

FRIBOURG⁺
network
FREIBURG

THE BUSINESS MAGAZINE
OF THE CANTON OF FRIBOURG

2019 —
**FROM FARM
TO FORK**

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Deuxième étape:
3 nouvelles unités résidentielles à partir de 2020



Olivier Curty, State Councillor,
Minister of Economic Affairs

FRIBOURG, TO WHET YOUR APPETITE!

Every year, the Canton of Fribourg exports over 130,000 tons of products coming from the agri-food sector for an amount of nearly CHF 400 million. And in numerous capitals throughout the world, it is not unusual for one to find in star restaurants or in gourmet delicatessen shops, cheeses such as Gruyère AOC or Vacherin and chocolate – specialties produced right here in our own Canton. This is but simple proof that in this domain, our knowledge and expertise are globally renowned.

Thanks to the wealth of the culinary and rural traditions of our Canton, today we are able to avail ourselves of an impressive concentration of enterprises of national – and even international - prominence, along with a multitude of top-level agricultural operations and SMEs that form a tremendous springboard for this core sector of our economy. We can also pride ourselves on our leading institutions both in terms of training – take, for instance the Grangeneuve Agricultural Institute – and that of research and innovation, such as the Agroscope Agricultural Research Center or the Adolphe Merkle Institute. Moreover, Fribourg oversees the Cluster Food & Nutrition of the Région Capitale Suisse association.

And yet, this ecosystem has an enormous potential for development galvanized by the major challenges of our times, be it the issue of population growth – with a projected population of 10 million for Switzerland in 2035 – or the new requirements demanded by consumers, or the breakthroughs in research in terms of nutraceuticals or functional foods. Neither should we forget the needs regarding food security in the emerging countries, or the necessity of developing production methods that are more environmentally friendly and economical in terms of water as well as energy.

This is why the government of Fribourg is developing an offensive strategy to promote this key sector of our economy, in particular by efforts to foster research and innovation. A vast array of initiatives have already been launched over the past years, such as the recent international call for projects entitled the Agri & Co Challenge. As a result of this unprecedented competition, eight innovative enterprises are already finalizing their plans to set up operations this year at the St-Aubin Innovation Space which, with its 280,000 m² of land set aside for operational activities and its 100 hectares agricultural land, provides a structure whose potential is quite unique in Switzerland.

Entitled “From Farm to Fork”, this 2019 issue of Fribourg Network Freiburg takes you on a journey to discover the treasures of this branch of our Canton’s economy dedicated to food, from the place of primary product production to the plate of the end consumer. A veritable food chain in which for each link – training, production, processing, distribution, marketing, consumption and recycling – the Canton of Fribourg sets a standard. You will become acquainted with some of the creative and enthusiastic players involved, who bear witness to the dynamism of a rapidly evolving sector which, in addition, represents a truly key asset for our tourist industry.

And so, this year we are offering you a very special vintage issue. A vintage with an abundance of flavors and savors in a Canton where knowledge and expertise in the domain of food provide a solid and reliable basis for the development of a resolutely modern and future-oriented agri-food economy. And tomorrow, I am convinced that products and processes marked made in Fribourg will become a standard reference at home and abroad.

“FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND'S BEST KEPT SECRET”*

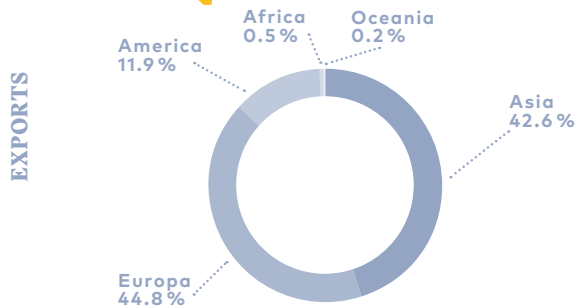
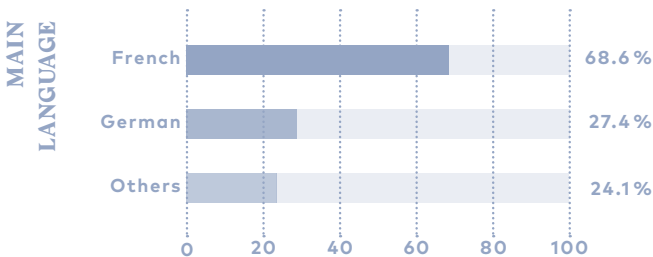
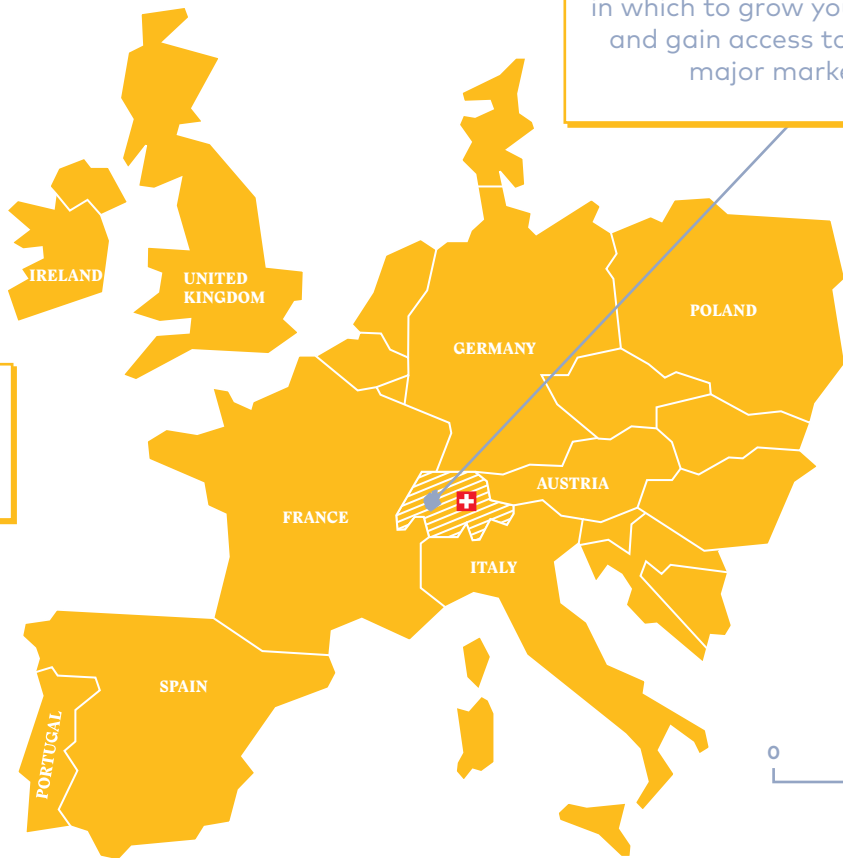
* Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Former Government Minister, United Arab Emirates

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13.72 %
future income tax rate

1.5 million
Inhabitants within a 45-minute radius

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TECHNOLOGY PARKS

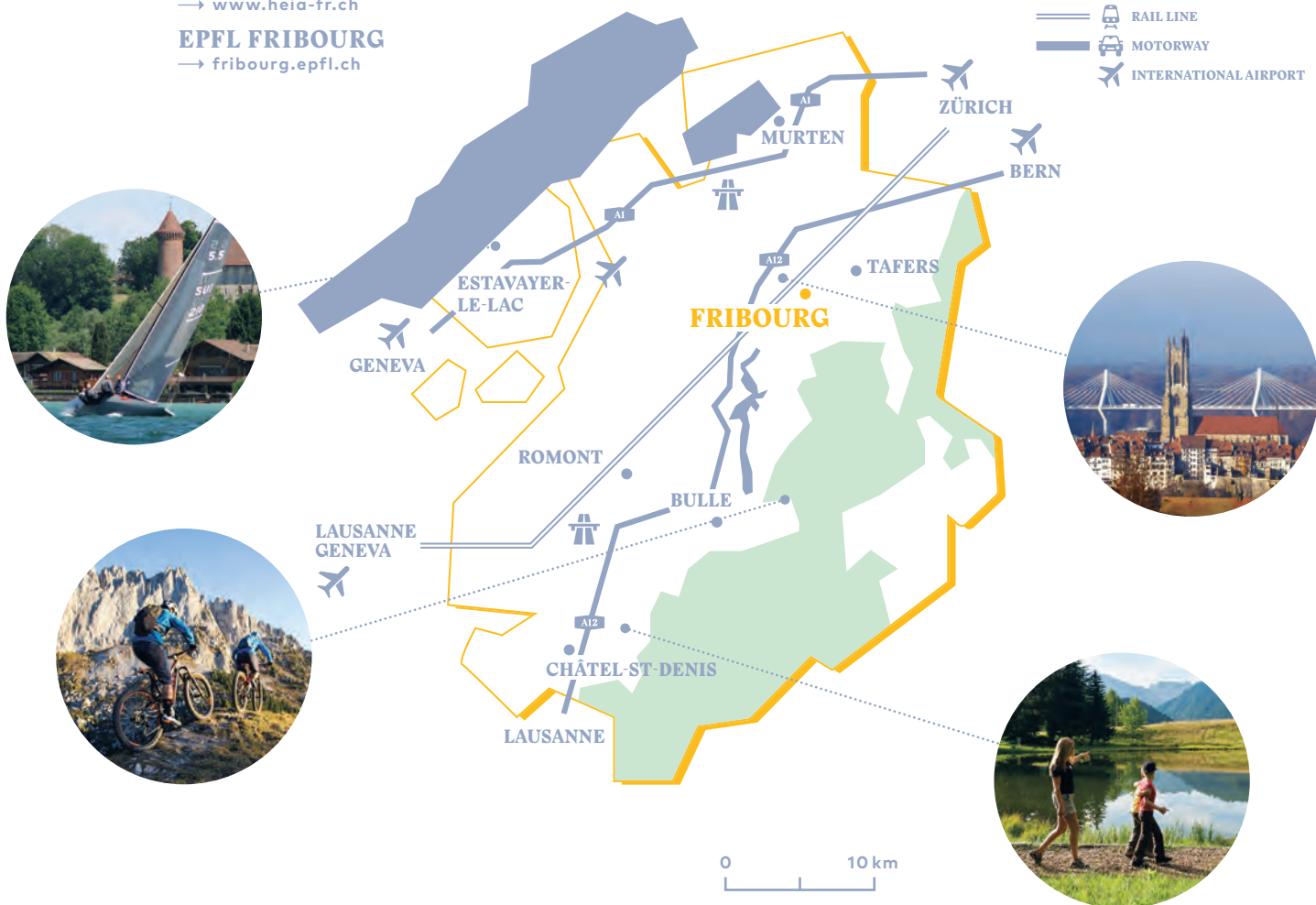
- BLUEFACTORY**
→ www.bluefactory.ch
- LE VIVIER**
→ www.vivier.ch
- MARLY INNOVATION CENTER**
→ www.marly-innovation-center.org

UNIVERSITY

- UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**
→ www.unifr.ch
- ADOLPHE MERKLE INSTITUTE**
→ www.am-institute.ch
- SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**
→ www.heg-fr.ch
- SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING**
→ www.heia-fr.ch
- EPFL FRIBOURG**
→ fribourg.epfl.ch

TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

- BIOFACTORY COMPETENCE CENTER**
→ www.bcc.ch
- SWISS INTEGRATIVE CENTER FOR HUMAN HEALTH**
→ www.sichh.ch
- SMART LIVING LAB**
→ www.smartlivinglab.ch
- INNOSQUARE**
→ www.innosquare.com
 - Cluster Food & Nutrition
 - Swiss Plastics Cluster
 - Building Innovation Cluster
 - Robust and Safe Systems Center (ROSAS)
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 - Plastics Innovation Center (PICC)



“The Fribourg Development Agency is here to assist you!”

