



**Hamburg**

**City Estates**

Hamburg, Germany

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Case Study from a Series on Access to Land  
for Community Connected Farming

## Case Study Series on Access to Land for Community Connected Farming

In 2010-11, an informal group of civic organisations from across Europe conducted a project on Access to Land for Community Connected Agriculture. A key part of the project lies in a series of seven case studies, documenting experiences from various European countries and different levels of activity (local, regional, national). These case studies seek to explore both the functioning and the benefits of community

connected farming. From this they seek to identify the constraints that limit access to land of sufficient quality and size, and the potential solutions that have been found to reduce the impacts of these constraints. The case studies are illustrative of a variety of issues and situations and, taken together, present some interesting and innovative approaches to the development of local, civic agriculture.

### • Viva sol, Lithuania:

A National Association of cheese eaters and producers established to support the development of solidarity between urban and rural people, and to encourage the settlement of small farmers and artisans in rural Lithuania. Viva sol has started a farmers' market in Vilnius, a box scheme, environmental training and activities to support small-scale breeders. Faced with the issue of several farmers being unable to find affordable land, it is currently envisaging creating a Land Fund to raise investments or donations in order to buy agricultural land.

### • Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farms, UK:

Two Biodynamic Community Farms located in East Sussex, UK, wholly owned by a cooperative (an Industrial and Provident Society) with approximately 600 shareholders, most of them local to the farms. The farms occupy approximately 300 hectares of land, the majority of which is owned by St Anthony's Trust, a local land trust. The farmers employ about 20 staff, process and sell their products directly and have established strong community connections.

### • Hamburg City Estates, Germany:

For decades, Hamburg municipality has purchased agricultural land to be able to influence city development. In 1989/1994, the city opted for the conversion of three large estates in its ownership to organic farming. These farms all play a major role in providing local organic food, and two of them have developed direct marketing and a large array of social and cultural activities involving the community.

### • Terre de liens, France:

A civic organisation established to assist organic and peasant farmers in gaining access to land. The organisation also promotes new ways to own and manage land as a common good. Terre de liens has created financial tools (a solidarity investment company and an endowment trust) to collect investment funds and donations, and educational tools to inform the public and raise awareness about land access and agriculture. It now has a network of 2000 members and 8000 shareholders, and owns 2400 hectares of farmland, supporting about 200 farmers.

### • Jaglea Farm, Romania:

An organic farm located near Sibiu, in the Carpatians, which illustrates a new kind of farm in Romania, where tradition and innovation meet to form an emerging 'new peasantry'. The Jaglea family practice a low-input, largely manual agriculture, which is certified organic and which seeks new ways to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. They process and market all their products directly, and took part in the creation of the first organic producers' cooperative shop in Romania. One obstacle that they face in seeking to expand their activity is gaining access to more land in the vicinity of the farm.

### • Cooperativa Agricoltura nuova, Italy:

A cooperative farm on the periphery of Rome, formed in 1977 following occupation of the land by a group of young people opposing urban development. It is now a 250 ha mixed organic farm, geared towards on-farm processing and direct marketing and hosting a range of environmental and social activities (an information centre on renewable energies, community gardens, social integration of vulnerable adults, etc.). In 1996 it obtained a tenancy contract from the municipality of Rome, which has established a regional park in the area surrounding the farm.

### • Regionalwert AG, Germany (RWAG):

A citizen shareholder corporation, located in the area of Freiburg im Breisgau, that supports the development of organic agriculture and local food production, marketing and distribution. It has collected €1.7 million from about 500 mostly local shareholders. The capital is invested in 6 farms and associated land, processing businesses (caterer, processor), and marketing businesses (retail and wholesale shops, box delivery). As part of its operation, RWAG has developed a detailed methodology to report on the social, economic and environmental impact of its investments in the region.

*These case studies have been brought together and edited by Véronique Rioufol (Terre de liens) and Neil Ravenscroft (University of Brighton and Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farms).*

# Hamburg City Estates

By Titus Bahner<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

For decades the old merchant town of Hamburg has pursued a policy of buying up agricultural land inside and outside the city limits to be able to influence city development. In 1989/1994 the city opted for the conversion of three large estates in its ownership to organic farming. All three estates are located at the north eastern city limits, one inside, two beyond, close to rather well situated housing quarters.

Gut Wulksfelde and Gut Wulfsdorf, which were rented out in 1989, have developed into large diversified farm businesses, one organic, one biodynamic, with a high degree of food processing and direct marketing. They serve their local area in manifold ways, mainly as sources for organic food (sold through their large farm shops) but also as a destination for school class trips, a place for cultural events, the location for several large annual public events, and the maintenance of a diverse cultural and ecological landscape with hedgerows, habitats and accessible pathways. Both farms also operate delivery services that serve the whole of the city of Hamburg and its surrounding area. Wohldorfer Hof, on the contrary, has developed into a highly specialized organic dairy farm with additional livery horses and little community involvement.

The city's support for the three estates consists mainly in offering long term (30-40 year) leases on what are now

favourable terms, and in investing in additional buildings on the two multifunctional estates. The tenants themselves have also invested large amounts of money. Uniquely, Gut Wulfsdorf initiated and supported the development of several eco-housing projects nearby that are now home to about 400 people. These residents are loosely connected to the farm, mainly as customers and non-material supporters.

The conversion of the three estates in Hamburg was a successful but singular step. Even if the positive development of the two community connected estates is widely acknowledged and both farms contribute significantly to living quality and a good image for Hamburg, the administration sees no comparable situation in any other of its very extended land possessions.



