



EUROPEAN
FEDERATION
OF CITY FARMS

Newsletter

1. 2021

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Contents

- EFCF events in 2021
- The Magic Hill School Farm in the Czech Republic
- School farms in the UK
- Gardeniser Hub
- Voice of the Youth / Youth Exchange
- The animals on Dublin city farm
- Spreading better animal welfare
- Traditional breeds on Kampen City Farm, Oslo
- The Hedgehog Colouring Book

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The EFCF is a member of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

EFCF events in 2021

The virtual AGM (legal part) will be held on Saturday 10 April 2021 and the General Meeting will take place during the EFCF conference in September 2021 in Birmingham. The Rete Educaterra has informed the EFCF that the Youth Exchange 2021 in July will be postponed till 2022, due to the Covid19 restrictions. Keep an eye on <https://cityfarms.org/events> for any changes.

The Magic Hill School Farm in the Czech Republic

by Markéta Strouhalová, school-farm co-ordinator

Bringing children out of classrooms, awakening their interest in nature and helping them to understand the symbiosis of the world - that and more is our goal. We want to teach children respect for nature and its products, but also support work habits, manual skills, patience and, last but not least, respect for human work.



Magic Hill

The Magic Hill Elementary School has been running a small farm since spring 2019. In the nearby municipality of Otice, on a plot of land of approx. 2 ha, we have built a sheltered outdoor class, crop beds, facilities for teaching in natural surroundings and dwellings and pastures for the small domestic animals, which we breed at the farm. From early spring till late autumn, the farm is open not only to our students, but to the other schools as well and to all who share the same goal with us. After two hard-working seasons, we are proud to announce that the farm has been certified as the Demonstration Permaculture Project and you can find us on the Permaculture Projects map.



The school farm gives the teachers and children the opportunity to bring real experience to the school by showing how a garden is started, how to cultivate crops from seeds through to harvest, what the traditional domestic animals are and how to take care of them, what symbiosis there is in nature and, last but not least, by leading children towards practical skills which they gain whilst maintaining the garden and whilst caring for plants and animals.



Besides these benefits, the farm also offers the opportunity to stay and learn outdoors. The pupils do not only learn the necessary skills in the spaces of the classroom whilst sitting in benches and listening to the teacher explaining. We would thereby deny them the natural desire to know using all the senses, we would limit the already minimal stay outside which is characteristic of today's generation of children.

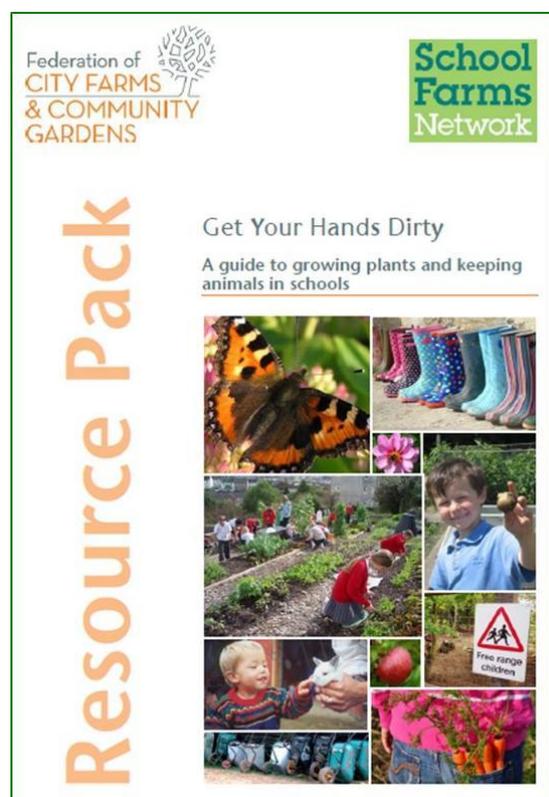
It has been proved that teaching outdoors has positive effects on the general attention of the pupils. Any subject, field and skill can be taught outside. We can count, measure, compare, seek, analyze, read, write, draw, produce and much more. You can truly learn anything outside! strouhalova@magic-hill.cz

<http://www.magic-hill.cz/en/school-farm/>

Farming and horticulture in schools in the UK: a brief historical perspective

by Ian Egginton-Metters, Social Farms & Gardens

In 1912 about 2,500+ schools had gardens. The 20s saw the emergence of Rural Studies, and in the 40s there was a growth of gardening in schools due to the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. After the war, rural subjects were even incorporated into some emergency teacher training. In the 60's the National Association of Rural Studies was founded. By the 1970's Rural Science (rather than Rural Studies) emerges only to be challenged by the rise of the environmental movement, and the Rural Science Association changes its name to the National Association for Environmental Education.



