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**Switzerland. Naturally.**

# Vibrant Swiss Agriculture



**SWISS FARMERS WELCOME YOU.**

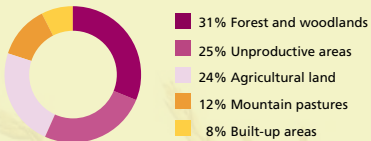


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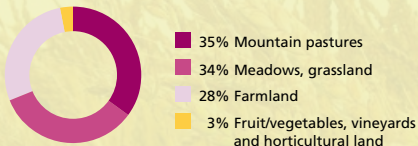
# One third of Switzerland is agricultural land

**Agriculture and alpine farming shape the landscape of Switzerland.** They make up more than one third of the total surface area.

### Surface division Switzerland



### Surface division agriculture



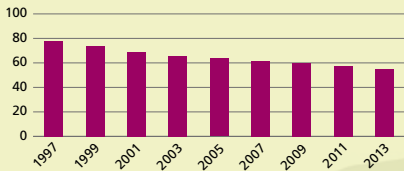
In Switzerland, every second about one square metre of cultivated land disappears and is replaced with urban areas or woods.

### Swiss agriculture is changing

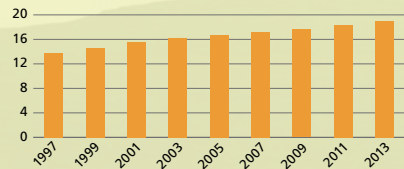
**There are 55,000 farms in Switzerland.**

The average farm size is 18.6 ha. As part of structural changes, there are increasingly fewer yet larger farms: every day almost three farms disappear!

Number of farms in Thousand



Agricultural land per farm (in ha)

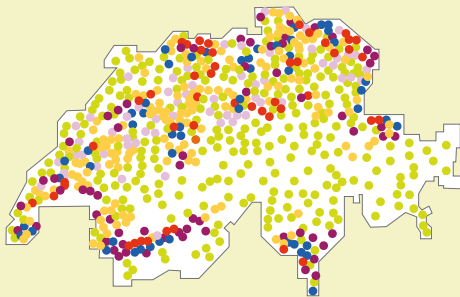


The higher productivity of the farms contribute to the structural changes, thanks to technical progress, as well as the constantly decreasing product prices.

### Swiss agriculture is diverse

#### The operating models vary considerably.

They range from animal husbandry on pastures or in fattening farms to field crops, arboriculture and horticulture, in various combinations. The orientation is influenced by the climate and the topography of the regions



- Pasture grazing
- Field crops
- Fruit
- Fattening farms
- Vegetables
- Vines

29 percent of Swiss farms are mountain farms, another 29 percent part-time farms and 11 percent organic farms.



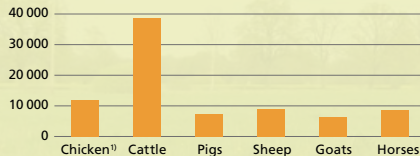
## These are the animals on Swiss farms

**Milk is Switzerland's most important agricultural product.** Around 587,000 dairy cows produce annually about 3.5 billion kilograms of milk. A good 70 percent of this is processed into cheese, butter, cream, yogurt or milk powder.

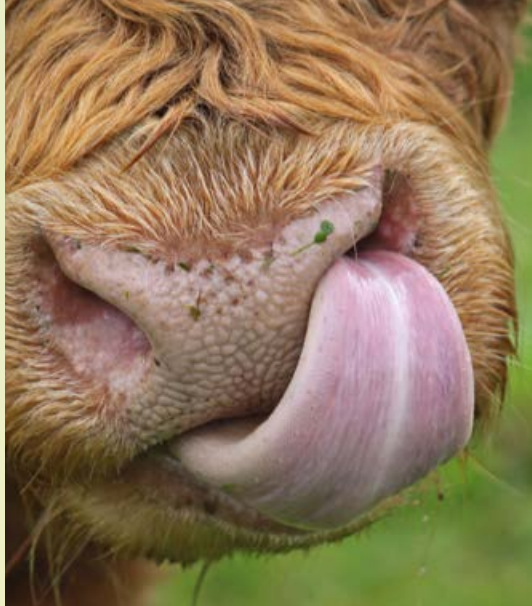
### The six main species of farm animals

1	Chicken <sup>1)</sup>	12 426 000
2	Cattle	1 558 000
3	Pigs	1 849 000
4	Sheep	409 000
5	Goats	80 000
6	Horses	57 000

### on Number of farms



<sup>1)</sup> of which 2,423,000 are laying hens



Many farmers have switched to meat production with suckler cow husbandry because the income from milk keeps going down. As a result the variety of breeds has increased.

