

# THE NEW TATRY ECO-REGION IS BORN IN SLOVAKIA

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One of the members of the INNER International Network of Bio-districts and Eco-regions is the Tatry Eco-Region of Slovakia.

The area between the Tatra National Park and National Park Low Tatras is a perfect place tailored for the establishment of the Eco-region Tatry, the first one in Slovakia.

The Tatra National Park is also part of the [UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme](#) and both national parks belong to the ecological network NATURA 2000.

In Tatry Eco-region agricultural land is located at an altitude from 905 to 1400 meters about sea level.

Restrictions given by these *limitations* led to the decision to start with agricultural cooperatives for the management of 143 ha of agricultural land in ecological way in 1991 and afterward on the whole area.

The development of the ecological agriculture in Slovak Republic began in 1991 following the trends in western European countries. By the end of 2014 the number of organic farms had risen to 400 with a total area of 180,000 hectares (7.5 %) of agricultural land. Dairy cattle and sheep were also included in the ecological production. Crop production is focusing on the production of ware potatoes, Spelt (*Triticum spelta*); and growing *Triticale* and roughage (bulk) fodder for own needs in animal husbandry.

Nowadays, 10 ecological farms operate in this area, and many of them are currently cooperating to monitor the management of the protected area of the National Park Low Tatras and to develop the commercial future of the Bio-production.

Five farms (Mengusovce, Šuňava, Liptovská Teplička, Východná, Važec) are members of the sales team BioTatry. BioTatry purchases raw milk for processing at their own small dairies and produces cheese threads, home-made butter, and cottage cheese. All products have the certificate of Quality Mark Gold.

BioTatry is the only sales team of this kind in Slovakia that brings together producers of milk in bio-quality. They have been working together since 2013 creating this cluster with the attempt to sell their products at a better price than before. Although in Slovakia there



are more marketing cooperatives that mediate sales, BioTatry is the only one solely focused on bio quality. BioTatry sales team is now selling their products abroad, where the consumer's purchasing power is higher. Their long-term strategy is to sell products mainly in Slovakia.

The Eco-Region is focused on strategic activities:

- Ecological farming in Kriváň, located between the High Tatras and the Low Tatras. They are focusing on animal husbandry (cows and sheep), and farming on 1,700 ha of grass lands (meadows and pastures).
- Restoration of meadows and pastures, including perennial fodder crops on the arable land. Each year they manage to regenerate approx. 250 ha.
- Ecological care of the soil. An innovative way of manure processing is implemented, cutting straw for the bedding. The manure is more easily processed and degrades faster as well. Nitrogen is added to the soil by planting of clover. Nowadays, only natural manure in permitted volumes is used.
- Production of organic seeds, like oat, barley, spring wheat, peas and potatoes that are grown on 450 ha of arable land, gives a surplus of seeds exported abroad.
- Sheep breeding is also internationally recognized with a closed cycle of herd, ranging from calves, heifers, cows to bulls with a rich variety of traditional products (cow's milk cheese, sheep's milk cheese, whey, broth).

Good practices of the organic farms are concretely demonstrating the possible economic use of common resources with the social participation to their management. A balanced relation between communities and ecosystems is not only possible in Eco-region Tatry, but the MAB programme of UNESCO certifies this ecological virtuous cycle too.

Thanks to the participation of all residents of the territory, the Tatry eco-region can more easily also become a preferred site for research, training, environmental education and territorial planning. In this framework the international partnership with the INNER network will be of a valuable support for the development of the great potentialities of the Tatry Eco-region, sharing knowledge and practical experiences with other Eco-regions involved.

### To know more

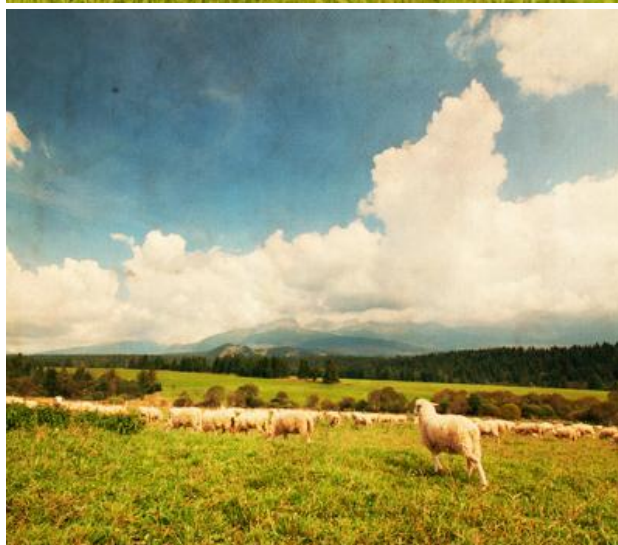
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[IN.N.E.R. International Network of Eco-Regions](http://www.uniag.sk/en/)

