

Oberfeld plot, used by Agriculture and gardeners, est-end of Darmstadt, one of the last agricultural areas within the city border, is used also as a recreational area for the citizens and fresh air corridor.

135 hectares arable land, in total 150 ha, Hofgut Oberfeld was a "Hofmeierei", domain of the Grand Dukes of Hessen-Darmstadt, later State owned of Hessen. The farm buildings are historical monuments. The large dairy barn in these days was a major source of income of the farm. Up to 1,500 liters of milk were delivered daily until 1939. At this time, about 50 people were working on the farm. September 11, 1944, RAF bombers destroyed in the so-called "Brandnacht" 99% of Darmstadt, also the domain Oberfeld and its barracks with prisoners of war.

2006 the tenant of the State domain expired. That was the reason for Darmstadt citizens to found the association "Initiative domain Oberfeld e.V." It should be preserved as open land and fresh air corridor and upgraded as a recreational area. Protection as a monument and organic farming with direct marketing was intended, a learning center and as the location of office and residential places for people with disabilities.

The initiative domain Oberfeld e.V. interested Minister of Agriculture of the State of Hessen, Wilhelm Dietzel and build contacts with potential funders and policy and the Software AG Foundation, which supported the concerns of the initiative and presented a business plan. With the backing of the Software AG "foundation Hofgut Oberfeld" had a starting budget of 1.11 Mio. €

The farm transfer took place on 1 July, 2006 on non-profit basis with organic farming, cultivated landscape, biodiversity, promotion of art and culture, education, youth development and child care, elderly care. The foundation has to assure that the domain Oberfeld is permanent and unchangeable operated and managed on the basis of these goals. For the agricultural part "Hofgut Oberfeld Agriculture AG" has become Contract and cooperation partner.



Farming family Kathrin and Thomas Goebel started July 2006 as a Demeter farm with dairy cattle, seeds, nursery, bakery, dairy and direct marketing. The farming business was set up as SME-limited company. Numerous Darmstadt families and individuals became shareholders of the new micro-stock company in agriculture under Demeter and organic farming directives since 2009.

The concept of organic farming provides a diverse crop rotation. A dairy cattle herd with dual purpose breed of old German Holstein Frisian is established, also used for fattening. A new barn and a cheese factory are built. Laying hens and other free-range produced poultry are part of the on-farm offer. In addition added value by on-farm-processing in bakery and dairy products in the farm shop are priorities of the management concept.

For many Darmstadt citizens Hofgut Oberfeld with its agricultural services, the “Hofcafé”, the herd of cattle, the stables and its special offers, such as spring Festival, historical on-farm-working-sessions, Thanksgiving, Christmas market has become a popular destination. The project “season gardens” for Darmstadt citizens is the possibility of seasonal farming/gardening by themselves.

The “Lernort Bauernhof” on-farm-school, supported by the Foundation Hofgut Oberfeld initiative, has settled in the farm-workers’ house. The goal is to achieve sustainable primary and secondary education also in agriculture, nutrition and food preparation for children, adolescents and adults. Environmental, economic, health and social factors of their own nutrition and consumer behavior should be understood by action learning. The concept is active learning with head, heart and hand, the relationship between agriculture and nutrition understandable and the production and processing of foods with a lot of fun in action. The learning center would encourage to actively engage in your own health. The project is linked to kindergartens, schools, extracurricular educational institutions and interested adults, teachers, opinion leaders and consumers.

About 200 half-day events are performed annually. Classroom projects, children's birthdays, solid farm-working-groups, holiday weeks, training for adults, always adapted to age, made in small groups based on different priorities (from the cow to the butter, From grain to bread, etc.) agriculture "understandable“. Various methods for quality development of environmental education work are applied. 2011 awarded with the “Karl-Kübel” Prize and in 2012 by the Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs awarded the "place of learning of the future Hessen". Furthermore, the learning center Farm is a member of the Federal Association On-Farm-school E.V and in the Hessian initiative "farm as a classroom". Since the participants contributions cover only a part of the expenditure, public subsidies important.

Hofgut Oberfeld Lebensweg e.V.

The association “Lebensweg e.V.”- Association for promotion of handicapped people after leaving school is one of the parents group of the Christophorus School for handicapped children aims to develop after-school-life prospects for mentally and physically disabled people. Founded 2000, Christopher's parents were active already in the nineties and were involved in renovating a mill-building the “Heydenmühle” in Otzberg-Lengfeld, where nearly 50 disabled people are assisted in a out-of-nursing-home residential living. About 80 workshop jobs for disabled persons (WfbM) were created.

In Hofgut Oberfeld, the association wants to create additional space for jobs for the coexistence of people with and without disabilities. For the purpose of ambulatory and assisted living the historic Swiss Milkers' House was renovated. The concept of coexistence of people with and without disabilities was widely supported in Darmstadt. In 2007, in a fundraising action, the readers of the daily journal “Darmstadt echo” collected 330,000 € in favor of the project. The Software AG Foundation doubled the amount. 2011 The foundation stone for a new house was laid.