



Design and testing  
new VET frameworks  
for the transfer and recognition  
of organic livestock  
management skills in Europe



Newsletter No. 3

# LIVORG

## Design and testing new VET frameworks for the transfer and recognition of organic livestock management skills in Europe

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**Dear readers,**

More the half of the project period has passed and the project has been very successful until now. The Pilot Courses and Labs have successfully been implemented in all partner countries. The interim report was submitted on time and successfully approved by the European Communion. A third partnership meeting also took place at the beginning of the year. We would like to use this Newsletter mainly to give detailed information about the implementation of the Pilot Courses activities and Counselling Laboratories developed in the last months as well as a summary of the third partnership meeting and the upcoming tasks for the project consortium.

### Implementation of Pilot Courses and Counselling Laboratories:

The Pilot Courses “Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management” and Counselling Laboratories started in September and October 2014. Each Pilot Course and Lab was set up with a duration of 80 hours, through a blended-learning approach including in class and on farm activities as well as E-learning and Business Incubator.

### Pilot Courses “Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management”:

#### *Greek Pilot Course:*

The Greek Livorg Pilot Course was held in Rethymno, Crete, a major livestock production area. Participants of the Pilot Courses were mainly farmers recently converted to organic, young unemployed with motivation to become organic livestock producers and agronomists working mainly as consultants on organic livestock management.

There have been 7 days of visiting several organic livestock farms, traditional and modern (mainly sheep & goat, as well as chicken and rabbit), production units of organic yogurt and eggs, as well as representative pasture land in several parts of the island (highlands and mid-land). The activities of the Greek Pilot courses could be called very successful in terms of participation as well as in terms of general spirit and motivation. Most of the participants were full-time producer and therefore had little free time but still were highly motivated to participate in an 80 hour course about organic



*Participants of the Greek Pilot Course visiting an Organic Farm on Crete*



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livestock management. The trainer of the courses, Dr. A. Stefanakis also impressed with high competence and performance.

### ***Estonian Pilot Course***

The Pilot Course “Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management” started in Estonia on the 7th of October 2014.

Participants were mainly students, but also young generation of farmers and other enthusiastic people who are interested in becoming organic livestock producers. During outdoor activities students visited five farms all over Estonia. In Puutsa farm in Jõgevamaa students learned about organic beef production. In Pajumäe farm in Viljandimaa organic dairy production principles and practices were studied and students visited the farm’s dairy where organic yoghurts and different cottage cheeses are made. Students also visited the biggest organic goat farm in Estonia, in Ida-Virumaa, and finally our university’s farm in Tartumaa where animal welfare was under observation. The indoor learning and farm visits with practical assignments were led, supervised and assessed by assistant professor Ragnar Leming and Prof. David Arney from Estonian University of Life Sciences.



*Students as experiential learners at Pajumäe organic dairy farm, Estonia  
Photo: Ragnar Leming.*

### ***Italian Pilot Course***

The Italian Pilot Courses started in Tuscany last October and was organized by the Italian project partners Enfap Toscana and ERIFO. About 20 young learner, aspiring entrepreneurs and young generation of farmers participated at this edition through the activities scheduled in the training plan, experiencing the organic livestock techniques and



*Farm - Il Ruscello (Pisa), Italy - The ancient breed of domestic pig “the Cinta Senese,  
Photo: Enfap Toscana”*

strategies in class and in different organic and conventional farms in Tuscany. In this Newsletter, we wish to present the outdoor pilot editions developed during the month of January 2015 when the young learners had the opportunity to directly experience the differences between conventional agriculture and the innovative techniques of the organic sector during two interesting and significant outdoor PILOT experiences. Particularly in the Farm “Il Ruscello” (Pisa) the farmer trained the young participants on feeding strategies (including pasture and rations) for the ancient breed of domestic pig “the Cinta

Senese”. Learners evaluated the quality of a range of feed types. During the training activities in the farm “Fini Romolo” (Pistoia) the learners were supported, coached and directed throughout the fundamental rules of converting into an effective “organic farming system” knowing the cost for certification and the consequences of violating the regulations in Italy. The farmer also presented its sheep for dairy production and the correct organic dairy process through laboratories activities, outlining the evolution of dairy sheep farming and organic production; analysing the pace, factors and impacts of development of a successful organic dairy sheep farm from North-East of Tuscany; specifying driving factors and prospects of small-scale organic farming development; assessing possibilities for replication of positive experience in other farms, and suggesting recommendations for improvement of public policies and organic farming strategies. The indoor and outdoor training activities with were led, supervised and assessed by the expert Giulio Malvezzi (Associazione Toscana Allevatori) and by experts of safety and healthy rules in the workplace from Enfap Toscana and UIL Trade Union.



