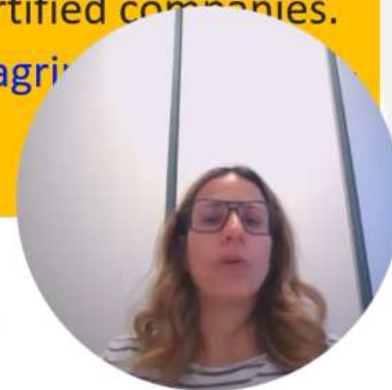
# Some examples of agri-nests in Italy

The Agri nest il Cavallo a dondolo (Agrinido the rocking horse) started its activity in 2007 in Mezzacorona in the province of Trento. It is a agri nest located on the family farm, an ideal setting for children to grow through specific itineraries, playing with the colours and scents of the seasons, taking care of small pets and familiarising themselves with some agricultural activities. The agr nest has a large garden and is immersed in the green of the surrounding countryside.

[www.ilcavalloadondoloagrinido.it](http://www.ilcavalloadondoloagrinido.it)

The Cascina Torrione Agri nest started its activities in 2011 on a farm in the province of Turin. It is a nest that hosts children from 6 months to 3 years of age and offers children a growth path that responds to their need to play and move freely in a stimulating and welcoming environment. The natural setting allows children to stimulate their senses and have meaningful real experiences guided by qualified educators in the company of their peers. During the week there are expressive workshops, psychomotor games, music workshops, cooking activities, reading workshops and manipulation activities. The weekly menu is prepared using food from our own production or purchased directly from other certified companies.

<https://www.cascinatorrione.it/agri-didattica/>



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# The Agri nest in Europe

- ☐ In Denmark, agrinides were inspired by the Waldkindergartens (garden kindergartens) established in the 1950s, which promote outdoor education and interaction with nature.
- ☐ In Germany has seen a rapid spread of agri nests, especially in rural areas, where they have become a viable alternative to urban kindergartens.
- ☐ In Sweden, agri nests are designed to be inclusive and sustainable, with a focus on interaction with nature and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle..



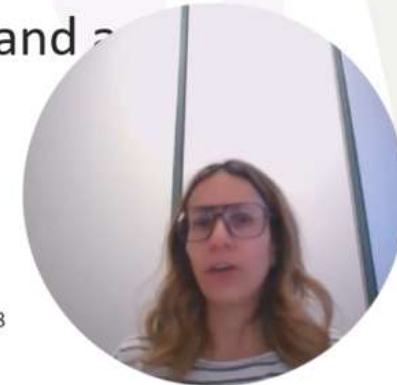


# Agri-kindergartens: definitions and functions

- ❑ Environmental Education: children learn about plants, animals and natural cycles through practical activities such as planting, harvesting and animal care.
- ❑ Social Skills Development: peer interaction fosters teamwork, respect for others and improves children's social skills. Psychological Well-being: outdoor activities and contact with nature help improve children's mental and physical health.
- ❑ Nutrition Education: agri-kindergartens offer children the opportunity to learn how to grow vegetables and fruit, promoting a healthy, balanced diet. Children learn to eat organic and wholesome products grown directly on the farm.
- ❑ Development of Motor Skills: outdoor activities improve the children's motor skills as they participate in games and physical activities.



An agri-kindergarten is an educational facility for pre-school children (3-6 years) located on a farm. Agri-nurseries aim to integrate traditional education with agricultural activities, allowing children to learn through direct interaction with nature and animals.





# Some examples of agri-kindergartens in Italy



The activity founded in 2006 is located in Chivasso (TO) and hosts children from 3 to 6 years old who have at their disposal various natural workshops, such as a didactic chicken coop, a small field that they tend directly by sprouting corn and wheat, and a real miniature vegetable garden. One of the most exciting moments for the little ones is the birth of the animals, dogs, cats and even donkeys. The children eat mostly seasonal products that are also grown on the farm with their collaboration. Another key element is the habit of respecting the environment through the use of recycled and natural materials, to develop an awareness that leads to the internalisation of an environmentally friendly lifestyle.

<https://www.lapiemontesina.it/agriasilo>

The activity is located in Rome and hosts children from 3 to 6 years old and offers an alternative to the classic kindergarten. The educators support contact with nature through activities in the educational gardens, thanks to the 10,000 square metres of greenery in which the school is immersed and contact with the animals that live in the facility, thanks also to the collaboration with the nearby Kadir oasis.