Olivier Curty, State Councillor,
Minister of Economic Affairs

TESTIMONIALS



→ www.promfr.ch

INNOVATION AWARD 2018/2019 

FRIBOURG HONORS ITS CHAMPIONS



Representatives of Cortexia, SCOTT Sports and NanoLockin (left to right) alongside Cantonal Minister of Economic Affairs, Olivier Curty.

This year's canton of Fribourg Innovation Award attracted a record 50 applications. In November 2018, over 500 guests gathered to watch the canton honor its champions of innovation. SCOTT Sports took home the SME Award, while the Start-Up Award, which is voted for by the public, went to NanoLockin. The Cleantech Distinction Award, which recognizes the "greenest" innovator, was won by Cortexia.

→ www.innovationfr.ch

SME AWARD FINALISTS

SCOTT SPORTS (WINNER) THE WORLD'S LIGHTEST MBT WHEEL

In 2015, SCOTT Sports set a goal for itself to revolutionize the bicycle wheel. By 2018, the expert in composite materials was ready to launch the lightest MBT wheel in the world. Produced using a single composite mold, the Syncros Silverton SL wheelset, including the spokes, is made from 100% carbon. Not only does the wheelset weigh in at an ultralight 1250 grams, it also offers unprecedented gains in terms of stiffness and acceleration.

→ www.scott-sports.com

MEDION GRIFOLS DIAGNOSTICS MAKING BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS SAFER

Before any blood transfusion occurs, a compatibility test is always carried out on the donor's and recipient's blood. However, the problem is that the new-generation of anti-cancer medication alters the results of these diagnostic blood tests. Although screening solutions are out there, they are very expensive, time-consuming, error-prone and not entirely risk-free. Medion Grifols Diagnostics has developed the protein Grifols sCD38 that blocks this kind of interference, making blood transfusions for cancer patients simpler and safer.

→ www.grifols.ch

ZBINDEN POSIEUX MAKING HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION SITES SAFER, FASTER

Traffic control devices and safety signs are still set up and taken down by the construction crew. Zbinden Posieux has devised an automated system, the DRB-216, which installs and removes this equipment, without the need for human intervention. It can secure a 6 km stretch of highway within 18 minutes instead of the usual 80 minutes.

→ www.zbinden-posieux.ch

START-UP AWARD FINALISTS

**NANOLOCKIN (WINNER)
A NEW WAY TO DETECT
NANOPARTICLES**



In the interests of quality, as well as health and environmental protection, products need to be screened for the presence of nanoparticles. However, existing methods, which tend to rely on electronic microscopes, are extremely expensive. The new method developed by NanoLockin uses active thermography, which is capable of picking up even the tiniest changes in temperature. When nanoparticles absorb light, they give off heat which can then be measured and counted swiftly and accurately. The NanoLockin method is easy to use, does not damage the sample and cost one-tenth of current analytical techniques.

→ www.nanolockin.com

**CORTEXIA
(CLEANTECH DISTINCTION)
MAKING CITIES CLEANER**



Cortexia pledges to make cities cleaner, cut costs and reduce the impact on the environment. The company has developed a system that uses smart cameras installed on public vehicles that objectively measure and record the

presence of waste in urban areas. Neural network algorithms identify trash and determine the volume. Data transmission happens in real time and a detailed 'grime map' is generated from this information. As a result, resources can be used more efficiently because the right personnel are dispatched at the right time, to the right place, with the right tools.

→ www.cortexia.ch

**TEXUM
USING CARBON FIBER TO
REINFORCE PAVEMENT**



Traffic loads, weather conditions and aging materials all lead to pavement deterioration. Texum has come up with a solution using carbon fiber composites to improve the durability of asphalt concrete pavement. When placed between two layers of asphalt, the carbon fiber geogrid makes the surface more resistant to cracking, especially in zones with heavy traffic volumes like roundabouts and bus stops.

→ www.texum.swiss

Famous around the world for its carbon mountain bikes, SCOTT Sports has succeeded in re-inventing the wheel.





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22. / 23. / 29. Juin 2019 à Planfayon

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Contact:

079 373 06 22

www.sekulic2019.ch

THE FNF WEB EXPERIENCE JUST GOT EVEN BETTER

Fribourg Network Freiburg (FNF) has a brand new website. Developed by Fribourg company NoPaper, the FNF site offers a host of great multimedia features.

The FNF online edition features lots of exclusive online content, including videos, photos and additional articles!



Read the additional article



See more photos



Watch the video

The PDF version of FNF is available, free of charge, in French, German, English and Mandarin Chinese, and contains live web links to additional online content on the FNF website. Click on the link below to download or view the latest issue. Enjoy!

→ www.fribourgnetwork.ch

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PATRICK AEBISCHER

“CONSUMERS WILL SPEARHEAD THE REVOLUTION”



At the end of 2016, Patrick Aebischer stepped down as President of the Ecole polytechnique de Lausanne (EPFL). During his 17-year tenure, this visionary from Fribourg transformed the institute of technology into one of the best in the world. Some of his most notable contributions include the spectacular development of human sciences, landmark architectural projects, the opening of new campuses in other parts of Western Switzerland and the securing of private funding. We asked the inveterate innovator, inventor and academic entrepreneur to cast his discerning eye on the role and ambitions of his home canton in relation to the agrofood and foodtech sectors.

As a board member of Nestlé Global, what is your take on the current buzz around foodtech?

I feel that consumers will drive the impending revolution. Younger generations are much more tuned in to environmental and animal welfare issues and consumers in general are increasingly concerned about the link between food and health. This has led to an unprecedented convergence of issues, with nutrition, production methods and consumption patterns receiving particular scrutiny. Food is fast becoming a major societal concern. Eating is no longer about survival or pleasure; it is a part of how we define ourselves. Nowadays, it is not

uncommon to hear people introduce themselves with statements like “I’m a vegan” or “I’m a flexitarian”.

Can technology address these concerns?

There is a plethora of technological and behavioral solutions to all of these issues. But serious challenges also lie ahead. Of course, technology can address these concerns but you must remember that economic factors play a large part – price considerations and ingrained habits make it harder to affect real change. Are we really ready to pay more for produce that is fresh, less processed and of better quality? Are we really ready to

cut our meat and fish consumption and replace it with insect- or biotechnology-derived sources of protein? These challenges open up two lines of enquiry when it comes to innovation. The first is incremental innovation, which is generated by the creative drive of our start-ups and companies like Nestlé. The second is collective innovation, which will shepherd society towards a more responsible path.

How well is the canton of Fribourg positioned to meet its extremely ambitious agrofood and foodtech goals?

First and foremost, the canton has its history and a longstanding culinary culture. Take Bénichon, for example. This thanksgiving festival has been around since the 15th century and the tradition is still alive and well today. The love of good food is written in the canton's DNA. No meeting in Fribourg is ever complete without lunch or dinner at a local restaurant! Also, Fribourg boasts a thriving and dynamic culinary scene. One of the best in the country, in fact. Over 30 restaurants feature in the Gault&Millau guide. Not bad for a canton with a population of 320,000! What Fribourg also has in its favor is its economic fabric, with a high density of farms and fairly unique food manufacturing companies, particularly in the dairy, chocolate and meat segments. The agrofood sector accounts for over 10% of cantonal GDP, which is significant.

What measures would you recommend?

First off, we have to keep promoting Fribourg's quality products, especially those that have been granted the Protected Designation of Origin (AOP) label over the last 12 years or so. Imagine exportable luxury goods, value-added products that are more about the taste than their health-giving properties, for which there will always be a market. Here, it would be worthwhile for the canton to take inspiration from other parts of the Swiss economy. Look at the success of the Swiss watch-making industry, a prolific exporter. This could provide the Fribourg food industry with a few pointers on how best to move forward. Then, there is the sector that encompasses issues like health, the environment and the economy...

Can you explain?

Inexorably, pressure from both consumers and the public authorities will facilitate the transition to a diet that is less reliant on meat and processed food towards products with fewer unhealthy fatty acids and a reduced sugar and salt content. This means, we need to come up with new kinds of dairy products, develop protein-rich substitutes, and devise slaughtering procedures that are more in line with what consumers expect. It is also imperative to rethink substitutes, preservatives and certain phytosanitary products while at the same time stepping up efforts to guarantee fairer income distribution and environ-

mental protection. Let's devise new solutions to prevent food waste and develop more environmentally-friendly food packaging. Small-scale innovation coupled with major technological disruption will usher in this movement and subsequent change. But this will require a culture of calculated risk-taking, as well as public and private priority investment to facilitate the development of this high-potential sector. Fribourg will also have to commit to ploughing more resources into "From Farm to Fork" projects.

Read the rest of the interview online.

Academic excellence, Bénichon, Cluster,
 Fribourg-Freiburg, Creativity, Cuchaule,
 Culture, Double Cream, Animal health,
 Fondue, Growth, Gruyère Cheese, Innovation,
 International, Leisure, Lifestyle, Lyoba, Organic,
 Tourism, Success, Nature, Food technology,
 Agri&Co, Network, Poya, Biomass, Tradition,
 Quality of Life, Butter, Fruits, Energy, Wellness,
 Proximity, Ecology, Vitamins, Gastronomy,
 Seed, Food&Nutrition, Dairy products, Cuisine,
 .ch, .swiss, Food processing, Recipe, Campus,
 Added Value, Sciences, Technology, Sun, Friends,
 Milk, Chalet, Gault&Millau, Technology Park,
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 Management, Start-up, Wine, Industry, www,
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 Grangeneuve,
 Vegetables,
 Dynamism,
 Ingredients,
 Agriculture,
 Agroscope,
 Farm2Fork,
 Packaging,
 Education,
 University,
 Chocolate,
 Nutrition,
 Logistics,
 Catering,
 Passion,
 Exports,
 Family,
 Crop...

