

CHAPTER 15

FARMING FOR HEALTH: ASPECTS FROM GERMANY

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Abstract. Until now, the term ‘Farming for Health’ is unknown in Germany but it would cover a wide spectrum of different kinds of social agriculture already existing in Germany, such as farms that integrate disabled people or drug therapy into their farming system, or farms that integrate children, pupils or older people. Relevant work in Germany is done in ‘Sheltered Workshops’, where supporting and healing powers of farming and gardening are used for disabled people with a diversity of work possibilities. Relevant activities also take place in work-therapy departments using horticultural therapy and in animal-assisted therapy. There are an estimated number of 1000 different projects for mentally ill, disabled and elderly people in hospitals, Sheltered Workshops, on farms and other projects in Germany with a multitude of individual work places.

The upcoming idea of Farming for Health may be met by the term ‘multifunctionality’ as one of the future goals of agriculture: to combine the production of cash crops with social functions, like providing space for recreation, care for landscapes and care for disabled people. Research showed that farms that work together with clients in their farming system have more time and financial support to integrate aims like caring for biotopes and landscape measures into their work schedule.

Keywords: horticultural therapy; healing power; recovery; sense of self; animal-assisted therapy; sheltered workshops; homeless people; work colonies; landscape development

INTRODUCTION

In the scientific community there is no faculty in Germany which focuses on people–plant relationships like horticultural therapy in the US or on Farming for Health (FH). Research is done in biotechnology and in environmental science. The idea of connecting ‘nature–garden–plant and people’ in horticulture and agriculture is pursued in Germany by different groups – planned at the level of Universities of Applied Science and practiced in the shape of projects which differ greatly in their intention.

There are some projects that integrate disabled people or drug therapy into their farming system, or farms that integrate children or pupils or older people. Much more relevant practice in Germany is gained in different projects. Konrad Neuberger and Ingrid Stephan deal with two aspects of FH: plants and animals as companions,

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mediators and therapeutic assistants. Robert Hermanowski gives a general view on Sheltered Workshops, where farming as a supporting and healing power is used with a diversity of work possibilities for some thousand disabled people. As examples two farms are described, one for mentally handicapped people and one for homeless people.

Due to the history of the German health system and the laws for the support of disabled people, there is little connection between the several existing health and support systems. They all have in common that these projects see their responsibility more or less equally on land, plants, animals and on people who are less favoured by worldly goods.

WORKING WITH PLANTS: HORTICULTURAL THERAPY IN GERMANY

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Origins of horticultural therapy in Germany

In Germany horticultural activities for the treatment of the mentally handicapped still play an important role. Gardening for health was started to be used systematically with the emerging idea around 1800, that ‘insane’ people could be healed at all. Johann Christian Reil, the leading reformer in Prussia, emphasized: “The appropriate asylum must have agriculture, cattle-breeding and horticulture” (Halle 1803).

Dr. Maximilian Jacobi (Neuberger 2004), the first physician supervising a hospital for the ‘insane’ in Germany (1825), used garden work intensively for curing the ‘insane’. Between 1854 and 1883 there was a broad discussion in psychiatric journals on the pros and cons of farm work as a treatment of the mentally handicapped¹: So-called ‘Agricultural Colonies’ were founded all over Germany between 1850 and 1900, combining horticulture and agriculture with healing and caring for mentally handicapped people. The healing power of working the land, of sowing, planting, caring and harvesting had still to be examined.

Horticultural therapy in Germany today

After a decrease between 1930 and 1945, and in the 1960s and 1970s, a renaissance of horticultural therapy began in the 1980s. Work therapy in general and horticultural (work) therapy especially gained more relevance. It appeared that different methods, including psychopharmaca and psychotherapy, were not able to yield sufficient results in improving or healing psychiatric patients. It became apparent that even increased industrial work therapy, which by then was being developed, could not solve the motivational problems of many patients (Neuberger in press).

Horticultural therapy with a different, more patient-focused view has been developed because: “Horticultural work therapy offers far more differentiated and graded work offerings than industrial work therapy. The evident requirements of horticultural activities influence motivational disorders positively. With social disorders, plants (and may be animals) become mediators towards the environment” (Leclerc-Springer 1994). More still, plants can be seen as subjects, subjects in a world that we share – a sight that has great relevance towards sensible relations with natural surroundings.

Some therapeutic aspects of horticultural activities

Gardening helps with physical and mental recovery by using a whole range of body movements. While gardening, people increase their flexibility and integrate different parts of the body. They may feel renewed strength and sensitivity. They usually become stronger, more adaptive to different work and weather conditions. Their sense of self, of being sensitive and sensible, their self-confidence is being confirmed when they see how their efforts help small plants to become bigger and more beautiful.