## These plants thrive on Swiss fields

The main products based on cultivated area

	hectares
1 Bread cereals	84 482
2 Fodder cereals	62 971
3 Silage and green maize	46 334
4 Rapeseed	22 244
5 Sugar beet	19 893
6 Vines	13 034
7 Potatoes	11 039
8 Vegetables	9 944
9 Fruit and berries	7 291
10 Sunflowers	3 959
11 Protein peas	3 619
12 Soya, oil pumpkins	1 453

**Herbs, kenaf, kardi, tobacco, hemp, or the nutrient miscanthus are also grown on small areas of arable land.** The area of pastures and meadows is 740,759 hectares, almost three times as big as that of arable and permanent crops.



The crop-growing areas are primarily across the entire midlands, from Lake Geneva to Lake Constance.

## Agricultural policy encourages sustainability and entrepreneurship

**The Swiss constitution defines the fundamental mission of agriculture.**

It is

1. To provide and secure food supplies for the population;
2. To preserve the natural environment;
3. To maintain the cultivated landscape;
4. To support the settlement of remote regions;
5. To respect animal welfare.

**The Agricultural Act defines the fine-tuning of the agricultural policy.** Since 1992 product-related subsidies have been continuously reduced and the farms more directly exposed to market forces.

At the same time an ecological approach, landscape quality and animal welfare are being promoted through direct payments.



Over 11 percent of agricultural land is today contributing, as an 'ecological compensation area', to biological diversity and the structuring of the landscape.

## Swiss farmers focus on producing good and safe products

**Swiss farmers supply the country with food.** With their wide range of products they provide 60% of the food consumed in Switzerland. Food production remains central and important for farming families.

**Swiss farmers have a high profile in the international market place due to the high quality of their products.** In foreign countries, many products can be produced on a more efficient and less costly basis. For Swiss products, their origin, the method of production – especially in an environmentally- and animal-friendly manner – is of primary importance.



Indication of origin and labels certify the quality of Swiss products: Suisse Garantie, AOP-IGP, IP-Swiss, the Swiss Organic-Bud, and many others.



## Swiss farmers provide for natural diversity

**Farmers sustain and take care of the cultivated land.** In this way, they protect Switzerland's natural resources and make an important contribution to organic variety.

**Swiss agricultural law sets the framework conditions for sustainable agriculture.**

It rewards ecological diligence via a direct payment method and thus supports the Ecological Certificate of Performance (ECP).

**11% der Schweizer Bauernbetriebe betreiben biologischen Landbau. > noch übersetzen.**



Extensive meadows, hedges, cross-linked natural habitats, controlled plant protection and minimal use of fertilisers are important for sustainable agriculture.

## Swiss farmers create a diversified landscape.

**Swiss farmers shape the configuration of Switzerland** with their meadows, pastures, fields, orchards and vineyards, **from the lowlands all the way to the Alps**. In more open countryside, production would be more efficient. On the other hand, those who nurture the quality of the landscape receive subsidies from the public authorities.

**By taking care of the cultivated land far up into the alpine valleys and in the Alps themselves**, farming families revive remote areas and keep them open and accessible for recreation seekers.



The cultivated land, with its seasonal variations, makes a contribution to the quality of life in Switzerland, thus rendering the country attractive for tourists.



