

Günter and Dörte Hufmann and Team: SoLaWi Oberellenbach – success story

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Farming with passion: We have been active farming already quite some time, first as part-time farmers, then more and more concentrated on it. Everyone, who is working with great interest knows, that he can no more let it go. It was only a logical decision after working with horses and given our love for bio vegetables to take up solidarity agronomy (Solidarische Landwirtschaft – SoLaWi).

Starting SoLaWi: In July 2015 we have transferred our enterprise to the concept of solidarity economy (network of solidarity economy <https://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/startseite/>). Since May 2016 there are more than five places for distribution: Melsungen, Oberellenbach, Bebra und 2 x Bad Hersfeld) to more than 160 members who share the harvest. The Hessian Television visited us and a film was made „Small farmer looks for people to join in“!
<https://programm.ard.de/?sendung=28108334950450>

Cultivation: We cultivate on around 3,3 ha of land 18 species of potatoes and during the year more than 70 vegetables, nearly all manually and horse powered. We work in a biologic-dynamic way, our enterprise is certified by Demeter- and by eco-certification (control point: Kontrollstelle DE-ÖKO-022). We mainly use seeds of [Bingenheimer Saatgut AG](#) and only our own horse manure.

70 vegetable species: Our slogan could also be: It does not function; it does not exist! We deliver outdoor sweet pepper till october. We do not have goods that do not taste!

18 potatoes species: There are delicious ones and extremely delicious ones – we do not harvest anything else. Our potatoes are called Laura, Linda or Bamberger Hörnchen ... Taste them!

160 Ernteteiler: In 2019 we supplied 160 families with our harvest. We do want to grow still and will be happy to receive you. Do write a mail or give us a call.



Distribution points:

Actually we supply Bad Hersfeld, Bebra and Melsungen. And we have a store in Oberellenbach. See also: Film by VSFSOE “Self-determined and self-administered“ of SoLaWi Oberellenbach and three other solidarity economy enterprises (SEE): http://vfsoe.de/?page_id=117

*Dörte and Günter Hufmann do not own land, no farm, no machines. In spite of that they try to realize their dream of fair agriculture. Without tractor, only manually and with horses, they work on rented land in northern Oberellenbach, no matter whether there are thirty degrees heat or ten degrees minus zero. They cultivate more than 60 species of vegetables during the year. And as that does not really function in market economy, the Hufmann Team decided to join „solidarity farming“. A concept, that can have a bright future not only in Hessia for small enterprises. Meanwhile it became a widespread network.

Why work with horses?

The ideal foundation of a closed operation and cyclical structure for biodynamic farms is the working horse. They eat the green fertilization (plants to help soil health), they give manure, they can be used to till the soil, and they are in spiritual exchange and connection with those around them.

10 important points according to Edgar Messerschmidt, an American horse-farmer published in 1954, and in: *Das Zugpferd* 2/3 1994

1. Horses can eat the grains/vegetables/plants that are growing on the farm
2. Their manure contains nutrients and is just as valuable as the food itself
3. If well cared for, horses can be used for up to 20 years
4. Working mares can foal, resulting in either an eventual substitute work horse, or simply can be sold for additional earnings
5. They are flexible- they can work alone, paired up, or even in threes or fours
6. They always give their all, no matter the conditions (mud, snow, etc.)
7. They barely cause soil compaction
8. They stabilize agriculture and economics
9. They are considered to be the most economically considerate source of energy for the agriculture industry in general
10. Dealing/working with horses makes way for influential education in regards to how people are living their lives:
 - a) Through daily routines
 - b) Moving the body and strengthening muscles
 - c) Noise can destroy the body's cells (i.e. loud tractors)
 - d) Generation of emotional balance
 - e) Heightened consciousness and mindfulness



Further aspects according to our opinion Horses are a **regenerative** and regional energy source

1. There is no loss of oil, hence **no environmental impact**
2. They are **less nutritionally competitive** compared to other agro energies
3. Horses are **beautiful** creatures
4. It is a **joy to work with horses** and to watch them as they work; there are many positive elements involved in working with horses such as the joy of life
5. They generate a **quality of food** that is proven to be better
6. Horses create very **meaningful jobs**, stable hands, riders, trainers, blacksmiths, veterinarians, etc. This stops the flow of money into the diesel industry.
7. Horse equipment/technology can be quite **simple** and one can easily build/repair on one's own
8. They are **independent from the crises** of the economy
9. Horses need teamwork- to work with them, one needs to develop **social skills** and patience to name a few