A depressed man of a fragile posture, aged 36, came to the garden and asked for the easiest work because of his sore back. His physician had forbidden him to handle more than 10 pounds. We looked for easy work like pricking seedlings, but we also asked him to try different tasks to exercise his body. After some time he accepted tasks that he had previously refused. By the end of his stay, he could function almost normally and even use a spade for some time. Experiencing physical strength and flexibility in his back, he could let go partly his depressive feelings and look more optimistic into the future (see Paetz 1893? Neuberger 2004).

The trigger point of horticulture for humans is that plants are living beings, companions on the way through life. They provide food and material for shelter. Plants give it freely. A sense of relation and responsibility can be built. The environment becomes fraught with meaning. This is especially important for addicted people, the homeless, for children, for people in crises and grieving people.

One can see how people are caring when one watches them plant flowers for the first time: after digging a hole they plant them, shovel soil to their stems and then slap the soil with their hands repeatedly, like saying: now you are there, now you are there!

Gardens are places where people experience their strength, their aggressive potential and where there is a place to transform it into meaningful work. Gardens are places to live out destructive attitudes, without harming other people. With a loving eye, this may also be changed and integrated as something living inside us all: making use of our aggressive potential. In a garden every structure may be reduced to small pieces, may it be soil or plants or compost.

A lot of power builds up, when someone works her “No”, his “I don’t like you” or her “You too” with a spade into the visible remains of lettuce, cabbage or zucchini, and cuts them to pieces. Clients who usually need a lot of pauses may

develop more strength and endurance than ever. People calm down. They feel content, like after a good meal.

How may a female client with an eating disorder profit from working the garden? First, she herself felt dispelled from garden work, then attracted by the weeds and the open space of the garden.

She is 28, broke up twice her educational goals, stopped several hospital stays and was about to be discharged from the rehabilitation unit because she went below her weight limit. We were harvesting leeks and my question to her was: "How may garden work help resolve your (eating) problems?" She could not give an answer to this question, but now, after I started talking to her openly about something that she would dismiss, she could talk with more emotional strength. Before, she had taken a lot of time to come to an answer.

I guess that she will use this question to find a solution for her problems and I know that garden work may help stabilizing one's body feelings, getting more appetite, simplifying one's ways of thinking, distract from nagging thoughts; gardening has to do with living and dying, with growing and changing, and is a very good possibility to combine work and counselling in a meaningful way.

Institutions and organizations

Horticultural therapy in Germany is often part of the work therapy department in about 400 hospitals and in rehabilitation centres for alcohol and drug abuse. There are 180 anthroposophical work and life communities, and between 265 and 501 'green' departments (REHADAT 2003) in Sheltered Workshops, where physically and mentally handicapped people work in garden and landscape maintenance. Financing is part of the general financing scheme of every hospital or rehabilitation centre. Horticultural therapy services are financed like occupational therapy by health insurances if rendered in a hospital or by social insurance if part of a rehabilitation programme.

Different quality management systems (QMS) are applied according to the general QMS of the head organization. As horticultural therapy is not an autonomous method of treatment but part of a whole it has to comply with the general rule. There is no governmental support; restrictions are usually based on economic grounds.

The Association for Horticulture and Therapy in Germany (G GuT) is a non-profit membership organization and the only one for Horticultural Therapy. It works on a voluntary basis. Members come from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and The Netherlands. Meetings are organized by chapters in West, South and East Germany. Financing is through membership rates. In 2002 G GuT contributed to the first German congress Garden and Therapy, supported by many different organizations.

Horticultural therapy as a profession

'Horticultural therapist' is an informal term in Germany. People working in this field have a heterogeneous educational background: they may be gardeners or farmers, but also nurses, occupational or work therapists, sometimes psychologists or educators, or they may even have other educational backgrounds.

Horticultural therapy as a profession of its own has not yet found its way into occupational therapy schools or into the departments of horticultural science at college or university level in Germany. Lectures on horticultural therapy have been presented temporarily at the universities of Hannover, Bonn and Dresden. A growing number of theses have been written regarding horticultural-therapy issues during the last 15 years. Preparations for a horticultural-therapy curriculum are on their way at different Universities of Applied Sciences.

