

Case study “Business cooperation for reducing non-point-pollution from agriculture”

Lake Constance is a drinking water reservoir for more than 4.5 million people in Switzerland and Southern Germany. Close to the German lakeshore about 1.600 farms are cultivating apples and other fruits on 7.800 hectares. The intensive production provokes high charges of nitrogen, phosphor and pesticides. There were intensive conflicts and almost no cooperation between apple producers and conservationists during the last 30 years.

In 2010 Bodensee-Stiftung started a project together with REWE Group (Europe’s third biggest food trading company), Obst vom Bodensee (association of fruit farmers) and local beekeeping and nature conservation organisations. REWE demands apples with a better environmental and biodiversity quality for its brand “Best Alliance”. The project goals are to reduce the environmental impact of apple production (pesticides and fertilizers) and to enhance biodiversity (especially bees and other insects) on these intensively cultivated areas. The main measures are

1. to adapt and to implement an environmental management system for apple and fruit farms
2. to develop and to implement bee-friendly measures (food and habitats) on apple and fruit farmland

The project partners try to combine the implementation of environmental and biodiversity management on farmland with local landscape plans and biotope network management. Due to REWEs incentive there are new chances to reduce the ecological impact of apple production on drinking water and to create better food and habitat offerings for bees and other insects. Especially new apple tree plantations have high potentials. Farmers accept the ecological measures much better than enforced measures by law. They are highly motivated to enhance their ecological and biodiversity performance because REWE, as there most important trading partner, will communicate farmer’s efforts at the point of sale. The close and trustful cooperation with the consulting experts from Obst vom Bodensee will cause a competent and fast dissemination of best-practise.

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