Growing Schools in the early days provided support to develop the network and subsidized some of the costs of network meetings. It also paid for the development of the resource 'Get your hands dirty' <https://cityfarms.org/guidances/view/77> which was initially aimed at supporting new school farm teachers and technicians. However, we realized that many teachers need some affirmation of what they are currently doing, and some introduction to what might be involved in progression to more complicated and resource intensive horticulture and rearing of livestock, so the resource is divided into 7 sections

rising in complexity of knowledge and skills, buildings and funding. There is also a bibliography and other support materials.



Approximately two thirds of UK schools now have some form of gardens tended by teachers and pupils, most growing some food plants. From a position of no interest for many years and a gradual decline in the number of school farms (down to 66 in 2006), there are now nearly 100 schools and Pupil Referral Units wanting to start a new school farm, with an increasing interest in both urban and primary schools. Social Farms & Gardens created the School Farms Network with experienced practitioners to develop a framework for mutual support and to raise the status and understanding of the benefits that school farms bring to education. www.farmgarden.org.uk/school-farms-network



Gardeniser Hub



by Chris Blythe, Social Farms & Gardens

Gardeniser Hub will create opportunities for the exchange of good practices, a chance to share resources and information and create new training opportunities for Gardenisers and Gardeniser Trainers. The training will use the ECVET system and builds on the Gardeniser Pro project by creating and delivering training to the potential trainers of Gardeniser Pro as well as for the public sector and schools. The project started in January 2021 and finish in June 2023.

Gardeniser Hub builds on the work done in EU GO and Gardeniser Pro which created a recognised training program for people working on community/urban gardens and farms. The aim of Gardeniser Hub is to create and test an innovative European training programme promoting the development of a new professional role –the Gardeniser Trainer and the Gardeniser within schools and public sector. It will strengthen knowledge, skills and competencies of the people undertaking the training, testing the evaluation of their learning achievements through the ECVET system, with the objective of paving the way for their recognition in the educational and professional training systems, both at a regional and national level and enhancing their learning .This will lead to a larger pool of Gardeniser trainers who will upskill and develop their competencies and deliver Gardeniser training.

The project objectives are to:

- develop skilled people to become trainers of Gardeniser to increase the pool of trainers able to deliver this course;
- create and deliver new formats of training to support public sector and school sectors who want to work with or create urban/community gardens and farms in their areas or sites;
- use the Gardeniser website to connect trainers in Europe, Gardenisers from the public and school sectors and to allow people to find Gardeniser Hub training courses which will
- extend the reach of the project. Participants will all be over 18.

Project Management will be undertaken by Social Farms & Gardens. The management of evaluation and dissemination will be done by all the partners who will be responsible for delivering these activities but there will be coordinators for the following:

- Management and coordination
- Dissemination- REPLAY Network with support from EFCF
- Evaluation- Pistes Solidaire with support from REPLAY Network

Responsibilities will be shared among the partners and tasks assigned will be consistent with their specific competencies and with the added value that each partner can bring. Gardeniser Hub program will, by the end, establish a professional qualification for the trainers of this course and also engage with and support public and school sector employees.

<https://gardeniser.eu/en>

Voice of the Youth – Youth Exchange

by Koen Deldaele and Florian Fiedler-Streb

For several years already, EFCF member farms have been organising youth exchange summer camps. Member farms from several countries are already involved, farms from Belgium, Germany, Norway, Denmark and Italy. Of course, other farms are welcome to join! The camp usually takes place in the summer holiday in July and last 7 days including travelling.

During this camps all the participants, 13 - 25 years old, give workshops to each other so everyone can learn from everyone. They also join in a cooking contest with typical meals from each region. Visits to fun places or cities in the area of the farm are on the menu. Of course feeding and caring for animals and helping the host farm in doing their job is scheduled as well. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, so there is also wild group games and the annual democratic disco party.