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# 1. Agriculture in Hamburg Municipality

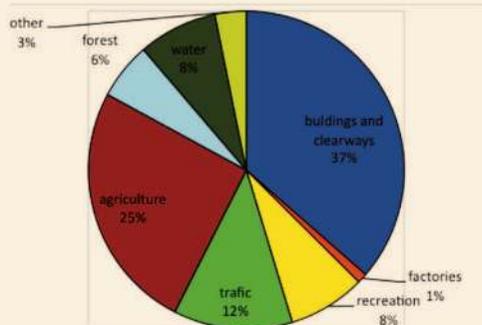
The city of Hamburg, an independent city-state in the German federal system, is surrounded by the predominantly agricultural federal states of Schleswig-Holstein in the north and Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) in the south.

Location of Hamburg in Northern Germany



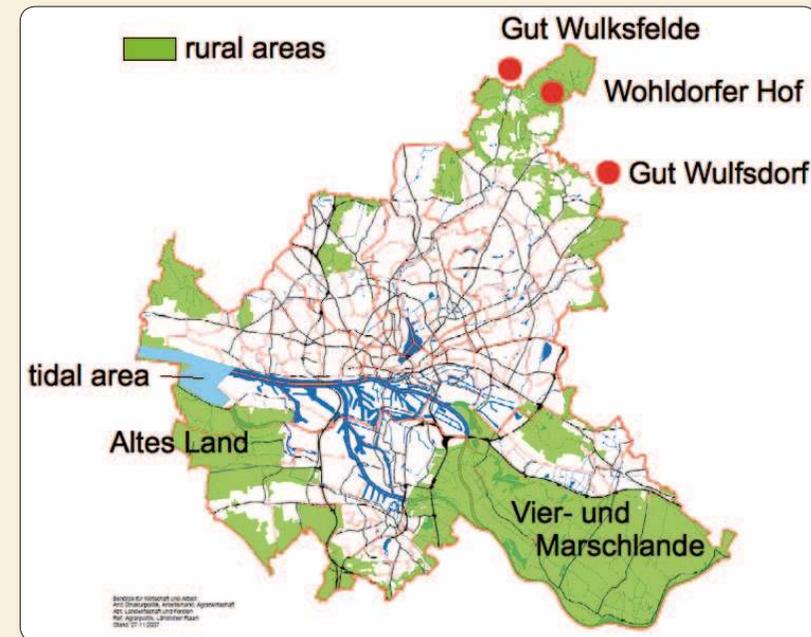
Being an old trade town since medieval times and, today, very much a service economy, the primary sector in Hamburg employs very few people (0.5% of the work force). This is a much lower share of the work force than the average for Germany (2.3%).

Land use in Hamburg City (total area 75,500 ha)



Land use in Hamburg is dominated by buildings, clearways and traffic areas, which account for 48% of the land area. The remainder is divided between agricultural land (25% of the total) and waters, forests and recreational areas (22 % of the total). About 8 % of Hamburg - parts of the forest, water and agricultural area - is protected as a natural area. Such protection is increasing in Hamburg, more so than in any other federal state.

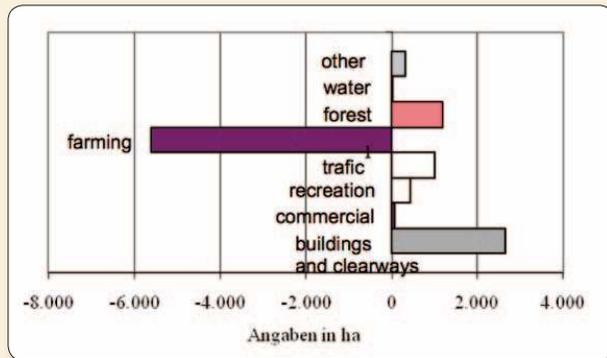
The spatial distribution of agricultural land is indicated on the map below which locates the main horticulture areas in southern Hamburg, as well as the three city farms in northern Hamburg. About half of the city's agriculture land is grassland, 40% arable land, and about 12 % are permanent crops such as orchards and nursery plants.



Source: Stadt Hamburg, Behörde für Wirtschaft und Arbeit

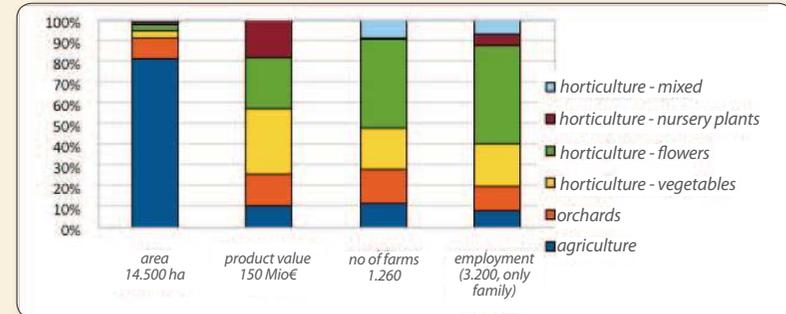
Annually, about 145 hectares (1 % of Hamburg's agricultural area) is lost due to urban pressure. The number of farms in Hamburg is decreasing by about 3% annually over the last decade. The average age of Hamburg farmers is much higher than in Germany as a whole, with more than a third being 55 years and older.

