

Final report 69p5

Student scientific excursion:

Organic farming in The Czech Republic and Austria - perspectives for further professional cooperation between Faculty of Horticulture MENDELU and BOKU within European Research Area

Program and participants

From 20 to 23 May nine organic farms in Eastern Austria and South Moravia were visited, as well as both the experimental gardens of BOKU in Vienna and of Faculty of Horticulture MENDELU in Lednice. In addition, a seminar about forest gardens was held. 13 students from BOKU and 3 students from The Czech Republic participated in the excursion, accompanied by Ass. Prof. Dr. Andreas Spornberger and Dr. Helene Weissinger from BOKU and Ing. Viera Žďárská and Doc. Ing. Kristina Petříková, CSc. from MENDELU.

Table 1: Participants of the excursion

	Name	Nationality	Notes
BOKU	Spornberger, Andreas	Italy	Accompanying person
	Weissinger, Helene	Austria	Accompanying person
	Pollan, Sieglinde	Austria	
	Stanek, Katharina	Austria	
	Sauer, Peter	Germany	
	Khomenka, Olga	Ukraine	
	Michalski, Miriam	Germany	
	Bauer, Magdalena	Austria	
	Geisberger, Carola	Austria	
	Aigner, Marina	Austria	
	Mairböck, Thomas	Austria	
	Lehner, Barbara	Austria	
	Manglberger, Robert	Austria	
	Bergmayr, Lukas	Austria	
Mayer, Jona Katanka	Austria		
MENDELU	Žďárská, Viera	Czech	Accompanying person 20-21 May 2014 Participant 22-23 May 2014
	Petříková Kristina	Czech	Accompanying person 22-23 May 2014
	Konečková, Jana	Czech	
	Vysoký, Martin	Czech	
	Gurinová, Erika	Slovak	

Activities

20th May 2014

The first stop in Austria was the “**Fruit city**” **Wiener Neustadt** where the cultivation of fruit trees on public space was discussed (<http://www.obststadt.at/>). The aim of the introduced project is to teach citizens about fruit production, and to develop a new approach in managing open space in a municipality.

Then the **organic vegetable and berry farm of Familie Oswald** (8230 Hartberg: Oberlungitz 64) (www.gemuesewerkstatt.at) was visited. The 12 ha farm, managed by 2 family generations, produce strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and a high diversity of vegetables. The products are marketed through diverse marketing channels: wholesale, local markets, self-harvest, Community Supported Agriculture.

Stefan Dreier presented his **organic fruit farm** (8225 Pöllau, Wieden 171) where he produces 12 cultivars of apples, plus pears and quinces, using spindle trees on 5 ha. Since he uses standard cultivars susceptible to common diseases and pests, many treatments with different organic pesticides are carried out throughout the year which were recited and discussed in detail.

Following common dinner gave the participants of the excursion wide space for informal discussion.

21st May 2014

On the next day, the 2.5 ha **organic herb farm** of **Veronika Zemanek** (8654 Fischbach 41) (www.kräuterhof-zemanek.at) was visited. Mrs. Zemanek combines producing and processing (teas, syrups, gelees) of 40 different herb varieties with offering accommodation for „holidays on-farm“ and rooms for seminars.

In the **BOKU experimental garden** – the next stop of our excursion, scientific experiments of the Research Group in Organic Fruit Growing, a collection of old cultivars and a students' community garden were demonstrated.

The last stop in Austria was the **bio-dynamic organic vegetable and seed farm Ochsenherz** (Tannengasse 1, 2230 Gänserndorf-Süd) (www.ochsenherz.at). Nine persons work here full-time on 5-ha plot. They are pioneers in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Austria. The management is rather work-intensive as they combine vegetable and seed production, including underutilized vegetables and many different cultivars. As the main manager of the farm told, marketing has become less time-consuming with the conversion to CSA.

22nd May 2014

The first farm visited in the Czech Republic was **BIOZELENINA Velehrad – a producer and trader of organic vegetables** (<http://www.biozelenina.eu>). Petr Weidenthaler, the owner of the farm, explained his wide crop rotation system, alternating 2 ha vegetables (always rotating root, onion and cabbage species) with 2 ha green manure. The remaining 20 ha are meadows for his horses which are not only hobby of the owner, but also provide manure for the vegetable fields. Production is to be sold in two regular regional markets, in a farm-shop and via e-shop (veg-boxes).

Next we visited **Sady, Velké Němčice s.r.o.** – one of the biggest producers of apples and pears in Moravia. The 80-ha orchard is managed in integrated way (IPM) and Mainly problems relating to weather and pest and diseases plant protection were discussed.

In the afternoon, two students presented about **forest gardens**. Erika Gurinová introduced the topic and emphasized the importance of forest gardens and afro-forest growing systems for sustainable soil management as well as for climate change mitigation. She also introduced famous Martin Crawford's forest garden in Great Britain, which she had visited just two months ago. Magdalena Bauer gave then an impression about her visit in a forest garden in Sweden. The seminar finished by fruitful discussion. The evening was completed with a guided visit of the Lednice castle English park, which is listed in the UNESCO cultural heritage index, and by a common dinner.

