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Agritourism farms as places of providing therapeutic services for people with autism spectrum disorder

Abstract. The aim of the article was to present the development of agritourism farms in terms of providing therapeutic services for people with autism. The literature review concerned Polish and Ukrainian farms. Autism in children can also be treated through contact between patients and domestic and farm animals. Therapies involving animals are called zootherapy and can be carried out in care farms, and additionally in those where tourist recreation is possible i.e. agritourism farms. The article draws attention to the benefits of contact between children with autism spectrum disorders and animals. The study presents a case study from Poland.

Keywords: rural tourism, agritourism, autism, ASD, agritourism offerings, care

Introduction

Services provided by farms are addressed to many social groups. Starting from children and teenagers, to sick, elderly, disabled and lonely people. Nowadays, we observe a growing phenomenon: the increasing number of children and adolescents on the autism spectrum. Experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) have estimated that autism occurs in approximately 1 in 100 children (WHO, 2023). In 2010, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) were the primary cause of disability among mental disorders in children under the age of 5 (Baxter et al., 2015). Even though children with ASD have similar characteristics of this disorder, they are characterized by a large discrepancy in the skills they demonstrate and the dynamics of changes in behavior and emotion. Research confirms that the beginnings of emotional

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and social development in young children suspected of autism may be disturbed, although also highly diverse (Winczura, 2018). This means that some children have a major problem with their ability to establish emotional contact. There is no exchange of content-adapted social activities and verbal and non-verbal messages between the child and the environment, which may have a significant negative effect on the proper psycho-social development of children.

Autism spectrum disorders are among the most common conditions in which interactions with animals, whether as co-therapists or companions, can provide significant benefits to individuals (Philippe-Peyroutet and Grandgeorge, 2018). Over the last decade, research has confirmed the benefits of animal therapy for children on the autism spectrum. O’Haire (2013) highlights that a wide range of animal species, such as horses, dogs, rabbits, guinea fowls, pigs, and llamas, are involved in these therapeutic processes. Most interactions between people with autism and various species of mammals, thanks to direct physical contact, have a positive effect on the patients’ level of relaxation. Confirmation of this applies, among others, to dogs (Nielsen and Delude, 1989), then the therapy is called dog therapy, to cats (Mertens and Turner, 1988), it is then called felinotherapy or cat therapy; to rabbits (Wedl and Kotrschal, 2009) in which case it is called lagotherapy; and guinea pig therapy (Gut et al., 2018), i.e. caviotherapy. Sometimes contact of children with autism with other animal species, for example birds and fish, can also contribute to improving their mental health and reducing emotional tension (Peyroutet and Grandgeorge, 2018). Among the above-mentioned pets with which contact with autistic children can improve their mental health, therapy using guinea pigs and other animals seems to be interesting. This is confirmed by research conducted in France (Grandgeorge et al., 2019). It can therefore be concluded that contact of people suffering from the autism spectrum with animals has a positive impact on building relationships with the environment and also has a positive effect on emotions and mental development.

The aim of the article was to present the development of agritourism farms in terms of providing therapeutic services for people with autism. The literature review concerned Polish and Ukrainian farms.

Materials and methods

The study used the literature review and case study method. Based on the literature review, a selection of scientific publications on the role of agritourism and care farms in the therapy of people with autism spectrum disorders was made. Using the case study method, a Polish model rural tourism center providing therapy in the Lublin province was examined. The analysis was conducted in May 2024.

The farm’s offer to people with autism

Therapies for children with autism spectrum disorder, undertaken with the participation of animals, are called zootherapy. It can be carried out on agricultural, agritourism and care farms, which in this case are referred to as care farms. One of the definitions of a care farm says that “it is a service provided on a farm in the field of day care and/

or social integration for individuals and families in order to improve their functioning” (Stępnik, Wnęk and Kamińska, 2020). In addition to therapy on farms, the very act of leaving autistic children from the city to rural areas allows them to significantly improve their well-being and contribute to improving their mental health. This is confirmed by numerous studies, including Elings (2012), Ferwerda von Zonneweld, Oosting and Kijlstra (2012), which indicate the best therapeutic measure is contact of sick children with animals on farms, i.e., including case of guardians.