Changes in Land Use 1979 - 2005 in ha



Within the city limits there are about 1200 farms with an average size of just 11.5 hectares. The graph below sets out the structure of these farms. About 80% of the land is farmed by «ordinary» farms with an average size of 85 hectares. These are mostly mixed farms with a regular use of alternative income sources. Organic farming makes up about 7 % of the farmland area. However, the vast majority of farms are horticultural farms – vegetables, flowers, nursery plants - and fruit growers (orchards). Although occupying a small land area, these horticultural units account for about 90% of farm numbers, family employment and also product value.

Shares of Farming Types in Hamburg Agriculture



The main area for horticulture farms are the marshy soils of the «Vier- und Marschlande» in south east Hamburg. This is the largest greenhouse cultivation area in Northern Europe. Fruit orchards are concentrated in the south west of the city and downstream along the Elbe marshes, the «Altes Land». Arable and grassland farming is common in the northern parts of the city, where there are sandy upland soils.

Meat and dairy production have more or less been abandoned within the city limits; the number of dairy cows has declined to well below 1000 animals, on 15 farms only. Since 1990 the number of cattle has decreased by 40 %, while pigs and chickens have decreased by 70 %. Those that do remain are mainly found on mixed farms, where they are mainly reared for direct sale to customers. The number of horses has almost reached the number of chickens (ca. 3000).

Market prices for farmland in Hamburg range from 20,000 €/hectare in the south-east to 38,000 €/hectare in the northern parts of the city. Forest land, at 27,000 €/hectare is almost as expensive as farmland. Fields for horticultural use are even more expensive, at between 30.000 and 50,000 €/hectare (average values from 2006). There are no statistical data available for farm rents, but the levels in neighbouring Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony are currently around 300 €/ha p.a. for arable land and 200 €/ha for grassland.

## 2. Hamburg's Agricultural Policy

### 2.1 Hamburg's Sustainable Development Policy

At least since the 1920s the Hamburg city fathers, maybe in some sense for luxury due to their „trade spirit“, have pursued the development of a comparatively beautiful and green city with large city parks and the waters of Elbe, Alster ponds and small channels in the city centre.

After the upheaval of the student generation in the 1960s, issues of environmental protection and sustainable development became a political topic in Germany in the 1980s, reflected in the foundation of the Green Party and in policy shifts by the other large parties. Hamburg, traditionally governed by the social-democrats, was at the forefront of these new challenges. Climate change became an important topic in Hamburg in the 2000s. This was partly motivated by the growing risk of extreme flood incidents as the city centre is increasingly threatened by rising North Sea levels. To address this, a very ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> reduction programme was implemented. With its coherent long-term policy for sustainable development under both social democratic and conservative city councils in coalition with the greens or the liberals, the city was nominated the „European Green Capital“ of 2011.

### 2.2 Political Priorities on Farming over time

The city's approach to sustainable development of its nature and landscapes translates into a careful spatial planning approach to define an equilibrium between the different claims for buildings, commercial development, traffic, recreation, nature protection and farming. This has significant impacts for farming, which has traditionally served the local markets with fresh produce, grains, meat and also flowers. Notwithstanding this, agricultural land has been needed for the development of buildings, industrial areas and also recreational areas like city parks. For a long time, these uses were seen clearly as superior to agricultural land use,

meaning that the process of reducing agricultural land in the city was not seen as a problem but rather as a success of city development.

Since the 1980s, however, a growing demand by citizens for quietness and natural environment gave agricultural areas an additional value in terms of landscape quality and biodiversity. Hence, the maintenance of «greenbelts» and coherent agricultural areas between the developed areas became an explicit policy goal of the city. Maintaining economically viable farms in these areas also became a political goal because of the social and cultural value placed on the open landscape of the farms and the food and other services that they offered (like horse riding).

During the agricultural planning period 2007-2013 the city state - like any other regional government in Germany - implemented a rural development plan for the allocation of EU structural funding. In this plan the traditional sectoral political approach was abandoned and an integrated approach to reconciling agricultural and other land uses was applied. The three main targets - economic competitiveness, ecological improvement and the vitalisation of cultural landscapes - were underpinned by a forth «frame target» of improving the image and identity of Hamburg agriculture. To preserve the complete existing agricultural land area for future farming purposes was a deliberate goal of the plan. But this had limited impact, as admitted by the responsible administrative unit of the city council.

The city uses several political instruments to foster the development of a multifunctional agriculture that provides citizens with local food and cares for the environment:

- Agri-environmental measures are offered e.g. for the protection of breeding birds on wet grassland.
- The different designation levels of protected areas in German environmental law are used to place restrictions on farming development, e.g. to prevent construction of large stables that are out of character with the landscape, or to ban the use of

agro-chemicals in certain vulnerable areas. The latter of course is financially compensated.

- Local marketing options are supported in different ways, e.g. by promoting weekly farmers' markets in many city districts and by supporting short food supply chains with information and publicity measures.

However until now the city has not opted to set something like a numerical goal on the percentage of food self-sufficiency from the nearer surroundings.

In the context of the larger Hamburg metropolitan area which comprises the city and its surrounding counties there is a "regional initiative" labeled "From the Region for the Region": restaurants, schools and retail stores are encouraged to use regional products and to build a network of business partners. But besides forming a large coalition of good will there seems to be no tangible action behind it yet.

The conservative-green city government from 2009-2011 tried explicitly to foster the growth of organic farming, but with little success. After a certain rush in the 1990s there was virtual stagnation in the numbers of organic farms and acreage. The new social-democrat city government from 2011 now plans a new emphasis on residential and commercial development which should happen primarily on already designated but not yet developed areas, but is likely also to have an impact on the remaining agricultural land.