Fribourg / Switzerland : Foodie Heaven



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Green Sentinel





TRAINING AND INNOVATION

With a host of respected research institutes and access to a comprehensive range of training opportunities, Fribourg offers the ideal environment for food innovation to flourish. The Saint-Aubin Agri&Co site has set for itself the mission of connecting potential partners, pooling expertise and fostering synergies.



AGRI&CO SAINT-AUBIN

ECONOMIC STRATEGY
AND POLITICAL AMBITION

The Agri&Co site in Saint-Aubin covers 120 hectares, including agricultural land, and boasts 6,500 m² of office and laboratory space.

It all began with the Agri&Co Challenge (see *FNF 2018*), a high-reaching international call for projects launched by the canton of Fribourg in 2018 and targeted at innovative companies working in the food, agricultural or biomass sectors. The competition exceeded all expectations, attracting as many as 154 applicants from 53 countries. The jury chose 16 winners, some of whom are set to move into the Saint-Aubin site (see *opposite*) this year already. "The incredible reception that the Agri&Co Challenge enjoyed shows that companies around the world are keen to develop economic partnerships with the agrofood sector in Fribourg, a mainstay of the cantonal economy", notes Jean-Luc Mossier, Chief Strategic Project Officer at the Cantonal Department of Economic Affairs and Employment. "Our atten-

tion will now turn to investing in the Saint-Aubin site and working out the details of our development strategy to consolidate Fribourg's lead status in the national agrofood sector."

The steering committee is now made up of representatives from the cantonal ministries of economic affairs, agriculture, and construction. "With support from the Cluster Food & Nutrition (see p. 43), we hope to develop the Saint-Aubin site within a short space of time and facilitate synergies with our Grangeneuve research and training hub. Of course, we also have to start unlocking the innovation potential of established Fribourg companies", adds Mossier. To begin with, CHF 1.7 million will be spent on turning the office space at St-Aubin into a collaborative site that has everything that modern busi-

ness ventures, especially the Agri&Co Challenge winners, need. Funding for agrofood-related research and innovation projects (specialized laboratories, experimental hothouse, etc.) is also at the exploratory phase, and work continues on the development of industrial projects. There is enormous potential. Fribourg is determined to take a proactive and progressive stance at the political level, too.











→ www.agrico.swiss

RELOCATION

A COLLABORATIVE SPACE IS BORN

No fewer than eight of the 16 winners of the Agri&Co Challenge have confirmed that they will move some part of their activities to the Saint-Aubin site in 2019. "Saint-Aubin is the ideal environment for us because we are able to pursue our day-to-day work and research activities there, as well as benefit from the on-the-ground support and a strong network of contacts. The infrastructure and farming land available opens up lots of opportunities. All that's missing are good ideas...that's precisely where we come in!" says Adrian Rubi, co-founder of Edapro. The Canadian Group iDUS Controls shares the same enthusiasm. According to Managing Director Brad Williams, "It is a phenomenal opportunity for us to make a name for ourselves on the European market, giving us direct access to customers, partners and possibly even investors. Cooperation with academia and industry is already looking good." For Bruno Azevedo, co-founder of the Brazilian Thinkmilk, "The canton of Fribourg has put in place a first-rate ecosystem for homegrown and foreign agrofood start-ups. We believe that we belong in this innovative and dynamic environment." But Saint-Aubin is not only open to the Agri&Co Challenge winners; talks are already under way with other companies that have expressed an interest in moving to the site.

The ten winners of the Agri&Co Challenge Relocation Program

-  **AgroSustain (Switzerland)**
-  **Augmenta (Greece)**
-  **Bee Vectoring Technology (Canada)**
-  **Edapro (Switzerland)**
-  **EDB Poliois Vegetais (Brazil)**
-  **Golden Chlorella SA (Switzerland)**
-  **iDUS Controls (Canada)**
-  **Smartyields (USA)**
-  **Solvea (Romania)**
-  **Thinkmilk (Brazil)**



En cas d'incendie,
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GLION HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

THINK LOCAL, GO GLOBAL



"For years, food connoisseurs focused their expectations on the content of their plate. Now, they want to have a global experience", notes Georgette Davey, Managing Director of the Glion Hospitality Management School. Across its campuses – Bulle (canton of Fribourg), Glion (canton of Vaud) and London (England) – students at this prestigious institution learn to answer this fundamental question: How can I offer my customers a culinary experience that is individual and unique? Today, mass production and restaurant chains are being put on the back burner in favor of local produce and diversity of terroir. "The canton of Fribourg provides

the ideal environment for our students to contextualize what they learn. For example, as part of their course work, they visit the chocolate maker, Cailler in Broc and cheese producer, Maison du Gruyère, as well as talk to small-scale producers." The school also encourages students to apply this celebration of local produce and tradition in their home region. "As many as 100 nationalities are represented at our school. This means that we are constantly juggling local and global approaches. It's a pretty thrilling challenge!"

→ www.glion.edu

AGROSCOPE

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: FRIBOURG LEADS THE FIELD



Agroscope is an impressive innovation network and a key partner for the Swiss farming community. With a CHF 186 million budget, Switzerland's national center of expertise in agricultural research has three main campuses (including Posieux in the canton of Fribourg), several satellite campuses, 1,000 employees and 1,200 research papers published every year. The research carried out by Posieux on animal production systems and animal health, and food microbial systems has further strengthened the

lead role that the canton of Fribourg plays in the Swiss agrofood sector. In fall 2018, the Swiss federal government announced its strategic decision on the future siting of Agroscope: research activities will be centralized in Posieux, while testing stations will remain decentralized. The purpose of these reforms is to create interdisciplinary synergies and foster international collaboration.

→ www.agroscope.admin.ch

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ENERGY



WARMTH



COMFORT



EFFICIENCY



WATER



MOBILITY

HEIA-FR

FRIBOURG ENGINEERS UNCORK A NEW WINEMAKING PROCESS



Winemaking is a tradition that is as old as time, as well as a source of never-ending inspiration for researchers and scientists. Take the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture (HEIA-FR): it has been involved in three innovative projects aimed at refining this age-old process. The first and most critical stage is fermentation, whereby yeast transforms the sugars present in the grape juice into alcohol. The problem is that climate change has led to higher concentrations of sugar which in turn heightens the risk of added stress on the yeast during the fermentation process. As Olivier Vorlet, Professor of Chemistry at the HEIA-FR, explains, "The procedure which we developed with the School of Viticulture and Enology in Changins involves the incremental and automated addition of the grape juice into the fermentation vat instead of pouring it all in at once, as is the current practice. This keeps the sugar content low and constant."

Once fermented, the wine enters the aging stage. Many winemakers now use airtight stainless-steel tanks rather than traditional wooden casks which allow oxygen to permeate and come into contact with the wine. Oxygen, even

in the tiniest of doses, influences the color, taste and style of the wine in both a decisive and positive way. Here, the HEIA-FR has developed a micro-oxygenator fitted with an oxygen sensor which artificially reproduces this phenomenon.

Finally, the last link in the production chain is bottling. At this stage, the supply of oxygen must be kept to an absolute minimum to ensure the longest shelf-life possible. The presence of carbon dioxide influences the acidity, tension and freshness of the wine. "By installing an exchange membrane between the tank and the bottling line, we have been able to drastically cut the oxygen content and also adjust the carbon dioxide content", the chemistry professor proudly notes. This means that the winemaker can guarantee that the quality of the wine remains constant, with minimum use of additives. "Our prototype, which is currently in the trial stage, will be ready for market very soon. France has already expressed an interest in it."

→ www.heia-fr.ch



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objectif:
un conseil
d'égal à
égal.

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Beratung auf
Augenhöhe.

Gil Menétrey
Direction
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RAIFFEISEN



DIRECTOR OF THE FOOD ECOSYSTEM INSTITUTE, HEG-FR

CHRISTINE DEMEN MEIER

The Fribourg School of Management launched its Food Ecosystem Institute in the Fall of 2018.

What is its mission?

Our short-term aim is to become a center of expertise and innovation in food management and entrepreneurship. Our activities are wide-ranging. For example, students in our specialized Consulting and Business Development program will have the chance to work with companies in the food sector. As a think tank, we offer companies in the food business research that is tailored to their specific knowledge needs. The Food Ecosystem Institute also will help to build successful research and innovation partnerships between academia and industry.

How did this project come about?

Food is a major preoccupation for society today. The entire food chain has been a political priority in the canton of Fribourg for several years already. This led the directors of HEG-FR to decide, rightly, to add this subject to its research and teaching programs by establishing an ad hoc institute. We hope to be able to fund ourselves through the income generated by providing services to companies.

You have had a long career in the hospitality and catering industry, which notably included the Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne. What is it specifically about this new Fribourg project that motivates you?

I find it particularly remarkable that almost every link in the food chain is represented in the canton of Fribourg: farming, processing, catering and retail. For HEG-FR students, the Institute will open many doors to a career in the food business, whether here in Fribourg, in Switzerland or abroad.

→ www.heg-fr.ch



CROWNED BEST YOUNG MARKET GARDENER AT SWISSKILLS 2018

YANNICK ETTER

Given that your father is a market gardener in Ried bei Kerzers, were you predestined to choose this career?

Not at all. Dad never pressured us to follow in his footsteps. Having said that, being exposed to the job on a daily basis made me realize just how multifaceted market gardening is. It requires knowledge of mechanics, planning skills, as well as manual labor, and, of course, a strong bond with nature. Also, you work outdoors and indoors, i.e. in the fields and in the greenhouses.

You completed your apprenticeship at Gerber Bio Greens, in the canton of Zurich, in fall 2018.

What's next?

First, I'm off to the Netherlands to get more work experience, then back to Switzerland to do my military service. Once that's over, I want to study for an Advanced Federal PET Diploma. My ultimate goal is to return to my roots, in other words to Bioguma, the business run by my dad and his three partners. I realize that our profession faces mounting challenges due to globalization and climate change, but I'm convinced that Switzerland's capacity for innovation will allow us to tackle these head on.

You are the first gold medalist in the newly introduced market gardening category of the SwissSkills competition? What was the whole experience like for you?

