

T5.2 Case study report (Code DE7B)

# **CSA Hof Pente GbR - Success through community, education and ecology**

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## Abstract

### Problems/Opportunities

The promising practice addresses the lack of understanding of and commitment to agriculture and food production. Through shared responsibility and the great competences of the management team, a regional food supply with organic farming is created near Osnabrück.

### Results

CSA Hof Pente stands for community-supported agriculture in a cooperatively organised form. 350 members receive seasonal and regional food produced on the farm through a membership. They also feel collectively responsible for the farming, as the decisions are discussed openly at regular meetings. They act not only as consumers, but also as producers. Many members also enjoy the atmosphere and social community at the pick-up-day and use the farm for local recreation.

The farm offers a wide range of education for sustainable development. There is a kindergarten and a school, where teaching and learning takes place. The educational offers are directly linked to the (agricultural) activities on the farm (apprenticeships, internships, seminars), but also indirectly through the experience of nature, agriculture and nutrition.

The farm practices biodynamic agriculture, which protects the climate, soils and resources (strict Demeter guidelines). In particular, the contributions to soil care (e.g. cultivation by horses) and to biodiversity (diversity on the farmland) stand out in particular.

### Recommendations

This practice shows how a rather small farm contributes to regional and seasonal nutrition, biodiversity and local community. Even if the farmland size is rather low (37 hectare), there are many jobs created per hectare.

## Context

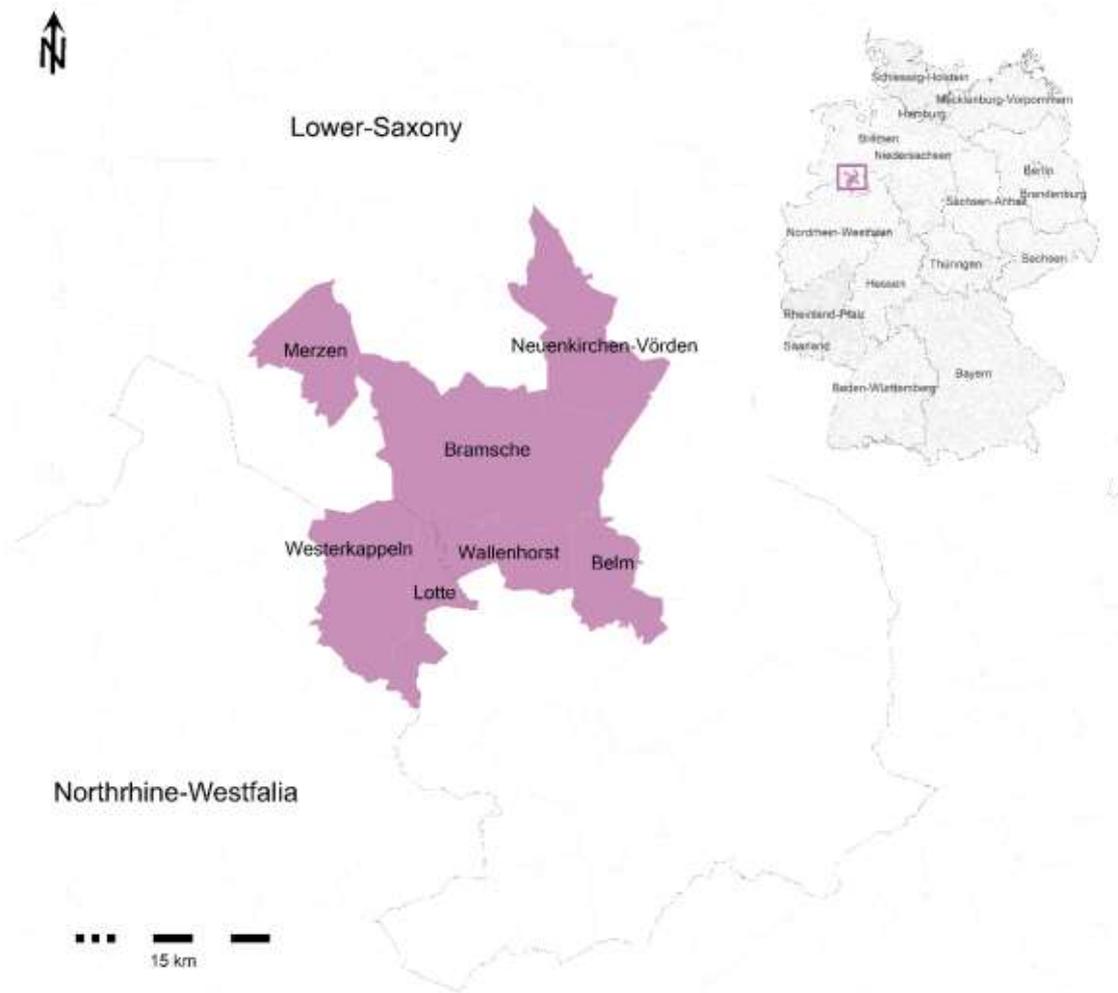
### Regional context

The CSA farm Pente is located near the small village of Pente, which belongs to the municipality Bramsche, in close proximity to the city Osnabrück in North-Western Germany. Bramsche is situated in the district of Osnabrück (Landkreis Osnabrück) in the south of the federal state of Lower Saxony, which borders the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. CSA is an abbreviation for Community Supported Agriculture, which means, that the farm works in close partnership with its customers and the surrounding communities. According to the German network of CSA farms, the customers, who are members of a CSA association, decide collectively about the crops and products<sup>1</sup>. Organic goods produced are not sold on the free market, but only distributed among the members. This concept is also called solidarity agriculture.

