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Mobile hen houses and high-tech: the AUGA Group

Clemens Klein



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Humongous amounts of greenhouse gases, high water consumption, the contamination of soil and water by excessive use of pesticides and fertilisers and by pollutants and drugs from industrial livestock breeding, and the destruction of biodiversity are only some of the points of criticism levied against conventional agriculture.

The AUGA Group, a Lithuanian company that is one of the biggest vertically integrated organic agricultural companies in Europe, has proof that things can work differently. Following crop rotation, it cultivates vegetables, mushrooms, legumes, and grain on 38,000 hectares.

The crop is processed and sold as well as used as feed for dairy cows and chickens, which in turn provide the farms with valuable fertiliser. The straw from the grain harvest is mixed with chicken manure, which makes a perfect fertiliser for growing mushrooms (i.e. the original core business of the company).

Mobile hen houses

In livestock breeding, AUGA also relies on innovative technologies that it has developed in-house. Mobile hen houses conserve the grassland and ensure species-appropriate animal housing much like the lighting systems that simulate sunrise and sunset.

On the dairy farms, the company uses mobile milking platforms so as to be able to milk the cows on the pasture without affecting the grazing routine of the animals. The power that runs the facilities is almost exclusively generated by renewable sources, partially from in-house solar and wind power plants.

At the moment, the company is also involved in the development of a tractor that runs on biogas which is sourced from the excretion of the animals. The goal is to run all agricultural equipment of the group on biogas from in-house production (i.e. from cow and chicken dung) and thus to drastically reduce the greenhouse emissions from livestock breeding.

“Fortune favours fools“

What sounds like an almost perfect circular economy from a sustainable perspective also makes sense economically. Whereas organic food yields are generally much lower per surface area – which is offset by higher prices – the company manages to achieve a surface yield similar to that of conventional farms on the back of in-house-produced organic fertiliser, innovative farming technologies, and a high degree of automatisisation.

Which shows: fortune does not always favour fools.

Infografik Fleisch

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