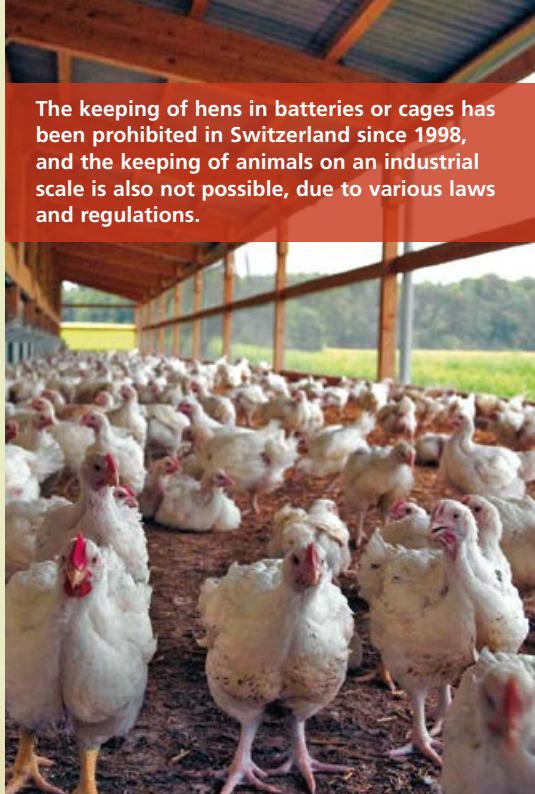
## Swiss farmers take the well-being of animals seriously

Switzerland has some of the most advanced animal protection legislation in the world. And only those farming operations that respect it by the letter are entitled to direct-payment subsidies from the government.

Moreover, the Confederation honours particularly animal-friendly husbandry of productive livestock with subsidies, e.g. regular free roaming of animals (RAUS programme), and also indoor systems which are particularly respectful of animal welfare.

Various labels also make for higher animal well-being. These are attributed by animal protection and manufacturer associations, and lead to higher product prices.

The keeping of hens in batteries or cages has been prohibited in Switzerland since 1998, and the keeping of animals on an industrial scale is also not possible, due to various laws and regulations.



## Swiss farmers cultivate traditions and specialities

Many Swiss farmers maintain and foster ancient customs of their specific region, as many of them are rooted in the agricultural and rural world.

Each region of Switzerland has its culinary specialities. And it's often the farmers that are familiar with these and who pass the recipes down from generation to generation.

Agrotourism offers bring city-dwellers closer to agriculture. Spending a holiday on the farm, sleeping on straw or enjoying fine fare at the farmer's wife's table, they taste a piece of authentic rural life.



Locals and tourists enjoy traditions such as the Chästeilet (ceremony dividing up the cheese) and Alpabzug (late summer descent of the cattle to the valley), folk music, decorating costumes or Hornussen (a kind of rounders) and trouser-hold wrestling.



## Swiss agriculture stimulates the labour market

**Agriculture is an important partner of many upstream and downstream businesses.**

Swiss farmers draw supplies from producers and traders – for instance seeds, manure, machines or milking plants.

And they deliver the raw materials to trading firms, mills, bakeries, butchers and retailers for storage, processing, refining and finally selling.

**The downstream branches of agriculture employ 213,000 people.** They generate value creation worth around 20 million francs per year.

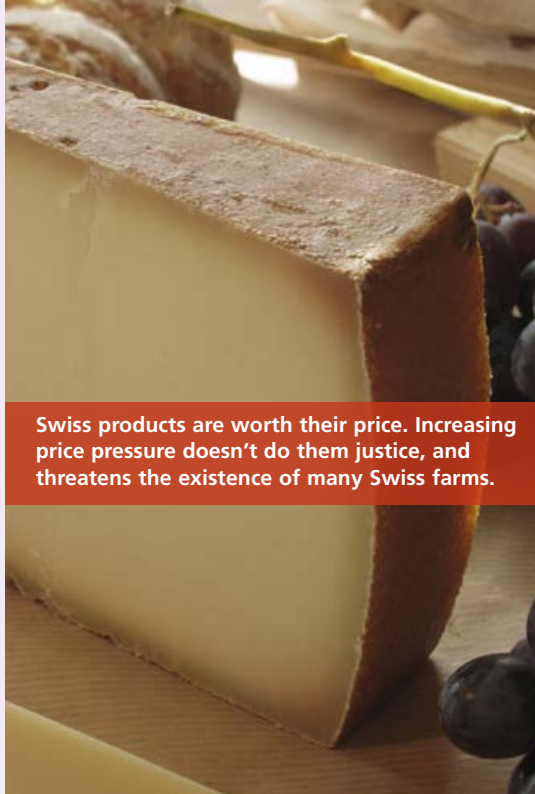
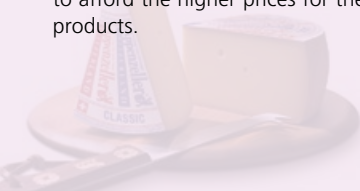


