

NETHERLANDS

Diversify the rural economy

Location

Ootmarsum

Programming period

2007 - 2013

Axis / Priority

Axis 3 – The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy

Measure

M311 - Diversification into non-agricultural activities

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 825 000

EAFRD 100 000

National/Region. 100 000

Private 625 000

Project duration

2007 – 2009

Project promoter

Boerderij Spa

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An old farm using EAFRD support diversified into a farm spa that combines in a holistic approach leisure and countryside life.

Summary

Lying between trees and pastureland to the north-west of Ootmarsum in the Dutch province of Overijssel is an old farm dating back to 1645. A casual passer-by would probably be surprised to learn that this old farm houses a health spa. This was exactly what Frans and Marinka Steggink were aiming for when they had the idea for a farm spa.



As well as the farm spa the couple also runs an ice cream dairy, cattle herd and farm-stay accommodation. All the activities form part of the family business. Visitors to the spa can make use of various facilities, depending on the spa package they choose. The farm also has a bread oven, two hay saunas, a herbal sauna and a room with a clay oven for mud treatments. Each space provides a different experience. For instance, the floor of the herbal sauna is covered with pine branches to stimulate foot reflex points. The gentle mist produced by the burner fills the air with the soothing aroma of pine needles and herbs. The farm spa in Nutter is a special kind of health spa. All spa packages offered by the farm involve some element of the countryside and outdoor life.

Results

The preservation of a characteristic farmhouse in the area was an important aim for the beneficiary. If the farmhouse was left standing as it was for another 25 years, it would have fallen into ruin. Thanks to the investment the old farmhouse was given a new function, rather than simply being replaced by a new building.

The spa won the 'Passie op het Plattelandprijs', rural development programme prize in the quality of life category.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Converting the old farmhouse costs more time, energy and money, however is more than worth it. The rural development programme support gave the beneficiary great encouragement. It enabled the beneficiary to realise the investment in the way it originally planned for. Something that would have been otherwise impossible.
- ❑ It took some time before the locals discovered the Spa. At first they had their doubts, but after some time they are enthusiastic and proud.
- ❑ What could be done better: at the moment the Spa has been build to the maximum capacity for expansion that could be used. This prevents the beneficiaries to extend their activities without legal consequences. The beneficiary considers they should have arranged the possibilities for further expansion with the local government in advance.