

An interview with Radim Holovský, owner of the Trněný Újezd Farm, on the difficulties of running a small farm in a region ruled by conventional agricultural and factory farms. On the systems that respond to demands for low prices for large quantities and are able to produce a kilo of meat for 40 crowns (1,5 EUR). On Babiš's monopoly, excessive consumption of meat, stress caused by drought and the inspection system, monoculture farming, chemical cocktails, and our bodies, which are served these cocktails. But also on a humane relationship with animals and why it is important to pay more money so that hens can see the sky.

On “ratcheted-up” feeding, a system that is able to produce a kilo of meat for 40 crowns, and the risks of free-range farms

So, let's take a look, shall we? Watch out, it's all wired up! You probably got just a little shock, cause if you'd've gotten the normal one, you'd've fallen over [laughs]... So here you'll see an alternative that you won't find in most other places. Over here's a breeder who's got 60 pigs, he had them outside, he had 100 people there and they wrote it up in the Guinness Book of Records. Here we herd 200 and we don't need to get it written up anywhere. People today will tell you: a pig pasture? No such thing! But every fairy tale had a village swineherd, he was in there because pigs grazed, it was normal and it was necessary. Today it's been driven up to extremes: pig feeding is a system that's been ratcheted up to try and push the animals to the most that they can handle genetically and bear in terms of health. Poultry feeding is ratcheted up so much that if you push it a little further, they start dying of civilizational diseases, heart attacks, strokes, so then they go back to a longer, more spread-out feeding schedule. All the animal can do there is eat or lie down. It's unbelievable, the production, how it goes along. But then something gets screwed up and it all falls down like a house of cards: you're feeding the poultry and the electricity goes out for twenty minutes in the summer and right then in the big hall with 20 thousand chickens... well, five minutes is enough.

You have to realize that hens are forest creatures, they naturally live in groups that have one rooster and ten hens. And the moment you shut 1000 hens into one hall, it doesn't work so easy, it can't; a horrible cannibalism takes over. The people who are lobbying for farming in big halls will tell you that they take care of the animals as best they can and make them totally comfortable. So ask yourself if a deer that lives outdoors... Today few people will come and say that they want to farm pigs in a way that'll give them a good life and wait to see how much people will pay for it. No. They have to fit into the system. By now pig farming has been totally wiped out. The moment someone says: I want a big chain to make me a kilo of meat for 40 crowns, there'll be a system able to produce a kilo of meat for 40 crowns and it won't stop and take a look around, unfortunately. The chains dictate, or rather the consumers dictate, that they want to eat for free, they decide—forgive me—that they want shitty food for free and they give it to them. Order fulfilled. And if that's the way people want it, they have to come to terms with the fact that that's how it is, with all the stuff that's connected to it.

Here, of course, the death rate is much higher than at those caged-up farms. When you close someone off in a room and give them things to eat and drink, it's hard for them to get hit by a car outside. That's the way it is with the animals, too. When you close animals off in a sterile farm, you're buying a sterile product that's never met a wild pig or a wild bird and the viruses that move freely in nature simply don't exist there. When you have them live this way [points to the pigs, sheep, and cows on the pasture], losses will of course be much greater. These [points to the pigs], these ones are bigger by now, even though predators come sometimes. A dog runs in and that's all there is to it, those are the risks. The moment you let animals like poultry outside, of course there's immediately enormous stress from salmonella. The risks are there, even though they go through inspection. But don't have any illusions about veterinary inspections: you have to have the paper and that has everything, but the reality is

often totally different. So you have two possibilities: you either close them off somewhere and dope them up with all kinds of supplements and vaccinate them across the board, or you say: we want to live in the world as it was, and that comes with some risk. And then you have to deal with problems for maybe ten years, you have die-offs, you have losses, and your goal is to create a herd that gradually builds up immunity itself.

