



Dear Reader,

the relationship of us humans towards the animal is usually an unbalanced one. Normally, we do love animals, particularly those we choose to live with. We seldomly feel uncomfortable, however, when it is about using if not abusing them for our own good, be it clothing, food or any other reason.

That alone is not necessarily a reason for criticism. One could even reply that it has always been this way, that even the Bible and many other religious texts advocate for man being the superior to the animal.

But that does not mean that it could not change, our relationship to our animals. Or that, indeed, it should change. While in Europe also thanks to rigid legislation by the European Union, large-scale abuse of animals is a thing of the past, the situation looks different in many other countries. Many people will not or cannot conceive of a relationship between man and animal as Europeans often do. Some religions, for instance, value different kinds of animals and despise others. The holy cows of India are not always so holy elsewhere.

However, they are in SEKEM. And not only cattle, also bees, sheep and other kinds of animals SEKEM raises for itself or for production. That is, because SEKEM has decided to aim at reshaping the relationship between man and animal in Egypt, a country where animal abuse is still relatively widespread. You will read in this issue, how the initiative tries to achieve this.

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Raising Animals in SEKEM

How SEKEM aims to reshape the relationship between man and animal in Egypt



Raising calves in the new stables

Raising animals naturally plays a huge role in the work of SEKEM - for commercial interests just as for its people.

One year ago, SEKEM's herds of cows and calves could finally move into the newly built stable. Thanks to the revised spacious arrangement of the building, they benefit from better air conditioning within the facility and SEKEM's personnel has less work to do when caring for them. Additionally, when constructing the new building, more attention was paid to facilities that would

make workflows easier and bring the animals into a calmer, more peaceful environment.

In the new facility, the present 80 milk cows are divided into „performance groups“ and can thus be cared for more purposefully. Their milk production could be improved over 2kg per animal and day. The bull „Raad“ (arab. „thunder“) always accompanies one of these groups and carefully watches out for „his cows“. Thus, it may happen that, being the true „macho“ that he is when with his herds, he char-

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ges towards any foreigner being so care- less as to enter his territory.

Health care could be improved too in the new building. A new "intensive care unit" for the animals is situated close to the entrance. Pregnant cows are cared for in this area, until immediately after they have given birth. Directly beside it



In 2007 SEKEM began full-scale conversion of honey production in compliance with demeter standards

are the stables for the young calves after they have been separated from their mothers after approximately three days. Here they receive their mother's milk as cow's milk directly from the bucket. After three months the milk supply ceases and it is now up to them to become used to eating green fodder of various qualities. Gradually, the supply of clover, hay and then straw is increased to allow for the calves' stomachs to develop the necessary bacteria. This way, they gradually learn to extract as much nutritional value out of the fodder they receive. The female calves reach their reproductive age after around 2 years. They give birth after approximately 9 1/2 months of pregnancy. After about 1 1/2 years, the male calves are either slaughtered for internal use or sold on local markets.

The demand for the breeding of „Swiss brown“ cattle has been steadily increasing, a welcome development for SEKEM, as the new race must be regarded a very suitable one for Egypt. It is on the one hand very robust and far less susceptible to illnesses than the „Holsteiner“ or „Friesen“ races, and on the other hand exhibits the same productive characteristics for milk and meat as these.

Naturally, the horns of calves are not removed in SEKEM thus over time leading to particularly remarkable exemplaries.

Apart from the breeding of cattle, raising bees is also of central importance for SEKEM's production of foodstuffs and agriculture. As in Europe, bees are little respected animals in Egypt and even among the endangered species. In earlier times it was natural that the beekeeper

per left a part of the honey to the bees as their food. It was not a rarity to see bee colonies with 4 to 5 layers inside their hives. Today the Egyptian beekeeper is glad, if one colony populates more than 5 honeycombs. In 2007 SEKEM chose to fully convert beekeeping to Demeter standards. Contrary to common knowledge, they do not primarily apply to the flowers the bees are allowed to collect their honey from, but mainly the natural (and artificial) living conditions of the bees themselves. The bees, for instance, are allowed to build their own honeycombs again and not have to populate prefabricated wax plates, which usually consist up to 50% of paraffine. For „raising“ the bees, the beekeeper has to await the exact moment when the peoples „decide“ to separate on their own. He is not allowed to separate them before the bees are „ready“.

Through these and other measures the beekeepers aim to strengthen the bees also physically so that eventually they will, for example, again be able to defend themselves against wasps and other natural enemies and collect more honey. In earlier times one people could easily produce up to 50 kg of honey. Today, 5-8 kg remain the standard.