Scientific research is rare and scarcely found in exam papers. To be mentioned is the evaluation of the horticultural-therapy programme by 225 participating patients in Langenfeld hospital and in Hof Sondern, Wuppertal, which indicates what patients find meaningful in horticultural therapy. The questionnaire highlighted three aspects:

- restoring the body;
- expanding consciousness;
- improving communication.

Some results have already been published in *Acta Horticulturae* (Neuberger 1995) and in the Symposium proceedings from the Awaji Symposium 2004.

HT in Germany – conclusion

Working in the garden is a consciousness-building process: gardens have their own unique qualities – they present living examples of vitality and they invite us to cope with the world around us in a natural and creative way. While gardening, people are using and affecting body and mind. This is relevant for all people with behavioural disorders, for ill people and for handicapped people, for people with trauma. Gardening connects with the world around and helps stabilizing or changing. It gives people in need something meaningful to do, when they experienced life in different, non-human forms.

FARM ANIMALS IN SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND THERAPEUTIC WORK

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Introduction

While people develop strong emotional bonds with their pets and while they often perceive them even as members of their family, farm animals like sheep, cattle, pigs, chickens and other species usually are merely regarded as useful 'objects'. While dogs, cats or budgies live inside houses and together with family members, farm animals are kept outside, often far away from the house. This alone probably contributes to the fact that they do not attach as closely to humans as do pets, and it strengthens prejudices that they are shy, cannot relate to humans, or are hard to control. In animal-assisted education we have found that chickens, geese, sheep, calves, pigs and other farm animals have strong positive social and psychological effects. And not only children seem to benefit from interacting with these animals, we are also aware that attitudes towards these species slowly change for the better (Institut für soziales Lernen mit Tieren).

Mobile teams of the 'Institut für soziales Lernen mit Tieren' (Institute for Social Learning with Animals) in Wedemark (near Hannover) regularly visit homes and institutions for children and adolescents, schools, and homes for the elderly in order to support social work done there through animal-assisted education and animal-assisted therapy. Our ponies, donkeys, sheep, goats, geese, chickens and other animals are not only gladly accepted in all these institutions, they facilitate our work and make it more efficient. We also regularly train farm animals to present simple tricks in our circus, and we have trained donkeys, pigeons and other animals for the Hannover theatre. In our two-year courses for professionals from therapy and education, students not only learn about theoretical foundations but also about methods for using farm animals – of course as well as pets – in animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted education, and about evaluation of their effects. And last but not least, we offer an intensive short-term therapy for families with disabled children.

Animal-assisted short-term therapy

During one week, families are comfortably accommodated in nice apartments close to our Institute. Wishes and needs of the disabled child are at the centre of our work. The child may choose the animal he/she would like to interact with out of about sixty animals. Our team is trained in client-centred work. Children are not judged for good or bad performance. Neither therapists nor animals demand that social norms are enforced; rather, the needs and the capacities of the individual child are accepted and enforced. Empathy and the experience of sensitive-responsivity in interactions with people and animals prevail for our little clients. We encourage the child to show his or her affection towards the animal – most of which are indeed positive – and to take over small responsibilities. Quite often a sense of connectedness and of competence begins to grow. We pay a lot of attention to parents and to siblings of our disabled clients. We also encourage exchange among families and mutual understanding of their situation. Videos of the therapeutic work are shown every afternoon in order to inform parents about social and emotional processes going on while their child interacts with therapists and animals, and, of course, in order to

give them an impression of his or her behaviour. Often parents recognize potentials of their child that were up to then unknown to them, or that they did not expect. Some of these potentials can be somewhat developed during the week, more will happen in the time following the therapy. Parents also more clearly realize sensory, motor or cognitive limitations of their child while he or she interacts with the animal, and sometimes they discover how these should and could be compensated for by people or by changes in their child's environment.

We realize that observation of animal-assisted therapy can open up a new and often deeper understanding of a child's potentials and of his or her unique perceptions and appraisals of demands encountered, as well as of ways for dealing with them. But most of all we are impressed by the strong emotional relationships that develop during the week between children and animals. We call it love, and it can be love for a donkey or a pig, for a hen or a horse. Interactions with animals have proved to be valuable cues for the emotional and social development of children with physical or mental handicaps, and development in these areas is correlated with cognitive functions and with motivation.

