

LE GRUYÈRE®  
SWITZERLAND 

No 57 - June 2022

# l'oiseau



Annual report **2021**  
of the Interprofession du Gruyère



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### Cover photo

Oswald Kessler. © Aliénor Held

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## Editorial

2 June 2022 marks the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Interprofession du Gruyère (inter-branch organisation). This institution, which seemed utopian at its birth, has proved to be a great success. It has made it possible to get through the end of the USF, the end of export subsidies with a fully liberalised cheese market, the end of the quota system, not to mention all the regional and global crises that have marked these 25 years of existence.

Based on the mutual respect of the three principal actors who make up the Gruyère sector, by giving them the same weight in decisions, the statutes have struck a fair balance to move forward in the respect of this noble traditional cheese.

In 25 years, the IPG has obtained the AOP, with the vagaries of recognition abroad. The recent example of the legal defeat in the USA is proof that nothing is ever certain.

Over the years, the organisation has maintained strict management of quality and quantities to allow for a healthy evolution on the markets and unfailing recognition by consumers and those involved in sales. On the basis of intensive negotiations, it has succeeded in increasing prices while attempting to ensure the best possible redistribution among the actors.



It has developed a promotional tool which has enabled the reputation of Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland to spread around the world.

In short, the sector has given itself the means to achieve its ambitions with, overall, a certain success. But as reported in the Triesse Gressard survey, everything is not perfect. Several issues need to be studied in order to determine a course of action for the coming years.

This is the challenge facing the new chairman, Mr Pierre-Ivan Guyot, who succeeds the two first chairmen, Mr Pierre Dubois, who had brought together the actors in the first few years, and Mr Oswald Kessler who initiated a precise strategic plan for the handling of all issues, generally known as the 'common thread'.

Thus, the years to come will be exciting, between modernity and respect for the ancestral principles which have always been the strength of Le Gruyère AOP, in both the recent and more distant past. Like the statutes, everything will remain a question of balance.

Philippe Bardet  
Director of the  
Interprofession



# Oswald Kessler

## Eleven years at the IPG, eleven years at the service of consumers

Oswald Kessler will step down as Chairman of the IPG at the next General Assembly. The former cheese-maker, affineur and senior executive at the Migros Group has headed up our organization for over a decade. The past eleven years have seen the consolidation of Le Gruyère AOP and the establishment of clear guidelines for the development of the entire sector. Meeting:

Throughout my term of office, I have always stuck to the same principles. Whenever a major decision had to be made, I reminded myself that six essential concepts needed to be considered, which I even called the six commandments.

### Quality and quantity

The first two, which take precedence over all the others, are the maintenance of outstanding quality and the rigorous management of quantities produced. Maintaining quality requires continuous monitoring of certain criteria such as the taste and texture of our hard cheeses. Strict compliance with the applicable regulations and good quality control procedures (inspections) are therefore of primary importance. To ensure that the product stays true to consumer tastes, I suggested the idea of using tasting panels, made up of people from all walks of life.

The issue of quantity management is a delicate one, given that we are currently producing cheeses that will be eaten in 6, 9 or 12 months. What will the market look like then? Making reliable projections in such an unstable world has become increasingly difficult. If we produce too much, then prices will fall, and if we do not produce enough, we will miss out on sales. The goal is always to find the middle ground between boldness and caution.

### Profitability

The third commandment states that profits must be as high as possible and fairly distributed among all members of

the sector, whether they are producers, cheese-makers or affineurs. In this context, we must seek qualitative growth. Productivity increases cannot be achieved at the expense of quality and/or the product's image, because this could ultimately impact the entire sector.

### Value for customers

The fourth commandment: consumers are the primary focus of everything we do. We sometimes tend to forget that without them, we wouldn't have a product, a sector, or indeed any income. Consumers want to know that when-ever they buy Le Gruyère AOP, they will enjoy a satisfying product. To achieve this, we need to be sure that our product meets the expected quality criteria. Consumers also want the product's image to match reality.

Today, our target audience thinks of tradition, animal welfare, pastures, absence of GMOs, and drastic limitations on the use of pesticides. The messages we send through advertising must therefore correspond to reality in this regard. This is not always the case with Swiss dairy products. The adverts depict horned cows grazing in a meadow. People passing through the countryside often notice that this is not really how things are. More often than not, the cows are standing in front of the barn in a concrete pen. When advertising is misleading, sooner or later it backfires on the advertiser. You have to have the courage to tell consumers "This is the way we do things." But of course, "the way we do things" must be acceptable, and meet their expectations.

### Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland brand

The fifth commandment relates to the institutionalisation of our brand. It is not just a question of promoting the AOP – which is important of course – Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland brand must also be protected throughout the world. Developing the brand and registering it with its visual identity in the United States has turned out to be a shrewd move. This prevents other producers from using our brand and logo. That said, a US court recently refused to protect the word Gruyère. This legal decision goes against our interests and we are appealing it.





Promoting the brand is also a task that falls to us in Switzerland. A huge number of full-fat hard cheeses are produced in our country, many of which are poor imitations of our product. If we want consumers to be able to differentiate between them, Le Gruyère AOP must be able to be identified all the way to the table, with a clearly visible label. This clearly requires additional work, but it is worth the effort.

### **A common future**

The sixth and last commandment states that no particular group within the sector should develop at the expense of any other. We operate like a parliamentary democracy – everyone must have a place.

The decision-making process used by the Assembly of Delegates therefore includes this requirement. A majority within each group must be in favour of a project: 11 producers, 11 cheese-makers and 6 affineurs. It is often difficult to establish a majority, and I have sometimes had to mediate between opposing parties. But this system preserves the majority interests of all stakeholders in the sector, which really is a plus.

### **On balance, stronger defence of the interests of all members**

We have created a review process based on these six commandments. We have managed to concentrate on problem-solving without losing sight of the IPG's main purpose: defending the interests of all members within the industry. We have always focused closely on the first two commandments, quality and quantity management.

We have sometimes found ourselves faced with emergencies. Here, we have always sought to define problems very precisely: how can the problem be put into words, what are the causal factors, what are its emotional aspects, what are the possible solutions? And, if we take a particular decision, what are its potential consequences? What are the pros and cons for us? Decisions are only taken after going through this process.

### **Two examples**

We have increased the price of milk, and therefore that of cheese, on two occasions. We asked ourselves how much the national and international markets could bear. An increase of 5 cents per kilo for

the producer automatically represents a 60 cent increase for the consumer, so the consequences are considerable. We set out to examine all facets of the issue before taking a decision. It was only then that we decided to apply the increases. But even when you think you have correctly weighed the pros and cons, you can be surprised by outside circumstances.

The first increase was decided on at the end of 2014. To everyone's astonishment, the SNB removed the Swiss franc's ceiling against the euro in January 2015, which naturally affected exports of our cheese. The second increase was decided in early 2020. The outbreak of the pandemic in February 2020 made us fear the worst. But these fears were unfounded, as sales of Le Gruyère AOP rose sharply during the health crisis.

We are currently witnessing a general increase in costs for producers, cheese-makers and affineurs alike. Faced with an uncertain future, it is thus important to find equitable solutions that suit all three parties. And once again, we must weigh the pros and cons, consider all possibilities and arrive at a decision in full knowledge of the facts, as far as possible.

### **Fine collaboration**

In the end, I think we did a fairly good job. The IPG's Management and the Chairman have collaborated extremely well. I make the same observation for the Committee and the Assembly of Delegates. I have great respect for strong personalities. The members of the Committee and the Assembly of Delegates are entrepreneurs, people who are proactive.

I have always known that in an organisation that works, resources are available for problem-solving. We need to discuss things, suggest solutions, establish a direction and move forward. This was my experience before joining the IPG, and was subsequently confirmed when working there as well. Everyone here has the same goal: defending and promoting the interests of Le Gruyère AOP.

**Oswald Kessler**  
President of the  
Interprofession



## General situation

After the year 2020 disrupted by Covid, 2021 started out with the same organisational difficulties. The virus affected all business activities during Le Gruyère AOP's jubilee year. July 6, 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of the protection of the Gruyère appellation in Switzerland, and the tenth anniversary of mutual recognition with the European Union. Two significant events were associated with this crucial moment in the life of Le Gruyère AOP. One was the meeting of the Assembly of Delegates, and the other, a "consumer" contest to celebrate the anniversary with the general public.

The Assembly of Delegates provided an opportunity to give a voice to those who committed themselves to making the magnificent project a reality twenty years ago.

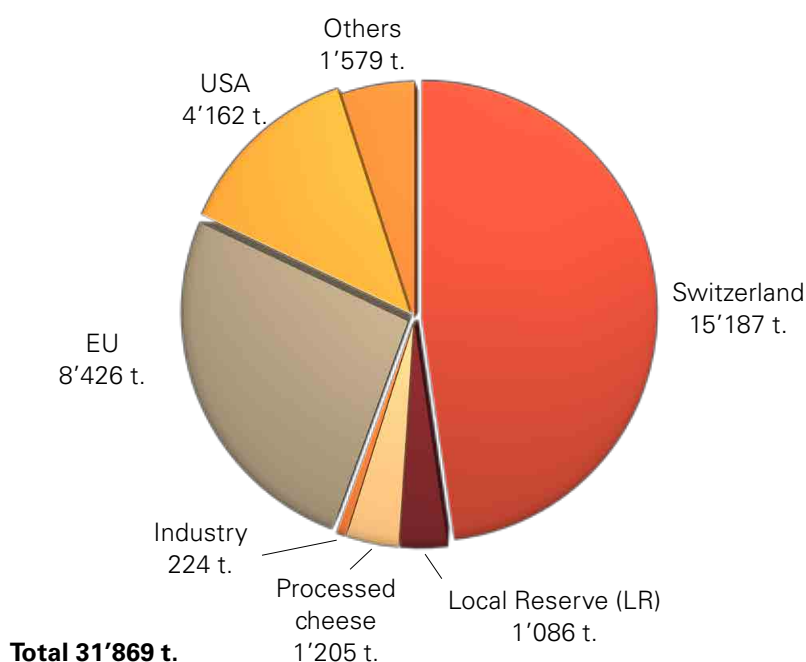
A speech was recorded by the President of the Confederation and the current Head of the Department of the Economy, Federal Councillor Mr Guy Parmelin. The Director of the FOAG at the time, Mr Bötsch, supplied a written text on the subject. During a face-to-face appearance, the current Deputy Director of FOAG, who also sat on the appellation committees at the time, Mr Jean-Marc Chappuis, also made a noteworthy speech. The Administrative Manager of Vaud Agriculture and the Head of the PDO-PGI register, Mr Frédéric Brand, provided details about the essential work he performed at the time to prevent Gruyère from being included in the Codex Alimentarius and becoming a generic name throughout the world. Also Deputy Director of the OFAG in 2011, Mr. Jacques Chavaz recalled the difficulties he encountered in reaching an agreement with the European Union to have the appellation protected throughout Europe.

