

AGRICULTURAL REPORT 2024 COMPACT



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Agricultural Report 2024

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www.agrarbericht.ch

The year 2023

The federal government has been monitoring and analysing the state of biodiversity and the environment in the agricultural sector for over 30 years. During this time, the agricultural sector has done much to develop its production methods and improve resource efficiency. Conserving natural resources is essential if we are to ensure agricultural production in the long term.

In 2023, climate change, crop protection and rising production costs were some of the main challenges facing farmers. The high level of participation in the new production system subsidies shows that the agricultural sector is ready to take on these challenges and is committed to greater sustainability in production. However, Swiss agriculture is just one link in the chain: the entire food industry and consumers need to make a commitment to greater sustainability.

This brochure provides a compact look at some of the current developments in Swiss agriculture and the agri-food industry. We at the Federal Office for Agriculture hope you enjoy reading it. Further information can be found on the website www.agrarbericht.ch.

Direct payments New subsidies to reduce the use of pesticides

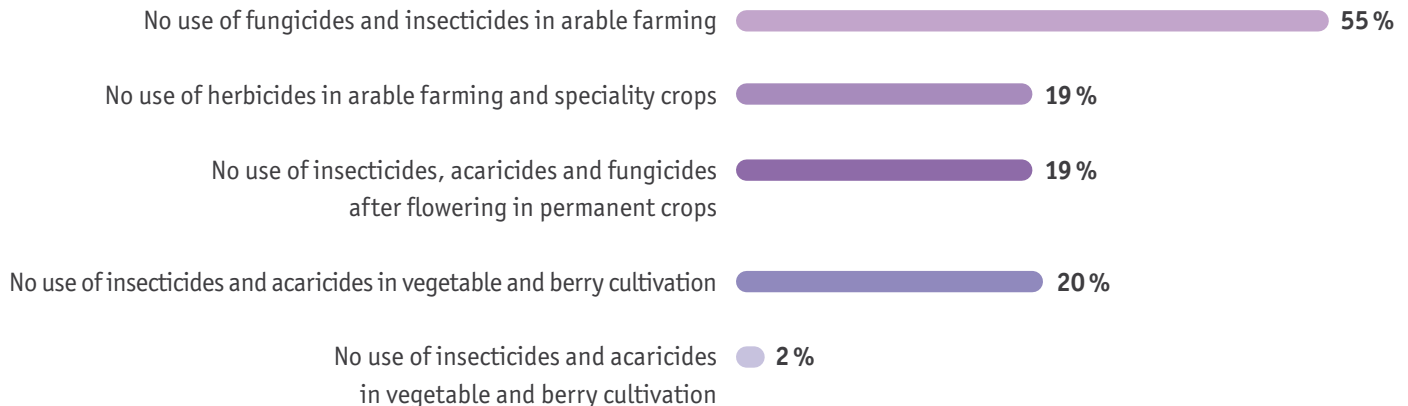
In response to the drinking water and pesticide initiatives, Parliament adopted a parliamentary initiative on reducing the risk of pesticide use in 2022. This instructed the Federal Council to reduce the risks associated with the use of plant protection products by 50 per cent by 2027 and to reduce nutrient losses proportionately.

To achieve this, the Federal Council introduced new direct payment programmes at the beginning of 2023 – including new and extended production system subsidies. These voluntary programmes are already having an impact in the first year of implementation.

For example, farmers no longer use herbicides on 19 per cent (53,000 hectares) of the total area of arable land, vineyards and orchards. In addition, around 14,000 farms refrained from using fungicides and insecticides on 102,000 hectares of cultivated land. These are encouraging results. The new incentives will help to better protect the environment from the effects of pesticides and excess nutrients.



