

## Press Release

### Regional Seminar - June 23, 2016 - Péruwelz

#### Social Farming and Forestry : When the human reclaims its status

*The Walloon Network for Rural Development, in collaboration with the LAG and Natural Park of the Plaines de l'Escaut, will organize on June 23 a Regional Seminar about social farming and social forestry. Nowadays farmers are struggling with various problems, both economic and environmental : social farming and forestry tend to put the human factor at the heart of the approach. This Seminar will provide an opportunity to focus on projects that combine in news ways social inclusion and agriculture.*

But what are social farming and social forestry exactly? They are projects that allow the reception of vulnerable people in farms, in forests or in a natural environment in a healing purpose, social inclusion goal or socio-professional integration. These vulnerable people have physical, mental or psychological handicap, are vulnerable young people, people with addictions, or just people who need to relax in a natural environment.



Numerous pilot projects have already been completed in Wallonia and Europe: they demonstrate the significant benefits both for hosts (foresters and farmers) and guests (vulnerable people) and their institutions.

These projects are an opportunity to put the farmer and his social role in a crucial position : far from a purely productivist vision, the forester or the farmer take back the role of knowledge and knowhow transmission. They also become a socialization enabler for the vulnerable people. The advantage is actually twofold: both for the hosted who feels valued by his work in the farm or in the forest, but also for the host that can play a key role within the society, as a «mentor» who has a lifetime experience to pass on.

The Regional Seminar on June 23 will bring together many field actors like farmers, foresters, social workers, health centers, ... and also institutions and administrations concerned with the issue. In the morning,

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the participants will discover the wide field of social farming and forestry through the experiences and testimonies of field actors (Samuel Hubaux «Nos Oignons», La Ferme du Harby, ...) but also through an overview and a summary of the opportunities allowed by the Walloon Rural Development Program. The afternoon will be a chance to work in workshops on several themes, with the precious lighting of European stakeholders such as Jan Hassink (researcher at Wageningen University on social farming), Robin Asquith (Director Care UK social farming and farmer) and Jean-Paul Barithel (President of ASTRA network in France).

## Practical Informations



**Place :** Complexe  
l'Atmosphère à Brasménil  
(Péruwelz)



**Participants :** farmers, foresters, social institutions, administrations, ...



**Time :** 9h30 à 16h30  
Welcome at 9h15



**Language :** french and english



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**Website :** <http://www.reseau-pwdr.be>  
**Full Program :** <http://goo.gl/HTSbvg>