Nor should we forget Ms Dominique Barjolle, who coordinated the study project which led to the creation of the Inter-professional organization and the start of operations in 1997. Ms Barjolle also acted as the Head of the OIC, the certification body overseeing the AOP. It is the actions taken by these people which form the basis of the success of Le Gruyère AOP in the market today.

The "Confrérie du Gruyère", a body which worthily celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2021, also took part in the festivities.

This Assembly of Delegates provided an occasion to note that 2020 was an excellent year in terms of sales, which can be repeated in 2021. However, there was a significant difference between the two Covid years. Exports continued to grow in 2021, setting new records both in the

**Repartition of the Gruyère AOP consumption during 2021 in tonnes**



European Union and in the rest of the world, with some 14,100 tonnes exported, as against a mere 8,650 tonnes in 2000. Conversely, sales in Switzerland experienced a decline, for which there could be two reasons. On the one hand, people could once again go on shopping tourism trips and eat out all through the year. And on the other, low levels of stock required sellers to choose certain channels to prioritise. As a result, the large national supermarkets significantly reduced their sales and promotion campaigns. The AOP 20th Anniversary Competition was one of the few major promotions for Le Gruyère AOP in 2021.

The excellent overall sales figures impacted stocks, which remained at very low levels throughout the year, and there were even shortages in some ripening categories. This situation prompted the Committee to recommend significant increases in production (in several stages) so as to be able to supply the market and keep stocks properly distributed. Thanks to these measures, an extra 1,700 tonnes (6%) were produced in 2021 compared with 2020. This also represented 2,600 tonnes more than was produced in 2019.

But quality was not affected. It has even increased, with an IB percentage which is insignificant for a raw milk product.

On the strength of this good image, promotional activities continued, even though they had to be adapted to Covid requirements, which called for a good deal of flexibility.

The Committee was also able to focus on the various topics related to the Triesse Gressard survey. A seminar on this subject was organised in July, between two semi-lockdowns, at Lac Noir. Several potential avenues emerged from the meeting, which were presented to the delegates at the end of the year. This same presentation was made to the entire industry in March 2022.

Two essential aspects to be improved are the exchange of information and the representativeness of decisions. These will be among the key topics in coming years.

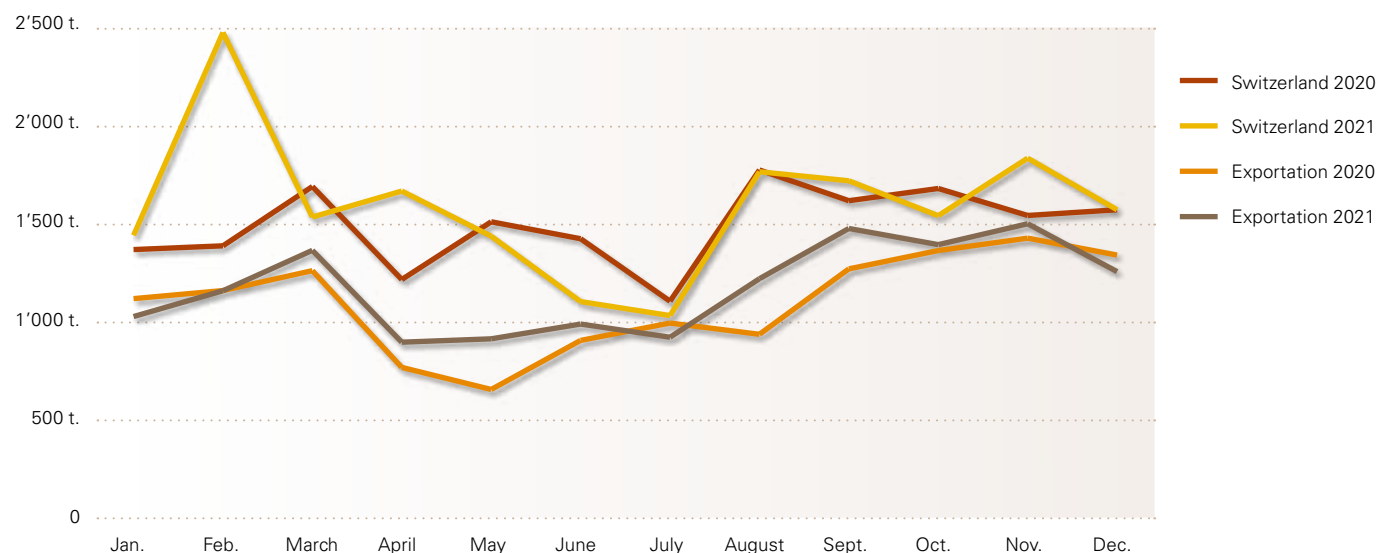
As 2022 saw the end of the transitional provision for continuous robotic milking, this was the subject of much discussion. As things stand, the decision taken on July 2, 2012 remains in force. The few farms concerned were obliged to change their milking systems. Some have already done so, but unfortunately, others opted to leave the sector. Discussions about the issues of processing and future technical innovation will continue with the establishment of a "Technology Watch" Committee, which will be coordinated by the person occupying the position of scientific adviser, created in 2021.

During an Extraordinary Assembly held in late December, the IPG delegates decided to acquire the Pinte des Vernes building and make it their administrative headquarters.

This historic building, located opposite the Maison du Gruyère, will enable the IPG to develop its activities while staying in Pringy, in the immediate vicinity of the flagship site promoting Le Gruyère AOP. To emphasise their relationship with the Maison du Gruyère, the delegates also voted to provide it with a substantial amount of investment to increase its shareholding and to pay for almost all of the work on the new museum design to be housed in the new building. This investment will supplement the significant annual allocation under the "Switzerland Cheese Marketing Demonstration Cheese Dairies" project.

This will enable the Interprofession du Gruyère to continue its work promoting and defending Le Gruyère AOP in the future.

## Sales 2020-2021 in tonnes







## Quantity management

In view of the high demand in 2020 and the prospects for 2021, the Assembly of Delegates of 20 November 2020, held by correspondence, had agreed to grant 1% definitively to each cheese dairy, as well as 1% on a temporary basis. At the same meeting, the rate of the 3/9 system was reviewed and increased by 2%. At the Committee meeting of 11 February 2021, it was decided that the quarterly tolerance would be brought to 3% to avoid any penalties.

As these measures do not make it possible to follow the market, the Committee, at its meeting of 21 April, granted a new quantity of 2% for Le Gruyère AOP Traditionnel and 5% pour Le Gruyère AOP Bio.

On 7 October 2021, a new temporary quantity of 6% was granted to all cheese dairies, both Bio and Traditionnel. At the same time, the end-of-year rotation was temporarily discontinued to allow as much production as possible in late 2021 and early 2022.

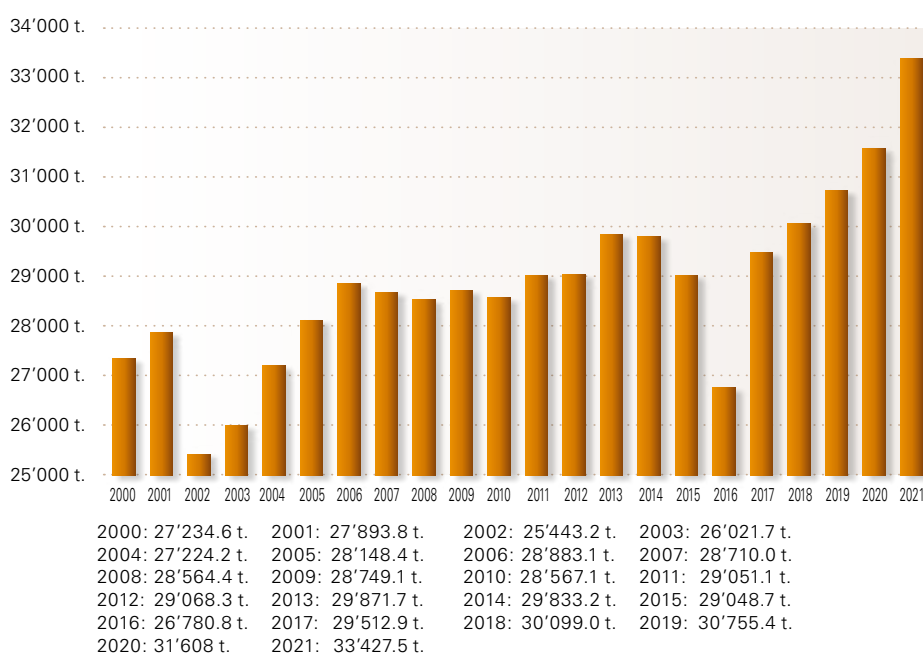
For the new year, a system based on a production of 3% definitive and 5% temporary has been prepared. In addition, the clause of the 3/9 system has been suspended for 2022.

This scheme was approved by the Assembly of Delegates on 24 November 2021. The evolution of quantities and stocks will be monitored by the Market Committee in the light of the cockpit.

At this stage, it has been decided to respond to market demand and address the issue of price increases at a later stage.

Production in 2021 amounted to 33,322 tonnes, a new record. This volume was 27,894 in 2001, the year in which AOP certification was obtained.

