

Innovation Project

Food and Agriculture Cluster



The Practical Project of ONNO e.V.: Raising the Consciousness of Members and the Public for the Effects of Climate Change and Possible Adaptation Strategies

ONNO e.V., the East Frisian Network for Ecology – Region – Future, functions as a mediator between its members affected by climate change, the scientists in the project **northwest2050**, and the public. The Association is especially active in the area of food communications and education, in order to strengthen the perspective of sustainable food culture in East Friesland among all relevant actors. In the context of this project, this is especially being developed and deepened with respect to the issue of climate change.

The Need for Climate Adaptation

The impact of climate change on the farmers in the region is caused by extreme weather conditions; however, there is not yet any subjective awareness of major change in climatic conditions. The effects of worldwide climate change are more clearly perceived in the form of delivery bottlenecks or the constant instability of the prices of feed and seed. Some are starting to think about going back to planting their own feed, according to the results of a survey of farms which constitute the bulk of the membership of ONNO. Moreover, it is assumed that cost increases will occur due to higher cooling requirements caused by the hotter summers which may result from climate change. This will be a major financial challenge, especially to those smaller farms which market and process directly, and which are active in the network.

Implemented Measures

The measures implemented to date by ONNO include:

- (1) Preparation of information in the form of a research project into climate-related problem areas of ONNO members, based on qualitative interviews
- (2) Provision of information via
 - (a) events and workshops on regionally specific key production issues in agriculture and climate change, and the associated challenges,



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- (b) our own informational material (info-mails, a newsletter called »Bladdje«),
- (c) »East Frisian Country Meals« for the public, which serve as an instrument for nutrition communications, and which are carried out by our members from agriculture and the restaurant trade, with a focus on the effects of climate change for the food economy.

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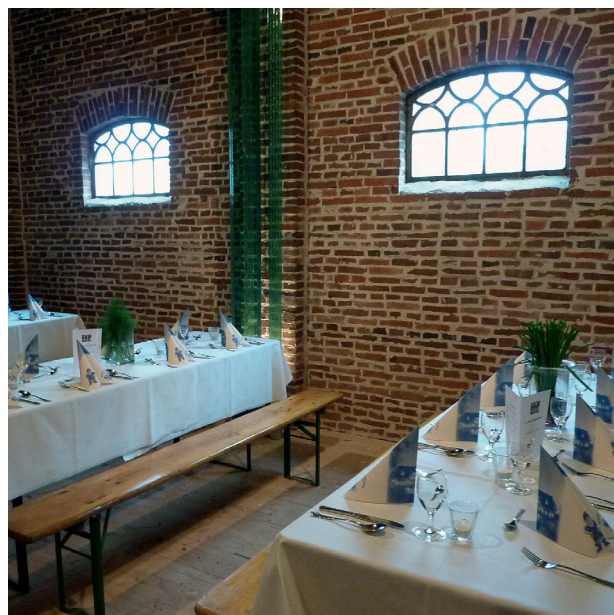
Method and State of Implementation

A survey in the fall of 2010 among ONNO member farms and businesses showed that climate-related problem areas in production and processing exist for the agricultural and food-producing sector in East Friesland. These vary according to soil consistency – the main differences are between sandy moorland and marshland. Resource-preserving measures have already been undertaken in past years, mostly for financial reasons. Almost all farms suffered losses requiring insurance claims due to heavy rain and storms, and as a result, increases in their premiums. A few had already undertaken adaptation measures, such as more efficient irrigation systems, strips of flowering plants to ensure insect diversity, or protection against strong solar irradiation. All those interviewed spoke of the high leasing rates for land due to the pressure on the land caused by biogas facilities, and the major price fluctuations for feed and cereals, which half of those questioned attributed to the effects of global climate change; more than half blamed the strategy of speculators. Special crops are being planted with reduced frequency, because they were sensitive to extreme weather in the Northwest and because, in the opinion of those questioned, vegetation periods are longer, but insufficient for a second crop.

For the restaurants associated with ONNO, the organization's East Frisian Country Meal program provided an opportunity to think about shopping behavior in a situation where worldwide wholesale trading permits anything to be available at any time. Daily menus with regional products which can be managed flexibly in accordance with the weather conditions and the availability of products, have introduced a new regional strategy. Regionality and transparency, and also seasonality, have been raised more strongly into the consciousness of the members, and also of the guests, as a strategy for maintaining the traditional cultural landscape. This is one of the reasons that guests frequent the East Frisian Country Meals.

Results and Transferability

Companies with similar problem situations should be networked with one another and their interaction should be supported. At the same time, the practical examples



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and the effects have led to a better understanding of the very complex problems of climate change and adaptation, which can then be passed on to the comprehensible manner to others. Strategies for dealing with climate change are developed in a common interchange. Addressing the issue practically by way of real impacts and approaches to solutions by means of the communication among members of the public is a helpful process. Barriers are discussed and solutions developed.

nordwest2050 is one of a total of seven projects funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) in the context of the KLIMZUG Program (Klimawandel in Regionen zukunftsfähig gestalten – Creating Climate Change-Ready Regions). In 2012 **nordwest2050** was awarded as an official project of the United Nations' World Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. The goal of the adaptation research is to develop strategies and measures by means of which regions and industries can be better prepared for life and business under the conditions of climate change. This is on the one hand designed to strengthen future competitiveness, and on the other to promote the development and use of new technologies and procedures for adaptation to climate change.

