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United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the food system

A nutritional turnaround urgently needs new recipes. They'll be on the table in autumn.

In 2015, Switzerland committed to helping the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) be achieved by 2030. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Swiss food system offers great potential for improvements in sustainability. A broad-based scientific panel is now developing a basis for discussion and recommendations for action. The expert panel “Future of Food Switzerland” was set up at the initiative of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network Switzerland (SDSN), a UN initiative for a scientifically grounded implementation of the global goals.

If it wants to fulfill the contribution it proposes for achieving the SDGs by 2030, Switzerland must closely scrutinize its food system. The food sector makes an even greater impact than do housing and mobility. Therefore, new recipes are needed along the entire value chain – from production to consumption. For the first time ever, a group of experts with such a broad scientific base will propose solutions for a sustainable food future in Switzerland.

The food you buy makes the difference

The members of the new expert group “Future of Food Switzerland” are compiling scientific findings to provide a basis for policy-makers and public discussions. And they are doing so with a much-needed general view of the food system in mind. Prof. Christine Brombach from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) says: “The expert panel unites a broad spectrum of perspectives and disciplines. That is why it is a fast, reliable and effective tool for supporting necessary changes.”

The group, initiated and moderated by SDSN, identifies concrete starting points on how Switzerland can approach its sustainable development targets. Because our diet has a lot to do with traditions and conventions, we need not only measures at the political level but also public dialogue about our individual behaviour. According to Martin Pidoux, lecturer in agricultural policy and markets at the Bern University of Applied Sciences, it is important that all actors are in the position to do their part: “We shift the blame on each other; we should take responsibility for sustainable development in our own sphere of influence – whether in politics, as a producer or as a consumer. For this to happen, however, everyone must know how to help shape and support the transformation.”



Sustainable Development Solutions
Network – a Global Initiative for the United
Nations

The Swiss voice for the Sustainable
Development Goals of the UN
Agenda 2030

If we act now, much is possible

The expert panel is accompanied by political economist and transformation researcher Dr Lukas Fesenfeld from the Oeschger Centre for Climate Research at the University of Bern and lecturers at ETH Zurich. Dr Fesenfeld is in charge of synthesizing and writing up the scientific inputs. The panel will publish its recommendations this autumn. For the urgent discussions on a sustainable nutrition policy in Switzerland, political decision-makers will thus be able to refer to broadly supported, scientifically based solutions. “The expert panel offers a knowledge-based overview and shows effective and feasible ways of how we can consume, produce and trade food in the future,” says Dr Fesenfeld.

Carole Küng, co-director of SDSN, is pleased that the SDGs related to the food system are being tackled with so much competence and combined strengths: “This means that Switzerland has a realistic opportunity to effectively contribute to the SDGs, even if we don’t have much time.” As secretary of the cross-party Parliamentary Group Global Goals (SDGs), she also ensures that the results will also be available to the federal parliament.

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We are happy to arrange interviews with experts from the panel.

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network is an international network of the United Nations (UN SDSN). It is the product of a global initiative to implement the UN Agenda 2030 and the Paris Climate Agreement. SDSN Switzerland is the Swiss part of this network. It brings together around 50 leading universities, research centers, civil society organizations, companies, and other knowledge centers and partners to create transformative solutions and achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals in Switzerland and beyond.

Further information and membership overview: <https://www.sdsn.ch/>

Scientific Expert Panel “Future of Food Switzerland”– Members

Name	Organization
Dr Stefan Mann	Agroscope
Dr Thomas Nemecek	Agroscope
Dr Gabriele Mack	Agroscope
Magali Estève	Agridea
Sonja Schönberg	BFH-G
Prof. Dr. Sandra Contzen	BFH-HAFL
Dr. Magdalena Schindler	BFH-HAFL
Dr. Evelyn Markoni	BFH-HAFL
Prof. Dr Thomas Brunner	BFH-HAFL
Dr. Matthias Meier	BFH-HAFL
Martin Pidoux	BFH-HAFL
Dr Theresa Tribaldos	CDE, University of Bern
Dr Elisabeth Bürgi	CDE, University of Bern
Bettina Scharrer	CDE, University of Bern
Dr Julie Zähringer	CDE, University of Bern
Dr Angelika Hilbeck	ETH Zurich
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Dr Christian Schader	FiBL
Dr Adrian Müller	FiBL
Prof. Dr Werner Hediger	FH Grisons
Prof. Dr Bernard Lehmann	HLPE-CFS
Dr Pascal Boivin	HEPIA – HES-SO Genève
Prof. Dr Fred Paccaud	Lausanne University Hospital, CHUV
Dr Lukas Fesenfeld Oeschger	Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Bern
Isabel Zihlmann	Swiss Public Health
Dr Jérémie Forney	University of Neuchâtel
Dr Dominique Barjolle	University of Lausanne
Prof. Dr. Sabine Rohrmann	University of Zurich
Dr. Basil Bornemann	University of Basel
Dr Birgit Kopainsky	University of Bergen
Dr Ilaria Espa	World Trade Institute
Prof. Dr Christine Brombach	ZHAW
Dr. Claudio Beretta	ZHAW
Dr. Piera Waibel	Independent
Beat Meier	Independent
Dr Christian Häberli	Independent