

## **Exchange Week Bonn - Reports 23.10.2016 – 30.10.2016**

### **Monday, 24.10.2016**

Reposed of long journeys to Bonn, our participants (from Monte Negro, France, Sweden, the



Our guests at the Pfeiffer & Langen company.

Netherlands and Greece) left after breakfast to visit the sugar company „Pfeiffer & Langen“ in Euskirchen. After a short presentation of the site we experienced the way how to process the sugar beet to gain crystal and fluid sugar. Two guidances explained us each production step and we've had the opportunity to ask lots of questions concerning the sugar beet and processes as it isn't a typical crop to

cultivate in most of our participants' countries.

Back in Bonn we've had a lecture given by a physiotherapist named Christian Rester at the University of Bonn. It was about different reactions of our body towards food and what you can achieve by different eating habits. In a big overview, Christian compared the different cultures of eating from our guests. We all were very interested in the different eating habits of each country and keeping healthy nutrition in mind, we've had Wraps for dinner.

### **Tuesday, 25.10.2016**

The second day of our exchange week started with a visit of the field laboratory „AgroHort“ of the University Bonn close to Meckenheim. We were given an informative presentation about the developments at this field laboratory and recent research projects, at which we later took a closer look. Afterwards we visited the fields and research buildings by tractor. The main topic of that day was 'renewable energies', so we saw several energy plants for



Happy about an exciting tour through the field lab "AgroHort".



Miscanthus or poplar trees grown in Meckenheim. We were introduced to the entire process - from cultivation, harvesting and drying to the final use of the product, i.e. in the form of pellets for heating, bioplastic or packaging. It was very impressive to see the high potential that is hidden behind the use of renewable energies, especially for the future of our energy supply. Later on this week we were able to visit a farm that covers its entire energy demand by self-produced wind energy as well as by burning locally produced wood chips in a special oven which closed the circle to the topic of this day. The participants thought that it is good that there is an increasing demand for research in this field. Afterwards we were able to take a look into other very modern greenhouses, where not only their function was explained, but also the running experiments inside as well. For instance, we saw the biggest rice cultivation area in Germany.



Our IAAS group visiting the oldest brewery of Cologne.

In the afternoon we were given an insightful guided tour through the oldest and still producing brewery of Cologne ("Sünner"). Our guide explained (among others) the importance of the purity law and entire process of brewing: from the mashing to lautering, boiling, fermentation, conditioning and packing the beer. The participants, asking a lot of questions, were contented with getting to know this part of German or better Cologne

culture. Finally, there was no way around tasting a fresh brewed "Kölsch" which opened the beginning of our sportive group activity evening in Bonn.

### **Wednesday, 26.10.2016**

At first, we visited the federal Ministry for Nutrition and Agriculture (BMEL), which is headquartered in Bonn, the former capital city of Germany. At the Ministry, we got a private presentation by an employee of the institution. They told us about the tasks, the hierarchical structure and about the budget which is available. To our topic, they informed us about their possibilities, to support farmers by the problems they have, according to the globalization with all their pros and cons. After the presentation, all participants had the chance to ask for more detailed information and explanations to the different points. In conclusion, they allowed us an inspection into the political sight to solve problems in the agricultural sector.



The second agenda highlight at this day was the visit of an organic farm. The „Biohof Bursch“ is managed by the family Bursch in the fourth generation. In 1964 the farm was converted into an organic farm. Until 2007 it was member of the „Bioland“ association, since this year they are member of „Demeter“ another association for organic farms, but with special ethics. Today they till a plain of around 45 ha and 7000 m<sup>2</sup> of greenhouses. They plant 60 different types of fruits and vegetables. Today the management of the family company is shared by the



Getting to know "Demeter".



Getting to know "Demeter" 2.0.

siblings Heinz and Renate Bursch. When we visited the farm near Bonn, we got a guided tour through the farm area at first the different hortical cultures and greenhouses. Later we saw, that they also processing their product on their own, for example Sauerkraut and gherkins. Finally, we got to know the way, how they bring their products to the consumer. The company philosophy is to sell the products directly. So, we visited the modern farm shop, which sells also other organic products, and

has the range of a normal organic supermarket. The second way they sell their products is to drive with mobile stalls to seventeen different farmer's markets in the surrounding of Bonn. The Biohof Bursch is an positive example how you can survive in the globalised world with creative, new and sustainable ideas, also as a farm.

#### Thursday, 27.10.2016

On the fourth day of our exchange week we wanted to show our guest the diversity and the development of the German dairy sector.

