



Effects and qualities of care farms

Based on scientific research as bundled in “ Effect of Care Farms” (WUR, 2011), care farms offer the following qualities to their participants

- Clear structure
- A safe and small scale environment
- The farmer/rancher as a role model and the farm as a community
- Meaningful activities and a sense of fulfillment
- Contact with animals and the natural environment
- Focus on a person’s ability instead of their disability
- “ Real” life
- A non-care environment; distraction
- Physical activity, often outside
- Interaction with aspects of the natural world (birth, death, growth, decay,..)

Proven effects of work on a care farms are:

For Youth with behavioral issues:

- Decreased problem behavior
- Improved contact with the family
- Decreased aggression, conflict and contact with the police
- Increased sense of responsibility
- Decreased estrangement to “normal” life
- Stimulated to use their creativity
- Decreased inclination to go down the wrong path
- Prevention of bigger problems

For elderly with dementia:

- Increased social contacts, also outside of the farm or existing home
- Increased appetite and increased intake of liquids
- Increased incentive to participate and stay active
- Man consider it a positive way to spend the day

For people with mental health and addiction issues:

- Decreased use of drugs
- Decreased visits to counselors, therapists, social workers,...
- Increased fitness
- Increased appetite
- Increased productivity and ability to balance energy for work and social life
- Calming effect, improved sleep
- Increased self esteem and confidence
- Increased social skills and manners
- Increased persistence, engagement and responsibility

For people with developmental disabilities:

- Increased confidence and self esteem
- Improved social contacts
- For some: a transition to employment