Total production 2000-2021 in tonnes







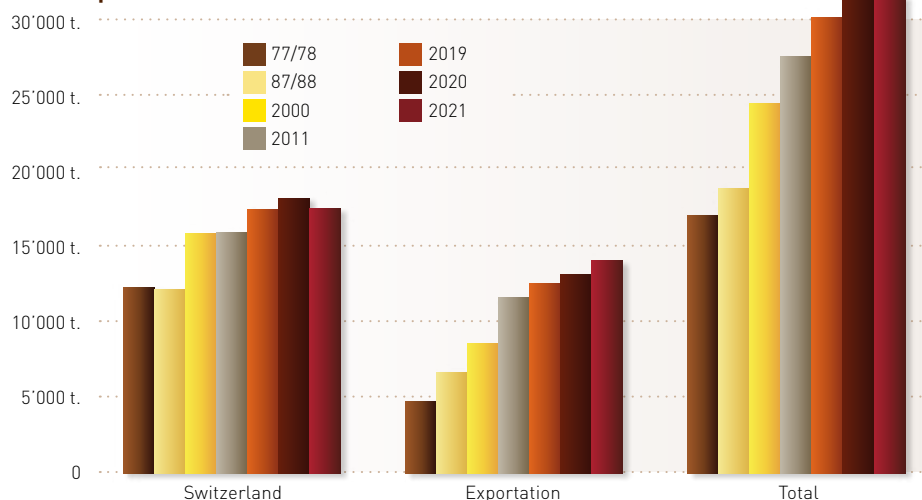
# Market development

As in 2020, the market remained generally very buoyant for Le Gruyère AOP in each of its varieties, from Traditional through l'Alpage to Bio.

While exports set a new record, it must be noted that the Swiss market slowed down somewhat to settle at around the 2019 level. Accordingly, it seems that 2020 was an exceptional year, due in part to the closing of borders and restaurants in Switzerland. When consumers cook at home, they favour quality products like Le Gruyère AOP. This observation suggests some room for improvement in the future.

In detail, exports posted excellent numbers with a new record in the USA at over 4,000 tonnes. In Europe, we were very close to records in a number of countries, even though some orders were not entirely filled due to low stocks. Overall sales amounted to some 31,869 tonnes, for the enjoyment of consumers both here and abroad

## Comparison of sales in tonnes





## The AOP dossier and **defence of the brand at an international level**

As Gruyère has been recognised as an AOP for 20 years on the national level and 10 years at European level, the Interprofession du Gruyère (IPG, the inter-branch organisation) is working to make this protection credible both in Switzerland and throughout the world.

The first step consists of systematically monitoring and applying the labelling methods prescribed in the Specifications. Overall, the situation in Switzerland is very good, both in large-scale distribution and in specialist stores. Sales staff sometimes need reminding that the wheels must have a label on one side. The IPG supplies these labels free of charge. One of the important aspects in promoting the brand Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland is that these should be present on the packaging and not associated with other labels.

While the packaging may look good, there should always be proof that the product is indeed Le Gruyère AOP. This is why the IPG, in full agreement with the Association of AOP-IGP, is requesting that the 'Savary' motion of watchdog officials be implemented without delay. Furthermore, the IPG is continuing its research through the application of trace cultures with Agroscope and culture Liebefeld SA. In this respect, it welcomes the start of construction work on the Posieux site.

The situation worldwide is more complicated. Thanks to agreements on mutual recognition of the defence for proper use of the name, the situation is good in the EU and Great Britain. Based on the agreement with France and Gruyère IGP France, the National Institute of Origin and Quality (INAO) acts systematically in the event of improper use of the name. Outside Europe, however, this is

more difficult. The Geneva Act of the Lisbon Arrangement, which came into force in 2021 and was intended to facilitate registration of appellations, has not yet had the desired effect. Accordingly, legal steps are continuing wherever Le Gruyère AOP has or is expected to have commercial importance, with varying success.

Unfortunately, at year's end, a court in Virginia handed down a particularly problematic decision, ruling that the name Gruyère could not be reserved exclusively for the European cheese. The IPG and Syndicat français have appealed against this decision, which does not take into account the distribution and the reality of cheese denominations on the US market.

In all these court decisions, the IPG is supported by the federal bodies, led by OFAG and the Institute for Intellectual Property (IPI).

It also expects the Confederation to ensure the highest possible protection of the Gruyère name in all international negotiations, and more precisely in the conclusion of bilateral agreements, without introducing a not very credible 'grandfather' clause<sup>1</sup>.

The IPG also expects the IPI to make sure not to register brands that do not correspond to the Specifications, in full application of the relevant federal provisions and in particular the Ordinance on AOP and IGP. It is only the combination of the strengths of private organisations IPG, the Association of AOP-IGP, oriGIn, SCM and federal and cantonal bodies that will enable credible protection of this fine appellation to be maintained.



<sup>1</sup> A clause to the effect that all those who had already acquired rights before a certain date are excluded from the application of protection.





# Quality of Gruyère AOP

## Assessment and controls

In accordance with the provisions of the Specifications, each batch of Gruyère AOP is subject to 'taxation' when it has reached an average age of four and a half months. This is the basis of the flawless traceability related to the casein mark. Each wheel is thus carefully checked before it is marketed. An initial qualitative assessment is made at around three months when the 'affineur' (ripenor or maturer) takes charge of the product as it leaves the cheese dairy's cellars. The taxation is performed by a Commission composed of a 'taxateur' (tester) from the Interprofession du Gruyère (inter-branch body) and an expert from among practising cheesemakers. The taxations at the beginning of 2021 were carried out without the cheesemaker expert so as to comply with the Covid-19 health restrictions. The procedure may be subject to appeal, i.e. a new test by an Appeals Commission composed of two affineurs representatives and a cheesemaker. Its result is then irrevocable. This procedure guarantees the objectivity required for the qualitative observation of the Gruyère AOP sold on the market. Before its final release from the cellars, Gruyère AOP undergoes a final assessment which is performed by the affineur-seller.

This process gives Gruyère AOP and Gruyère d'Alpage AOP their impeccable quality for the enjoyment of all kinds of consumers. This aspect is encouraged by the Interprofession du Gruyère through the payment

of quality bonuses, which amounted to some 6,202 million francs. This support for quality creates significant openings for each stakeholder, whether it be the cheese dairy, cheesemaker or affineur. Starting with production in 2022, the process of data transmission after leaving the cellars will be digitalised, with taxations entered on a tablet.

In detail, for annual production in 2021, the IB rate remained very low at 1.56%. Thus, the rule stating that the application and promotion of quality should be made without consensus is paying off. 98.06% of the dairy wheels were classified IA quality, whereas the proportion of 19 pts and above was 67%. Out of 28 appeals on taxation, 13 were won. For the production of Gruyère d'Alpage AOP where climate conditions play a more important role, quality also comes into play with proportionally a little more IB, which is understandable for this speciality. Nevertheless, 94.87% was classified IA with 65.8% of 19pts and over.

This excellence can be attributed to the professional work of all concerned, from milk production to cheese processing through to maturation. This daily commitment is also encouraged by the different advisory bodies, such as Caséi, Arqha and Agroscope. Furthermore, training must be continued so that future generations retain a desire for independence for the benefit of quality and tradition, in order to ensure diversity of taste.

With a view to maintaining the authenticity of national specialities, the Interprofession du Gruyère actively participates in the activity of Liebefeld Culture AG. It welcomes the investments planned for the relocation of this body to Posieux, Grangeneuve as soon as possible.



## Chemical analysis

### Moisture and fat content

Systematic checks for chemical composition are carried out on each batch. 25 analyses gave rise to appeals, and 14 were won.

It should be noted that the checks cover over 2,000 batches per year. Respect of the contents relating to the Specifications is checked over an average period of 6 months. Overall, the objective assigned to these checks has been met.

### Specific analyses

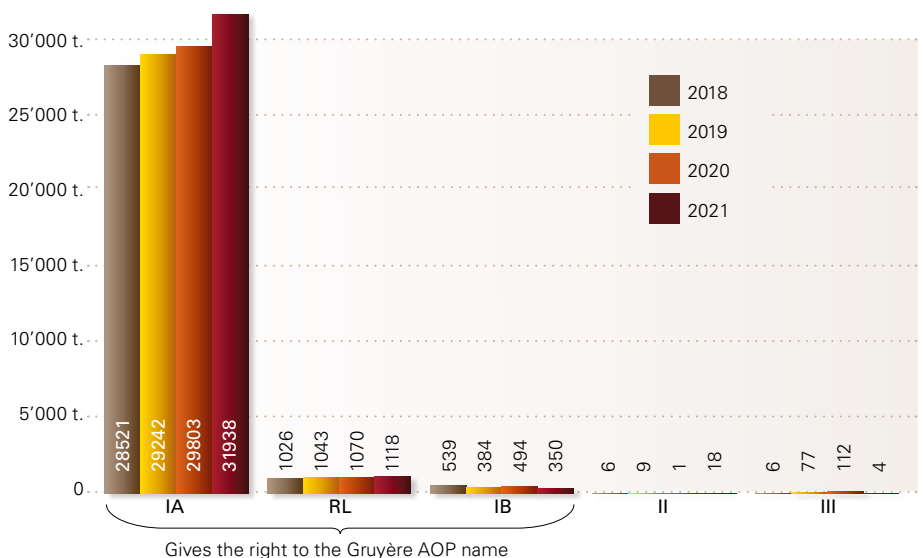
The Interprofession carries out analyses relating to the hygienic and bacteriological quality of the cheese. In 2021, checks continued to ensure the absence of pathogenic, phytosanitary and veterinary products. It confirmed that the measures put in place make it possible to guarantee that the Gruyère AOP commercially available complies with the relevant legal provisions. It is important for the consumer who buys Gruyère AOP that it is a product without any additives and naturally lactose- and gluten-free.

In this regard, the sector notes the good collaboration with the different control bodies, each within its own sphere of competence.

## The Quality Commission

As mentioned in the chapter on the bodies of the Interprofession du Gruyère, the Quality Committee, and particularly its ad hoc delegation, is at the disposal of actors within the sector to find the best option when there is a recurrent problem on a site. This way of working guarantees the healthy development of Gruyère AOP.

### Comparison of quality by civil year in tonnes







## National and international honours for Le Gruyère AOP

Despite the pandemic, several competitions took place during 2021, both nationally and internationally. These events play an important role in developing the brand and highlighting the different actors of the sector.