In addition to farming, the CSA farm in Pente also offers various activities for the local community, like a kindergarten, a school and the possibility to visit the farm. For the analysis of the regional context, the following municipalities are taken into account: Bramsche, Belm, Wallenhorst, Neuenkirchen and Merzen (in Lower Saxony) as well as the cities of Lotte and Westerkappeln (in North Rhine-Westphalia). Due to a lack of data availability, in some cases the entire district of Osnabrück is analysed.

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<sup>1</sup> Netzwerk Solidarische Landwirtschaft 2020: Was ist solidarische Landwirtschaft? Retrieved on 10/08/2020 from <https://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/das-konzept>



**Figure1: Study Area**  
Source: own illustration, created with RegioGraph

## Geography and nature conservation

The elevation of the surroundings of Bramsche is predominantly below 100 metres above sea level. The municipality is located on the river Hase, which crosses the region in a north-south direction, and on the artificial Mittelland Canal, which crosses it in an east-west direction. The village of Pente is located at the crossing of those two water bodies. Although the area is comparatively rural with fields, forests and small villages, there are only few

conservation areas for nature. Only about 5-6% of the area are protected under the Natura2000 directive (Bundesamt für Naturschutz 2019)<sup>1</sup>.

The most important interregional traffic connection for the region is the motorway A1, connecting Bramsche and its surroundings to the cities of Bremen and Hamburg to the north, as well as Münster and the metropolitan area of Rhine and Ruhr to the south. The federal roads B68 and B218 cross the region in a north-south direction and connect Pente with Bramsche and Osnabrück. There is also a rail station in Bramsche.

## Demography

The region of Bramsche (not the entire district) had about 101,508 inhabitants in 2018. Between 2008 and 2018, the number of inhabitants was more or less stable (-627 inhabitants in total). The age structure of the population roughly corresponds the age structure of the district of Osnabrück and the federal state of Lower Saxony. There is a slightly higher share of children between 0 and 14 years and of people between 30 and 64 years than on the federal level of Lower Saxony (children 14.7% vs. 13.6% and adults 48.2% vs. 47.4% respectively). Accordingly, the share of young adults between 15 and 30 years (16.5% vs. 17%) and of people older than 64 (20.5% vs. 21.9%) is a little lower (Statistisches Bundesamt 2018b). This indicates a high share of families (see Table 1).

Name	Population	Area [km <sup>2</sup> ]	Density [Population/km <sup>2</sup> ]
Belm	13,750	46,64	294.8
Bramsche	30,952	183,39	168.8
Merzen	3,859	53,05	72.7
Neuenkirchen b Bramsche, Hase	4,549	57,63	78.9
Wallenhorst	23,081	47,17	489.3
Lotte	14,135	37,69	375.0
Westerkappeln	11,182	85,83	130.3
<b>Total study area</b>	101,508	511.4	198.5

Table1: Population of the study area

Source: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 31.12.2018

<sup>1</sup> Estimated value based on Federal agency for Nature conservation 2019: conservation areas in Germany

The population density of the region is at 198.5 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. This value is higher than the average of Lower Saxony of about 167.3 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. There are various differences within the region. The rural municipalities in the northwest of the region (Merzen and Neunkirchen) are very sparsely populated. The municipalities closer to Osnabrück have more inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1).

About 6.6% of all pupils leave school without a degree in the district of Osnabrück. This value is comparable to the value for the federal state of Lower Saxony (6.3%). A more significant difference can be found in the share of young people graduating from school with an entrance qualification for universities. While on federal level an average of 32.7% of the graduates do so, in the district of Osnabrück only 23.6% obtain the qualification. The share of female graduates is high in both cases (55.7% in Lower Saxony, 57.3% in Osnabrück), which is a general trend in Germany (Statisches Bundesamt 2018a).

### Economy

About 130,000 people are employed in the district of Osnabrück (Statisches Bundesamt 2018c). Only about 1.7% of employees work in the primary sector, compared to 1.9% on federal state level. The more rural districts of Ammerland (6.1%) and Cloppenburg (3.9%) have much higher shares.

The share of agricultural land is nearly 50% in the municipalities of Wallenhorst and Lotte, while the share of agricultural land in northern municipalities is much higher - Merzen (72.8%) or Neuenkirchen (81.4%) (Statisches Bundesamt 2018d).