To accomplish this goal, we planned to visit two dairy farms, which took a different approach to find successful way to earn a living from producing milk. So we left Bonn after Breakfast and drove to Lohmar to visit the „Weiler Milch KG“. The owner of the farm, Michael



Happy cows at a dairy farm.

Weiler, showed us the relatively recently build barn in which he is keeping nearly 140 Holstein Friesians with an average milk yield of 9500 kg milk per year and cow. In the new barn are just the lactating and dry cows, whereas the heifer and the calves are kept in the old





barn in the village. He is using two milking robots from „Lely“, which he explained to us during the visit. After Mr. Weiler showed and explained us the farm there was an interesting discussion about the development of the dairy sector and the work of the government.

From Lohmar we drove to the nearby Neunkirchen-Seelscheid where the second farm visit took place. In Neunkirchen-Seelscheid is the farm of Bruno Stauf, where he held round about 70 Fleckvieh cattles. First, he explained the history and the growth of the farm which was characterized by a slow but steady growth from 40 cows in the year 1970 to 140 cows in the year 2006. But then he realized that the constant growing is not the future for his farm and so he decided to decrease the numbers of cows held to 70. He also invested into a milk station which is beside the barn and where the people can buy fresh milk. He also built two mobile stables for hens and he also sells the eggs at the milk station. At the moment, he was in the transition phase from conventional farming to organic farming. After the Farm visit he invited us into his sons' bar to drink some cool and fresh milk from his cows.

After getting varied impressions of the German dairy farms we drove back to Bonn. In the evening we did our „Trade Fair“ where the participants prepare some typical food and drinks from their home country so that the other people get a tasteful impression of traditional food from the different countries.

Later, we went to the old town of Bonn to visit a karaoke bar.



Cultural exchange at the obligatory IAAS-TradeFair.

### Friday, 28.10.2016

After a big breakfast in Bonn we visited the potato farm Gut Neu Hemmerich, which is located eight kilometres west of Cologne. This region is popular for its fertile soils but also for its coal industry. On the farm, we were welcomed friendly by the farm manager and Mr. Lindemann-Berk, the farm owner, who guided us around his property and explained us the philosophy and management.

They attach great importance to quality and sustainability. Therefore, they use self-produced energy by wind and solar systems. Also, the cultivated rape delivers energy of biodiesel and is used for some local machines. Besides, the local



Visit of Gut Neu-Hemmerich.



weather station gives important information about the best point of cultivation and plant protection to minimize the use of it. A lot of potatoes are sold on the farm. This system of self-marketing becomes more popular in Germany, because the costumers look for regionality and the place where their food comes from. It works completely automatically. The costumer choses his favourite sort and pay it at an automat. A camera controls the process. Furthermore, the farm has a lot of modern renovated houses to life. The inhabitants have no problem with the noises the big machines and tractors make. They really enjoy the atmosphere and the life in the countryside.

After the tour Mr. Lindemann-Berk invited us for a huge meal prepared with much love by his wife. We were very thankful for this invitation and really impressed by the atmosphere of the nice furnished hall. After the magnificent tour by Mr. Lindemann-Berk we took the train to Cologne centre. Altogether we had the opportunity to discover the city for a while. For instance, some visited the chocolate museum and others went through the old town. Subsequently we experienced the cologne night life as well.

### **Saturday, 29.10.2016**

On Saturday morning we took the train to the penultimate station during our exchange week: Wahner Heide, a 37 square kilometres big natural reserve area.

There we visited a farm who's job it is to preserve the unique, human made landscape. We learned how big companies are obligated to finance a compensation for their interventions into the environment.

The farm executes some of these projects for companies like the Cologne/Bonn airport. They graze big paddocks in the natural reserve area, a heath, with cattle, water buffalos, goats and donkeys. Each species is an expert on his field and helps to preserve a special kind of cultural landscape with rare plants and animals. The water buffalos for example preserve small, open ponds by laying in them in order to cool themselves down during the summer months. Without this natural treatment plants would grow in the ponds and the ponds would slowly disappear. After the long walk through the Wahner Heide we ate a homemade bovine/cattle soup at the farm and satisfied headed back to Bonn.



Happy participants in front of a Glan cattle.





**Six countries, 24 participants, exciting exchange. Thanks to all of you!**







We want to thank you all for the great week and the opportunity to make this event happened!

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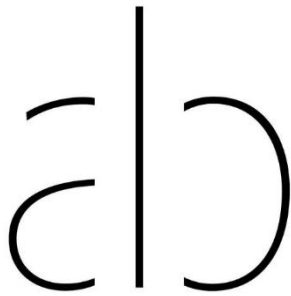


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