An agritourism farm may also be a care farm, with its tourism and leisure offer usually aimed at elderly and disabled people, including children with autism. Zootherapy treatments involve, for example, hippotherapy using a horse as a therapist and a similar therapy using donkeys called onotherapy. Farm animals are playing an increasingly important role in agritourism and rural tourism. In recent years, cow-assisted therapy, defined as “a process of health support in which a representative of domestic cattle is a central and indispensable element” (Szczycka, 2024b), has become popular. Other farm animals used by owners of rural tourism facilities for therapeutic purposes include pigs, goats, rabbits, sheep and also fowl such as chickens, ducks, turkeys and pheasants. Close contact between sick children and the above-mentioned farm livestock, observing the animals, and sometimes feeding and grooming them, often yields good results, contributing to improving the mental health of autistic children.

In Western Europe, there is currently a trend for care farms specializing in zootherapy. For example, in France, therapeutic activities with autistic children often use animals such as alpacas, deer, donkeys, rabbits and horses in agricultural and agritourism farms (Philippe-Peyrouet and Grandgeorge, 2018). In the Netherlands, most care farms have livestock that are used in therapy with children on the autism spectrum. The animals include: horses, ponies, sheep, chickens, ducks, goats, cows, rabbits, pigs, fish, and birds (Ferwerda van Zonneweld, Oosting and Kijlstra, 2012).

There are also caring agritourism farms in various European countries that specialize in the therapy of adults with autism. Service providers offer these people a variety of activities, not just with livestock, which can help to improve their health. For example, in the Italian region of Umbria, this may include resting in olive groves for autistic people, as well as cleaning the interiors of agritourism farms, which also provides positive opportunities to reduce the effects of the disease (Torquati et al., 2019).

In summary, among the various methods of improving the condition of children with autism spectrum disorders, agrotherapeutic tourism occupies a special place. It is important to emphasize that health tourism in rural areas is a significant element of the tourism offer, contributing to the development of this sector. Accommodation facilities, including agritourism farms, offer a variety of therapeutic services, including kinesitherapy, folk therapy, recreational activities, and animal-assisted therapy. Zootherapy, including dog therapy, hippotherapy, onotherapy, and sheep therapy, is becoming increasingly popular, providing a unique attraction, especially for children. Many agritourism farms in Poland use zootherapy as a signature product. Additionally, the therapeutic offer in rural tourism can include education on cultural and natural heritage, as well as agrotherapy, which offers activities such as herbal medicine,

massages, and organic herbal teas. Supporting therapies in rural areas by public institutions and social organizations is crucial for the further development of this form of health tourism (Roman and Roman, 2022).

Offer of agritourism farms in Ukraine aimed at people with autism

Rural green tourism in Ukraine is a relatively new and promising area that allows city dwellers to join the traditional way of life of rural residents. The essence of this type of tourism is a holiday in the countryside, where all organisational support for tourists' accommodation (including food, leisure, services etc.) is provided by the host family.

Rural green tourism in Ukraine is a form of tourism based on visits to rural areas and activities related to nature and agriculture (Kalna-Dubiniuk et al., 2016a; Kalna-Dubiniuk et al., 2016b). The essence of this type of tourism is to open up the life and culture of the rural population to tourists, as well as to showcase the natural and cultural riches of rural regions. Its attractive features are clean air, homely atmosphere, unspoilt nature, natural products, silence and a leisurely lifestyle.

The number of farmsteads in Ukraine needs to be constantly updated, as there are no reliable sources of information on the actual state of development of rural green tourism (Table 1). Data for 2022 and subsequent years with the beginning of the full-scale invasion cannot be found and tracked at all.

Table 1. Dynamics of rural green tourism development in Ukraine

Year	Number of farmsteads [units]	The area of the estates [sq.m.]		Number of people accommodated	Average capacity of estates [places]
		in total	including residential		
2020	285	65 986.2	29 987.7	49 948.0	12.6
2021	233	71 208.2	23 556.7	39 311.0	13.5
Deviation 2021 to 2020 (+; -)	-52	5 219.2	-6 431.0	-10 637.0	0.9

Source: compiled by the authors based on Derzhavna sluzhba statystyky Ukrainy and Derzhavne ahentstvo rozvytku turyzmu Ukrainy.

