



Fro de Bauer (Ask the farmer)

Bringing farmers and kids together to teach the role and importance of agriculture.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Luxembourg (country-wide)

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P6 - Social inclusion and local development

Focus Area: Local development

Measures: M19 - LEADER CLLD

Funding:	Total budget	145 598.30 (EUR)
	EAFRD	74 255.13 (EUR)
	National/Regional	49 503.42 (EUR)
	Private/Own funds	21 839.75 (EUR)

Timeframe: 2018 to 2020

Project promoter: Lëtzebuenger Landjugend
a Jongbaueren a.s.b.l.

Email: fro@frodebauer.lu

Tel: +352 691 54 32 14



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Summary

Fro de Bauer (Ask the Farmer) is a project that addressed the widening knowledge gap in society regarding agricultural production systems and the dwindling appreciation for foodstuffs. Societal change is needed to raise awareness of today's regional production systems. As this is difficult to initiate, the project developed a unique and innovative approach to bringing agriculture closer to youngsters aged ten and 11.

In three steps, pupils work together to complement their agricultural knowledge of Luxembourg before having the opportunity to get to know a specific agricultural sector and visiting a farm. The target group was specifically chosen to train future decision-makers and consumers of agricultural products on the specificities of agriculture. The project was implemented by the association of young farmers, which is an important player in the agricultural sector due to its size and the age of its members (average age well below 40).

Project results

- 20 of 36 primary schools in three out of the five LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) regions were involved (13% of all Luxembourg primary schools).
- 1 300 pupils from 83 classes took part in Fro de Bauer between 2018 and 2020.
- The project led to the creation of two long-term full-time equivalent jobs (one full-time, two half-time) after closure of the LEADER project.
- Youngsters learned about production techniques, regional methods for food production and animal husbandry management systems.
- Their awareness of food production, regional and seasonal foodstuffs and sustainable consumption (waste prevention) increased.
- The role of farmers in value chains, environment, food security and quality was underlined.
- The project created a lasting learning experience remembered by children, reinforcing their capacity for critical thinking.



- > Farmers, schools, teachers, municipalities, nature parks, the education directorate general, an organisation for consumer protection and other partners all exchanged closely with one another and three participating LEADER regions.
- > Networking activities helped to include existing projects, e.g. with Ministry of Agriculture, and to promote regional and seasonal products and to fight food waste.



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Key lessons and recommendations

- > Information in classrooms helps but the main event that is key to the success of the project is the farm visit.
- > As well as interested primary schools, it is important to find keen and motivated farmers.
- > Speaking about agriculture to children requires special skills – many younger farmers have them.
- > A small amount of economic compensation helps ensure farmer participation.
- > The quality of the project depends considerably on the motivation, flexibility and personality of those involved.
- > The person in charge of implementing the project has a key role.
- > Social skills, experience in the agricultural sector and teaching skills are indispensable.

Context

In recent years, the Luxembourg organisation of young farmers and rural youth has seen a widening knowledge gap in society regarding modern agricultural production methods. Low levels of awareness among consumers in Luxembourg about cultivation and rearing practices has led to a corresponding lack of apprecia-

tion for foodstuffs and the work of farmers. Information circulating on intensive agricultural practices in Europe has also affected the image of agriculture in the country, despite Luxembourg's practices being far less intensive.

The Luxembourgish association of young farmers (Lëtzebuenger Landjugend a Jongbaueren) implemented an initial project aiming to improve the image of agriculture between 2016 and 2017 thanks to the voluntary commitment of young farmers. It was seen as a great success, with many Luxembourg citizens gaining first-hand knowledge of agricultural practices and local and regional production. However, the stakeholders felt that an information campaign was not the ideal tool to work towards societal change as the message tended to be easily forgotten.

It was decided that a subsequent project was needed, which could professionalise the approach, to induce the expected societal change in a more sustainable and tangible way. Sustainable societal change can best be achieved by targeting the younger population, who are eager to learn and do not have preconceived opinions that can hinder awareness-raising efforts. Youngsters appreciate interactive, tactile forms of learning, meaning that this type of programme was required to enable the knowledge transfer of agriculture from farmers to youngsters.



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Objectives

Fro de Bauer set out to professionalise information activities on agriculture, targeting the younger generation, by providing the right kind of information. It sought to improve the societal image of agriculture through an adapted curriculum and to bring agriculture and its practices closer to the younger members of society, who, after all, are future decision-makers, consumers and potentially also farmers.



