

AgriMontana



NutriScope



ProfiCrops



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Newsletter Agroscope Research Programmes



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Research Programmes Agroscope

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Staff and Colleagues,

The year 2008 is drawing to a close, which means that the Agroscope Research Programmes have also been running for nearly a year. This current newsletter will give you an overview of how far they have been dealt with and a forecast for the next period from 2012 to 2015.

Even within its first year, the research programme showed some definite results, a fact that pleases me very much. On one hand the first publications have appeared in print, on the other the programmes are an important topic for the stakeholders. Experience has shown that the programmes are not just popular in Switzerland but are also held in high regard internationally. The reason for this interest from abroad is that the research programmes are exemplary. They are exemplary since they connect at all national levels, which is essential for working out concrete and practicable solutions. This attempt deals with the requirement to network agricultural research with the various institutions under headings such as «player», «topic», «organisation», and «communication».

In parallel to the start of the operational programme and the research programme, the planning for the period of 2012 to 2015 has already started. Many other questions aside, the one of programme continuation has particularly been raised. This is because the idea of programme research has come up quite late in the day and therefore it has not been given full consideration during the development of the various projects. Currently, we assume that the ongoing NutriScope, ProfiCrops and AgriMontana research programmes will continue well beyond 2011, as was first planned. At most, an adjustment of the main points is required. Basically, the topics «sustainable crop growing under liberalised market conditions», «healthy, safe and high quality foods» and «contribution of agriculture to develop mountain regions» will remain to be important even after 2011.

By extending the programme, we enable the participants and the organisation to use the development projects and to include them into the new work programme. The subsequent new networks will form a good basis to develop targeted projects with regards to the next period, and will continue to strengthen programme research within Agroscope. At the same time, a longer running period opens up the inclusion of further partners and the participation in research programmes.



Paul Steffen
Responsible for Agroscope
Research and Development Sector



Contribution of agriculture to the sustainable development of mountain areas

During the last few months, activities on this programme level focussed on composing a first publication concerning AgriMontana topics as well as networking AgriMontana with the outside world. As always, there are continuous talks with external institutions that wish to introduce projects to AgriMontana. Parallel to that, concrete research operations are actively running as part of the projects.

Focussing on Swiss alpine pasturing of livestock

By focussing on the alpine pasturing of livestock during the summer season, three publications have been compiled about its economical importance and ecological impact as well as the effect of contributions towards alpine pasturing. You will find further information with regards to these publications at www.agrimontana.admin.ch.

Apart from its manifold functions, alpine mountain pasturing is still of great economic importance since it accounts more than 30 % of the income of agricultural operations in the mountain area. Seasonal pasturing will continue to be important in the future even though the livestock for this type of nomadism is declining. To keep it at the level of 2005, the subsidies towards alpine pasturing must be increased. This expected development is a problem from an ecological point of view, since the decline in livestock density could lead to a loss of valuable pastures that are part of nature reserve land. To curb loss of diversity of species, agricultural policy control instruments should be put in place. In concrete terms there is a demand to link the subsidies to the pastures used for alpine pasturing as well as for categorisation according to type of livestock.

AgriMontana as a research network

To publicise AgriMontana as a research network, the programme has been introduced at various occasions to the relevant stakeholders. The mainly positive feedback reflects the expectation that AgriMontana should review concrete reasons and conclusions for relevant questions that concern agricultural institutions in mountainous regions. However, the keenness of stakeholders is also shown in that initial contacts have been made with regions that are interested to collaborate with AgriMontana.

Mountain research awayday in Brig for

The mountain research conference in Brig shows that mountain areas are as important for research as ever. Typical topics are regio-political strategies for the design of the alpine region, the construction of ecological networks within alpine areas or arguments with an ecological outlook for future use of cultivated land. In connection with AgriMontana it is confirmed that in the long run agriculture should not be isolated from its region. On the contrary, it needs to be embedded within the context of space and time, in particular when working out strategies for agricultural development.

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Healthy, safe and high quality food of Swiss origin

From 1st January 2009, Daniel Guidon will be the responsible of the NutriScope programme. Hans-Peter Bachmann remains in the management group and is responsible for the direct contact with Swiss Food Research. Also new are Ueli Zürcher (ACW) and Hans Dieter Hess (ALP) as contacts for programme management.

