



Newsletter 2010

Dear Friends and Supporters of IVA-Farm

In this edition:

<i>The New Haybarn</i>	1
<i>Strawberries in November weather</i>	2
<i>Better never than too late...</i>	2
<i>Preparation meetings</i>	2
<i>Mangulitz'a's Palace</i>	3
<i>Coming and going animals</i>	3
<i>Land in view :-)</i>	3
<i>What is to be expected for 2011?</i>	4

Although we have had a very heavy year, we are pleased to tell you that our IVA-Farm is growing steadily.

This yearly newsletter intends to give an overview of the happenings and developments of the farm in the last year 2010 and the preview on planned and often surprising actions in the coming year 2011.

We wish you a happy, healthy and joyful 2011!!! And hereby we thank the uncountable number of helpers that stayed for a shorter or longer period of time at IVA-Farm and all the supporters of the farm.



Hannab, Elise, Nata, Vivienne and Boudewijn

The new Haybarn

In March 2010 the season started with the construction of the new hay barn for which Cyriel Kegels and Wim Rikken came again from Holland. In spite of all the rains that fell this month the building was finished within the planned three weeks period. Miroslav Filipović the son of our neighbor helped gratefully. The two level building gives roof to the main agricultural machines in the down part and a closable shed space for boxes, tools and small machines. The upper level is meant for storing hay and straw.

- The best strawberries of Belgrade
- A wet year with little production
- New, dry places for hay, machines and pigs
- New land: a generous gift
- Plans for the future: Busha cows





At Pentecost we found five quail eggs.

Strawberries in November weather

In spite of all the rains and the late start of the season, the agricultural and garden year 2010 started good with a big spring harvest and early start of the market thanks to the cultures we plant in October/November surviving the winter. April became critical: after three dry days followed some rain days that brought a lot of moisture. Also then we still managed to sow and plant in between the rains fast all the cultures. But in may we lost our mood when we had to harvest in cold and rainy weather the late ripening strawberries and lost almost two third of the harvest. The 500kg saved strawberries counted as the best on the Zeleni Venac market and were the only ones that didn't need to be washed since we use straw under the berry plants.

The rest of the garden season became a real catastrophe: the rain didn't stop anymore and we couldn't help seeing our nice growing cultures turning yellow one after the other due to dying roots caused by the high water level. After digging channels and replanting without success we ended the market season already in July in order to have enough for the needs of the workers on the farm in wintertime.

Better never than too late...

On the agricultural fields it didn't look much better. The rain destroyed the clover plants on the slopes sown the autumn before. We had to sow them again in spring. For sowing the vetches-and-oat-mixture we couldn't come early enough on the land, since the fields were inaccessible by the heavy machines. Our dear neighbor Ljubiša Filipović complained that he daily had to tow several tractors out of their land, getting stuck somewhere in the mud.

Because of these late sowings and high temperatures in between the rain falls in June the vetches-and-oat-mixture didn't succeed. And so we had at hay time a lot of wild grass (green foxtail and 2m high cockspur) for cutting. Since these high grasses don't dry easily we found out the bales started to burn inside and we had to open them all in the backyard and pile the hay after drying. The rye harvest gave us only 300kg from 0,7ha land so we decided to save on costs and the rest 0,7ha which had even less grain, not to harvest. But the result gave us good grain for the next season.

The season was so wet that our dear neighbor Ljubiša Filipović complained that he daily had to tow several tractors out of their land, getting stuck somewhere in the mud.



Mixing preparation p500: horn manure

Preparation meetings

In may we organized the 3rd biodynamic preparation meeting in which more than 20 people participated. The preparations that were buried in September 2009 were dug out. And the nettle and hornquartz preparation were dug in the soil. Unfortunately there was no meeting in September 2010 since the high air moisture during drying time of the preparation flowers made them become mould. Apart from dandelion we managed to save just enough for our own surfaces.