### 2.3 Land Ownership by the City

Unlike many city administrations, the Hamburg government has, for many years, followed a policy of buying up any piece of land which may be relevant for future development within the city limits and to some extent even beyond. Of the total of 14,500 hectares of productive agricultural land in the city, about 8,000 are owned by the city. Even more land had been acquired in the past and now has been turned into developed areas. However

the financial administration of the city government monitors the price level and rejects purchases that are well above the average price published by the "expert committee on land values", which publishes an annual report of land prices on the regional (NUTS III) level. The actual prices that the city pays to acquire land may be slightly above this average level, but not by too much.

The land reserve is managed by a city-owned company (Sprinkenhof AG) which charges an annual lump sum per rental contract (or per ha) for this service. The city lets the purchased land back to the farmers on short term leases in order to be able to use the land when needed. To provide security for investments it guarantees the restitution of remaining investment values at the end of the lease (Übernahmeerklärung). This is sufficient for the banks to grant credits.

Apart from the city there seem to be no other large landowners in Hamburg. Indeed, the other land holdings are rather scattered, with many private owners. Paradoxically, the Hamburg merchant mentality does not see land as a tradeable good. Rather, land is kept and inherited; if a citizen sells land, this is considered a bad sign.



Despite the large role of the city as an agricultural land owner, there is no systematic attempt to use this position to influence land use in a direct way, e.g. by putting conditions in rental contracts. Exceptions to this are the contracts for the three city estates described below, which were rented out in 1989 and 1994, on the condition that the land would be farmed organically. The reason is that except in the rather peculiar situation of these estates, the plots which are acquired usually are only parts of an existing farm, or consist of a whole farm which has been bought by the city and rented back to a family who have farmed it for generations before.

An example of this is a large strip of «Vier und Marschlande» called Billwerder that was identified as a potential site for an extension of the harbour area in the 1960s, but which was never developed for this purpose. The city bought up about 60 complete farms in the area and rented them back to the farmers. About 45 of them, of between 1 and 100 hectares in size, are still actively farmed today, so by the fourth generation of the farming family. These farmers would not voluntarily quit their land or change their production system just to conform to the ideas of the administration. The administration sees no point in chasing these existing farming families out to install new ones or forcing the existing ones to farm differently. The “Vier- und Marschlande” have for centuries found their way in serving the local markets, have developed peculiar strategies to cope with the frequent risk of river floods as well as with changing economic circumstances, and therefore have developed a strong mentality of self-sufficiency and determinacy. Newcomers from the town who move to the «countryside», different from other Hamburg districts, have not succeeded on putting their standards of quietness and clean air upon the local farming population. On the other hand the area is very unsusceptible to organic farming which only makes up for 2% of production, compared to 7% in all of Hamburg. Therefore, in due consideration of local self governance and mentality, the city does not put rental conditions for a change in land use in their contracts, even if it legally could do so.

The case of the three Hamburg estates at the north eastern city limits (one inside, two beyond the borders) is a different story. Traditionally this was an area with large agricultural holdings and estates, owned by rich merchants or noble families who from time to time bought or sold an estate or went bankrupt (in other words, not a family farm situation). In this district as early as the 1900s, the city pursued a policy of preventing the development of what in German is called “bacon belts”, settlements outside the city limits which pay their taxes to the surrounding municipalities. Following their commercial instincts, the city fathers systematically bought up land around the city to prevent it from being developed. This strategy was quite successfully applied and led to the development of residential areas inside the city limits which nowadays host a quite prosperous and open-minded population who provide the main target groups for the three organic estates - a different situation compared to south eastern Hamburg.

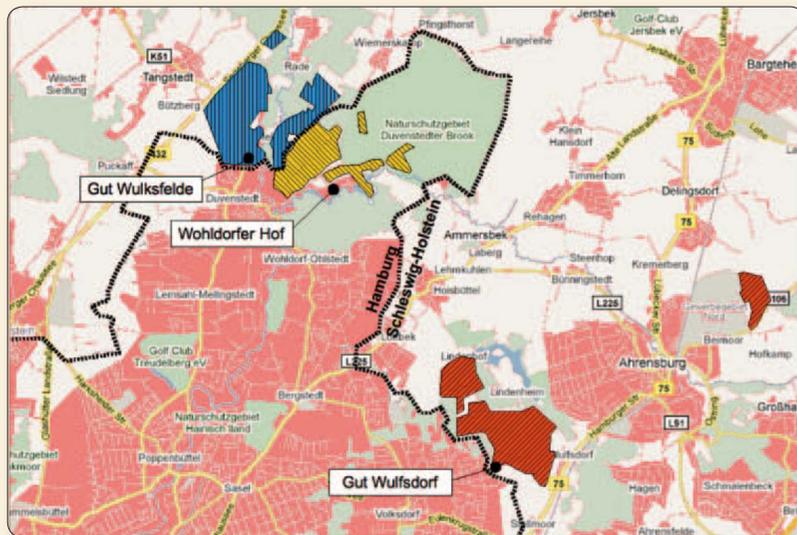
The responsible administration officer in the city’s commercial department (who is still in charge today) sees no contradictions here. The renting out of other farms than the three northern estates under similar intentional conditions has never been considered by policy or administration, he says. It has been a peculiar situation because of the significance in size of these estates (they are the largest estates that the city owns), and that their tenancies have ended at the same time, thus allowing the city to seek new tenants. All other farms have short-term leases which are automatically extended as long as the fields are not directly used for non-agricultural purposes. The decisions taken about these three estates therefore extended beyond the interests of the northern city districts, to bring benefits to the whole city in terms of local food provision, of community attractions and of landscape quality.

