



Project AGRI-TRANS: Transparency in Agricultural Vocational Training

European standards using the example of livestock farming (pig farming)
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**National report on the general and agricultural vocational
training system using the example of livestock farming (pig
farming)**

Germany (IG BAU/Peco-Institut)

presented at the regional seminar in Berlin



GD Bildung und Kultur

Programm für lebenslanges Lernen

The German vocational training system (using the example of pig farming) – project Agritrans

Significance of agriculture¹

In 2007 approximately 13 million farms in the European Union (EU-27) operated on a total of 172.5 million hectares of land. Next to France and Spain Germany ranked third with respect to the area used for agriculture, yet, in terms of the number of farms it was in the ninth position. Within the EU-27 Romania, Poland, Italy and Spain are by far in the lead with the largest number of farms. Two thirds (66%) of all farms are located in these countries.

In 2007 Germany had 374,500 farms using approximately 17 million hectares of land. The area used for agriculture included all types of use, i.e. arable land, permanent grassland and permanent crops. **Between 1999 and 2007 the number of farms dropped by 20.7%.** This is equal to an **average annual reduction of the number of farms by 2.6%.** The amount of land used for agriculture shrank only comparatively little between 1999 and 2007 (by 1.1%).

Structural adaptations lead to a continuous growth of farms with a simultaneous reduction of their number. By 1999 dropped especially the number of farms with less than 50 hectares of land. On the other hand the number of agricultural companies with more than 100 hectares of land is growing: since 1999 their number increased by 30.9% to 31,900 farms; of these 9,000 were located in the new federal states (former East-Germany) and 10,300 in northern Germany (Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen). Correspondingly, the share of those farms (with more than 100 ha) grew; in 2007 their ratio had already reached 52.2%.

Reasons for the ongoing structural change are the economic and political changes. The economic factors influencing the structure in agriculture include the success of rationalisation achieved by using more advanced machinery, improved production methods and tools as well as progress in breeding. The political framework conditions are mainly created by the EU with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that has changed considerably due to the reforms introduced over the past decades.

Company structure has altered in the recent past mainly in the old federal states (former West-Germany) while the new federal states experienced less of a structural change. From 1999 until 2007 the number of farms in the old federal states dropped from approx. 441,600 farms to 344,400 (-22 %) while in the new federal states the number dropped from 30,400 to 30,100 farms (-1 %). The main reason for this difference is the different development in the previous decades. Agriculture in the new federal states is characterised by a comparatively small number of farms with large acreage whereas in the old federal states small and medium-sized family-operated farms with smaller acreage dominated – especially in southern Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria).

¹ See Destatis (editor) (2009) Landwirtschaft in Deutschland und der Europäischen Union 2009. (Agriculture in Germany and in the European Union); Author: Dr. Peter Gurrath

95% of the farms are family-operated. They produce the lion's share of agricultural produce in Germany. Partnerships, limited companies and corporate bodies (joint-stock companies and registered cooperatives) are so small in number that they play a very subordinate role. In 2007 98.6% of the farms in Germany were lead by natural persons and only 1.4% by corporate bodies. These figures have remained almost unaltered since 1999. Most of the family-operated farms in Germany are run as part-time farms. In 2007 there were a total of 154,500 full-time family-operated farms (45%) and 191,800 part-time farms (55%).

Agriculture has only a small share (roughly 1%) in the total GNP. Yet, approximately **80% of the required food comes from domestic production.**

Employment

In **2007 slightly less than 1.3 million employees were working in agriculture; that is 12.9% less than in 1999.** As we have mentioned already for the sizes of farms, structural change is influencing in particular the old federal states and reduces the number of farms there. In correlation with this the number of employees in agriculture is also shrinking. In the old federal states the number of employees dropped since 1999 by 13.9% to under 1.1 million in 2007. In the new federal states the number shrank by 5.6% to 159,400 employees during the same period. When you subdivide the employees in farming into those who belong to the family of the farm owner and those who do not, the situation in Germany was as follows in 2007: there were 728,600 family members versus 522,800 non-family members, among the latter 336,300 seasonal workers.