From a professional perspective, it was extremely rewarding to find out how I compared to my peers and to be able to apply some rarely used skills again. On the personal level, I really enjoyed being around other young people. Market gardening is a 'small world', so I knew most of them already!

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UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG

A photograph of four young adults, two men and two women, engaged in conversation outdoors. One man is sitting on a concrete ledge, wearing a white t-shirt and pink shorts. Another man stands next to him, wearing a black bomber jacket and dark pants. Two women are also present, one standing and one sitting on the ledge. They are in a modern, open-air setting with trees and a building in the background.

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ADOLPHE MERKLE INSTITUTE

DETECTING NANOPARTICLES IN FOOD

As of 2020, the presence of nano-ingredients in food products must appear on all labelling in Switzerland. According to Alke Fink, Professor of BioNanomaterials at the Adolphe Merkle Institute (AMI), this move “is motivated by a desire for greater transparency and not because of any risk posed by nanoparticles”. This change in regulations will require the authorities, and more specifically the Cantonal Chemists, to check for the presence of nanos in food products. It is a job that demands sophisticated instruments and specialist expertise. As one of the world’s leading research institutions in the field of nanomaterials, the AMI was the authorities’ perfect partner. “We were asked to develop a specialized method to analyze and measure nanomaterials in food. The hardest part is finding a way to pick out the nanos from the material surrounding them.” However, the task of this team of Fribourg scientists should be made easier by a rapid test for detecting nanoparticles developed by NanoLockin, an AMI spin-off and winner of the 2018/2019 Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award.

→ www.ami.swiss



The AMI's Transmission Electron Microscope (TEM) detects nanoparticles using a high-voltage electron beam.

FRIBOURG SCHOOL OF HEALTHCARE

EATING WELL AND LIVING WELL IN OLD-AGE

It is an inescapable fact that the population is growing older. With this in mind, the Fribourg School of Healthcare (HEdS-FR) has made aging-related topics a priority of their research and development activities. “All of this work has the same goal: finding ways to improve seniors’ quality of life”, adds Director, Nataly Viens Python. Among its ongoing development projects is the creation of a platform “which exploits

data collected by retirement and nursing homes.” Specifically, certain data like the nutritional status of residents is processed in a way that makes it accessible to and comprehensible for all retirement and nursing home managers. This will allow retirement and nursing home management in the cantons of Fribourg and Vaud to compare notes and identify any problems. The HedS-FR also jointly organizes annual

benchmarking sessions for retirement and nursing home managers, “with a view to sharing good practices in a given area.” In 2018, the focus was on oral health and dental care, “which can have a huge impact on the food intake of the elderly”.

→ www.heds-fr.ch

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BIOMASS

TURNING TRASH INTO ENERGY 

The biogas plant in Henniez, built and run by Groupe E Greenwatt, is the largest of its kind in Switzerland.

What do slaughter waste, manure and coffee grounds have in common? All of this organic material, whether it comes from animals or plants, is biomass – a renewable, carbon-neutral, high-potential source of energy that can generate electricity, heat and fuel.

These properties are not lost on the agrofood industry in the canton of Fribourg. Micarna, for example, processes as much of its waste as it can into raw materials and energy. As Roland Pfister, spokesman for the meat processing arm of Migros, explains, "In 2017, Micarna recovered or recycled 81% of its useful products. We want to increase this rate to 100% by 2040. Our ultimate objective is to have a closed environmental loop", adding, "Blood and floating aggregates are used to generate biogas while slaughter waste is transformed into feed for domestic

and farm animals. Specific by-products even find their way into the pharmaceutical industry." The Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture is also working on a project to turn chicken feathers (some 2,000 metric tons produced every year), into a greener alternative to plastic packaging (see *online magazine*).

Nespresso not only recycles its aluminum coffee pods but also recovers their contents. Proof of the high energy potential of coffee grounds can be found at the biogas plant in Henniez: close to 60% of its energy output is generated from this waste material even though it only accounts for around 15% of the total volume of organic matter used by the facility. During the anaerobic digestion and biogas production processes, coffee grounds from a single pod generate the same amount

of energy needed to make a new one. The anaerobic digestion process produces a natural fertilizer with high added value. It is then sold to farms which, in turn, provide the biogas plant with organic waste, thereby closing the environmental loop.

→ www.micarna.ch
 → www.nespresso.com

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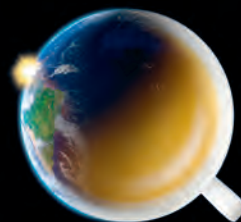
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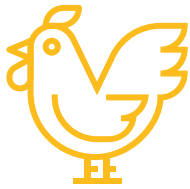


www.nestle-nespresso.com/sustainability

NESPRESSO

THE FOOD INDUSTRY IN FRIBOURG

KEY SECTORS OF FOOD INDUSTRY



27,4%

Livestock



12,2%

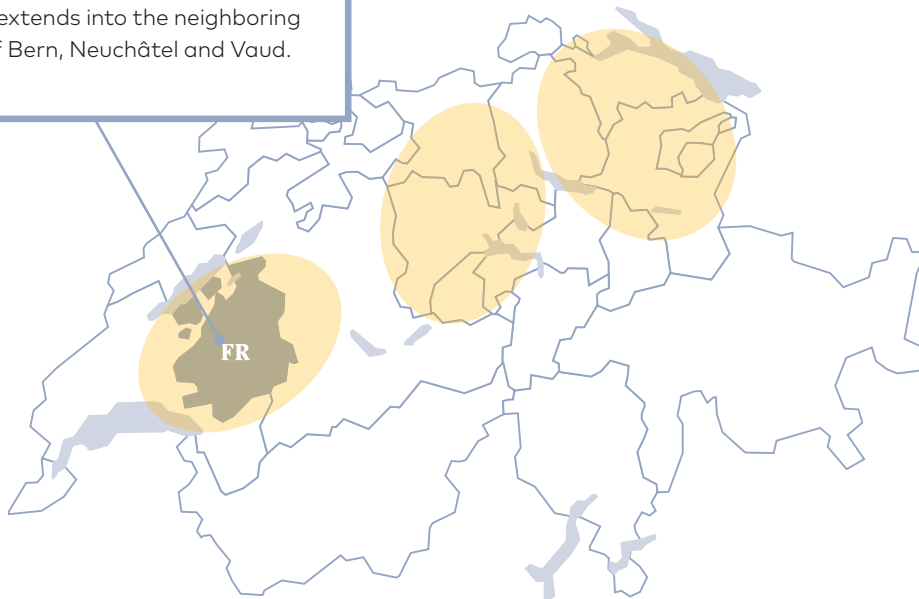
Dairy products





10,2%

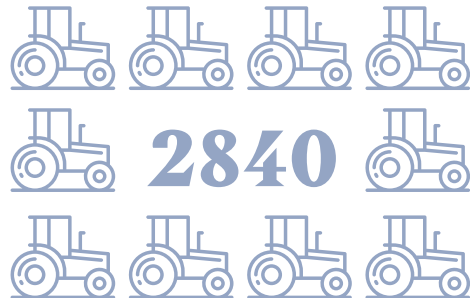
Processing and preserving of meat and meat products

The canton of Fribourg is at the heart of one of Switzerland's three food clusters, which also extends into the neighboring cantons of Bern, Neuchâtel and Vaud.



20%  

Share of the canton's workforce employed in the food sector.



farms

29



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GRANGENEUVE AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE

TEACHING AND PRACTICE IN ONE PLACE



The opening of a new teaching farm, coupled with several expansion plans, will undoubtedly boost the already excellent reputation of the Grangeneuve Agricultural Institute.

With a dairy farm, a market garden, orchards, an apiary and a cheese dairy, the Grangeneuve Agricultural Institute is one of only a handful of Swiss colleges to have its own working farm. This is a real blessing “for our teaching staff because it affords them a lot of freedom when developing the courses they want to offer, and for our students”, notes Pascal Toffel, the Institute’s Director.

Founded in 1888, Grangeneuve is a provider of education in agriculture, forestry, horticulture, dairy, agrofood, home economics and housekeeping studies. “But we are more than an agricultural college that offers vocational training in a wide range of professions. We also provide consultancy services and continuing education courses.” Every year, some 1,100 young Swiss people enroll at

Grangeneuve, 40% of whom are from outside the canton of Fribourg. “Bilingualism is really important to us. One quarter of our students, and one-third of our teaching staff are native German speakers.”