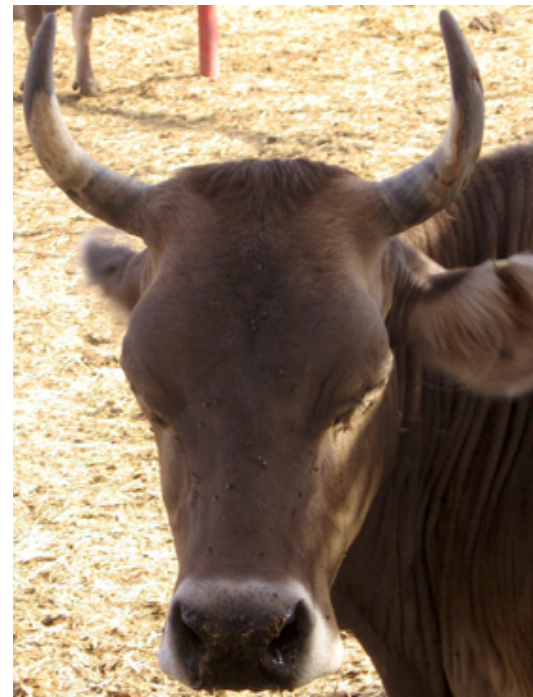
The German beekeeper Guenter Friedmann supports SEKEM during this transition to Demeter standards, as he was directly involved in their development. SEKEM also found a local student of law who, having been raised by his father, a professional beekeeper, has become a beekeeper himself and will now help others in Egypt to convert to Demeter, too. He easily took on the challenge to learn the new regulations and will assist SEKEM in applying them to its own production system.

Egyptian farmers also suffered severely from the bird flu of the year 2006 that affected their poultry farms. Only in the past autumn could SEKEM begin again to raise its chicken. The following winter fortunately did not bring any additional problems and all animals survived the season - the risk of infection is usually greatest during the winter. Now, in the summer, SEKEM's 8000 chicken can safely return to their open courts.

The initiative's specialists have selected a native, relatively small but robust

chicken breed for the new population. The stable, through its more extensive design, also serves to keep the chicken healthier. All of them now have more room, light and air to breathe, which also helps to prevent diseases. The animals are fed with garlic and onion bulb wastes to further strengthen their resistance to diseases. They also receive vegetable remains and clover and can use sand and dust baths more conveniently now in the new facilities.

A fourth and equally relevant animal in SEKEM are the many sheep raised by its workers in small herds that roam the countryside. Sheep are the „cleaning“



animals in Egypt, a natural form of agricultural „waste disposal“. The approximately 30ha of green fodder that are cultivated during summer and winter are first mown for the cattle before the sheep begin their grazing on the bare grounds. They also take care of the fields under the Guava trees that are cultivated for their leaves. By grazing, the animals keep grasses and weeds down. Several of the „Chamomile Children“ assist the Bedouin Kleb, who cares for the sheep and camels. They learn from him how to get acquainted with the animals „personally“, understand each one of them and its needs and how to cater for them.

By working with animals in such a way, SEKEM strives to communicate the

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Cooperation Project Between Egypt and Europe Strengthens University

Second TEMPUS-project develops a study programme of the Heliopolis University in Mechatronics with European support

The second development programme in higher education in cooperation with the European Union has just been launched at an inaugural meeting in SEKEM.

The current reform process in Egypt demonstrates positive change in the development of Egypt's economy and particularly in the area of higher education. There is growing demand for students possessing interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise in the mechanical, electronic and software branches of various engineering faculties. The emergence of mechatronics engineers further strengthens this demand.

A consortium was formed by SEKEM with the objective of developing a practical mechatronics study program with strong ties to the industries. The emphasis is on the training of trainers and the creation of modern teaching materials. The DIMPTOT project, as it is called, is being funded with support by the European Commission, as a Tempus-project with a grant of 469.000 Euro over 3 years.

The team consists of universities and institutions with strong expertise in research and education in mechatronics, as well as industrial partners.

The primary aim of the TEMPUS-project is to improve the international competitiveness of the field in Egypt and eventually lead to higher living standards in the country. A student-oriented educational reform in line with the Bologna process in Europe is supposed to also assist the social cultural and economic development in the country.

The partners include Bochum University of Applied Sciences (BUoAS), Bochum (DE) (Grant Holder), Sekem Development Foundation, Cairo (EG) (Project Coordinator), E-ON Ruhrgas AG, Essen (DE), El Zagazig University*, Zagazig (EG), Higher Technological Institute*, Ashara Ramadan (EG), Mechatronik e. V., Bochum (DE), Silesian Technical University, Gliwice (PL), South Bank University, London (GB).

Saad Gadalla, Bijan Kafi



This project is financed by the European Union. The opinions depicted in the text do not necessarily represent those of the European Commission.

ideal of taking on more responsibility for the wellbeing of them. Kleb is an Egyptian who has taken on this responsibility and developed almost a form of reverence towards „his sheep“. Usually, animal breeding is often marked by abusive treatment of domesticized animals in Egypt. Thus, for Egypt, this is quite a remarkable development. It is one aim of SEKEM to contribute to more sustainable forms of the treatment of animals. Specialists who deal with animals therefore do not only receive technical training but a professional education to help them understand how humans and animals can live together in better ways.

Angela Hofmann, Bijan Kafi



Imkerei auf der SEKEM-Farm

World Future Council Meets First in Hamburg

On 13 May, on initiative of Jacob von Uexküll, founder of the Right Livelihood Award („Alternative Nobel Prize“), the World Future Council met for its first inaugural session in Hamburg. Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish participated in the event as one of its founding members.

