

# Reconstruction of an agricultural facility and construction of facilities for agritourism and hippotherapy

Transforming an old agricultural site into new facilities offering disability-friendly equestrian activities and agritourism to improve lives, diversify the business and support the local economy.

## EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Jasová, Slovakia

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P6 - Social inclusion and local development

**Focus Area:** Diversification & job creation

**Measures:** M06 - Farm & business development

<b>Funding:</b>	Total budget	996 809 (EUR)
	EAFRD	336 423 (EUR)
	National/Regional	112 141 (EUR)
	Private	548 245 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 04/09/2017 - 30/11/2021

**Project promoter:** AgroContract Dairy Farm, a.s.

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## Summary

The project was initiated and carried out by the agricultural company AgroContract Dairy Farm, a.s. Jasová - a family-run enterprise in the south-west of Slovakia. The objective was to create a functional agritourism centre equipped with technical support for horse breeding, stabling and hippotherapy facilities. As part of the project two derelict farm buildings were transformed to house the new centre. Additionally, an equestrian arena was constructed. Additional aims were achieved including better integration of people with disabilities into society through hippotherapy and raising public awareness about this therapy, as well as enhancing uptake of such therapy.

## Project results

- A new establishment has been created, offering the region entirely novel services. The equestrian club is designed for children aged eight and above, as well as adults, with the aim of fostering a connection with horses and the care of farm animals.
- The project has built capacity for providing hippotherapy services, currently accommodating up to three clients.
- The equestrian club has become an attraction for locals and tourists, contributing to an increase in visitors from elsewhere in the region, thereby impacting positively on the local economy. It is estimated that a 25% increase in revenue for local establishments was achieved in 2022.
- Further diversification activities have been generated, including renting out premises to companies for team-building events.
- The project contributed to the creation of two new jobs.





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## Key lessons and recommendations

- › Social farming and equestrian enterprises provide possibilities for new business niches and rural diversification.
- › During project implementation, useful new rural skills were gained in equestrian education, gastronomy, operating restaurant services with guest accommodation and horse breeding.

## Context

AgroContract Dairy Farm in Jasová (located in the Nitra region, south-west of Slovakia) was founded in 2000. During the following decade, the farm underwent a full reconstruction, supported by both EU funding and private funds. More recently, a derelict agricultural site was purchased, primarily with the aim of using the location for a hayloft. However, the acquired area contained numerous semi-dilapidated structures, prompting the farm owners to think about new development opportunities. As a result, the decision was made to revamp two derelict barns and develop them into a state-of-the-art equestrian facility.

## Objectives

The main goal was to transform the existing space into an integrated equestrian centre with accommodation and dining facilities, thereby enhancing the entire farm area. The centre would cater for sports horses, house a riding school and provide hippotherapy services (a therapy for people with physical and/or mental disorders utilising the movement of a horse).

Overall, the project aims were to:

- › Diversify the farm activities.
- › Improve the company's economic efficiency.

- › Enhance advertising and the company's position in the region.
- › Increase the attractiveness of agriculture.
- › Support the local economy.

## Activities

The project involved:

- › A first phase to transform an old farm building into a stable housing ten horses, complete with changing rooms, a tack room for the storage of riding gear, and a communal area.
- › A second phase involved modernising another derelict building into a fully-fledged restaurant, including a kitchen, accommodation for guests and horse stables.
- › Additionally, a covered riding hall and an outdoor riding arena were created.

## Main results

- › Key results are a new rural business venture providing an equestrian school, led by a professional trainer catering to both beginners and advanced riders through individual training sessions.
- › The project contributed to the creation of two new rural jobs.
- › The project has built capacity for providing hippotherapy services, currently accommodating up to three clients.
- › The equestrian club is designed for everyone aged eight or above. Its establishment provides a rural service for its clients that fosters a connection with horses and the care of farm animals.
- › The stables offer boarding facilities for horses owned by others.
- › The equestrian club has become a local and tourist attraction, contributing to an increase in visitors from elsewhere in the region, thereby impacting positively on the local economy.
- › A wider local impact is achieved by visitors not only exploring the farm and its equestrian facility but also frequenting other local businesses, such as wineries that offer tastings, etc. It is estimated that a 25% increase in revenue for local establishments was achieved in 2022.
- › Further diversification activities have been generated, including renting out premises to companies for team-building events.
- › In the coming years, further enhancements are planned such as a children's playground and a mini zoo, as well as hosting social events.



## Key lessons and recommendations

- It was very rewarding to be able to convert a disused area into a highly productive asset. This avoided any need to encroach on agricultural land.
- Social farming and equestrian enterprises provide possibilities for new business niches and economic diversification in rural areas.
- During the implementation of the project, extensive knowledge was gained in equestrian education, gastronomy, operating restaurant services with guest accommodation, working with children and horse breeding.



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### Additional information:

<https://jkjasova.sk/>

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