23rd May 2014

The last day of our common excursion started in the **Academic and Experimental Garden of Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice**, where we learned about the collections of ornamental plants as well as about the long-term breeding programme in apricot orchard.

Then we continued with the farm of **Josef Abrle, Pavlov**. Mr. Abrle senior is one of four organic wine producers in the region and the wines from his cellars have won many international wine competitions. As the climate in Pavlov is very dry (300 mm rain/year) it allows no greening of the vineyard. The son – Mr. Abrle junior, is responsible for the herb production. Dried flowers and herbs are sold to Sonnentor – an Austrian company. Seeds from some species (e.g. sage, chives, and fennel) are sold to a German seed company. We had here also the opportunity to see rather unknown medicinal crops as *Sedum acre*.

The last farm, we have visited during our excursion, was **PATRIA Kobyly, a.s.** On 240 ha orchards they are producing **organic apricots, plums, peaches, sour cherries and pears**. Visited apricot orchard was converted to organic farming just recently. We discussed pros and cons of old and new apricot varieties and new ways of fruit marketing due to the missing fruit-processing industry in the region (join stock company with wide product assortment and business activities).

Outcome

The diversity of farms in terms of size, products, cultivation methods, marketing activities and philosophy allowed all participants of the excursion much deeper understanding of organic horticulture, fruit and vine growing. Students could experience regional differences in climate and marketing opportunities which create distinct forms of cultivation and distinct business models. The excursion motivated the students to (further) focus on organic production in their studies since the high sustainability of organic farming could be demonstrated.

As a concrete result, Austrian participants formed a group, with the aim to organize common excursions to innovative, organic farms and (forest) gardens, to deepen their knowledge which they can make use of in their own farms or gardening projects.

Exchange in research and teaching is planned in future between participants of the excursion from BOKU and MENDELU.

Evaluation

The excursion was well-organized, not much was changed compared to the original program.

We regret that not more Czech students could participate in the excursion. In future projects, more emphasis should be laid on an even distribution between Austrian and Czech participants.

Nevertheless, the participants enjoyed the exchange and the journey to a neighbor country which some of them have not been visited before (see a letter of one participant, Martin Vysoký). The administrative accompaniment by the AKTION and by the OeAD offices was very agreeable. We would like to thank the responsible persons for their helpfulness. Thus, we will further recommend the AKTION as an effective funding tool for exchange projects.

Hlavičky	
Od	Martin Vysoký <vysoky.martin@gmail.com>
Predmet	poděkování za exkurzi v Rakousku
Komu	Ing. RNDr. Erika Gurinová <xgurinov@zf.mendelu.cz>
Doručené	25.05.2014 18:39
Velkost	6 KiB
Tagy	+

Dobrý den paní Eriko!

Chtěl bych Vám touto cestou moc poděkovat, že i přes tu prvotní komplikaci jste mě tak ochotně přijala na exkurzi a během ní se tak obětavě starala a rozšiřovala mé povědomí o lesních zahradách. Bylo to bohaté, osvěžující a dozvěděti jsem se mnoho nového - hlavně teď vím jaký potenciál skrývají lesní zahrady a dokážu si nyní v hlavních rysech představit, co obnáší fungování ekofarmy. Moc rád bych pokud bude příležitost toto vědění uplatnil v budoucnu při plánování. Získal jsem mnoho nových kontaktů a dokonce i přátel.

Z rakouské strany mam odezvy ze to bylo obohacující a moc zajímavé. Připojuji citaci od Magdaleny 😊 "altogether it was perfect with a lot of impressions and information and very nice people around..."

Doufám, že jsem v rámci možností byl aspoň trochu nápomocen.

Přeji Vám mnoho úspěchů v zahraničí!

S velkou vděčností zdraví,

Martin Vysoký



Common guided visit of Lednice Park.

In Vienna:

23.6.2014

Responsible persons

Signature

Professional supervision Ass.Prof. Dr. Andreas Spornberger

Administration and implementation DI Dr. Helene Weissinger

Professional supervision prof. Dr. Ing. Boris Krška

Administration and implementation Ing. RNDr. Erika Gurinová
PhD. student

In Lednice: 30.06.2014

Attachment – photo documentation:



- a) Flower strip in a tunnel on vegetable farm Oswald.
- b) The organic fruit farm of Stefan Dreier.
- c) Bio-dynamic organic vegetable and seed production in Ochsenherz.
- d) Experimental garden of BOKU/Vienna.
- e) Organic vegetable farm BIOZELENINA Velehrad.
- f) Production of herbs in Josef Abrle's organic farm in Pavlov.
- g) Sady, Velké Němčice s.r.o. – one of the biggest producers of apples and pears in Moravia in integrated management.