Since Dr. Abouleish received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 2003 and personally met Jacob von Uexküll, both visionaries have been in close contact to develop solutions for finding and catalysing concepts and ideas of practitioners and scientists that allow to tackle the most pressing global problems. The idea of the World Future Council was developed from discussions among more than 50 prominent persons from all over the globe. The circle is conceived as a plenary of bright minds and independent thinkers who are willing to discussing openly and publicly pressing issues of global relevance and present workable solutions to global leaders.

On 13 May the council elected Bianca Jagger, advocate for human rights and a notorious and belligerent public figure, as chief executive officer of the five-head leadership circle.

For its first campaign, the council chose the topic of climate change. *“Today we truly stand at the crossroads of human history. Our actions – and our failure to act – will decide the future of life on earth for thousands of years, if not forever.”* With the „Hamburg Declaration“, the council members have published their first public statement. It is directed at the leaders of G8 states and the participants of the Heiligendamm Summit and challenges them to live up to their unique responsibilities and to put themselves in charge that not obsolete economic dogmas jeopardize the future of the world's population.

The World Future Council will meet irregularly in different places in the world, contribute to the public debate on pressing issues of international importance and seek to influence leaders to realize sustainable and „green“ change on a global scale.

<http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org>



New Devices for the Vocational Training

The electrical current is invisible. Ideally, you can measure it. In the worst case, you feel it. With the new, modern devices the Vocational Training Center at SEKEM has just received, the apprentices in the electrical engineering department have a lot more fun in detecting and measuring all sorts of electrical phenomena.



Hermann Haegele introduces the apprentices to the tools

The 25 items have been donated by the specialist for electrical measuring equipment Beha in Glotttetal close to Freiburg/Germany. Among the devices is such sophisticated equipment as the two-pole current checker with display for training in the workshops, or the indispensable „Duspol“ for the practical work on the construction site and a multimeter for testing electrical and electro-mechanical parts.

All these devices are indispensable to ensure a safe working environment when handling electrical parts and machines. They make for a formidable addition to the toolboxes of the Vocational Training Center. Accordingly, teacher Eng. Amr immediately set out to test the new equipment with his students to find out what great things they could do with it.

Hermann Haegele

Supporting Development for over 20 Years

On 12 May, the annual assembly of the Vereins zur Förderung kultureller Entwicklung in Ägypten e.V. was held in Stuttgart. The largest support organisation of SEKEM used the event to inform members and friends alike about the achievements of the past year and introduce them into future plans.

About 240 people had followed the invitation to the Rudolf-Steiner-Haus to hear several speeches by representatives of the initiative and its friends. Dr. Hans Werner, honorary chair of the Verein, introduced visitors into the social and cultural activities. In 2006 work could begin on the extension of the Medical Centre. Also in 2006, numerous events were held again at the SEKEM Academy including many public concerts, exhibitions and debates. The SEKEM School received a new facility for curative education. First wooden works by the pupils could be examined at an exhibition in Stuttgart. Here, a photographic exhibition was also available to introduce visitors to the newest developments.

Dr. Roland Schaette, chair of the Verein, and Bijan Kafi, European project coordinator, informed members on the

progress of the „13 Villages Project“, a project financed and carried out jointly by the EU and the Verein together with the Egyptian „SEKEM Development Foundation“. In 13 villages in the vicinity of the SEKEM farm, a series of small-scale development projects are being executed since January 2006 and over a course of 3 years. Some of the topics covered include women’s empowerment, health, literacy and microcredit actions. Approximately 45-50.000 people benefit from the activities.

Prof. Dr. Löbler, University of Leipzig, held a speech on the development of the higher education in SEKEM. He is currently working with Dr. Abouleish towards the prompt opening of the university. What Albert Schmelzer, founder of the intercultural Rudolf-Steiner-School Mannheim, had to say on the need to innovate school education from a multicultural perspective, gave many participants an insight into the challenges also SEKEM and its SEKEM School has to face while reforming school life in Egypt. The SEKEM School also educates the children of European employees.

Christina Boecker

Impressions from SEKEM



Sometimes even the SEKEM farm is covered in fog

The SEKEM farm is situated on the Eastern rim of the Nile delta, that is on the opposite side of the easternmost areas of the Sahara, the „Western Desert“, as it is called in Egypt. Because of this, the climate on the farm is already almost dry to subtropical. Even though the farm already lies well within the desert area that borders on the Nile delta and is thus no longer reached by the waters of the river, it get surprisingly cold after nightfall, particularly during winter. Moreover, the almost permanent lack of cloud coverage leads to great and spontaneous differences in climate during day and night. Our picture shows SEKEM in the early morning hours. Dew has formed on the plants and dense fog covers the fields. The fog immediately disappears as soon as the sun comes up over the fields.



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Publisher: SEKEM, Egypt

The editors of SEKEM Insight wish to thank all contributors who helped in creating this edition.

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