2. NutriScope Workshop

On 30th June 2008, a workshop for the modules entitled «improvement of safety and quality within the food chain» and «ways and strategies for the support of sustainable nutrition» took place. The participants presented their contributions to the project for the 2008–2011 mandate and some results were already introduced. During the second part of the workshop common issues, possibilities for collaboration, and existing gaps were summarized and discussed.

Programme Forum and Programme Management

Also on 30th June 2008, the second meeting of the programme forum took place. Already, it was in a position to present project contributions and first results of the second workshop.

NutriScope

The suggestions by the programme management for the positioning of NutriScope were discussed in great detail by the forum. The programme management reviewed these suggestions during the meeting of 2nd July 2008 and as a result formulated five clear targets for NutriScope:

1. NutriScope is compiling scientific bases for healthy, safe and high quality foods of Swiss origin in important areas.
2. Selected topics will be elaborated and published together with clinical research.
3. Together with Swiss Food Research, NutriScope operates a platform for food and nutrition research.
4. NutriScope is communicating actively via knowledge mediators e.g. SGE, FOPH, FVO, Swiss Food Net and Nutrinet.
5. NutriScope is supporting the publication of results in scientific journals and specialist publications. Selected scientific conclusions will be communicated to the public. Additionally, syntheses will be provided and published.

The people involved in the forum have changed somewhat since the last meeting and their profiles can be found on the NutriScope website.

Hans-Peter Bachmann and Ueli Bütikofer have again visited many project managers this year and had insights into various fields of operation. We would like to use this opportunity to thank the project managers very much for the interesting talks, discussions and guidance that have widened our horizon considerably.

As it is, during the next few months' new focal points will be pinpointed by all participants with the aim of emphasizing the activities of NutriScope. We will concentrate in particular on the realisation of synergy potentials, communication, and collaboration with the Swiss Food Research R&D Consortium.

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ProfiCrops

New ways for viable indigenous plant production in view of the liberalisation of the market conditions

ProfiCrops was introduced during the 4th EPSO (European Plant Science Organisation) Conference in France. The numerous exchanges highlighted in particular a new requirement shared by many international research institutions and programmes: the need for integration at all levels of agricultural research (people involved, topics, etc). ProfiCrops is responding to this major challenge of integration through its transversal, multidisciplinary and unifying aspects. The people concerned have been included from the initial phases of the preparation and development of integrated projects.

Integrated projects are running

For example, Agroscope, HESA, FSPC and Swisspatat are contributing their specific expertise to the development of the project «For durable production of arable crops after liberalisation of the markets» characterised by a multidisciplinary study of the pooling of arable crops activities in networks of 3–4 farms. OFEV and EAWAG want to contribute to this, via direct interaction with Agroscope and HESA, through the development of new knowledge which may lead to the consideration of the ecological indicators linked to the risks of erosion and losses of nitrogen and phosphorus and plant protection products in the analysis of the durability of the new structures set up (choice of rotation, design of oversized plots, etc.).

In a liberalised market, disease-resistant varieties represent definite added value for our viticulture which is concerned to distinguish itself through the promotion of a high quality environmentally-friendly production. Those concerned were invited to the presentation of the integrated project «Development and contribution of disease-resistant varieties to Swiss viticulture» at a workshop which ended with a wine tasting session of the wines produced from disease-resistant varieties.

In the integrated «Fire blight» project, the development of a new initiative to promote communication between research and the other people concerned was given a warm welcome by the FUS and Swisscofel.

Forum is collaborating

The ProfiCrops forum met on 19 September in Wädenswil. The intention of the forum was to discover ProfiCrops research activities and the programme includes, as an addition to the plenary session, a visit to the «Fire blight» activities. BegObst, the group monitoring the new «Fire blight» projects financed by the Swiss Confederation as a result of the motion of national councillor Müller, also participated at this meeting. This provided an opportunity for the main research projects in Switzerland in this area to be presented, the interests of those concerned to be discussed and the strengths and gaps in the «Fire blight» knowledge system to be identified as well as for a discussion of possible improvements. The «Fire blight» discussion focused on small gaps in the research portfolio; the big work and the value of the running projects is not taken into account adequate. The importance of an appropriate communication was shown once more.

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Feedback

Have you any questions, comments or suggestions regarding the Research Programmes? If so, please get in touch with the appropriate Contact Person.

Impressum

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