

## Obituary

# Christian Zewen

(19.03.1959 – 08. 03. 2022)

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.3986/fag0028>

Christian Zewen, an outstanding and devoted scientist in buckwheat research, passed away on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 in Luxembourg at the age of 62. He was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 1959. C. Zewen was employed by the Government of Luxembourg, the Ministry of Agriculture, Viticulture and Consumer Protection of Luxembourg, as head of the Unit. He graduated at the Department of Agronomy, University of Gembloux, Belgium.

Christian Zewen was much devoted to protecting nature and agricultural and culinary traditions, especially those connected with buckwheat. He collected literature and data on buckwheat growing in Europe historically. His interest in protecting and extending the growing of buckwheat in Luxembourg, especially Tartary buckwheat, far exceeded his duties as a member of the Ministry and his Unit. C. Zewen also supported the University of Ljubljana to receive a pluriannual research project (1999 – 2002) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Luxembourg, to collect and evaluate buckwheat samples, especially Tartary buckwheat samples, of domestic populations in Luxembourg, Slovenia and Europe in general, to investigate growing practices and development of food products.

In 1999, Christian Zewen organized with Christian Ries the first comprehensive book on buckwheat in the German language (Das Buchweizen Buch: mit Rezepten aus aller Welt. Arzfeld: Islek ohne Grenzen EWIV, 1999. ISBN 2-9599967-0-4). The first edition of the book was soon sold out and in 2007 they published the extended edition of the book (Das Buchweizen Buch: mit Rezepten aus aller Welt. 2. überarbeitete und erweiterte Aufl. Arzfeld: Islek ohne Grenzen EWIV, 2007. ISBN 978-2-9599967-1-9). In 2001, at the World Buckwheat Congress in Sondrio (Italy), C. Zewen presented a paper

titled “Buckwheat beer and other buckwheat products in Belgium and Luxembourg”.

In 2003, C. Zewen prepared a chapter on buckwheat-growing and utilization in Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands for a book on buckwheat ethnobotany (Ethnobotany of buckwheat. Seoul, Korea [South]; Jinsol Publishing Co., 2003. ISBN 89-87750-28-0). The cooperation with Christian Zewen is acknowledged in many scientific papers on buckwheat, especially for providing the seeds and literature data, mainly on the history of buckwheat-growing and utilization in Europe.

To study and support buckwheat production, he extended his activities to many countries in Europe (Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Slovenia) and Japan. We remember his visits in Slovenia, investigating possibilities to husk buckwheat grain (both raw and precooked), observing buckwheat fields and mills and experimental preparation of buckwheat dishes. Of special importance for the organisers was the participation of C. Zewen at the 12<sup>th</sup> International Buckwheat Symposium (IBS) in Laško, Slovenia in 2013. He presented an excellent work of art poster, “Tartary buckwheat” by Claire Felloni. He also in Laško presented “Das Buchweizen Buch” (2007) and explained the production of experimental buckwheat-beer in Silenrieux, at Philippeville,



*Figures 1 and 2: C. Zewen preparing Tartary buckwheat braided bread with a student of Education Centre Piramida Maribor at Agra Fair Trade and Exhibition in Gornja Radgona, Slovenia.*



**Figure 3:** Title page of the book published in 1999.

Belgium and in Germany. Based on these initiatives, soon after the 12<sup>th</sup> IBS, the Brewery in Laško, Slovenia, started to produce Tartary buckwheat-beer, the first of its kind in

Europe, probably only the second one worldwide, besides the traditional Tartary beer production by Yi people in Sichuan, China (presented on page 24 of the Das Buchweizen Buch (2007)). On the 12<sup>th</sup> IBS, C. Zewen made a deep impression on participants due to his enthusiasm, good will, and efforts to keep alive the tradition and further development of buckwheat production.

Christian Zewen organized with Christian Ries (Department of Ecology, Luxembourg National Museum of Natural History) several international meetings on buckwheat in Luxembourg. The most prominent of them was the 1<sup>st</sup> European Symposium on Buckwheat in 2015 in Luxembourg (1<sup>st</sup> EuroIBRA). This was the beginning of European buckwheat symposia, followed by the second one in 2018 in Tarvisio (Italy) and the third one (online) in 2021 in Prague (Czech Republic). C. Zewen supported the journal “Fagopyrum” and was in the years 2017 up to now, the member of the editorial team and the Associate Editor.

C. Zewen was also included in several nature-protecting activities, including “Honey Bee Wild” action to protect pollinators.

We will remember Christian Zewen as a kind, warm, sensitive, caring, and thoughtful colleague.