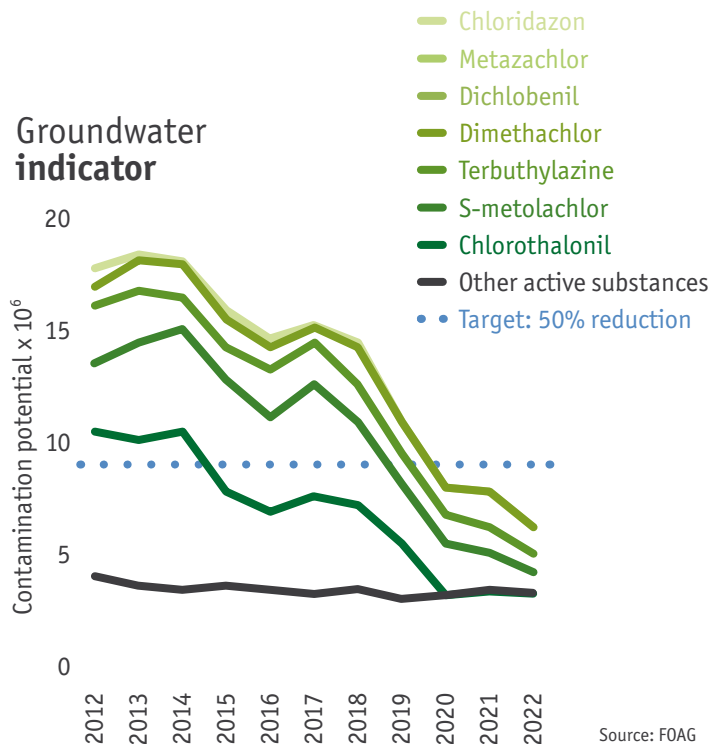
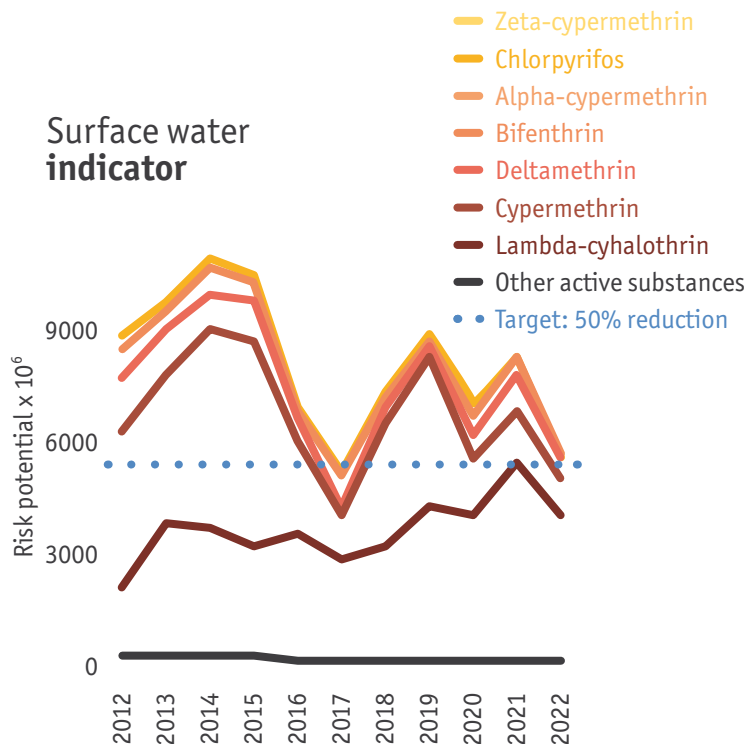
Share of land area in %



Plant protection products action plan Risks to the environment reduced

In 2017, the Federal Council adopted an action plan aimed at reducing the risks associated with the use of plant protection products (PPPs). The plan sets targets and measures for achieving them over a ten-year period. It also contributes to the target set by Parliament in the Agriculture Act 2021 of reducing the risks to surface waters and semi-natural habitats and the pollution of groundwater by 50 per cent compared to the average value for the years 2012–15. The government also defined indicators to assess the extent to which the targets had been achieved.

On 8 May 2024, the Federal Council approved the interim report on the implementation of the action plan. The initial results are encouraging. Thanks to the measures taken by the agricultural sector, the risks to the environment have been reduced. However, the results also show that, without the use of a number of active substances, it is becoming increasingly difficult for farmers to protect their crops.



