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[www.landmais.com](http://www.landmais.com)  
[www.slowfood.travel](http://www.slowfood.travel)

## JUST A SMALL WHITE GRAIN



### Products:

**Corn semolina white: 500g, vacuum – packed, gluten free**

**Cornmeal white: 500g, vacuum – packed, gluten free**

I had the great fortune to grow up in an almost untouched area (Carnic Alps-Carinthia-Austria).

With my neighbour of the same age I learned how to catch a marten, fox or jay and how to fish a trout just with my hand.

It was a carefree time in which we lived and we deeply experienced nature and all its facets. This was our survival game.

On the farm any help was needed because most of the work had to be done by hand. Many machines did not exist yet.

I can still remember our last horse that was used to bring the hay in.

All food came from the farm, it was simple but nutritious. Everything we needed was produced on the farm.

With the beginning of school, a new life began and thereby also a new age on the farm.

The changes on the farm proceeded very fast. New ways of thinking, new machines, new production methods. The motto was - the more, the better.

The traditional knowledge was thrown overboard, it was no longer necessary to think about how to deal with the soils. Chemistry and artificial fertilizers took that duty over.

But: I can't and would never judge my family for that attitude because this was in fact the spirit of the time and everybody who did not participate was lost.

At the tender age of 30 years the next big change came.



### **Dad - what is that and how does it work?**

The questions my children asked, also aroused my interest - they were about the old mill on the farm. It is big, has two millstones, is terribly loud, everything wobbles and dusts - but in the end something very good comes out.

My father came into play. He showed us how to grind corn flour. Our beloved "Sterz", which I enjoyed very much during my childhood was reborn. Now the interest was aroused, and the way was marked out. We wished for having that kind of corn again on the farm. Luckily there were still a few corncobs and a handful of grains left.

Simultaneously with the first cultivation attempts in the vegetable garden, the "Tirgefieder" as we call it (that is the removal of the leaves from the corncobs) and the hanging of the corncobs for drying, the awareness for the almost forgotten old tools, craft skills and ways of life on the farm was born.

From today's point of view, we can only bow to the abilities, the knowledge and the connection with the nature of our ancestors.

Slowly we understood that it all makes sense and can be put together in a meaningful way.

Our guests also asked many questions as for example where the bacon is smoked, how Evi - my wife - makes our delicious homemade cheese, why the corncobs hang there, and so on.

These are all stories that made us put things together. It was very important to us to consciously live the philosophy we cultivated and represented on the farm.

I managed to find a student at the FH Weihenstephan who wanted to write his diploma thesis about our white corn.

Suddenly more people were interested in this story, also from other regions. In cooperation with the seed expert of the province of Carinthia, we succeeded in declaring the "Gailtaler weißer Landmais/ Gailtaler white corn" a "rare agricultural crop" at the EU in Brussels.



At the same time, we registered it as an EU trademark.

And there was even more to it: during the constant dealing with the white grains, the terms "celiac disease" and "gluten-free" suddenly appeared. What does that mean? A doctor friend of ours gave us a crash course and we also asked the AGES (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety) which quickly explain to us.

The next challenge was there. Will we be able to produce a valuable food with such a high level of purity that it will be suitable for celiac patients?

Our agricultural business has been converted. Not a single grain of wheat could be left on the farm.

Now new challenging questions came into play: how do we feed our animals and what about the crop rotations in the fields?

## **Rethinking:**

Everything is possible, at first not that smoothly but with increasing experience it gets easier and easier.

Until today, we have succeeded in producing our Gailtaler white corn semolina and flour completely gluten-free.

Our white corn has meanwhile become an integral part of high gastronomy, various specialist shops sell it, and the press and television have discovered its interesting story.

## **The next step was:**

The Slow Food idea has recently taken root here. Our region has developed into the first worldwide Slow Food - Travel Region. Guests from all over the world visit us on our farm. The fields and the production process on the farm are visited and discussed. It also takes courage to stand up and say - that's how we do it.

But you can't do it alone.

It also needs the help of committed people, of specialists who can put such a complex idea together and guide it in the right direction.

We have succeeded in doing that. The interaction between the Slow Food team, the right advertising channels (Kärnten Werbung), the gastronomy and the specialist shops works very well.

(Local politics were omitted for the time being!!)

The trend continued as the word BIO is on everyone's lips.

Next year our son's generation takes the farm over. Their goal is organic farming. (We are currently in an Austrian program for environmental and landscape protection - a preliminary stage to organic farming)



Nevertheless, it must be considered that not all organic products are the same. The feasibility of the specific requirements on the farm and in the fields, as well as the regulations and specifications of the individual organic associations, must be carefully examined.

Do the requirements they established for another region also fit here?

We are currently setting up important contacts, as for example with the head of organic research in Austria, the scientific advisory board of the government and corresponding universities of applied sciences.

It is very important to bring together old knowledge and the latest research and, of course, to profit from it.

This year we already got students who want to write their diploma theses about our Slow Food Travel Region.

The topic area has become very broad.

What we are proud of:

The whole story also created jobs. The products are marketed via tourism (hotels). Our bakery needs two more workers. On the farms the young want to stay again as they see a promising future. What more could we ask for?

**Idealism:**

The respectful handling of the soil (the fight against the agricultural lobby is inevitable), the application of almost forgotten crafts, the advancement of old varieties, agricultural work, who would have thought almost 30 years ago that all this would be possible thanks to a small white corn kernel?

**Certificate of Gluten-Freedom**