I used to have a telephone too, but I broke it last week in my tractor. I just look at it for the radars and cloud cover, otherwise I wouldn't need it. I have enough stress that every time the SMS beeps it winds me up. Because nobody ever writes you to say that everything's okay, just: there's a problem here, an inspection coming there, etc. People make stress for themselves. Today if your phone dies you're in a total panic. I also know that I can't turn off my phone because an animal can always escape or go off onto the road. So I don't let myself turn it off even for a night and I'm always under that pressure, by my own decision.

On contracts with Babiš, subsidies, excessive meat consumption, fields of rapeseed, and how much modern families spend on food

People say that groceries are getting more expensive, but ten years ago young people spent more on their phone and internet than on groceries. Which is upside-down. People should first give each other a couple of slaps and ask whether what they pay for groceries is enough to produce them. To do it differently, you have to find people who would understand and be willing to pay for it and also willing to assume some risk. But the moment you take Kostelec Smoked Meats, which had a normal value was a billion crowns, and you buy it for a hundred million, of course you can do everything that happens here in large-scale production. We Czechs have someone who has a monopoly on the whole agricultural sphere. The way it works is that you sign a contract with Babiš, he buys everything from you and gives you all the materials. Of course he has it figured out that if you get a subsidy, if you try hard to do the farming well, it'll work out so you can stay alive. There's a system of subsidies set up, the market sets it itself, and when you're in the system, it works out and you can feed your family. But you have to obey the monopoly. Once people realize that they don't want something this way, but they want it another way... only then will agriculture work differently. Here large-scale farming is done by a few large entities and then your alternative is small-scale farming that takes care of the land. We're in a situation where the land isn't an ecosystem, but an agroecosystem – the cultural landscape has been agricultural for a good few hundred years. And we can say: yes, we want it to work like that and we'll try and make it work with people in the village. These days there's the subsidy mechanisms for that, but here that mechanism has failed completely, because 90 percent goes to big farms. And when we crawled into the Union, there was lobbying for there to be a set amount per hectare, and that killed the small farms. The subsidies are by the cultivated hectare, ideally the less particularities you have the better. Because "we don't want you to produce animals, you'll manage it somehow, take the subsidy and you'll be more or less fine." Everything's all worked out. All of Czech agriculture is in the hands of Babiš, because Babiš has all the materials in his hands. Us, what we do with sustainable farming, we're not dependent on him because we do it differently. But the moment you use fertilizer, all the fertilizers go through him. That's how he built Agrofert. It's set up that if you're not buying it from somewhere outside the country, you have to buy it from him.

Yesterday I heard on the radio that cities are starting to let the grass grow tall, that tall grass gives you a cooler environment, has a regulatory component. But then someone said: these days certain types of bugs can't function in the farming sector anymore, so the city will have to offer green space to bugs that can't live in farming areas. That's totally upside-down! When you look at how much of Babiš's rapeseed we're cultivating, we're at the very top of Europe. And a sprayer goes through that rapeseed at least five or six times wiping out

everything that moves. Because there's a pollen beetle that eats up the flowers, so when they're blossoming they use the spray to wipe out absolutely everything, bees or not. And do you think that people who go to buy canola oil or fill up with biofuel realize how much life they've driven out of that system? No. They'll say: it's fine. You have to rotate the ecosystem around. Soon these pigs will be somewhere else and it'll be green and fertilized again.

People totally live in a bubble, even I live in a bubble of sorts and there's many things I don't understand, but food should cost much more.

A hundred years ago, agriculture was purely sustainable and food costs for a family were at least 50 percent of wages, if not more. Today food costs are maybe 10 percent of a family's budget. In the past meat wasn't so accessible, now people eat a huge amount of it and pork and poultry has become something produced for a few crowns. And that probably won't be beneficial for the population. For food to be food again, people have to really be willing to pay more for it. A lot of people realize this once there's a problem, someone gets sick and has to change their diet.