The aim was to enable pre-teens to gain hands-on experience and form their own opinion of agriculture in Luxembourg. This included introducing information about agriculture into the curriculum of primary schools by providing class visits, appropriate teaching material and, most notably, an excursion to a farm, to combine theory with practice. In concrete terms, the project also involved the creation of one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position during project implementation, with the prospect of hiring additional staff, which duly occurred at a later stage.

Activities

LEADER co-funding enabled the employment of an expert in agriculture, who was entrusted with project implementation, developing the information material and content to embed the project activities into the school curriculum and carrying out the class visits.

The project expert visited the schoolchildren (ten- to 11-year-olds) at participating schools for two hours each trimester, ensuring an authentic and focussed experience. Each class visited the farms during the last trimester, enabling them to learn about Luxembourg's agriculture in three successive steps.



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1) First contact (first trimester)

During the first class visit, pupils' knowledge of agriculture was activated. In small groups, they were asked about what they already knew and that was put into a mind map. Knowledge gaps, such as missing types of producers, were collaboratively closed. The pupils were then familiarised with the regional and seasonal crops that are grown in Luxembourg and the meaning of seasonality in terms of the availability of food. With the aid of a calendar, which was completed over the course of the school year, pupils

increased their knowledge of regionally produced foodstuffs and ways to avoid food waste, referring to an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture.

2) Knowledge of specialised forms of agriculture (second trimester)

During the second class visit, pupils were informed about specialised forms of agriculture via the dissemination of a small information booklet. The class decided which sectors it wanted to learn more about and what type of farm to visit (milk, meat, vegetable, fruit production, etc.). Depending on the choice, they were then familiarised with the specificities of the chosen agricultural production, e.g. why eggs are marked with a digit code or what different types of husbandry systems stand for. The booklet contained a step-by-step guide on how to grow plants from cuttings at home.

3) Farm visit and debrief (third trimester)

All classes began step three with a farm visit. Pupils were given the opportunity to get in touch with production methods on site, being guided by the farmer in a two-hour visit to their farm. Pupils saw how different types of animals are raised and fed and how land cultivation works. They could also ask questions. An in-class debrief was organised, along with the project expert, following the visit, to answer any final questions. Additionally, pupils received a small booklet with information on food labels and completed the seasonal calendar that was started in step one.

Main results

The project involved 20 of the 36 primary schools in the three LEADER regions, representing 13% of all Luxembourg primary schools. During the LEADER project period (2018-2020), around 1 300 pupils from 83 classes took part in the Fro de Bauer curriculum. The project led to the creation of two long-term FTE jobs (one full-time and two half-time) after closure of the LEADER project.

Youngsters learned about production techniques, regional methods for food production, animal husbandry management systems and other generic and specific information about agriculture. In a tactile and interactive way, their awareness of food production, regional and seasonal foodstuffs and sustainable consumption (waste prevention) was heightened and the role of farmers in the value chains, in the environment, for food security and quality was underlined.

Through the combination of the theoretical and practical learning experiences, the project created a lasting learning experience and one that is remembered by children. This contributes to reinforcing their capacity for critical thinking and reflecting their perceived environment.



During project implementation, farmers, schools, teachers, municipalities, the three Luxembourg nature parks, the education directorate general, the organisation for consumer protection and other partners all exchanged closely with one another and the three participating LEADER regions. Networking activities also helped to include existing projects, e.g. with the Ministry of Agriculture, promoting regional and seasonal products and fighting food waste.

Key lessons and recommendations

Information provided in the classrooms helps facilitate the excursion, but the main event that lives long in the memories of the children and which is key to the success of the project, is the farm visit. It is a highlight of the semester that enables children to have direct contact with animals, plants and farm equipment – an experience that most will not have had before.

In addition to interested primary schools, it is important to find keen and motivated farmers. Speaking about agriculture to children requires special skills, which can be found among many younger farmers. A small amount of economic compensation helps ensure farmer participation.

The quality of the projects depends considerably on the motivation, flexibility and personality of those involved, with the person in charge of implementing the project taking on a key role. Social skills and experience in the agricultural sector and teaching skills are indispensable.

Additional information:

Fro de Bauer website: <http://fro-de-bauer.lu/>

Letzebuerg west website:

<https://www.letzebuergwest.lu/projekte/fro-de-bauer>

Letzebuerg west website :

<https://mu.leader.lu/projekte/fro-de-bauer-0>

Landjugend a Jongbaueren website: <http://jongbaueren.lu/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F13hV9EB11M>

Landwirtschafts website: <https://agriculture.public.lu/de/actualites/2021/oktober-2021/conf-presse-30-ans-leader.html>