



UNISECO



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Increasing the knowledge about income alternatives to intensive livestock farming of the Swiss Lucerne Central Lakes region

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Understanding and Improving the Sustainability of Agro-ecological Farming Systems in the EU

POLICY BRIEF

The Lucerne Central Lakes region is affected by environmental impacts of high animal densities in agriculture such as water and air pollution. Stricter laws to contain the problem meet fierce resistance from farmers. Therefore, such laws need to be accompanied by access to knowledge with regard to income alternatives.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Lucerne Central Lakes region is dominated by animal production, the most important farm types being specialised milk farms (31%) and specialised cattle rearing and fattening farms (14%). It is one of the most intensive pig farming regions in Switzerland as well as in Europe. Animal densities are stagnating at a consistently high level of 75% above the Swiss average. The main reason for the stagnation is that livestock farming still is economically attractive despite past regulatory efforts to contain the problem. While many of the stakeholders involved in the project assess additional, stricter regulations to reduce stocking densities as effective, the political acceptance remains low.

Besides the profitability of status quo production such as intensive pig farming, other reasons are important too, such as past investments in stables, the traditional, livestock-centred knowledge system, uncertainties about market development of income alternatives (e.g. special crops). The latter are tackled by advisory services, but there are gaps in accessibility and content of these services, thus uncertainties remain among farmers.

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Related to UNISECO case study:

[Strategies for reducing stocking densities.](#)

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Blueberry plantation

The field is located on a farm formerly specialized in milk and pork production. (Photo: Kummer)

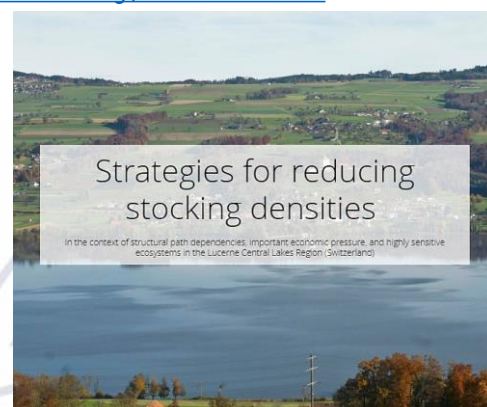
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend, to further improve the knowledge system in the region in three domains: (1) Target young farmers even more actively during a generation change with advisory services by explicitly presenting income alternatives, their market development and adaptations that would be needed on the farm. (2) For all other farmers, make first advice related to income alternatives affordable and quickly accessible without the need to prepare beforehand with a written concept on the planned changes. (3) Strengthen the role model of innovative farmers in the region by financially supporting a network of innovative farmers. The latter would allow peer-to-peer learning opportunities among farmers and to showcase examples of successfully lowering animal densities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Case study website: <https://uniseco-project.eu/case-study/switzerland>

Case study story map: <https://arcg.is/1iKTGa0>



Start page of case study story map.

ABOUT UNISECO:

UNISECO is a European research project aiming to develop innovative approaches to enhance the understanding of socio-economic and policy drivers and barriers for further development and implementation of agro-ecological practices in EU farming systems.

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<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/773901>

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UNISECO in the EIP-Agri projects database:

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