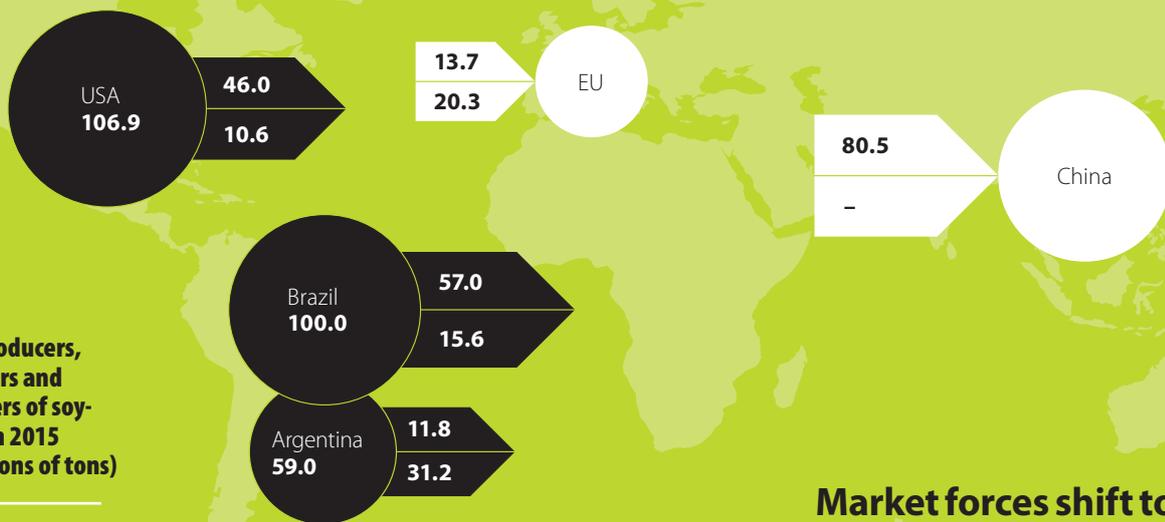


The global increase in the consumption of meat, eggs and milk products has led to an expansion of soybean production in North and South America. The prohibition against using animal protein as fodder, low production costs in the US, Brazil and Argentina, and genetically modified soy have made the soy plant one of the most important components in feeding our livestock. And this has had negative consequences for the environment and humanity.

A boom with consequences

Lead producers, exporters and importers of soy-beans in 2015 (in millions of tons)



Source: <http://www.indexmundi.com>



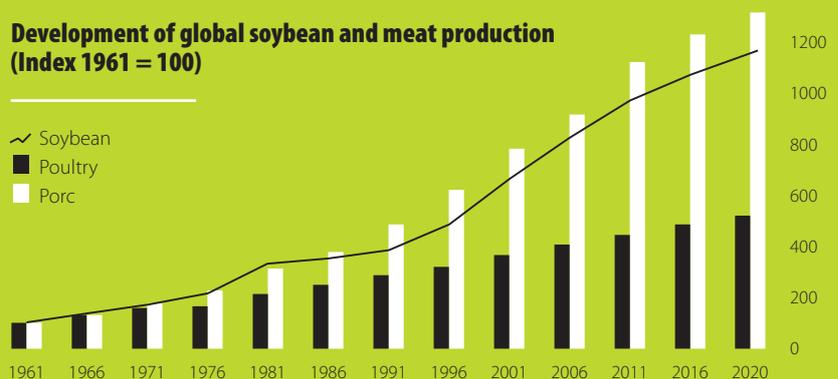
Market forces shift to Asia

Soy is mainly produced in North and South America. The US, Brazil and Argentina account for 80% of total global production. China is now the largest importer of soy. Until 1990, it imported almost no soy. Europe and Asia's addiction to protein is significant.