### 3. Turning City Estates into Multifunctional Community Farms performance

#### 3.1 The Story of Conversion

The location of the three estates in Hamburg is shown on the map in section 1. The farmed areas are indicated in the following map:

*Farm Areas of the Three Estates in Northern Hamburg*



The three city estates had been bought up by the city many years ago. Gut Wulfsdorf, outside the city limits, was bought in 1922 and became the city's farm-work and education home for difficult juveniles until the 1960s. With increasing mechanisation, the farm turned to large scale pig fattening and arable farming. Gut Wulksfelde and Wohldorfer Hof were bought in the 1960s on the basis of plans for a new airport north of Hamburg (which later were not realised) and the need

for ecological compensation areas for these plans. Both farms were originally much larger; more than half of their initial land, mostly forests and less fertile fields, were converted to natural and protected areas adjacent to existing nature reserves.

With the end of a first round of long-term leases in the 1980s, the city looked for new tenants for Gut Wulksfelde and Gut Wulfsdorf, which became available at the same time. Wohldorfer Hof followed in 1994. A key person in this process was environmental activist Andreas Brandt – environmental technician by profession - who had very close relations to the city administration. He was able to convince environmental senator Jörg Kuhbier from the social democratic party to turn the two estates into multifunctional organic model farms and to organize a public call for new tenants. The city parliament adopted the proposal with a large majority across all parties. To shape a different future for Hamburg's largest area of farm land was seen to offer a unique opportunity. The prospect of creating new jobs was also important. There has been no formal ex-post evaluation of this decision until now, but since all three farms are commercially successful there is little apparent need for such an evaluation.



The city issued a public call for tenders, with the tender procedure managed by the city's environmental department. Among the applicants were three groups with appropriate concepts, two relating to organic farming and one to biodynamic farming. They all applied primarily for Gut Wulfsdorf, due to its better development options in terms of neighbourhood structure and its quieter situation. Since the biodynamic applicant, Georg Lutz, was only willing to farm at Gut Wulfsdorf, the city decided to let Gut Wulfsfelde to the two organic groups with the condition that they should merge and agree on a joint concept. In return, the Gut Wulfsfelde group received more initial support from the city to bring the poor farm buildings into good condition. The city invested about 800,000 Deutsche Mark, which is roughly equivalent to the same in euros now. Biodynamic farmer Georg Lutz, on the other estate, promised to improve the buildings more or less from his own resources.

The third estate, Wohldorfer Hof, followed in 1994 with a similar call for tenders. The responsibility for managing it meanwhile had changed to the financial department. Among the applicants there were none who proposed a truly multifunctional concept. Apart from a hypothetical correlation of this fact to the change in departmental responsibilities, this had a certain practical logic because the local demand for large farm shops was already served by the two neighbours. So the winning concept was a specialized dairy farm with provision for pensionary horses (stabling, feeding and caring for private horses in return for a monthly livery payment).

The lease contracts initially were restricted, according to the first paragraph, for the purpose of "organic farming", which was in a subsequent paragraph more precisely defined as farming according to the standards of the German association for organic farming (EU regulations were not available at this time). The lease contained no additional obligations with respect to locally oriented marketing or cultural activities etc. and so left the tenants entirely free to set their own priorities. The organic

condition later posed a problem because this prevented the farms from receiving EU support for organic farming. For the legal principle of subsidiarity a farm that is obliged to farm organically anyhow cannot apply for public support to do so. Therefore in an amendment to the contract in 2000, the condition to farm organically was replaced by a regulation that the price of the lease would be doubled if organic agriculture were to be abandoned. Thus the tenants of the farms are no longer legally obliged to farm organically. The city influences the way of farming only by choosing tenants who propose an appropriate concept for farm development.



### 3.2 The Three Estates Today

The following table summarizes some basic data for the three farms.

	Gut Wulfsfelde	Wohldorfer Hof	Gut Wulfsdorf
conversion to organic farming	1989	1994	1989
size (hectares)	317	215	366
- in city ownership	260	215	290
- arable land	254	135	236
- grassland	37	80	100
- other	6 ha horticulture 14 ha biotopes incl. 12 km hedgerows orchard with 40 old varieties	10 km hedgerows	16 ha horticulture 18 ha biotopes seed breeding
soil quality	loamy sand (20-40 points out of 100)	loamy sand (18-38 points out of 100)	loamy sand 22-36 points out of 100
organic standard	organic (Bioland)	organic (Bioland)	bio-dynamic (Demeter)
cattle	48 suckler cows	70 dairy cows ø 8.500 kg p.a.	55 dairy cows ø 6.200 kg p.a.
- breed	150 head in total German Angus with horns	140 head in total Holstein-Frisian without horns	315 head in total Red-White with horns
other livestock	220 fattening pigs 5 sheep 1200 chickens 550 geese 100 ducks zoological garden	50 horses	18 sows 400 fattening pigs/year 12 sheep + lambs 300 geese 1 horse, 3 ponies
workforce intensity (farm only)	2.5 / 100 ha	1.9 / 100 ha	0.8 / 100 ha
on-farm processing	bakery	small dairy	butchery, bakery
marketing	farm shop box scheme with online ordering service farm restaurant	10% on-farm sale	farm shop 9 farmers markets coop. with box scheme
employment (farm, processing, marketing)	110 permanent staff	4,5 permanent staff	60 permanent staff
annual turnover	8 500 000 €	500 000 €	6 400 000 €
- of which EU support	120 000 €	90 000 €	150 000 €
turnover per ha	26 800	2 300	17 500
recent investments by the city	0.65 Mio €	---	1.0 Mio €

