

# Consulting of Humus Management – Examples of Lower Austria

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Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Austria

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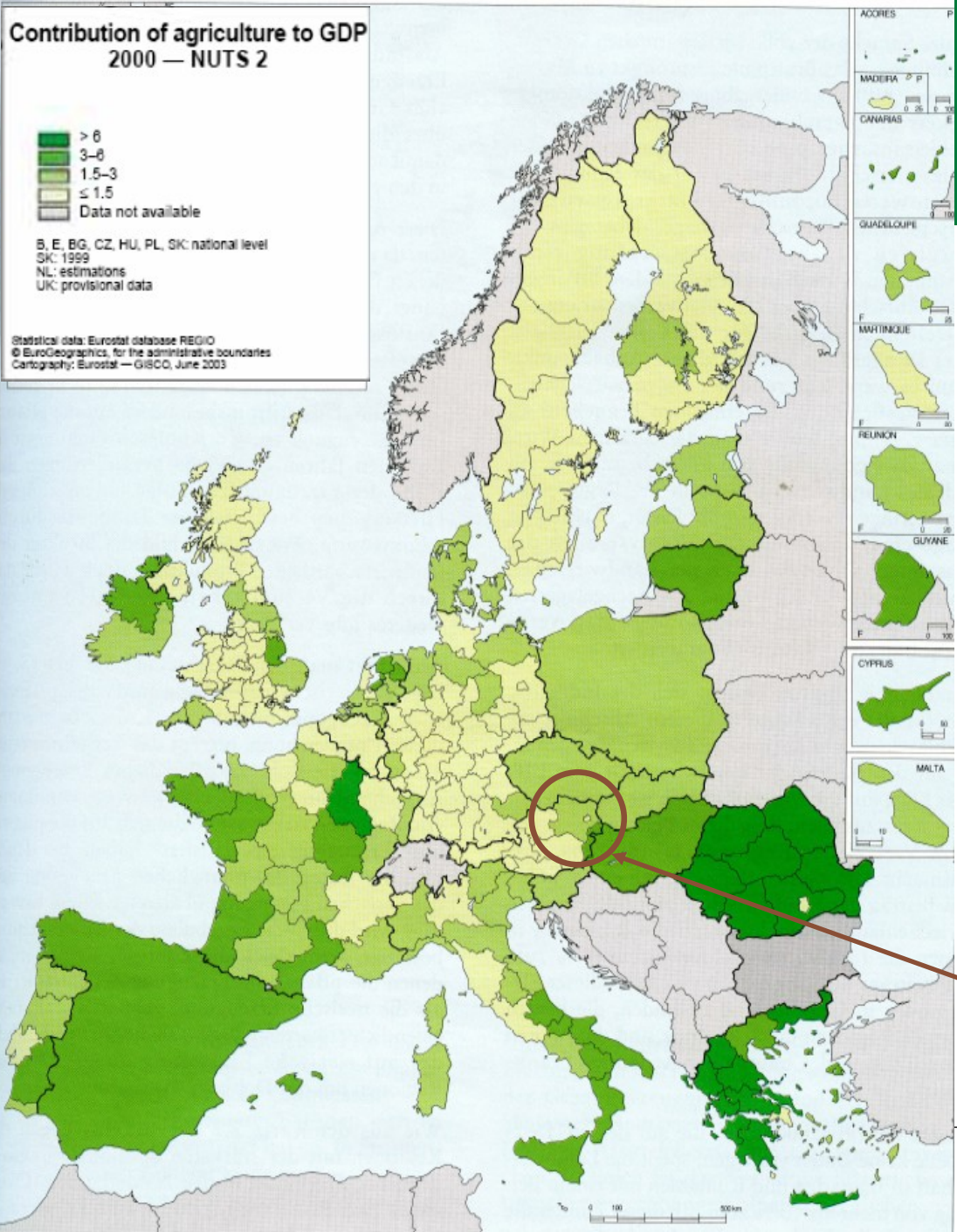
landwirtschaftskammer  
niederösterreich