The research conducted on the basis of published statistical information by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine on the development of rural green tourism in 2020-2021 shows a negative trend, as the total number of homesteads in the country (individual entrepreneurs) that provided tourist services in 2021 decreased by 52 units compared to 285 in 2020 and amounted to 233 homesteads. Comparing 2020 and 2021, it can be seen that, in particular, their total area increased by 5219.2 m², while the living space decreased by 6431 m² over the period to 23 556.7 m² in 2021. As for the number of

people accommodated, it decreased by 10 637 and amounted to 39 311 people in 2021. At the same time, the average capacity of farmsteads that provided tourist services increased by an average of 0.9 beds.

The offer of farmsteads in Ukraine is diverse and includes accommodation, catering, outdoor activities, cultural excursions, relaxation treatments, participation in agricultural work, organization of festive and corporate events, rehabilitation for veterans and people with disabilities, rehabilitation for children with autism, agrotherapy, apitherapy, and hippotherapy.

Farmsteads often provide various accommodation options, such as comfortable rooms in the main house, separate cottages, or holiday homes, and sometimes even tents or camping sites. Many of them have their own restaurants or kitchens where traditional Ukrainian cuisine is served, often prepared with local and organic products. Guests can enjoy numerous outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cycling, or hiking. For culture enthusiasts, excursions to local attractions, museums, churches, and other historical sites are organized.

Relaxation treatments include spa services, saunas, and massages, which help with recovery and rejuvenation. Guests can also participate in daily agricultural activities, such as picking fruits and vegetables, milking cows, or cheese-making. The premises of these farmsteads are also used for hosting events such as parties, weddings, corporate gatherings, and other celebrations.

Some farmsteads specialize in providing rehabilitation for veterans and people with disabilities by offering workshops on gardening and plant cultivation. Farm therapy also includes agrotherapy, apitherapy, and hippotherapy, which support both physical and mental well-being.

It is essential to highlight that the offerings of farmsteads can also be designed to support children with autism, providing substantial benefits for their development and well-being. Activities such as animal-assisted therapy, gardening, and sensory-rich experiences can help improve communication skills, reduce anxiety, and enhance focus. The natural and tranquil environment of farmsteads offers a supportive space for children to engage in therapeutic activities at their own pace, fostering both emotional and cognitive growth. By incorporating agrotherapy, apitherapy, and hippotherapy, these programs create a holistic approach to care, demonstrating the potential of rural settings to promote inclusive and impactful rehabilitation.

The development of rural green tourism for children with autism in Ukraine can have a significant positive impact on their development and well-being. Taking into account the specific needs of this group of children, green tourism programmes can be specially adapted to provide them with comfortable and stimulating conditions (Voloshynskyi, 2011).

Rural regions of Ukraine, with their natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere, can be an ideal place for such programmes. Here, children with autism can feel safe and comfortable, and natural landscapes can inspire them to explore and interact with the environment.

Rural green tourism programmes for children with autism can include the following components:

- sensory stimulation through nature – walking in the forest, observing rivers and lakes, touching plants and animals can contribute to sensory stimulation and development of children;
- adapted classes – organisation of special classes in drawing, needlework, music and other creative activities that can be useful for the development of children with autism.
- social interaction – joint activities with other children and adults can help develop social skills and improve communication;
- agrotherapy with the help of animals and plants – interacting with animals, such as horses, dogs or other pets, can have a therapeutic effect and help reduce stress and anxiety;
- participation in agriculture – involving children in simple agricultural tasks such as planting vegetables or caring for animals can help them to develop a sense of independence and confidence.

Agrotherapy, which is beneficial for people with autism because it uses contact with nature and agricultural activities as a means to improve physical and emotional well-being. The main idea of agrotherapy in agro-housing is that people can get a therapeutic effect by being in a natural rural environment and doing agricultural work or just relaxing in nature. For people with autism, especially children, contact with nature can be an effective way to develop social skills, reduce stress and improve communication abilities. There are some of the ways in which agrotherapy can be useful for people with autism as per below:

- gardening and agriculture – gardening, growing vegetables or flowers can provide people with autism with the opportunity to develop motor skills, feel useful and have an impact on the environment;
- therapeutic agricultural programmes – the development of special programmes that include gardening and other agricultural activities to improve the physical and emotional well-being of people with autism;
- contact with animals – interacting with animals, such as farm animals or pets, can have a calming effect and help develop empathy and social skills;
- social interactions – working in groups on agricultural projects can be a great opportunity to interact and develop social skills;
- stimulating sensory experiences – working with the different materials and textures commonly found in agriculture can stimulate sensory experiences and help develop sensory skills;
- herbal medicine – the use of plant extracts, essential oils and herbal baths can have a therapeutic effect on the health and well-being of tourists. This form of agrotherapy can be included in the spa treatments of agritourism farms;
- ecological therapy – interacting with natural environments, including forests, fields and rivers, can have a positive impact on mental health and overall well-being. Walks,

picnics and environmental excursions can be an important part of an agrotherapy programme;

- creativity and handicrafts – organising creative and handicraft workshops in the natural environment stimulates the creative potential of participants and contributes to their emotional recovery.