Preparatory meeting in Cologne / Germany

One of the outcomes of the youth exchange camps is the idea that young people want to take responsibility for the projects that are meant for them within the EFCF. To serve this purpose, the proposition to elect Youth Speakers during the youth exchange camp was put forth during a youth exchange preparatory meeting in Cologne some years ago (financed and organised by the Bund der Jugendfarmen und Aktivspielplätze in Germany). The first six Youth Speakers have been elected on the next youth exchange camp. You can find their pictures below, in order of appearance: Bauke Labeeuw (Belgium-Flanders), Simon Vandenberghe (B- Flanders), Christian Heimann (Germany), Margaux Gonissen & Selena Trovato (Belgium-Wallonia), Robin de Zilva (Germany)



The EFCF Youth Speakers represent the interests of the adolescents from city farms who want to be active in the federations work. The idea being that Youth Speakers are elected at the EFCF youth exchange for one year. Every participating group who attend the exchange can elect one or two of their youngsters to become Youth Speakers. Every group can elect their Youth Speakers in their own democratic and transparent way. The elected Youth Speakers stay in contact over digital media such as videoconferencing or

instant messaging, but also meet in person if possible and necessary. In the Youth Speakers group all decisions are made in a way of consensus. The Youth Speakers use the youth exchange to listen to the ideas and needs of the young people and try to implement them in future projects, the Youth Speakers also bring the needs and ideas of their local farm adolescents towards the EFCF. To support the ideas of these enthusiastic youngsters a working group Voice of the Youth emerged within the EFCF, consisting of several professional and volunteer members of farms involved in the Youth Exchange. The members of the working group are Ida Fiedler, Elise Herlin, Florian Fiedler-Streb, Ellen Mestdagh, Maria Hornsby, Andrew Philips, Alec de Zilva, Lea Menn, Steve Dedeurwaerder, Willem Labeeuw, Koen Deldaele.

The working group wants to promote the participation of adolescents within the EFCF and incorporate the issues of the youngsters into the EFCF community. The working group "Voice of the youth" is a collaboration between the Youth Speakers and the professional members of the working group. The professionals help the elected Youth Speakers as representatives of the youth of the EFCF to achieve their wish to speak out and take responsibility. Another goal of the working group is to maintain and ensure the future of the annual youth exchange and possible youth orientated projects in the future. The information about the EFCF youth exchange and the Youth Speakers will soon be available on the website.

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Our amazing animals

by Stephen Webster, on a work placement scheme on Dublin City Farm

Just look at the eye-catching picture on the pages of the Irish Times of some kids running alongside Moses who was in his pen, caught by the camera lens in mid-gallop...his mane blowing majestically in the wind. Were it not for the allotment wall in the background and the fencing in the foreground, I could have easily imagined him careening free across the prairies of North America – not a miniature Shetland Pony, but a majestic Wild Stallion...Master of all he surveyed! Little did I suspect at the time that this was also Moses' impression of himself!

It's probably no secret that Moses and Susie are closest to my heart...having been the two animals that I've spent the most time with. I loved Mosey the very first moment I saw him on my first morning of work at the farm, as he trotted cheekily out of the Allotments alongside Marion on the way to the cabin for a nice Carrot Breakfast. I could see the cheeky, mischievous

gleam in his eyes and knew straight away what he was “up to”. I was exactly the same myself, as a young lad – always getting into mischief...often out of boredom...and subsequently getting into trouble for it, and although our various shenanigans may have been very different (as I was not trapped in the body of a Miniature Shetland Pony), the end result was the same and I ‘got’ Moses straight away. We were ‘cut from the same cloth’ and it was to be the start of a beautiful friendship. I spent a lot of time with Moses in the early months, brushing...or rather ‘attempting to brush’ him – a task which, while tremendous fun...in a slightly ‘death-defying’ way...taught me to master the art of dodging attempted nips, and rotating smoothly in perfect synchronisation with Moses’ butt so that he couldn’t line me up for a good boot. Aaah! - The heady Good Ole’Days...just coming into Summer – I miss them so!

sort of plan a four-year-old child might concoct, but alas...instead of running to Marion in a panic shouting, “Marion! Poor Moses is starving – he’s trying to eat a rock! Should I get him some carrots from the kitchen? Maybe two bags full, as he’s so famished?”...which I’m sure was the outcome Mosy was hoping for...I merely laughed. Poor Mosy – You can’t kid a kidder!