# Contribution of agriculture to GDP 2000 — NUTS 2



B, E, BG, CZ, HU, PL, SK: national level  
SK: 1999  
NL: estimations  
UK: provisional data

Statistical data: Eurostat database REGIO  
© EuroGeographics, for the administrative boundaries  
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, June 2003



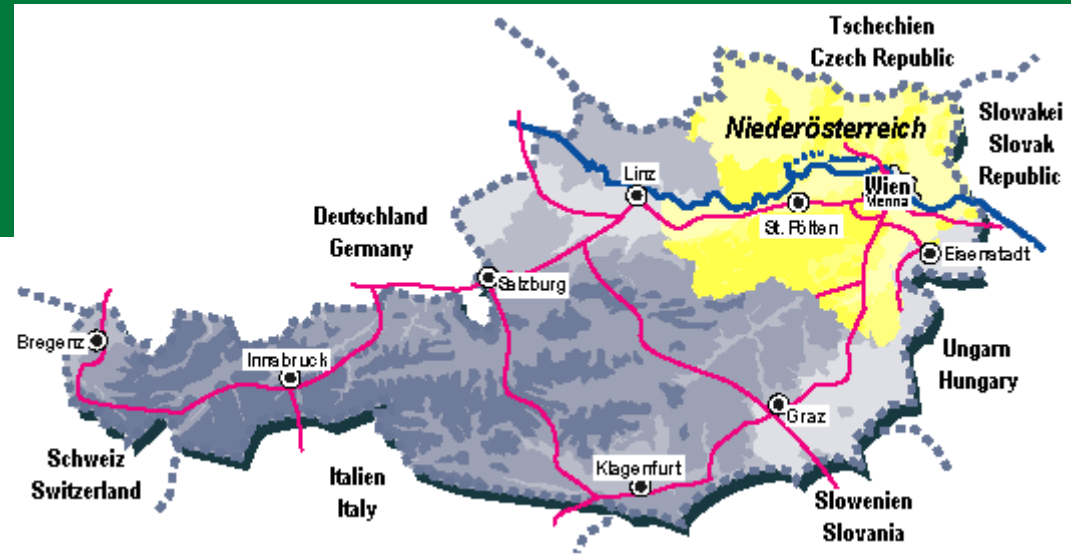
Agriculture in Lower Austria is very important for the food production in Austria because of the natural conditions of production and the size of the state.

Lower Austrian agriculture contributes 3.7 % to the gross domestic product.

