



Position paper on sustainable protein supply in Switzerland

Politics, research, market players and civil society are engaging in discussions and implementing measures to ensure a sustainable agriculture and food industry. Sustainable protein supply is an important pillar. This paper shows what the Swiss Soya Network (SNS) contributes to a sustainable protein supply and where the future priorities lie.

Acting and cooperating

Sustainable nutrition systems are based on a combination of animal and plant products and the most sustainable production techniques possible. Animal foods such as meat, milk and eggs play an important role, as they provide many other micronutrients such as iron in addition to high-quality proteins. As part of healthy dietary patterns, they make a decisive contribution to achieving the Global Nutrition Targets 2025 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹.

The players in the Swiss agriculture and food industry are tackling the challenges of a sustainable protein supply proactively and with foresight. They are responding to changing consumer habits, making their contribution to the food supply and to achieving climate targets: Each in their own place, but also in dialogue with each other.

As part of their climate targets, retailers, processors and brand owners are focussing on plant-based alternatives and testing laboratory meat. The animal feed industry is experimenting with alternative protein sources such as algae, insects and climate-friendly animal feed. The producer organisations SBV, IP-SUISSE, Bio Suisse, BOM, SMP, Suisseporcs and Gallo Suisse are also preparing agriculture for changing consumer habits.

Cooperation in the supply chains takes place via working groups, platforms and networks, such as the SNS. Collaboration in the SNS enables players to react better to a changing environment. It reduces defensive attitudes towards change and specifications, promotes innovation, enables trends to be predicted and set trends themselves. The SNS sees itself as part of the journey and the solution.

Balanced diet

A regular supply of high-quality proteins is of great importance for human nutrition. Globally, foods of animal origin account for around 40% of the protein supply². The rest is accounted for by plant proteins. In Switzerland, foods of animal origin account for 61% of the total protein intake. Meat is the most important source in terms of quantity³. Healthy and balanced eating habits protect against malnutrition in all its forms and thus reduce the risk of developing noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes or cardiovascular problems⁴. The biggest challenge for food security today is not to produce enough calories⁵, but to provide a healthy diet while minimising the impact on the environment. A good mix of plant and animal proteins is of great importance for a balanced and sustainable diet. Future-oriented measures with regard to climate and health are: moderate meat consumption, the reduction of food losses and the promotion of resource-conserving cultivation systems.

The Swiss Soya Network focuses on the major levers

Since its foundation, the SNS has focussed on optimising the production of animal foodstuffs by defining guidelines for the sustainable import of feed raw materials in the sector, monitoring compliance with the measures and thus helping to reduce the environmental impact. The SNS is organised as an association and network. It is implementation-orientated and works directly with the companies involved in the market. The SNS sees itself as a link and mediator between agriculture, suppliers, standard organisations, authorities and science. We listen and take action. The SNS endeavours to improve as much as possible within its own perimeter. In doing so, we keep an eye on developments, together with other stakeholders. For reasons of efficiency and sustainability, the SNS takes care of the big levers: protein supply and -sourcing in the animal feed sector, and thus the urgency of procuring feed imports abroad in a sustainable, deforestation- and conversion-free manner that is as climate-friendly as possible. The members of the SNS have the expertise and opportunities to make a difference.

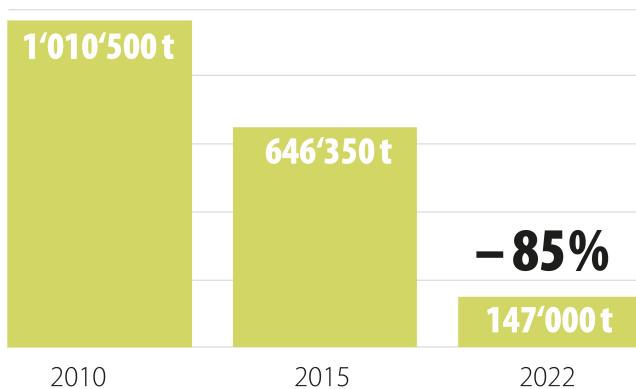
What the Swiss Soya Network has achieved so far

In 2023, Switzerland imported around 218,603 tonnes of soya extracted meal for animal feed. All imports are now certified by sustainability standards, GMO-free, deforestation-free and conversion-free, and over 95% of them now come from Europe. As a result, CO₂ emissions have been reduced by 85% compared to 2010. In addition to soya, other feedstuffs (broken rice, grain, maize gluten and dextrose) are also procured sustainably on an ongoing basis. When the Russian supplier was delisted in response to the war in Ukraine, the SNS proved that it can react quickly and take responsibility.

