

“We’re not in Europe here”

Exploitation in Germany’s Asparagus, Strawberry, and Vegetable Plantations

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OXFAM
Deutschland

„DAS HIER IST NICHT EUROPA“

AUSBEUTUNG IM SPARGEL-, ERDBEER- UND
GEMÜSEANBAU IN DEUTSCHLAND



Initiative
Faire Landwirtschaft



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Key facts and methodology

- More than 250.000 seasonal migrant workers in German agriculture
- Publication together with „Initiative Faire Landarbeit“
 - Consult migrant workers throughout Germany with regards to their rights
- 66 Interviews with seasonal workers on 4 farms in 2022 by PECO-Institute – all farm supply German supermarkets
- Verification interviews by Oxfam employees in 2023

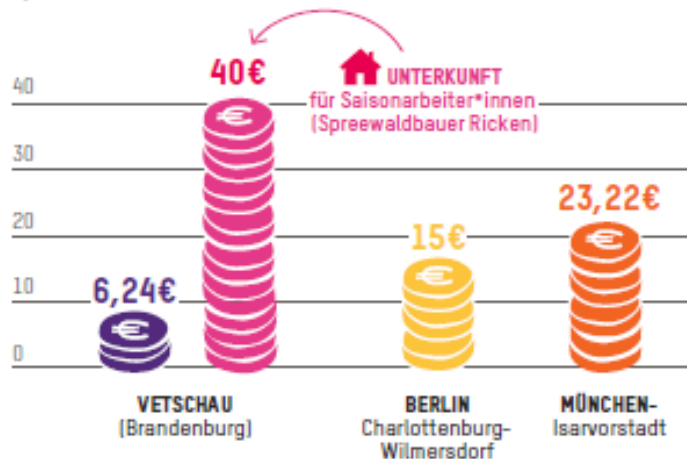


Key findings: Wage „theft“

- Wages are pushed down – sometimes below the legal minimum wage – via high deductions for housing

GEMEINSCHAFTSUNTERKUNFT AUF BRANDENBURGER SPARGELHOF – TEURER ALS WOHNEN IN MÜNCHEN

Vergleich von durchschnittlichen Kaltmieten pro Quadratmeter in deutschen Städten³⁸ mit den Kosten für ein mit zwei Personen belegtes Zimmer bei Spreewaldbauer Ricken³⁹



- ☹ Schimmelbefall in einer der Unterkünfte (April 2023)³⁹
- 📍 Unterkünfte bei Spreewaldbauer Ricken (Juni 2022)



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Key findings: Insufficient health insurance

- Report that they need to pay for health treatments:

„We have to pay everything ourselves. Even when the ambulance comes, we have to pay 400 or 500 Euro out of our own pockets.”

- Sick workers are fired and travel back to their home countries to avoid costs in Germany:

“Sick or injured workers often get put on buses back to their countries of origin.”



Christian Moldovan kommt aus Rumänien und arbeitete im Frühjahr 2023 bei Spreewaldbauer Ricken in Vetschau.

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Labour rights violations throughout Europe



Price pressure by German supermarkets

- Supermarkets are also responsible for the labour rights situation because they worsen it by fierce price pressure

“The price pressures exerted by food retailers—in a context where our operating costs have just exploded on all sides—are at the point where they threaten the very existence of us fruit and vegetable farmers!”

“The food retailers, those are the criminals, so to speak.”

“There are no negotiations. The supermarkets set the price.”

- Even the minimum wage commission by the German government concluded:
 - Retailers did not pay higher prices once the minimum wage was raised. To compensate for the higher costs in a different way, farmers they would have to pressure field workers to increase their productivity.



Quiz

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How many years would Aldi-Süd heir Karl Albrecht Junior have to work, in order to earn his wealth by harvesting asparagus?



Quiz

800.000 years



Demands

- Towards the German government:
 - Guarantee health insurance for seasonal workers
 - Implement the Supply Chain Due Diligence law in a way that it holds supermarkets responsible for their prices pressure
 - End the supermarket „oligopoly“
- Towards the supermarket
 - Do not rely on certification but adapt purchasing practices - Pay appropriate prices
 - Publish supplier lists

**Thank you for your
attention**

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OUR FUTURE**

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