Gut Wulfsfelde is run as a limited company owned by two managers. Besides farming and keeping a herd of suckler cows and other livestock, they operate a large farm shop and online delivery service. A bakery, market garden, farm restaurant and a carpentry shop are run by independent subtenants. The farm even has a little farm zoo and playground for children. The ensemble of farm businesses has a total of 110 regular employees with a turnover of 8.5 Mio €. More detail is given in the next section.

Gut Wulfsdorf is run as a family farm and employs regularly about 60 people. In addition to arable farming, dairy cows and livestock and market gardening, the farm runs a shop and has a stall at nine farmers' markets. In addition, a butchery, bakery and a cooperative box scheme are run by independent subtenants. The total turnover of the whole is about 6.4 Mio € annually. This farm engages intensively with housing projects in the close neighbourhood, where people are jointly developing housing areas for multi-generational living and work-life-spaces, including offices and some community facilities.

Wohldorfer Hof has developed to a highly intensive organic dairy farm with 50 horses at livery. It is organized very leanly, with two tenant farmers, two workers, and one part time person (the wife of one of the farmers) to do the milk processing. Ten per cent of the milk is processed to provide pasteurized fresh milk, yoghurt, quark, cottage cheese and cheese. These products are sold at the farm. The rest is delivered to an organic dairy 35 km away. A delivery service for dairy products, that once employed five people, was stopped after one of the employees left the business. There are no community activities, and the farm has a difficult relationship with the local environmental NGO that cares for the nature reserve surrounding parts of the farm. The farmers have no objections to a new approach to direct marketing, if the right person came forward, but they are not actively pursuing it.

### 3.3 Gut Wulksfelde: Developing a Large Community Farm

Gut Wulksfelde is run as a limited company (GmbH), with the company being the legal tenant for the farmland and buildings. The lease was signed in 1989, with the farm run initially by a group of six managers drawn from the two organic teams that tendered for the farm. Since then, five of the managers have left the farm, among them Andreas Brandt, who left in 2006. The farm is now managed by Uwe Westebbe from the initial group and Rolf Winter who joined in 1993.

The farm business, the farm store, the delivery service and the bakery are run by the limited company. The large market garden business is subcontracted to independent tenants as well as the new restaurant business established in 2009 and a small furniture carpentry business.

Initially all six group members were shareholders of the limited company, each having equal shares. Whoever left was paid off by the remaining ones or by the new entrants. The work in different departments is organised in a friendly but clear

hierarchy, with heads of departments responsible for the management of their staff.

Initially the group had an 18 year lease with an option for another 12 years. In 2000 the lease was extended to another 30 years, until 2032. The price corresponded to a normal rent level, of 200 Deutsche Mark per ha (100 €/ha). This has not been altered since, although this would have been possible according to the contract.

After the farm had developed successfully for 15 years, the city again invested in the buildings. In 2006 the manure and silage storing facilities were renovated, at a cost of €250,000; in 2009 a new barn for machinery, the geese and the pigs was constructed, at a cost of €400,000 and the drainage system was renovated. These investments were financed from the city's general investment budget and managed by the city's commerce department (Wirtschaftsbehörde), which had previously taken over responsibility for the estates from the environmental administration.



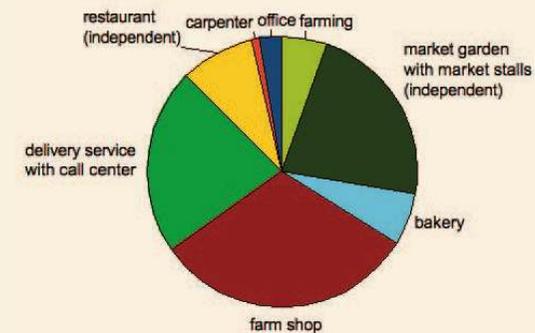
After the successful development of the farm shop and the processing businesses, the city considered applying a commercial rent to the commercial buildings (as opposed to those used for primary production). This would have posed a significant financial problem for the farm business. After negotiation, the city decided to sell the buildings to the farm, using an hereditary lease («Erbbaurecht»), a legal option where a building is sold for a fixed number of years while the land on which it stands remains the property of the seller. The owner of the building pays an annual rent (interest) to the owner of the land. City and farm agreed a contract for 66 years, with the capitalised value of the rent plus additional investments financed by the ethical GLS bank, which in turn gets an annual income consisting of interest and loan repayment.

The farm area of Gut Wulksfelde has increased by 50 ha since the beginning. In contrast, the turnover of the business has increased substantially, to about 8.5 Mio € per annum. Only €120,000 of this represents a direct support payment from the EU. The scope of production and processing is tailored to the demands of the retail customers. The vast majority of products are marketed directly through the farm shop and a box scheme delivery service that operates throughout Hamburg city. Additional products are bought in from cooperating farms to supplement the farm's own production.