In 2021, Le Gruyère AOP received several prizes rewarding the work and efforts of the entire sector. These distinctions enhance the quality image of our hard cheese, which is associated with respect of a tradition, of nature and of know-how.

The Interprofession du Gruyère (inter-branch organisation) wishes to congratulate all the 2021 winners. Thanks to very high-quality milk, outstanding production and ripening, they demonstrate the excellence and the success of the Gruyère AOP branch.

### World Cheese Awards 2021

From 3 to 6 November 2021, the best world cheeses were tasted and rated in Oviedo (Spain) on the occasion of the World Cheese Awards. Le Gruyère AOP stood out in this competition, winning several awards and medals thanks to products from different affineurs and cheese dairies.

These numerous distinctions clearly demonstrate that Le Gruyère AOP is not only a cheese that is recognised and appreciated abroad, but also a product prized for its unique taste characteristics.

#### Gold medals

Alexandre Guex, Fromagerie de Châtonnaye, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Fromagerie Cremo, matured by Fromage Gruyère SA

Adrian Scheidegger, Fromagerie de Niedermuhren, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Christophe Suchet, Fromagerie de Bonnefontaine, matured by Lustenberger & Dürst AG

#### Silver medals

Alexandre Guex, Fromagerie de Châtonnaye, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA, Fribourg

Markus Sturny, Fromagerie de Lanthen, matured by par Cremo Von Mühlénen SA, Fribourg

Markus Sturny, Fromagerie de Lanthen, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA, Fribourg

#### Bronze medals

Markus Sturny, Fromagerie de Lanthen, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Olivier Bongard, Fromagerie de Düdingen, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Adrian Scheidegger, Fromagerie de Niedermuhren, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Adrian Scheidegger, Fromagerie de Niedermuhren, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Alexandre Guex, Fromagerie de Châtonnaye, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Franz Jungo, Fromagerie Strauss, matured by Cremo Von Mühlénen SA

Gérald Raboud, Fromagerie de Courgenay, matured by Emmi SA

Christophe Suchet, Fromagerie de Bonnefontaine, matured by Lustenberger & Dürst

### Mondial du Fromage et des Produits Laitiers (International Meeting for Cheese and Dairy Products) in Tours (France)

152 exhibitors from 48 different countries gathered from 12 to 14 September 2021 for the Mondial du Fromage et des Produits Laitiers. Le Gruyère AOP was well represented during this international competition, which featured over 850 cheeses. The Fromagerie Moléson SA made a fine impression by winning the 'Super Gold' medal thanks to a Gruyère AOP made in their cellars and matured by Fromages Gruyère S.A. The Gruyère AOP from the Fromagerie Spielhofer and matured by Mifroma also distinguished itself by winning the bronze medal.



## Concours Suisse des Produits du Terroir (Swiss Competition of Regional Products)

With the goal of facilitating direct contacts between producers and consumers, the Concours Suisse des Produits du Terroir brought together over 1,100 products and 175 exhibitors. Several medals were awarded in honour of Le Gruyère AOP during this weekend of competitions.

### Le Gruyère AOP

#### Gold medals

Michel Grossrieder, Fromagerie Moléson SA, matured by Fromage Gruyère SA

Erich Hunkeler, Fromagerie de Sommentier, matured by Fromage Gruyère SA

#### Silver medals

Jean-Daniel Jaeggi, Fromagerie de Grandcour, matured by Fromco SA

Jean-Daniel Privet, Fromagerie Le Pâquier, matured by Mifroma SA

#### Bronze medals

Alexandre Schaller, Fromagerie de Villarimboud, matured by Fromco SA

Jean-Pierre Chuard, Fromagerie de Ballaigues, matured by Lustenberger & Dürst AG

Didier Germain, Fromagerie Les Martel, matured by Fromco SA

Laurent Python, Fromagerie de Grandvillard, matured by Lustenberger & Dürst AG

### Fondue Moitié-Moitié mixture

#### Gold medal

Les Fondues Wyssmüller® 'Excellence' (Moitié-moitié)

#### Silver medal

Laurent Python, Fromagerie de Grandvillard

#### Bronze medals

Jean-Daniel Jaeggi, Fromagerie de Grandcour,

Erich Hunkeler, Fromagerie de Sommentier,

Jean-Daniel Privet, Fromagerie Le Pâquier

## Concours International des Fromages et Produits Laitiers (International Competition of Cheeses and Dairy Products) of Lyon

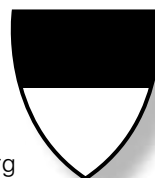
On 3 December 2021, over 300 categories of cheese and dairy products were present at the Concours International des Fromages et Produits Laitiers of Lyon. Le Gruyère AOP of Yvan & Lucas Limacher from the Fromagerie Le Solliat and matured by Margot Fromages SA distinguished itself by winning the silver medal.

### The 'cheese of excellence' of the canton of Neuchâtel



The Neuchâtel Gruyère AOP of 2022 received a distinction. At a tasting session held for a jury composed of persons from political, journalistic, culinary and professional circles, it was the Gruyère AOP made by Adrien Pagnier of the cheese dairy Duo-Vallon des Bayards that obtained the most votes out of the ten Gruyère AOP presented. The Gruyère AOP of the Duo-Vallon cooperative headed by Jean-Pierre Gfeller will be promoted and referenced for one year by the Neuchâtel cantonal promotion organisation.

### The 'cheese of excellence' by the Fribourg State Council



On behalf of the State Council, the chairman Jean-François Steiert nominated the cheeses of the year 2022. In fact, the Canton of Fribourg selects its Gruyère AOP and Vacherin Fribourgeois AOP at the same time, so as to remain in the spirit of the authentic Fondue Moitié-Moitié (half-and-half). Accordingly, it is the Gruyère AOP of Markus Sturny from the Fromagerie de Schmitten that will be showcased at political meetings.

### The 'cheese of excellence' of the Vaud State Council 2022



At the end of its meeting of 3 November 2021, the Vaud State Council tasted three preselected Gruyère AOP among fifteen samples. The cheese of excellence of the Vaud Government was the Gruyère AOP from the Fromagerie de L'Auberson, produced under the guidance of cheesemaker Vincent Tyrode. This Gruyère AOP, like all its competitors, obtained an average rating above 19 points out of 20 at the 2020 'taxations' (inspections).







# Marketing

## Overview: A year full of promise

The situation is still uncertain worldwide with regard to the end of the pandemic and its consequences, and marketing challenges remain daunting. Notwithstanding, 2021 enabled us to prove our resilience and gain visibility, while continuing to transform and develop in the field of digital marketing. The promotional strategy for Le Gruyère AOP is constantly being fine-tuned to meet the expectations and needs of consumers, in order to better serve them.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the promotion of Le Gruyère AOP has remained a priority. Contact with consumers of Le Gruyère AOP has been maintained and even increased, as the various (semi-)lockdowns introduced in Switzerland and abroad have confirmed the popularity of home cooking. This has provided an opportunity for consumers of Le Gruyère AOP to (re)take the time to prepare delicious dishes with their families or just to treat themselves. Le Gruyère AOP has adapted to this context by offering creative recipes via numerous communication platforms. Social networks enable us to continue to inform our audience about Le Gruyère AOP. Promotional activities have therefore been adapted through the creation of tutorials and online training. Indeed, consumers are showing a desire to eat well and are opting for “pleasure” products like Le Gruyère AOP.

The marketing promise is based on seven pillars for the Le Gruyère AOP brand

- Strict quantity management control linked to flawless traceability
- Quality management as per the Specifications
- Assured profitability
- Value for the customer
- Encouragement, support and promotion of sales of Gruyère AOP nationally and internationally
- Defence and protection of the Le Gruyère AOP brand
- The future of the “Interprofession du Gruyère” (inter-branch body)

Implementation of the annual marketing plan is never taken for granted. The following mission is at the heart of efforts:

- The AOP is the common thread
- History, maintenance of traditions and regional production are the key words
- The product, not derivatives, must always be at the centre of developments
- Le Gruyère AOP sells on taste
- There must be fair remuneration for every actor in the sector



The period under review offered an occasion to explore new trends and technologies, with a view to boosting consumption in different countries. The restructuring of the gruyere.com website continued and the Interprofession du Gruyère invested in intensified efforts to reach new consumers through social networks. Thanks to the clout of the Le Gruyère AOP brand, compliance with our Guide to Good Marketing Practices and implementation of strategic communication, sales and awareness have significantly increased.

## National promotion

Nationwide advertising campaigns focused on the 20th anniversary of the AOP, notably with a new advertising spot, the distribution of samples of Le Gruyère AOP in the main railway stations in Switzerland and a competition to celebrate this anniversary.

