

**GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP
SLOVAK INTERNATIONAL VISIT
29/04 – 01/05/2013
Reviving rural areas**

REPORT FROM THE VISIT

Connection of the organic agriculture and agro-tourism

Visit dates and participants

The meeting took place from 29th April till 1st May 2013 in Kopaničiarský region. This meeting was attended by 12 participants from the Czech Republic. The Dutch and Polish partners didn't have their representations. The project group of the hosting country consisted of people from the hosting organisation *AGROEDUKA Trenčín* and its partner organisations civic association *Penzióny pod Bradlom* and *LAG Kopaničiarsky región*.



Programme

Monday 29. 4. 2013 Podkylava, Agropenzión Adam

Region of plum solitary houses – workshop in agro-guesthouse (plums as a traditional product from the region, food from plums, introduction of the region)

Ecoagrotourism – its present and its future

Tuesday 30. 4. 2013 Košariská, Brezová pod Bradlom

Workshop in pension *U Juhása, Košariská*:

- Traditional methods in the region – homemade pig-slaughtering
- Presentation of the region and the typical countryside (undulating landscape with characteristic hills)
- *Ekotrend Myjava* – presentation of the producer (grower and producer of ecological plants)
- Ecological breeding of beef cattle and ecological growing of plants (*Pod Bradlom, Dlhý Vršek*)

Wednesday 1. 5. 2013 Agropenzión Adam Podkylava and farm Charolais Podkylava

Opening of the grazing season on a farm *Charolais* in the village *Podkylava* - introduction of the farm, which is managed under the organic farming and attendance on the celebration as a demonstration of the preserving folk traditions.



The program was held at two main locations – *Agropenzión Adam Podkylava* and *Penzion U Juhása Košariská*. The first of them is an example between the connection of organic farming and agro-tourism. *Penzion U Juhása* is an example of combination both organically produced crops and animals for gastronomy with cooking traditional dishes from local sources.

Presentation of the venue (*Kopaničiarsky* region) and development of rural tourism in this region



Kopaničiarsky region is an important ethnographic site with their own folk culture and folk tradition, which is today presented by folklore ensembles and groups. Both young and old people still maintain the traditions of their ancestor. The folklore of the region attracts visitors both from Slovakia and abroad as well. The region has a treasure that disappears from many Slovak sites. Local people are proud on their traditions and thanks to it they hold big potential in their hands. The region is favorite holiday place for those who adore nature and folklore. One of the local traditions is also special spirit from plums – *slivovica*.

The diversity of terrain and abundance of natural sceneries, historical sites and cultural events generate invitations for visitors of this region as well as suitable conditions for sports activities and relaxations.

Ecoagrotourism is a special form of rural tourism, which is closely connected with agricultural production. The role of rural tourism is to bring people close together nature and motivate them to act in accordance with the requirements of environmental protection.

The upward trend of staying on farms, pensions, small hotels, holiday apartments, individual camping and caravanning indicates the growth of opportunities for the development of tourism and returning to the traditional values.

The high quality of the environment of the region is illustrated by the fact that parts of the land belonging to Small and White Carpathians Mountains have the status of Protected landscape areas and there are also some smaller protected areas as nature reserve *Ševcova skala* (Cobbler's rock) and natural monuments in the strictest (the fifth) degree of protection - *Štefanova*, *Malejov*, *Kožíkov vrch* (hill Kožíkov) and *Bučková jama* (Bučkova pit).

Homemade pig-slaughtering as a product of agrotourism in the region



Homemade pig-slaughtering was in past an essential necessity. It took place mostly during winters. Processing of the pigs at home provided the necessary supply of food. At least, lard, which was stored in a special container, had to endure until the next slaughtering. Salted, lightly smoked or lard laden meat was used until the harvest period. Slaughters are big events up to now.

Preparation for a butchering begins several days in advance. You need to get necessary tools and materials ready. Slaughtering begins early in the morning. When the butcher comes, hot

water is already boiled in a caldron. Everyone is enjoying all-day work, because it brings time of opulence with big amount of delicacies.

At first of all we need to know what kinds of products we want to make during the pig processing. According to it we prepare some of the ingredients in advance and we form a menu for *karmina* (typical evening celebration). Among the main products belong roasted or smoked meat, ham, bacon, various sausages wrapped into the intestines, cracklings or lard from the fat, fried intestines, brawn jelly, special soup and many other products. The day before this big event we stew grains and rice, chop breads, peel onions and garlic. We also prepare necessary spices, quality sauerkraut from barrels and horseradish in sour pickle. We will need also a kettle, large wooden tub, work desks, straw for singeing and enough firewood under the kettle.

Karmina is a great experience and also a social event for family, neighbours and friends.

In the past, pastors and notaries were invited among the firsts. At the end of the celebration there is a good tradition and unwritten law to present guests with gift of food to take home.

Company *Ekotrend Myjava* – presentation how to grow and processing organic crops



Business of *Ekotrend Myjava* is organic farming on area about 156 hectares. They grow spelt, wheat, rye, medicinal herbs and apple trees. They also process and pack their products for

food using in their own mill, pasta factory and tea factory. The company has its own brand for organic food *BIOMILA*. Under this brand you can find special product lines of tea bags, grains, flour and semolina, cereal, pasta (especially from whole grains), bakery products (sticks), dried apples, spelt drink and sunflower oil. The company produces altogether more than 40 kind of products.

The main product of the farm is spelt. This ancient grain has retained a higher proportion of fiber, gluten, vitamins and important minerals than standard bred wheat. Thanks to the soft cover spelled grain is suitable for the production of whole grain products. Such products help digestion and improve immunity. Moreover spelled products have a pleasant nutty flavor, can warm you up and give a lot of good mood.

Products with brand *BIOMILA* have won the award for the best organic food four times (2005 – spelt semolina, 2009 – *BIOMILA* spelled whole meal stick, 2010 – *BIOMILA* dried apples and 2011 - *BIOMILA* spelled pasta (*tarhoňa*). This award is given every year by consumers and is supported by Centre of environmental activities in Trenčín and by the Association of Organic Agriculture Ekotrend Slovakia.

BIOMILA flour, various kinds of pasta and dried apples received the regional brand *Tradície Bielych Karpát* (www.tradiciebk.sk) - Traditions of the White Carpathians in 2012. This brand ensures the regional origin, quality and complying of some other stern criterions. Products with brand are characterized by local materials and higher proportion of manual work, using traditional methods and consideration of environment.

Opening of the grazing season on the farm Charolais in the village Podkylava – introduction of the farm, which is managed under the organic farming



This farm is close to *Agropenzión Adam* and has pastures with a total area of nearly 300 hectares where American cattle *Charolais* is organically bred. The aim of the farm is biomass production and breeding of quality breeds. Cattle is grazed in natural conditions without any use of fertilizers, chemicals and artificial feeding. On the farm there are also pig breeds *Mangalitza* which are grazed by freely grazing manner without housing in a stable.

Particular attention is paid to regional cuisine and activities associated with its presentation. Exceptional is offering of thirty plum dishes, based on the traditions of local cuisine using homemade products. On this farm you can learn how to connect of organic farming and agrotourism. Final product is used as an example not only in this region but also for entrepreneurs from different parts of Slovakia.