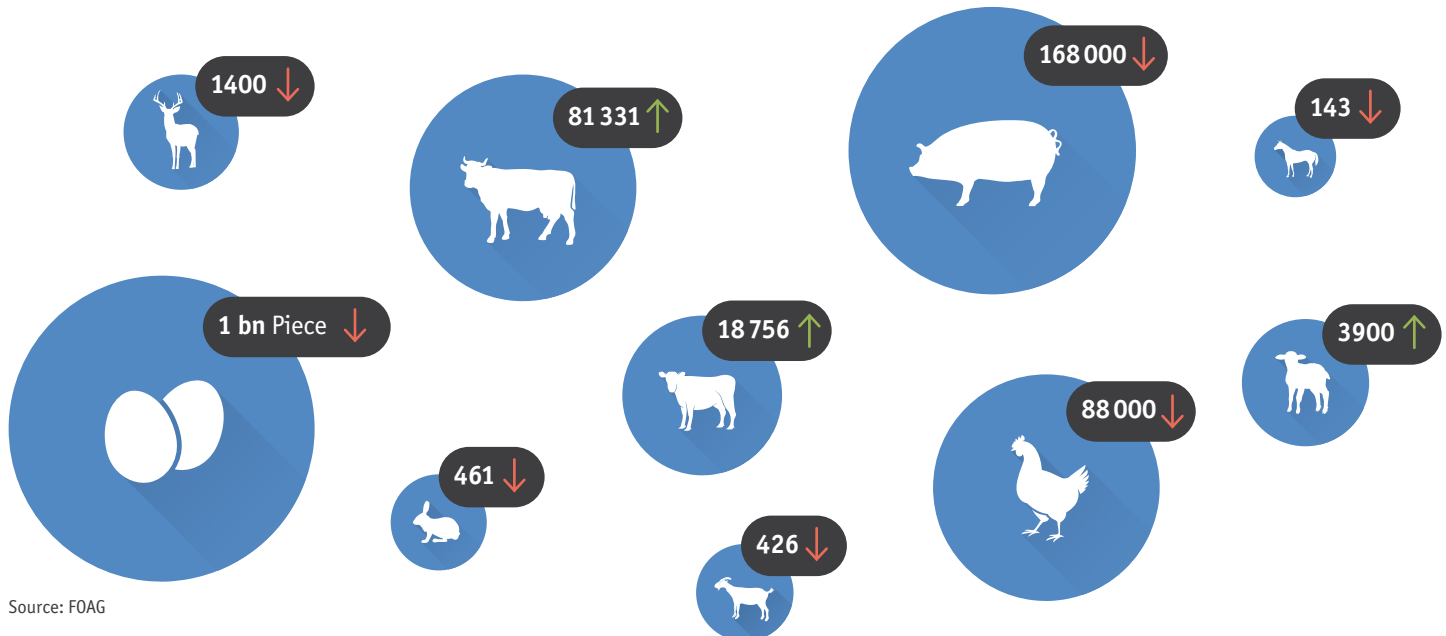
Meat and egg production Slight decrease in poultry meat and egg production

In 2023, a total of 361,906 tonnes of meat were produced in Switzerland, of which around 45 per cent was pork. There was an overall reduction in stocks, resulting in a drop in production. The picture differed across production sectors. The pig population fell by 3.5 per cent to 1.32 million animals, owing to overproduction in the previous year. Despite the decline, pork remained the most produced meat and the domestic share rose to 98 per cent.

Beef production rose by 1.4 per cent overall to 81,331 tonnes. The poultry population remained stable at around 13 million animals, including 3.8 million laying and breeding chickens, although poultry meat production fell one per cent to 88,000 tonnes. With around one billion eggs produced, egg production fell by 3.7 per cent. The domestic share of poultry meat remained stable at 66.3 per cent.



Swiss meat and egg production in 2023 Sales weight in tonnes



Source: FOAG

Producer and consumer prices

Higher consumer prices for dairy products

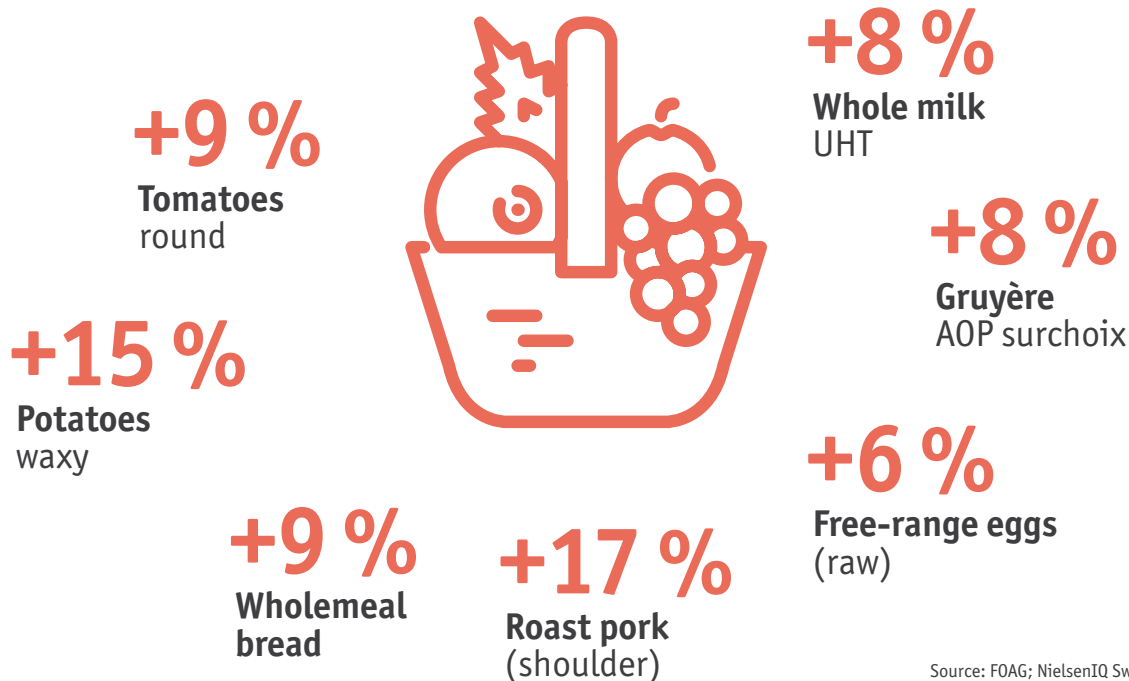
In 2023, there was a year-on-year increase in producer and consumer prices for the majority of the products analysed. In animal production, producer prices for raw milk and eggs have generally risen. Prices also rose on the pig market. Price trends in crop production were mixed. There was a rise in pome fruit prices, primarily as a result of higher production costs and reduced supply. Consumer prices for dairy products and eggs also increased.