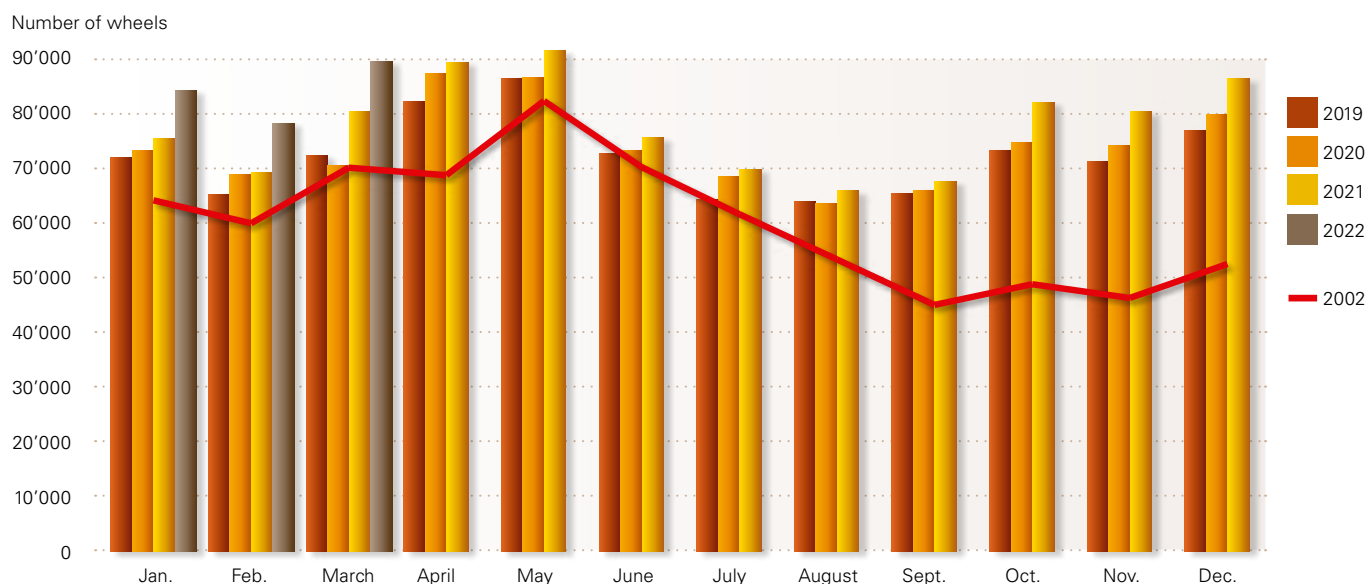
The national media plan featured a video adaptation of the "Gestures" spot to accompany the weather on television. From May to June, Le Gruyère AOP was supported by a poster campaign in major transit areas. In all, 650 locations were selected and 140,500 screenings were held.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the AOP, 80,000 trays of Le Gruyère AOP cheese at different maturing stages were distributed in railway stations in French-, German- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

A contest specifically organised from June to September helped raise visibility in connection with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This information was picked up by our website gruyere.com as well as the cheese dairies in the sector. Nearly 24,000 people took part in the contest by answering questions about the AOP. Some 20 prizes were won, including three dream weekends, one on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel, one in Zermatt and another in Charmey. These actions were covered by Swiss newspapers and magazines, significantly increasing brand awareness.

The collaboration with all the commercial actors in the sector was a resounding success, as reflected by no less than four million leporellos stuck on pre-packaged packages by Le Gruyère AOP mass retailers, plus a presence in the Le Gruyère AOP cheese dairies, informing consumers about the competition. This in turn allowed them to win substantial prizes, i.e. three dream weekends, one

## Comparison of production (casein markings)





on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel, one in Zermatt and one in Charmey.

Le Gruyère AOP was present throughout the year in coordination with the Association for the promotion of AOP-IGP and Switzerland Cheese Marketing (SCM). All spring fairs were cancelled. However, the resumption in autumn provided an ideal opportunity to let the public taste the different cheese maturing stages at various events like the Foire du Valais in Martigny, the OLMA in St. Gallen, the Salon des Goûts & Terroir in Bulle and the Automnales at Palexpo.

The exclusive tourist collaboration between Zermatt and Le Gruyère AOP, which dates back over 20 years, enabled visitors to use electric buses bearing the image of Le Gruyère AOP at the Zermatt tourist site.

Le Gruyère AOP has supported local tourism and various events staged throughout the year in Gruyères, such as the Cheese Festival, the National Day, the Fire Arts Market and the Christmas Market.

A common approach is taken with the Vacherin Mont d'Or AOP, l'Etiwaz AOP and the Terravin wine quality brand, backed by the State of Vaud. This makes it possible to present our traditional quality products in hotel schools and to introduce Le Gruyère AOP to international students.

## International promotion

Under the auspices of Switzerland Cheese Marketing (SCM), promotional measures have been introduced for the Le Gruyère AOP brand. Media placement for the entire international market is coordinated with the agency Mediamix.

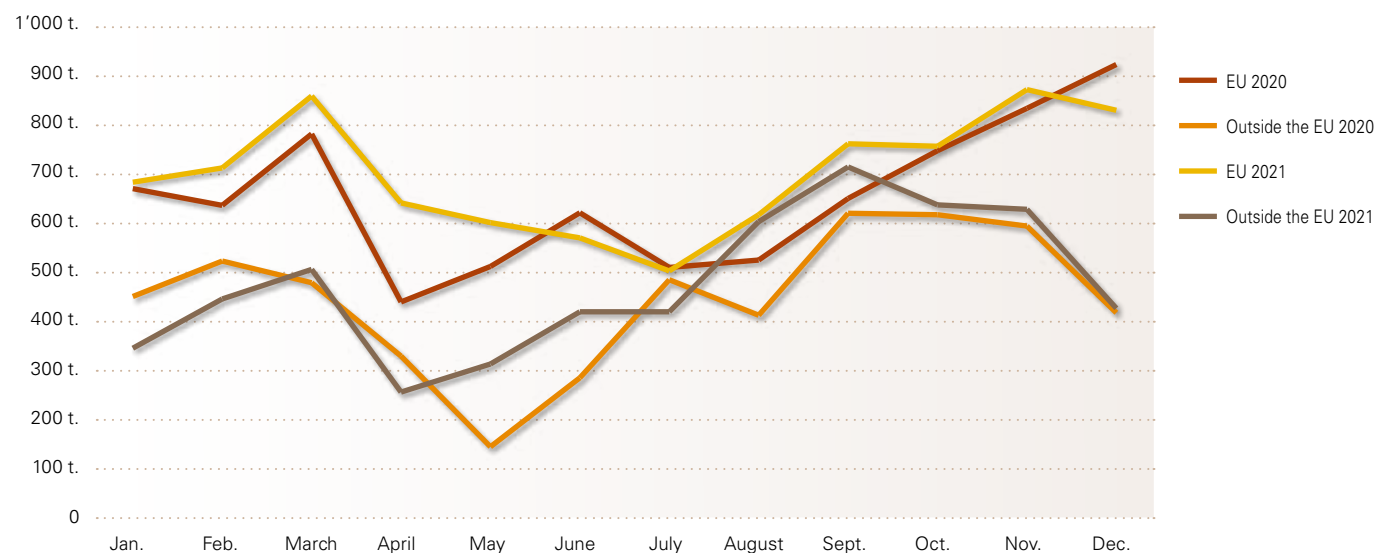
## United States

A sales record was set in 2021 with over 4,162 tonnes sold, making the US the biggest export market for Le Gruyère AOP. The Interprofession du Gruyère supports promotional activities with the aim of increasing brand recognition and protection over the long term. The new SCM North America structure, which has been active since May 2021, lets the trading houses implement promotional measures in order to meet consumer expectations.

## Germany

The German cheese market closed with a slight decline of -1.7% to 3,182 tonnes. Although German consumers are buying differently in order to eat in a more healthy and aware manner, the reopening of restaurants, hotels and take-away sales in the second quarter led to a clear slowdown in home consumption. With the 2020 price increases, Le Gruyère AOP is now selling at a high price. German consumers have therefore become very price-conscious, as reflected by sales of Le Gruyère AOP. Despite the pandemic, Le Gruyère AOP strengthened its point-of-sale presence by organising promotional activities nationwide. Similar measures have complemented a local marketing campaign dedicated to the promotion of Le Gruyère AOP in the field with more than 200 tasting days. In addition, the Interprofession fulfilled its promotional role within the framework of the ANUGA exhibition. The partnership project "Le Gruyère AOP meets Tea, Carnet d'une Rencontre" was successfully implemented through public relations and generated 87 million impressions thanks to the

## Exports 2020-2021 in tonnes



collaboration with digital platforms such as myself.de or falstaff.de. During the year, numerous digital presences were organised with the food platforms Eatsmarter and Lecker.de.

## France

The French hard cheese market grew strongly in 2021 by 5%, with a total volume of 27,000 tonnes (source IRI). Despite the year-long health crisis, volumes of Le Gruyère AOP recorded a very strong increase of +16.7% for a total of 1,861 tonnes. With the pandemic still around in 2021, it was difficult to conduct promotional activities, both in major supermarket chains and traditional channels. Le Gruyère AOP, in close collaboration with the trading houses, organised more than 770 days of promotional activities on the range of Swiss cheeses, including 68 days of specific activities focusing on Le Gruyère AOP. Le Gruyère AOP was promoted at 130 cheese shops through discovery tastings. In addition, travelling tastings were held and the introduction of an ambassador promoter dedicated to the brand got underway in October 2021. A poster campaign (large format and digital screens) targeted at points of purchase (shopping centre parking lots) reached nearly 285.5 million people, while the press advertising campaign reached 32 million people.

## Benelux

The cheese market in the Benelux countries posted spectacular growth in 2020 (+10%), a level of private consumption that was maintained overall in 2021 for Le Gruyère AOP. The IPG closely followed the evolution of the crisis and adapted the marketing plan to the cir-

cumstances. The objective is to recruit new consumers through appropriate promotions in mass distribution. A specific action around fondue rounded out sales support at year's end. The pandemic precluded the resumption of event tastings in supermarkets. In order to allow many consumers to taste Le Gruyère AOP, the Interprofession du Gruyère, with the help of SCM Benelux, set up campaigns to distribute 20-gram cheese sticks. The samples, accompanied by a brochure highlighting the quality of the product, were added to the online orders of customers of leading Belgian retailers. These operations made it possible to reach a different audience and more than 100,000 new consumers.



