

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

**SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM:
AUSTRIA**

**Apple hens - Laying Hens in Bio-
dynamic Orchards**

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Due to the high specialization, permanent crops are rarely combined with animal husbandry and the organic approach of mixed and circular farming was displaced. The vegetation underneath the fruit trees is normally not used and offers an excellent source of food for e.g. so called Apple Hens. For interested farmers an Apple Hen Handbook is available in German and English.

Following experiences and interim practice results can be provided for interested farmers:

- Animals have needs different from those of permanent crops - be aware to become a livestock AND fruit farmer.
- Take care in advance to provide an animal-friendly stable - examples for small mobile stables can be read up in the Apple Hen Handbook.
- Clarify who is responsible for the Apple Hens and the daily work.
- Use spent laying hens for a second production cycle, their needs are easily met in a low-intensity husbandry system. Organic spent hens are often available locally at low cost.
- Identify marketing channels (also for eggs that do not meet external quality standards, e.g., too thin shell) in time to establish a herd size in coordination with the sales volume (including own use).
- Potential application of copper in low dosages in the orchards do not affect egg quality.
- Be aware of potential obstacles from marketing guidelines for specific marketing channels which regulate animal husbandry within permanent crops (due to the direct application of manure by the animals). Experience shows that small scale flocks (up to 350 hens) are not considered as commercial livestock husbandry and are accepted.



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MIXED'
NETWORK FROM AUSTRIA**





ABOUT THE PROJECT

MIXED (Multi-actor and transdisciplinary development of efficient and resilient MIXED farming and agroforestry systems), an EU-project, is supporting the development of European Mixed Farming and Agroforestry Systems (MiFAS) that are more efficient and resilient to climate changes.

ABOUT MIXED IN AUSTRIA

In Austria MIXED is implemented by BOKU (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna) and based on a still ongoing FiBL-project with Demeter farmers of the organic fruit producer platform 'Von Herzen Biobauern', which will be expanded by including additional farms.

7M€
BUDGET

19
PARTNERS

10
COUNTRIES

Although in Austria small-scale agriculture is clearly dominating, the specialization of farms continues to progress. Fewer and fewer farms practice both animal husbandry and arable, vegetable and fruit farming. This leads to a concentration of the different branches in some regions with decreasing resilience of the farms.



MIXED partners from Austria:



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