

WWOOF - Willing Workers On Organic Farms

Catherine Somerville aus Edinburgh im Juli 2008

I am Catherine, a 19 year old student from Edinburgh. I study English and German at the University of Durham, and am at the beginning of my German "year abroad" as part of my degree. I have a university placement beginning in September in Switzerland, and I wanted to also spend some of this summer in Germany to improve my language skills and make the thought of an entire year abroad slightly less intimidating! Hof Harwege was one of the few Wwoofing farms with a website, so that immediately attracted me, as I had some idea what I was heading to!.

I have spent a fair bit of time in the countryside before, but I am pretty much a city girl, and many of my friends found the idea of me working on a farm hilarious! I have to admit that I was also pretty nervous about coming, not about the work side of it, but it is a bit scary going to stay with a family you have never met! The Harweges made me feel immediately welcome, and the wwoofers have our own house area down on the farm, so there is a great balance of having your own space, but also feeling included and welcomed into farm life.

I spent three weeks in July on the farm, and it has been such a fantastic experience! It is a completely different lifestyle from what I am used to, and has taught me so much about the dynamics of organic farming. Before I came I really knew very little about it, and whilst I was interested, it was by no means the motive with which I came to the farm. Through talking to Heiner and Julian (the gardener) I have really become interested in it, the benefits for the environment, and the challenges it poses. It can be quite hard work on some days, when the beans need picking, or we need to weed a field, but it is incredibly satisfying getting to the end of the day and eating the very fresh and delicious fruits of your own labour.

From talking to other Wwoofers I get the impression that at Hof Harwege we work slightly harder than other Wwoofing farms, but that this is more than paid of in the high quality of food, accommodation and hospitality which we all receive.