MSc thesis: Regreening following a rockslide: Vegetation development in the Blatten pilot trial

Starting date: 1 May 2027
Duration: as specified by the university
Working Place: Blatten VS, Zurich or Posieux, remotely
Language: German, French, English
Agroscope research group: Forage Production and Grassland Systems
Evaluating professor or university: as specified by the applicant
Contact: Manuel Schneider, Research Group Leader
Email: manuel.schneider@agroscope.admin.ch

Background

On 28 May 2025, 9 million m3 of scree and ice crashed into the Lötschental valley, burying the village of Blatten. A total of 70 ha of agricultural land was also buried. The stated aim is to rebuild the village of Blatten and to restore the agricultural land. To this end, three pilot plots were recultivated in July 2026. The soil was prepared with various additives – manure, topsoil, wood chips and mycorrhizae – and eight contrasting multispecies mixtures were sown.

Objectives

1. To monitor the vegetation dynamics in the mixtures depending on the soil treatment.
2. To estimate species proportions and assess forage quantity and quality
3. To derive recommendations for the recultivation of further areas

Requirements

- A sound knowledge of meadow plants in their non-flowering state
- A keen interest in fieldwork, resilience to all weathers and stamina
- A driving licence for passenger cars
- Prior knowledge of and an interest in statistical data analysis

Procedure

If you are interested, please send your CV and letter of motivation to the email address above.

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