Choosing the right animal

The Institute for Social Learning with Animals works with twelve different species. We have taken care that all individual animals show interest in human beings and that they like contact with people. All of our animals can be handled quite easily; they all accept limits set by humans, and they also express discomfort or flight when children step over their limits. Horses, donkeys, calves, goats, sheep, pigs, geese, ducks and chickens as well as rabbits and guinea pigs are all well suited for therapeutic and educational work. They all are fascinating for humans and elicit a lot of attention and interest. Children seem to seek contact with young animals before all, i.e. with small calves, lambs, kittens or foals. These not only allow tender contact but seem to satisfy children's needs to care for living beings, too. When working with kids and farm animals it is important to build up contacts between them carefully, and to help relationships to develop. Sensitive observation and going along with children and animals can be recommended.

Experiencing farm animals

Getting to know a farm animal and becoming aware that this is a unique living being with needs and potentials, able to communicate and to act in its own way, is a valuable experience for a child. Chances to see farm animals in their natural environment have become rare today. Animals that appear in fairy tales or in folklore seem to emphasize some aspects only, they often symbolically present selected traits of animals; usually they have little to do with reality. The media bring children in contact with a virtual reality. This is not sufficient for a full development of knowledge about nature, for an experience that is connected to sensory and to motor schemata, to emotions and the awareness of human's deep-rooted affiliation with other forms of life. In contrast, children are fascinated when meeting real

animals in natural settings. Here, a form of learning can take place which has been instinctively prepared in the course of evolution. Its educational and therapeutic effects are well documented.

Human–animal relationships

In animal-assisted education children not only learn about animals, about their behaviour and their interactions with humans. A relationship of trust can develop. Animals are authentic. Their signals are clear; there are no double-blind messages when it comes to expressing needs or to defining borders. Animals do not judge human behaviour according to cultural norms. Children and animals can ‘honestly’ communicate non-verbally, using the old language of relationships, namely analogous communication. Interactions are most of the times intrinsically motivated. Usually, children find their optimal levels of activation when interacting with animals, i.e. that level between relaxation on the one side and tension on the other which leads to maximal behavioural efficiency.

For handicapped and disabled persons animals often provide instrumental support, but motor skills and sensory–motor integration are improved, too. Even more important are data showing that animals help to increase self-esteem, independence as well as trust and tolerance. Generally, in children socially important traits like empathy, responsibility, respect and concern for others are developed in interaction with animals, and several studies have shown generalizations with regard to interactions with humans. Farm animals play an important role in our work, and we hope that this will be more and more recognized – for the benefit of our little clients as well as for the benefit of animals.

AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE IN SHELTERED WORKSHOPS IN GERMANY

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Introduction

Since the middle to late nineteen eighties, agriculture and horticulture are being re-discovered as a domain propitious to the work with disabled people and especially for the following reasons:

- Within garden or landscape groups, many Sheltered Workshops continued to care for their own fields and, as a service rendered, fields of external enterprises. In this context the idea was often considered to extend the positive experiences in horticulture and landscape modelling to agriculture as well.

- Possibilities for jobs that did not exist within mechanized agriculture appeared with the transformation and refining of the produce through bakeries or dairies and direct sale.
- The establishment of organic agriculture as an alternative permitted the creation of jobs with a higher safety level and acceptance from society.
- Within the context of an increasing globalization workshops were exposed to a great pressure on prices, so that the search for possible alternatives to industrial work was intensified.
- Within the framework of structural changes in agriculture more and more farm buildings and fields were abandoned. Thus Sheltered Workshops were increasingly proposed to manage an agricultural or horticultural farm.
- The therapeutic value of work in a green section is very high when the farm is conceived specifically to respond to the demands of an activity with disabled people.

What are 'Sheltered Workshops'?

According to the German law for highly disabled people § 54, 'Sheltered Workshop' is defined as follows:

"A Sheltered Workshop is a structure to integrate disabled people into active life. It is designed for disabled people who, because of the type or the impact of their handicap, cannot or cannot yet enter or re-enter the labour market. It must:

1. offer an appropriate professional education and activity with regard to their performances, appropriate salary for the result of their work, and
2. give the opportunity to develop, increase or re-appropriate their performances and capacities, and through this to develop their personality.

It must as far as possible be able to offer a large variety of training possibilities and workstations as well as to present qualified staff to ensure work quality and for the supervision of disabled people".

In Germany there are approximately 630 Sheltered Workshops, in which about 210,000 disabled people work. More information is available at <http://www.bagwfbm.de> (in German).

Against this favourable context 150 Sheltered Workshops with an agricultural or horticultural section have been created in Germany. Interesting is the number of workshops that farm organically: a representative survey of the German organic agricultural community in early 1999 revealed that about 60% of the agricultural or horticultural activities within Sheltered Workshops were conducted organically.