The number of employees dropped in particular because **the number of family members working on the farms** dropped (-22.6 % from 1999 until 2007). During the same period the number of non-family members among the farm workers shrank by only 4.7% (from 195,900 to 186,600 employees). Since family-operated farms were mainly located in western Germany the reduction of family members working on the farms was chiefly restricted to that part of Germany, too. In 2007 the family members working on farms still dominated there (689,300 persons = 63.1%). Because of the different dominating legal status of the farms (partnerships, limited companies and corporate bodies) in eastern Germany the number of employees that are not family-related is dominating. Out of the 159,400 persons of the agricultural labour force 75.4% were wage-dependent employees and only every fourth person was part of the 39,300 family-related workers.

An indicator for the **productivity increase with dropping numbers of employees** in agriculture is the smaller number of workforce-units in comparison with the amount of land used for farming. In 1999 the ratio was 3.6 workforce-units on 100 hectares of land; by 2007 it had dropped to 3.1 workforce-units (-3.9 %).

Ecological (organic) farming has been rising steadily in Germany in the recent past. According to the agricultural structure survey Germany had in 2007 14,500 ecologically operating farms. These were 3.9% of all farms and the number stands for a growth of more than 50% since 1999 (+51.2% or +4,900 farms).

Significance of pig industry

Next to China the EU-27 is the world's second biggest pig producer. In 2007 the total number of pigs was 160 million animals (China: 502 million animals). Of these 77.9% (124.7 million) were kept in the stables of the EU-15 – this means that almost one fourth of them was kept in the new member states.

Within the EU Germany has a large share in various types of agricultural produce and it is **the biggest pig producer within the EU.** In May 2009 approximately 67,000 farms kept 26.9 million pigs. For comparison: the number of cattle was only 12.9 million. This means that the number of pigs grew by 0.6% versus November 2008. Stocks are biggest in Niedersachsen (approx. 8.2 million pigs), followed by North-Rhine Westphalia with roughly 6.5 million pigs. So, these two federal states keep 54.4% of all pigs in Germany.

In 2007 **per capita meat consumption was 89.6 kg**, that is 2.9 kg more than in the previous year. The lion's share of that was pork (55.7 kg, i.e. +1.2 kg per capita). However, consumption has been going down slightly since then.

Until 2008 the **number of pig farms dropped**, however, this trend did not continue in 2009. Yet, in comparison with May 2009 the number of pig breeders shrank by 11%. These figures reflect the crisis that influenced the pig market in recent years. In 2007 dropping profits from pig fattening resulted in a shrinking demand and price reductions for piglets. During the second half of 2008 the economic situation of pig farming improved because good yields in arable farming and the global financial crisis made prices for cereals and oil go down and in consequence the production cost dropped. At the same time sales prices for pigs for slaughter improved.

Farms with pigs and stocks of pigs

Farms/animals	Farms/stocks	
	November 2008	May 2009
	in 1,000	
farms with pigs (total)	67.1	67.3
among these breeding pigs	23.7	22.8
pigs (total)	26,718.6	26,948.3
piglets with less than 20kg live weight	6,550.5	6,804.5
young pigs of 20 up to under 50kg live weight	6,657.6	6,315.5
fattening pigs	11,181.0	11,488.7
50 kg up to under 80 kg live weight	5,540.3	5,545.8
80 kg up to under 110 kg live weight	4,762.5	5,104.2
110 kg and above	878.2	838.8
breeding pigs (50 kg and above)	2,329.6	2,339.6
breeding sows (total)	2,296.4	2,306.9
pregnant gilts	267.4	284.5
pregnant other sows	1,365.4	1,372.7
non-pregnant gilts	251.2	239.6