In the Osnabrück district, 38.9% of all employees work in the secondary sector, differing slightly from Lower Saxony with 29.4 % respectively. In the last decade the number of employees who work in the secondary sector increased, while the share of total employees working in the secondary sector decreased. This seemingly contrary development is due to the increase in number of employees overall (Statisches Bundesamt 2018c).

Looking at the employment rates in the tertiary sector, Osnabrück (59.4%) has a significantly lower share than the federal state of Lower Saxony (69%) (which is already low compared to other federal states). The independent cities of Oldenburg (88.3%), Osnabrück (81%), Wilhelmshaven (78.3%) and Delmenhorst (76.5%) have very high employment rates in the tertiary sector. Within the tertiary sector especially administrative and educational work as

well as health and insurance only play a minor role in the district (about 40%, federal average 44.7%). In terms of transport, communication and tourism however, the district of Osnabrück has higher shares than the average of Lower Saxony and Weser-Ems (Statisches Bundesamt 2018c).

The absolute value of the GDP of the district is at about € 10,900 million, which corresponds to 3.8% of the GDP of the federal state of Lower Saxony (Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder 2019).

The unemployment rate of the statistical area is about 4.3%. The share of employed 15 to 64 year-olds is slightly higher than the Lower Saxony federal level (64.4% vs. 61.1%). In the Osnabrück district, the proportion is even slightly higher (65.9 %) (Statisches Bundesamt 2018c).

## Agriculture

In terms of agricultural land in the district (143,266 hectare), the most important crops are plants for a green harvest with about 34,859 hectare (24.3%). This is much higher than the shares of the Weser-Ems region (13.8%) and Lower Saxony (4.3%). In comparison to other districts in the greater region, winter wheat (126,000 tons per year) and barley (158,000 tons per year) are important crops in the Osnabrück district also regarding (Statisches Bundesamt 2018d).

The average size of a farm in the district of Osnabrück is about 47.52 hectare. This is clearly smaller than the average size of farms in the statistical region of Weser-Ems (about 55.67 hectares) and also below the federal average (about 68.75 hectares). The share of large farms with a size of 100 hectares is about 10.4%. The shares of large farms both in the statistical region (15.1%) and in the federal state (21.9%) are significantly higher (Statisches Bundesamt 2018d).

About 2.5% of farm businesses in the district of Osnabrück are run ecologically. This is almost exactly the same value as the share for the statistical region of Weser-Ems. The federal average of Lower Saxony is higher (3.4%). Concerning the ecologically cultivated land, the share in the district of Osnabrück (2.4%) is slightly lower than the share of Weser-Ems (2.4%) and clearly lower than the federal average of about 3.4%.

There were 2,777 farm businesses in the district of Osnabrück in 2010. 2,405 were at least partly owned by the farmers who run the business (Statisches Bundesamt 2018d). This corresponds to a share of about 86.6%, which is slightly higher than the average of Weser-Ems (84.5%) but slightly lower than the average of Lower Saxony (88.2%). At the same time, 2,071 out of the 2,777 farms leased the land (74.6%). The lease fee was about 418€ per hectare, which is much higher than the average lease fee of the statistical region (348€ per hectare) and the federal state (307€ per hectare).

In 2016, there were a total of 2,465 farm businesses in that district. 274 of them were managed by partnerships, which equals about 11.1%. This share is slightly lower than the shares for Weser-Ems (13.5%) and Lower Saxony (12%). Farm ownership by legal persons is very uncommon not only in Osnabrück, but also in the whole of Lower Saxony. Only 12 farms in the district of Osnabrück were run that way (0.4%), which is only slightly lower than the values for Weser-Ems (1.2%) and the federal state (1.1%). As to be expected, the most popular form of running a farm in Lower Saxony is the individual enterprise. Especially in the district of Osnabrück, where the share of individually run enterprises is about 88.4%.

In 2010 there were 9,861 people working on farms in the district of Osnabrück. About 51% of them were family members of the farmers. This share is slightly higher than the shares for Weser-Ems (48.9%) and for Lower Saxony (48.5%). This finding fits to the slightly higher number of individual enterprises in the district. In return, the number of permanent workers in the district (13.2%) is slightly lower than the average of the statistical region (16.4%) and the federal state (15.7%). In terms of seasonal workers, the share of the district is at 35.8%, which is very similar to the values of Weser-Ems (34.6%) and Lower Saxony (35.8%). (Statisches Bundesamt 2018d).

In 2010, 60.2% of farm owners were 45 years or older, which is a higher percentage than the in Weser-Ems (58.5%) but lower than the federal state of Lower Saxony (62.2%). Of these 1,672 farm owners, 542 had already established a succession.

