



## Learning processes initiated by agricultural demonstration activities in Switzerland

Rebekka Frick, Kathrin Huber, Heidrun Moschitz, Thomas Alföldi

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# Results from Swiss Case Studies

- **Bio-Viehtag (Organic Cattle Day)**
  - Since 2018
  - Organized by Bio Suisse & FiBL
  - Objectives: Knowledge exchange on organic cattle husbandry
  - Size: 600 visitors, 15 sessions
- **Arenenberger Ackerbautreff (Arenenberg Arable Day)**
  - Since 2015
  - Organized by Agricultural Centre Arenenberg
  - Objectives: Demonstrate trials of arable farming
  - Size: 100 visitors, 4 sessions





## Research Question

# What are success factors for initiating learning processes at agricultural demonstration events?

- Learning processes
  - Focus on Output
  - i.e. acquired knowledge and skills, memories, reflection
- Success factors
  - Focus on role of demonstration events
  - Focus on organization of demonstration events

# Methods

- **Data collection**
  - Quantitative and qualitative methods:
  - Survey with participants (BV and AA: ca. 10% of participants)
  - Participant observation (BV: 4 obs., AA: 3 obs.)
  - In-depth interviews with participants (BV: 8 int., AA: 9 int.)
- **Analysis:** inductive identification of success factors
- **Validation:** Workshop with advisory group



## Success Factor I

# Clear objectives and programme as well as target group-specific advertisement

*«The advertisement has to include the information the farmer needs to decide whether the event is useful to him.»*  
*Advisor, Participant*





## Success Factor 2

### Optimal access for participants at different levels

- Location and time, visibility and acoustics
- Introduction, structure (flexible vs. fixed groups)
- Mediation techniques

*«During the presentation the participants were rather passive. The attention rose when the focus shifted to the [demonstrated] animals.» Participant observer, Organic Cattle Day*





## Success Factor 3

# Relevant contents and applicability on the individual farms

*«[The speakers] should be honest so that one can see whether something really works and [...] also should show things that did not work or where there have been some problems.» Farmer, Participant of the Arenenberg Arable Day*



## Success Factor 4

### Interaction between the participants

*«The Organic Cattle Day is a good format to get security needed to try something new. Because the people who are already doing it go there. [...] In most of the times, [the session] is followed by a discussion among the participants. And that's when you discover who already does it.» Farmer, participant Organic Cattle Day*





## Success Factor 5

### Long-term anchoring

*«What is interesting is when you can go there [to the trial] again and can see how it develops. I went back many times to observe how the sugar beet and maize is developing.»  
Farmer, Participant of the Arenenberg Arable Day*



# Conclusions

- Huge potential of demonstration events
- In practice: not easy to fulfill all these factors
- Learning as a first step for change of knowledge and attitude
- Questions of implementation: what else is needed? Role of demo-events in an overarching system