At the same time, it was always clear that smoked meats are stuffed with absolutely everything, that white powder that'll solve everything. And only when someone has health problems do they start to address what they really eat and what the mechanism is that sets everything off. I saw it with horses in sports, when horses got operations on their legs and none of the doctors were able to come and say: hey, you're doing it wrong, the animals are overburdened, their load is unbalanced, and the moment something hurts, they start being under an enormous strain... Coming back to Babiš: he exploited the fact that the economy was good, gave to everyone, bought everything, and now people follow him totally blindly. A friend of mine was a manager at the ecological section of the ministry and a month ago he told me: hey, I'm done, because working towards any sustainable and small farming under Babiš and Toman is a complete waste of any effort whatsoever.

On the inspection system, stress, and what lies behind the last fence

I must say, it's crazy the extent that farmers are oppressed by the inspection system. If I ever have dreams, it's about the inspection system. You're always living under stress. It's so extreme! You have to take the excrement every day and count the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium and keep a record of it. And they're lies anyway – you make some norm, you just do it somehow. You don't know why you're being bugged like this. I understand that the moment you stuff chemicals into nature there's a need for someone to make sure that there are limits to it. But when your animals are outdoors and you function with what the farm itself produces, it's unnecessary and is a serious bother for me. Now, for example, there was a drought where the animals couldn't graze anywhere because there was nothing but desert. And still you have some norms and on paper they have to graze, so you move the animals around and count up all the nitrogen, meanwhile the animals weren't there because they couldn't have been. So you're weighted down by that purposeful lie that accompanies you every week, all the time really. The inspection mechanisms are just set up for the giant companies – there the limits are needed because then they start hauling off liquid manure from herds of thousands... The moment you want to do large-scale farming, you have to adapt to the system and you can't take a look around. You can't say: hey, I want to do this without chemicals. These days, as soon as you eliminate the chemicals, you don't have a chance of succeeding with those prices.

Ninety percent of the stress is the inspection system. Then of course there's other things: not enough money, or then again maybe you do have enough but the situation is set up so that you have to invest, they're putting a lot of pressure on you: invest, invest, invest,

because you get subsidies. There was a program here for developing the countryside, it goes until 2020, and I haven't applied for it in a long time. That's what people are dealing with now, that Babiš applied for absolutely everything and that such a big company also got a subsidy that it shouldn't have. And it's these subsidies that were made for small companies to keep the countryside, the countryside. And the moment you wash it out and make it all a monoculture, the countryside, the agricultural countryside, ceases to exist. The villages will still be there, but what's behind the last fence... you'll be afraid to climb over the fence because you'll climb into a field and come back with burns on your legs. Or else they'll tell you: it's harmful, climb outside the village. Ninety percent of the stress, really, is the agricultural bureaucracy the subsidies are attached to. But if you don't have global subsidies like everyone else does, or you make a mistake and have to return the subsidy, at that moment you're condemned to collapse. We've been talking about records of animals, numbering animals, but the moment they pull the animal out of its skin, the meat is untraceable and then they do all sorts of awful things and make large-scale business. But when the inspectors come, they'll dish out a fine for numbers that don't match. You only learn about the inspection a day or two before and everything stops right then, you have to chase down the animals at once and put numbers on them. So it's stressful. If only you could have everything under control, but when the animals are outside, they crawl into the first bush and the numbers mess up and get lost. And at that moment the inspector comes and you have a problem!

On not sleeping at home, labor, and the one animal that's "late to come"

Of course, the main expense in agriculture is labor. We started about ten years ago, at that time I was worried about competition. But over ten years the competition has disappeared because the people who had farms and did everything from A to Z, most of them have closed. We have five or six people, some long-term, some foreigners who come in stages and replace one another. In Ukraine they do it for a quarter of the cost, we employ those guys too. You won't get a Czech into farming anymore, not so much for financial reasons but because people simply won't do that work anymore. Because it's time-consuming, seven days a week and a very long work day – you can't be a tractor driver or just work with the animals, on the farm you have to do everything. It works in the big companies where people work shifts and everything is nice and neat, but that's really the difference. These days farming is moving in another direction and you try to hang on tooth and nail so that you can make do.