### Interim conclusion

The area around the CSA farm in Pente can be defined as a semi-rural area rather than a completely rural one. Although agriculture plays an important role and the share of agricultural land is quite high, there are more densely populated areas that can be described

as rather urban. Especially the south of the area, close to the city of Osnabrück, can be characterised that way. The age structure is relatively young because of families living there. In socio-economic terms the area gives some different impressions. On the one hand, the educational level and share of the federal state GDP are comparatively low. On the other hand, the unemployment rate is lower than the average of the surrounding. It seems that the area around the CSA farm and probably the whole district of Osnabrück concentrates on certain economic branches, especially in the secondary sector.

## Origin of the practice

### Origins of the idea

The farm Hof Pente in Northern Germany has been a family farm for over 450 years. In 1988 the farm converted to an organic Bioland-farm and 20 years later, to a Demeter-farm. In 2011 it became a community-supported farm (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

The following section focuses on the last farm succession within the family.

The current farm operator sees the impulse and idea for education, agriculture and community rooted in his own childhood and youth. He grew up on the farm that he later took over. His father was a full-time director of an educational institution (Volkshochschule Osnabrück), worked in the field of rural adult education and ran the farm more as a sideline business (or hobby). His parents (especially his mother) were very interested in dialog process support, a communication method based on mindfulness, presence and mutual respect, used in social, educational and therapeutic work. Agriculture, education and communication therefore played an important role in the early life of the current farmer. (DE7B / Int. 2)

The current farmer studied agriculture, did a PhD (in the field of ecological agriculture and food culture) and hold a teaching degree. During his studies he got a deeper insight into Waldorf pedagogy and biodynamic agriculture. He has also spent some time abroad, which inspired him as well (DE7B / Int. 2).

Initially, his vision or goal was to establish community-supported agriculture on his farm. It was also important to him that his work was meaningful overall (DE7B / Int. 2) (for more on the motivations see section “Promoters, motivations and targets”).

The idea was also supported and implemented by his wife, who is a gardener and Waldorf teacher. His parents were still living at the farm and helping out sometimes. Especially the father needed to be convinced of the new approach. Since the farmer gave seminars at the time he came up with the idea, he was in touch with many young people who were enthusiastic about new ideas and sustainability. At the time, a few apartments were rented out on the farm. The tenant, a beekeeper, and his wife supported the farmer’s family at the beginning as well. The farmer applied for and received subsidies from The German Federal

Environmental Foundation (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt). They were beneficial at the very beginning and were mainly used for communicating the idea to the public.

At an early stage, the mayor of Bramsche also made a positive commitment to the project, which was important for any planning and approvals in cooperation with the administration (DE7B /Int. 2).

Although the idea was not taken seriously and was viewed rather sceptically by local politicians and possibly other farmers of conventional agriculture, the local population in the immediate surroundings reacted positively. Since the farmer and his wife were a long-established and well-known family in the local network (as opposed to being newcomers in the region and field of agriculture), the local community had a basic trust towards the changes made at the farm. Already on the first event, when information about the idea of community supported agriculture was given, the necessary number of members was recruited (DE7B /Int. 2).

The members of the CSA farm pick up their products on Fridays. As the members perceived this weekly event as an opportunity to bring their children to the farm and let them get in touch with animals, nutrition and agriculture, the idea of a kindergarten came up quickly from the members. This idea met with approval among the farming family, as they have a pedagogical background and appreciated the connection of agriculture and education. Thus, a kindergarten was established at the farm one year after it established community-supported agriculture. As the children grew older, the idea of a school came up and was established, too. The school needed a development plan for a new building, which posed a major challenge for the school foundation as German building law does not permit the construction of educational facilities outside of settlement areas. But through the close link to agriculture and a general support by the mayor, the construction project was carried out. Thus, the farm has developed into a place of education, agriculture and community (DE7B/Int. 2).

### Promoters, motivations and targets

After his training as a teacher and in agriculture, the farmer could not imagine working in conventional agriculture. A conventional teaching job using traditionally teacher-centered, non-participative methods was not an option for him either. He was looking for a lively living

and meeting space. He and his wife got to know community supported agriculture. It was important for them to understand agriculture not only as mass production, but rather as a new way of doing business, a cultural impulse and a different kind of togetherness.

To them, it is about meaningful activities with purpose resulting in their context. For the farmer, a meaningful context arises from the interrelationships with nature. Agriculture offers a lot of space for this. The educational aspect is understood in a similar way. Kindergarten and school should be places where activities are related to a meaningful context that can be experienced directly. In his opinion, agriculture is very suitable for this approach. He wanted to create an educational place where meaningful togetherness is possible, where creativity and the social aspects of togetherness are emphasised (DE7B/Int. 2).

In this case the initiator is the farmer himself, with his wife also strongly supporting the idea. At the beginning, the biggest supporters were the family members. Financially, funding from the Federal Environmental Foundation contributed to the start (for other actors, see the section "Actors", "Synergies and networks").

### Constraints and conflicts

The farmland is rather small and the buildings and infrastructure were not in the best condition, so some investments were needed in the beginning (DE7B/Int. 2).

For favourable conditions see section "Resources activated and adaptability".

