

## AUSTRIA

### Farm's performance, restructuring & modernization

#### Location

Nation wide

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P2 – Farm Viability and  
Competitiveness

#### Measure

M1 - Knowledge transfer &  
information actions

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 96 500  
EAFRD 77 200  
National/Regional 19 300

#### Project duration

2015 – 2018

#### Project promoter

Ländliches  
Fortbildungsinstitut  
Österreich

#### Contact

[l.piller@lk-oe.at](mailto:l.piller@lk-oe.at)

#### Website

[www.meinhof-meinweg.at](http://www.meinhof-meinweg.at)

“My Farm – My Way” is a web platform that allows farmers to exchange ideas and innovative practices and get to learn from each other.

### Summary

Farmers and especially the young ones who like to be innovative, needed their own platform for exchanging ideas or thoughts, an opportunity to learn from each other and to have inspiring virtual and/or real meetings.



The Austrian chambers of agriculture, supported by the rural development programme for Austria, developed the online platform ‘My Farm-My Way’ to connect “Agripreneurs” and innovative business enterprises in agriculture and forestry. At the same time the website acts as a source of information by for instance offering information about farms that are open for study visits to those who wish to get access to new practices or processes.

### Results

By the end of 2017, already 104 farms had been listed and are active as partners for innovation.

The Webpage got 30 028 hits from July to October 2017, 91% of all visitors coming from Austria.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ A key question for listing a farm as innovative was “What can we learn from this farm/these farmers?”. If there is nothing to learn, the farm will not be listed and so farmers were forced to explain what benefits they could provide.
- ❑ The initiators realized that the farms which were already active in direct marketing of their products and therefore had more direct contacts to consumers, were more open to exchange know-how than farms not involved in direct marketing.
- ❑ Creating a handbook for study visits is necessary in order to enhance the quality of what farmers present about their enterprise.
- ❑ Sharing their knowledge by phone or through external presentations is also very useful.

## Context

In 2014, the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture started an to pave the way for a “culture” of innovation in agriculture by stimulating and promoting innovative projects. Many Austrian farmers are already focusing on innovative production methods and processes, which is one of the strengths of the Austrian agricultural sector. Farmers and especially the young ones who like to be innovative, needed their own platform for exchanging ideas or thoughts, an opportunity to learn from each other and to have inspiring virtual and/or real meetings.

## Objectives

“My Farm – My Way” is a platform created to put innovative farmers into the spot light, to aspire and motivate those farmers who are interested in, or open to innovative agricultural methods and support those who have already opted to use innovative measures.

## Activities

This project runs nation-wide all over Austria and the created online platform focuses on conveying achievements not only from the best farm practices but also from less innovative yet still good farm practices, because the public needs to be informed about these efforts as well.

“My Farm – My Way” offers a range of services for farmers: It supports the exchange of experiences and know-how; identifies farms that are open to visits for new comers in the sector; advertises campaigns for already existing offers for innovative projects; promotes direct marketing and education.

Services available to teachers and consultants include an online list of excursion farms; providing access to information about farms and on new initiatives and lessons; and acting as an advertising platform for new offers for educational programmes and consulting.

The first steps towards creating the platform was to structure it, get the right partners and create a “white book” with clear rules and input requirements. After this first preparation phase the technical implementation of the webpage started. The structure of the webpage is as follows:

*Looking for new ways* – This section focuses on the presentation of innovative farms and it is a virtual meeting point to exchange know-how and share innovations.

*Learning things which are worth to know* – includes a calendar of events, allows farmers to register and participate in innovations-exchange programs, presents all education and consultation offers relevant to innovation and has a collection of links and quotations.

*Visiting Farms* – is a section where visitors in the website can access a list of potential farms for study visits and traveling workshops, sorted by topics and categories, integrated feature to contact each listed farmer

*Presentation of the responsible project partners* – provides information about innovation experts and innovation drive activities.

After the technical specifications of the website had been agreed, partners focused on the content by selecting and collecting information about innovative farms (content, images, videos) from each region. Its region or federal province, has the sole responsibility for their regional partners (farms, education centres, etc.). Regional content managers coordinate the identification of each farm as well as the editing the regional content, while all activities are coordinated by national content management.

Content provided for each farm presented includes:

### A. General information

- Contact information
- Farm description
- An executive summary: “What’s the speciality of this farm”
- Images and videos (optional)

### B. “Tell us your story” – this is the story of each farm:

- Why did you change?
- Description of the idea, examples
- Implementation process
- Who have been the “supporters” of your project
- Critical events
- Future Prospects
- Indicators
- Interesting statements / motto

### C. “Study Visits” – content:

- Program
- Target groups
- Opening hours and costs
- Getting there
- Other information

## Main Results

By the end of 2017, already 104 farms had been listed and are active as partners for innovation.

The Webpage got 30 028 hits from July to October 2017, 91% of all visitors coming from Austria.

More results (number of study visits, events...) will be delivered by the end of the project funding period.

*“This project has paid off for me. A producer of animal food found some information on the webpage about my products in the field of horseradish and granulate of horseradish. Actually the request on it is very high because of the positive effects on animals. With this webpage we can not only doing exchange of know-how, we also can find new contacts with business partners!”*

Participating farmer



## Key lessons

The project initiators had long discussions about the criteria, i.e. what gives a farm the right to be listed as “innovative”. The key question was: “*What can we learn from this farm/these farmers?*”. This question became also a knock-out criteria. If there is nothing to learn, the farm will not be listed. So farmers were forced to explain what benefits they could provide.

The initiators realized that the farms which were already active in direct marketing of their products and therefore had more direct contacts to consumers, were more open to exchange know-how than farms not involved in direct marketing.

The next step has to be the creation of a handbook to improve the quality of the information delivered by farmers during the study visits.

Farms need to have the will to pass on their know-how, but need not necessarily be open for study visits. Sharing their knowledge by phone or through external presentations is also very useful and acceptable.



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## Additional sources of information

n/a