



Country Report for Switzerland

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Topics of demonstration

- **Animal husbandry:** species-appropriate animal husbandry and health
- **Crop cultivation:** reduced tillage and soil-protecting agriculture, organic cultivation of berries, fruit and vegetables, fodder production and grassland management in mountain areas
- **Further sustainability topics:** Smart Farming, community supported agriculture, combating problem plants in the Alps, beekeeping

Providers and purpose of demonstration

- **Most frequent providers:** organizations/institutions engaged in education/research/consulting
- **Main organisers:** cantonal agricultural offices (schools, advisers), often in close cooperation with research (Agroscope, FiBL) or interest groups, farmers' organizations, industry...
- **Mega events:** all large-scale events are organized in a joint effort
- **Visitors:** the first/most frequently mentioned profile of a typical group of participants is farmer
- **Demofarm "Agrovision":** a private player in the value chain, highest number of visitors, activities mainly addressed to consumers

History

Agricultural cooperatives formed for marketing purposes
Regional "LANDI's" or "Biofarm" have been carrying out field tours or machine demos since middle of 20th century

Field trials as demo site or research platform
Field trials on varietal characteristics have been originally established as trigger for comparative events at beginning of 20th century

First on-farm demonstration identified
"Farmer-to-farmer working groups", which we consider today as a very effective and modern form of learning, began 250 years ago in Zurich: on his model farm, H. J. Gujer, called "Kleinjogg", invited other farmers to demonstrate and discuss successful methods, famous personalities visited his farm such as Goethe, Rousseau and Pestalozzi



Types of Demonstrations

- Field tours, crop days, large-scale events, courses with demos and farmvisits
- Farmer-to-farmer working groups with stable visits and field tours (rotating among members)

Access Issues

- **Gender:** men clearly in the majority in all functions (75-90% male), farmer-to-farmer working groups more gender balanced (up to 50:50)
- **Age:** most offers open to all farmers, accessibility simple, specific offers explicitly aimed at young farmers or then at experienced/innovative farmers
- **Geography:** access to demo-activities very high due to the small size of country but language barriers between french, italian and german speaking parts of Switzerland, within 1-2 hours car drive, access to all demo-activities in each linguistic region, institutions well distributed throughout the country, local coverage traditionally ensured by the cantons' mandate to provide their own counselling/education services and historically by research, high level of acceptance and identification; offers in special crops (fruit, viticulture, herbs) linked to production areas; national competence centers for certain animal species (e.g. small ruminants, poultry); in mountainous regions events on animal husbandry dominate according to demand or type of farm

Other Issues

- **Coverage:** relatively small circle of dedicated farmers is present at demos, others are described as consulting resistant and difficult to reach
- **Sustainability:** important in farmer-to-farmer working groups in terms of organizational form and interests, often all three dimensions of sustainability respected
- **Demonstration farms:** agricultural schools or research stations have clear contractual relationship with farmers, they own and operate or lease the demo farms on their land, this due to historical reasons

Distinguishing Characteristics

- High demonstration activity in Switzerland
- Demos mediated mostly top-down, but due to the federalist system close to the base
- Purely farmer led demonstrations are rare, ideas are usually taken up by institutions
- High collaboration between researchers and interest groups due to mutual interest in topics
- Activities more often driven by research than by innovation (e.g. soil-protecting, no-tillage)
- Companies (machinery, products) often act as sponsors, for large-scale events (with a trade fair character) companies are offered platforms for demonstrating their innovations



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