

ZFarm – News

The latest on building-integrated agriculture

December 2013

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Freshly Harvested

Completion and kick-off: the ZFarm closing conference

The ZFarm closing conference, held on 24 September 2013 at the Kalkscheune in Berlin-Mitte, marked the start of a new era of urban food production: some 100 scientists, project initiators, company representatives and political decision-makers discussed the possibilities and limitations of food production on and in buildings. Scientific arguments were exchanged, ground-breaking ideas presented and specific initiatives arranged.

Carola von Morstein from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) started the scientific dialogue. Seen from the perspective of international collaboration, she described the benefits of urban agriculture for securing food and income in developing and emerging nations. Rather than focusing on the use of new technologies, she primarily addressed the issue of improvised solutions such as rice bags or car tyres filled with soil.

The subsequent scientific exchange between researchers from the ZFarm team and selected experts and actors in the realm of practice was subdivided into three thematic blocks. Kathrin Specht exchanged arguments concerning the “social aspects of ZFarming” with Ina Hartmann from the research project “INNSULA” (ZALF); together with Professor Katrin Bohn from the Institute of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the Technische Universität Berlin, Axel Dierich discussed the benefits and limitations of “ZFarming as a green infrastructure for the city of the future”; and Susanne Thomaier and Professor Dr. Joachim Sauerborn from the University of Hohenheim’s research project “Skyfarming” discussed the topic of “ZFarming and the local economy”.

In each of the three thematic blocks, short presentations were also given by practitioners in Pecha Kucha style. Using 20 slides each that automatically changed after 20 seconds, pioneers Madeleine Porr of Paradies Wuhlheide, Jonas Herms of Himmelbeet gGmbH, Dr. Gunter Mann of Optigrün international AG, Anton Roßbach of watergy GmbH and Andreas Graber representing Urban Farmers presented their companies/initiatives and their products and innovative ideas. The programme, lectures and press release can be downloaded from www.zfarm.de.

Examples of specific projects, from rooftop gardens to integrated fish and tomato breeding, were then documented together with the research results in the poster presentation “Tomorrow’s urban agriculture”. The posters will be exhibited to the public soon. The venue and visiting times will be published in good time on the website. (*Axel Dierich, inter 3*)

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“Something’s growing on the roof” – practical guide for rooftop greenhouses online!

The practical guide for rooftop greenhouses was produced just in time for the closing event in September 2013 and presented to the participants hot off the press. Many of those involved in the ZFarm network contributed to the product’s success by providing professional input and reviewing individual chapters. Many thanks once again to all those who were involved in this productive collaborative activity!

The practical guide contains 16 chapters addressing all of the important issues that need to be taken into account when planning and operating a rooftop greenhouse. The range of topics includes all of the steps involved, from initial brainstorming to the finished rooftop greenhouse. Amongst other things, check lists for site analysis, production planning, financial planning and public relations are provided.

The manual is generally considered to be a contemporary landmark document for the actual implementation of projects in Berlin. The printed version is already nearly out of stock. However, the guidebook is available to all interested readers free of charge for downloading (pdf). (*Kathrin Specht, ZALF*)

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ZFarm in Practice

Map with potential roof surfaces for commercial ZFarming in Berlin online

A map is available on www.zfarm.de showing potential roof surfaces for commercial ZFarming in Berlin. The map was created on the basis of data taken from the Berlin Solar Atlas and the Environment Atlas.

In order to calculate the roof surface potential, flat roofs with an area of at least 500 square metres that would be suitable for solar utilisation were initially selected from data contained in the Berlin Solar Atlas. It was assumed that roof surfaces that were suitable for solar utilisation would also constitute potential space for ZFarming. In addition, various other criteria were defined that need to be taken into account when planning commercial rooftop farming projects: a roof inclination of no more than 8 degrees, building heights not exceeding 50 m, compatible area uses and types, and the homogeneity of the areas. No consideration was made of aspects concerning statics.

Taking these parameters into account, the following theoretical potential space for commercial ZFarming on Berlin's roofs was yielded:

7,302 flat roofs could be exploited. This corresponds to 7.3% of all flat roofs and 2.0% of all roof surfaces in Berlin.

Of these 7,302 flat roofs, 3,122 would be suitable or highly suitable for commercial ZFarming based on the respective space layouts (i.e. homogeneity and size). This corresponds to 3.1% of all flat roofs.

In terms of area, this equates to 831 hectares of potential space for commercial ZFarming, of which 479 hectares would be suitable or highly suitable based on the respective space layouts.