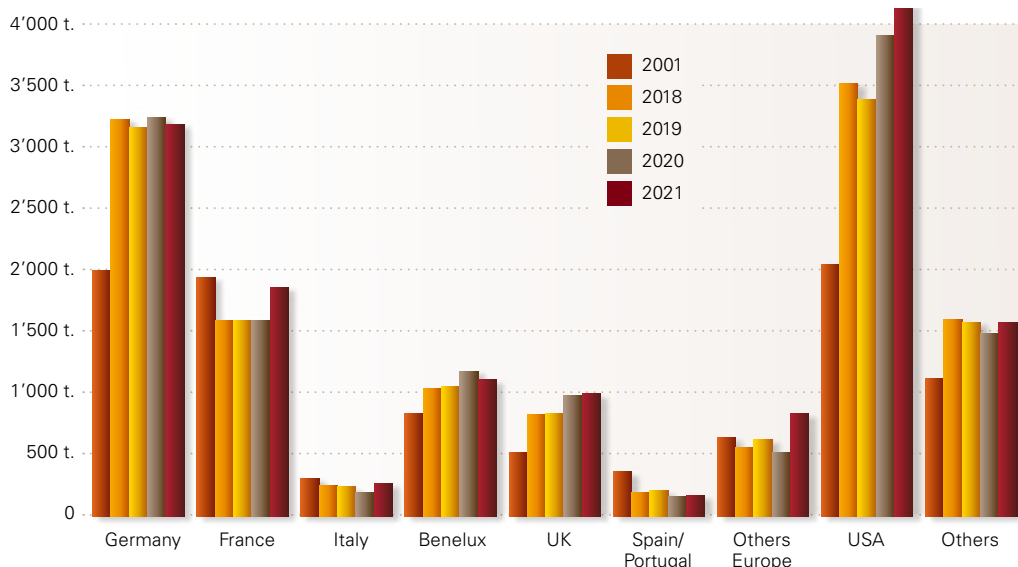
## Great Britain

Promotional work for Le Gruyère AOP in Great Britain was maintained despite the uncertainties of Brexit. The strategy is based on a selection of public and professional trade fairs, in order to reach consumers in a context that is very different from a point-of-sale format. The aim is to boost the product's image in the UK, Scotland and Ireland. The lifting of restrictions at the end of 2021 allowed us to be actively present with tastings of Le Gruyère AOP at several fairs such as Hampton Court, Gardener's World, Great Yorkshire Show and RHS Flower Show.

## Italy

Some 271 tonnes of Le Gruyère AOP were sold during 2021 in Italy, equivalent to an increase of 73 tonnes compared with the previous year. This encouraging performance is due to several digital promotional initiatives carried out on social networks as well as on-site initiatives to promote the product in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

## Comparison of Gruyère AOP yearly exports in tonnes



Total 2001: 9'775 (EU 6'608)  
 Total 2002: 9'303 (EU 6'064)  
 Total 2003: 9'407 (EU 5'948)  
 Total 2004: 10'280 (EU 6'147)  
 Total 2005: 10'600 (EU 6'794)  
 Total 2006: 11'186 (EU 6'719)  
 Total 2007: 10'886 (EU 6'917)  
 Total 2008: 11'779 (EU 7'205)  
 Total 2009: 10'974 (EU 7'346)  
 Total 2010: 11'967 (EU 7'501)  
 Total 2011: 11'670 (EU 7'673)  
 Total 2012: 11'527 (EU 7'568)  
 Total 2013: 12'207 (EU 7'757)  
 Total 2014: 12'376 (EU 8'063)  
 Total 2015: 11'956 (EU 7'307)  
 Total 2016: 12'106 (EU 7'551)  
 Total 2017: 11'787 (EU 7'480)  
 Total 2018: 12'800 (EU 7'689)  
 Total 2019: 12'684 (EU 7'722)  
 Total 2020: 13'258 (EU 7'872)  
 Total 2021: 14'168 (EU 8'427)



## Nordic countries

The Scandinavian economies are recovering from the pandemic crisis and showing great resilience. Pre-pandemic GDP levels have already been reached, and the Nordic economies are booming. Under these favourable circumstances, Le Gruyère AOP has taken another successful step forward and set a new sales record in the North with a total of 972 tonnes in 2021. In addition to various print and video campaigns in all four countries, we are developing and accelerating our digital strategy to support Le Gruyère AOP. Creative collaboration with brand ambassadors is intensifying and helping us tap into local trends. Point-of-sale tasting activities are another highlight in the promotion of Le Gruyère AOP, which is making a name for itself as a super-premium cheese. The “Stories” campaign developed for this purpose was awarded the coveted “Tidskriftspriset” prize in 2020 for the best advertising campaign for Le Gruyère AOP. As the cheese is often consumed at breakfast and on weekends in the Nordic countries, a digital campaign on Spotify, “the Soul of Breakfast”, was created to address a group of urban consumers who like to cook. In the first three months, the Le Gruyère AOP website scored over 55,000 views, which can be considered above average. Overall, almost 13 million potential Nordic customers of Le Gruyère AOP were reached in 2021 through targeted print advertising and 42 million through digital advertising.

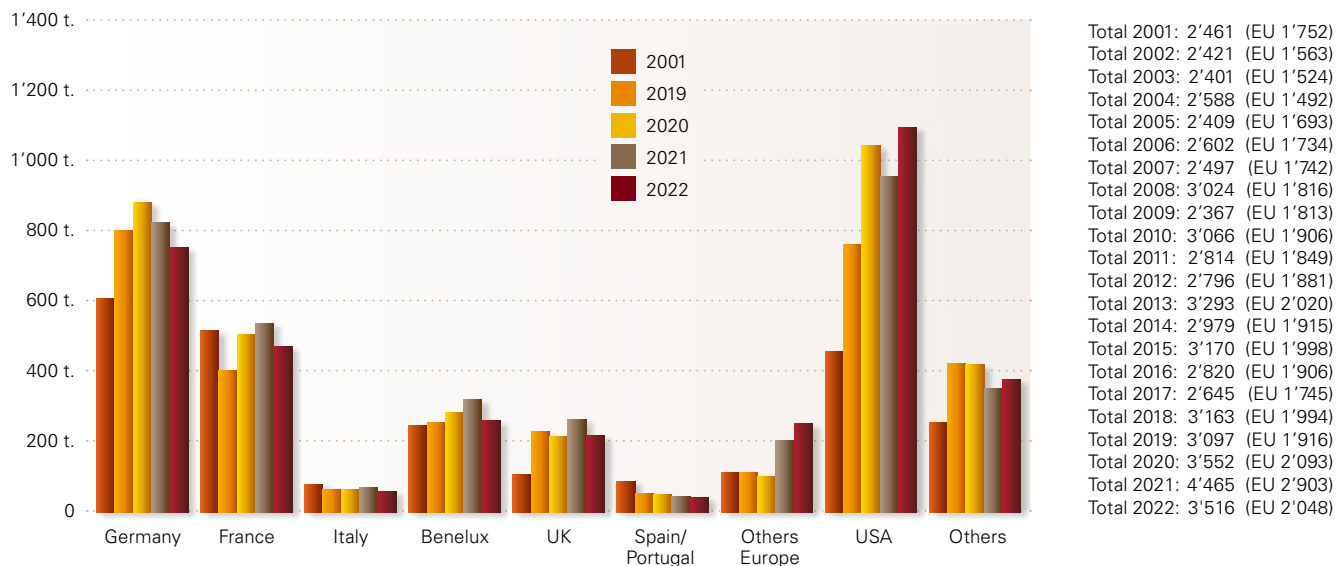
## Australia

Le Gruyère AOP is the driving force behind Swiss cheese in Australia, with 200 tonnes of exports per year in 2021. This position is supported by promotional and communication activities to ensure that this growth continues in years to come.

## Russia

Le Gruyère AOP, which is heavily taxed in Russia, remains a luxury product on the banks of the Moskova and Volga rivers. The cheese sells in luxury stores for between 35 and 70 francs per kilo depending on the location. Sales remained stable on the Russian market, which is constrained by numerous administrative and customs controls. In this context, some 300 tonnes of Le Gruyère AOP were consumed in Russia in 2021. Sales are supported by the Interprofession du Gruyère, which organised various promotional activities such as training and tastings. Benefiting from a protected name on the Russian territory, Le Gruyère AOP was present in several professional fairs such as Prodexpo, the largest food industry fair in Russia and Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, recent events have checked or even halted this market development.

## Comparison of Gruyère AOP exports from January to March in tonnes







## Japan

In terms of investments by the Interprofession du Gruyère, sales in Japan are linked to the economic development of the country, which represents a gateway to Asia. In general, the Japanese prefer specific references such as imported cheese, particularly Le Gruyère AOP. Investments were made to strengthen the presence and image of Le Gruyère AOP in Japan, a market that is sensitive to well-known brands and imported quality products. The Interprofession du Gruyère supports brand promotion efforts by investing in printed and digital signage. Product promotion is encouraged through targeted tastings.

## Spain

The Spanish economy grew by 5% according to GDP data. Household consumption rose by 4.7% over the previous year, the biggest annual increase since 1999. Le Gruyère AOP benefited from this upward trend by increasing its sales by 7%. This good sales performance is also due to several promotional initiatives, such as a television advertising campaign on national channels and various commercial actions undertaken with major supermarket chains. Le Gruyère AOP actively supports and organises its public relations with the media and social media to generate content. Promotional actions are carried out with mass distribution to introduce consumers to the product. On the occasion of the Christmas 2021 campaign, more than 80 promotional campaigns were run in Madrid, Catalonia, the Canary Islands, Valencia and Malaga, with dedicated Le Gruyère AOP staff. Health restrictions did not preclude the holding of trade fairs, leading the brand to create new consumption opportunities like the project to combine honey with Le Gruyère AOP. This atypical mix was well received by consumers, who appreciate the quality of the promotional item, its originality and its low environmental impact.

## New markets

In 2021, the Interprofession du Gruyère, together with SCM, consolidated its investments in different countries, called "new markets" or "export initiatives". The sales promotion programme of the Agriculture Act with specific activities is applied according to the rules of co-financing

published by the OFAG (Federal Office for Agriculture). The Interprofession is maintaining its promotional activities to support and increase sales of Le Gruyère AOP while actively collaborating with the trading houses. These investments are made in countries that demonstrate a potential for sales growth.

The Canadian market is regulated by quantity quotas for the import of Le Gruyère AOP. Promotional projects based mainly on a tasting plan are carried out in major supermarket chains. To round out these initiatives, the Interprofession du Gruyère developed and distributed seasonal digital campaigns throughout the country.

South Africa, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, Israel, Mexico, Poland and Ukraine represent new markets where the Interprofession du Gruyère acts on a case-by-case basis. Investments for market prospection are aligned with the different Swiss cheese Interprofessions but also with the commercial companies. Measures supported and managed by the Interprofession du Gruyère can be divided into two main groups: consumer marketing, through advertising and public relations activities, and POS activities, i.e. tastings at points of sale or during professional or general public fairs.

## Sponsorship

Promotional activities are rounded out by sponsorship. The aim of the various partnerships is to boost brand visibility both nationally and internationally.

