



The EFCF is a member of the
European Environmental Bureau

European Federation of City Farms

Working together for a Sustainable Future



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EFCF Conference 2007: welcome in Belgium!



The Fédération Belge Francophone des Fermes d'Animation (FBFFA - www.fermedanimation.be), EFCF member since 1990, organized the EFCF conference 1993 in collaboration with the French Federation (GiFae), and for this reason has been contacted in September 2005 to organize the 2007 EFCF conference.

The FBFFA absolutely needed a partner to organize this conference, as it does not have a paid worker yet. It seemed then logical to propose this nice collaboration project to the platform Fermécole, to which the FBFFA has given a part of its work since 2003. 'Fermécole' (www.fermecole.be), contraction of the words Ferme (farm) and Ecole (school), is a project subsidized by Belgium's French-speaking Community. It's a partnership project between the FBFFA and Accueil Champêtre en Wallonie (ACW - www.accueil-champetre.be), a non-profit-making association which brings together Pedagogic farms. Pedagogic farms are agricultural enterprises, which welcome children during school hours. Created more than 20 years ago and grouped firstly in "Fermes Découverte" and "Fermes Buissonnières", they are part of ACW since 2001.

These 48 farms have now spread out their educational work to the four corners of Wallonia. Although they are different in their history and way of functioning, the educational farms from these two associations share the same objectives: they introduce children to the links between Man and Nature, via agriculture and its environment, give them the opportunity to get in touch with the living world, and teach them the active role they can play inside this system. As a result, in autumn 2005, the FBFFA suggested to ACW, its partner in Fermécole, to also become its partner in the organization of the EFCF conference 2007. ACW management board agreed and wished to become member of the EFCF. In April 2006 the representatives of EFCF member federations admitted ACW as an associate member.

For the 2007 conference our objective will be one of the Fermécole projects: show how educational farms contribute to develop children's skills. We also would like to exchange ideas with members of other city farms on this subject and invite educational profes-

sionals (teachers...), who could give us an interesting perspective. In answer to a request of the EFCF, we will propose on the one hand to illustrate our objective through artistic and expression activities. On the other hand, as Wallonia is a land rich in landscapes and regional products, we also would like to show or to let participants take part in activities promoting healthy food. The key words food, agriculture and health have already resulted in a European project on nutritional education on city farms through the EFCF network (published in 1999). The very same key words are the basis of the Fermécole project. We hope that this will be an occasion for a maximum of members of educational (city) farms, to participate together in a social project for the benefit of the children.

2006 EFCF Information Booklet



The new European Federation of City Farms (EFCF) information booklet ('Blue Booklet') is ready and will be available on www.cityfarms.org

EFCF Animal Welfare policy



City farms play a crucial role in educating children and adults about food, farming and good animal welfare practices. Animal welfare issues are more in the public eye than ever before and we have a responsibility to ensure that our advice to city farms relating to animal

welfare policies and practices is the best available. City farms recognise that animals that are farmed for human benefit are sentient beings and that we must respect and implement the basic five freedoms in their breeding, rearing, keeping and using:

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst: access to fresh water and a diet for full health and vigour**
2. **Freedom from discomfort: an appropriate environment with shelter and comfortable rest area**
3. **Freedom from pain, injury and disease: prevention or rapid treatment**
4. **Freedom to express natural behaviour: adequate space and facilities, company of the animal's own kind;**
5. **Freedom from fear and distress: care, conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.**

Additions to include: the need to maintain direct contact with farm animals by children and adults, advice on responsible breeding programmes, advice on dealing with the abandonment of animals at city farms and information on the care of pets in education programmes. More information on the work about the EFCF Animal Welfare Policy in the next newsletter

Animal Welfare organisations

The EFCF has made a website link to the websites of three international Animal Welfare organisations: the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). They are also very active in the field of education and public awareness. The EFCF has contacted them to express interest in their work and to explain city farm work. Although the EFCF is not as big as these organisations there are quite a few areas where our work overlaps and the EFCF sees opportunities to contribute to each others work and ideas.



The WSPA is the world's largest network for animal welfare. It brings together over 650 member societies in over more than 143 countries. The animal welfare programmes include a mix of direct fieldwork, campaigning, education, training and member society development. More information: www.wspa-international.org



The CIWF focuses on animals farmed for food rather than animals generally and works throughout the European Union and worldwide to end cruel

factory farming practices. The organisation wants to promote that farming should be humane and sustainable and recognises that animal welfare, human health, environmental protection and sustainability are interconnected. More information: www.ciwf.org.uk



The IFAW works to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals throughout the world by reducing commercial exploitation of animals, protecting wildlife habitats and assisting animals in distress. The organisation seeks to motivate the public to prevent cruelty to animals and to promote animal welfare and conservation policies that advance the well-being of both animals and people. The IFAW works in 15 offices in more than 50 countries around the world. More information: www.ifaw.org

Exchanges

A group of German students from Stuttgart went on a study visit to city farm Hagerhof in the Netherlands for four days in the end of April. They experienced working in the social and cultural settings of this city farm.

