

IN DEPTH ANALYSIS

NAME : 't STRUISVOGELNEST (OSTRICH NEST FARM)

ADRESS : Zuut 18, 2500 Lier, Belgium

CONTACT : Marijke Gielis tstruisvogelnest@hotmail.be



WEBSITE : <http://www.tstruisvogelnest.be/>

FACEBOOK : 1. <https://www.facebook.com/kinderboerderij.tstruisvogelnest>

DESCRIPTION : They original were a greenhouse for cold crops like lettuce. At the moment 2/3 of it is rented to another farmer, the other 1/3 is still used to grow crops they use within the workshops & the shop. Part of the greenhouse serves as indoor playground & workshop area.

They have a cafeteria space they use as shop, workshop room when farm is closed for public and as indoor sitting room to consume pancakes & other small snacks.

Outside, you have 2 big separate areas. 1 where you can walk through some of the smaller animals. Also the animals you can cuddle. The other area is a walking path around the bigger animals all having separate sheds and fence around.



1. WHAT DO WE OFFER ? TO WHO ? WHEN ? HOW ? AT WHAT PRICE ?

⇒ *They call themselves ‘a viewing, doing, caring, cuddling and petting zoo’.*

a. **A care farm** which offers a valuable time commitment to people from vulnerable groups.

(No physical handicap) These people can help on the farm and go along with the family Gielis.

i. **Frequency** : daily

- 1 adult / older youngster at the time

ii. **Staffing** :

- No special staffing, they go along with the family. Work with them in the stables, help with feeding,...

iii. **Fee for participation** :

- Free
- Because they are an official ‘care farm’ , they receive a small subsidy. The subsidy amounts to 20 euros per day part that one or more care guests are activated at the care farm.
- In addition, farmers and horticulturalists can appeal to the Flemish Investment Fund when they carry out adaptation works to make their accommodation accessible to care guests.
- The Flemish government considers this payment as an economic compensation for the time farmers and horticulturists invest in the care activities. It is not an allowance for the accompaniment of the care guests.



b. Visit to the domain / farm / shop :

They want to be 'the farm for everybody'

Everybody can enter the domain and farm to walk around and have a look at the animals . They can follow a designated route or visit the playground. They can have something to eat/drink in the cafeteria and/or buy some products from the farm (vegetables, eggs). They grow a mix of vegetables like : tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, cauliflower, potatoes, lettuce

In the cafeteria they are famous for pancakes made from ostrich eggs.



i. Target group :

- families with children
- cycle tourism (& 1 bicycle routes pass by)
- hikers (walking network pass by)

They offer 3 walking tours starting & ending at the farm : 4, 8 & 10 km.



ii. Frequency :

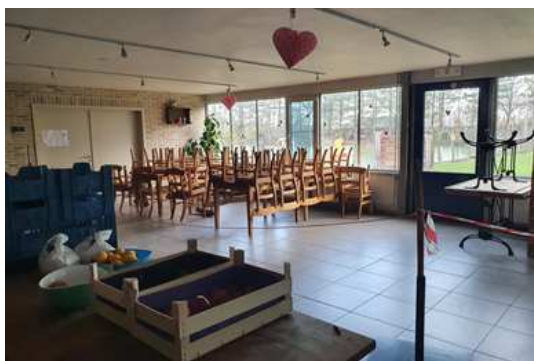
- Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday : 13h00 – 17h00
- During school & public holidays

iii. Staffing

- Own family (4 FTE – brother & girlfriend, 2 sisters)
- Mother & Father on pension, sometimes available if needed
- Job students depending on the need (pool of 6 people)

iv. participation :

- free



c. A children Farm Program to schools : educational programs :

They have worked out some formulas for children, taking into account different age categories. Half days & Full days.

Half days consist of a farm visit with tour around the animals. Full days have free play in the afternoon or specific activities as :

- Workshops:

- Baking: cookies, bread, cake
- Making pizzas
- Making soup
- Making apple compote
- Make fruit salad
- Search on the farm

- Farm game:

The teachers themselves guide their children along the animals via the numbers on the farm. They get an informative booklet with explanations about the different animals. At the different numbers the group stops to carry out the assignment. Did the children carry out the assignment correctly? Then they get a puzzle piece. When all tasks have been completed and the puzzle pieces have been collected, the children can make the puzzle. This puzzle is a tip that leads to where the treasure is hidden on the farm. Assignments such as: bird dance, fishing for ducks, horse race, feeler box, searching for the tail of the donkey, counting sheep, jumping like a kangaroo on the bouncy castle, ...

i. Frequency : 5 days / week :

- Monday to Friday (on reservation)

Registration in forehand (some schools book 3 years in advance). Most schools from Antwerp city area.

During schoolyear (mainly march to June) they receive on average 100 schoolchildren.

ii. Staffing :

- Own family (4 FTE – brother & girlfriend, 2 sisters)



iii. Fee for participation / activity :

- Half day:
 - a. Self-guided tour: € 4
 - b. Accompaniment from the farm: € 6
- Full day:
 - a. Self-guided tour: € 6
 - b. Accompaniment from the farm: € 8 (accompaniment = half day)
- Workshops:
 - a. Different workshops : € 3
 - b. Search on the farm : € 1,5 (only takes 1 hour)
- Farm game:
 - a. Full day : € 2
- PRICES = includes 1 drink
- For every 20 students = 1 teacher for free



d. **An Activity Program to individuals/groups :**

This **activity program** on the farm for individuals & groups is mainly organized as a children's party for special occasions (eg birthdays).