→ www.fr.ch/grangeneuve

GREEN SENTINEL

A VERTICAL VEGETABLE GARDEN

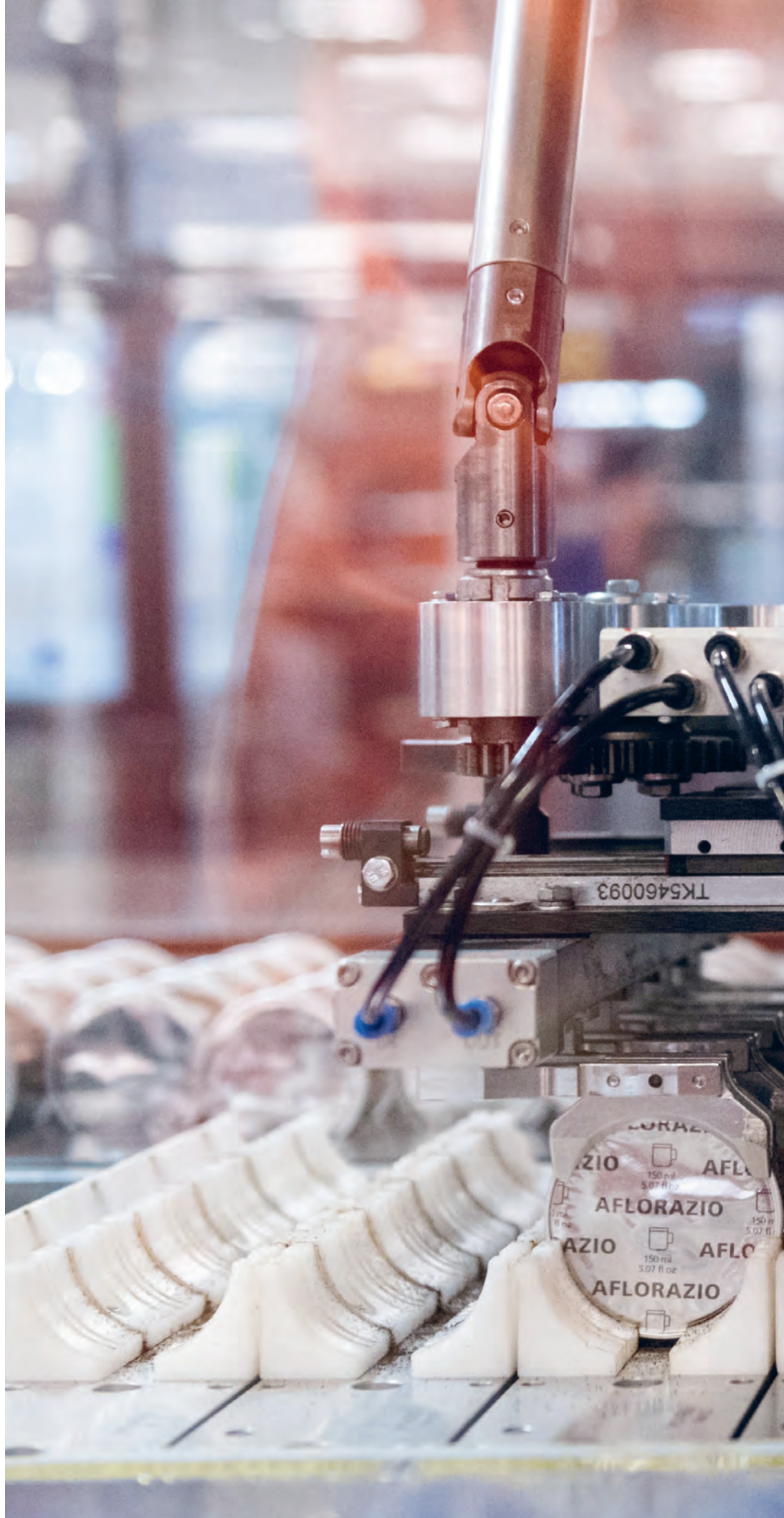
“All we did was to put nature in a box!” jokes Pascal Peleszezak. Sounds simple, right? But, as the founder of Green Sentinel explains, “Creating vertical gardens is highly technical and complex.” The Fribourg company had to draw on considerable expertise and skill to create the first-ever stand-alone planted wall. Green Sentinel’s vertical market garden is aimed at not only the agrofood industry and the market garden sector but also the general public, providing up to five or six times more planting space to grow fruit and vegetables. Similar to a permaculture, the wall offers the same quality conditions as organic soil. “It is basically a hollow block filled with

soil and RCW, a kind of a mini-compost.” Then, nature is left to work its magic. The aim is to achieve a maximum yield from minimum space and give consumers a chance to rediscover the authentic taste and health benefits of natural produce, at very affordable prices. Although Green Sentinel has only recently begun selling its vertical vegetable garden, Peleszezak is confident, “We plan to export our know-how to the four corners of the globe.”

→ www.green-sentinel.com

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Produits Epagny

The Vertuo range, designed specifically for the North American market, is produced at the Nespresso plant in Romont. It was built in 2015 at a cost of CHF 300 million.



TK546

2

INDUSTRY AND PRODUCTION

The global agrofood industry needs to reinvent itself by whatever means, whether by tapping into new technologies or not. This means putting consumers right, left and center of its initiatives, as well as offering them healthier, more convenient and more sustainable products which still deliver on quality. The Fribourg agrofood sector is already well-equipped to rise to these challenges.



DAIRY PRODUCTS

FRIBOURG, THE LAND OF WHITE GOLD



Whether it is made in high-tech dairies in the lowlands or on a traditional mountain alpine farm like this one, Gruyère AOP and Vacherin Fribourgeois AOP are made according to the most stringent standards.

Milk is woven into Fribourg's fabric. Agriculture, dairy farming and cheese-making have shaped the long history of the canton. Taking its name from the picturesque region where it was first made, Gruyère AOP dates back at least to 12th century. This cheese made from raw cow's milk is the product of the age-old traditional expertise of master cheesemakers, affineurs and dairy farmers. Over time, its renown has spread far beyond Switzerland's border. Every year, almost 15,000 metric tons of this iconic Fribourg specialty – roughly half of total production – are exported throughout the world. Visitors to Fribourg have many opportunities to discover how Gruyère AOP is made, including a trip to a

demonstration cheese dairy, interpretive trails as well as visits to various traditional mountain dairies.

But the canton has another iconic cheese: the semi-hard Vacherin Fribourgeois AOP, which is famed for its delicate taste and creamy texture. When it comes to fondue, a dish that hails originally from Fribourg but is now synonymous with Switzerland in general, Vacherin Fribourgeois AOP is an essential ingredient, whether served on its own or married with Gruyère AOP (the famous 'moitié-moitié' – or half-half – fondue). Let's not forget other great Fribourg cheeses like Gottéron, Mont-Vully, Sensler Mutschli and tomme Moléson. Experts also agree because year

after year, Fribourg cheeses regularly excel at the World Cheese Awards. In November 2018, in Bergen, Norway, over 3,500 cheeses from some 30 countries were put to the taste test during this prestigious global competition. Thanks to its outstanding collaboration with many partner cheese dairies, the Fribourg company Cremo was awarded 21 distinctions, including 10 gold medals. This is once again proof of the excellent quality of Fribourg milk because an exceptional product relies on exceptional ingredients.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

THE CREAM OF THE SWISS ECONOMY

The canton of Fribourg has nearly 1,400 milk producers, 80 cheese dairies and 36 alpine dairy farms. Over 400 million kilos of Fribourg milk are delivered every year to milk processors and cheesemakers. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Fribourg dairy industry is a powerhouse of the Swiss economy.

Founded in 1927, **Crema** is the second largest milk processor in Switzerland. Its fresh milk, creams, yogurts, milk drinks, cheeses and butter are sold both at home and abroad.

ELSA-Mifroma (see p. 45) is part of the Migros Group and comprises six separate companies. Its field of expertise is the production and packaging of dairy products and the production and the ripening of cheeses. Today, ELSA-Mifroma is a market leader in Switzerland and an important player in the European dairy industry.

Milco, a family-run business founded over 60 years ago, produces a range of dairy products, including cheeses, creams, butter and yoghurts, which are enjoyed by customers as far afield as Russia. Its roots in the region of La Gruyère are as solid as the company's commitment to organic production methods and the creation of premium regional products.

Translait (see p. 47) began life specializing in the delivery of dairy by-products but gradually shifted its focus to the processing of these by-products into high-quality products for both the food and animal feed sectors.

- www.crema.ch
- www.elsa-mifroma.ch
- www.milco.ch
- www.translait.ch



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FREWITT

HIGH-TECH MILLS FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY

Frewitt is the global leader in the design and development of high-tech milling, deagglomeration, metering, and filling machines for all kinds of powders and granulates.

"Although most of our orders come from the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, orders from the food sector generate 20% of our turnover", explains Antoine Virdis, Frewitt CEO. For example, the company worked with Fribourg dairy group Cremo to develop a customized solution for grinding powdered milk. The team had to overcome a host of technological challenges when designing the high-tech mill: it had to offer triple the flow rates

normally found in machines used by the pharmaceutical industry, guarantee continuous discharge, and prevent powder sticking to the internal walls. The special mill also can withstand the shock of an explosion, a common phenomenon when handling this type of powder. "It's a win-win situation. Once we incorporated our technology into this specific application, we then used the new insight we gained to improve our standard products."

→ www.frewitt.com

JNJ AUTOMATION

ROBOTS LEND CHEESEMAKERS A HELPING HAND



"When it comes to cheese-making, humans will always be involved because they have the expertise and the responsibility for quality control and tasting the end product. However, we'll do the rest", explains Joël Jaquier, Co-director of JNJ automation. The company, based in Romont, is a world leader in the development and manufacture of robots for use in cheese cellars (see *photograph*). Almost every stage of

the production process, including moving, brushing and washing the cheese rounds, can be entrusted to machines built by JNJ automation. "Switzerland alone produces 30,000 tons of Gruyère cheese every year, with 12,000 destined for the export market. There is no way we would be able to produce so much if we had to remove the rounds from their molds, flip them and put them back into the molds, or move to pallets by

hand." From village cheese dairies to major affineurs (cheese ripeners), the company is a forceful presence in the domestic and international markets. "Our next big challenge is traceability", adds Jaquier. "At any minute, our customers must be able to verify which molds have been turned and when."

→ www.jnj.swiss



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GUTKNECHT GEMÜSE A FOOD TREND-SETTER



Pascal Gutknecht loves to break new ground. Around 17 years ago, his family business embarked on a joint venture with two other farms. Gutknecht and his two co-owners now employ 80 staff, produce vast quantities of vegetables, and specialize in supplying niche markets.

"There is always something new for customers to try in our farm shop", says Gutknecht. Shelves are filled with assorted varieties of a wide range of fresh vegetables like bell peppers, radishes and eggplant. Last year, Gutknecht customers could choose from no fewer than 29 varieties of tomatoes. The farm shop is a win-win for everyone: customers discover new flavors and the market gardener gains a valuable insight into what consumers want. Sometimes, customers even ask him if he could add such-and-such a variety to his already extensive selection. "These requests have often given me new ideas for the business." It may not be in a prime commercial location but as many as 150 to 200 customers pass through the doors of the Gutknecht farm shop every day. In addition to orders from nursery schools and restaurants, the bulk of Gutknecht's business is supplying major distributors. Thanks to his farm shop, he is able to tell them which products are proving particularly popular. Food trends in Switzerland start in Gutknecht's farm shop.

The farmer values this direct contact with the customer and is delighted that "people are really interested in food." Gutknecht welcomes this interest and now runs tours of his farm. "We are like those restaurants with open kitchens." Visitors are also able to see the important role that the Seeland region plays in Switzerland's market gardening sector. Home to an impressive number of innovative vegetable-growing businesses, the region is responsible for around one-third of Swiss vegetable production.

Added to this resourcefulness are Gutknecht's green credentials. Thanks to 3,800 square meters of solar panels, "We are now basically self-sufficient, at least in terms of energy." However, his green plans do not stop there, "We are also working with partners and the commune of Kerzers to build a wood pellet-fueled power plant." Soon, Gutknecht will be able to boast that his produce is not only fresh and local but also entirely carbon-free. It is down on the farm that the future begins.