Therapeutic offer of rural tourism facilities on the example of a Polish case study

In Poland, among rural tourism facilities, it is possible to distinguish those that specialize in performing therapeutic functions. An example of such a place is the analyzed facility located in Lubelskie voivodeship called Zagrodowa Osada (Farmstead Village). The facility is located in the village of Uściąg, 6 km from Kazimierz Dolny, 18 km from Puławy and Nałęczów and 48 km from Lublin. The analyzed unit is a 3-hectare farm, which includes a manor house, a historic barn and other outbuildings, as well as a handicraft workshop, a “therapist’s house” and a shed for relaxation or entertainment. The whole place is fenced and friendly to people with disabilities. According to the owner herself (Official website..., 2024), the place was “created out of passion for folk traditions, rituals, love of old objects, nature and simply living in the countryside”. The motivation for founding the center was also the desire to own animals – especially horses.

The Zagrodowa Osada offers tourists six guest rooms in a manor house and two detached houses. The facility also offers catering, which consists of regional meals made from organic ingredients. In addition, it also offers the possibility of organizing a party in the manor house, an intimate wedding in the barn and celebrating other occasions.

The facility offers self-development and therapeutic workshops for both children and adults. Under the banner of “Weekendy Uważności” (Weekends of Mindfulness), stays are organized here, during which guests practice yoga and breathing, meditate and work with horses. Guests can choose a type of diet, such as vegan, can drink herbs, and have access to snacks and drinks throughout their stay. Classes are held outdoors or in a historic century-old barn. For those who wish, horseback riding lessons, marma massages and natural medicine treatments are possible at an additional cost during free time. Included in the price of the trip, clients participate in two morning breathing and meditation classes, three yoga sessions, one “theory” class about horses, one workshop with horses from the ground and one meditation on horseback (in the saddle). Participation in the aforementioned classes promotes tranquility and well-being among participants. In addition, according to the service provider, people during Weekends of Mindfulness become more confident, which translates into building better relationships in their personal and professional lives.

Offerings typically aimed at children are “Holidays in the Homestead Settlement” (Wakacje w Zagrodowej Osadzie), “Kolonie artystyczno-jeździeckie” (Art and Riding Camps) and “Ferie artystyczno-jeździeckie” (Art and Equestrian Winter Holidays). During their stay, children take part in activities around horses and other farm animals, as well as art and theater classes, and are provided with individual horseback riding lessons. Art classes include pottery, toy-making and decoupage workshops. Among other activi-

ties, there is also a tour, a game of pick-up and wandering in the woods. This approach to creating an offer that includes elements of animal therapy, art therapy and theater therapy is a holistic approach to supporting the proper development of children and adolescents.

In the unit under review, visitors have the opportunity to interact with a variety of animal species. These include horses and ponies, a donkey, a goat, dogs, cats, rabbits and fowl. The therapeutic properties of contact with each of the animal species held at the facility are scientifically proven.

Research indicates that equine-assisted services greatly enhance various social skills in individuals with autism spectrum disorder. Specifically, interaction with horses significantly improves social communication and social cognition (Madigand, Rio and Vandeveld, 2023). Donkeys used in animal-assisted therapy have behavioural characteristics such as calm behaviour, making them well suited to such interventions. Donkey-assisted therapy focuses primarily on the psychological, cognitive and psychiatric rehabilitation of disabled patients (Portaro et al., 2020). Goats are one of the animals used in bovidae-assisted therapy, which is an innovative and effective form of therapy (Szczycka, 2024a). Including dogs in physical activity sessions can help children with autism spectrum disorders to increase their physical activity and achieve the associated health benefits (Abadi et al., 2022). Cats may serve as a compensatory mechanism for individuals with autism, who are often characterized by social contact avoidance, acting as a substitute for human companionship (Cleary et al., 2023), and additionally, these animals provide valuable therapeutic companionship (Hart et al., 2018). Interactions with rabbits can have a positive effect on reducing stress and anxiety in children (Molnár et al., 2020). Listening to bird sounds relieves anxiety and reduces paranoia. It also brings joy and helps alleviate human anxiety (Joybell, 2024).