A group of Italian Farmers and Council operators from the Province of Bergamot is planning a five day study tour to London and Bristol city farms end of November 2006.

Green menus in Dutch restaurants

The Dutch Animal Protection of Animals Society, in collaboration with the National Catering Industry and organic farmers' associations, has initiated a 'green menu' in a number of restaurants in the Netherlands. In addition to the 'regular' menu, organic and vegetarian meals will be served during a trial period of two months.

The kick-off was a press lunch in one of the 13 participating Maastricht restaurants on 1 August. Alderman Jacobs called the project a highly commendable initiative and emphasized that care for animals goes further than taking care of your own pets. It also involves choosing meat that is produced in humane conditions. Moreover, he said, organic agriculture has less impact on our environment.

Cycle route around London's city farms

A 30-mile cycle route around eight of London's 17 city farms has been established by the British Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens. Cyclists can choose to pedal between two or more city farms, or they can spin their trip out further by completing the whole loop.

A grant made available through the Cycle London Promotional Partnership (CLPP), has enabled the federation to create a web-based resource for the cycle path, including an interactive map and directions for each section, plus details of all city farms en-route.

Creepy Crawlies in film-festival hit: Microcosmos

The film follows one day's cycle of life among ants, spiders, grasshoppers, caterpillars, dragonflies and beetles. It shows birth, transformation, food, combat, death, even sex. It shows breathtaking views of the creatures and a wide view of the countryside where the insects are going about their busy lives.



Seventy minutes of pure poetry, almost without words. For instance, the encounter between two amorous snails is beautifully set to opera music.

The film took 15 years to research, two years to design specialized cameras and lighting equipment and three years to shoot. The result is educational in that it shows us something we have never seen before. The film does not name the creatures or explain what they are doing. It leaves the teaching to its stars. If you organize a creepy crawlies activity, it is a great contribution to the understanding of a fascinating 'underworld'.



Two amorous snails

A Garden of Remembrance at a city farm



"In our heart we always remember you"

The text above is the translation of the text, engraved on the monument in the Garden of Remembrance at Oan Köbbes city farm; a farm in the Maasveld institution for people with learning difficulties (www.city-farms.org/papers.html). The farm is also a much-visited city farm for the neighbourhood.

The farm is situated at a spot along an old branch of the river Meuse, where a man called Jacob used to run a small pub. Hence the name of the farm: "At Jacob's", "Oan Köbbes" in the South Dutch dialect. Now a place where people with learning difficulties live and work. They work with the rhythm of the seasons; sowing in spring, harvesting in summer, pruning trees in autumn, so that after winter the new growth of spring comes again, looking after the farm animals throughout the year - a fulfilling life of working outdoors.

Many of the residents have a catholic background and therefore being busy also means praying; praying for yourself and for those you love. To be able to do so, a so-called roadside shrine was erected at the farm in the eighties of last century and soon this became a very popular place among the residents of Maasveld. So popular that a number of them expressed the wish to be buried there. In the nineties this wish was granted, although it was not going to be a cemetery but a garden of remembrance, where ashes can be scattered. The City of Maastricht was involved in the realisation of this project, because a number of regulations had to be observed. The Client Board of Maasveld keeps an eye on the maintenance and development of the garden.

Regularly the residents of Maasveld and their relatives come and pray for those whose remembrance they carry in their heart. Maasveld is proud that not only the rhythm of the seasons matters at the farm, but also the rhythm of life.

Interesting websites

<http://earth.google.com>



Stadtteifarm Bremen-Huchting e.V., Germany
www.stadtteifarm.de

Download the free programme from Google Earth, put in your address or find your farm manually and download or print an areal photograph of your farm. The pictures are guaranteed not older than three years.

www.natuurvoorgezondheid.info

Nature for health



This website (in Dutch and in English) gives an overview of organizations and activities that focus on the improvement of health by means of nature / natural elements. The website includes chapters on research, policy and (best) practices. Other chapters deal with subjects regarding the city and countryside or target groups like children and the elderly. Many of the interesting links on the website are also in the English language.

Good Practice Database

Two new examples will be added to the Good Practice Database on the EFCF website (www.cityfarms.org): 'Art at the city farm' and 'A mobile city farm'.

If you know about a special project or if you have developed a successful method yourself, please contact us: pwolters@planet.nl

A Data Base of Good Practice Tried, tested and current projects on City Farms



Farm workers with learning difficulties teach schoolchildren



Orange bikes - young people learning about sustainable entrepreneurship



Oriental Eco Garden



Children acting locally, learning to think globally



A mobile City Farm



Teamwork in a goat club



Street litter, great fun for children, goats and donkeys



A Biotifull City Farm

New papers going on the EFCF website

1. Calculating the full costs of a city farm project, activity or service.
2. Peer Review Social Auditing - Evaluating the social, ethical and environmental impacts of city farms.
3. Ideas to help prepare feasibility study for introducing renewable energy and cutting energy costs and the CO2 impact on the world.
4. Rain water harvesting and re-use on a city farm.