## Eurosport

In order to highlight the various partnerships such as cross-country skiing, curling and athletics, Le Gruyère AOP broadcasts numerous spots during these competitions on the Eurosport group's sports channel. This channel, which specialises in sports broadcasts, airs an ad that communicates the values of the industry and the product through the portrayal of Caroline Etter Clément, a milk producer in Mouret, as well as Laurent Python and Mathieu Pharisa from the Grandvillard cheese dairy. This very dynamic spot was a real hit.



### Giant X Tour

Le Gruyère AOP supports the rounds and the final of the Giant X Tour. These national ski and snowboard competitions are organised for young people in training (students and apprentices). The young athletes in question had a chance to qualify for the national finals, held at the end of March in Leysin.

### Cross-country skiing

In 2021, the cross-country skiing World Cup events took place normally even though contact with the public was not always allowed. The season started with the Finnish stage in Rukka and continued with the unconditional Tour de ski. Le Gruyère AOP was present at events in Switzerland and Scandinavia where the product was presented and tasted. The brand also benefited from significant television exposure during this season, with an audience of over 190 million viewers during more than 58 hours of TV broadcasts. The Gruyère AOP Cheese Challenge is another promotional activity organised in conjunction with the Cross Country World Cup. It rewards the fastest athletes in each stage with a 2.5kg tip of Le Gruyère AOP. This competition proved surprisingly popular. Indeed, the athletes challenged each other throughout the season to try to form a whole wheel of Le Gruyère AOP. In addition to the product, the two best athletes of the Le Gruyère AOP Cheese Challenge for the 2021–2022 season (Ebba Andersson and Alexander Bolshunov) received a personalised bell sporting the colours of the Le Gruyère AOP brand plus financial support to help a training club of their choice.

Le Gruyère AOP continues to support young people and cross-country skiing by backing the Nordic Kids Tour, which organises several stages in French-speaking Switzerland. In addition, a worldwide digital app, We4skiNordiq, lists cross-country skiing events and trails throughout the world. The app has joined forces with Le Gruyère AOP to encourage cross-country skiing and promote its sustainable practice.

### Athletissima & Weltklasse

The brand maintains its commitment to athletics by sponsoring several world-class events

such as Athletissima and Weltklasse, major stages in the Diamonds League athletics championship. Athletissima took place in August in Lausanne, with the world's best athletes competing in front of more than 13,000 people. The event was marked by the return of the public, who did not wear masks and had a chance to taste delicious Le Gruyère AOP cheese sticks. The international Weltklasse competition in Zürich, the final of the Diamond League, attracted 20,000 spectators to the Letzigrund. A Le Gruyère AOP tasting was also organised in the stands and the VIP areas.

### European Athletics

Collaboration with European Athletics includes several events at the European level: the European Indoor Championships in Poland, the U21 and U23 in Estonia, the Teams in Poland and the Cross Country in Ireland. These events provide brand visibility by showcasing Le Gruyère AOP for tasting.

### Swiss Athletics Federation

Le Gruyère AOP has partnered with the Swiss Athletics Federation to support "Mille Gruyère", a series of competitions for future Swiss athletics hopefuls. Other actions and partnerships were undertaken at national level to promote the practice of this sport, such as the presence of the brand at the Swiss Indoor Athletics Championships. The Swiss Athletics Federation celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Numerous projects highlighting the evolution of this Federation and its champions were organised during the year. Le Gruyère AOP supported the "Swiss Athletics on Tour" project, with a bus sporting the colours of Le Gruyère AOP. More than 10,000 Le Gruyère AOP bags and other promotional gifts were distributed on this occasion. At the end of the season, 1,500 people were invited to Interlaken to celebrate this jubilee and taste a delicious risotto served in Le Gruyère AOP cheese wheels. Finally, a partnership was concluded with Athle.ch to promote athletics. This platform is very active in Switzerland and creates tailor-made content for Le Gruyère AOP during the various athletics meetings, which is then aired on the digital channels.





### Swiss Canyon Trail & Le Gruyère Trail Charmey

The Swiss Canyon Trail and the Le Gruyère Trail Charmey have become a reference for runners. These two events, which reach beyond our borders, allow Le Gruyère AOP to demonstrate its nutritional benefits during the refreshment stops.

### Curling

As part of its commitment to curling, Le Gruyère AOP supports the Women's World Curling Championship, originally scheduled to take place in Schaffhausen, Switzerland but subsequently moved to Calgary, Canada. Despite a restrictive health bubble, a digital campaign supported the brand during the event throughout Canada. To reward the Swiss team's world title, the Interprofession du Gruyère invited the entire team in July. Each athlete was rewarded with a piece of Le Gruyère AOP and was able to discover the Maison du Gruyère followed by a meal.

The Gruyère AOP European Curling Championship was held in November in Lillehammer, Norway, where teams and spectators had a chance to taste Le Gruyère AOP over a week-long period.

### BCN Tour & Group E Tour

During the past year, several events served to showcase Le Gruyère AOP, such as the BCN Tour and the Group E Tour. During the summer, different routes are offered every Wednesday to a popular audience. At the end of each event, the riders have an opportunity to enjoy the product served at the finish line.

### Gottéron

Throughout the winter season, Le Gruyère AOP supports the HC Fribourg Gottéron team during the National Ice Hockey Championship. After a season held behind closed doors until April, HC Gottéron was able to reopen to the public. During the home games, the spectators could enjoy a delicious half-and-half fondue in one of the six restaurants.

### Digital marketing

The various measures put in place by governments to prevent the spread of Covid-19 transformed many aspects of our daily lives. Some of these changes, like mask-wearing, were temporary, while others, like videoconferencing, will surely remain part of our daily routines. This pronounced digitalisation of communication has changed the way people communicate. This being so, a brand like Le Gruyère AOP must certainly continue to expand digitally, in order to effectively reach its target audience.

Accordingly, in the marketing plan, a digital strategy has been developed in partnership

with the communication agency Numéro10. The strategy is mainly based on four networks: the website gruyere.com, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

### Website

With 86,000 visitors from 36 different countries, the website gruyere.com is at the heart of the digital communication of Le Gruyère AOP. Thanks to its modernisation in 2020, the website benefits from a refined design and high-performance technology, allowing it to reach a large number of visitors every day. Major efforts undertaken in 2021 will increase the quantity and quality of content offered on our platform. To inspire visitors, a "recipes" module has been developed in partnership with the chef Philippe Lignon. The catering industry, a pillar of Le Gruyère AOP, has been highlighted by articles that focus on the main actors of this noble product. The website is also popular with users seeking information on Le Gruyère AOP, such as its production, manufacturing and distribution.

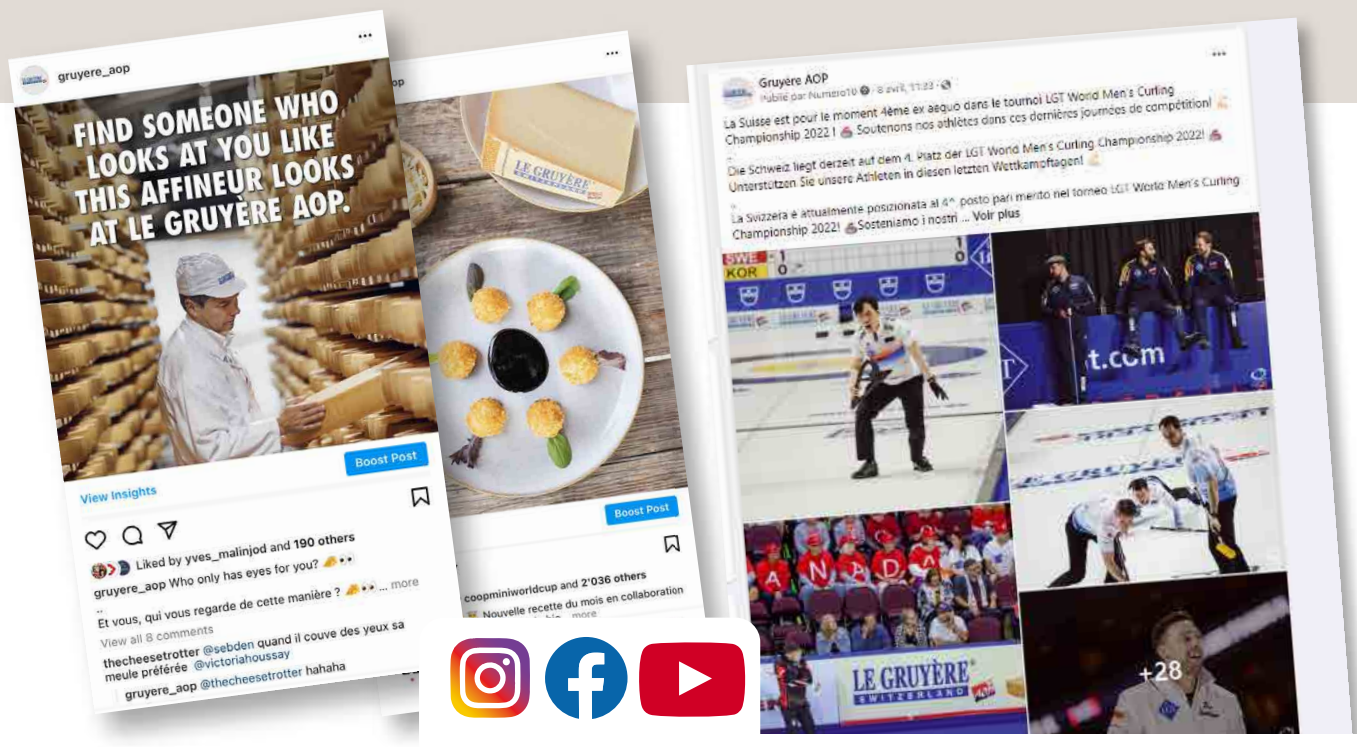
### Instagram

With 7,900 followers, Le Gruyère AOP is the most followed Swiss cheese brand on Instagram. Although a large share of these followers are from Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe, the majority of them are following the product in the United States with growing interest. To reach new users and boost brand awareness, resources are allocated on Instagram. These efforts are focused on publication of organic content and international ad campaigns. A total of 128 posts featuring the star Le Gruyère AOP reached 8.5 million users.

