

# FARMINFIN



Farming concepts and innovative  
funding/financing

## CASE STUDY

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Amelie and Franziska  
Wetzlar



# INTRO

Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar run the Pimpinelle dairy sheep farm in the Oderbruch, directly on a large river bend of the old Oder. The two entrepreneurs keep a flock of Krainer Stein sheep.

The sheep dairy are located in three buildings of the four-sided farm. Here, milking takes place and the fresh sheep's milk from the farm's own flock is processed into various handmade sheep's cheeses, yoghurt and curd cheese. The products are marketed from the farm, via organic shops in the region and the Berlin cheese trade.

For the farm managers, sustainability does not only mean the shortest possible transport routes and consistent ecological production and processing, but also circular management. This includes extensive grazing of the animals, own hay production, cooperation and mutual support with nearby small farms and energy- and resource-saving management. The sensible use of as many recyclable materials and by-products as possible closes the cycle of production and utilisation on the farm. Therefore, in addition to cheese and dairy products, the range also includes lamb, sausage, hides and wool and other products from our own production.

In 2019, a new barn was built, partly financed through a successful crowd-funding campaign.

## 1. PERSONAL DATA OF THE FARMER



- ▶ **Name:** Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar.
- ▶ **Birth year:** 1979/ 1977.
- ▶ **Gender:** Female/ Female.
- ▶ **Education:** Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar are trained dairy shepherds and sheep cheesemakers and have been running the Pimpinelle dairy sheep farm together since 2011.
- ▶ **Occupation:** Full-time female farmers.

## 2. FARM DATA

► **Farm location:** Dairy and sheep dairy, Amelie & Franziska Wetzlar GbR, Lindenstraße 20, 15320 Quappendorf.

► **Farm Area in ha:** 15.5 ha.

► **Farm description:** The focus of the dairy sheep farm is the sheep herd, which currently comprises about 60 animals with offspring.

The Krainer Steinschaf breed is the dairy sheep of the Alps and was imported directly from its country of origin, Slovenia. It is a very old, robust and hardy dairy sheep breed and is one of the sheep breeds most threatened by extinction. The farm thus contributes to the preservation of this breed.

Lambs are reared with their mothers. This means that the lambs drink from their mothers until they are old enough to eat for themselves.

All colours are represented in the herd, from black to spotted to white. It is important to the entrepreneurs that the animals are healthy and robust against wind and weather, whilst maintaining high quality milk production.

Thus, the animals are on the pasture day and night for most of the year.

Only in the winter months from December to March are the animals kept in the new open barn. During this time, in addition to meadow hay, they are fed exclusively grain and juice feed from organic farms in the region. Here, too, regional cycles are important to Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar.

Permanent grassland is managed with sheep grazing. Sustainable pasture management helps to provide the animals with good basic fodder on a daily basis.

The farm is a member of the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft Krainer Steinschafe” and the “Schafzuchtverband Berlin Brandenburg e.V.”.

The sheep's cheese dairy has been in operation since 2012. It is located in the former baking and washing house, a restored brick building from 1920. 80 square metres of the farm's own sheep's milk is processed into various cheese specialities, yoghurt and curd cheese. On the roof of the sheep's dairy there is a thermal solar system that covers most of the dairy's hot water needs in summer.

### 3. FINANCING AND ACCESS TO FUNDING

Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar kept their 60 dairy sheep with offspring in an old barn building until 2019, which did not offer enough space and especially not enough roofing. The aim was to no longer keep the sheep in the old cow sheds in winter and to create a more airy and lighter barn with heated drinkers and also a significant reduction in workload. Good reasons for a new open stable. This was to cost around 100,000 euros. They had already been promised subsidies and private loans for the construction of the stable, and crowdfunding was to close the financing gap of 20,000 euros for the implementation of the stable construction project.

