

## From niche to volume with integrity and trust CASE STUDY FACT SHEET

# Biohof Achleitner - Austria

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### Historical development

Biohof Achleitner is located in the fertile Eferding basin along the Danube in Upper Austria. The business has grown significantly in the last 15 to 20 years and is a good example of the growth potential of organic farming through diversification into several business branches and cooperation with other farms. In 1986 Mr. Achleitner and his wife took over the 20 hectare vegetable farm from his parents. In 1990 they converted fully to organic farming. Right from the start they were oriented towards direct marketing, with their small farm shop and by supplying restaurants and caterers.

Step by step, they collaborated increasingly with other producers and processors in the region. As more and more regional fresh fruit and vegetable farmers got involved, they decided in 1997 to set up a limited liability trading company. At the same time they started to import organic products, mainly from Italy and later on also from Greece. A year later, in 1998, delivery of boxes to households began. In 2002, after suffering from severe floods, they separated their farming from their distribution and started to



The outlet and distribution premises in Eferding, Upper Austria, opened in 2005

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*“What distinguishes us from others is that we have not left our origins. Though marketing has become a big business branch, from our heart and concerning the importance, we are still organic farmers [...] and that we are able to operate almost completely without buying in any fertilizers. That’s where we share our expertise with our suppliers in the fruit and vegetable sector.”*  
(The director of Biohof Achleitner)  
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build their new sales and packaging premises in a more suitable place. The building uses innovative renewable materials and was completed in 2005 (see picture above). Until 2009 their wholesale branch mainly supplied specialized organic and natural food stores directly in Austria and the neighbouring Bavarian area. Following a crisis after rapid growth, they entered a cooperation with the wholesaler BioGast in 2010, to whom they outsourced major parts of their wholesale activities. In 2009 they started to partly supply the three major Austrian supermarket chains (Spar, Billa, Hofer) with selected products. Today, besides their agricultural production (vegetables and cereal) the business thus comprises a box scheme, an organic wholesale and a restaurant called Kulinarium, combined with a small shop (Frischmarkt). In addition to fresh fruit and vegetables, customers can choose from a huge variety of other

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**Legal form:**

Limited liability trading company

**Date of foundation:**

1990

**Homepage:**

[www.biohof.at](http://www.biohof.at)

**Logo:****Product range:**

Various

Mainly fresh fruit and vegetables in the boxes + ≈6000 in their shop

**Number of employees:**

83

(+ 15 seasonal workers during high season)

**Distribution channels:**

Organic boxes (≈7000)  
Wholesale/Retail (BioGast)  
Kulinarium (restaurant)  
Frischmarkt (own market)

**Boxes:**

11 different ones  
(i.e. Office or Vitamin box)

**Main values associated with organic:**

- closing production cycles
- direct consumer contact
- transfer of knowledge

**Facebook likes:**

6 825 (2 April 2015)

**Google hits:**

9 090 (2 April 2015)

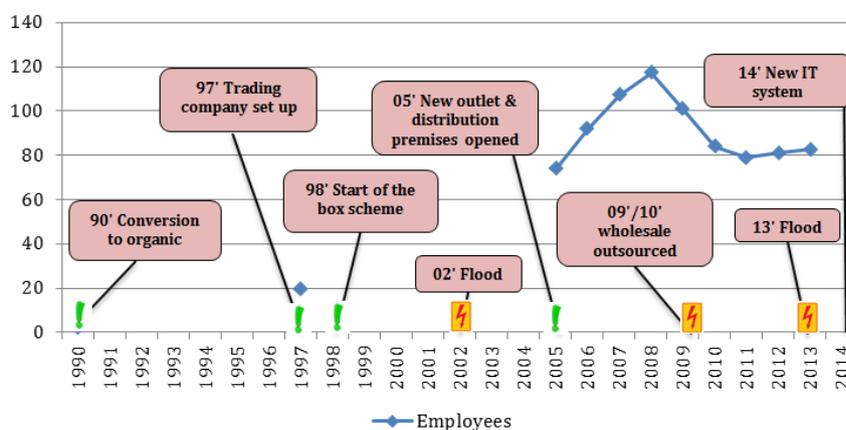
organic products as the Biohof Achleitner complements its own production with a number of regional suppliers for various product groups and imports from organic wholesalers. Achleitner maintains close and long-term relationships with his suppliers, regionally as well as abroad. Outside Europe the enterprise cooperates with Biotropic (an international wholesaler) and has initiated a number of projects in the Dominican Republic, South Africa or New Zealand.

The key values for the operation are related to the preservation and protection of the environment (i.e. conservation of long-term soil fertility by composting, reducing green-house-gas emissions, ecologically sound buildings, electric vans for delivery, etc.). Achleitner argues that sourcing globally would not violate these values, as imported fresh organic products, even including transport, would have a smaller carbon dioxide footprint than local produce from greenhouses or with excessive storage.

**Supply chain organization**

In terms of public perception, the box system is the central and most important business line for Biohof Achleitner, with around 7000 boxes per week delivered by 14 vans within Upper Austria and via an outsourced logistic company to adjacent areas of Styria, Salzburg and Lower Austria.

At the moment the director estimates that the Biohof has around 50 regional farmers plus some producer groups in Greece and Italy who supply him with significant volumes of fresh fruit and vegetables for the boxes. Biohof Achleitner also has a very close and amicable partnership with the second largest box scheme in Austria (Biohof Adamah) near Vienna. As each of them has very clearly defined distribution areas, they do not get in each other's way, compare notes on customers, logistics or product

**Milestones and employees**

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