I’m very close to donkey little Susie. One of my first (and favourite) jobs when I first started was to brush Susie, and spend time with her, and I got to know her very well. Susie is such a gentle, placid little soul, yet has that strong will and resilience that comes with age and experience. She is incredibly sensitive and empathetic and I experienced this first-hand back during the first Lockdown when I was in a good deal of pain with an abscessed tooth. One morning, I was sitting on the edge of one of the raised paddocks clutching my jaw



Children run alongside Moses, an energetic 17-year-old miniature pony, on the opening day of Dublin City Council’s first urban farm at St Anne’s Park, Raheny. Photograph: Alan Betson / The Irish Times, April 26, 2019

That being said, Moses has never actually kicked me. The closest he came was when he ‘flicked me’ with his feet one day. I have no doubt that he could have put some serious force behind it and hurt me if he had wanted to, but he didn’t. He just wanted to let me know that he was having a ‘bad hair day’ and was NOT in the mood for a brushing, so I backed off and left him, ‘windswept and interesting’. Moses makes me laugh all the time with his antics which can be hilarious. I was in his pen with him one day when he started ‘gnawing’ on a rock which was mostly embedded in the ground as if to say, “Look Steve! I’m soooooo hungry that I have to resort to chewing on rocks. This is a disgrace! What are you going to do about it Webster?” While doing so, his right eye was watching me closely in order to gauge my reaction. His plan was brilliant in its simplicity, and hilarious in its transparency – the

in pain and praying for the Neurofen capsule that I had taken to kick-in. The pain was intense and despair was starting to set in, as it had been going on for weeks and I had been unable to find a dentist that was practising. Susie was standing maybe 15 feet away, and as I groaned in pain and wondered just how much more of it I could take, she began very slowly inching towards me. She would take a little step or two, then pause, then another little step, and she kept coming closer until she was right in front of me, with her head over my right shoulder nestling gently into my back. I was both moved and comforted at the same time. There is no doubt in my mind that she could somehow ‘sense’ my distress and wanted to help in her own gentle, beautiful way and ever since that moment, Susie has had a very special place in my heart.

Now don't get me wrong – my little furry 'Angel of Mercy' has her own little faults and idiosyncrasies also. She is an expert at sneaking into stables where there may be unconsumed Goat-Mix, and can do so with complete stealth, like a little equine ninja...while managing, all the while, to look completely innocent and benign. She can be quite stubborn also, when she wants to be and once she has made up her mind to do something, she can be very determined...whether we approve of it or not! Pigs Willow and Ash are our resident 'Girls on Permanent Holiday'. They like nothing more than to eat their fill and then sleep it off, lazing luxuriously in their stable and raising hell whenever Moses (the annoying brother) bustles into their 'bedroom' and starts rooting around without so much as a nod of acknowledgement.

Sheep Freckles goes quietly about her innocent business, of exploring and nibbling on the odd tasty leaf or shoot, all the while calmly 'observing' the antics of the other animals with a bemused, almost beatific expression of contentment and goodwill on her little face. Goat Maggie-May is the 'Matron' of the sheep and goats as she patrols the stable area making sure that everything is in order – A place for everything, and Everything in its place! Then there are 'the Youngsters'...sheep Gwen, donkey Milly and goat Woody, our newest arrivals who have all settled in very nicely and made the farm their home – a place where they are loved and accepted and have the constant companionship of the other animals. I am only recently getting to know the Rabbits and Guinea-pigs which, of course, are just little bundles of cuteness on four legs, and about which an entire article could be written and this is a new adventure in itself.

<https://www.facebook.com/Stannescityfarm>

That is the advantage of city farms. But it is also important that people realize that animals bred for consumption are treated differently from those kept on a city farm, even though they all have the same feelings. People also need to realize that it is not necessary to consume meat and dairy. One can also choose to eat less meat and dairy or pay a higher price for meat and dairy coming from animals raised more humanely.



Monique Slee

I always wonder where it actually goes wrong. I often see how parents and grandparents with children interact with animals at the city farm. Very few adults explain to the older children that there is also a thing like intensive livestock farming. Very few explain that hot-dogs, hamburgers and ice-cream come from these animals. Sometimes consumers themselves do not even know, or do not want to know. Animal products in stores have become unrecognizable. Milk in happy packaging with no indication that calves are separated from their mothers immediately after birth so that we can drink the milk. Eggs do not grow in boxes in the supermarket but are laid by hens whose "brothers" are killed at birth.

Slowly, animal-welfare is fortunately becoming a more important topic. City farms can be important tools to get this message across. On a city farm, visitors can learn about the natural species-specific behavior and intelligence of the animals. They can learn about their essential behaviors and needs. Visitors can be encouraged to think critically about how animals are kept in intensive livestock farming conditions. This way they can make the connection between the animal on a city farm and the animal they eat and later make wiser choices in the supermarket. This way the welfare of all farm animals can be improved. A well-managed and responsible city farm is also a center of education that helps make the world a better place for people and animals. On the website of Eyes on Animals you can find a list of 'animal friendly' commercial farmers in the Netherlands.

www.eyesonanimals.com/nl/steun-de-betere-boer

Better animal-welfare: how do we spread it?

by Monique Slee,
inspector for www.eyesonanimals.com



**Eyes on
Animals** | Watching
out for their
welfare

When I was an inspector for the Dierenbescherming (Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals), I regularly checked on Dutch city farms. In 2012 I became an inspector for Eyes on Animals and since 2014 I have also been working as a volunteer at an educational farm.