In the period 1996-2000, Gut Wulksfelde was the main partner of a EU-funded project to develop large-scale organic processing and marketing for the wholesale trade. Food from Gut Wulksfelde was served in the Hamburg canteens of German airline Lufthansa, which served about 1.000 meals per day, and in several other large companies. However, after 9-11 2001, Lufthansa invested all its resources in additional security measures and stopped the purchase of organic food. Nevertheless, the project has become independent of the farm, and is run by a group of people in another town. However, it still purchases products from the farm for processing.

Including the subcontracted market garden, the farm employs about 110 people. The wages conform to standard union tariffs but with less difference between the low and the high level jobs. Work relations are quite stable and the departmental managers are highly qualified. To improve their leadership skills, the heads of departments are sent to expensive training courses.

*Employment Structure on Gut Wulksfelde*

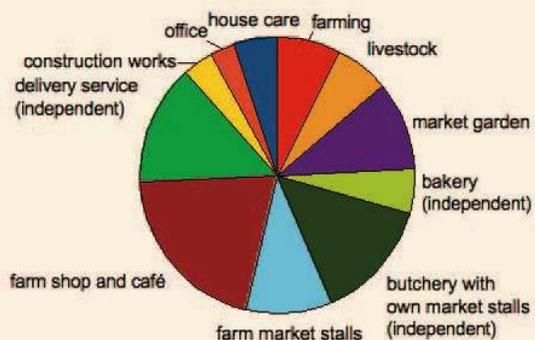


About 25% of the merchandise (by turnover) comes from the farm, with the rest from wholesalers who source their products from the surrounding region. For example, milk comes from the organic dairy which processes the raw milk bought from Gut Wulfsdorf and Wohldorfer Hof. The large number of people employed in the farm shop results from two working shifts, 6 days a week, and a high degree of information and service provided for the customers. At any time in the shop there are around 10 staff at work: 3-4 behind the meat counter and behind the bread, cake and pastries counters respectively, others stack-ing shelves, and some at the cash desks. Some farm products are also processed by the shop staff, like delicatessen salads.

For comparison, the employment structure of Gut Wulfsdorf is somewhat similar with most jobs created in marketing:

employment by department	skilled workers	unskilled workers	apprentices	trainees	annual working hrs
farming	2	2	1		10000
livestock	1,5		1	1	9000
market garden	3	5	1	3	14000
bakery (independent)	1	2			7200
butchery with own market stalls (independent)					
farm market stalls	3	5			19200
farm shop and café	3	2			14000
delivery service (independent)	10	4			28000
construction works	3	5			19200
office	1	1			5000
house care	1,5				4000
sum (total = 66)	2	1	1		7000
	31	27	4	4	136600

Employment Structure on Gut Wulfsdorf (by hrs)



Gut Wulfsfelde's activities are centred around providing their customers with good food. The farm shop serves around 5.000 customers weekly, the delivery service another 2,500, while the farm's marketing contact list contains about 7,500 addresses. The food prices are comparable to the general price level for organic retail stores. For consumers it is the quality

and transparent local origin of the food, allied to the attractive environment of the farm shop, which attracts them to buy at the farm. For customers of the delivery service, the prices reflect usual retail prices plus a convenience premium.

Social and cultural activities support these community relations. About three times a year there are large farm fairs which attract several thousand visitors from all over Hamburg and beyond. About 150 school classes visit the farm annually for half day education trips. A little farm zoo with domestic goat, pig and poultry breeds attracts children, as do the adjacent playing facilities (including a sand pit). These attractions provide parents with opportunities for quiet shopping.

An "association of friends to support the farm" (Förderverein Gut Wulfsfelde e.V.) has a place for a young volunteer for ecological work (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, done instead of obligatory military service). Together with the volunteer, association members organize guided tours on the farm for the public and for school classes, discussion evenings and



environmental work days. They also maintain good contacts to the local branch of the environmental group NABU. The association members have also planted an orchard with 40 old varieties of fruit trees. From time to time a cultural evening is offered with food and a classical concert. Since 2009 a farm restaurant has opened which offers high class cuisine, with chefs who have previously gained international experience in New York and Dubai.

All these activities are derived from a good sense for the needs and wishes of the regular customers, who are always seen to be at the centre of farm development. However, the farm does not engage in philosophical discussions about food prices or CSA-type legal structures.

A recurring problem – for all three estates – is the security for investments made by the tenants. In the years after signing the initial lease, the local farmers' cooperative bank made unsecured loans for farm equipment because the bank was satisfied with the farmers' business plan. This is no longer possible. This has led to the farmers asking customers for private loans ("Genussrechte") of at least €10,000 at an interest rate of 7% per annum. Eighteen customers have lent a total of €400,000. The interest is paid in merchandise at the farm shop and so costs the farm only about 5%.

The development potential for Gut Wulksfelde is not in terms of acreage because more land is not available locally. Rather, there is potential to intensify the animal husbandry and to improve the delivery service.

Until now, heat for the farm has been produced by conventional fossil gas. But plans will be realised in late 2011 to run a pipeline from a local municipal compost biogas plant. This will power a combined heating and electricity power station that will serve all the farm's buildings. Electricity will be distributed by a domestic grid, with surpluses exported to the public grid. In addition to the private loans of €400,000, the farm has applied for a 50-75% grant from EU and national funds.

At Gut Wulfsdorf, a 200 kW chopped wood heating system, largely supplied from the farm's own biomass, went into production in 2000. Recently 120 kilowatts of photovoltaic panels have been installed on the farm roofs.

