

Annual Report Swiss Food Research - 2019

Summary:

The expansion and strengthening of the Innovation Ecosystem was successfully continued in 2019 by Swiss Food Research. The number of members has increased from 105 to 132. One new innovation group (Bioconversion) was founded for the exchange and work on concrete, future-oriented topics.

In 2018 and 2019 a total of 3 innovation groups were newly founded which are working on the important questions of the use of non-meat-based protein sources, alternative preservation (HPP, UV, E-beam, PEF, etc.) and the possibilities offered by fermentation for new foods or the utilisation of side streams. A total of 9 innovation groups are active now. More than 85 projects have emerged from these innovation groups in recent years.

In the reporting period, about 70 companies & partners were visited and individual discussions on innovation projects were held. In addition, Swiss Food Research has intensively advised several start ups in the field of business development. This consulting service is an important contribution to the community and is provided altruistically - a service that is appreciated.

The Agro-Food Innovation Forum, held for the second time together with the Cluster Food & Nutrition and the Kompetenznetzwerk Ernährungswirtschaft, was a great success with 150 participants and 28 exhibiting start ups. The aim of the forum is to bring together all those involved in the agro-food industry and to promote the exchange of Know how. The focus is on promising start-ups and their exchange with companies and research organisations to further develop the content of start-ups and promote cooperation with partners.

Cooperation with the other clusters and organisations (Kompetenznetzwerk Ernährungswirtschaft and Cluster Food & Nutrition, SGLWT and SVIAL, Swiss Food & Nutrition Valley) was further intensified. Together with SGLWT and SVIAL, the conference on 1 February 2019 on the subject of superfood was very successfully held. Together with the Cluster Food & Nutrition, the application for the Innobooster will be submitted, thus strengthening the cooperation with French-speaking Switzerland.

Internationally, Swiss Food Research has become a network partner of EIT Food and can participate in tenders in 2020. We were again represented at the second ASEAN Food Innovation Congress (Foodinnopolis) in Bangkok and were able to strengthen the cooperation (concrete project planning for 2020). For the first time Swiss Food Research participated in the Seeds&Chips fair in Milan and offered an international platform for 6 start ups.

2019 was a highly significant year for Swiss Food Research. It was important to set the course for the future, as Innosuisse's funding under the NTN programme will end in 2020. Innosuisse attaches great importance to the successful continuation of the network even after funding ends in 2020. Therefore, the strategy for the future 2020+ was developed in close cooperation with the Executive Board and reviewed with Innosuisse (part of the evaluation in 2019).

The further development, expansion and sustainable financing of the "Swiss Innovation-Eco-System" are the core tasks for the future. The importance, performance and added value of innovation networks such as Swiss Food Research are undisputed in this area. Their contribution to the entire value chain must be strengthened and secured for the future.

Various scenarios were drawn up as part of the strategy development process. The resulting preparations and measures have been taken (talks with Avina Foundation, preparation of Innobooster application, member of EIT Food, closer cooperation with other networks), so that they will show their effect in 2020. 2020 will thus become the year of decisions regarding the future of Swiss Food Research. The new President Fabian Wahl and the entire Executive Board deserve great thanks for their support in dealing with these future challenges.

2019 – A deeper view

Swiss Food Research is attractive - We welcome new members!

The importance of the network is recognised throughout the industry and in 2019 we were able to welcome 28 new members. Established companies from the SME sector, numerous start-ups and large companies (Bina, Delica, Jowa, Micarna) as well as other research institutions (groups from the Universities of Applied Sciences Friburg and Valais as well as Empa) have been convinced by the values of Swiss Food Research and became members. The network currently has 133 members and is represented throughout Switzerland.

We are active and networked throughout Switzerland

10 new members were gained from French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. The reinforcement of our team in French-speaking Switzerland made it possible to visit numerous companies and research organisations and establish new contacts. Together we are able to respond to the many and varied needs.

In order to integrate the two language groups German and French, all communications in the form of newsletters are consistently bilingual. Several events were also held in the Bern area to make it easier for all regions to participate

From the idea to the product - innovation groups produce and implement new ideas

The innovation groups form the basis for the generation of research and development projects for the respective area. There are 9 innovation groups active and since 2018 three new groups have been founded. The groups are now established and 15 projects have been generated this year, which will be pursued further within the framework of Innosuisse projects or other suitable funding opportunities.

The groups that exist today: Cereals and bakery products, insects as food and feed, coffee, packaging for food, aquaculture, digitalisation, Proteins4Future, Nonthermal preservation and bioconversion.

