

by Christine Fischer



Meet a Vegetarian Hunter

The author, a Swiss hunter and blogger, chooses not to eat meat and focuses instead on the science of hunting and the sociology of hunters.

Apparent contradictions have not stopped me from doing what my heart beats for—my passion is hunting in the mountains. I guess Swiss girls have a love for nature and mountains in their blood. But as an animal lover, I am concerned with our inconsiderate meat consumption and contradictory relationship with animals. This raises many questions to which I find answers in my hunting activities.

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I have been hunting for 12 years now, mainly in Germany and Austria. Some people don't understand how I can hunt but do not consume my harvest of venison. (It is not wasted—I give it to people who appreciate it.) My personal understanding of hunting is broader than simply a high-quality meal. Many of the responsibilities of a huntress speak to me: respect, mindfulness, love and appreciation for our wildlife and nature, awareness and acceptance of the natural cycle of life and death, sustainable use of our natural resources and the need to keep this beauty accessible and tangible for the following generations—to mention just a few.

I am particularly interested in hunting in a socio-political context. To gain a better understanding of these complex relationships and interactions, I studied at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna and graduated as *Akademische Jagdwirtin*; in English, you might call this a bachelor's degree in hunting.

There is a symbiotic relationship between hunting and science that is beneficial to both sides. In the two years of my studies, I researched hunters on social networks and wrote my thesis about them. The urgency and relevance of this topic have led to a more in-depth and diverse commitment in this area.



My blog, www.HirschundCo.com, is a platform where hunters and scientists may network. Knowledge makes us hunters better in practice. It creates more understanding of the concepts of sustainable hunting, and the more we know, the better we can debate in public. It is high time to convince the non-hunting majority of the valuable contributions that hunting makes to our natural resources.

To communicate our diverse responsibilities as hunters, we must now use social networks. Without these channels, we cannot reach younger groups. HIRSCH&CO therefore provides suggestions, ideas and thoughts about the sensitive handling of hunting content on social media. My blog also focuses on “scientific blinks”—highly compressed content from scientific studies and projects that we can absorb in a maximum of five minutes of reading time. The reader gains useful knowledge for hunting practices.

I expressly advocate a constructive dialogue with *all* interest groups. Especially important to me is the discourse with open-minded but skeptical non-hunters. The fact that I myself generate meat but do not eat it has often proven to be a conversation starter.

I invite everyone to share their knowledge and their questions and to bring their experiences into the discussion at www.HirschundCo.com.

Banner Image: Christine Fischer with Eddie, “the greatest hunting dog of all time.” Author photo

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