I need to sleep an average of six hours a day. When it's less, then sooner or later you collapse, your back, whatever. Here you spend all your time working. It's farming and the family has to adapt to it. It happens sometimes that you don't sleep for a whole week because you can't. Your employees don't come overnight so you go lie down for ten minutes or so. But that's just the extreme which otherwise end up getting all screwed up. You work until the evening because you have to, then you know that at two in the morning you have to go off somewhere because early in the morning you're going to load up and so on. Unfortunately I don't have enough guys with papers. They have it for a tractor or something, but they don't have a work visa because it doesn't work the official way. When that happens you can't send a guy onto the road, so you become their taxi driver, driving them around to the fields. So, to sum it up: we sleep or we don't. You work seven days a week. But today most people are set up so they simply don't work seven days a week, evenings neither. Unfortunately I do it alone, at a certain point my dad totally stopped and then a woman from Prague came around and a heap of children. In agriculture you really need kids who will take it over, the older generation watches the kids and then there's someone who has to pull it all together. We've had 30 years since the revolution and family farming is starting to go back to what the communists knocked out of it. I'm not saying it's the only option, but farming was always a family thing, so when

you're doing it yourself it just doesn't work. Vacations you can only dream about, too. You simply can't just leave here.

It's psychologically demanding work, mostly because of the inspections and the employees. From morning to night you're bugging people who don't want to do the work and don't have a natural relationship to the animals. Everything is good to the extent that you can do it yourself, but when you start to transfer it into a larger system, that's when the stress comes in. When you have a small farm, you don't need a director, you don't need a manager, an economist, an accountant, a zootechnician, an agronomist. Because every day you get in the tractor and ride all around the farm. And really, you see the most when you come to feed the animals and when you know them, what they're like, how they act normally. When a zootechnician comes at one phase or another, sometimes the animals are eating, you don't learn anything. But when I come here now and start pouring them food, they all fly over and suddenly you see that one is late to come. And the one that's late to come today could be sick or dead tomorrow. And the zootechnician doesn't see that. It's just like when you go with your child to the doctor and have to dictate everything to him. The doctor won't know why the child is crying.

Supposedly the employees dream about work, but I don't suffer like that. It's more that whenever you wake up in the middle of the night, you think about work. When you lie down at night, you're still going from pen to pen again in your mind making sure that everything is alright, that nobody is missing, that they don't need anything. It's not like you can come home and switch off, not at all. You're constantly watching. Now during the night some weather starts up, so you say, come on, come on, go deal with this... 200 days in the year I don't sleep at home, I sleep in a sleeping bag somewhere around the farm. In winter, when the animals are giving birth, I sleep by the births, so objectively about 200 days a year I don't sleep at home. I have a sleeping bag and a mattress in my car and I move around as needed. Really, you just want to do it in a different way and those are things that nobody will tell you to do.

On droughts, monoculture farming, chemical cocktails, and the desire to do sustainable farming "nicely"

It used to be that agriculture had to have animal and plant production connected, these days unfortunately the farms are focused on either animal or plant production. So a farm with a big hall for pigs or poultry: you don't need anything, you take a hectare of field, stuff in some halls for 80 thousand birds, bring everything in, take everything away. So with maybe two hectares of land including the surrounding area you can make an obscene profit, you're turning tens or hundreds of millions a year, and at the same time you have nothing, you buy everything and take it all away. Then there are properties that have 1000 hectares with just plants, not a single animal. And I see that as the worst mess because of the distribution of nutrients.