In this connection, it must be noted that the area data are approximate values. This is due not only to the data applied, but also to the criteria applied which, considering the novelty of the topic, by all means require reflection. The map will be developed further in the coming weeks. (*Susanne Thomaier, Technische Universität Berlin*)

Online map of ZFarming projects updated

The map showing ZFarming projects available at www.zfarm.de was once again updated, and now contains 94 existing projects in North America, Europe and Asia. The map enables

users to search for projects based on various criteria, and also contains useful links. For example, you can reduce your search to rooftop greenhouses or projects in Asia only. Queries can also involve a combination of different criteria. (*Susanne Thomaier, Technische Universität Berlin*)

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ZFarm in Dialogue

Last newsletter

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the topic of ZFarming and in our research results! Since funding for the research project "ZFarming – urban agriculture of the future" runs out at the end of the year, this is the fifth and, unfortunately, the final newsletter. However, the website will continue to exist until the end of 2014, meaning that you can still find out about results and publications via www.zfarm.de. (*Axel Dierich, inter 3*)

ZFarm at the European Students' Parliament in Berlin

ZFarm discussed the options and potential of building-integrated agriculture with participants of the European Students' Parliament in Berlin in an expert hearing on 14 September 2013. The two-hour hearing with ZFarm team member Axel Dierich was also used to develop specific political strategies and requests, which the participants used as the basis for drawing up resolutions on future food supplies for cities. (*Axel Dierich, inter 3*)

ZFarming in Paris and Berlin

A delegation of teaching staff, students and graduates from Paris visited Germany for a week at the end of June in order to gain an overview of how ZFarming projects were being explored and implemented in Germany. The group from the TECOMAH (L'École de l'Environnement et du Cadre de Vie) sought to draw comparisons for innovative ZFarming projects in Germany and France. In this framework, they visited ZALF for a day, where we presented the ZFarm project to them and discussed the feasibility and framework conditions in Germany and France. (*Kathrin Specht, ZALF*)

University of Potsdam visits ZFarm

Geography and Geoecology students from the University of Potsdam visited ZALF on 27 September in the context of the "Sustainability Concepts in Practice" seminar. At the students' request, the ZFarm project was presented in greater detail as a separate lecture. In the course of the seminar, other examples of sustainability in Berlin and Brandenburg were explored. Topics included agriculture, energy, architecture, water management and transport. (*Kathrin Specht, ZALF*)

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Publications

ZFarm article published in international scientific journal

The article entitled "Urban agriculture of the future: an overview of sustainability aspects of food production in and on buildings" was published in May in the online edition of the prestigious international periodical "Agriculture and Human Values". [Link to article](#)

Specht, K., Siebert, R., Hartmann, I., Freisinger, U., Sawicka, M., Werner, A., Thomaier, S., Henckel, D., Walk, H. & Dierich, A. (2013): Urban agriculture of the future: an overview of sustainability aspects of food production in and on buildings. *Agric Hum Values*, 1-19. DOI 10.1007/s10460-013-9448-4

"Lebensmittel – zwischen Ware und Wertschätzung" (Food – between product and appreciation) ForschungsReport 1/2013

Scientists present their food-related work in the latest edition of *ForschungsReport* (published by the Senate of Federal Research, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV)) on the topic of "Food – between product and appreciation". In addition to our article about the ZFarm project "Food on top of the city", the current issue also contains articles about sustainably caught wild fish, eating habits and social traditions.

"Gemüsebeete auf Supermarktdächern" (Vegetable patches on supermarket roofs), Zeit Online

In an interview with *Die Zeit*, Dr. Ulf Freisinger (ZALF) explains the potential for urban agriculture and ZFarming.

"Obst und Gemüse auf der Landflucht" (Fruit and vegetables in rural exodus), Fachzeitung für nachhaltige Wertschöpfung

The opportunities and limitations for ZFarming projects in Germany are presented in the "Fachzeitung für nachhaltige Wertschöpfung (Mexpress)". In addition to an interview with Kathrin Specht (ZALF), other ZFarm network actors are also mentioned in the article.

"Vom Himmelsbeet und Tomatenfisch – Städtische Landwirtschaft der Zukunft" (Sky plots and tomato fish- urban agriculture of the future), inforadio

rbb Inforadio reporters talk about the ZFarm conference "Urban agriculture of the future" in a radio feature

(Kathrin Specht, ZALF)

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ZFarm in public

ZFarm at the 5th AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference

Kathrin Specht and Susanne Thomaier presented various aspects of ZFarming at the 5th AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference "Innovations in urban food systems" in Montpellier, France. Information about the conference and the book of abstracts can be found on the conference website at: <http://www1.montpellier.inra.fr/aesop5/> (Susanne Thomaier, Technische Universität Berlin)

ZFarm in European exchange

The URBACT network "Sustainable Food for Urban Communities" invited ZFarm to attend a workshop in Oslo in September in order to present the various implementation scenarios and business models of building-integrated agriculture to the cities belonging to the network. The network carries out exciting work on the development of sustainable urban food systems. <http://www.sustainable-everyday-project.net/urbact-sustainable-food/> (Susanne Thomaier, Technische Universität Berlin)

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