The integration of disabled people in agriculture as an opportunity for landscape development – case studies in Germany

The integration of handicapped people in agriculture is a combination of social work and farming which aims to make use of the multifunctional potential of agriculture demanded by society and politics. Both agriculture and social work can profit from cooperation. Can there be beneficial effects for landscape and wildlife too? The poster describes a study of the potential of three farms for the integration of physically and mentally disabled people with work on the landscapes. The main questions asked were: What has already been done? Which aims have been followed? What are the conditions restricting or supporting the implementation of landscape work?

Case One: Bingenheim

Community Bingenheim established 1950
- Sheltered Workshop for handicapped people (WfM)
- 12 handicapped people in agriculture, more than 200 in the institution, ratio of supervision about 1:3
- Demeter certified
- 100 ha / 55 ha arable
- Cereals, forage crops, potatoes
- About 2 ha apple orchards
- 40 milking cows + offspring + fattening
- 5 sows + offspring + fattening

Case Two: Gut Sambach

Community Gut Sambach est. 1991
- Not a WfM, independent integration
- 24 handicapped people in total
- Ratio of supervision 1:3 to 1:6
- Demeter certified
- 530 ha / 380 ha arable
- Cereals, forage crops, potatoes
- About 12 ha orchards
- 150 milking cows + offspring + fattening
- 200 fattening pigs + sows

Case Three: Hofgut Richerode

Church Institution Hephata Hessische Diakonie established 1915
- Sheltered workshop for handicapped people (WfM)
- 20 handicapped people in agriculture
- More than 1000 in the institution
- Ratio of supervision 1:7
- Bioland certified
- About 90 ha / 50 ha arable
- Cereals, potatoes, forage crops
- 50 fattening bulls + 400 hens + 160 chicken (+150 ducks + 300 geese)
- Potato peeling equipment

Conclusions: Opportunities for landscape work with disabled people

The investigation of these three cases shows that there is great potential for the inclusion of disabled people in landscape work on farms and that many things have already been achieved. This potential is limited in practice by multiple factors; most important are factors that also limit the sustainable farming concept such as a shortage of professional staff, time and money. The attitudes and esteem of farmers and staff are decisive for what happens in the landscape.

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