I think that the problem is monoculture farming, when the land can't hold the water, neither what's in it nor what comes from the surface. It just washes it out. That's what my grandpa said. Here we have a pond, by now there's so many trees growing in it that you don't even know it's a pond, but until nineteen sixty-something it was cultivated by a state farm. And grandpa said: the state farms kept the original boundaries, everything was unified some way or another but agriculture was still done on more of a small scale. Then the state farms ended, it was transferred to the Mořina agricultural cooperative and grandpa said: they came, levelled the hill, came with heavy tractors and levelled the boundaries. Then the first big rain came and there was no more pond, after the first big rain it got clogged up with mud and that moment all that was left was a trickle in the middle, it got covered with grass and trees. And today the agroecosystem is set up that there's no variety in species, there's just these big fields. And

you see how the animals can't function, the natural ones, not even water can function in it. Personally, I think the biggest problem is the corn, the rapeseed, the whole large-scale agriculture. And nobody realizes that until they start de-mudding all the big streams.

I always say that today it's really easy to do conventional farming, because whenever something happens, you take your sprayer and either add nutrients or wipe out what you don't want. And the moment you want to do it without chemicals, it's a long process and a mistake you make today might come back to haunt you five years later. Like you have some weed multiply, for example. In farming you only have one option. You have plants that, in combination with bacteria, fix nitrogen from the air: clover, alfalfa, peas... all legumes that have symbiotic bacteria, rhizobium, and that get nitrogen into the soil. You need nitrogen as initial material for plants to grow. But none of these plants are on the market, most are feed crops. Unfortunately, that's wiped everything out, so all the nitrogen gets into the system through petroleum, the materials for agrochemicals come from there. At the same time, the options that nature gives you... we're surrounded by nitrogen, it's 70 percent of the air, but the plant doesn't know how to fix it. And agriculture has lost that ability because they've started to grow totally different crops, today it's all about corn. And corn on its own won't reach out for anything. You have to be aware of this and know how to link these things together.

For example, I've just now seen for myself how big a problem drought is for sustainable farming as opposed to conventional farming. Last year there was a big drought and here we're in an area that's really bad for precipitation. At this time last year we couldn't feed the animals outside from the pasture. Everything here was dry as a desert and we couldn't do anything. In sustainable farming, the plant is dependent on nutrients in the soil, they're colloid solutions dissolved in water, and if the plant doesn't have water, it can't draw in the nutrients. In conventional farming you spray 80 percent of the nutrients for the plant aboveground onto the leaf, so the plant gets its nutrients and can function with, say, water from dew, which is pure and has no nutrients. So in conventional agriculture, even in extreme drought, it grows somehow. In sustainable agriculture, when there's a drought, you can't do a damn thing, because without water there's no way to get the nutrients from the ground.

I'd be radical in everything, with Roundup, for example, but conventional agriculture would lobby that you can't get by without it – people have been taught that you can't get by without it and the economic system won't let you do it otherwise. Thank God someone's finally starting to knock that idea down, but it's a long process. America's saying now that it's harmful, people are getting awarded money for it having irreversibly damaged their health, but in most of Europe they still claim that Roundup is fine. But now there are consumers that want to get milk, but don't use Roundup on your farm, our consumers don't want it anymore. It's the same with GMO corn – suddenly consumers say that they want a product that isn't tainted by it. Remember DDT, a spray that was stopped 50 years ago, they had to stop using it. And today the people who deal with drinking water are saying that DDT is starting to be a problem in groundwater and that it's been in the drinking water for 50 years already. It took a while for it to get out of the agrosystem through the groundwater to here.

But changing the system is really difficult, because of all the lobbying. Just like there's these huge influences and money in pharmaceuticals, it's in the chemical industry and animal production too. It's not just Roundup, people should also take notice of all the other insecticides that are wiping out everything on just a massive scale. From our childhood I remember butterflies absolutely everywhere, now show me where there's butterflies. On farmland they're gradually becoming impossible to find. People often don't realize the full consequences, that whatever you add to the land, whatever spray, it ends up inside you, it can't not happen. And now it's just a question of whether someone says: this amount is slightly harmful or really harmful, because it's always harmful. And the other thing is the cocktail effect when you

involuntarily mix things together. Imagine 100 chemicals that you mix together in one organism. People are like sheep.