non-pregnant other sows	412.3	409.8
breeding boars	33.2	32.6

Source: Bundesamt für Statistik (federal statistics office) 2009

In the long term **pig farming is becoming ever more important in Germany**. Between December 1998 and November 2008 the total number of pigs grew by 420,000 animals (1.6%). **Pig fattening had the fastest growth** with 1.1 million pigs, or +10.8%. During the same time the number of breeding sows and boars dropped significantly: by 14.7% to 2.3 million pigs. In the same period the number of piglets dropped only by 23,000 animals (0.4%) to 6.6 million. On the one hand this is due to progress in breeding and improvements in stable management, on the other hand it is a consequence of the growing import of piglets.

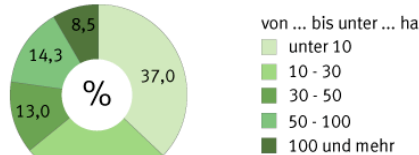
The average number of pigs per farm is 398 although the **size of farms** shows considerable regional variation. Farms in the North and East are much bigger than in the South of Germany. Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sachsen-Anhalt ca. more than 1,000 pigs per farm; Bavaria, Hesse, Rheinland-Pfalz and Saarland less than 200 pigs per farm.)

Especially in pig fattening a **concentration process** has taken place in recent years. In May 2007 roughly 31.3% of all fattening pigs were kept in a total of 1,900 farms with 1,000 pigs or more per farm; in 1997 this ratio was only 14.3% of the fattening pigs. The share of the fattening pigs that were kept in farms with 50 to 999 pigs dropped accordingly during that same period. In May 2007 only 64.9% of the pigs were kept in farms with 50 to 999 pigs; ten years before the share was still 75.5%.

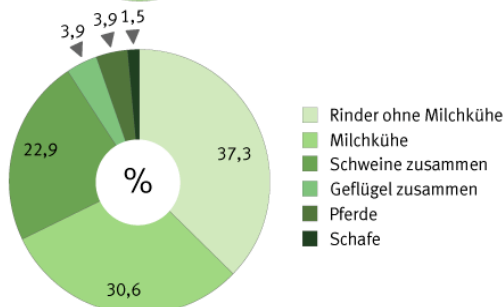
Landwirtschaftliche Betriebe 2007 nach Betriebsgrößen und Viehbestand

in Prozent

Betriebe¹



Viehbestand²



¹ Landwirtschaftliche Betriebe mit einer landwirtschaftlich genutzten Fläche von mindestens 2 ha und mehr bzw. mit einer Mindestgröße an Erzeugungseinheiten.

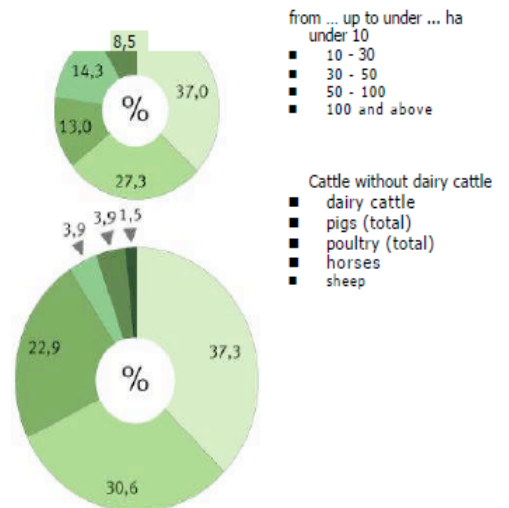
² Berechnung der Anteile auf Basis des zuvor in Großvieheinheiten umgerechneten Viehbestandes.

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Agricultural companies (farms) in 2007 according to size and livestock in percent

Farms¹

Livestock²



¹ Farms with a cultivated acreage of at least 2 ha and above or with a minimum number of production size

² Computation of shares on the basis of the animal livestock that was previously converted into livestock units

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Employees in pig farming

Altogether the number of people working at farms that do pig keeping is approximately 130,000. Precise figures for the number of wage-dependent employees do not exist. However, the trend towards bigger companies in this field is connected with a trend towards a greater number of wage-dependent employees.

