

SHEPHERD APPRENTICESHIP IN GERMANY

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As in other countries, sheep and shepherding is part of the agricultural training. People wishing to become certified farmers can choose to specialise in various branches whereas sheep rearing and shepherding is a specialisation in the animal husbandry branch. It is an official apprenticeship including academic and practical work on sheep rearing farms. Nowadays there are about 1,000 professional, full-time shepherds in Germany working throughout the country.



ORGANISATION

Structure

The first year is only academic and is completed with all apprentices in the field of animal husbandry. For the second and third year, apprentices work on farms while they attend block courses at agricultural schools. At the end of the apprenticeship, participants are examined with practical and written exams. The apprenticeship normally lasts three years, but people who have previously completed an apprenticeship or higher education can skip the first year.

Location

The courses of the apprenticeship can be attended at various agricultural schools, for example Triesdorf in Bavaria and Saalekreis in Saxony-Anhalt. The practical part can be completed at any certified farm.

Language

German.

Established

The apprenticeship was initiated for the first time in 1976. It has been running in its current format since 2005.

Average number of participants each year

Around 70 apprentices in the whole country with between ten and fifteen graduating each year.

Degree

Participants who pass the final exams (written and practical) get the title “Tierwirt Fachrichtung Schäferei”, an officially recognised degree. If a shepherd works for at least 1.5 times the time required for the apprenticeship, he or she can attend the final exam to obtain the professional title of professional sheep keeper.

Focus animal species

Sheep, with some general knowledge about other livestock. Emphasis is also placed on sheep dogs and guarding flocks.

Profile of the participants

As it is an apprenticeship, most of the participants are young people whose parents have a farm with sheep. About half of the participants are women.



OVERVIEW

Year 1

General courses at agricultural schools about agriculture, animal husbandry, animal health and welfare, administrative procedures, environmental conservation, ecology and sustainability. Damage prevention measures (fences and livestock guarding dogs) are only briefly addressed during one day of the apprenticeship.

Years 2 and 3

Working on officially recognised farms as apprentices with block-courses at agricultural schools. The block-courses focus on:

1. Sheep keeping;
2. Lambing and upbringing;
3. Production of wool, milk and meat;
4. Shepherding/sheep guarding;
5. Pastoralism, fodder production;
6. Environmental conservation and landscape maintenance.

Statistics of the trainees:

www2.bibb.de/bibbtools/de/ssl/1871.php?fulltextSbmt=anzeigen&src=berufesuche&keyword=Tierwirt

Further information

www.bildungsserveragrar.de > Ausbildung > Tierwirt

www.lfl.bayern.de > Berufsbildung > Tierwirtin, Tierwirt Schäferei

www.bbs-saalekreis.bildung-lsa.de > Schulform > Berufsschule > Tierwirt/in für Schäferei