This 'dream ratio' as regards organic farming can be explained by the advantages of the organic way of farming in working with disabled people:

- The safety at work is increased by the non-use of chemical products.
- Through this, meaningful jobs are created whereas these are absent in the conventional agriculture due to the use of chemical products.
- Because external products are not used, the sequence of fertilization, sowing, growing, harvesting is much easier to understand on organic farms.
- Thanks to appropriate prices organic farms can more easily maintain themselves on the market.

- The fact that direct sale, for example through farm shops, often takes place on the organic farms, prevents the agricultural section of the Sheltered Workshop from isolation.
- Organic agriculture enjoys a greater acceptance by the public.
- There is a possibility to be granted state subventions through investment incentives and area-related subsidy.

Due to the experienced advantages of organic farming practices for working with disabled people in Germany, the organic way of farming became a standard in Sheltered Workshops, while conventional workshops constitute a minority. Most of the still conventional green sections are considering the possibility of a conversion to organic on the medium or long term.

Task, financing and organization of Sheltered Workshops

The main task of Sheltered Workshops towards their clients is vocational training, improvement of mental and physical ability, and development of personality. Workshops provide workplaces for persons with physical, mental and/or psychiatric disabilities. Sheltered Workshops are open to every disabled person, independent of origin, characteristic or severity of the disability. Becoming a worker in a Sheltered Workshop requires only a minimum of realizable performance.

Sheltered Workshops are financed by public money (different sources depending on the type of handicap) as well as by the income through production.

Most of the Sheltered Workshops are organized in the umbrella organization 'Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Werkstätten für behinderte Menschen' (BAGWfbM; Federal Working Committee of Sheltered Workshops). Farmers and Sheltered Workshops meet annually at a conference and communicate via the website <http://www.gruene-werkstatt.de>. A separate organization does not exist.

Survey

Within the context of preliminary activities to the constitution of the 'Manual for organic agriculture in Sheltered Workshops' by the working group Organic Agriculture, a questionnaire was sent to the German Sheltered Workshops in April 1999. Ninety-five Workshops returned the completed form. When we assume the number of Sheltered Workshops with a worthwhile activity in agriculture or horticulture to be around 150, the survey summarizes information from about two thirds of all relevant Sheltered Workshops.

Most units farm between 30 ha and 50 ha.

- There is an average of 26 disabled people per unit. However, this number varies between 1 co-worker on a farm and 133 on workstations with different green sections.
- Within the 95 Sheltered Workshops, 14 are exclusively concentrating on landscape design and maintenance without actual farming and can therefore not be taken into consideration for this question. This brings the absolute number of

agricultural units down to 81, and the percentage of units working according to organic guidelines up to 63 %.

Prospect

Green sections are excellent opportunities to offer adequate jobs to disabled people. The diversity of tasks, working in nature, experiencing the cycle of seed – plant – harvest, contact with animals, a holistic pedagogic starting point – these are all arguments in favour of green sections. They cause more and more Workshops to set up a green section, despite the strong engagement needed and risks that may be encountered. The pride taken in the products that are made does not only concern the disabled people but often benefits the whole workshop, since the green section becomes the image maker of the whole Sheltered Workshop.

Still, the enthusiasm for green sections within Sheltered Workshops should not mask the existing problems. Indeed the economic pressure on Sheltered Workshops rises and green sections are no exception. Because especially agricultural activities are burdened with relatively high investment costs and need additional staff for care and follow-up, green sections are increasingly critically considered from an economic point of view. In some Workshops, however, even if they are utilizing all their optimizing potential, green sections will not bring the results probably expected by the management. Here we must clearly use the meaning and value of a green section for the whole unit: it is a striking argument that it employs a group of people who would not feel comfortable somewhere else or cannot cope at all in an industrial section. In such cases, a sort of ‘mixed calculation’ in favour of the green section appears indispensable in order to continue to enjoy its performances.

Despite all their advantages, one cannot expect an explosion of the multiplication rate of green sections in Sheltered Workshops. The director of a Sheltered Workshop summarized the situation concerning the establishment of green sections as follows: “This is only possible with engaged people”. This is surely true but the causal effect goes both ways since a well-conceived green section generates satisfaction at work and engagement from the part of the involved workers as well.

In the final analysis, there are by now green sections in Sheltered Workshops that are stable in the long run and that are suitable examples to motivate new organizations to invest in such a section. By doing so they contribute to the life of carers and disabled persons, who are proud of their products and highly value the meaning of their work.