A qualified animal farmer can **work** in many **fields**. Qualified persons can work in animal production farms, agricultural associations and institutions, in veterinary clinics and laboratories, agricultural training facilities, in equipping stables, in agricultural trade and administration.

Pig farms in Germany are **lacking both trainees and qualified workforce** since too few persons get trained in pig farming. At the same time those who do such a training often do not join farms but work in companies that are associated with pig farming. One reason for that is the low level of social recognition and acceptance of pig farming and inappropriate ideas of what this work is like that totally ignore the high level of technology and modernisation in the farms and the consequent need for qualified labour. Moreover, working conditions to an extent still are hard and unattractive so that many do not work in pig farming for long.

Working conditions

In Germany has evolved a comprehensive **structure of participation** that is accepted by all social forces although there are recurring attempts to limit the influence of codetermination by unions in the companies. New forms of social involvement come into being thanks to the European programmes that stretch even into the field of economic codetermination.

In Germany employers and employees enter into autonomous collective bargaining. In agriculture, horticulture and private forestry we have collective agreements covering the whole of Germany. They are negotiated on the regional level. In agriculture collective bargaining on the national (i.e. federal level) negotiates a recommendation that is then being implemented in the regions. In agriculture the recommendation from the federal level is the guiding collective agreement.

The **average wages of an employee in agriculture** is EUR 10.80 per hour. The reference level is the income of a qualified employee with two years of vocational experience.² Yet, the wage situation varies a lot from region to region. In addition to an East-West gradient there is also a North-South gradient.³

- The average gross wages in the new federal states is Euro 1,388.
- In the northern federal states the average gross wages is Euro 1,890;
- southern/western federal states Euro 1,990.

² <http://agri-info.eu>

³ <http://www.jobturbo.de/Content/GehaltsvergleichDetail.aspx?Beruf=Tierwirt%20Ausb.&id=4d936a6f-de39-4cee-81d4-f68f956dd356&show=Lohngefaelle>, 30/11/09

IG BAU assumes that **40-50% of the companies adhere to the collective agreements** and approx. 60,000 employees (in agriculture) are getting the agreed wages. The companies bound to the collective agreements (members in the employers' associations) usually respect the collective agreements.

While the **degree of organisation** of employees in agriculture is approx. 10% it is only between 2 and 3% in pig farming. In general membership numbers are shrinking.

In German agriculture the computed **working hours** are 2,088 hours per year with 40 hour weeks. Deducting holidays, vacations etc. the computed number of productive hours is 1,795 per year.

The collective agreements define a **40 hour week**; on company level working hours can be arranged flexibly to vary from 38 to 45 hours per week.

In Germany state regulations for industrial safety and the trade associations regulate **health and safety at work**. Trade associations are made up of equal numbers of representatives of three groups with employers and employees being responsible for safety at work in the companies. While in big companies health and safety at work are implemented almost without any problems, things in that respect are not running so smoothly in small companies.

Union demands

By now Germany has a big low wage sector. Approximately 10% of all employees are employed in this sector. Especially the free mobility of employees across all EU-member states that will apply as from 2013 causes fears that the wages in pig farming will drop and that this will become a low wage sector, too. For that reason the relevant unions, in particular IG BAU, demand the introduction, respect and control of legally binding minimum standards for employment, wages, animal keeping, environment, health and safety at work, adherence to the collective bargaining systems and ongoing further qualification of employees in the sense of lifelong learning in all companies.

General vocational training system in Germany

Responsibilities

In Germany there is a division of labour between the federal and the state (Länder) level regarding the fiscal tasks. The federal states (Länder) are responsible for public education and thus also for training at the vocational schools. The laws regulating this are harmonised among the 16 federal states by the permanent conference of the ministers of education. This conference also develops the framework curricula in coordination with the federal authorities.

