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Final Report

IAAS-Seminar „Different Dudes, Innovative Agriculture in South-West Germany”

28th of April 2013 to 5th of May 2013

30 people, 7 countries, 3 cars, 2 minibuses and 755 km of driving, this was the IAAS Seminar in Germany 2013, which the IAAS Hohenheim committee hosted at the end of April and the beginning of May 2013, thanks to our great sponsors.

„Different Dudes, Innovative Agriculture in South-West Germany”, was the title of our Seminar. It took place in Baden-Wuerttemberg and we were glad to host 30 students from Slovenia, Greece, Russia, Poland, Spain, Switzerland and Germany.

The focus of the seminar was to present innovative, modern and new methods related to agriculture. Different lectures and presentations were answering questions about environment, GMOs, honey bees and the fruit production at Lake Constance. Besides this we made excursions to the cities of Meersburg, Tübingen and Stuttgart. However let us start at the very beginning.

Sunday, 28th of April 2013: Arrival

All the participants arrived in good order and on time. Some of them arrived by car, others by train or by plane making detours via Paris and Amsterdam. As they were very curious to see the university we launched a scavenger hunt in the main area of the Hohenheim castle, where the participants had to answer questions about Germany and the region of Baden-Wuerttemberg. To make the international participants familiar with German eating culture we ended the day with a barbeque with typical German food.

Monday, 29th of April 2013: “Structural change in the Allgäu” AGROGEN-Day

On our first excursion day we were expecting a very contrasting programme.

First we visited “Rapunzel Naturkost GmbH” a family business in Legau, pioneer in organic and fair trade commodity trading since the early 70’s and able to constantly increase sales and product diversity during the last 40 years. Before the tour of the company, including the Rapunzel Museum, we were shown a movie about the development of the firm. The visit at Rapunzel ended with a discussion about genetically modified organisms, this year’s topic of IAAS International.

Afterwards we visited a dairy farm run by the family Endress in Bad Grönenbach, a very different example of the structural change occurring in agriculture in this region. This farm experienced a rapid growth, particularly during the last 10 years. The participants were very impressed by the milk production with 1500 dairy cows. The dairy farm was combining its production with renewable energy from a photovoltaic and biogas plant. We had the chance to get an insight into large-scale production systems, as well as first hand information about the benefits and challenges facing the young farmer in his day-to-day business.

Tuesday, 30th of April 2013: “Specialised crops in the Lake Constance region” KWS-Day

This day was devoted to specialised crops and niche products. The “Lake Constance region” is famous for its fruit production, and the area around Tettngang is one of the three most important hops production areas in Germany.

In the morning we visited a hops farm with attached museum about hops production in Siggenweiler. We got to know the modern way of cultivating hops on the farm as well as its contrast, the historical hops growing in the Museum.

In the afternoon we visited the “Marktgenossenschaft Obst vom Bodensee”, a farmers cooperative with own brand, commercialising fruits produced in the region. After an introduction to the cooperative’s structure we had the chance to visit a large packaging site for apples in Eriskirch (peak production of 250 t/day).

In the evening the traditional Trade Fair took place. Participants from the different countries presented their most typical food and drinks as well as traditional clothing from their home countries.

Wednesday, 1st of May 2013: “Labour’s day”

In the morning we organised a workshop about project management whereas the participants learned about organising events and managing teams in order to reach a common goal.

In the afternoon we went to Lake Constance for a sightseeing tour through the historical town of Meersburg.

For supper our guests had to rise to the challenge of making the traditional Swabian food “Käse-Spätzle”.

Thursday, 2nd of May 2013: “Innovation at the Swabian Alb” AMAZONE-Day

Leaving the beautiful region at Lake Constance and heading again back towards Hohenheim, we visited a water-buffalo farm at the Swabian Alb. This farm has recently diversified its production away from traditional dairy farming by introducing water-buffalos to the region and starting a speciality cheese production: among others Albzarella, which is an own creation, a type of mozzarella cheese.

In the afternoon we visited the “Climate garden” of the transition town movement in Tübingen. The “transition town”-movement is aiming to make society more resilient in response to peak oil and climate change. The “Climate garden” as a permaculture project, is an example of sustainable urban agriculture, taking unproductive land into cultivation and decreasing urban dependency on external food supply. One of the important projects in the garden is the use of Terra Preta soil.

The day ended with a walk through the historical city of Tübingen, followed by our return to the University of Hohenheim.

Friday, 3rd of May 2013 “Tradition meets innovation: University of Hohenheim PROPLANTA-Day

The aim was to give our foreign participants an introduction to our home, the University of Hohenheim. Besides a campus-tour we arranged a visit to the Institute for Apiculture in the morning where we were shown the beehives and discussed about the problems of beekeeping today. In the afternoon a visit to the museum for agrarian technology, the “Deutsches Landwirtschaftsmuseum” was on the program. In the evening we once again focused on the topic of apiculture and watched the new documentary “More than Honey”, which was followed by a lively discussion.

An evaluation of the seminar and the different aspects of the programme took place in the evening.

Saturday, 4th of May 2013: “Stuttgart” HORSCH-Day

In the morning we held a guided sightseeing tour through the city centre of Stuttgart to get to know the characteristics. In the afternoon we visited the famous “Mercedes-Benz-Museum” and ended our seminar with a visit to the “Stuttgarter Wasen”, a local spring fair taking place during this time of the year.

We want to thank all the participants for their great interest and motivation during this seminar.

It is beyond all doubt that this Seminar could not have been arranged without the generous help of the sponsors and the University of Hohenheim, whom we would hereby like to thank:



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