



AGRIDEMO



FARMDEMO



PLAID

Country Report for Slovenia

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Topics of demonstration

- Arable crops
- Beef, Dairy cattle
- Horticulture - Vegetables
- Fruit growing
- Viticulture and oenology
- Orchard crops
- Seed production
- Organic farming
- Permaculture
- Food processing (dairy, meat, fruits)
- Soil conservation and protection
- Nature/biodiversity
- Tourism on farm

Providers and purpose of demonstration

In Slovenia the majority of on-farm demonstrations are initiated and organized by organizations, both public and private (NGOs and companies). In organic farming these organizations are NGOs linked to the farmers, but also universities cooperate with organic farms. In conventional farming they are led by universities and other public institutions and also companies (especially related to seeds and plant varieties). The purpose is mainly dissemination of good practices and innovation, mostly to increase profitability of the farms. Organic sector is aiming at sustainability to a larger extent due to its generally stronger environmental performance, focusing on all aspects of sustainability (economic, social and environmental). Notable is an increase of demonstration activities of commercial companies (inputs, machinery) where the objectives are clearly commercial.

Note: The overview still needs to be completed once the Agriculture Advisory Service has responded to the questionnaires.

History

First records of demonstration activities in agriculture in Slovenia are from 80's at the Agricultural Institutes (i.e. in Maribor) but they probably started earlier. These activities were implemented at regional level on selected farms, in the form of field experiments (grain varieties, cultivation technologies etc.) carried out by the agricultural advisers - specialists. They were funded mostly by the state. Since mid-90's their frequency strongly diminished also due to limited public finances.

University in Maribor (FKBV, experimental farm in Pivola) started with demo activities in mid-90's and started a long-term trial study on various methods (convent., integrated, organic, biodynamic) which also serves demonstration purposes. Demo activities gained a new dynamic with emerging organic farming in early XX. century. Several commercial organic farms got involved as demo farms on the request and through organization of NGOs, universities and recently also Agricultural Advisory Service.

Types of Demonstrations

- Practical demonstration in the field (i.e. techniques, products, machinery)
- Open farm events and guided visits, field walks
- Demonstrative trials
- Presentations and workshops on various technical issues

Access Issues

Gender: most demonstration participants are male, probably due to the general male predominance in the agricultural sector.

Age: There is a large diversity of age, although younger participants are noted in the organic sector.

Geography: More demonstration activities are noticed in the North-Eastern part of Slovenia which is also in general more agricultural. In addition, the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Maribor University with its own experimental farm and demonstration activities is located there.

Other Issues

Since the beginning of XX. century there was a decline of demonstration activities performed by the Agricultural Advisory Service (AAS), including different types of field trials. This has been probably related to the change of focus of AAS to supporting implementation of CAP measures on farms (diverse payment schemes etc.).

Nowadays demonstration activities seem to depend on the rural development funding or research projects, but in some cases they are also initiated and project-funded by NGOs. Another type of demonstration activities on farms are mostly varieties trials/shows of seed companies which are initiated, organised and funded by these companies; these activities aim at promoting their products.

Distinguishing Characteristics

- Focus on specific crops / single technologies (commercial companies) except for organic farming where whole farm approach is equally prominent
- Farmers' initiative in demonstration activities is weak, except in the organic farming sector
- Regional level of organization of demonstration activities, absence of national network, with the exception of organic farming
- Organic farming sector is more active in sharing knowledge and involving farmers in demonstration activities
- Demonstration activities are connected to research and rural development programs funded by the EU and more rarely by the state



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