### **3.4 Gut Wulfsdorf: Organizing Good Neighbourhood**

A peculiarity of Gut Wulfsdorf is its tremendous impact on its neighbourhood by attracting people who want specifically to live near the farm and developing housing projects. The farmer, together with about 60 other parties, has created a holding association to purchase the city's youth home buildings, which are adjacent to the farm. The main motivation for this step was to prevent the development of an anonymous quarter close to, but without connection with, the farm and its activities.

The housing project - called «Wulfsdorf commons» (Allmende Wulfsdorf) - has now developed 100 apartments, craft shops, a kindergarten and a health care centre, all to ecological standards. Allmende Wulfsdorf has also become home to the



farm's breeding activities, in cooperation with an ecological seed breeding company (Bingenheimer Saatzucht AG). The farm has also bought a large barn for vegetable storage. To finance its share of the purchase, the farm undertook basic engineering works such as digging ditches for basements and cables, and paving gravel paths.

Hamburg University's botanical institute traditionally had its plant breeding facilities on the farm. Shortly after the farm had turned to organic cultivation, the institute planned to release genetically engineered potato varieties on neighbouring test fields. The farmer lobbied against these plans and was supported by many allies including the city administration. The farmer and his supporters won the battle and the botanical institute has gradually withdrawn from its activities at Wulfsdorf. The university facilities came up for sale in the late 2000s, and another group of settlers, mainly young families, organised a second housing project, with a nice dome-shaped seminar and event building, called «Wild Roses», which is open for newcomers.



A third housing project "Bornseck" was developed slightly further away, but still with close connections to the farm. Twenty-four apartments and a Waldorf-kindergarten were constructed there as a multi-generational living project.

The impact of Gut Wulfsdorf, with its involvement in housing activities, is acknowledged by the city administration. The farm has been an important catalyst in bringing vitality to the area in terms of living quality. Although the housing projects are outside the city limits, they influence the adjacent housing quarters within the city boundaries. It is likely that the area would have been developed for housing regardless of the farm's intervention. However, the multi-generational and social approach to living, the combination of living and work spaces, and the eco-housing standards with low CO<sub>2</sub>, waste and traffic emissions, all create public benefits to the surrounding communities.

The inhabitants of the housing projects are not formally connected to the farm, and beyond the farmer being a member of one of the owner associations, the farm is not formally linked to the projects. But the neighbourhood is a vital source of support to the farm, not only through purchasing goods in the farm store, but also by engaging in voluntary activities. An association has been formed to organise cultural events on the farm. Three to five events are organised every month during the summer. Most of these are run by external people who come to the farm to present their knowledge about cooking, nutrition, ecology or fairy tales.

The wealth of personal relationships stabilizes the farm and enables it to respond effectively to customers' preferences. It may even be a valuable resource for direct forms of financial participation in the farm development, a vision which the farmer would like to develop in the future.

# Access to land for Community Connected Agriculture in Europe Project 2010-1

This case study is part of a broader project on Access to land for Community Connected Agriculture in Europe run by a group of European civil society organisations.

## Project Presentation

Our European project on Access to Land for Community Connected Agriculture focused on experiences of Community Connected Farming where there have been particular issues related to gaining and maintaining access to land.

We define Community Connected Agriculture as:

- sustainable, i.e. with no chemical inputs and minimal use of external and non-renewable resources, such as organic farming or extensive grazing;
- civic, i.e. concerned with the broader social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of caring for the land and producing food and/ or engaging directly with their community;
- local, i.e. open onto their local environment and nurturing the local social and economic fabric through direct marketing, on-farm transformation, job creation, social activities, consumers' participation, etc.

## The objectives of the project were:

- To document such experiences, through seven case studies and a mapping exercise of about 100 community-connected farms and related projects throughout northern, southern and central Europe;
- To disseminate information about and analyses of these experiences and the difficulties that they have faced, to feed into the broader public debate about the future of European agriculture and rural areas.

Local, civic agriculture is developing in Europe, and is gaining broader support from consumers, citizens, civic organisations and local authorities. Such farms often have many benefits: they provide local and quality food to consumers; they contribute to the protection of the environment and the reduction of farming's carbon footprint; they often create more jobs, per hectare, than more conventional farms; they contribute to the maintenance of green belts

around cities; and they are often multifunctional and pluriactive farms, which reinforces their economic sustainability and the vitality and viability of rural areas.

At the same time, one key obstacle to the preservation and development of local, civic agriculture is that many such farms are unable to compete successfully for access to sufficient land that is in good condition. Such civic farmers often struggle to find agricultural land that is available to them at affordable price and on secure terms. A question at the core of our project therefore was to explore these difficulties and, where possible, to identify innovative solutions.

## Project Partners

The project was coordinated by Sjoerd Wartena and Véronique Rioufol - Terre de liens (France) and Titus Bahner - Forum Synergies (Europe). Neil Ravenscroft - University of Brighton and Tablehurst and Plaw Hatch Community Farms (UK), Jan Douwe van der Ploeg - Wageningen University (Netherlands), Audrius Jokubauskas - Viva sol (Lithuania), Peter Volz - Regionalwert AG/ Die Agronauten (Germany), and Marta Fraticelli - aGter (France/ international) were all active partners of the project.

## Funders

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## Contact:

We welcome information and contact regarding similar European initiatives and studies. The results of our work, and on-going activities, are available (from March 2012) on the website of:

### Terre de liens:

<http://www.terredeliens.org>

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