



Agri-Trans - Transparency in vocational education and training

Outline of the proposals to improve the training, working, and living conditions in pig breeding

During the two-year project Agri-Trans, the partners involved dealt with the situation in vocational education and training of pig farmers and developed the following proposals for the European dialogue highlighting transparency and comparability of qualifications. The discussion took place under the leadership of the Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt (IG BAU, Union for construction-agriculture-environment) with the support of Peco-Institute.

Pig husbandry in Europe is currently undergoing a period of considerable changes. Besides a process in which are fewer but bigger production sites, work procedures as well as employee know-how and abilities are also changing. This is why workers partly need more and broader qualifications.

Since employers lament the lack of a qualified workforce, workers are forced to acquire more and more qualifications.

On the one hand, this problem can be attributed to the bad image of pig husbandry. On the other hand, traditionally, workers have not been given responsible activities at the farms in the sector: there are small career opportunities and modest salaries. As a result, there is a high turnover in all countries. In response to this deplorable situation, we present the following demands to the European decision makers.

We want an initial and on-going continued training in animal husbandry (pig husbandry) so that trainees receive good working and living conditions. This means adequate wages and working hours to guarantee social integration in the social environment as well as an occupational image that does not lead to social exclusion. All degrees and *qualifications awarded by the EU member countries must be comparable.*

This means:

- Everybody has to have the right and the possibility to attend a qualified vocational education and training. Training must be free and decently paid.
- Initial training has to fulfill broad basic qualifications (acquired in two years) and with the possibility to specialize in the occupation (acquired in one year). Here, theoretical and

practical training must be closely entwined. The quality of training facilities (schools, farms, companies, etc.) has to be regulated and maintained.

- Vocational education and training has to ensure the sustainability of qualifications and the maintenance of workforce. Besides necessary technical (f.ex. feeding, animal welfare, reproduction etc.) personal competences (i.e. team work, independence, reflexivity etc.) have to be considered in the training, too. Furthermore, social (i.e. health and safety issues, collective agreements, labor codes etc.) and environmental (i.e. nature conservation, waste disposal, purchasing etc.) aspects have to play a considerably role besides economic contents to do justice to a sustainable vocational education and training.
- The entire vocational training system has to be embedded in the concept of “lifelong learning”. Every employee has a right to develop his/her knowledge and capabilities so they can adapt to the developments in the labor market. Therefore, the educational system has to recognize informally acquired knowledge and capabilities.
- The employer has to support and ensure qualified vocational education and training. One possibility could be the regular payment of a fee into a training/qualification fund that would finance in each sector and/or country.
- Flexibility in reaching objectives of the training programs has to be reached (i.e. part-time, resuming after a break etc.).
- All social groups must have access to a vocational training program. This especially addresses equal treatment of sexes.
- Trainees as well as employees must receive a decent pay which allows them to live a decent life and to make financial retirement arrangement. The principal “same pay for same work“ should be applied here, ignoring sex, nationality etc.
- Training program and content have to be geared to the social and technological developments of the respective occupations. Social partners have to participate and decide equally on the contents. All training facilities including business (based on a certain number of employees) shall develop long-term business plans for the development of their company, the development of the sector and the development of the necessary qualifications for future employees. Vocational training programs must adapt to market trends and prepare for the future. If such long-term plans are not implemented sanctions have to follow (i.e. no layoffs without a broad justification beyond existing regulation).
- It has to be possible to put acquired qualifications into practice in a typical work routine.

We want a legal framework which ensures that *95% of the population has a formal qualification*. Unqualified employees have to be qualified. For this, unskilled workers must have the opportunity and support to gain experience.

We want *the implication and participation of social partners* in all decision making processes in the vocational training systems (initial and continued training). This will ensure the fulfillment and satisfaction of employees’ justifiable needs.

We want the implication of employees the decision making processes because of their experience and knowledge. In addition, they have to receive appropriate qualifications so that they can contribute in a good manner to internal decisions.

We want harmonized and binding EU-wide social and environmental standards for working processes and they have to be part of the basic vocational education and training. The harmonization of social standards must be labored European-wide. Here, the best existing standards have to be used as orientation benchmark. An improvement by collective agreements is possible at any time. The following aspects should be paid attention at:

- Working time;
 - The work day has to be shaped so that, first of all, it is family-friendly. Second, work time has to be linked to payment in a way that allows a good life for a family.
- Occupational health and safety measures;
 - Strict hygiene and health standards have to be introduced at the work place. The monitoring of these standards has to be ensured. In case of non compliance, sanctions must follow (until the closure of the enterprise).
 - Working conditions have to be developed in such a way that female workers can easily adapt to them.
- Holiday;
 - Every employee in the pig sector can claim a sufficient number of days of holidays per year.
 - Besides regular yearly holiday arrangements, employees who have worked in the agricultural sector for ten years have to be granted an additional health holiday of a longer period, since their jobs continue to be physically challenging despite technical innovations.
- Continuing training and retraining;
 - Every employee has the right to continued training during his career.
- Bonuses;
 - In exchange for particular circumstances or strains, bonuses (based on wage) have to be paid. Nevertheless, improvements and the reduction of difficult circumstances or strains continue to have priority over the pay of bonuses.

In addition to a good payment for employees, we want that employees receive a percentage of the company's profits. This participation should depend on the revenue of the enterprise and can be either financial or some other kind of payment (i.e. funding of social facilities, reductions of the number of products developed in the house, holiday resorts and vacation time).

The implementation of these demands and measures will automatically contribute to the improvement of the occupational image of all agricultural occupations, particular the pig worker. Consequently, qualified employees can be attracted to pig husbandry and will remain in the business. All current and future employees and employees have to be empowered to adapt to and to shape the current restructuring of agriculture. Moreover, workers have to be allowed to develop personally as well as vocationally in a self-determined way by means of their qualifications.

We especially asked legislators as well as social partners to create the respective conditions and institutional procedures necessary to implement our demands.

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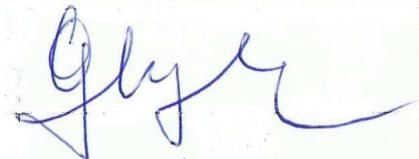
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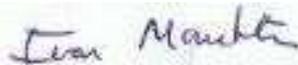
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