AN EXAMPLE: THE MEIERHOF FARM OF THE EBEN-EZER FOUNDATION

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Organization

The Eben-Ezer foundation is considered an in- and out-patient structure with the aim of helping disabled people. The organization was founded in 1871 and belongs to the social welfare work of the regional Church of the city of Lippe. It supervises 900 people of all ages and with mental handicaps of all degrees.

The Meierhof farm is organized in two parts: the residence for adults comes under the responsibility of the farmers while the 'working' part comes under the responsibility of the Sheltered Workshop. Responsibility for the whole Eben-Ezer foundation is carried by a full-time council composed of both a theological and a commercial executive director. The higher committee is the Supervisory Board.

History

The foundation started with agricultural activities at the beginning of the last century. Ensuring food supply, during and after the first World War especially, was the decisive driving force for the creation of an own farm, which was developed beyond the scope of the small vegetable gardens existing until then. In 1919 the farmland already covered 30 ha to supply food for 300 disabled people of the Eben-Ezer foundation.

After establishing industries and trade businesses in the proximity of the farm, agricultural activities were re-orientated at the beginning of the nineteen fifties. The Meierhof farm was founded outside the village and several residences were created around it, partly within its immediate neighbourhood, partly in nearby villages and on other farms.

The Meierhof farm today

Today the Meierhof farm provides jobs for approximately 30 disabled people. About half of them live on the farm. In 1999 the farm was converted to certified organic agriculture and joined the German organic producer group Bioland.

The farm offers different (production) activities:

- Cereals and root crops on an area of more than 100 ha.
- Potatoes grown, sorted and sold on the farm as well as to the affiliated potato-peeling section in the WDP.
- Milk production, with 60 cows kept under animal-friendly conditions (open-course stable, access to grazing grounds), automatic milking system, as well as cattle breeding on an area of 40 ha grassland.
- Pig breeding and fattening, sale of meat.
- Free-range hens, sale of eggs.
- Horses, sheep and goats, with supervision of the animals.
- Management of the forest grounds and the sawmill.

The 'value' of agriculture in the Eben-Ezer foundation

For the clients, the daily change between private and professional environment provides diversity and a beneficial rhythm. These are pacemakers in our lives that prevent stagnation and lethargy. Work as a part of the rhythm of life gives structure to our everyday life – a fundamental need of every human being. Workstations in the Eben-Ezer foundation connect disabled persons to society and make it available to them, in which they could otherwise not participate. The meaning of a job for a person with a handicap is not only to be seen from a material point of view; a 'work community' makes it possible to practice and mutually show competences and knowledge. Pedagogic self-evidence is the following: accomplishments should be measured in accordance with capabilities. Self-esteem increases due to the fact that a person has a profession also.

Through living and working together in one place people share much time and experience, also anger and troubles. Here are possibilities of reappraisal, be it through conflicts or by being in a group.

Today men and women with very different individual biographies, backgrounds and capabilities work at the Meierhof farm. Some of them are returning from so-called 'foster families' and some have decades of agricultural work on other farms behind them. Besides an occupation in agriculture under a better supervision, many of these people wish to stay in an agricultural environment when reaching retirement (to stay as residents). For others, mainly for younger people, the diversity of activities, working with animals and particularly being linked with nature within a job offers interesting work and living opportunities. They are – in accordance with their cognitive abilities – strongly bound with, and feel responsible for the various production processes.

Financing

The Eben-Ezer foundation receives a fixed care rate from the rehabilitation body responsible for each occupied workstation, normally the supervising service for social welfare.

This care rate finances the supervising staff, the pedagogic employees of the different Sheltered Workshops. The amount of these obligatory allowances planned by the government allows the supervision of 12 disabled people by one pedagogic employee in the working section of a Workshop. However, as the Meierhof offers very diverse working possibilities, part of which are also intensively supervised by technical staff, proportionally far more group leaders than pedagogic staff are needed on the farm. Their jobs must be financed by the farm itself.

The profit resulting from farm activities should hence finance the disabled workers' remuneration, the salaries of the supervision staff as well as investments and maintenance. Since costs of equipment and up-keep of the working space in the Workshop are often high, the body responsible for rehabilitation pays 30 % of the investments made in the production realm.