It is important for people to be able to see and interact with animals. Only then do people get to know them and understand how sentient and intelligent they are.

Botolv and Eldar become city boys

by Heidi Katrine Tønnesen, Kampen Økologiske
Barnebondegård, Oslo

On October 30th we connected the horse trailer to the car and set course for Maura, 50 km north of Oslo. This day we had been waiting for a long time. We should pick up two new farm family members. At the destination farm we were given a tour in the barn and were told about the different breeds.

We should pick up two calves of traditional Norwegian breeds. Botolv, a beef calf of the breed Vestlandsk fjordfe, and Eldar, a beef calf of the breed Sidet trønderfe.



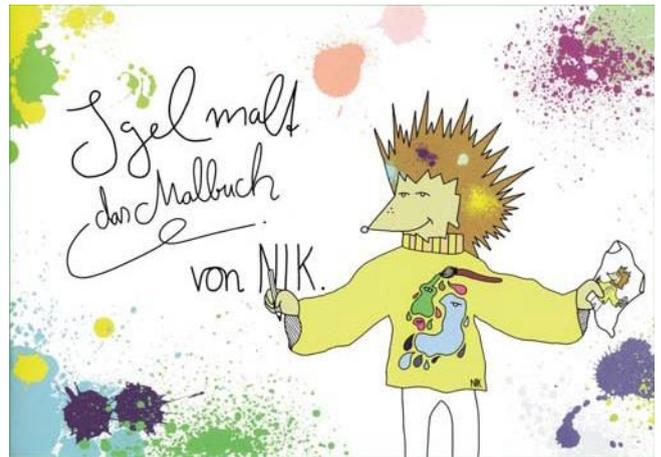
Botolv and Eldar

Little did they know that they were going to be city boys in the middle of Oslo at Kampen Økologiske Barnebondegård (Kampen Organic Children's farm). <https://kampenbarnebondegard.com/> Botolv was 12 weeks old when we picked him up. He had been with his mother since he was born. Eldar was 1 week old when we picked him up. His mother did not want him, so he had been bottled up from day one.

The trip to Oslo was a little scary for them. Also, it was a little scary to get out in a new place here at our little farm. And here, there are many different species of animals in the same barn. It was exciting for Botolv and Eldar to meet a horse, sheep, mini pig and a bragging donkey that was the scariest of all. But it did not take long before they felt at home. They are trained to wear a halter and walk on a leash. They are also allowed to walk loose in the yard where they run around and do pranks.

We are proud to have two such great representatives for each of their old Norwegian breeds. We hope these two guys will thrive in the city, be kind and well-behaved bulls who can have a long and good life in the big city.

The Hedgehog Colouring Book



The thirteen 'Hedgehog' locations in the interactive colouring book will inspire children in the age of 5 – 12. to develop their creativity. They can colour in, write, paint and search for and find texts. The little text in the book is in German. The book is A4 format transverse and has 32 pages. The locations/themes are museum, jungle, music, garden, painting, cooking, building, protesting, diving, cinema, play, bed and friends. The book can be ordered from

<https://www.bdja.org/publikationen/>

Symposia and conferences

Colloque La place des fermes pédagogiques dans l'éducation à l'environnement, et au-delà (Symposium: The place of educational farms in environmental education, and beyond) postponed till 10 September 2021, Pontoise, France.

<http://colloquefermepedagogique.org/>

Growing People, Plants and Animals. School Farms Conference, 2 and 3 July 2021 will be online and open to anyone in the EFCF

www.farmgarden.org.uk/events/school-farms-conference-2021

Clever ideas

Call the cavalry!

Horses ride to rescue of an inner city garden

Mounted City of London police receive a surprise order: to help trample in wildflower seeds at the Barbican. The Barbican is famous for its Brutalist architecture, but the concrete conceals a well-kept secret: a community garden where wildlife thrives



https://amp.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/28/call-the-cavalry-horses-ride-to-rescue-of-an-inner-city-garden-aoe?_twitter_impression=true