On the other hand the **federal level** is responsible for vocational training at the companies and outside of schools. The activities are coordinated by the federal ministry for education and research (BMBF). This ministry is authorised to recognise vocations to be trained and to issue training ordinances. They are prepared by the federal institute for vocational training

(Bundesinstitut für berufliche Bildung (BIBB)) and coordinated with the Länder. Disputes concerning responsibilities do not exist so much between the federal and the state level but rather among the Länder.

Important laws for vocational training are:

- vocational training law of 1 April, 2005;
- handicrafts regulation act;
- ordinance on the suitability as instructor for vocational training;
- law on industrial safety for youth;
- works council constitution act;
- law on the support for further education for promotion;
- correspondence course protection act.

The federal employment agency provides counselling, placements and financial support for vocational training to young people and companies.

Training is offered in collaboration with several **partners**: industry, commerce, trades, agriculture, professionals, public administrations, health care services and more than 900 extra-company training facilities.

Chambers and relevant state authorities have the task to provide counselling for companies, to register trainees, to certify the suitability of instructors with regard to their qualification, to sit on examination boards and to implement the social dialogue on the regional level.

On federal level the **social partners are integrated** through the executive committee of the federal institute for vocational training and on state level integration takes place at the vocational training committee of the various ministries; at regional level integration is provided through the vocational training and examination boards of the chambers. The latter control and implement the preparation for vocational training, vocational training itself and further qualification.

Tasks of the social partners at the individual levels:

- 1) National level: participating in the development of training courses, standards and recommendations
- 2) Level of Länder: recommendations for all aspects of vocational training, in particular coordination of activities at schools and companies
- 3) Regional level: counselling, monitoring of training at the companies, examinations and certification of degrees
- 4) Sectoral level: negotiations about the number of places offered for vocational training, collective agreements concerning the remuneration of trainees
- 5) Company level: planning and implementing the vocational training at the companies.

Vocational training at secondary level II

Dual training system

In Germany the vocational training system is called a dual system because the training is done both at vocational schools and at companies. It normally takes three years. Some training lasts only two years and the training duration can be reduced for some individuals (e.g. trainees with A-levels).

Basic requirement for being admitted to vocational training is that compulsory schooling has been completed. There are no other formal requirements for admission. Basically vocational training is open for everyone. However, the trainees normally have completed secondary schooling or even acquired university entrance level (A-levels).

The training is based on a vocational training contract that is signed by a training company and the trainee. Per week the trainees are trained for three or four days at the company and one or two days at vocational school.

The **companies pay the cost** for their training and pay a **remuneration** to the trainee that is agreed in the collective agreement by collective bargaining. Each year the remuneration rises and reaches approximately the level of one third of the initial wages of a qualified employee.

The **training at the company** is regulated in a training ordinance. Each training company specifies this further in an individual training schedule. Only those companies are allowed to do vocational training that can actually teach the qualifications required in the training ordinance. The chambers check whether companies are suitable for providing vocational training. The chambers also monitor the training.

The **training ordinance** provides guidelines for the duration and contents; the companies may deviate from these in case their specific situation makes it necessary. Especially small and medium-sized companies often are not able to teach all that is required. They do not have the necessary personnel or because of their specialisation they may not cover all the fields and activities required. These gaps are closed by extra-company training facilities. These institutions are operated by corporate bodies of the respective sector and supported by the ministry of education. Another possibility is that several companies associate and provide the training by collaborating and complementing each other.

The **vocational school** has the task to extend the basic and specialised vocational training and also general education. Subjects taught are related to the vocations and subjects belonging to general education (e.g. German language, social studies, economics, foreign languages, sports and religion). Arrangement of the school hours is coordinated with the companies. Attention of vocational school is free of charge. (For more information visit www.bibb.de)

Fulltime vocational schools

To this kind of vocational schools belong vocational schools and various forms of secondary schools on grammar school level with vocational orientation.