The owner of the facility, who is the author of the programmes offered to guests of the workshops, is a horse riding and hippotherapy instructor. She collaborates with people who are practitioners of natural medicine, psychodieticians, massage therapists, and are professionals specialising in therapy, teaching and leading yoga, meditation, Happiness Program courses (Meditation and Breathing Workshop) and personal development classes.

The service provider employs a variety of methods to reach customers. The offer of Zagrodowa Osada is available on platforms such as: e-turysta.pl, agoda.com, booking.com, booked.com.pl, tripadvisor.com, noclegi.pl, meteor-turystyka.pl, wedding.pl, trivago.pl, kraina.org.pl, gufik.pl, www.momondo.pl, viamichelin.pl, holiday.pl. An important channel of communication with customers and potential guests is the page on the social networking site Facebook, which has 2.2 thousand likes and 2.3 thousand followers. Posts about the offer and planned events, as well as accounts of events held, regularly appear there (The official Facebook, 2024). The owner also has a website with sentences referring to the positive impact of art and contact with animals on human health. These include:

1. „Art enriches the inner life of a person, educates the intellect, and provides life wisdom. Art reveals new values, serves as an integrating medium that provides a sense of security. Art offers pleasure and serves as entertainment, allowing for free expression of personality. Art adds dynamism to life, develops imagination and sensitivity. Art helps restore mental balance, reduces depression and anxiety. Art helps change a negative attitude to a positive one. Art protects against emotional imbalance and mental disorders”.
2. „Animals bring joy and smiles and provide activities that allow one to think about something other than oneself (age, problems, illness). Animals teach responsibility, regularity, and provide topics for fascinating conversations. Animals stimulate movement, activity that increases self-confidence and the sense of life. Animals offer a source of warmth, touch, and positive feelings. Animals reduce stress levels, help gently navigate through loneliness, illness, or depression”.

These quotes make it clear that the service provider knows how effective art therapy or animal therapy can be in treating and supporting human wellbeing. The combination of these two therapies creates a holistic approach to activities aimed at maintaining or restoring general welfare, offering tourists not only relaxation but also the opportunity to connect more deeply with themselves and the world around them.

Discussion

Child development is always a diverse process. The socialization process is undoubtedly an important moment when the family environment is still important for the child, but the search for acceptance in the group of peers begins. As previously indicated, children with autism are characterized by disorders in participating in alternating social interactions. These disorders vary from child to child. Therapy for children with autism includes activities leading to the desired changes in the patient's functioning (including those on agritourism farms), i.e. psychotherapy, sociotherapy, re-education, compensation, correction (O'Haire, 2013). Thanks to these activities, the patient functions better in social life and copes with his problems, thinking, behavioral and emotional disorders. Therapy for autism requires extensive support in various aspects.

Research conducted by many scientists (Włodarczyk-Dudka, 2013; Damiano et al., 2014; Byström et al., 2019; Suchowierska-Stephany et al., 2019; Zeidan et al., 2022; Roy and Strate, 2023) indicate that autism spectrum disorder is a condition characterized by deficits in social interaction and communication. In order to eliminate these deficits, it has been noted that animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is a breakthrough therapeutic intervention that involves using the innate bond between humans and animals to improve physical, mental, emotional, social well-being and communication (Viau et al., 2010; Esposito et al., 2011). By including animals such as cats, dogs, horses and birds in therapy sessions, AAT aims to alleviate symptoms and improve the therapeutic experience of people struggling with a variety of conditions. The wide range of therapeutic possibilities of animal activities for people with autism spectrum disorders makes it possible to choose the appropriate and most suitable methods.

The basis of every action and work with an autistic child or adult is mainly to eliminate deficits, improve the quality of life and functioning, and appropriate stimulation for development (Bociarska et. al., 2019).