There are thus 9 platforms available to generate new ideas for projects. In total, about 130 companies are involved in these groups.

The new participation model was introduced in the innovation groups. The innovation group is open to members and non-members. For non-members the participation fee is 650 CHF/person and participation. Participation is free of charge for members. Interested non-members can participate twice free of charge before deciding on a model.

New projects for the Swiss economy in cooperation with research

Innosuisse, FOAG and FSVO

Project activity increased significantly compared to the previous year. The projects supported purely by Innosuisse amount to 11. In total, the network supported 21 projects. The innovation groups contributed to a total of 15 projects. There was and is very great interest in the support provided by Innocheques. The increase in the amount of funding to 15,000 CHF has proven to be the right step. A total of 5 Innocheques were supported.

Two projects were successfully presented in the [Success Stories](#). In the project Optimisation of oil consumption in the deep-frying process, Swiss Food Research provided intensive support in the preparation of the application and its contents. The project is almost completed and the optimisation has been successfully implemented.

In the project Coffee Bean Fermentation, Swiss Food Research has contributed the project idea to the Coffee Innovation Group and incorporated the research expertise in the field of cocoa fermentation. Cocoa fermentation shows great analogy in terms of methods. Together with an industrial partner, initial, very successful investigations were carried out in the context of an Innocheque, which will be further deepened in a follow-up project.

[AgrIQnet - an initiative of the FOAG, supported by Swiss Food Research, SBV, VQS, Agridea](https://agrinet.ch/de/was-ist-agrinet/wer-ist-träger.html)

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To promote innovation in agriculture and among farmers, the FOAG set up the AgrIQnet support programme.

The third call for proposals has resulted in 8 applications. The call for proposals was jointly planned, organised, advertised, implemented and the proposals submitted were evaluated. In the joint review (FOAG, SBC, Agridea, VQS and Swiss Food Research) all projects were discussed and the projects worthy of support were identified and proposed to the FOAG for funding. 6 projects will receive final funding.

Swiss Food Research Calls

Innovative ideas are the basis for innovation. To enable ideas to be tested at an early stage, Swiss Food Research funds idea testing within the framework of Swiss Food Research Calls.

The Research Call was announced once in 2019. The requirement that the participating companies should be members of Swiss Food Research has proven to be very effective and leads to a better focus of the research institutions.

In the call 14 proposals had been received. These were evaluated together with a team of experts from the research organisations. A total of 6 proposals were funded.

Since the introduction of the Research Calls as separate funding for the promotion of innovative ideas in 2013, 104 projects had been submitted and evaluated. 57 projects had been funded with CHF 500,000 and 70% of the funded projects have been continued. The Research Calls are thus a central element in the promotion of innovative ideas and the initiation of new projects.

Events - Working and networking

15 meetings were held with the various innovation groups. Some groups met twice, others only once. The groups bring together business and research and an average of 30 participants per meeting can be expected.

Together with SVIAL and FIAL the "SVIAL CEO Business Event" was organised on the topic "Start Ups and Career Changers - Success Stories".

Swiss Food Research, SCAUT and SVIAL jointly organised an event on the topic of underground farming. The topic was the underground production of food in disused tunnels. In Switzerland there are opportunities for projects in such a completely new environment.

Together with the two large professional associations SVIAL and SGLWT, a conference was held on the subject of superfood. The conference was well attended with over 100 participants and the joint organisation by SVIAL, SGLWT and Swiss Food Research was very much appreciated.

The conference Brennpunkt Nahrung has established itself as the central conference for the industry. Swiss Food Research participates in the Conference Board and co-organises the topic area Start-ups and Innovation within the conference.

The repeated international participation in an event of the National Innovation Agency in Thailand - Innovation Symposium Food Innopolis - deserves special note. Swiss Food Research was invited there as a speaker to report on the Innovation Eco Systems of Switzerland. On 2 days presentations were given

on the topic Innovation Eco System and discussions were held with up-and-coming start-ups in the food sector.

<http://foodinnopolis.or.th/en/home/>

Seeds&Chips Milan – 6.-9. May 2019

Seeds&Chips positions itself as the "Global Innovation Food Summit" in Milan. Numerous European initiatives of the start-up sector were represented. Swiss Food Research had a stand to enable Swiss start ups to be present there and to strengthen their own international network. Participating start ups were: Agrosustain, Alver Golden Chlorella, sfs Sustainable Food Systems, SwissDeCode, Telement Facile. The participation in Seed&Chips will be maintained and strengthened through the cooperation with Switzerland Global Enterprise in the future.