The **basic package** concept takes 3 hours :

- consists of a discovery tour of the farm, where the children themselves have the freedom to walk around and discover everything on their own / play / enjoy / romp / ...
- snack/meal: Ostrich pancakes or fries with a curry sausage à volonté and one drink per person.

Additional Activity to select : lasts +/- 1 hour and is included in the 3 hour package

- **Guided tour of the farm:** the children can then be accompanied in some of the sheds of the animals + feed them /
- **Music pack:** this is a pack with different tasks around and with the animals. Inside the package they offer a surprise for the children / birthday person.
- **Photo search:** Based on photos, children will search for objects on the farm. 10 photos / 10 objects with the animals. This can be played in 2 groups.
- **Workshops:** baking cookies, cakes, bread - making pizzas, ... (same as schools)

ii. **Frequency :**

- Daily on reservation

iii. **Staffing**

- Own family (4 FTE – brother & girlfriend, 2 sisters)
- Job students if needed
- Parents are asked to be present for helping



iv. **Fee for participation :**

- Basic package : € 10/person. (min 10 persons)
- Additional activity :
 - a. Guided tour : € 30/group
 - b. Music pack : € 30/group
 - c. Photo search : €20/group
 - d. Workshops : € 4/person

e. Farm Camps :

They offer daily farm camps with a weekly changing theme. They always start the day by feeding, caring for and cuddling the animals. In the afternoon they offer a workshop adapted to the weekly theme.

Target group : children 3 – 10 years

In 2021 they will develop a new offer for children 11 – 14 years

Planning summer camp 2021 :

Week 1 - Fruit week

Week 2 - Vegetable week

Week 3 - Baking week

Week 4 - Water week

Week 5 - Sports, games and crafts week

Week 6 - Egg week

Week 7 - Potato week

Week 8 - Fruits and vegetables week

Week 9 - Sports, games and crafts week



i. Frequency : during school & public holidays

- 1 week spring break
- 2 weeks Easter break
- 9 weeks summer school holidays
- 1 week autumn break

ii. Staffing

- 3 FTE
- from own family or job students

iii. Fee for participation :

- The price is € 25 / day. Drink and 2 snacks included.
- 2nd child and further within 1 family : € 20 / day
- On average 45 children / day.
- Possible to inscribe for 1 day, different days, 1 week, whole vacation,...



2. RENTABILITY – EARNINGS / COSTS

- a. Total number of visitors are estimated around :
 - i. 100 schoolchildren each day : mainly during March-June + September-October : 3000/year
 - ii. 45 children every day during farm camps : 3000/year
 - iii. Family parties (mainly Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday) : 2000/year
 - iv. Free visits : not figure available (spending in shop & cafeteria)
- b. At the moment most of the work is done by the family & job students if needed. It allows an income for all 4 members.
- c. They try to minimize cost of staff by always asking help for supervision by the teachers and/or parents.
- d. At this moment the care farm is subsidised (200 days x € 20) , but taking into account the needed guidance it is a zero operation, which is looked as being a social function in favour of the region.
- e. They limit the feed cost of the animals by :
 - i. Using vegetable waste from proper production
 - ii. Using of own hay
 - iii. They buy straw

3. MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

a. Facebook & Instagram :

- i. This social media is the main communication form at present.

b. Folder :

- i. They made an initial folder 10 years ago when starting the activities on the farm.
- ii. From then on only word-of-mouth advertising is the main marketing tool. They are mostly fully booked. Schools book for 3 years in front

c. Website :

- i. The website gives you the total overview.
- ii. Not so fancy. Thinking on developing a new one, but it lacks time.

#struisvogelnest Instagram Posts



Wij hebben oks geamuseerd 🤗 #struisvogelnest



Genieten.. ❤️ #struisvogelnest #kinderboerderij
#lier #zonnig #genieten



Op stap met de boys 🧡🌿 #kinderboerderij
#struisvogelnest

4. ANIMALS AT THE FARM

- Ostriches (80)
- Cows
- Horses
- Deer
- Goose, swans and ducks
- Donkeys
- Alpaca's
- Sheep & goats
- Rabbits
- Guinea pigs



5. DO – DON'TS – BOTTLENECKS

- a. **Transportation /parking** : at the moment most of the schools are coming by bus. Families mainly come by car (too far from public transport) and brought traffic problems for the neighbours.
This resulted in an amount of complaints and licensing problems. It took nearly 10 years to sort out everything and get finally a license for an extra parking spot. Due to this problem they stopped organising events on special occasions (e.g. eggnog at easter), which were to successful.
- b. They have a lot of people asking if they could come and pick vegetables themselves (CSA principle). They are looking into the possibility.

GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN Auto Immo Jobs Shop Mijn abonner

GVA NIEUWS GEMEENTE SPORT DOEN! VIDEO MIJN ARTIKELS



Lori Van den Bosch en Ben Gielis van kinderboerderij 't Struisvogelnest. — © Kristof Van Rompaey

't Struisvogelnest kan na vijf jaar procederen gebruiksvriendelijke parking aanleggen

Lier - Na meer dan vijf jaar procederen beschikt kinderboerderij 't Struisvogelnest in de Zuut 18 in Lier over een omgevingsvergunning voor de aanleg van een parking. "We hopen dat de parking binnen de twee weken klaar is", klinkt het.

6. EXTRA PICTURES



Link to Instagram pictures : <https://www.picuki.com/tag/struisvogelnest>

Contract No AGRI-2019-409 supported by the European Union contributed to the results presented in this document. The opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the Contracting Authority's official position.



Prepared in the framework of the 'Preparatory Action on Smart Rural Areas
in the 21st Century' project funded by the:

