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EVENT

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German-U.S. Farmer Exchange 2009

 On 5-12 July 2009, the second transatlantic Farmer-to-Farmer exchange brought together farmers, foresters, journalists and policy-makers from the United States and Germany to discuss the role of agriculture in future climate policies. On their trip through Ohio and Pennsylvania and ending in Washington DC, the group of 30 participants visited several farms applying climate friendly agricultural practices, as well as biofuel and algae processing facilities. One topic of major concerns was possible ways to off-set GHG emissions by industry through mitigation activities in agriculture. Moreover, participants intensively exchanged knowledge and experiences in different bioenergy applications.



Ecologic and the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) [1] (EDF) were responsible for the organisation and realisation of the trip. The exchange was made possible through the support of the [Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington](#) [2]. The exchange's co-organiser in the US was [25X'25](#) [3], a renewable energy initiative promoting the US goal to achieve a 25 percent share of renewable energy consumption from agriculture and forestry by 2025. Members of the 25X'25 alliance hosted several farm visits and two discussion forums attended by the exchange participants. The 15 participants from Germany were accompanied by several farmers and representatives from the US agricultural community.

 This exchange built on [the previous transatlantic Farmer-to-Farmer exchange in 2007](#) [4] by deepening relationships, widening the range of participants and extending the topics beyond agriculture to forestry and its role in bioenergy and carbon sequestration. In fact, the new [Climate Bill](#) [5], which passed the [US Congress](#) [6] right before the exchange started, provoked intensive debates about the future role of agriculture and forestry in carbon

trading schemes and boosted the exchange of experiences with new technologies in Germany and the US.

Visits in Ohio and Pennsylvania included:

- Richards Family Farm, Circleville, OH
Bill Richards is the 25x'25 National Steering Committee co-chair and former chief of the [USDA Soil Conservation Service](#) [7]. The farm showcases many conservation practices including no-till farming. His 1,500 acre family farm of corn, soybeans and wheat has been using no-till since the early 1960s.



[Univenture, Inc/Algaeventure Systems](#) [8], Marysville, OH
Univenture manufactures archival binders, badge holders, media storage and custom storage devices from polypropylene and other environmentally-friendly materials that are PVC-free and recyclable. Univenture's subsidiary Algaeventure Systems, established in 2008, has developed the Rapid Algae Farming (RAF) system to harvest algae for the production of biofuels and bioplastics. RAF systems can be combined with animal, dairy and/or crop farm practices.

- [Lake Erie Biofuels](#) [9], Erie, PA
Founded in 2007, this multi-feedstock plant is the leading producer of biodiesel in the eastern U.S. and Pennsylvania's first large-scale biodiesel production facility. The plant has an annual output of 45 million gallons with 70% from soybean oil and 10% from canola oil.

-  [Ernst Conservation Seeds](#) [10], Meadville, PA
Founded nearly 40 years ago, this family-owned and operated business is a leading provider of seeds and plant materials of eastern North American ecotypes to soil and water conservation industries and local businesses. In addition to their seeds, mixes and bioengineering products, Ernst grows three native species of warm season grasses (switchgrass, big bluestem, coastal panic grass) for renewable energy production. They are researching a process for increasing switchgrass straw density for biofuel. They are also helping to develop local oilseed production of canola and camelina.

 The exchange ended with a Riverside Chat on the Potomac River in Washington where participants shared their impressions during the trip and planned for the German part of the exchange in summer 2010.

Other references to the 2009 German-U.S. Farmer Exchange project can be found on the website of "[Lancaster Farming](#) [11]",

the leading Northeast and Mid-Atlantic farm weekly newspaper.

5 July 2009 to 12 July 2009

Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington DC

Ecologic Related Articles

- Transatlantic Farmer-to-Farmer Exchange on Bioenergy and Climate Friendly Farming Practices
- Transatlantic Climate and Energy Cooperation: Working together, learning from each other
- Bioenergy and Climate Friendly Farming Practices: Approaches in Germany and the United States
- Johns Hopkins University Summer School: 'Anything is Possible'

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Links

[1] <http://www.edf.org/home.cfm>

[2] <https://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/Startseite.html>

[3] <http://www.25x25.org/>

[4] <https://www.ecologic.eu/././2173>

[5] <http://www.congress.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c111:2:./temp/~c1117Y6YcH:>

[6] <http://www.house.gov/>

[7] <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>

[8] <http://algaeventuresystems.com>

[9] <http://www.lakeeriebiofuels.com>

[10] <http://www.ernstseed.com>

[11] <https://www.lancasterfarming.com/node/2106/>