- At **vocational schools** the trainees receive part of the vocational training in one or several vocations in various sectors and it can be accepted as the first year of a full dual vocational training. Precondition for admission is at least completion of lower secondary school.
- **Fachoberschule** comprises of grades 11 and 12 (usually 17 and 18 years of age) and is based on the intermediate school leaving certificate (GCE); the first year consists of practical training at companies and lessons, the second year provides general and specialised lessons;
- **berufliches Gymnasium (vocational grammar school)** is not subdivided and leads directly to A-level graduation; vocational subjects include business, technology, nutrition, agriculture, health, social work and communications technology;
- **Berufsoberschule** exists only in some Länder, has a duration of two years and aims at enabling young people from dual vocation training to acquire university entrance level (A-levels).

Preparation for vocational training

Before the actual vocational training young people may do a *basic vocational training year* that may also be accepted as first year of vocational training.

Another form of preparation for vocational training is an actual vocational training preparation year especially for those young people who did not complete any school level and want to make up for that.

Admission qualification at a company provides practical training at companies for periods ranging from six to twelve months and during that period the participants receive monthly allowances for maintenance. These offers aim at young people in the age group 16-25 with little job opportunities.

Vocational training in higher education

Studies at a university of applied sciences (**Fachhochschule**) are more practice-orientated. Preconditions for admission are A-levels in general education or A-levels related to the desired field of studies (Fachabitur) and studies normally take 4 years.

Some Länder additionally have vocational academies (Berufsakademie) that offer science-related and practice-orientated vocational training. This type of training takes three years. Here, too, A-levels in general education are required for admission and a training contract. The company with which the contract has been concluded will register the student at the vocational academy. The companies pay the cost for the training at the company and a remuneration to the trainee also for the periods of theoretical training..

Instructors and teachers in vocational training

Teachers hold the lessons at the vocational schools, whereas the **instructors** are specialists in the companies who teach practical knowledge and skills.

In Germany responsibility for teacher training lies with the ministries of education of the individual federal Länder. The requirements for the initial training of instructors are regulated by the law on vocational training and the ordinance on the suitability of instructors. No formal regulations exist for their further and ongoing qualification.

In small or medium-sized companies with a small number of trainees the instructor would do the training work in addition to his/her main function as employee or employer. Major companies have specialised departments for training. Instructors must have the vocational and work-related educational knowledge and skills for the activities they train. This is supposed to facilitate training at the companies. The chambers check the quality of training.

Ongoing qualification

Ongoing qualification can be acquired through many offers of private and public institutions. In agriculture the chambers of agriculture play an important role.

Assessment of the learning outcome/certification of the trainees

At the end of the training the trainees must show that they are able to carry out jobs independently, with self-responsibility and in collaboration with others. For doing so they must have subject-related, social and methodological competences; they must be able to plan, carry out and control their work independently.

Final examinations are based on the requirements at work and the work processes as they occur in practice. A final examination usually covers four or five fields that are based on typical vocational activities. Subjects general education are certified with the school's leaving certificate.

The training includes intermediate and final examinations with a theoretical and a practical part each. The chambers are responsible for holding the examinations. For each vocation in which training is provided an examination board must be established. The boards must have at least three members (representatives of employers, employees and vocational school teachers).

The examination requirements for a vocation are valid all over Germany and thus guarantee that all graduates have a uniform level. However, the time schedule may vary a lot depending upon the vocations and in particular the practical exams may be spread across only a few hours or several days or weeks.

Recognition, i.e. certification, of skills and knowledge in a vocation without having done a vocational training can be acquired by means of external examinations. The basis for this is the ability to prove work in the respective vocation for at least one and a half times the duration of the vocational training (i.e. 4 ½ years). However, very few persons take external examinations.