This year is quite good because it rained in May, but drought is a horrible problem, especially when you practice sustainable farming in this area where we're in a big rain shadow. This is the Bohemian Karst, there's a crazy amount of limestone that heats up in the summer and there's a mass of hot air so the clouds don't cover here. You see? The clouds come and here they split apart, the limestone karst simply won't let them in. But now I see that, because of the drought, and this really pisses me off, we'll have to buy calves and not birth them here, because we're in an area where you can't grow the forage crops. After my experience last year, unfortunately, I can't have that many mothers when I have to bring them feed halfway across the country the whole winter. So maybe here the herd will stay, we have 250 hectares and 200 cows, so it's not like we're tiny or anything. To do sustainable farming nicely I'd have to be much smaller, but I can't afford that economically.

On a humane relationship with animals, how every ecosystem ends in catastrophe, nature stripped out of its skin, a conversation between Mars and the Earth. And also on why it's important to pay more money so that hens can see the sky.

I was born into this, I've lived in it. We have a family history in this area going back to 1620, which is quite rare. But at some point you start to go on a different path, you start to have the feeling that you want to do things differently. You see it in the children. I'm always bringing home an orphan, a hen somewhere bore it, she had fifteen chicks, so I'll bring it home. Now, for example, I have to pick up a lamb somewhere because I found sheep here, and of course I can't just leave them. Even if someone told you it's not economical. But it's humane. Well, then you see the baby sitting there for three hours just staring. Observing. Observing beetles in the grass and observing how the grass grows. My wife always tells me: Hey, this one will be the one that'll do it. My brother studied physics, he works on solar cells and travels the world researching materials for photovoltaic cells and has no attraction to agriculture, he'd never in his life enter it willingly. What he had to do as a child was enough. We came back here when we were 10, 11 years old. He took it as an evil and I, as a blessing. My mom told me that ever since I could stand on my own two feet and hold onto a cart, she never saw me at home. When we were in Prague, I took it roughly, fortunately it wasn't for long. And I don't know what would've happened if the revolution hadn't come, what I would have done. This work, for me, is happiness. It's really only happened a few times in my life that I didn't want to work, that I felt like I'd had too much. My employees tell me: You want everything right away, you're crazy! But I'm satisfied when everything works and connects smoothly. Like, today I'm reaping, tomorrow I'm plowing, the day after I'll have everything sown and it all starts again. And you definitely can't do it for money, because here you always have one foot in deep debt.

In college we had the basics of economics, for us hillbillies [laughs]. For us it's enough to know what VAT is, basic accounting. But what was essential for me was the discovery that the principles working in the economy are the same as the principles the ecosystem works on. The economy grows just like the ecosystem, then something happens and the whole thing collapses. This was a revelation for me. That every ecosystem ends in catastrophe, you see a forest growing but no tree can grow up to heaven, then a fire comes, everything burns up to the last bit and it starts all over again, in juvenile stages. And the fire, paradoxically, is important for nature, because the juvenile stages have another chance to take root. Otherwise college was totally useless to me, but in the basics of agroecology I started to realize that I wanted to do it differently. Another reason was that we're in a poor region, there's precipitation here, limestone in the soil, quarries. From my dad I saw how farming works from terrible chemical materials, you stuff in 100 percent chemicals, fertilizer, you reap 90 percent and the subsidies

even up the rest. And unfortunately my dad didn't really manage to set it up well and then you start from absolutely nothing and have a 20-million-crown debt. And I said to myself: geez, we put 100 percent and don't even reap 100 percent, so why should we stuff chemicals in there? Then you say that if you aren't able to produce enough to live, it's much better to do something that won't harm nature. Here you're certain that what you see then ends up in the product, too. And people are once again are ever more connected locally, they say: yes, I live here, it grew here, I see how they take care of the animals, I'll pay more so the farmer can make do and the landscape can make do as well.