**Strong Swiss companies – processors, wholesalers and retailers, and cooperatives – refine the farmers' products and bring them to the market.**

## Switzerland has its price

**Food prices are higher in Switzerland than in neighbouring countries.** High salaries and higher cost prices for production resources are one reason for this. In addition, topographical and climatic conditions, combined with the high production standards prescribed by the law, generate higher costs. So the low prices dictated by major agricultural exporting countries remain unbeatable.

**Many consumers want above all to buy inexpensive products.** But the Swiss spend only 7 percent of their income on food, compared to their neighbouring countries at 15 to 20 percent. And the work for a Big Mac is 15 minutes in Zurich against an average of 35 minutes worldwide. So they should be able to afford the higher prices for the good Swiss products.



Swiss products are worth their price. Increasing price pressure doesn't do them justice, and threatens the existence of many Swiss farms.

## Swiss farming families show an entrepreneurial spirit

**To give their business a good future**, many a farming family opts for alternative ideas:

- new species of animals such as ostriches, bison or deer
- new varieties such as Shi-Take mushrooms, chokeberries, or kiwi fruit
- energy production with biogas, solar power, or woodchip heating for the neighbourhood
- new services such as event offers for groups, or catering
- new sales models such as farm shops

**Others streamline their work** with the aid of new technologies, in farm communities or through specialisation and contract work for third party businesses.



**Innovation on the farm involves the whole family. And in alternative offers it's often the farmer's wife who's the driving force.**

## Scientists and breeders give a future to agriculture

**Swiss universities and research institutes carry out research on agriculture.** The ETH Zurich, Agroscope and the FIBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) provide farmers with the foundations for sustainable farming. They test new cultivation techniques, conduct feeding trials, grow apple varieties and run studies on economic efficiency. Renowned agrochemical companies in Switzerland also contribute to the development of agriculture.

**Breeding associations produce animals with optimum characteristics.** These are not only to be found in Swiss barns and cowsheds; Swiss breeding has achieved international recognition.

Future-oriented agricultural research promotes tasty, safe foodstuffs, a healthy environment and innovative, competitive farming.





## Swiss farmers seek dialogue with consumers

**Fewer and fewer Swiss still have a direct link with agriculture.** And they are less and less aware of its significance and its variety of services.

**So since 1998 Swiss farmers have been running the national communications campaign 'Gut, gibt's die Schweizer Bauern' (Swiss Farmers Welcome You)** With posters, TV spots, presence at trade fairs, events on the farms and many other measures they seek to dialogue with consumers and voters, giving them an insight into farming and thus promote understanding.



Since 2015 animals play a role as 'eyewitnesses' for the good achievements and services of the farmers. They wear the edelweiss farmer's shirt, symbolising the campaign.

## Swiss farmers are well-trained

- **Minimum training:** 2 years practice and theory for certificate as agricultural practitioner
- **Basic training:** 3 years on training farms and at a vocational training centre for certificate of proficiency
- **Professional certificate and master's diploma:** Managerial schools 1 and 2
- **Agri-technician, Agri-trader:** Höhere Fachschule (Advanced Technical College)
- **Bachelor/Master:** Advanced technical college or «Matura» and work experience or vocational school-leaving certificate studies at advanced technical college or university

More information: [www.agri-job.ch](http://www.agri-job.ch)



The training also provides specialisation options in fruit-growing, vegetable cultivation, viticulture, wine technology and organic farming.