



Youth and young farmers' workshop

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Group 10

Business plans and multisource financing for multifunctional farms

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Main issues and challenges identified

The main issue discussed was how to start a multi-functional organic farm (including tourism) in an area/country where monoculture and intensive farming are the norm, e.g. the Netherlands.

The main challenges identified were:

- ✓ How do you get farmers to scale back and extensify?
- ✓ How to cover the higher costs of production?
- ✓ Farming and farmers' attitudes must change; extensive farming is also good.
- ✓ Farms should provide experiences, not just produce food.
- ✓ New generation should learn about nature, ecosystems, traditional farming.

Main obstacles identified and support needed

- ✓ Ownership of land (problems to acquire).
- ✓ Capital needed for starting the farm and related businesses.
- ✓ Convincing farmers to extensify and diversify.
- ✓ Convincing consumers to buy quality products that may be more expensive.
- ✓ Political change: support level and structure of subsidies for organic farming.



Support needed

- ✓ Convincing farmers to participate in a collective approach: several farms working together.
- ✓ Help test different types of ownership/entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Add value to products.
- ✓ Consumers: focus on food quality and origin, make near-produced food available in organic/farm shops (e.g. in university cities).
- ✓ Lobby politically for a change in the RDP subsidies for organic farming, not only for conversion but also for maintenance.

Lessons learnt

- ✓ The idea should be supported in practice by the consumers. Marketing, awareness and branding is necessary.
- ✓ Instead of investing into a farm, it may be useful to pilot a project through which individual farms are encouraged to cooperate to create an organic multi-functional farming cooperative/community.
- ✓ As this would be a multi-functional business, it may be useful to divide business plan into farming and non-farming.

Possible actions

- ✓ Involve consumers: focus on local products (large-scale, e.g. schools and small-scale)
- ✓ Involve specialists & farmers
- ✓ Cooperate
- ✓ Lobby policy change (support for extensive farming and near-produced food)
- ✓ Raise awareness
- ✓ Include education (e.g. schools) in awareness-raising
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Support local branding