→ www.gutknecht-gemuese.ch

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LADURÉE A FRENCH DELICACY WITH A SWISS TOUCH

"A French way of life, made in Switzerland" is how David Holder, President of Ladurée, describes his famed macarons (see *photograph*), which are produced at the company's Enney site. It is here, at this 20,000 m² facility — operational since 2011 — that Ladurée's 70-strong workforce assembles these jewel-colored, pillowy confections by hand according to a 150-year-old method. "The macarons made in the canton of Fribourg are exported to 35 countries. It is critical that no matter where our customers are in the world, our macarons offer them exactly the same great

experience in terms of taste, texture and pleasure." It is precisely this conscientiousness and attention to detail as well as the quality of the raw materials that brought David Holder to Switzerland, a decision he has never regretted, "Most of the ingredients we use are locally sourced, as is our workforce whose professionalism and loyalty never cease to amaze me." The experience of working in Switzerland coupled with the beauty of its landscape has even led the French entrepreneur to set up home here.

→ www.laduree.fr



CHOCOLAT VILLARS THE SWEET TASTE OF SWITZERLAND

Founded in 1901, the renowned chocolate maker Chocolat Villars is a staunch defender of premium chocolate and traditional craftsmanship. Today, it employs 150 people, counts 350 varieties in its range and exports its delicious wares to 60 countries. The company is also an innovation powerhouse, beginning in 1935 with the creation of the first-ever liqueur chocolate bar. "Back then encasing

liquid in chocolate was no mean feat!", notes Stephan Buchser, Managing Director of Villars, with pride. In 2017 Chocolat Villars launched a new range that marries the delicious taste of its famous chocolate with the finest fruit brandies and spirits that Switzerland has to offer – Bartlett pear brandy, cherry brandy, raspberry brandy, absinthe, whisky, and gin. "We do everything in-house: from

roasting the beans right up to making the chocolate. To make sure that this expertise and fantastic ingredients shine through our product, we use only Swiss milk and sugar. We source materials made or grown in Switzerland wherever we can!"

→ www.villars.com



LE NOUVEAU CENTRE MÉDIAS À FRIBOURG DAS NEUE FREIBURGER MEDIENZENTRUM

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DIRECTOR - SWISS FARMERS' UNION

JACQUES BOURGEOIS

What sets Swiss agriculture apart?

Swiss farms are relatively small – 20 hectares on average – and highly diversified. Our country also has very stringent rules in place. For example, to receive direct public subsidies, farms have to set aside 7% of their usable land for biodiversity. Also, Switzerland produces around half of the food it needs. However, given the pace of demographic growth, maintaining this self-sufficiency rate will be one of the greatest challenges facing Swiss agriculture.

What tools does Switzerland have to tackle these challenges?

Its brain power, the resilience of family farms and the capacity to innovate! Technological advances like robotic milking, automated farming, and autonomous agricultural vehicles provide farmers with a welcome helping hand. The same also applies to research. For example, thanks to giant steps in plant selection, crops that are grown are now more resistant. In terms of animal health, we have slashed antibiotic use by 50% in 10 years.

What sets farming in the canton of Fribourg apart from the rest of the country?

The agrofood sector is responsible for one-fifth of the canton's GDP – that's a massive share! The canton is also home to several major processing plants, primarily for milk and meat products, and of course a host of regional produce designated with the Protected Designation of Origin (AOP) label. The canton has made the wise decision to strengthen its agrofood sector. As a result, it will be well placed to generate even more added value.

→ www.sbv-usp.ch



**MANAGER OF THE
FOOD & NUTRITION CLUSTER**

NADINE LACROIX OGGIER

What is the Food & Nutrition Cluster?

It is a non-profit organization that was launched in Fribourg in 2015. It currently has 82 members, from nine cantons. What all of these SMEs, start-ups, major companies and academic structures have in common are their ties to the food sector. This platform's greatest strength is its superior regional and national networking capability.

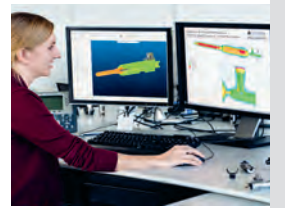
What does the platform actually do?

Most of our work is focused on matching food industry players with the right research partners to help drive their projects forward. As well as organizing periodic food and nutrition-related conferences which are rounded off with a networking reception, we run continuous professional development courses. The Cluster is also tasked with organizing major events like the Agri&Co Challenge.

The Cluster is an initiative of the Swiss Capital Region Association, whose members include the cantons of Fribourg, Bern, Neuchâtel, Valais and Solothurn, as well as a number of communes and regional organizations. So, why did you choose Fribourg as the platform's base?

Every link in the entire food value chain can be found in Fribourg, and there is also a high concentration of agro-food companies, who are major employers in the canton. For Fribourg, the presence of the platform is a real opportunity because it will be able to share in the success of projects that receive support from the Cluster.

→ www.clusterfoodnutrition.ch



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FLAGSHIP MIGROS PRODUCTS FROM FRIBOURG



Micarna (top left), Mifroma (bottom left), Sushi Mania (top right) and ELSA (bottom right) are major-league players in the Swiss agrofood sector.

M-Industrie, part of the Migros Group, is a Swiss industrial behemoth and global leader when it comes to the manufacture of own-branded products. Over 20,000 different food and non-food items are produced across its 33 sites, of which 24 are in Switzerland. The canton of Fribourg is home to four of the Group's companies. First, there is Micarna in Courtepin, which is the leading producer of meat, poultry and seafood in Switzerland and employs close to 1,400 people. Second, Mifroma in Ursy specializes in cheese ripening and packaging. Third, there is ELSA in Estavayer-le-Lac, which makes a huge range of milk, yogurts, creams and cream cheese products. It is also the largest single-site dairy processing plant in Switzerland and, together with Mifroma, makes up the ELSA-Mifroma Group.

The latest addition to the ELSA family is a milk that is very rich in protein, low-fat and lactose-free. "Proteins are very interesting because they can help regulate sugar intake", explains Matthew Robin, Director of ELSA-Mifroma. Also, enriching low-fat dairy products like this milk gives them "a nice texture". However, the development and refinement of the new product was a "complex process that required expert input from all of our teams".

Since 2016, M-Industrie can also rely on the very special expertise of Sushi Mania. The company, which was founded in Vuadens by Marc Durst, makes as many as 36,000 pieces of sushi a day, from futo-maki to sashimi right up to nigiri. "Our experimentation knows no bounds!" marvels Durst. Regular customers of Sushi Mania have already been able to try out some of the results of these experiments, such as fruit, chocolate, duck and even merguez sushi. "We invent 10 new varieties of sushi every month", and this is only for the Lausanne branch of Globus, Migros's high-end department store. In Europe "almost everyone knows what sushi is, but many are still reluctant to try it", according to the gastronome. "This means that there is tremendous growth potential for our business."

- www.mindustry.com
- www.elsa-mifroma.ch
- www.sushimania.ch

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SOCFIN PALM OIL FOR THE LOCAL MARKET



"Palm oil (see photograph) is a staple food in the countries where we do business, much like butter is in Europe", explains Luc Boedt, CEO of the Socfin Group. But there is a problem, "It is in critically short supply which means that local people are forced to import it at very high prices." In sharp contrast to its rivals, the multinational, which employs 50,000 people and has its operational head office in Fribourg, decided to tweak its business model in favor of producing and selling palm oil precisely in those regions where this valuable commodity is scarce. All 10 production sites of

the Luxembourg group, which are located in eight countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, have their own processing plant. "We work with local growers, offer them technical support and buy their crop at the going market rate. In doing so, we help advance the development of these regions." Socfin annually extracts over 430,000 metric tons of oil from palm fruit. It is then used to make a wide range of products, including cooking oil, soap, mayonnaise and candles.

→ www.socfin.com

TRANSLAIT TARGETING THE CHINESE MARKET

Infant milk formula is a booming market in China. There are two main reasons why sales of this popular product have gone through the roof: the end of the one-child policy and the tendency of new Chinese mothers to return to work within a few weeks of giving birth. Fribourg company Translait, which specializes in the use and sale of milk byproducts, was quick to spot this promising business opportunity. Together with Synutra, one of China's largest infant formula manufacturers, the firm plans to set up a facility in the canton for drying whey collected from cheese dairies across the region. The dried

byproduct will then be turned into powdered milk destined to feed the Middle Kingdom's youngest generation. It is an ambitious project, "It will take up to CHF 100 million to complete, and the plant should be operational by 2021", adds Vincent Stucky, Managing Director of Translait. "As a major player in the cheese industry, Switzerland produces more whey than it consumes. We only work with international customers."

→ www.translait.ch

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The advent of Nespresso coffee capsules in 1986 revolutionized the global coffee industry. Today, several billion coffee pods are produced in Switzerland every year, and exported around the world. The beating heart of this operation is in the canton of Fribourg, specifically the town of Romont where the youngest of Nespresso's three Swiss-based production facilities opened in 2015. Recently, Nespresso announced plans to step up production, not least because of the growing popularity of the Vertuo range, which is made entirely in the canton of Fribourg. Originally designed specifically for the North American market, where consumers prefer their cup of morning joe on the larger side, these innovative pods are now available in 14 countries. Expansion plans, scheduled for 2019 and 2020, will see the

addition of two new production lines at the Romont plant, alongside the recently opened Nespresso Product Development Center and the Coffee Campus, a training center for coffee experts. Once completed, Nespresso will have invested over CHF 90 million in these three projects.

Nespresso is also busy pursuing its ambitious plans for the other end of the coffee production chain. Since 2003, the undisputed leader of single-serve coffee pods has been working closely with the NGO Rainforest Alliance on the Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality™ Program, which aims to guarantee highest quality coffees, protect the environment and improve the livelihoods of coffee growers and their families. "The program was launched in Costa Rica, where several hundred small

producers took part. Since then, it has been rolled out in an additional 12 countries and involves close to 75,000 farmers who can rely on advice from over 400 agronomists", as Isabelle Gayral Boschung, Global Sustainability Program Manager at Nespresso, notes with pride. Every year, the Nespresso Sustainable Quality Farmers and Agronomists Awards recognize the community and environmental engagement of both coffee growers and agricultural scientists (*see online issue for more details*). According to Gayral Boschung, "Over 90% of our coffee comes from AAA certified farms, but we plan to raise this to 100% by 2020."

→ www.nespresso.com



Over 75,000 farms across 12 coffee-growing countries are part of Nespresso's AAA program; here, in Guatemala.

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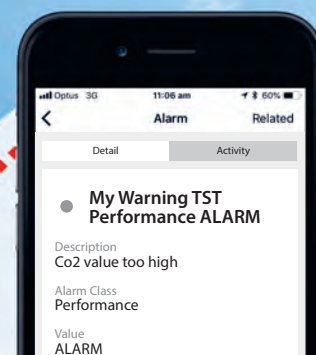
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ROLAND MURTEN

LESS GLUTEN, MORE TASTE!

