

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

## SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM: GERMANY

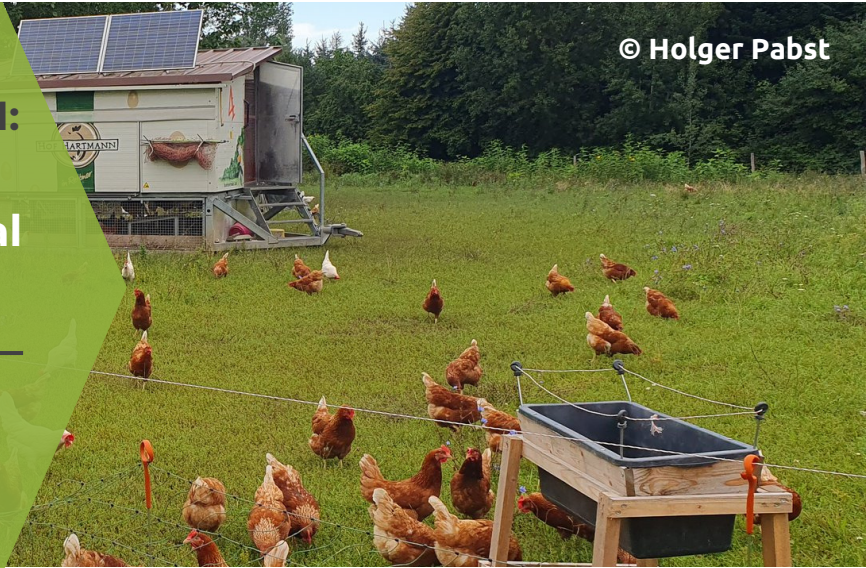
### Chicken forest - semi-natural diversity in agroforestry

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The idea of the chicken forests - implemented by Hof Hartmann in Rettmer - demonstrates the combination of agroforestry and chicken farming: mobile chicken coops offer outdoor access for grazing and feeding, but also a safe place during the night and for laying eggs.

Together with grassland, the agroforestry strips of poplars, willows and also berry bushes planted in 2016 provide a species-appropriate habitat for the chickens. The journey was a continuous learning process, leading to the addition of shade trees, inland fences, and the understanding that the chickens prefer grass to a certain length. In its current form, the chicken forest offers the animals plenty of space and protection from birds, wind, and sun. The trees improve the soil and microclimate, and the various shrubs and berries are a welcome change on the chickens' menu. Studies conducted as part of a citizen science approach by the agroforest-monitoring team of the University of Münster also show positive effects on biodiversity, from honey bees and wild bees to ground beetles, robins, and other birds as well as bats. Still, animal welfare is the primary focus of the chicken forest (cattle and alpacas also graze in the agroforestry system). The interaction of farmer, citizen scientists, agroforestry and chickens gradually creates a "symbiosis of man and nature".

As part of the MIXED project, a demo field day took place in cooperation with Hof Hartmann and the agroforst-monitoring team. The entire conception, elaboration, and implementation as well as any rights lie with Hof Hartmann and agroforst-monitoring.

<https://www.hof-hartmann-rettmer.de> or <https://agroforst-monitoring.de/>



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





## 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.

**7M€**  
BUDGET

**19**  
PARTNERS

**10**  
COUNTRIES

## ABOUT MIXED IN GERMANY

In Germany, MIXED is collaboratively implemented by the Institute for Rural Development Research and the Swabian Donaumoos Association. The project is working with two groups of farmers practicing MiFAS (Mixed Farming and Agroforestry Systems) in different ways.

In Germany, MIXED partner IfLS cooperates since April 2022 with the team of agroforst-monitoring, a project by students of landscape ecology at the University of Münster, Germany. The project is all about active participation of volunteer citizens and associations in the research of agroforestry systems; and as such, a comprehensive and user-friendly catalogue of methods enables citizen scientists to capture eight dimensions of agroforestry systems through simple experiments. For the MIXED project, this citizen science approach offers the possibility of direct dialogue with different stakeholders of mixed land use systems.



The demo day at Hof Hartmann attracted numerous visitors and encouraged intensive discussions (© Holger Pabst)

## MIXED partners from Germany:

