

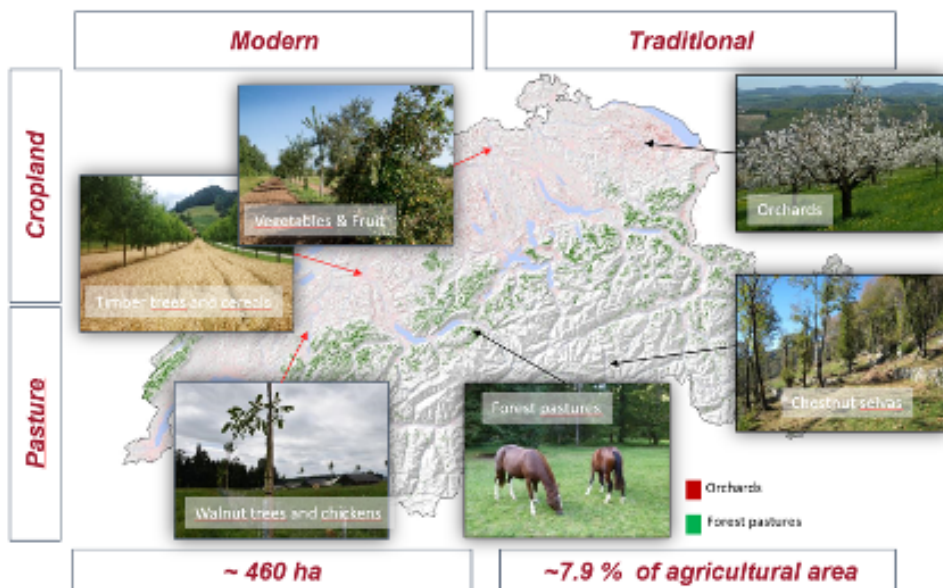


Agroforestry: Strengthening Resilience and Ecosystem Services of Swiss Land Use Systems

Policy scenario co-design

In Switzerland, there is still a large proportion (7.9% of usable agricultural area, in total about 79.000 ha) in traditional agroforestry systems, like traditional orchards or forest pastures. Modern agroforestry practices only account for a small proportion (500 ha) of land use. Modern agroforestry systems are eligible for funding under the biodiversity promotion scheme. Although the financial incentives are high, up to 2250.- Swiss francs/year and ha, the conversion to modern silvoarable and silvopastoral systems is progressing only slowly. However, especially in the last three years, interest on the part of political decision-makers has increased.

Swiss Agroforestry in Practice



(Merzog et al, 2018)

Figure 1: Overview - traditional and modern agroforestry in practice.

For example, in its [Sustainable Development Strategy 2030](#) (SDS 2030), the Federal Council indicates the priorities to be set for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development over the next ten years:

“sustainable consumption and production”, “climate, energy and biodiversity” and “equal opportunities and social cohesion”.

Among other things, concrete measures were defined for the period 2021 - 2023 within the framework of an action plan in order to achieve targets within the above-mentioned priority themes.

Measure 7 directly targets agroforestry measures. Specifically, it states: *“This measure generally aims to evaluate the potential of coordinated promotion of trees in the form of urban forestry and agroforestry in rural areas. A cross-sectoral and spatially differentiated approach to the use of trees as a natural resource is proposed. The assessment of the promotion potential is based on the question of the extent to which this can contribute to addressing global challenges such as CO₂ sequestration, biodiversity loss and adaptation to climate change.”*

The specific objectives of Measure 7 are:

1. Development of a cross-sectoral, coordinated partnership
2. Dialogue and knowledge transfer for the further development of urban forestry and agroforestry
3. Development of guidelines and recommendations
4. Exploration of innovative approaches and perspective analysis

A concept will be developed for the promotion of trees and for reflections on forest and agriculture policies of the future, as well as on their relationship to ecological infrastructure in the context of the biodiversity strategy.

In three stakeholder meetings in the first half of 2022, the Federal Offices for Agriculture and the Environment discussed various measures to promote agroforestry in Switzerland, defined possible research priorities and discussed current problems with practitioners. The current Swiss Climate Strategy for Agriculture, which will be adopted this autumn, also includes various measures to promote agroforestry systems from a climate perspective.

Overall, the current situation of agroforestry in Switzerland can be summarised as follows:

Two steps ahead – one step back

- Growing interest from farmers
- Support from farmer organisations, e.g. IP-Suisse (~20,000 members) created a climate label with agroforestry amongst the proposed measures
- **Agro4esterie**: a pilot project funded by Ag. Ministry with funding for 100 agroforestry farmers and for scientific monitoring (2021-2027)
- **The Coop Agroforestry Support Programme** is the first climate project in Switzerland to be financed by the private sector in the voluntary CO₂ market. Between 2018 and 2022, 60 farms participated. The carbon yield in woody biomass in the agroforestry system was financed.
- Ag. and Env. Ministries organise three **networking / information days** on agroforestry related to the revision of the «Swiss CAP» and the Sustainability Agenda for administration + stakeholders + research (as explained before)
- Revision of the «Swiss CAP» contained an agroforestry measure. It was stopped by parliament in 2020 (there was a general disagreement about subsidy levels and «how green should it be»). The government’s new proposition has no agroforestry measure, however this is back to parliament in autumn 2022

The most important policy scenario co-design options for Switzerland are:

Overall, the following broad directions are currently being discussed in Switzerland:

1. Agricultural policy as a whole will become more agroecological and promote production systems that meet these objectives.
2. Intensive livestock and fodder production for ruminants in the valley areas is being shifted to the hill and mountain areas in favour of site-adapted, grassland-based animal husbandry. The area for fodder production in the valley areas is increasingly used for arable farming and the products flow directly into human nutrition.
3. The intensive keeping and feeding of non-ruminants (pigs, poultry) is coming under increasing pressure in Switzerland. In September, the Swiss population will vote on the [factory farming](#) initiative. Even if the initiative is rejected, it shows the increasing sensitivity of consumers to the issues of animal welfare and “feed no food”. In the long term, the husbandry regulations for non-ruminants will continue to adapt to the existing rules of organic farming.
4. The degree of self-sufficiency in cereals, oil crops and grain legumes to be increased.
5. In a mosaic-like and diverse cultural landscape, mountain agriculture will increasingly use land for arable farming.
6. Negative environmental impacts from agriculture are reduced to a minimum.

IG Agroforst recommend the following policy options:

These are the result of the policy workshops described above and were also communicated to the Federal Office for Agriculture in a letter at the beginning of 2022:

- Anchoring agroforestry in agricultural policy as an independent production system.
- Agroforestry should be recognised measure as a biodiversity-promoting area in arable farming.
- Today, the topics of agroecology (including agroforestry) are very much underrepresented in agricultural education. There is also rarely an advisory structure on these topics, so that interested farmers hardly have a place to turn to. The federal government must make efforts to increase capacities in this area.
- Implementation of the Climate Strategy for Agriculture and strengthening of agroforestry measures within it.
- Promotion of direct partnerships between cities and municipalities and local agriculture within the framework of climate protection projects.

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AGROMIX brings together farmers, researchers and policymakers to explore agroecological solutions for more resilient land use in Europe, developing tools to implement these practices.

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