

## Description of the family farm Reisinger (formerly Hinterleitner)



Figure 1: Friedrich Reisinger

### Ownership (family)

Managing directors:	Friedrich & Roswitha
Manager:	Andreas (son) & Linda
Children:	Barbara
Grandparents:	Markus & Maria

### Location

Located in a valley of the nature park municipality Neuberg/Mürz (Arzbach), the farm spreads within an altitudinal range of 800 to 1300 m a.s.l. (i.e. montane altitudinal belt) on mostly calcereous soils with a total annual precipitation of approximately 1200 mm. On average there are 4-5 months of snow cover in the region.

### Farm

With a property of 188 ha (16 ha thereof are agricultural land), managed on a full-time basis, the national legal requirements for a private hunting ground are met. Currently all in-house processes aim at being as less time consuming as possible, to have a high level of flexibility. Forestry is the main source of income. Forest management builds on natural regeneration (mainly), with artificial regeneration aiming at the enrichment of species diversity to foster the ecosystem's ability to adapt to future challenges (e.g. climate change). The extensive agricultural production focuses on the marketing of oxen via the national programme ALMO (<http://www.almenland.at/almo.html>).

Neither forest nor agricultural products are further processed on site, they are marketed as primary products.

### Christmas tree production

Additionally to forestry and agriculture the family markets Christmas trees (mainly spruce and fir). „It's not the perfectly shaped, standard mass product (e.g. Caucasian fir) we market – it's more the „Christmas tree adventure“ our customers come to experience on our farm“ Andreas Reisinger points out. It's the experience of cutting the trees on your own or simply selecting a fancy product (e.g. specific shape or size) our customers prefer. As a member of the Styrian forest association „Waldverband“ the trees are marketed via the association of Styrian Christmas tree producers „ARGE Christbaum Steiermark“. All trees are sold directly at the farm, mainly to regular customers.



Figure 2: Christmas trees and packaging equipment

## Forestry

The family focuses on forestry, managing around 170 ha of even-aged forests that are mostly naturally regenerated. While Andreas (son) is responsible for the management and silvicultural practices, Friedrich (father) takes care of quality assessment and marketing. Artificial regeneration techniques are used to introduce mixed tree species. The rotation period is around 140 years. Annual increment is approximately  $1.000 \text{ m}^3$  over bark (i.e.  $\sim 550 \text{ m}^3/\text{ha}$ ), with a species composition of 70 % spruce, 23 % larch and 7 % fir and pine. Hardwoods are almost missing.

On average, stands consist of trees at the age of 80 years with slopes around 45 % steepness. However, less than half of the forest area can be harvested fully mechanized (i.e. by harvester) due to steep slopes up to 75 %. Most of the trees are harvested by cable yarder and processor as well as tractor and cable winch. Currently nearly 50 % of the total growing stock could be harvested (i.e. trees older than 80 years). Due to severe game damage trees of the age classes 2 and 3 (i.e. trees within 21 to 60 years) are almost absent.

Main goals for the (near) future of the family holding are: i) shortening of the rotation period to 120 years, ii) harmonisation of the age-class distribution and iii) a broader species composition. All activities target at a more stable forest ecosystem that is able to cope with climate change and remains economically viable, also for future generations.

By-products such as mushrooms or berries are not marketed, mainly due to labour intensive and time consuming production patterns that do not go in line with current production goals. These products are assumed to be side products of forest production systems and are supposed to serve as additional sources of income (e.g. via holidays on the farm, for specialized direkt marketing SMEs).



Figure 3: Friedrich Reisinger selling a Christmas tree to a customer