



Improving veterinarian's knowledge of animal husbandry in organic agriculture in Switzerland

Context

Organic farming aims to close nutrient cycles, maintain soil fertility, and robust and healthy plants and animals with resilient performance.

Moreover, in organic farming, a lot of effective substances are banned, or their use is restricted, and treatments are only acceptable if their active substances are included in the positive list of the annexe of the regulation VO (EU) 2018/848. In Switzerland, using AM is only allowed to ensure animal welfare and avoid suffering.

Problem

There are strict guidelines and strategies for the Swiss organic sector to maintain animal health and reduce antibiotics. Veterinarians need to be made aware of these guidelines. They make prescriptions as on conventional farms, and the communication between farmers and veterinarians is often tricky.

Solution

Education and further training for veterinarians to familiarise them with organic farming strategies.

Outcome

A training course was developed with farmers and veterinarians about animal husbandry in organic farming. This training course was composed of subjects such as the organic guidelines and mentality, as well as providing information on how to treat diseases with alternative medicine such as homoeopathy and phytotherapy. Furthermore, the veterinarians were informed on where to find detailed information on organic recognised products. The training was carried out as part of the further official training of veterinarians. The training was evaluated and resulted in a good rating from the participants.

During the university training of young veterinarians, FiBL introduced them to the guidelines and strategies to maintain animal health and reduce antibiotics. A focus was given to the potential of treatments with medicinal plants.

Practical recommendations

In case you plan training for vets working in the organic sector:

- Involve farmers and vets in the curriculum development
- Focus on the relevance of prevention and complementary medicine
- Evaluate the training also from the perspective of veterinarians and farmers.

On-farm / Market application

- Look up usable products under: <https://www.inputs.eu/>
- Successful piglet weaning: <https://www.fibl.org/de/shop/1656-absetzen-ferkel>

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Phytotherapy event in February 2022

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