## Actors involved

### Description of actors involved

At the beginning, the family played a crucial role in the implementation of the idea. The farmer's wife has the same educational background (agriculture and teaching) and similar goals. The farmer emphasizes that they developed the farm together. Furthermore, some of the tenants living on the farm property, especially the beekeeper, also accompanied and supported the idea (DE7B/Int. 2).

Public relations were done consciously from the beginning. The new approach to agriculture also aroused the interest of the media. Several television reports, newspaper articles and radio contributions were published. This contributed to the publicity of the CSA farm.

The German Federal Environmental Foundation funded the CSA Hof Pente for about three years: "The focus of the funding was on the one hand to test a model communication and education concept at the CSA Hof Pente and on the other hand to network, multiply and further develop this approach" (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

Of course, the members also play an important role. Currently, the CSA Hof has 350 members who purchase their products from the farm.

Even if the farmer himself is perhaps the driving force that represents the farm publicly, he strongly emphasizes the importance of his wife, the family and the constantly growing team of employees. Here, too, clear and open communication and good cooperation is emphasized (for more on this, please see section "Synergies and networking").

## Style of farming

### Resources activated and adaptability

Since this promising case is a farm succession, access to (mostly rounded) land and the farm was given (DE7B/Int. 2). Due to the fact that it was a succession within the family, there was already an existing network of the family and it may have been an advantage because the local community had a basic trust towards the family and was not as sceptical about a new idea (DE7B/Int.2). The expertise and knowledge of the successors that they had through their an agricultural and educational background was very helpful (DE7B/int. 2, DE7B/int. 36)

The communication was very deliberate and targeted. At the early stage the local press was informed, there were events on site and support from politicians (DE7B/Int.2). The German Federal Environmental Foundation founded the farm with 100,000 €, which was mainly used for communication and marketing. Furthermore, a small loan was needed to install greenhouses and infrastructure, because the farm was not in good condition.

### Farming approach

There are basically three core aspects that define the CSA farm Pente: Community, education and ecology.

The community aspect is clearly expressed in the community-supported agriculture, which is a cooperative business form. Private persons/households acquire a membership of the cooperative and pay a membership fee for a year. In return, they pick up locally produced, seasonal vegetables, eggs, bread and meat on a pick-up day each week (on Fridays). The membership fees are invested in machinery and wages for the employees, seedlings or seeds. Currently, the farm has about 350 members. It is furthermore important that members partake in decisions through their membership. These are openly discussed at regular events. This also makes the members feel jointly responsible for what happens on the farm. Thus, they are then not only consumers, but also producers.

The communal aspect is also expressed in the fact that the farm is a social meeting place. Many members appreciate the nice atmosphere on the pick-up day. They enjoy meeting people and connecting with each other. Over the years, friendships were established and new initiatives have been founded. Many of the members bring their children, too. They can

play with other children on the farm site and get in touch with nature and farming. Adults enjoy the farm site for local recreation, for example by having coffee (from the café run by members) or sitting in the sun. For many members from the city of Bramsche or Osnabrück this visit in the countryside has become a part of their weekly routine (DE7B/int.16, DE7B/int.16).

The educational aspect is expressed by the fact that the farm is a diverse place of education for all ages. On the one hand, there is a kindergarten and a school, in which teaching and learning take place in the sense of “Action Education”: “It is deeply rooted in the ideas of Waldorf education but freed from the conventions and limitations of a conventional school structure. It responds to the current environmental and educational crises” (Coghill 2021). The education in the kindergarten and the school is very closely linked to the (agricultural) activities on the farm. Moreover, there is a high demand for training and internships at the farm site and seminars are offered in adult education (for more on the pedagogical concept see section “Networking”).

Education for Sustainable Development is practiced on many levels at the farm. “ESD is a process that through experience creates an awareness for the future, for the impact of decisions and action today have for tomorrow” (Federal Ministry of Education and Research). In other words, the kind of education offered enables people to think and act in a way that tackles the challenges of our future. This is done through the direct educational offers mentioned above, but also through the direct experience of nature, agriculture, and nutrition of all members (DE7B/Int.2, DE7B/Int.3).

The theme of ecology is expressed through biodynamic agriculture, in which the climate, soils and resources are preserved. The farm produces under strict Demeter guidelines. Numerous individual measures for the organic farming are implemented of which the special care of the soil needs to be mentioned in more detail. This implies that chemical fertilizers are not used and, as specialty in Pente, the soil is cultivated by horses. Secondly, great importance is attached to biodiversity. This means that the cultivation is strongly fragmented as many different types of vegetables are grown on a small area, which is beneficial for the local flora and fauna (Interview Hartkemeyer).

All processes are linked to the 17 „Sustainable Development Goals“ of the United Nations (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

In order to perpetuate the efforts of the farm, the community foundation Hof Pente was established. It serves the promotion of landscape conservation, nature conservation, education and civic engagement. The property of the foundation (land) as well as the lease proceeds are used permanently for this purpose. "It secures organic farmland through land acquisition, promotes the further development of cultivation methods that protect the soils such as horse work, initiates campaigns, provides information and gives a voice to organic farmers. In addition, the foundation initiates educational projects with an action-oriented educational approach." (CSA Hof Pente GbR; author's translation)

### Innovation introduced and transferability

After the farm succession, the first step was to transform the farming according to Demeter principles. For more on this see next section "Environmental issues".