Hunger for soy remains unabated

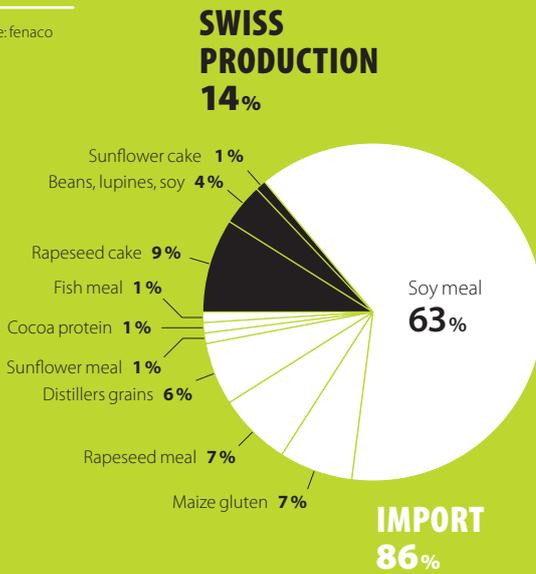
Demand for and production of soy have increased fivefold over the past 40 years. The main reasons for this development are the pent-up demand for animal protein in Asia and the shift in meat consumption in developed countries toward low-fat poultry. Some 111 million hectares of land were planted with soybeans in 2014. This resulted in a harvest of 312 million tons.

Development of global soybean and meat production (Index 1961 = 100)



Source of crude protein

Source: fenaco



Switzerland's protein needs

Switzerland, too, depends on soy imports. The country only meets 14% of its crude protein needs on its own. It doesn't have the varieties, yield stability or climatic and topographical conditions to be able to expand production of protein feed substantially. Switzerland therefore imported 285,000 tons of soybeans and soybean meal for animal feed in 2015, most of it from Brazil.

GMO-free

According to estimates, 82% of global soy crops have been genetically modified. In the US and Brazil, 93% and 94%, respectively, of soy that is produced has been genetically modified. In Argentina, the figure is 100%. Switzerland has always chosen not to plant or import any genetically-modified soy.

Europe's importance grows

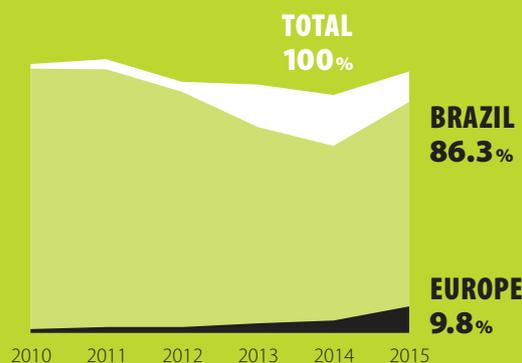
Brazil is the only major producer that offers GMO-free soy in large quantities. But the percentage of genetically-modified soy is constantly on the rise in Brazil. As a result, Swiss importers are looking for new sources of soy – and they're looking in Europe. This has reduced the country's dependence on traditional producers. Switzerland has increased the amount of soy it imports from Europe from 1% to around 10% over the past four years.

Deforestation in the Amazon on the decline – Cerrado under pressure

Thanks to the moratorium on the production of soy the deforestation of the Amazon is on the decline. Wholesalers are refusing to buy soy produced on land in Brazil's Amazon region that was cleared after July 2006. Today, some 5,000 square kilometers of forest are cut down each year. Ten years ago it was five times as much. Yet the pressure on Brazil's Cerrado region, with its extraordinary biodiversity, remains unabated. About half of this region has been converted into farmland since the end of 1950.

Consequences for humanity and the environment

Soy is an important source of protein for people and animals and a crucial source of income and foreign currency for cultivating countries. Yet legumes also have negative consequences for the environment. These range from deforestation through water pollution to soil erosion and decreasing biodiversity. The increase in soy cultivation can also lead to social conflicts and tensions between producers and local populations based on land and worker rights.



Soy meal import to Switzerland

Source: Reservesuisse, Soy Network