Exporting Swiss chocolate around the world is easy, but does the same apply to less glamorous products like baked goods? According to Cyril Cornu, owner of Roland Murten, "Quality is the decisive factor here." The baked goods manufacturer from Murten ships its pretzels, crispbread and crackers across Europe, and as far afield as Singapore and Japan. In recent years, the manufacturer has focused more of its energies on the gluten-free market and, within a short amount of time, has become a leader in this field. However, Roland is only getting

started, "We're currently working on developing products with lower salt and fat content. People want to eat more healthily, but don't want to give up the taste they love!" What seems like a contradiction for some sounds like a challenge for Cornu. The company is also trialing new reduced plastic packaging. Fresher, healthier and more environmentally friendly – is there any challenge left for Roland to tackle? Watch this space...

→ www.roland.ch

FRIBOURG HAS FOOD PACKAGING ALL WRAPPED UP

CAFAG&PLASPAQ



Cafag&Plaspaq (see photography) has the entire food packaging chain covered: from design and manufacturing right through to packing and delivery. "This helps prevent any misunderstandings or mistakes about what our customers want", explains Christian Tissières, director of the Fribourg company which specializes in thermoforming, industrial cardboard packaging solutions and plastic injection. "Take packaging design, for example. Our designers talk to the heads of production every day, which means they know exactly what designs are feasible and how long it will take to make them." Thanks to this holistic approach, which is "pretty unique in Switzerland", the Broc-based firm

has been able to mount an effective response to the challenges posed by a globalized food industry. One thing that all of Cafag&Plaspaq operations have in common is their pursuit of perfection. Plastics used in food packaging, which account for half of the company's order book, are subject to rigorous checks and monitoring. "We make a point of knowing where the materials come from and how they are disposed of", warns Christian Tissières. The R&D team works closely with academic partners to boost the sustainability and traceability of its packaging solutions.

→ www.cafag-plaspaq.ch

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PRODUITS EPAGNY

INNOVATION MEETS TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP



Visitors from across Europe flock to La Gruyère for its clean, invigorating air; the foodies among them have the added attraction of sampling the delicious meat specialties from local producer Produits Epagny (see *photograph*). "All of our products – salami, cured beef and cured ham – are air-dried", explains Peter Gerber, the Managing Director of the company based in the eponymous Gruyère village. "We carried out the process in other parts of Switzerland, using the same cuts of meat and the same seasonings, but the end result was rather disappointing." Not surprisingly, Produits Epagny, founded in 1931, counts Switzerland's major retailers – Migros, Coop, Manor and Globus – among its many customers. "Our specialty is... specialties!" adds the managing director. The company puts all of its traditional craftsmanship into creating, in limited quan-

ties, products that meet its customers' individual specifications. The company is uncompromising when it comes to sourcing its ingredients and uses only meat from animals reared in Switzerland.

For Produits Epagny, its deep local roots are no obstacle to its innovative drive. "Ten years ago, we were the first in Switzerland to launch meat snack packs." The advantage of this extrasmall format is that indecisive consumers can enjoy a little of each of their favorite products. Even the packaging has been carefully thought-through, "Customers can simply open the pack and place it directly on the table." As part of this project "the company created some 15 additional jobs because the ready-to-serve packs are filled by hand." Produits Epagny is also behind another innovative product –

snack packs that combine mini-rolls of wafer-thin air-dried meat and Gruyère cheese. It has won over not only retailers but also major transport providers. Tourists and travelers on the famous Montreux-Oberland bernois railway line can pick up one of these tasty snack boxes from the on-board catering service. "All SWISS European flights departing from Geneva carry products that we created, according to the airline's specifications." The managing director is rightly optimistic about the future of Produits Epagny. If additional proof were needed, the company has recently announced plans to expand its operations.

→ www.produits-epagny.ch

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Viticulture

Cuchaule, Bénichon mustard and bricelets: the perfect sundowner menu while you take in the stunning view of Fribourg Old Town and its cathedral.



3

TOURISM AND CONSUMERS

The promotion of culinary traditions and local produce plays a decisive role in boosting tourism. The canton of Fribourg, a high altar of gastronomy and the good life, boasts a culinary heritage that is as authentic as it is diverse.



TRADITIONAL FRIBOURG PRODUCE

A BOUNTIFUL PANTRY OF LOCAL SPECIALTIES

"We are right to be proud of our culinary heritage, one of the richest in Switzerland." Pierre-Alain Bapst, Director of Terroir Fribourg, does not shy away from extolling the virtues of traditional Fribourg produce. The canton is indeed a cornucopia of local specialties – cheese, meat, baked goods and wines, to name but a few. Gruyère and Vacherin fribourgeois cheese, *cuchaule* (a sweet saffron bread) and Botzi pears, all of which bear the prestigious European AOP (protected designation of origin) label, are particular favorites among food lovers. Two additional Fribourg specialties, the delicious *jambon de la Borne* (lightly smoked ham hock) and the lusciously rich Gruyère double cream, both of which take pride of place in the Pantagrueilian feast of Bénichon (*read opposite*), have also applied for AOP certification.

"The canton's iconic specialties also include fondue *moitié-moitié* (ed: 50% Gruyère and 50% Vacherin Fribourgeois), wines from Cheyres and Le Vully,

meringues, Bénichon mustard, Vully cream pie and an array of toothsome Bénichon confections, such as aniseed cookies, *bricelets* and *croquets*", with Bapst adding, "More than 250 products already have the Terroir Fribourg label, which is awarded to products that satisfy stringent production, processing and marketing criteria that also meet the corresponding national regulations." But do these specialties make it beyond Fribourg's borders? "Our cheeses, starting with Gruyère AOP, are the undisputed international ambassadors of Fribourg's culinary heritage! The international market holds great potential for products like meringues, Botzi pears, double cream and Bénichon mustard. Promoting these goods is one of our key missions."

→ www.terroir-fribourg.ch



Vully cream pie (left), meringues with double crème (center) and Botzi pears AOP (right) are synonymous with the canton of Fribourg.

BÉNICHON A LIVING TRADITION



Cuchaule topped with Bénichon mustard, cabbage soup, mutton stew, jambon de la Borne and other smoked meat specialties, leg of lamb served with Botzi pears, mashed potato and green beans, a cheese board, meringues and Gruyère double cream, and not forgetting fruits of all kinds and Bénichon cookies, all rounded off with a spot of dancing to help digest it all: welcome to Bénichon, Fribourg's traditional thanksgiving celebration. Originally a religious festival, Bénichon has evolved into a popular and gastronomic event culminating in

the lavish banquet detailed above. Having said that, revelers nowadays tend to forgo some of the dishes on this plentiful menu. Generally held in the fall (the date varies from one region to the next), Bénichon celebrates the end of the harvest season. The people of Fribourg, and a growing number of visitors, enjoy this feast at home or at restaurants set up especially for the occasion, and it is often accompanied by Swiss traditional music. Once seen as outdated, this age-old tradition is now enjoying an impressive revival in the canton.

GOÛTS ET TERROIR FOOD FAIR A FIVE-DAY FESTIVAL FOR FOOD LOVERS

Goûts et Terroir is a must for all food aficionados. This annual Swiss food fair, which takes place in the fall, brings 300 exhibitors, 6,000 specialties and 45,000 visitors to the town of Bulle, in the heart of Gruyère. For almost 20 years, the yearly event has been showcasing authentic homegrown produce from across Switzerland. Visitors can also enjoy cooking demonstrations, workshops for all ages, and the Swiss Bakery Trophy, a prestigious competition that attracts artisan bakers and confectioners from around the country.

→ www.gouts-et-terroirs.ch



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DELLEY SEEDS AND PLANTS FORTY WHEAT VARIETIES REGISTERED IN 19 COUNTRIES



Delley Seeds and Plants (DSP) acts as a link between seed breeding and production in Switzerland. The Fribourg company, which is a member of the Swiss Seed Growers Association (Swissem), co-owns wheat & triticale (wheat-rye hybrid) varieties created by the Agroscope breeding program at its research station in Changins. DSP is in charge of carrying out variety tests, maintenance breeding and basic seed production. It also works with breeders in other countries when it comes to species that are not bred in Switzerland, such as barley,

rye and oats. The company also promotes varieties it has developed in partnership with Agroscope. "Our specialists evaluate potential candidates in trial networks worldwide", explains Evelyne Thomet, Managing Director of DSP. Nineteen countries have registered no less than 40 DSP wheat varieties in their national catalogues of varieties.

→ www.dsp-delley.ch

CULTUREFOOD GREEN MARKETING

"Major meetings of heads of state to discuss the environment are right and proper, but turning these words into action would be even better!" Jean-Paul Baechler, Managing Director of Culturefood, firmly believes that his food distribution company must also play its part on this issue. Since 2017, the environmental impact of fresh fruit and vegetable offered by the Fribourg company – one of the leading wholesalers in Western Switzerland – has been assessed by the start-up, Beelong. In Culturefood's online shop, every item of raw and fresh produce, whether it be apples, tomatoes or cucumbers, come with an environmental rating, ranging from A to G. "Five main criteria

are used to determine which category a food item should go into: origin, seasonality, method of production, impact on the climate and resources, and product transformation." This allows retailers and restaurateurs to make an informed choice to shop more responsibly. Less than two years after the collaboration between Culturefood and Beelong began, Baechler is happy to note that "price is not the only factor that customers consider when deciding what to buy."

→ www.culturefood.ch

Gault&Millau

Fribourg

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- Hôtel de Ville - Fribourg **16**
- Au Sauvage - Fribourg **16**
- La Pinte des Mossettes - Cerniat **16**
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- Aigle Noir - Fribourg **15**
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- Auberge de la Croix Blanche - Villarepos **15**
- Romantik Hôtel Le Vignier - Avry-devant-Pont **15**
- Hôtel de Ville - Vaulruz **15**
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- Zum Ochsen - Düdingen **14**
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- L'Ecu - Bulle **14**
- La Tavola Pronta - Greng **14**
- Restaurant du Grand Pont - Fribourg **14**
- La Pinte du Vieux Manoir - Morat **14**
- Café de la Fonderie « Ben & Léo » - Fribourg **14**
- Restaurant du Cheval Blanc - Bulle **14**
- Gasthof zum Roten Kreuz - Giffers **14**
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- La Salamandre - Portalban **13**
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- La Maison Salvagny - Salvenach (Morat) **13**
- Le Rive Sud - Estavayer-le-Lac **13**
- Romantik Hôtel L'Etoile, Restaurant Nova - Charmey **13**
- LUSINE - Corminboeuf **13**
- Restaurant La Suite - Fribourg **12**
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GASTRONOMY

A PARADISE FOR FOOD CONNOISSEURS



The greatest compliment that customers can give Alain Bächler (see photograph), Chef-proprietor of Les Trois Tours in Fribourg, is to hear them say that they had a wonderful time at his restaurant. Over the last 20 years, Bächler, along with a handful of other chefs in Fribourg, have been delighting diners at their temples of gastronomy. However, securing his 18 Gault&Millau points and one Michelin star requires unflinching discipline and the endless pursuit of perfection. "I am always in the restaurant when it's open. But I can also count on a loyal team and together we do everything we possibly can to make sure that our customers leave the restaurant happy." Bächler never takes a back seat, meticulously checking each and every plate to make sure they are worthy to leave his kitchen. He holds his suppliers to the same exacting standards. He believes that it takes a great deal of experience to be able to select the best suppliers and ensure that the produce they supply is of the highest quality. As the great French chef, Prosper Montagné once said, "It takes something very good to make something good."