In addition, the new cooperative form of community-supported agriculture was chosen. "In this concept, the food from the farm is no longer sold on the market, but flows into a transparent economic cycle that is organized and financed by the members.[...] All marketing costs are eliminated. In this way, members and producers shape the farming and food culture together and share responsibility for food production and landscape development" (CSA Hof Pente GbR; author's translation).

There are opportunities to get to know farm life and the work with plants and animals for all members and especially for children. This creates a meaningful transparency for all participants (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

The greatest innovation is the establishment of the farm as a place of education. The consistent combination of agriculture, nature conservation, community and education is unique. The boundaries between these fields become meaningfully blurred. Not only is the farm a place of education, but the pedagogical concept behind it was highlighted, especially during the stakeholder workshops. More on action education see section "Synergies and Networking".

The CSA farm Pente sees agriculture and sustainable development as an engine to drive innovation and transformation. Therefore, the farm has many national and international partnerships and consults other interested institutions (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

## Environmental Issues

CSA Farm Pente farms under Demeter principles, implementing many measures to protect and revitalise the soil and biodiversity.

Biodynamic agriculture is the first official organic agriculture and dates back to the basic ideas of Steiner. He was looking for social and just ways of farming. The goal of biodynamic farming is:

-  agriculture as active care of nature,
-  the production of healthy food,
-  the development of new forms of social coexistence (CSA Hof Pente GbR)

The idea that the farm is considered as an organism involving consumers is central (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

A specialty at the CSA farm Pente is the usage of horses for cultivation of the farmland and foregoing the usage of large agricultural machinery as much as possible.

Since the owner of the farm has an academic background, he maintains good relations with research institutions. The environmental effects of the activities at the farm were evaluated in several studies.

In a research project on true cost accounting, all internal and external costs (e.g. as environmental impacts/costs) were taken into account. This study quantified the "true costs" of agricultural production and evaluated them transparently based on recognized models (CSA Hof Pente GbR). The results show that the CSA farm Pente generates a benefit compared to conventional farming, which generates a detriment (DE7B/int. 2, Kreisel 2019). Furthermore, there was an ornithological study, which examined how the conversion to biodynamic agriculture affects bird diversity. It was found that the diversity of species has increased significantly (DE7B/int. 2, Hammerschmidt 2016).

## Synergies and networking

### Relationships with the local community

The local community was strongly involved from the beginning by communicating openly and transparently. This is one of the farmer's basic principles. For example, the press was involved at an early stage. The local community reacted mostly positively to the new idea. The members were all acquired at the very first information event. This was also due to the fact that the farming family was locally known and connected regionally (DE7B/ Int.2).

A good community is very important to the farmers and valued by the members themselves. On the farm, all members have the opportunity to use the common facilities on the farm site, e.g. the communal kitchen as a café or the school auditorium for making music together.

### Synergies enabled

The individual characteristics of the farmers facilitated the creation of synergies. The fact that both farmers have an agricultural and a pedagogical background was advantageous for combining education and farming. From the beginning, the farmer had strong connections to young people through his professional activity. Since the farmer has an academic background, he appreciates research and being involved in research projects (More about this can be taken from the next chapter).

Some of the former employees of the CSA farm Pente have started their own CSA farm in the region. They have used the CSA farm Pente to gain experience and imitated the idea afterwards.

### Networking

In many interviews, it was emphasized that the farmer is a very skilled networker. He is a good listener and talented at recognizing commonalities and using synergies (DE7B/Int.3, DE7B/int.7, DE7B/Int.40). He always tries to integrate the actions and activities of the farm into larger processes and the societal context. Thus, he actively seeks new networks and

partnerships (DE7B/Int.2, CSA Hof Pente GbR). Accordingly, the farm, he and his employees are active in many networks.

A few significant networks are briefly described below.

The farmer, together with three other people, founded the working group „Action Education“ (Handlungspädagogik) (DE7B / Int. 2). Action education aims to allow children to participate in everyday activities and actions of adults rather than educating them using frontal teaching methods. The meaningful actions of adults are deemed worthy of imitation by the children. The child, who lives in the surrounding of these activities, then practices self-education (AG Handlungspädagogik).

Der CSA farm Pente is a cooperation partner of the UNESCO Nature and Geopark TERRA vita. The UNESCO Nature and Geopark TERRA vita is “the first German, large-scale protected nature reserve in the UNESCO-sponsored, worldwide Geopark network” (TERRA.vita 2021). It mainly focuses on the following issues

-  Nature conservation and landscape preservation
-  Sustainable tourism
-  Education and communication
-  Sustainable regional development

Within the framework of educational work, the park aims to teach the conscientious handling of the environment and natural resources. For this purpose, the park cooperates with various organizations that provide education for sustainable development and enable an experience of nature. One such organization is the CSA Hof Pente (TERRA.vita 2021).