Mangulitza's Palace

The decreased demands of the garden gave us time in June to work on the fundament and floor of the extension of the pig stable. In October the building could be used by our mangulitza pigs Fine, Banja and Iko, that were happy not to stay outside during the cold winter. With the building were helping Nebojša with the floor, Cyriel and several volunteers with the walls and temporarily flat roof, and Hannah Schaffran, Elise Ewald and her father Thomas Lüttich with mortaring. The result looked like a real pig palace.



Our mangulitza sow Fine in the new stable.

Coming and going animals

Tango, our huge grown boar, went this summer to a neighboring mangulitza breeder from whom we got a young boar for further breeding.



Two of the new-born Sjenička lambs

In the mixed sheep and goat stable a lot of young goat and sheep lambs were born, some mothers even giving a triplet! And so we had a lovely 9 little goats and 5 lambs jumping around. While writing this newsletter at the other side of the wall two new goats are being born.

We found out that breeding chickens in the natural way—with a mother on the nest—is far more efficient than buying machine hatched chicks. To be precise: of all the 60 artificially bred chicks not a single one survived whereas the naturally grown ones gave us 10 new chickens.



While writing this newsletter at the other side of the wall two new goats are being born.

Land in view :-)

While in autumn preparing the land for the winter we got from our neighbor Borivoj Đuričić the wonderful offer to buy his 1,6ha big field with a small piece of forest. We agreed immediately even though we didn't know how to realize that financially. And, as planned by higher forces, some days later we got the offer of Floor Kegels, aunt of Boudewijn, of an annual donation which exactly covers the sum of the land which we pay in two years. All together we expanded to 11½ha land.



New land for the future of biodynamic agriculture in Srbija

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What is to be expected for 2011?

In October 2010 came Zoran Vučinić alias Zoki from Montenegro to us. Because he wants to stay for a longer time in order to learn biodynamic agriculture we started to restore a weekend house 2½km further in the village that we got to use for free from a family from Belgrade so he can live there in 2011. He works with medicinal plants and natural healing methods and wants to start with bees at our fields. Furthermore Hannah stays with us until mid next year as student of the Free biodynamic education of Germany. And in February we expect our child to be born with help of a midwife from Belgrade.

The traditional building activities with Cyriel and Wim are already planned for the springtime. The old house will be enlarged with a new living space and the current living will become extension of the kitchen. The planning is a bit complicated since Boudewijn tries to fit the extension to the existing building style and the surroundings and to connect the old with the new house.

More building activities are planned for the summer – that according to the prognoses will be wet again. For the first three **buša cows** that we want to buy in spring we will need a small cow stable that can be used for the expanding sheep herd when the cow herd needs a bigger stable as well. Buša, also known as Bosnian or Illyrian cow, is a small, domestic race belonging to the short horn cows (*Bos Brachyceros Europaeus*) with different breeding lines spread over the Balkans. The skin color varies from red, black, gray until silverblue in the south regions. The cows are small and compact weighing between 230kg and 270kg, the bulls are bigger with a body mass between 340kg and 430kg. They are very resistant to diseases on which modern cows easily get sick and they don't have high demands in food. In relation to their body size the average 1,4 liter/day milk production of the buša cow over 260days/year is very satisfying, especially regarding to it's high quality.

The cows mean a further step into closing the circle of the agricultural organism. Since buying manure is expensive and complicated and it never has the same quality as it can have on our farm, we decided to start with cows. For the expanding of the cow herd we urgently need to find financial sources to buy more land, a serious cow stable and a dairy. Time is pressing, since the prices are going up with the EU-integration in view.

We start the year 2011 with the growth of batatas (sweet potato) with which we might replace the potato in future when the batata manages to grow well here. It demands some improvisational talent to grow their young plants under the right conditions.

Furthermore we hope to get a better season in 2011 with changed planting times and methods. And we thank once more all our helpers and wish you a healthy new year.



*Buša cow in Zasavica
Special Natural Reserve*