The picture for retail prices for meat and meat products is somewhat different: fresh meat in particular rose in price, but there was a fall in the cost of meat products. In the plant products sector, fruit prices fluctuated, while potatoes, flour, bread and most vegetables recorded a price increase.



Consumer prices 2023/2022

In %, without organic products



Living conditions Higher satisfaction among farmers

A special analysis by ‘Statistics on Income and Living Conditions’ (SILC) shows that many farming families are tired of politics and their trust in politicians is dwindling. This survey compares the living conditions of farming families with other households and is conducted annually by telephone interview.

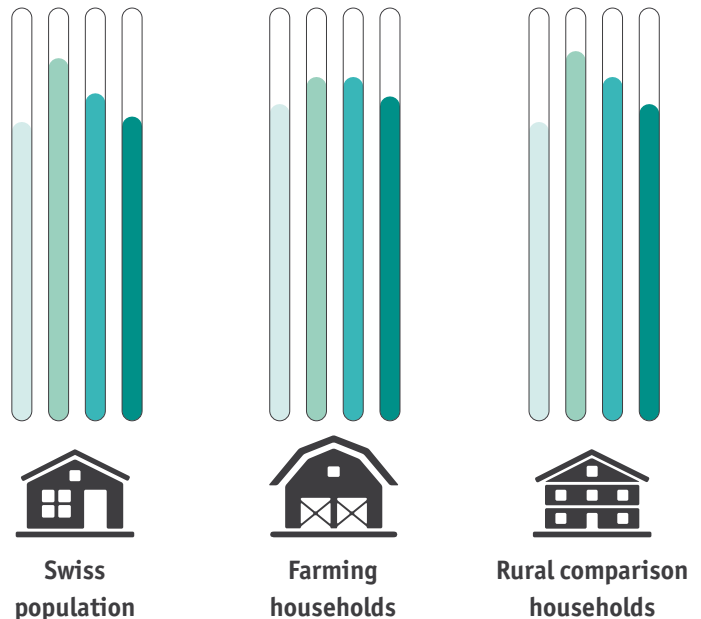
Farming families are interested in politics, participate most frequently in elections and votes and have a clearly more right-wing attitude than the other population groups. However, many of them are feeling more insecure and exhausted. Their sense of happiness lies somewhere between that of the Swiss population as a whole and that of the rural comparison group. Satisfaction with different aspects of life varies, but overall they are most satisfied with their day-to-day life.

262 people from farming households were surveyed in SILC 2021. A household is considered a farming household if at least one person in the household is self-employed in the agricultural sector. For comparison, the diagram shows both the results of the entire Swiss population and those of the comparison group ‘Households in rural areas’ with an employed reference person (2,033 people).



Average of the population that is satisfied with ...

- their day-to-day life
- living with others
- personal relationships
- their working conditions



Farms

Continued growth in organic farming

In 2023, there were 47,719 farms in Switzerland, 625 or 1.3 per cent fewer than in the previous year. The average utilised agricultural area per farm increased by 28 acres to 21.8 hectares. The number of farms with an area of over 30 hectares rose again. The share of women running farms continued its upward trend, reaching 7.3 per cent in 2023.

The spread of organic farming also continues; around 19 per cent of agricultural land is now farmed organically. In 2023, there were 7,896 organic farms in Switzerland, 77 more than in the previous year, and 30 per cent more than ten years previously.



