



Country Report for Austria

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Topics of demonstration

- Arable crops: roots crops, combinable crops
- Fodder crops
- Bee keeping
- Topics not related to any specific crop or animal
- All topics are related to climate change mitigation and adaption, conservation agriculture, soil and biodiversity

Providers and purpose of demonstration

In Austria the majority of the on-farm demonstrations are done by researchers or students, due to the fact that research institutions are also the main organisers. The two other main groups doing demonstrations are the public/private advisors and the individual farmers.

The reasons why organisations and farmers do demonstration activities are diverse. The main reasons are all connected to knowledge and information like information gathering and sharing, educational training opportunities, research implementation and knowledge creation.

History

Demonstration activities have a long history in Austria. One of the oldest organisation considering agricultural education is the University of Natural Resources and Life Science in Vienna, founded 1872. Since the late 1940s institutions like the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES) and the Austrian Council for Agricultural Engineering and Rural Development started organising demonstrations. They undertake field experiments and offer various number of courses for advanced training. In the late 20th and 21st century new organisations followed like the Ländliche Fortbildungsinstitut (agricultural training institute) which offers around 13,500 courses per year. Later institutions specialised on organic farming were implemented. In Austria, also numerous private farmers as well as private organisations and food supply chain companies are involved in the demonstration activities.



Types of Demonstrations

- On-farm
- Presentations
- Field experiments
- Demonstration display
- Field walk

Access Issues

Gender: Although the gender balance is 50/50 in most of the offered demonstration activities, women are still underrepresented. The audience is mainly male. Reasons for that could be that fewer women work in the agricultural sector or because of work splitting on the farm.

Age: In most of the cases the age of the audience is represented in all age categories. But in general the audience tend to be under 25 years old. A reason for that could be that younger farmers have a different and maybe better education than the older generations and for them on-farm demonstration activities are a well-accepted form to get information about agricultural topics.

Geography: From the organisational point of view demonstration activities are spread all over Austria, because each federal state has an agricultural chamber or a provincial government that are involved in agricultural education. Looking at the farmers no clear picture can be drawn because of lack of information.

Other Issues

For Austria only a rough picture can be drawn due to the fact that the individual farmers are underrepresented in the inventory as well as the supply chain actors which are not represented at all. They are involved in demonstrations activities as funders and organiser, although not represented in the inventory.

Distinguishing Characteristics

- Individual farmers have a weak network
- Organisations are embedded in active networks
- The demonstrations farms are mainly specialized on crop related issues
- In general demonstrations tend to consider a whole farm approach rather than only single practices
- Providers of demonstration activities are mainly research institutions and private/public extension advisory services and individual farmers



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