In addition to the events, Swiss Food Research published articles on various topics in the industry media - see: <https://www.swissfoodresearch.ch/en/about-us/media/>

All the activities successfully prove that Swiss Food Research is recognised in the market and its notice has been further increased compared to 2018.

Networking & partnerships

Cooperation with EIT Food

Swiss Food Research is a member (Network Partner) of EIT Food since 2019. This has created international access to the largest European innovation network. As a Network Partner, Swiss Food Research takes part in the annual meeting and all events of EIT Food. In addition, it can participate in projects as a partner. For Swiss Food Research and its members, this enables access to project-related funding.

Cooperation with Impact Hub - Kick Start Accelerator

In 2016, the cooperation with the start-up accelerator Impact Hub was started. In 2019, we participated for the 4th time in the start-up selection committee for the accelerator programme Kick Start

Swiss Food Research is thus participating in the national and international start-up scene of the agro-food industry and maintains and establishes valuable contacts. The start-ups are thus given access to the innovation network of Swiss Food Research.

Cooperation with SVIAL & SGLWT

The cooperation with SVIAL and SGLWT was strengthened by joint events, informal collaboration such as supporting media campaigns and mutual memberships. With the re-election of P. Braun as SVIAL President, mutual collaborations can be easily intensified and the size of the "active community" can be increased significantly to the benefit of all actors in the agro-food sector.

Cooperation with other clusters

The cooperation with the Kompetenznetzwerk Ernährungswirtschaft - Region Eastern Switzerland to Zurich and the Cluster Food & Nutrition - Region Fribourg, Bern, Valais was further intensified in 2019. The successful joint organisation of the 2nd Agro Food Innovation Forum has also made this cooperation visible to the outside world. On a strategic level, many discussions took place on the future cooperation and the shaping of the innovation landscape and the role of the different networks. In particular, the establishment of a jointly supported umbrella organisation - Suisse Agro Food - was intensively worked on

and its financing had been discussed with numerous stakeholders (FIAL, SBV, Verein Qualitätsstrategie, BLW, SBFI). The advantages that such a “meta-network” (uniting all innovation networks) offers to Switzerland were recognised by all. Setting up such a joint organization to enhance and manage collaboration amongst all networks will be further discussed with all stakeholders and tested on a project-specific basis.

Cooperation with Swiss Food & Nutrition Valley

Meetings were held with Fathi Derder (former National Councillor of the Canton of Vaud, designated CEO Swiss Food & Nutrition Valley) to learn more about the initiative and possible collaboration. Swiss Food & Nutrition Valley is a nationwide initiative launched by Nestlé, the canton of Vaud, EPFL and EHL. Its aim is to promote Switzerland as the place for innovation and start-ups in the agro-food sector worldwide and to attract young talent. As the largest innovation network in this field, Swiss Food Research can make valuable contributions with concrete projects.

Strategy 2020+

The year 2019 was dominated by the Strategic Planning 2020+. Together with the Executive Board, various scenarios were developed and measures for implementation have already been initiated. As a core measure all forces and resources are being concentrated on growth and the generation of new financial resources in 2020. To support that, the workforce must be increased and the financial reserves can be used up to a minimum level of CHF 125,000 (June 20). It must be possible in 2020 to open up new sources of finance for 2021 and beyond. Otherwise, Swiss Food Research will no longer be able to offer its current services and must be restructured.

December 2019 and January 2020 were intensive and very critical months in this respect, during which much had been decided on the future direction. The originally planned and long-prepared cooperation with the Kompetenznetzwerk Ernährungswirtschaft did not materialize. Instead, the cooperation with the Cluster Food & Nutrition became very close through the joint application for the Innovation Booster. The interaction with the Avina Foundation, which began in mid-2019, was then successfully developed into substantial financial support at the beginning of 2020, which will ensure "survival" for the time being and enable the expansion of the "Innovation Eco-System".

Outlook for the future

The further development and expansion of the “Innovation Eco-System” is the core task for the future and secures the raison d'être of Swiss Food Research by creating clear added value for participants in the agro-food value chain. To this end, new services will be developed based on our core competencies in the field of innovation, matchmaking (partners, competencies), building and operating networks and providing platforms and funding. National expansion and cooperation with French-speaking Switzerland will be promoted, as will international links via projects with EIT Food, Swissnex India, Singapore or Thailand. 2020 will already show results in this respect.

Zurich, July 9th 2020



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