<https://www.madagaschool.it/facciamo/materna/>



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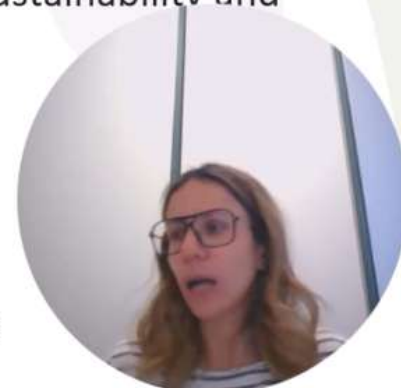
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# The Agri kindergarten in Europe

- ❑ In Denmark, agri-kindergarten are integrated into farms and offer children the opportunity to participate in daily agricultural activities. These programmes are designed to promote learning through interaction with nature and animals. An agri-kindergarten located near Copenhagen has had a positive impact on the local community by improving environmental awareness and sustainability
- ❑ In Germany, agri kindergartens are mainly found in rural areas. These educational programmes combine traditional education with agricultural activities, such as growing vegetables and caring for animals. An agri kindergarten in the Bavarian region of Bavaria has been shown to improve children's social and cognitive skills, as well as foster social inclusion
- ❑ In Sweden, agri kindergartens are designed to be inclusive and sustainable. These educational programmes focus on interaction with nature and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. An agri kindergarten near Stockholm has had a positive impact on the local community by promoting environmental sustainability and ecological education.





# The Benefits of Early Childhood Education Services

## Benefits for children

**Cognitive development:** Agri-nests and agri-kindergartens foster the development of children's cognitive skills, including problem-solving and creativity. Studies have shown that children attending agri-kindergartens show significant improvements in cognitive skills.

**Psychological well-being:** Interaction with nature and animals contributes to children's psychological well-being, reducing stress and improving mood

**Social skills:** Agri-nests promote the development of social skills such as cooperation and pro-social behaviour. Children learn to work together and respect others

**Motor skills:** Outdoor activities improve children's motor skills, in particular gross skills



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# The Benefits of Early Childhood Education Services

## Benefits for families

Parenting support: Agri nests and agri kindergartens provide a safe and stimulating environment for children, enabling parents to better reconcile work and family

Social inclusion: Agri nests and agri kindergartens promote social inclusion, creating socialisation opportunities for families and improving community cohesion

## Community benefits

Environmental sustainability: Agri nests and agri kindergartens promote sustainable agricultural practices and environmental awareness among children and families

Local economy: Agri nests and agri kindergartens can contribute to the local economy by creating and supporting farms



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# Day care centres: definitions and functions for the community

Day care centres are facilities offering care services and recreational activities during the day, located on farms. These centres are designed to accommodate elderly, disabled or people with other special needs, offering them a safe and stimulating environment, integrated with agricultural activities.

- **Reception and Hospitality:** day care centres welcome guests during the day, providing a safe place where they can spend time in company and participate in various agricultural and recreational activities.
- **Agricultural and Recreational Activities:** guests participate in various agricultural activities, such as growing vegetables, caring for animals and managing the vegetable garden.
- **Recreational activities** include games, art workshops, music and theatre, to stimulate guests' cognitive and social skills.
- **Canteen service:** Day care centres provide meals and snacks throughout the day, often using fresh, organic produce grown directly on the farm
- **Family support:** they provide support to care families, easing the daily care burden and offering for assistance



# Conclusions

Social farming represents an opportunity for both farms and communities through various services for children and other disadvantaged groups.

- ❑ It is appropriate to identify within each context what the needs and requirements may be (What kind of users are there? What services are lacking or missing? Is the area becoming depopulated?)
- ❑ Define the usefulness of services (work-life balance, reduction of inequalities, job creation, etc.), while also ensuring their quality. ), also ensuring their quality.
- ❑ Define according to the characteristics of one's own company which services can be offered (childcare offer, day care centres, etc.) Which actors can be involved (municipalities, other companies, etc.) and who can implement them (presence of suitable facilities, training and skills, etc.)?
- ❑ Networking with the territory by liaising with e.g. administrations, operators and families and involving all the territorial actors (also bringing families together in educational projects: food education, environmental education, etc.).
- ❑ Evaluation of the necessary contextual elements (source of funding, etc.)

