Farmer Marcus

„Hi, my name is Marcus, and I own a cattle farm in …“

What’s your daily business?

„I got dairy cows for milk production and, you know, all the stuff that’s part of a farm: several barns, silos, a biogas plant and of course pasture, where the cows graze. Some oft the cows are sold to butchers.”

Can you explain what manure is?

“Manure is basically cow feces. It is obviously produced automatically by the animals, but it’s not just waste to me. I can use it as fertilizer for the pasture.”

So you’re spreading cow piss across your fields?1

“Well, it sounds kind of weird if you put it that way (haha). First of all, cow feces is just part of the business. And they produce a lot o fit! I can use some o fit in the biogas plant, but I gotta do something with the rest. Secondly, manure is not just smelly waste. It contains essential nutrients for optimized plant growth. If I apply it regularly on my fields, the plants grow faster and stronger. This is obviously good form e and the cows, because I don’t have to buy additional animal feed.”

Is there also a period of time, when you’re not allowed to spread manure?

“Yes, indeed. Overfertilization can be a problem. When there’s too much fertilizer on the pasture, the ground can’t hold it anymore and it might get into the groundwater. From there, the nutrients can spread in a huge area, which affects each and every plant growing there. That’s the reason, why you’re not allowed to bring out manure before heavy rain or during extremely dry periods. You’re also required to keep a certain distance to natural rivers with your manure distributor.”

Why do you even need fertilizer? Grass and weeds grow everywhere, don’t they?

“Well, my green fields are the main food source for my animals. They either graze on the pasture directly, or I cut the grass regularly and store it in form of hay for the winter. If the plants don’t grow as fast as they do while being fertilized, I’d have to buy additional food for the cows, which costs a lot of money.”

Does the mowing affect the plants?

“Not really. I use specific seed mixtures, which are perfectly fitted for the land I own. Some of these species even grow faster, when they are mowed down within certain time spans. Wildflower mixtures would not be as enduring, especially when it comes to the cattle trampling across the fields.”

What do you think about wildflower strips for bees and other insects?

“Scientists claim, that these strips around the farm land improve the local biodiversity. That’s why the government forces us to keep a certain percentage of our land as natural as possible. But that doesn’t really help my business: it only means that I got less acres for myself, and the bees and butterflies don’t really make up for that loss.”