↑ +30 %
2013–2023

7896
organic farms

30 years of agri-environmental monitoring

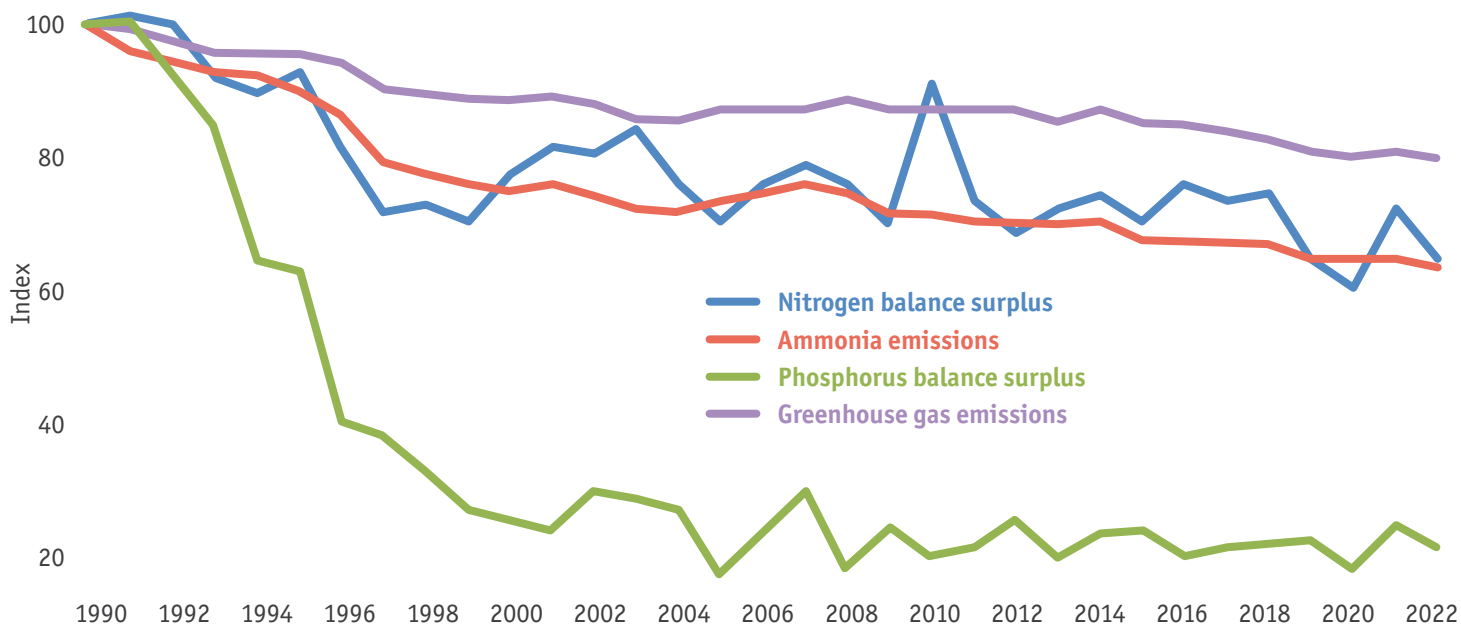
How has agriculture influenced the environment in the last 30 years?

Over the past 30 years, agri-environmental monitoring in Switzerland has shown how agriculture impacts the environment and how these effects are developing. Agroscope and the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) have been collecting data on this on an ongoing basis since 1990. The results, presented in the agricultural report, are used for research purposes and by the FOAG for the development of agricultural policy.



The overall environmental impact of agriculture has decreased significantly since 1990, which is a very positive development. Nevertheless, challenges remain, particularly with regard to greenhouse gas emissions and the loss of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus. Agri-environmental monitoring provides an important basis for promoting sustainability in agriculture and protecting natural resources. Using time series analyses statistical methods, it is possible not only to describe the increase or decrease in indicator values, but also to better understand the background to these changes. On this basis, targeted measures can be applied to make agricultural policy even more effective and to better support agriculture in overcoming the challenges faced.

Changes in key agri-environmental indicators since 1990



Source: FOAG, Agroscope

International comparisons Higher producer and consumer prices

In 2023, producer and consumer prices in Switzerland were generally higher than in the three neighbouring countries surveyed, Germany, Austria and France. For example, producer prices for dessert apples were significantly lower abroad than in Switzerland.

In consumer prices, butter showed the greatest price difference between neighbouring countries and Switzerland. Most products are cheapest for consumers in Germany. However, a range of factors influence prices in Switzerland and in other countries, making comparison difficult.



Consumer prices in neighbouring countries

In % of the Swiss price (CH price = 100%)

