

# Editorial

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## Editorial

For many years, the Journal „Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarsoziologie“ has been a valuable and faithful companion for the 250 to 300 members of the Swiss Society of Agricultural Economics. It provides a good mirror for the broad range of research activities Swiss agricultural economists and sociologists have undertaken. It also shows that Swiss agriculture has always been a lot more than just plain food production, but illustrates the interdisciplinary concept of multifunctionality.

The world is changing, however, and the concept of our journal has to follow this change. One of these changes is the fact that the qualification of scientists is increasingly measured along their authorship of peer reviewed papers. This new scale has its logic: While everybody is able to put something down to paper, there should be a mechanism that ensures the originality and relevance of what is published. The qualified opinion of two fellow scientists under the veil of anonymity is a rather good proxy for this requirement. Without a review process, the incentive to submit a paper to “Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarsoziologie” has steadily been decreasing over the last years. Therefore, we have now started to ask two anonymous reviewers for their opinion when a paper is submitted. This procedure has resulted in a slimming diet of our journal, abandoning the need to fill two volumes per year. A number of papers had to be rejected in accordance with the reviewers’ opinion, and I am happy that this issue could be filled with high-quality papers.

Another relevant development is certainly the diminishing importance of national borders. Negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between Switzerland and the European Union are on the political side of what our Society has anticipated on a scientific basis. Since 2007, we have broadly distributed a call for papers in Switzerland and abroad in preparation of our Annual Conference, resulting in a substantial increase in international contributions, particularly by German colleagues. This internationalisation of our conference has also led to an internationalisation of our periodical. While we would be very unhappy to lose part of our Swiss readership, we are most eager to gain international subscribers.

The change of title into our new “Yearbook of Socioeconomics in Agriculture” reflects our approach what kind of international niche we aim to fill. There exist a lot of socio-economic Journals. But while the link between social and economic issues has a particular relevance for the

field of farming, researchers in agriculture have to choose between economic Journals and sociological ones. Our Yearbook explicitly links economic and social aspects of farming and thus provides a platform for the discussing the concept of a multifunctional agriculture. It can unambiguously be justified that such an attempt comes from Switzerland, a country where the social and cultural role of agriculture is particularly strong.

Our first Yearbook focuses on climate and environmental economics - a topic which as been intensively discussed at our Annual Conference earlier this year. I feel that it provides a very suitable prototype for the concept of our new periodical and I wish every reader a good time with this first volume of, hopefully, a long serial.

Stefan Mann