Farm - Fini Romolo (Pistoia), Italy – Learners during the dairy production  
Photo: Enfap Toscana

### German Pilot Course

The German Pilot Course "Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management" was organised in collaboration with the University of Cooperative Education Saxony - Dresden State Academy and the Organic Farmers Association Gaea e.V..



More than 20 university students participated in the Pilot Course. Theoretical knowledge on organic animal husbandry was taught mainly through lectures. During guided excursions the students could expand their knowledge about organic pig and cow production as well as raising of goats and organic poultry keeping in mobile hen houses. One highlight was the farm “Gut Hirschaue”, which is specialised on wild animal husbandry with roughly 1000 fallow and red deer and mouflons. They also keep the “Märkisches Sattelschwein” (a unique cross breed of saddleback and wild boar) within the free range system. On this farm topics like animal health, selection of breeds and pasture management to reduce endoparasites where discussed. The students also visited a dairy factory to see how organic raw milk can be processed to wide range of different dairy products.

„free range grazing of „ Märkisches Sattelschwein“ on „Gut Hirschaue“, Germany, Photo: Konrad Behr

## Counselling Laboratories:

### Polish Counselling Laboratory:

The Polish Counselling Laboratory was attended by 20 students of vocational education training in the field of agricultural engineering. During outdoor activities participants visited five different organic farms and one organic cheese store. It was in light winter season, so the weather allowed numerous outdoor activities. Modern technologies for cow raising and milk production were studied at Gajewo Centre. The owner of the farms also runs a bio gas station, so he could also give detailed information on how to plan, calculate and conduct a bio-gas station. The advantages of combining dairy farming and cheese production could be discussed at the organic farm of Marian Nowak. During a dairy workshop the participants learnt how to produce cheese and add natural flavors. The challenges and advantages of raising highland cattle in Central Europe server climate could be studied at the farm of Mr. Grzywacz. In Nosibady, Central Pomerania an example of organic sheep husbandry was shown to the students, where an old breed of sheep “Swiniarka sheep” was reintroduced in 2004. At Pepopwo farm students could experience organic horse keeping for rehabilitation purposes.



Highland cattle at the farm of A. Grzywacz, Poland

### Spanish Counselling Laboratory:

INFODEF (Institute for the promotion of development and training) organized the Inter-ethnic LAB of LivOrg project in Spain. For its development, INFODEF has had the collaboration of numerous organizations, including Local Authorities and Provincial and Regional Governments, official VET centers in organic agriculture and NGOs, all of them related to the fields of training in organic farming or the support of migrants and ethnic minorities through training and employment services.



students participating in the inter-ethnic LAB in Spain

The Laboratory has addressed various target groups, including young immigrants and ethnic minority students of VET in organic farming and migrants with experience in the farming sector and interest in self-employment.

More than 50 people have benefited from the various training and advisory activities conducted during the development of inter-ethnic LAB, including classroom and in farm training and counseling for self-employment in incubators. The content of the training activities aimed to develop innovative methods of training and counseling to

strengthen the capacities of farmers belonging to ethnic minorities to develop their entrepreneurial potential in the field of organic farming.



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## Third project meeting in Dresden - 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015

The third transnational partnership meeting of the project LivOrg was held in Dresden, Germany, on 19th and 20th February 2015 and was organized by the German partner EkoConnect e.V..

During the meeting, the European project partners presented the results of the PILOT and LABS editions developed in each participating country and the instruments and methods to implement the assessment of the learning outcomes. In addition, the partners planned the effective activities to exploit the first results of the project - such as a second e-brochure, newsletter, press releases, Facebook etc. as well as enlarge the networking and the involvement of the Sector Skills Alliances stakeholder at national and local level. One dissemination and promotion workshop as well as one national focus group for exploitation per country are planned during the next months. Additionally each partner will support one to three new or aspiring entrepreneurs to apply for the EU programme Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs, a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries.



LivOrg project partners at the third partnership meeting in front of the venue in Dresden, Germany (19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> February 2015). Photo: ERIFO



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