Recent modernization provides a well equipped working space in the long run. They are a professional stimulation and qualification orientated towards the labour

market and finally the economically decisive positioning within an evolving agricultural market.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE: CATHOLIC WORK COLONIES ‘MARIA VEEN’ AND
‘ST. ANTONIUSHEIM’ – AGRICULTURE WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS
CARING FOR THE HOMELESS

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Origin and history

At the end of the 19th century, the creation of so-called ‘work colonies’ was an innovative answer to the very widespread homelessness and migrant poverty. Indeed in Germany the number of migrant jobless and homeless people increased considerably with the industrialization and in particular since the ‘Gründerkrise’, the ‘crisis of the founding’, in 1873. A stay in the colonies was voluntary. Some migrants stayed one night or a few days only, others months or years. Indiscriminately everyone who stayed had to participate in the construction and up-keep of the colony, if not handicapped due to age or disease. The founder of the first work colony, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, summarized the concept of the colonies with the words ‘work instead of alms’.

In 1888 the Association for Catholic Work Colonies was founded in the Land (country) Westfalen in Germany with the participation of the diocese of Münster and the archbishopric of Paderborn. At the same time the first work colony named Haus Maria Veen was started south of Münster. The second colony St. Antoniusheim followed 20 years later to the west of Münster at the border with The Netherlands. Until today both facilities are engaged in helping homeless and old people, but they have now only little in common with the colonies of the 19th century. Modern single and double rooms have replaced the dormitories of the last decades. The patriarchal structure has been replaced by modern social management schemes offering interdisciplinary help and support, which range from social and addiction work to house keeping and caring for elderly and ill people.

Agriculture as a social programme

The basic idea of the work colony was that under their supervision and guidance the nomadic poor could help themselves and others in need of accommodation and food. This is where agriculture played an important role, bringing the hope that a broad self-sufficiency was within reach.

Colonies were often founded on the fringes of expanding industrial and urban centres. Supposed moral and political dangers of the modern cities were to be

avoided in that way. Very often available land, such as marshland or heath, could hardly be used for agriculture and was unfriendly to human settlement.

Due to the poor soil quality, neither Haus Maria Veen nor St. Antoniusheim was able to support the up-keep by their own means only. The number of people in need who frequented the colonies was too high and agriculture yielded too little. From the beginning both houses were dependent on donations and public subsidies.

Nonetheless, like in other work colonies, a larger and more diversified agriculture developed in the first half of the 20th century, which contributed to the self-sufficiency of colonies and reduced their need for public funds. The idea that colonies could be independent was then partially honoured. Besides the evident economic assets, agriculture offered further advantages. First, until late in the 20th century colonies benefited from the agricultural experience of the homeless migrants, of whom many – as most of the population – were already familiar with farming activities. This meant that not their deficits were highlighted but their capabilities. It was realized that even with limited machinery and little rationalization agriculture could be viable. In this way numerous jobs were provided that did not require special skills. As a result agriculture provided the socially marginalized and stigmatized nomadic poor with the experience of contributing to community.

In addition, the idea according to which hard work in the isolation of the colony was a preventive and curative means to fight alcoholism (widespread among nomadic poor) played an important role. Finally, the rhythm imposed by natural events structured the days and the years and thus contributed to the stabilization of the colonists' life.

However, under changing socio-economic conditions after the middle of the 20th century these assets successively lost their value. The increasing mechanization, specialization and rationalization in agriculture demanded special skills. These were ever rarer among the homeless people, since many hardly had any previous experience with modern agriculture. This meant that the possibility of making ties with the capacities and knowledge of the colonists faded away. In addition, the attractiveness of Haus Maria Veen and St. Antoniusheim diminished as a side effect of the development of a Social Welfare State, which provided help for the homeless and the jobless. Thus the contribution of agriculture to the maintenance and functioning of the colony and the attractiveness of agricultural activities diminished steadily. Activities in horticulture were created instead but also and above all in assembly and manufacturing, and in recent times also in the services area (laundry, cleaning). With some delay work opportunities in the colonies reflected the evolution of the general labour market. At the end of the 20th century less than 10% of the inhabitants of St. Antoniusheim or Haus Maria Veen were working in agriculture (without horticultural activities). At the same time and in comparison with other sectors, agricultural activities employ a high rate of qualified staff.

Contrary to comparable social structures, neither Haus Maria Veen nor St. Antoniusheim gave up their agricultural activities. This cannot be explained by the argument of tradition. One should have in mind that agriculture carries a positive image and inspires sympathy, which can facilitate the acceptance of a social structure in the local and regional environment. This is particularly the case when

agriculture is successful and thus manages to raise interest among the public. The agricultural section of Haus Maria Veen was granted a prize for their dairy activities several times until the end of the nineteen eighties. Maybe even more meaningful is the consideration that agriculture contributes to maintaining a large number of diverse jobs in the facilities. Because residents of Haus Maria Veen and St. Antoniusheim expect to be able to contribute to the running of the units in accordance with their capacities, diversified work possibilities are crucial so that different demands, capacities and wishes are met. It is also about giving chances to everyone to develop the feeling that he/she is contributing to the up-keep of the houses. Despite the fact that both houses are today largely financed by public subventions, part of the maintenance costs is still to be covered by the houses themselves, as in the past. Colony residents are aware of this. Finally, agricultural activities are characterized by natural and to a certain extent self-evident rhythms that correspond to the organization of the day and year. This is a very helpful guiding path, especially for people who have problems structuring their lives and days.