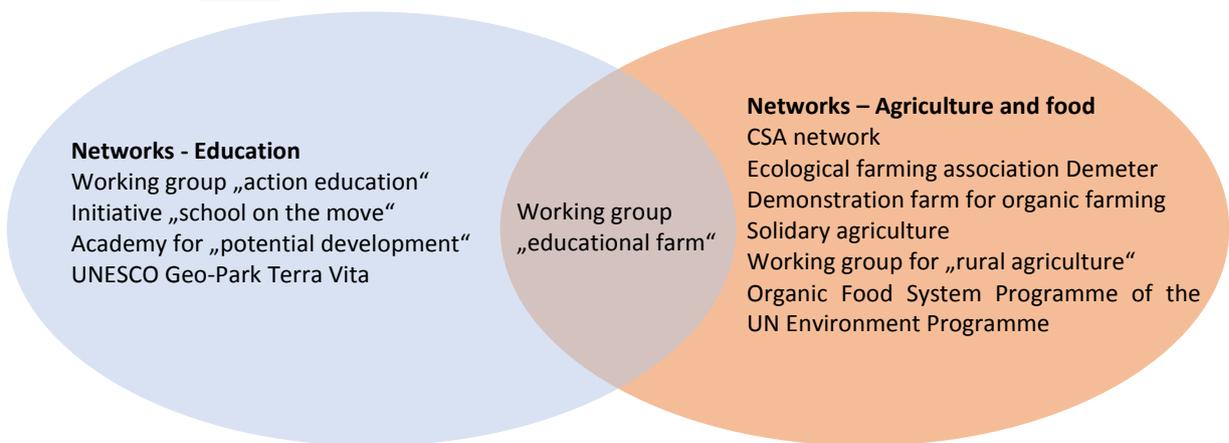
The CSA farm Pente is a practice partner of the Organic Food System Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

As already mentioned, the CSA farm Pente is involved in research projects, as the farmers both have an academic background. It is actively involved in the research project series “nascent”, in which contributions and the potential of transformative economic forms in the food sector are investigated. This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Antoni-Komar and Rommel 2021).

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The aim of the project "Transparenz schaffen" ("creating transparency") is, on the one hand, to enable and support farmers and companies in the food industry to establish contacts and learn about consumer expectations. On the other hand, the project aims to raise more awareness for their production methods and to introduce the products to consumers as well as the whole region. This project is funded by the EU and managed by the Chamber of Agriculture (Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Saxony 2021).

The figure below shows a more detailed overview of the various networks.



**Figure 2 Networks of the CSA farm Pente**

Source: Own illustration based on (CSA Hof Pente GbR)

## Policies and institutional supports

### Policies

For the construction of the school it was necessary to retrace a landscape conservation area and to draft a development plan. In the matter, CSA Pente faced difficulties with the interpretation of the building law as to whether a school serves the purpose of agriculture. However, his was finally approved after a controversially led discussion of the local politics. The mayor, who was appreciating the CSA farm Pente, positively influenced this process. It became clear that the definition of "agriculture" must be rethought in legal terms (DE7B/Int. 2).

The interviewed persons demanded that conventional agriculture (intensive factory farming, monocultures) should receive less financial support and agriculture should be rethought towards small-scale, regional supply structures (DE7B/Int. 3, DE7B/Int.6).

In addition, access to land should be easier (DE7B/Int.3, DE7B/Int.16).

### Institutional support

As mentioned in section "Actors involved", the German Federal Environmental Foundation funded the CSA Hof Pente for about three years, mainly for the purpose of communication. Moreover, the mayor of the city of Bramsche supported the farm, which was advantageous for formal processes.

## Impact and perspectives

### Impacts on rural regeneration and generation renewal

The CSA farm Pente is not just a farm, but a holistic organisation that implements sustainability principles conceptually and practically in an exemplary manner. It combines and transforms farming, production, trade, consumption, nutrition, early childhood education, school education, vocational training, culture and community. It comprehensively implements the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. All stakeholders (the employees, the members of the cooperatie, the parents of the kindergarten, the trainees and interns, the teachers and parents of the school children) participate in the development process of the farm and the learning place CSA farm Pente. In this way, learning together and from each other is promoted and developed as the basis of all processes.

Through all these efforts, the farm and its philosophy are compatible with overall societal transformation processes.

### Economic impacts

THE CSA Hof Pente creates a new, regional food supply system that strengthens the regional cycle. It fosters resilience, as the newly established food supply is independent of global market developments. Especially during the COVID19-pandemic, the members did not had to fear to be affected by global gridlock and border closures.

Compared to conventional farming, the CSA farm Pente creates many jobs per hectare of farmland. Approximately 20 people work on 36 hectares of farmland. Before the succession, the farm did not even provide a livelihood for one family. The costs and risks that a farmer would otherwise bear (e.g., weather extremes and crop failures) are now shared by the community. The same applies to the benefits.

