

# Universalmuseum Joanneum Press office

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## Schloss Stainz Agriculture Museum Recipes for success and models for the future

### **Agriculture Museum, Schloss Stainz, Schlossplatz 1, 8510 Stainz**

Opening hours: 1st March to 31st October, Tue–Sun: 10am–5pm

On advance notice it is possible for groups to visit the Hunting and the Agriculture Museum also outside normal opening hours between March and October from Monday to Friday.

Closed from November to February

Information: +43-3463/2772-0

**From September 19th 2009, the Joanneum Universal Museum acquired another major attraction – the new Agriculture Museum at Schloss Stainz. Its permanent collection is not confined to a nostalgic look at the past but also includes a modern presentation of the ecological challenges of the future.**

### **Exploring traditions**

Agricultural products seem to be taken for granted these days, featuring in many guises in our everyday culture and Austria's touristic profile as a "land of enjoyment". However, agriculture produces not only foodstuffs but also raw materials for industry and generating energy. Many modern forms of processing look back on a long history of development. Where hi-tech machines are used these days, originally very simple appliances were employed.

The new Agriculture Museum explores these traditions. It not only shows historic objects, but also uses modern media for an informative and modern presentation of issues of present-day and future concern. The new display is closely co-ordinated – in both content and design – with Schloss Stainz's Hunting Museum, which has aroused great interest among visitors since it was opened in 2006. The agricultural collection is an exciting and inter-active investigation of aspects of agricultural activity, putting historical connections in a new perspective and highlighting links with our own day.

## **Expanding horizons**

At the start, the exhibition tour focuses on the “cycle of nature”. The subject is illustrated both by historic implements and an informative film by Martina Aichhorn about contemporary agriculture, presenting amazing machinery and surprising perspectives alike. Agricultural crops are shown not just as materials for foodstuffs but in new contexts as well – as the basis of adhesives, bandaging materials or meat substitutes, or in the form of toys. Particular emphasis is placed on integrated presentation – from the plant via the crop to the finished product. Visitors can also try their hands as “laboratory assistants”. After all, where would modern agriculture be without research? This involves using a microscope to recognize invisible structures and making one’s own discoveries about plants and their structure.

The close connection between agricultural applications and our cultivated landscape is particularly clear when experimenting on the large “media table”, where an almost infinite number of possibilities loom for using a richly illustrated digital agricultural lexicon. But a willingness to experiment is also needed for the landscape puzzle!

## **Stories – paintings – buildings**

Farming work has always been profoundly involved with social issues. The new permanent collection features not only facts and figures for agriculture as a form of employment under various conditions but also personal recollections from the early 20th century – to read or to listen to.

The arts have also left us a whole host of monuments to the image of farming life – over the centuries, art and literature have reflected the vicissitudes of social attitudes. In the Middle Ages, farming folk were seen as simple-minded, rough people. The Romantics left the 19th century with an idealized image of hard-working, devout peasants communing with nature. Subsequently, the focus in literature and art shifted to a realistic reflection of living and working conditions on the land. In the first half of the 20th century, farmers were stylized in art into “feeders of the nation”. A series of paintings, e.g. by Ignaz Raffalt (1840), Joseph Heicke (1846) and Anton Marussig (1903) show that not only farmers but also farmhands and domestics were popular subjects in painting.

Farm buildings have also change dramatically in the course of history. Visitors can compare historical and contemporary agricultural buildings and discover the different functions of architecture.

### **The spirit of research and diversity of species**

A further room is devoted to processing products with historic implements. Many of these appliances are still familiar, but who still knows how to use a „Brotreim“ (bread stand), „Ölkuh“ (pumpkin seed press) or butter barrel? Thematically linked is the next room, which focuses on the revolutionary ideas of Archduke Johann and the activities of the Imperial Agricultural Society he founded. Exhibits include valuable landscape models constructed for the purposes of study and documentation in the 19th century. And not only models – tried and tested originals are also on view.

The seed collection of the Imperial Agricultural Society documents the meticulous investigative spirit of the founder of our museum in the field of agriculture. Archduke Johann got the Society to import particularly high-yield crop types from other countries, therewith for example popularizing species of bean that give far greater yields than fava beans. No fewer than 55 jars with phaseolins in a wide range of different colours and species (including kidney beans) can be admired in the exhibition.

The idea for this collection of seeds was already mentioned in the draft statutes of the Imperial Agricultural Society: “1) Adequate space in the Institute garden, plus 2) a number of yokes of the adjacent city moat are set aside for the growing of seed stocks on a small scale, research on a larger scale, and the application of farming tools. Laid out in the garden is an orchard nursery.”

### **Wood and hi-tech**

Archduke Johann’s ideas still flourish in forestry as well. Exhibits include historical equipment, Styrian timber joints from the construction industry and also completely new products from the timber processing industry. In this context, wood injection-moulding is the magic abracadabra. Wood pellets and maize starch are the raw materials for this “growing” material, which stands out particularly for its long-term utilization. As important is the fact that there is no waste during processing. Products made with it are used in the toy-making and packaging industry, the construction of musical instruments and tool manufacturing. Even the motor industry is going new ways and making (for example) the interior cladding of car doors from wood injection-moulded parts.

The basis of the economic utilization of timber is healthy forests that have other functions as well. Recreation and conservation, utilization and welfare effects and other subjects to do with our forests are explored separately in four fascinating media stations.

The permanent exhibition of the new Agriculture Museum at Schloss Stainz occupies 15 rooms with a total exhibition area of 910 m<sup>2</sup> (10,000 sq. ft).