Lower Austria

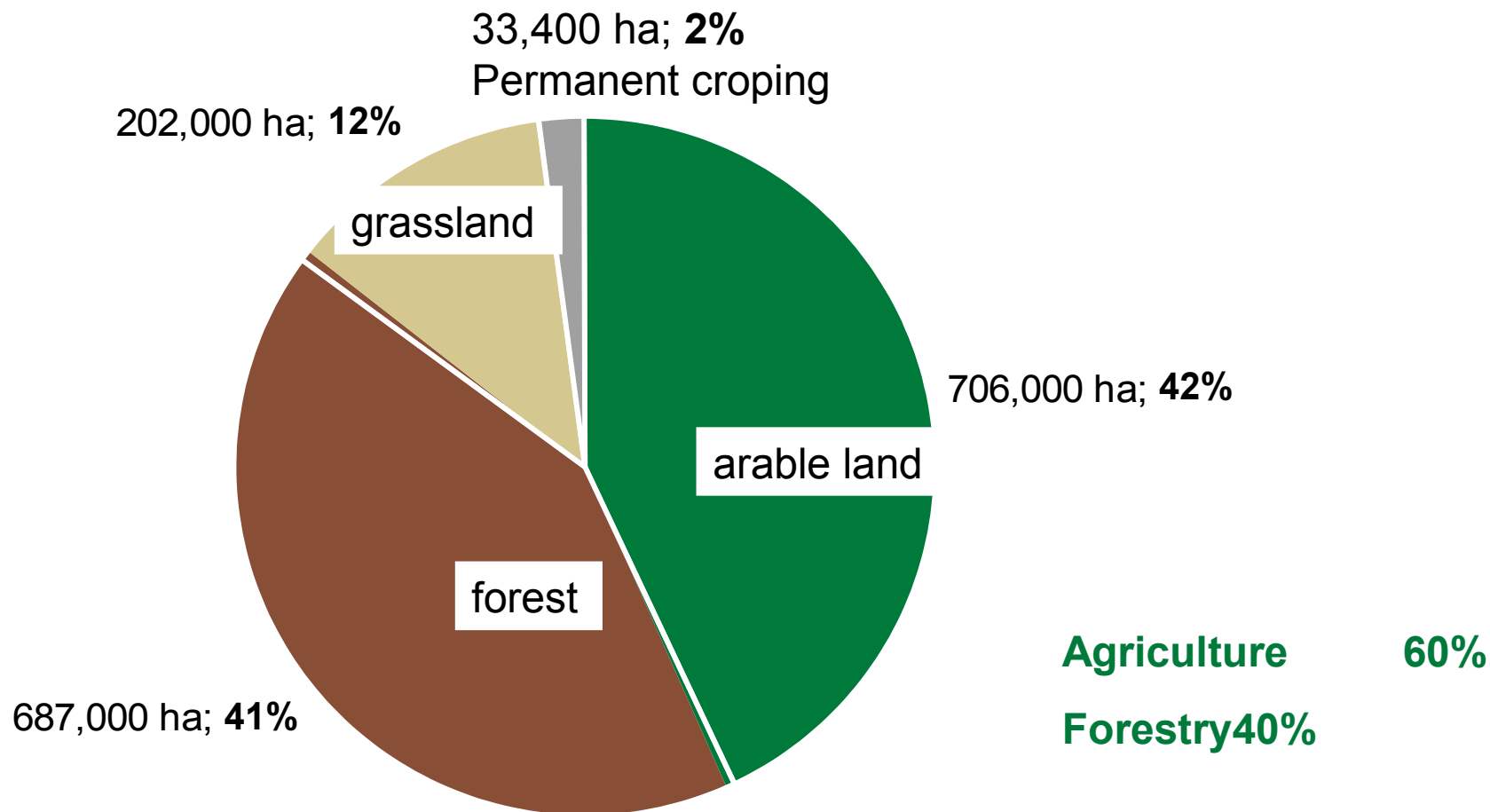
Source: EU

# Lower Austria – Main facts



	Lower Austria	Austria	Share in Austria
Area	19,174 km <sup>2</sup>	83,900 km <sup>2</sup>	23%
Population	1.55 million	8.08 million	19%
Agricultural area	941,231 ha	3,267,833 ha	29%
Wooded area	686,767 ha	3,310,330 ha	21%
Persons employed in agriculture & forestry	126,000 (7.8%)	521,000 (4.8%)	24%
Gross production of agriculture	1.61 billion EUR	5.42 billion EUR	30%