### Environmental and ecological impacts

The CSA Hof Pente has a positive impact on the environment. If the internal and external costs are monetised, the organic farming results in a positive benefit (Interview Hartkemeyer). The organic farming is carried out according to strict Demeter principles. The

cultivation of the soil with workhorses is particularly noteworthy. In this way, the soil is neither compacted nor altered as much as it would be through cultivating with large agricultural machinery. In addition, there is a great variety of vegetables grown. More than 50 varieties are cultivated on a small scale on a fairly small area. This promotes biodiversity, especially bird diversity, in the immediate surrounding. This was confirmed in an ornithological study (DE7B/Int.2).

In addition, many people are educated on the farm with regard to sustainable development.

## Social impacts

CSA Hof Pente is approved as an educational institution and in the course of time a kindergarten, a school and training places have been established. These offers enhance the conventional education system. Action-oriented learning based on real-life, ecological issues is firmly anchored on the farm.

A place of encounter was created, strengthening social cohesion. In addition to the products, many members seem to appreciate this the atmosphere at CSA Pente in which they can socialise. Most members are pleased about the possibility of contact and exchange to other members and the farmers, which they are however not obliged to take advantage of. Families enjoy having their children experience a "storybook farm" and connect directly with healthy eating, organic farming and community. The shared responsibility and the opportunities for co-design and participation strengthen the sense of belonging and social cohesion.

## Perspectives

Many interviewees see great potential in the CSA farm Pente and in the concept of community-supported farming. The farm has developed very positively for about 10 years. Moreover, the number of CSA farms is increasing overall. Since the founding of the CSA farm, other farms in the region have been founded according to similar principles, in part by former employees. There is therefore a great potential for transfer.

In order to secure the future of the farm and a sustainable agriculture, the joint foundation was founded. Land worth about 210.000 € was donated by the CSA members, the farming



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family and a retired farmer from the neighborhood. The objective is to secure the acquisition of organic land, to further develop soil-conserving cultivation methods and to inform and support organic farmers in representing their interests (CSA Hof Pente GbR).

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## Annex 1 – The list of interviews

Code	Interviewee (Pseudonym)	Gender	Role	Place and date of the interview
DE7B/Int. 1	Stephan Richter	Male	researcher	Via phone; 18.09.2020
DE7B/Int. 2	Philipp Hertz	Male	farmer	Via phone; 06.10.2020
DE7B/Int. 3	Marco Hoffmann	Male	partner from a network	Via phone; 13.10.2020
DE7B/Int. 4	Simone Diederich	Female	farmer	Via phone; 05.11.2020
DE7B/Int. 5	Marco Maur	Male	partner from a network	Via phone; 16.11.2020
DE7B/Int. 6	Christine Reinhard	Female	local practitioner	Via phone; 09.12.2020
DE7B/Int. 7	Eric Kaiser	Male	partner from a network	Via phone; 09.12.2020
DE7B/Int. 8	Jonas Kunze	Male	local practitioner	Via phone; 09.12.2020
DE7B/Int. 9	Ralph Schiffer	Male	partner, practitioner	Via phone; 16.12.2020
DE7B/Int. 10	Ulrich Lehrer	Male	partner from a network	Via phone; 18.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 11	Peter Bürger	Male	educator, practitioner	Via phone; 20.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 12	Juliane Neustadt	Female	educator	Via phone; 22.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 13	Alexander Freud	Male	local politician	Via phone; 22.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 14	Gabriele Scherer	Female	researcher	Via phone; 27.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 15	René Unger	Male	employee	Via phone; 28.01.2021
DE7B/Int. 16	Paul Drescher	Male	(regional) politician	Via phone; 10.02.2021
DE7B/Int. 17	Max Schultheiss	Male	educator	Via phone; 11.03.2021
DE7B/Int. 18	Daniela Achen	Female	practitioner	Via phone; 22.12.2021
DE7B/Int. 19	Gabriele Walter	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 20	Alexander Adler	Male	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 21	Stephanie Kaufmann	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 22	Susanne Rothstein	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 23	Nadine Friedman	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 24	Heike Schweizer Steffen Wurfel	Female, male	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 25	Janina Hirsch	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 26	Susanne Eisenberg	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 27	Lisa Friedmann	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 28	Lisa Bader	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 29	Sophia Vogt	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 30	Jennifer Bader	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 31	Yvonne Hoffmann	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 32	Daniela Weiß	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 33	Leonie Eichel	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 34	Barbara Eisenberg	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 35	Sara Frei	Female	employee	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 36	Lena Fuhrmann	Female	farmer	Bramsche, 12.03,2021

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DE7B/Int. 37	Barbara Konig	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 38	Laura Kluge	Female	employee	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 39	Claudia Bar	Female	member	Bramsche, 12.03,2021
DE7B/Int. 40	Marcel Freitag	Male	partner from a network	Via phone; 07.04.2021

**Table 2. Interviews**