One of the forms that is gaining more and more scientific importance, which improves the functioning of a child with autism and at the same time is not limited to side effects, is dog therapy. Dog therapy is carried out in a comprehensive form and in the rehabilitation of people with autism (Bociarska et. al., 2019). Rehabilitation with the participation of horses, cats, dogs or dolphins has a positive effect on improving the physical and mental condition of autistic children. Professionally trained animals are accepted and liked by children, they do not cause them to feel fear, thus enabling them to overcome any communication barriers. Under the influence of appropriate therapy, autistic children open up to the outside world, which gives them a lot of joy and helps them receive stimuli from the surrounding environment.

Undoubtedly, zootherapy is one of the most modern and effective forms of rehabilitation for autistic children (Włodarczyk-Dudka, 2013). Similar results were presented by the team of Byström et al (2019), who indicated that children's contact with animals has a positive effect. Thanks to the therapy with animals, social initiatives are increased, typical autistic behaviors are reduced and stress is reduced. In turn, Stigsdotter et al. (2011) emphasized that nature and animals should be used in therapeutic and educational contexts. A similar position is presented by Beetz et al. (2012); Annerstedt et al. (2013); O'Haire (2013), Ben-Itzhak et al. (2014); Posner et al. (2014); Hägerhäll et al. (2015), who in their texts indicated the importance of appropriate prevention and therapy of autistic children using contact with animals. Temple Grandin et al. (2015) believe that for some people with ASD, animals can provide strong social support both as companions and companion animals. According to them, the surrounding natural environment also has a beneficial impact on emotions and relationships with society.

Nowadays, agritourism or care farms play a huge role in providing therapy for autistic children (Roman and Wojcieszak-Zbierska, 2018). Classes dedicated to children, teenagers and adults provide many positive behavioral and emotional reactions. In many European countries, there are specialized farms that provide therapy for people on the autism spectrum. A wide range of activities, not only with farm animals, means that resting for autistic people on the farm and participating in minor farm work teaches social behavior and provides positive opportunities to reduce the effects of the disease (Torquati et al., 2019). Also in the work of Kręgiel et al. (2019) indicated that therapy with animals, e.g. on farms, in the opinion of parents of children with autism, has a positive impact on the emotional sphere, motor condition, balance and motor skills of patients. Also Ferwerda van Zonneveld et al. (2012) highlighted the importance that for children with ASD, visiting care homes is an important addition to current treatment options. According to them, care farms are an ideal refuge where children with ASD will find safety, space and peace. As the Ferweda van Zonneveld team (2012) points out, in the Netherlands, children with ASD can benefit from short breaks combined with therapy in care homes. These

farms offer care, homework or reintegration work for people with various types of disabilities, for example mental retardation, psychiatric or addiction problems, older people (with dementia), children and young people in need of care. Most care farms have animals. Bonding with animals can be used to improve and treat the behavior of children with ASD, and this type of treatment is called an emerging field called animal-assisted interventions (AAI) (Kruger, 2006). These children's communication with animals reduces feelings of anxiety and arousal and may act as a mediator to improve their social interactions with other people (Martin, 2002; Rothe et al., 2002). Therefore, it can be indicated that human interaction with animals provides a sense of security, comfort and entertainment and enables the expression of feelings.

Among the farms that offer therapy to people on the autism spectrum, there are also those that run agritourism activities.

Conclusions

Based on the literature review presented and the case study conducted, several conclusions can be drawn. Adults with autism can be included in work in the agricultural sector, contributing to improving relational and organizational skills. Various forms of therapy, not only with farm animals, can contribute to a significant improvement in their mental health and well-being. A form of therapy for children with autism may be contact with pets, e.g. dogs, cats, guinea pigs. In some cases, however, the relationship may be negative, both on the part of the animal and the child. Resting on caring farms and agritourism farms may also be an effective form of therapy for autistic children. This applies to close contact with various species of farm animals, e.g. horses and donkeys, which are therapists in rehabilitation methods, in hippotherapy and onotherapy, respectively.

In Western Europe, for adults with autism, but especially for autistic children, zotherapy is popular on care farms, including agritourism farms. Based on the example of the studied Polish facility, which exemplifies good practices in utilizing a wide range of health-supporting services, it can be stated that it is possible to run a successful rural tourism establishment with a rich therapeutic offer that could benefit people on the autism spectrum. The combination of health services centered around activities involving art and animal interaction constitutes a successful agritourism offering.

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