Nevertheless, a fine-dining experience is not simply about the ingredients on the plate, no matter how amazing they are. "An excellent restaurant offers a multidimensional experience: creative, finely executed cooking, coupled with exceptional service and attention to detail in everything. For the customer, it is about more than just good food." It is about non-stop toil and diligence, and service with a smile, no matter what.

Fribourg chefs have understood this, as the many outstanding restaurants in the canton show. Indeed, 33 Fribourg restaurants are listed in the most recent edition of the famous Gault&Millau guide! Bächler believes that there are two reasons for this: a generation of cooks who were trained and recognized by the greatest names in the business, such as the incredible Frédy Girardet, and a highly discerning local population, "Whether it is for business or for pleasure, people here love to dine out and enjoy a fine glass of wine."

→ www.troistours.ch



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DIRECTOR OF THE SWISS INTEGRATIVE CENTER FOR HUMAN HEALTH (SICHH)

JEAN-MARC BRUNNER

The SICHH launched in 2012 as a joint venture between the University of Fribourg and the Canton of Fribourg Hospital. What connection does the SICHH have to the food sector?

Our center of expertise is interested in any area connected with human health, especially biotechnology (biotech), medical technology (medtech) and food technology (foodtech). In fact, there are certain overlaps across these three disciplines. For example, certain techniques used in biotech can be transferred to foodtech. Also, Fribourg's food-related expertise is an important selling point for pharmaceutical companies looking to set up their biotech production units in the canton.

What foodtech projects is the SICHH currently working on?

We are currently helping the University of Fribourg develop an ultra-fast system for identifying the presence of listeria in cheese products. Within a matter of seconds, the sensor is capable of detecting this pathogenic agent, which can contaminate foodstuffs. We are currently in talks with a number of firms, particularly in France, to turn this working prototype into a finished product. We have also worked with an agricultural research institute on the development of a recognition technology based on artificial intelligence that tracks the position and movements of animals when they are indoors.

So, your mission is to turn ideas into products?

Exactly. Always implicit in our activities is the cross-functionality and integration of existing expertise. We now have an expansive national and international network of academic and industrial partners at our fingertips.

→ www.sichh.ch



HEAD CHOCOLATIER AT CONFISERIE SUARD

JORGE CARDOSO

Do you have to be a chocoholic to be a master chocolatier?

Not necessarily. I'm more addicted to working with chocolate than eating it! After all, if you want to win competitions, you have to be deeply passionate about what you do. It took me 18 months to perfect the chocolate centerpiece that won gold at the 2018 Culinary World Championship in Luxembourg. But I also enjoy eating chocolate, especially the grand crus which I'm lucky enough to work with every day. After all, I would be doing my adopted home of Fribourg a disservice if I didn't like this delicacy! *(laughs)*

How did you become such a gifted confectioner?

I certainly think my triple CFC (*ed.: federal vocational diploma*) – cook, pastry chef-confectioner and baker – stood me in good stead. Also, I had already acquired a taste for cooking and baking when I was a kid growing up in Portugal, as my mom worked as a pastry chef and my dad as a cook. However, back then, I didn't want to follow in their footsteps and chose to study art instead. My art background actually comes in very handy now. Before I start creating a centerpiece, I make a very detailed sketch of what I want it to look like.

What was it like competing in the 2018 Culinary World Championship?

It all began at the 2017 World Pastry Cup in Lyon. I was part of the Swiss team that ultimately won bronze. After the competition, the Swiss Culinary National Team asked me if I wanted to come on board for the 2018 Culinary World Championship. The judges loved the Swiss-themed

→ www.confiserie-suard.ch



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MAISON CAILLER

“CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY” MADE REAL

Many a child has dreamt of swapping places with the eponymous hero of Roald Dahl’s ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’. In the village of Broc, in La Gruyère, the Maison Cailler – Switzerland’s very own chocolate factory (see *photograph*) – is a case of life imitating art. Since its opening nine years ago, the Maison Cailler has welcomed over 3 million visitors and is now the number one tourist attraction in western Switzerland. Every day, food lovers from around the world, families, school groups and companies pour through its doors, and leave with childhood dreams rekindled and a goody bag full of brand-new memories.

The oldest Swiss chocolate brand, which celebrates its 200th birthday this year, offers visitors a unique experience that engages all five senses and takes them on a fascinating journey through the history of chocolate. Along the way, they discover how the basic ingredients of cocoa and milk are transformed into this sweet treat and, according to research, a proven mood-enhancer! To round off the tour, visitors have the chance to sample a huge selection of Cailler products,

an experience that is sure to put a smile on everyone’s face. For those who want to enjoy a deeper dive into the world of chocolate, they can reserve a spot in one of the interactive workshops led by master chocolatiers.

Visitors can also enjoy a peep inside the chocolate factory itself, which is right beside the Maison Cailler. It is here that best-sellers like Frigor, Femina and Cailler Branches are made. Besides the wealth of experience and passion that goes into the production process, all of the chocolate made by Cailler, which has been owned by Nestlé for 90 years, is unlike any of its competitors. This is because it is made from condensed rather than fresh milk, which gives the chocolate its unmistakable rich and velvety texture. The “white gold” which is used to make this not-so-secret ingredient comes from 1,500 cows that graze on the lush pastures of La Gruyère, and is produced according to official natural and environmentally friendly standards.

→ www.cailler.ch/en/maison-cailler





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AF TOSCANO



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PANIER LOCAL REGIONAL PRODUCE ONLY A CLICK AWAY



It was once said that the lifestyle of the 2.0 generation was incompatible with sourcing locally grown or produced food. In 2014, Arnaud Déglise, who was “reared on local produce” and with a wealth of retail experience under his belt, spotted a gap in the market, “There was no link between local producers and consumers.” With help from a friend in the dairy sector, Déglise came up with Panier local, a micro-regional alternative to major retailers’ online stores. Customers first select the Panier local website for their region. (the company has three outlets in Fribourg, and a fourth in Bordeaux, France.) Next, they fill their virtual shopping cart. Then, Panier Local delivers the order right to the customers’ doorstep. “Instead of keeping our own stock, we operate using mobile logistics”, explains the managing director of the company, which was founded in Arconciel. The fact that each branch of Panier Local operates fully independently means that the company could extend its reach into other cantons, and even countries, thereby setting it on a path of “unlimited growth”.

→ www.panierlocal.ch

AF TOSCANO, GROUPE E BRINGING SALMON BACK TO FRIBOURG

Over a century ago, salmon disappeared from the canton of Fribourg’s rivers. But thanks to efforts by AF Toscano SA and Groupe E, they are set to return in the very near future... this time in a closed loop! A next-generation fish farm is scheduled to open in the municipality of Grandvillard in 2021. This project is a joint venture between the energy supplier Groupe E and engineering firm AF Toscano, which specializes in the construction of food production facilities and

designed the only other farm of this kind in Switzerland. Once up and running, it is projected that the farm will be able to produce 600 metric tons of salmon per year. “98% of the water needed for the ponds will be recycled as well as all fish waste. Excreta will be processed at the neighboring biogas plant”, explains Benjamin Chollet, an engineer with AF Toscano. This new facility will expand and boost the status of the canton of Fribourg as a major agrofood inno-

vator. Not only that but the salmon produced by the new facility will cover 5% of national consumption while keeping the transportation footprint to a minimum. There are also plans to make the facility open to the public, which means that one day the fish farm in Grandvillard might even become another of Gruyère’s many tourist attractions.

→ www.toscano.ch
→ www.groupe-e.ch



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VITICULTURE

TWO JEWELS IN THE WINEMAKING CROWN



The renowned restaurant guide Gault&Millau named two talented winegrowers from Fribourg, Stéphane and Fabrice Simonet, '2019 Rookies of the Year'.

Authentic is the adjective that professional enologist Fabrice Simonet chooses to describe "his" vineyard in Le Vully, which straddles the northern border of Fribourg and the canton of Vaud. Recently, this discerning wine connoisseur and his brother Stéphane were named 2019 Rookies of the Year by the prestigious Gault&Millau guide. Together, they are actively helping to forge the reputation of Fribourg as a great winegrowing region and in doing so upholding a tradition that has been cherished in the canton for many centuries. Although the first written record of viticulture in the canton goes back over 1,000 years, "Vines have probably been grown here since the very beginning of our times." His family estate, Petit Château, is in Môtier, a stone's throw from Avenches (Aventicum), the capital of Roman Helvetia. Given that the Romans tended to seek out hillside terrain to grow grape vines, it is not entirely inconceivable that they established vineyards on the slopes of Mont Vully, too.

What they lack in size, the vineyards of Le Vully make up for with an exceptional Mediterranean-like microclimate that is ideally suited for growing wine grapes. With its mix of sandstone and marl (a source rock containing clay and

limestone), the soil lends itself to the crafting of wines with great aromatic precision. The fresh, crisp taste of Le Vully wines are much loved by wine aficionados. Fabrice Simonet also adds the impressive number of enologists per square meter as another feature that sets this vintage apart, not to mention their deep attachment to the land they nurture and their outstanding expertise in the art of vinification.

Another jewel in the region's winemaking crown is the terraced vineyards of Lavaux, some of the largest in Europe. This UNESCO World Heritage Site and incredible terroir, which stretches along the shores of Lake Geneva and offers stunning views of the French Alps, produces wines of extraordinary quality. Most are crafted from the Chasselas grape, which is synonymous with the region. The vineyards of the canton of Fribourg also regularly win awards for their Chasselas wines.

→ www.lepetitchateau.ch

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