For several years now there have been efforts to reflect also the informal training of employees in various passes and documents. Among them are the ProfilPASS and the qualification pass.

Counselling

Vocational guidance is a core task of the employment agency, but it is also offered by schools, universities, private institutions and social partners. In agriculture again the chambers of agriculture must be mentioned in particular.

Training as pig farmer

Training as pig farmer takes three years and is a specialisation for animal farmers. Precondition for admission is to have completed compulsory schooling; having an actual school leaving certificate is an advantage.

When a potential trainee has successfully applied for a training place at a certified training company (farm) the trainee and the company conclude a training contract. The farm will register the trainee at the vocational school to which the company has been allocated. The training contract will be registered at the relevant authority or chamber, respectively.

The company will pay the trainee during the training. In the old federal states trainees get Euro 550 per months during the first year of training. This pay grows to Euro 620 in the third year. The company will also cover the cost for extra-company training and training material.

Germany has five vocational schools and 120-130 companies where pig farmers are trained.

Working conditions

The working conditions for trainees in pig farming are regulated in the general collective agreement for agriculture. According to this regulation the working days start at 7 a.m. and end at 4 p.m.; also included are health and safety regulations (not in all federal states) and payment in accordance with the minimum rate stated in the collective agreement.

Contents of training

The training contents result from the framework training schedule for animal husbandry of the training ordinance.

Learning fields (overview) for the vocation of animal farmer				
Learning fields	Timing guidelines (in no. of lessons)			Contents
	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	
Introduce a new employee to the company	40			Company structure, processes in the company, vocational ethics and consumer protection, labour law, communication, presentation
handling machines, appliances and equipment;	60			Prevention of accidents, operating instructions, trade associations

Prepare and maintain animal shelters	80			Demands of animals, materials, hygiene measures
Handling animals	60			Observing animals, sensory organs and nervous systems, locomotor system, prevention of accidents, marking, documentation
Feeding of animals	80			Digestion, feedstuff assessment, feeding demands, feeding schedules
Reproducing the livestock		80		Heredity, selection of animals, selection for breeding, covering, legal regulations, marking and documentation, communication
Keeping the livestock healthy		80		Health monitoring, immunity, causes for diseases, animal diseases that must be reported, breeder's medical chest; preventive measures, emergency slaughter
Procure and store goods		60		Storage, contracts, documentation, hazardous substances, communication
Waste disposal and utilisation of by-products		60		Faeces and animal waste, confiscate, packaging, hazardous waste, legal regulations
Specialisation of pig farming				
Producing and marketing breeding pigs			80	Appearance, assessment of value for breeding, proof of lineage and catalogues of animals for breeding, herd management, documentation, auction, reproduction process, organisations and associations
Producing and marketing quality piglets			80	initial care, weaning, feeding of sows and piglets, types of stables, diseases, legal regulations
Producing and marketing fattening pig			60	Computing of feed rations, stabling, quality assurance, animal transport, consumer protection
Managing pig livestock			60	Livestock development, production schedule, financing, public relations activities

Source: Framework curriculum for training animal farmers

<http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/pdf/Bildung/BeruflicheBildung/rlp/Tierwirt.pdf>, 18/01/2010

Trainees learn how to produce sows, fattening pigs and piglets. If companies are too much specialised for providing comprehensive practical training they will form associations and exchange trainees. The vocational schools and the training counsellors support this process.

The knowledge is tested in intermediate exams (one year before the training is completed) and final exams. The exams consist of oral, written and practical parts. By passing the final exams the trainees acquire the title of *animal farmer* (Tierwirt).

Animal farmers who specialised on pig farming usually work in pig breeding either at specialised animal farms or general farms, or at farms specialised on piglet production, or at pig fattening farms. They may also work at insemination stations or at teaching, experimental or research facilities. In addition to the above they may work at slaughterhouses or associations representing farmers.