Today they ship things back and forth across the world and people are absolutely blind to it. It's like if you go to a protest for the environment and put on jeans made of cotton. Let people go see how cotton is made on a large scale: there's no nature there, it's all been totally wiped out by chemicals. There nature is totally stripped out of its skin, but we don't see it so we don't care about it and have no trouble putting on that skin of jeans.

I don't give them names anymore, I did when we had fewer but now it's impossible. But you know every animal, individually. Because the moment you work here and saw them all be born, each of them is a personality for you. You have some comparison for each, this one came from there so you call her Landová, or this bull over here is named Arzén Nectinský... now the animals look like they're doing well. But when you come in March and there's rain falling with snow and the animals are standing in a group to keep warm, everyone says: hey, they're suffering here. And at that moment the animal is of course suffering. Then when you have them all day in the frost... Frost is super because you don't have mud, but when it rains and everything is like this [points to his waist] and you have to go right into that, go with a tractor into that mud, I'll tell you: it's ugly. But again, it's a trade-off. It evens out, half the year it's not all fun and games, but half the year things go well. They could lock you up in the clink and say: we're giving you food, you have a warm bed, it's not raining, there's no wind here, what else would you need? And you don't want to live like that. It's the same thing when you see how happy the animals are... when I come here with the water tank, all the pigs are over there and it's like a spa. It gives you a feeling that makes you say: yeah, it's good to do this. And not that you go somewhere and it's just [makes rows of pens/cages with his hand]. It's not even about whether bio eggs are better or worse than regular eggs, even if we know it. But you're paying for the comfort that the hen knows what the sky looks like, a nest with straw. And it's essential for me that we don't stuff chemicals into their materials.

Large-scale farming is just like large-scale people – people in the city. People in the city can function because you bring them clean water from somewhere and take their garbage away somewhere else, so people just live there and pretend that it doesn't affect them because it flows in and out, you don't see it. And it's exactly the same with those animals. The moment you start to accumulate a large amount of anything in one place, whether it's animals or plant monocultures, you have to deliver a crazy subsidy of energy, chemicals, antibiotics, microelements... few people realize that everything people eat ends up in the sea. It used to be that people had an outhouse in the garden and they put it into the garden and it stayed in that system.

There are principles of nature, and people try to shift them, turn the planet inside-out and... who was it who said to me: it's like one planet is chatting with another, Mars and the Earth, and the Earth is constantly scratching, something's making it itch. Mars says: hey, it's just people, it'll pass. The people will destroy themselves. Now nobody knows sustainable farming anymore, because they've been stuffing chemicals into everything for 70 years, but it really works. And I was so excited, I went into it as a challenge, to prove that it works, and it does work! The moment you have a dairy and produce milk, whenever you drain some of it for cheese, you're left with whey, a protein that you really need as material for pigs, maybe. And

that's precisely the problem: it's separate. The people who make milk don't know what to with it, they pour it out... You need the connection. Anyone can do permaculture, all you need is a hen and to put your garbage back in the garden. It's the ideal model!

For me, the best holiday is when the employers go home Sunday afternoon and you can walk around the animals and fields yourself, crawl on all fours and look at the basics. With sustainable farming you have to spend a lot of time like that and observe so you know what works and what's wrong. I personally believe in it, I try to do it like it used to be... she wants to lick you. Because people are salty, so she'll want to lick you because salt is something missing from their systems and we try to supply it to them. If she were to lick you [laughs] it'd be like getting rubbed with a wood file... Fortunately there's some people, more and more all the time, who care about what they eat, who think about the animals and are willing to pay a little more money for the animals to have good conditions. So they're helping make it possible for the animals to have better lives, for the countryside to function, for there to be the original animal species in some way, for the animals to be outside on the pasture, in the most natural environment. Even if they're cold outside in the winter and then hot in the summer, but that's just how it is in nature. I'm a bit of a pessimist and I know that I can't save the planet, but I'm making an effort to be able to say that I did as little harm to it as possible and didn't give people polystyrene. So we try to keep the animals as naturally as can be done... And can you imagine that everything you dream of will end up sooner or later in one giant ocean?