# Distribution of land use for agriculture and forestry in Lower Austria – 1,681,000 ha



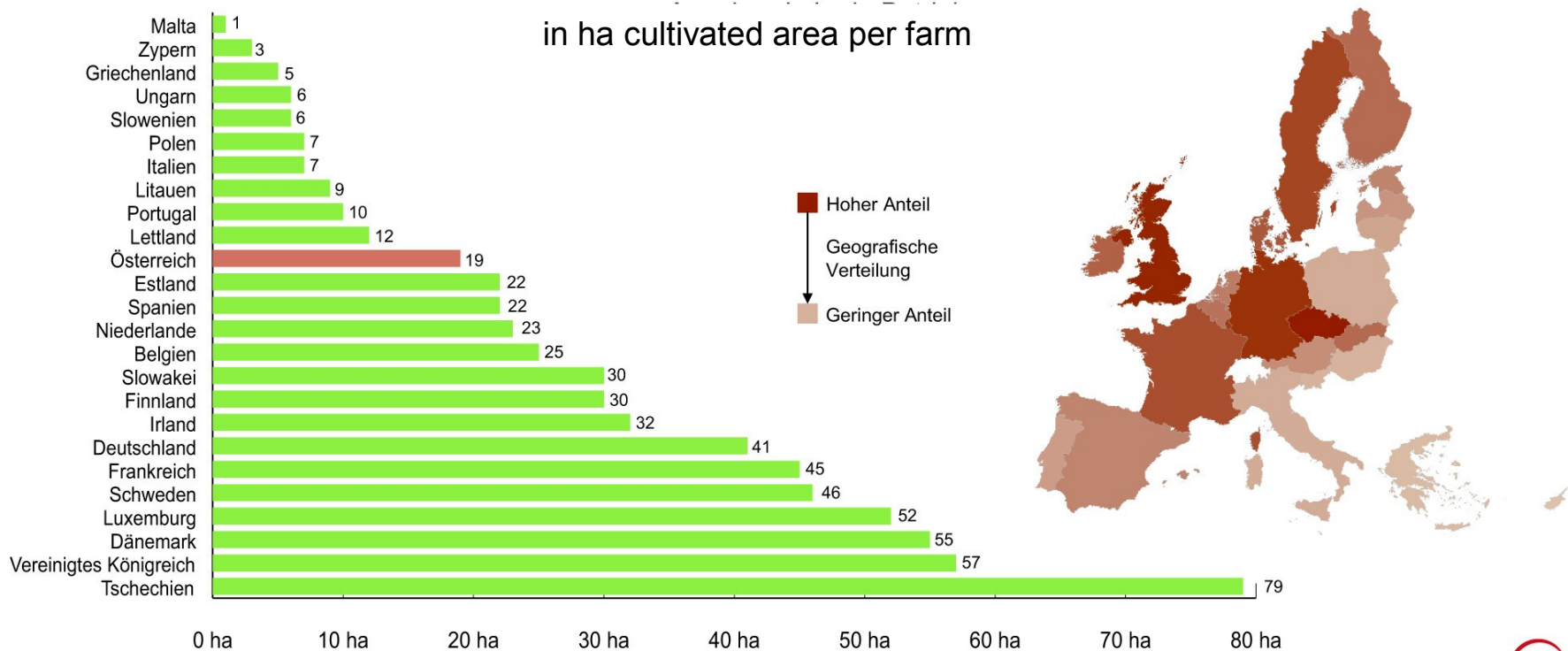
Source: Statistik Austria

# Lower Austrian farmers share of the total Austrian agricultural production 2006

	Austria	Lower Austria	Share of Lower Austria in %
potatoes	654.621 t	540.637 t	83 %
sugar beet <sup>1)</sup>	2.587.467 t	1.924.248 t	74 %
wheat	1.396.300 t	884.299 t	63 %
rye	93.786 t	56.119 t	59 %
wine	2.256.297 hl	1.286.846 hl	57 %
barley	914.052 t	525.559 t	57 %
oat	131.176 t	61.163 t	47 %
vegetables-field	527.827 t	244.822 t	46 %
sheep	106.761 Stk.	38.360 Stk.	36 %
grain maize	1.471.668 t	427.894 t	29 %
cattle	595.672 Stk.	133.193 Stk.	22 %
pigs	5.282.015 Stk.	1.129.526 Stk.	21 %
milk	3.113.658 t	630.679 t	20 %
fruits	827.720 t	138.178 t	17 %
calves	87.091 Stk.	10.393 Stk.	12 %

Source: Statistik Austria

# Average size of farms



Quelle: Eurostat



Lower Austria 22 ha (36 ha total area per farm incl. forest)

Austria 19 ha (40 ha)