On 10 April 2019, the women entrepreneurs launched a public collection campaign via an online platform under the motto "We're putting our sheep in the dry". Each supporter could either donate a free amount of money or choose a thank-you gift for a certain amount. The higher the amount, the greater the reward from the farm. Those who financed a complete stall for an animal, i.e. 385 euros, received an overnight stay in the bee wagon at the farm including a cheese breakfast as a thank-you, or could choose the sheep to be put out to dry and received a portrait of "their" lady sheep in return. For smaller amounts, there were e.g. cheese, farm tours or sheep wool. As a further thank-you in case of success, the two offered the donors a cheese-making course.

The crowdfunding campaign ran until 26 May 2019. 21,514 euros were raised from 202 supporters - so the crowdfunding was successful, and the sheep pen could be financed. At the same time, the final building permit was granted, so that construction could begin in autumn 2019 and the animals could move into the new barn in winter.

Crowdfunding achieved the following:

- Contribution to the financing of the Court;
- Retain customers and find new ones;
- Further external impact and attention.

The two entrepreneurs are very happy with what they have achieved. With crowdfunding, Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar not only got the money they needed to build the stable, but they also gained real supporters for their project.

The aim of the entrepreneurs is to offer high-quality and organic food from and for the region of the Oderbruch and Berlin, according to their motto;

"Good food keeps body and soul together!"

**“If you are aiming for crowdfunding, we advise good preparation and guidance. A crowdfunding campaign takes work. You have to convince people why they should support your project of all things, even though they may not know it. Your project must offer real added value for the individual, the environment or society and this must be conveyed in a short and crisp way...”**

**“An important success factor for us in general-business-wise and also for the financing of the project-was and is the conviction and idealism with which we build up our farm. People quickly notice whether someone stands behind what he or she is doing, or whether something is being “sold” to you. Be “real” and stand up for your convictions! ...”**

## **4. TRAINING NEEDS AND CONCLUSION**

► **Training experiences and gaps:** Important skills in the profession are physical and mental stamina and a reflective attitude. The women entrepreneurs' express goal is to offer high-quality and organic food from and for the region of the Oderbruch and Berlin.

They focus on full sustainability and regionality in production and marketing.

Overall, and also within the relationship created through crowdfunding, the two farm managers focus on openness, cooperation, transparency and communication.

The two are able - both online and in direct contact - to reflect the mood and situation of the business in short descriptions.

In addition to the operational and technical requirements, these skills in networking with customers, business partners and the local community are certainly success factors for the business.

► **Final considerations:** Pimpinelle Dairy Sheep Farm is an innovative example of an alternative approach to funding for farmers. The farm used crowdfunding to finance an open stable.

The basis for reaching and convincing more than 200 people with a farm concept is a high quality standard in dealing with people, nature and animals as well as great transparency towards the outside world and joy in communication and customer relations.

Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar are creative and keen to experiment, and the two of them are passionate about farming. They also carry this passion outwards into their environment.

With this type of innovative financing, an additional good external effect was thus achieved in addition to the pure financing of a sub-project of the Court.

In this respect, crowdfunding was a suitable instrument to obtain financial support and at the same time to create and spread awareness for the farm's own products and moreover for sustainable agriculture in general.



# PARTNERS

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On Projects Advising (OnP), Spain  
[www.onprojects.es](http://www.onprojects.es)



Folkuniversitetet (FU), Sweden  
[www.folkuniversitetet.se](http://www.folkuniversitetet.se)



Agricoltura E' Vita (AéV), Italy  
[www.agricolturavita.it](http://www.agricolturavita.it)



Asociace soukromého zemědělství ČR  
The Association of Private Farming of Czech Republic (APF CR), Czech Republic  
[www.asz.cz](http://www.asz.cz)



Union de agricultores y ganaderos - jóvenes agricultores de Jaén (COAG-Jaén), Spain  
[www.coagjaen.es](http://www.coagjaen.es)

## Social media

Facebook: [@farminfin](https://www.facebook.com/farminfin)  
Twitter: [@farminfin](https://twitter.com/farminfin)

## Project webpage

[www.farminfin.eu](http://www.farminfin.eu)

## PROJECT COORDINATOR

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The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA), Belgium  
[www.ceja.eu](http://www.ceja.eu)



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