

## 2010 Study Tour in Poland

On October 1-10, 2010 a Study Tour group visited Heifer projects in Poland. It was a great pleasure for all Heifer Poland staff to host them. The group started their journey in Wrocław, a beautiful city located in Southern Poland. They were introduced to Heifer International, its mission and cornerstones. They also had the occasion to hear briefly about the history of Poland and the history of the cities and places they were going to visit during their 10 days stay in Poland.



After visiting Wrocław with its most impressive monuments and places, they went to the first project "Horses help Farmers to be self-sufficient" in the Wróbliniec community. They visited three families participating in that project; they also met with the farmers' association "Zagroda" which had prepared various attractions, such as horseback riding and a carriage tour of scenic places. The group also took part in preparations of a traditional Polish lunch.

The next day they went to the Gold Mine in Złoty Stok and visited the project "Development of Simmental Cattle Production on Farms in the Sudety Region". Despite the very long journey that day, the participants willingly met with the Heifer families, who are part of that project. They spent a night on an Agro Tourism farm, and the next morning visited families of the project "Horse Agro-Tourism helps the Farmers of the Miedzylesie Region". Undoubtedly the main point of that day was the Passing on the Gift ceremony. Four Simmental heifers and two Hucul horses were given to new farmers. The event had a very ceremonial character. Among invited guests were regional and local authorities, leaders of local associations, farmers participating in the projects in the Sudety region, and the national media. The coverage of the event appeared on two national TV channels the next day. Study Tour participants received small gifts, such as handmade cards and beautiful paper flowers made by the farmers.

After visiting the projects of the Simmental cattle and Hucul horses, the group went to see the sheep project in Labowa. On the way to Nowy Sącz, where the project "Sheep Breeding for Balance Development for Food and Livelihood Security of Labowa Community's Farms" is located, they stopped in Oświęcim to visit the Auschwitz Museum, which was for them an unforgettable experience. Late at night they arrived at the hotel, and the next day they went to the project site to meet with the recipients who received Heifer assistance in the region.



This day was full of attractions. Participants met with two families and visited their farms in the mountains. Thanks to the project leader, they could also see the "Bee Keeping Center" in Kamianna and the Orthodox Church in Polan. Families, who participated in the project, prepared wonderful lamb and goat dishes. They also attended a sheep shearing event with the community.

They could even shear sheep on their own. They even took some wool in small bags with them to the states.

The project in Labowa was the last project that the Study Tour participants visited in Poland. They have finished their journey in Krakow, where they could admire the beautiful old town, famous churches, and synagogues. Hopefully, they will remember their stay in Poland for a very long time and will be back here one day, as they promised.

"I am very grateful that people donating to Heifer wanted to visit us and our families. We are very honored they spent their time in our community and could see how Heifer funds are distributed among the project participants," said Grzegorz Tabasz, project leader in the Labowa community.

"It was an excellent time with excellent people. It was a real pleasure for me to assist the Study Tour group together with my colleagues; especially I had a chance to show the projects that I coordinate," said Piotr Jaśniewicz, Heifer Poland field assistant.

"These were very two special days for our community. We were nervous, but also very excited about the visit. I am so happy that we could show our guests the POG ceremony and share with them our joys and problems of everyday life," said Elżbieta Brzostowska, project leader in the Sudety Mountains Region.

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