**Organic farming:** 4.200 farms (9 %) cultivated by organic methods.

# The Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Austria (CoA) - fundamental principles

- The chamber of Agriculture is the **statutory lobby of farmers**.
- founded 1922
- **Every farmer** who owns at least one hectare of usable agricultural area is a **member** of the CoA **by act of law** and in return, is entitled to demand its service.
- **160.000 members – 442 employees** (100 part-time) – of that 210 advisers

# CoA Lower Austria – structure

- Service based support and information centre
- **40 elected deputies** as basis of the farmers representation
  - President Mr Hermann Schultes
  - 2 vice-presidents Mr Josef Pleil and Mrs Theresia Meier
- Federal state office with **head office and 7 departments in St. Pölten**
  - Director general DI Franz Raab
- **21 local offices** with teams of specialists in every agricultural category to give advice to farmers





# Chamber of Agriculture in Lower Austria – The tasks

The tasks of the Chamber of Agriculture are authorised by law of the federal government.

## **Authorised tasks** by law:

- Lobbying
- Financial support
- Consultancy
- Education

## **Main activities:**

- Lobbying
- Consultancy in law, taxes and social welfare
- Statements on bills
- Information and consultancy for subsidies
- Consultancy for rise in productivity and increase of farm income  
(crop production, livestock husbandry, business economics, forestry, pomiculture, viniculture, construction)
- Basic agricultural education
- Advanced trainings to different issues

# Soil testing in Lower Austria, organized by CoA

- In cooperation with the local offices
- Farmers are invited to tutorials for soil testing in written form
  - Explanation of soil samples
  - Selection of the fields for soil testing
  - Which analyses? (phosphate, potash, organic matter, trace elements etc.)
- Advantage of sufficient humus content in arable land, f.e:
  - Reservoir for plant nutrients
  - Reservoir for water
  - Good soil structure:

# Soil testing in Lower Austria, organized by CoA

- Good soil structure:
  - ❖ early warming in spring
  - ❖ soil aeration
  - ❖ decrease water erosion
  - ❖ best root penetration
  - ❖ active soil biodiversity
  
- Intention: to enhance the curiosity of the participants knowing their humus content!

# Recommended humus content

The recommended humus content in Austria for arable land depends on the content of clay in the soil:

- „light“ soil                      < 15% clay              humus > 2,0%
- „middle“ soil                      15 – 25% clay              humus > 2,5%
- „heavy“ soil                      > 25% clay              humus > 3,0%

# Soil testing in Lower Austria, organized by CoA

- Expenses of the soil testing/soilanalyses
- Accordation of meeting places for the soil samples
- Transportation of the samples to the soil laboratory
  
- After the analyses: I get the results and the participants are invited to a tutorial for plant nutrition

# Tutorial for plant nutrition

- Interpretation of the results of the soil testing
- Recommendation for plant nutrition
  - Phosphate
  - Potash
  - Magnesium
  - Sulfur
  - Nitrogen etc.
- Classification of the humus content of arable land (and vineyards):

„The trend in humus-content is much more important than humus-content in percent“

# Activities in Lower Austria for increasing/stabilization the humus content

- Consultancy (e.g. CoA):
  - Reduced tillage
  - Compost, manure, slurry
  - Catch crops (intertillage)
  - No straw burning
  - Increase humus content .....
- Financial incentive:
  - For catch crops
- Law:

The straw of grain usually was burned in the east of Lower Austria, because of the low rainfall. Since about 20 years, this is forbidden. No more organic matter is lost!

# Summary

- Annual participants of soil testing, organized by CoA: Ø 2.000
- Annual soil samples: Ø 12.000 (maximum 32.000!!!)
- Annual tutorials for soil testing: Ø 35
- Annual tutorials for “plant nutrition”: 65 - 75
  - including tutorials for nitrate reduction in groundwater
  - including best practice for applying farm fertilizers
  - Including pH-value and calcium-carbonite-content (very low in Waldviertel!)
- Finally:

There are also other federations which offer tutorials for “soil”  
(e.g. organic federations for their members)



Thank you for attention

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