

Alfred Grand (AG) stopped ploughing 25 years ago, and converted his farm (80ha arable land, 10ha grassland) to organic cultivation in 2006. Nutrient management is done only by crop rotation without any fertiliser (even no compost). In 2010 AG co-founded VERMIGRAND Naturprodukte GmbH. The company produces organic fertilisers and peat-free organic soils. The research on his farm focuses on composting using earthworms, soil-health and agroforestry.



Objectives

- research and development
- collaboration with research partners
- knowledge transfer of scientific results
- testing and modifying of new techniques

Motivation

- presenting innovative and alternative approaches and methods for agriculture

Topic selection

- in cooperation with research partners, universities, the agricultural chamber of Lower Austria and BioAustria (Austria's umbrella association for organic farming)
- since being a research and demonstration farm key topics are determined by the host farmer

Evaluation peer-to-peer learning environment (field day, 19.07.2018)

- small group of 8 participants
- multi-sensorial experiences (smelling and feeling compost, viewing flower strips)
- exchange of knowledge within the whole group, sufficient time for questions
- all participants would recommend the event to others

Audience & participation

- scientists, farmers, citizens, pupils, journalists, local television channel
- recruitment from local work groups of BioAustria and the host farmer's personal network
- free-of-charge participation

Demonstration set-up

- oral presentation and topic overview by the host farmer in the beginning
- field visits by car
- 2 demonstrators (1 researcher, the host farmer)
- informal relationship between demonstrators and participants
- mostly top down approach
- no dissemination material
- no feedback surveys by the participants after the event

- first organic no-till trials with the Roller-Crimper method in 2016 → cooperation with the Rodale Institute (Pennsylvania, USA)
- fostering of research cooperation on EU- and international level
- integration of values about sustainable agriculture
- AG is very keen on a strong relationship between research and practice



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