



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

Project Agri-Trans – February 2010

Partners:

ZZPR (Poland), Agrostar (Romania), FNSZ (Bulgaria), IG BAU (Germany), 3F Fagligt Fælles Forbund (Denmark), FGA-CFDT (France), FNV Bondgenoten (The Netherlands), Réseau Projectif (France), CC.OO. (Spain), EFFAT

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. 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: 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 demand for initial and on-going continued training in animal husbandry (pig husbandry) so that trainees receive good living and working 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 and recognized in the whole European Union.*

This means:

- 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.
- Along with the necessary technical expertise (i.e. feeding, animal welfare and health, reproduction etc.) in the vocational training, personal competencies (i.e. team work, reflexivity, and independent working) have to ensure the sustainability of the qualifications.
- 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 qualified initial and continued training. One possibility could be the regular payment of a fee into a 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.
- Trainees as well as employees must receive a decent pay which allows them to live a decent life and to make financial retirement arrangements. 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. 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 demand 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 demand *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 demand the implication of employees in 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 demand harmonized and binding EU-wide social and environmental standards for working processes. These must be part of the basic training. The harmonization of social standards has to happen via joint European collective agreements which contain the following aspects:

- 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 demand 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 to create the respective conditions and institutional procedures necessary to implement our demands.