Opportunities for ongoing/further qualification

Opportunities for ongoing/further qualification are usually offered by the chambers. Trained pig farmers may do courses (480 h) to expand and deepen their vocational qualification and management skills and qualify as *Meister* (foreman). Another grade - below Meister - is that of *Staatlich geprüfter Wirtschafter* (certified farmer). This type of training takes one year. The chambers of agriculture and relevant institutions also offer lots of other qualification opportunities.

Improvements of qualification from the point of view of the employees+

The biggest issue in pig farming is the **lack of trainees**. One main reason for this is the bad image of the vacation of pig farmer since many young people have wrong ideas of the work involved. They are not aware of the contemporary conditions in large facilities or even at smaller farms.

Additionally, there are **not enough qualified employees**. This is because too few young people get trained as pig farmers and many of those who do it are going into related fields like technician or stable equipment or continue their studies in higher education after they completed the training.

No solutions have been found for this, yet. An essential approach that will be followed up is to improve the image of pig farming and of agriculture in general. During the past 50 years agriculture has undergone enormous changes with the introduction of modern technologies, management, organisation and knowledge. Its public image does not reflect this and it is still considered to be a minor sector of economy – also in numbers of jobs. Vocational schools, competent authorities and chambers, institutions on Länder-level and on federal level are responsible for enhancing this image and advertising for these vocations.

Yet, **working conditions** in many of the existing farms are still hard (irregular working hours, hard physical labour, smell, etc.), so that many employees do not work there for long (because they don't want to or cannot bear it).

With the introduction of specialised technologies and the growing size of pig farms they **specialise ever more. This makes it impossible to provide comprehensive training at one single company**. Trainees are forced to change their training companies during the training. Organising this change and the collaboration between the companies and the training facilities required leads to growing logistic needs.

This situation also requires that the **trainees become more mobile**. In countries with lots of pig farming there is a balance between supply and demand of places for vocational training, so it is possible to find a place for training within the home region. In regions with a lot of pig production also vocational schools are nearby. This is an important factor for the continuity of work at the companies where the trainees do the practical training. Neither the dual educational system nor the companies want blocks of several weeks either at school or at the company. In regions like Sachsen-Anhalt vocational schools are closing down because demand is too low. This makes it difficult for trainees who have found a training company in that region to organise their training. They have long trips to the school and need a second accommodation.

Aspects regarding the European discussion about the comparability of training

For 2014 Germany like all the other EU-27 countries develops a national qualification framework on the basis of the European qualification framework (EQF). This is supposed to make the national vocational qualifications comparable. In 2009 the first common German draft qualification framework (DQR) has been published.

Other EU-members have got their national qualification framework a long time ago. Germany and the German trade unions have ignored the European debate about education for a long time. For that reason the German qualification framework is still in the discussion phase.

The debate was dominated by the fear that the positive aspects of the dual system would have to be abolished. However, the design of national qualification frameworks depends upon the particular structure of the national education systems and its objectives – not upon seemingly imposed elements of a European qualification framework. Currently we are in the trial phase. Several pilot projects try to develop methods and assessment systems for making the contents of vocational training transparent and making qualifications and learning outcomes comparable. This aims at enhancing or creating the mobility of the trainees and future employees.

Another aspect that is important for the unions in this discussion are efforts to reflect also the informal training of employees in various passes and documents. We still need a lot of research for defining how competences acquired by informal learning can be reflected in the German qualification framework. Here, too, the social partners have to develop nationally valid standards. *For the sake of protecting and implementing the interests of the employees and ensuring uniform standards it will not be possible to accept that individual companies, chambers, suppliers of education or agencies certify learning outcomes of non-formal and informal education. This is to prevent that social standards can be turned into (economic) disadvantages for individual regions or companies.*

Moreover the process aims at improving the connections between schools, vocational training and universities so that transitions become more seamless and more equality among them is achieved. Currently especially vocational training is still insufficiently integrated.