Future

On the one hand, we have an agriculture of which the economic contribution to the running of the colonies diminishes gradually; on the other hand there is an agriculture that promotes an image and helps to maintain large and diversified work opportunities, which contribute to the development of self-esteem and the structuring of days. What should we do? Stop the agricultural activities and use the available natural resources in other ways? Invest and run a highly mechanized agriculture, which would not bring work opportunities for residents but would generate profits, which could be reinvested in other projects? Start an organic farm, in which labour could be given a new value, but which bears considerable organizational and financial risks and which might face acceptance problems? Or choose a middle path, for example by consciously splitting the agricultural activity into a profit and a non-profit part – the first one mechanized and rationalized, the second for the image and above all for the people who want to work and also can work, but at a different pace?

FARMING FOR HEALTHY PEOPLE, FARMING FOR HEALTHY LANDSCAPES – PERSPECTIVES OF MULTIFUNCTIONALITY WITHIN FARMING FOR HEALTH IN GERMANY

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The appearance of cultural landscapes in Central Europe is strongly influenced by the farming of the land – ca. 50% of Germany's land is farmed; including forestry

this figure is more than 80%. Today only 3% of the population is working on farms; they create landscapes for the whole German population. Landscape is a production area for farmers. But landscape is also a place for living, working, housing, experience, recreation, moving through, and making connections.

In former times cultural landscapes were a by-product of agriculture with lots of hand work, whereas today a diverse and aesthetic landscape is preserved and developed only by active decisions and means. Also on organic farms cultural landscapes do not appear automatically as by-products of organic farming methods.

During a project 'Optimizing nature conservation on organic farms' (supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds of the Federal Environmental Ministry) farms that implement approaches of nature conservation into their practice were investigated (Van Elsen et al. 2003). What are the motives of these farmers to deal with questions of nature conservation and landscape development, and – furthermore – to create and develop their landscape actively? Which circumstances allow such initiatives? What are the motives behind them?

Due to the lack of previous investigations an explorative approach was chosen. In different regions of Germany 13 interviews were held on organic farms belonging to different certifying organizations. A wide spectrum of farms with respect to size, geographical site, structure, social structure and assumed intentions of the farmers were chosen. The interviews were elaborated using methods of qualitative social analysis (Mayring 1988; Strauss and Corbin 1996).

The results show that the motives of farmers are exceptionally intrinsic in nature. Especially the relation to nature is very important. Two types can be distinguished, one of a relation intimate to nature which is characterized by a close connection to nature and landscape including feelings and the ability of 'living within'. The other type is characterized by a relationship 'more distant' to nature.

Two types of reasoning can also be found for nature conservation on farms. On the one hand the protection of endangered plant and animal species and biotopes, and on the other hand a phenomenological approach with a strong connection and reflection of personal experiences.

One interesting result was that traditional family farms usually have less time and financial support to integrate such aims than farms that work together with clients in their farming system. In 2004 a new project has started to investigate this phenomenon systematically.

Petrarca – The European Academy for the Culture of Landscape – intends to evaluate nature conservation and cultural landscape as marketable products of agriculture. People living and working on farms become connected to their places, to nature and to landscapes. Farms become seed points for a sustainable landscape development. In combination with 'Farming for Health' approaches this can lead towards new perspectives for sustainable farming for healthy people and for healthy landscapes.

German examples of such landscape processes are seminars by Sonja Schürger with people of the 'Bioland-Ranch Zempow' (Schäkel and Schürger 2001) and seminars held by Thomas van Elsen on the 'Adolphshof' (Hämelerwald) and Medewege farm (Schwerin).

NOTES

¹ especially the discussion on 'Irren-Colonien' in: Damerow et.al. (1854-1878), see: Snell, Voppel, Duval, Flemming, Güntz, Jessen, Laehr, Landerer, Roller, Koepe, primarily in: *Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Psychiatrie und psychisch-gerichtliche Medizin*, Vol. 1-40, 1844- 1884

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