Clever ideas

If you come across a clever idea or if you had a brilliant idea yourself, take a photograph and e-mail it to Hans Jörg Lange (bdja@bdja.org) or to Pauline Wolters (pwolters@planet.nl). Location and two or three lines of explanation will do.



Piggy bank for donations, made of an old milk can. City farm De Balijhoeve in The Netherlands.



What's to know about the inside of a cow? Lift the flap and find out. Freightliners Farm in London.

The hot summer has brought on a lot of flies. This spool of a few hundred meters of environmentally friendly sticky tape does the trick and does not bother other animals like bats or swallows. These fly traps are available at agricultural retailers.



Fly traps at Het Neerhof City Farm near Brussels



Code of Good Practice for Farm Animal Breeding



The European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB) is an independent European forum of farm animal reproduction and selection organisations in cattle and other ruminants, pigs, poultry and aquaculture. European farm animal breeders have recently agreed a Code of Good Practice. This code has been developed in a joint EU funded project with farm animal breeders and professional input on communication, certification and ethics. The code breaks up into general conditions, sustainability and technology. One of the key aims of the Code is: 'to create greater transparency in the relationship between the European breeding and reproduction sector and the public. Currently, 18 breeding organisations (in a range of farm animals, different sizes, different regions in Europe) are preparing for adoption of certification of Code-EFABAR. Umbrella organisations like Rare Breeds organisations can participate on behalf of all their member organisations.

More information:

www.fffab.org (European Forum of Animal Breeders)

www.sefabar.org (Sustainable European Farm Animal Breeding and Reproduction)

www.code-efabar.org

Nettle (re-)search

Stinging nettles are not the most popular plants among visitors on a city farm. The Latin name *Urtica dioica* comes from 'uro', which means 'I burn'. 'Dioica' refers to 'two houses' (the female and the male plant). Nettles are covered with tiny, nearly invisible stinging hairs containing formic acid that causes an intense, stinging pain, followed by redness and skin irritation. If you move your bare hand up the plant under the leaves, you don't get stung, because then the hairs will not break easily. Farm animals will not eat nettles, unless they have been mown.



People have been using nettles for food, medicine, fibre and dyes (green from the leaves and yellow from the roots) since the Bronze Age.

Nettles and biodiversity

Nettles usually appear in the same places year after year, in rich soil, disturbed habitats, moist woodlands, along rivers and along partially shaded trails. Several species of butterfly, moths and insects are attracted to nettles to feed or to attach their eggs to. The stinging hairs of the nettle are a defence against grazing animals.



If you have fields with too many nettles, you need to mow them and take all the nettles, hay etc. away. This helps to reduce the nitrogen on which the nettles thrive, giving more opportunity for other wild flowers and plants to grow in future years.

Mow the fields during July to allow the wild plants to have seeded for the following year.

Nettles as fertilizer or pesticide

Nettles thrive on nitrogen. If you mow them, you can add them to your compost heap to add nitrogen. Nettle liquid feed is used for growing other plants. As a spray it also works against plant louse. Put nettles into a barrel or large container and add cold water. 1 kg of nettles / 10 litres of cold water. Leave for 4 to 5 days and drain and collect the liquid. It is used as a fertilizer to strengthen the leaves of plants. For this purpose the liquid feed you have made needs to be diluted by 10 parts of water to one part of liquid feed.

Nettles as medicine

Fresh nettle leaves are used to treat aches and pains, like gout and arthritis. Once dried, the leaves are a natural anti-histamine and also have anti-asthmatic properties.

Nettles for cloth

Cheese cloth made from nettles is used to separate the curd from the whey and also to wrap the cheese. The nettle cloth was said to have a natural anti-bacterial effect.



Consuming nettles



More opportunity for other wild flowers and plants to grow in future years

Nettles are very healthy. The nettle is one of the most important plants that can help clean your system in the springtime, using the young nettle leaves. Nettles which are cooked lose their sting. Nettle tea and infusion. Pluck and wash the young leaves, Add boiling water. Allow to infuse for about 5 minutes and drink. Nettle soup, used as soup or like a spinach; (lots of iron, magnesium, vitamin A and some protein): Pluck the young leaves and wash them (wear gloves or stir with a wooden spoon). Chop leaves finely. Slow cook with some cooking oil. If the taste is too strong, mix it with mashed potato. Nettle jam. 1 kg nettles, 1 kg sugar, half a glass of water, half a glass of vinegar. Mix together and marinate for 24 hours. Bring to boil, reducing it to a thicker substance. Cool and place in jam jars.

More information:
www.nettles.org.uk
where you can also find information about the "Nice to nettle week"