



Hohenlohe brother calf initiative



THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Cow-fed calf rearing is a particular form of calf husbandry on dairy farms. The calves stay with the cows for three months and drink from the udder. They have space to move around and have social contact within the herd. Some calves remain on the farm after the cow-fed rearing period and become dairy cows themselves, the other calves go to slaughter. The meat of these calves is sold under a premium label.



The high animal welfare standard of cow-fed rearing as well as the short transportation time to the slaughterhouse are additional values of the product. Several farms associated with the 'Geifertshofen Village Dairy' apply this system. The additional costs for the farmers and the dairy are significant. To ensure economic viability is a major challenge for everyone involved in the value chain. The Geifertshofen cheese dairy has therefore set up a coordination office together with the Hohenlohe Bruderkalb Initiative and organic associations and the Schwäbisch Hall Producers' Association. Anja Frey is the value chain manager. She advises the farms on all issues related to cow-fed calf rearing,

organises training events, takes care of marketing and informs customers. Anja applied this system years ago when she was a farmer. She adjusted the management steadily during her own learning-by-doing period.

THE IMPACTS OF INNOVATION

Anja's approach was new in the area. She inspired other farmers, in particular female farmers. She became a multiplier for many years, even before the foundation of the regional marketing initiative.



She engaged in the alignment of forces of the different organisations and pushed forward for the development of the joint label. This label and the associated marketing activities ensure cost-covering market prices of male and female calves from organic dairy farming. Anja and her colleagues also engage with policymakers, and already provided advice for the development of a new support measure.

USEFUL LINKS

<https://dorfkaeserei.de/heumilch/bruderkalb>

<https://www.demeter-bw.de/bruderkalb-initiative-gewinnt>