The SNS delivers on important promises: 1. ecological (climate-optimised, certified, GMO-free, conversion-free and deforestation-free), 2. geographical (mainly from Europe) and 3. geopolitical (no soya from Russia):

1. Greenhouse gas emissions (t CO₂eq) Swiss feed soya imports

Source: Soya Network Switzerland



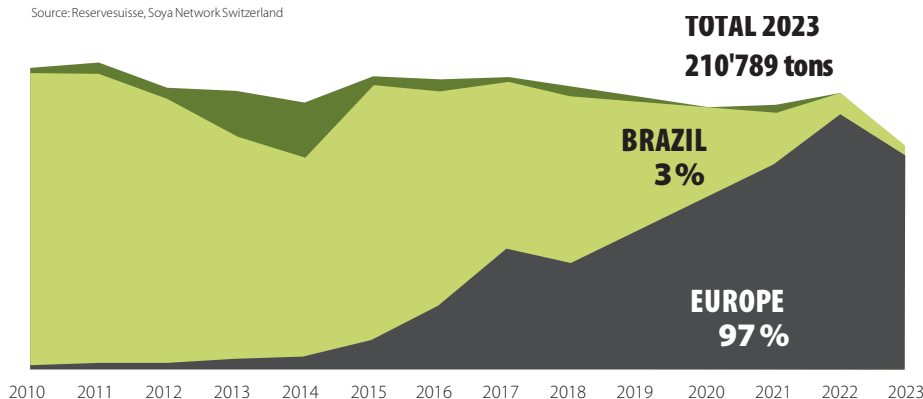
3. Soya import ban from Russia

Source: Soya Network Switzerland



2. Imports of soya extraction meal into Switzerland

Source: Reservesuisse, Soya Network Switzerland



Our promises for the future

With joint commitment and perseverance in the sustainable procurement of soya, the SNS has been able to achieve a great deal. This level must be maintained in the future. We will also be dealing with these issues in the coming years:

1

Making supply chains more resilient, sustainable and fair

The consequences of climate change and global population growth will intensify the battle for increasingly scarce agricultural goods. Securing raw materials will only succeed if supply chains are built in partnership. This means that the risks, costs and profits along the entire value chain are constantly renegotiated and distributed fairly.

The supplier base for feed soya is narrow. Switzerland is the most important buyer of GM-free soya for Germany and Italy. Under these conditions, the SNS and the procurers must deepen the existing supplier relationships. This means securing the required quantities with longterm cooperation agreements with suppliers wherever possible and incorporating sustainability goals in the process.

3

Extending the effect

Because the work of the SNS is having an impact, the members have In addition to feed soya, the members decided in 2020 to sustainably procure other feedstuffs such as wheat, barley, oats, broken rice, maize gluten and dextrose. In doing so, it must be discussed on an ongoing basis and with the involvement of all stakeholders where the risks lie and which sustainability requirements can be realised on the market at a reasonable price. This continuous development is only possible if the entire value chain, from the combine harvester to the plate, shares the same goals and values. The members of the SNS prove that this is possible and will continue to be necessary in the future.

2

Increase transparency

The complexity of the supply chain for feed soya is lower than for other commodities such as coffee, cocoa or palm oil. Since the majority of procurement takes place in Europe, the distances are short and direct. In addition, the procurers and the SNS have maintained regular dialogue with suppliers abroad for years. As a result, the sustainability criteria and traceable flows of goods required by the SNS are met. This means that we are in a good position to be prepared for the upcoming regulatory requirements (EUDR, CSDDD, CSRD, etc.) for companies in the area of reporting and due diligence.

The SNS supports its members in further increasing transparency in the supply chains. It has a functioning control and reporting system in which the import quantities per customs item, the countries of origin and the certification are audited annually and the results are communicated in the annual report. This needs to be developed further. Legal requirements help with this. At the same time, the players in the supply chains are required to standardise the collection, processing and exchange of data and make it usable for all parties involved.

References:

¹ Nelson, Gerald; Bogard, Jessica; Lividini, Keith; Arsenault, Joanne; Riley, Malcolm; Sulser, Timothy B. et al. (2018): Income growth and climate change effects on global nutrition security to mid-century. In Nat.Sustain. 1 , 773-781. DOI: 10.1038/s41893-018-0192-z.

² FAO. FAOSTAT: Food balances (2010-). Global per capita protein supply. <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FBS>. Accessed: 6.9.23. Kopf-Bolanz K, Walther B. Protein consumption in Switzerland - evaluation of the menuCH data set. Swiss Nutrition Bulletin.2021;130-46; doi:10.24444/blv-2021-0111.

⁴ WHO. (2020). Healthy Diet, Healthy Diet, <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/healthy-diet> accessed 13 March 2024

⁵ Chen C, Chaudhary A, Mathys A. (2021): Nutrient adequacy of global food production. Front.Nutr. 2021; 8:739755; doi:10.3389/fnut.2021.739755.

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Members

The 33 members of the network are procurers, traders, mills, producer, label and environmental organisations, processors and retailers. They represent key players in the value chain of the Swiss agriculture and food industry.

