



Country Report for Slovakia

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Topics of Demonstration

- Precision agriculture
- Soil fertility management
- New varieties/planting material
- Cultivation practices
- Optimal use of farm machinery
- Animal health management and welfare
- Animal nutrition/feeding (economic and environmental issues)
- Housing and rearing systems
- Milk and meat quality
- On farm processing of food and feed
- Use of renewable energy
- Agri-tourism and recreational services
- Biodiversity and natural management
- Management and marketing practices
- Short food supply chains
- Business models of small farms
- Support of young and new farmers

Providers of Demonstration

- Top-class large-scale commercial farms
- Organic farms (leaders)
- Research and high education institutions
- Testing and control stations
- Self-governing organisations (chamber, federations, associations and unions of plant growers and livestock breeders)
- Private suppliers and sales business companies

Purpose of Demonstration

The primary purpose of demo activities is to increase the competitiveness of farming communities through innovation and practical knowledge exchange. In addition, many of the demo activities lead to a better environment, higher value added products, healthier food, and more diversified activities including use of renewable energy.

History

- In 1920s the first demonstration activities organised by regional testing and control stations
- Since early 1950s demonstration activities started in the newly established research institutes
- Since 1990 (after the political changes in Slovakia) demonstration activities started on transformed commercial farms with the support of newly established organisations e.g. associations and unions of plant growers and livestock breeders, Agri-food chamber and private supply and sales business companies



Figure 1. Slovak National Field Day - attracted over 100 agri-suppliers and 1000s of visitors including Slovak Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

Types of Demonstrations

- Mostly one-off events or repeating events at demonstration farms in Slovakia (field days, rearing days, etc.).
- Very few permanent demo farms. Only research and education farms are open all year round, however, they primarily serve their own research and education on a permanent basis. Their own innovations are presented mainly by „field“ or “barn” days.
- New types of demonstrations are emerging (e.g. Dairy Apps, Drone show, Robotics in green houses, Intelligent irrigation).

Access Issues

In Slovak agriculture, more men than women are traditionally involved, and so men's participation in demonstration activities is greater than that of women. However, more and more women are becoming top managers and thus also leaders of demo events.

Other Issues

Slovakia is a geographically diverse country. This determines the type of agricultural production and thus demonstration activity. In the fertile lowland there is intense production of grains, vegetables, fruits, pigs, intensive dairy and meat cattle. In mountainous regions production focuses on root crops as well as intensively farmed mountain fruits. Mountain cattle and sheep are raised on permanent pastures. Demonstration activities focus accordingly.

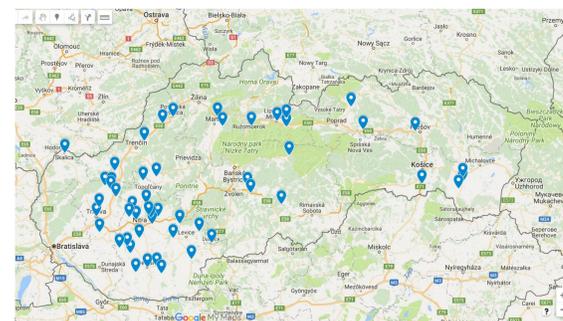


Figure 2 Slovak farms where demonstration activities are conducted

Distinguishing Characteristics

- National Field Day, regularly visited by Slovak Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture attracts more than 100 suppliers and 1000s of visitors (mainly farmers but also media)
- In demo activities, large-scale commercial farms closely cooperate with input (seed, agri-chemicals) and technology suppliers
- Large-scale commercial farms serve as knowledge holder and innovation brokers for small farms
- Demo activities in very specific areas (berries, organic farming, social innovation, green care) are held mainly on small farms



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