### Facebook

Despite an ageing of the platform, Facebook remains an important communication channel for Le Gruyère AOP. This network offers a unique opportunity for Le Gruyère AOP to reach baby boomers and Generation Xers. This trend is reflected by the statistics, which show that the largest share of our Facebook subscribers in 2020 were around 65 years old, female and living in Switzerland. It is imperative to take this demographic variable into account when creating publications. Recipes, as well as articles related to the industry, are generally very popular. When it comes to Facebook, the Interprofession du Gruyère prefers this type of content to more modern publications targeting a younger audience. Moreover, the 2021 health context underscores the need to continue investing in Facebook advertising campaigns. This effective approach allowed us to reach 17.6 million users during the period under review and increased brand visibility internationally. In fact, 12,000 users searched for additional information on the gruyere.com website after being exposed to one of our campaigns.





## YouTube

The digital strategy is complemented by YouTube, which offers an interesting tool for the brand by combining modern technology with a large user base. Several elements have been introduced, such as the ad campaign “The Gestures” published twice during the year 2021. This video campaign focuses on actors within the sector. Available in several languages, the advertising clip has been viewed over 5 million times. YouTube also offers the possibility of publishing long, qualitative videos – a wonderful opportunity for a brand like Le Gruyère AOP to increase its visibility and inform new consumers. This was the idea behind the creation of the video “Making Gruyère AOP.” Generating 600 views daily since its publication in 2019, it has become the mainstay of our YouTube channel.

## Videobooks

In the current socio-economic context, new digital instruments such as “videobooks” are a formidable force for effectively reaching the general public. Developed in 2021, this didactic tool consists of a 16/9 screen integrated inside a book. Each time a page is turned, a short film dedicated to a specific stage in the production of Gruyère AOP is shown. Produced in 3 languages and distributed to various partners in Switzerland and abroad, this videobook proved very useful in 2021 for informing and educating consumers despite the impossibility of meeting face to face. Although this tool will surely never replace a shared tasting with live exchange of views, it is a very useful complement for developing knowledge.

## Travel & public relations

The year 2021 was marked by the resumption of public relations and hospitality activities within the Maison du Gruyère and with the players in the industry. Benelux, France and the United States scheduled visits by small delegations of sales representatives and journalists for study tours to the heart of Le Gruyère AOP. Actors from the sector, such as milk producers, cheese makers, herdsmen and affineurs, once again welcomed fans of Le Gruyère AOP in search of emotions and the discovery of an authentic product. These cheese aficionados benefited from days of immersion in the industry, returning to their consumers enriched with knowledge and a wealth of experience to share. Collaborative measures were introduced with the Maison du Gruyère, in order to broaden the reputation of Le Gruyère AOP.



## 2021 Events

### F1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021

FIS Tour de Ski 2021, Switzerland, Germany, Italy

### 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

Swiss Indoor Athletics Championships, Macollin

### 22<sup>nd</sup> February to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

FIS Nordic Ski World Championships, Oberstdorf (Germany)

### 26<sup>th</sup> February to 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021

WE4SKI Nordiq, Virtual Event

### 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

European Athletics Indoor Championships, Torun (Poland)

### 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021

À la Découverte Du Printemps Avec Le Gruyère AOP, Switzerland

### 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Swiss Marathon Championships, Bern

### 30<sup>th</sup> April to 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021

World Women's Curling Championship, Calgary (Canada)

### 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021

La Fête du Fromage, Gruyère

### 8<sup>th</sup> May to 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Mille Gruyère, Switzerland

### 19<sup>th</sup> May to 11<sup>th</sup> August 2021

BCN Tour Challenge, Neuchâtel region

### 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021

European Athletics Team Championships, Chorzow (Poland)

### 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Mondial du Chasselas, Aigle

### 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Swiss Athletics Championships, Langenthal

### 8<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

European Athletics U21 & U23 Championships, Tallinn (Estonia)

### 17<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Gruyère Trail Charmey, Charmey

### 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021

National Holiday, Gruyères

### 6<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Francomanias, Bulle

### 11<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Group E Tour, Fribourg region

### 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021

Rencontres de Folklore Internationales de Fribourg, Fribourg

### 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Athletissima, Lausanne

### 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Le Marché des Arts du Feu, Gruyères

### 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Swiss Athletics Championships U16-U18, Winterthur





#### **4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Swiss Athletics Championships U20-U23, Nottwil

#### **8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Weltklasse, Zürich

#### **12<sup>nd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Mondial du Fromage et des Produits Laitiers, Tours (France)

#### **18<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Open Bike Haute-Gruyère, Gruyère

#### **26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

Bocuse d'Or Final, Lyon (France)

#### **1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

Foire du Valais, Martigny

#### **7<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

Olma, St. Gallen

#### **9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

Anuga, Cologne (Germany)

#### **12<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

50th Anniversary of Swiss Athletics, Interlaken

#### **12<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021**

Les Automnales, Geneva

#### **13<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Brot Chef Finale, Aarau

#### **20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Le Gruyère AOP European Curling Championships, Lillehammer (Norway)

#### **26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

FIS - World Cups Nordic Skiing, Europe

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

Pintes Ouvertes, Canton of Vaud

#### **10<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

Christmas Market, Gruyères

#### **12<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

Spar European Cross Country Athletics Championships, Dublin (Ireland)

#### **28<sup>th</sup> December 2021 to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

FIS Tour de Ski 2022, Switzerland, Germany, Italy

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## Governing Bodies within the Interprofession du Gruyère

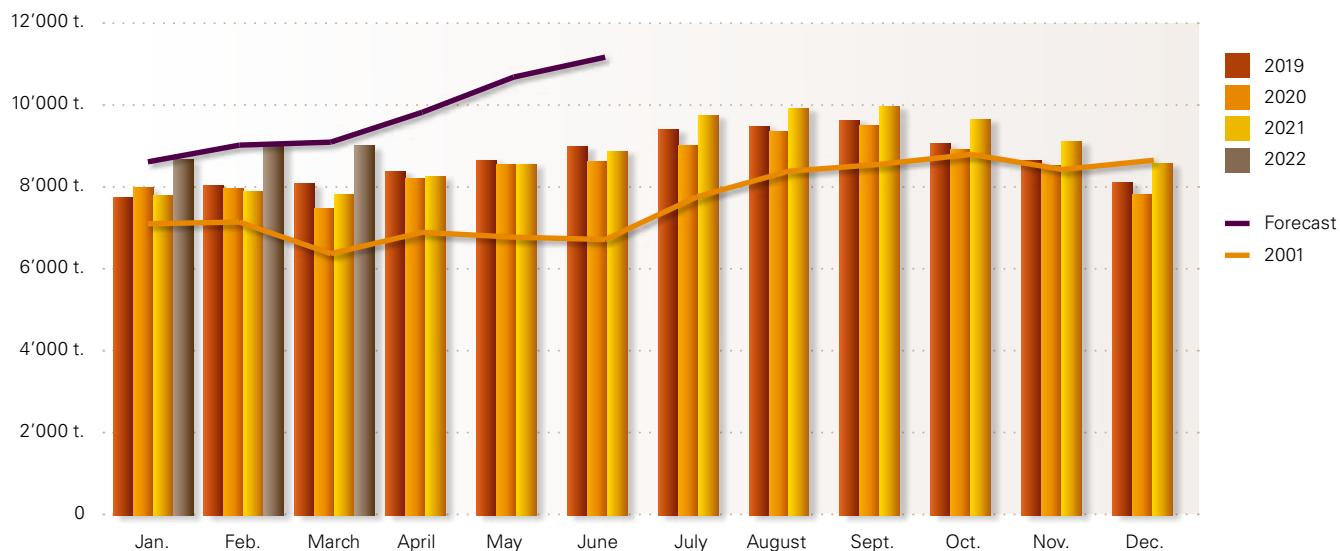
Despite the restrictions associated with Covid, the Interprofession's bodies held a large number of sessions during 2021.

The Board met seven times, including twice in an expanded format, to examine the purchase of the Pinte des Vernes building. Apart from this file, the report regarding the Triesse Gressard investigation was the subject of several discussions, the conclusions of which were then passed on to the Committee. This latter body held sixteen sessions, three of which were dedicated to a seminar on

the Triesse Gressard study, under the guidance of the company's director, Mr Bouillot.

In addition to this subject, one that is important for the future of the sector, the questions of production volumes and prices were also addressed. The maximum sizes of farms, the minimum number of farms per cheese dairy, and methods of delivery all led to extensive and heated discussions. A working group had to be set up, which subsequently held three meetings. This body mainly discussed the conditions associated with the price increase of 1 April

### Comparison of stock evolution (end of March 2022) in tonnes







Didier Germain

2020, but was subsequently dissolved and incorporated into the Planning Commission. The latter was tasked with preparing a comprehensive file for the meeting of the Assembly of Delegates on 24 November 2021.

The supreme body of the Interprofession du Gruyère was convened on three occasions for three key events in 2021. On 6 July, Espace Gruyère hosted an event to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Le Gruyère's recognition as an AOC/AOP. A key date in the lifetime of this time-honoured cheese, it was marked by speeches from several VIPs, including the President of the Swiss Confederation. It also provided an opportunity for those present to share a convivial get-together. On 24 November 2021, the Assembly of Delegates voted on the budget and production quantities for 2022. It also set the rules covering maximum operating sizes within the sector, according to the following conditions:

*The maximum quantity of milk which can be produced by a dairy farm is 1.3 million kg. The term milk refers to all milk sold, with the exception of milk intended for calves and for personal consumption on the farm.*

*There must be at least 5 official producers for each Gruyère AOP manufacturing site. No incumbent producer may exceed one third of the volume processed at a particular manufacturing site.*

*The provisions concerning the rule of one-third for cheese dairies do not apply to holdings producing 600,000 kg of milk or less.*

*The provision concerning the requirement for 5 producers does not apply to manufacturing sites that process 1.8 million kg of milk or less.*

*These provisions entered into force on 1 January 2021.*

*Having accepted these basic rules, the Assembly of Delegates intends to resolve the details of their application in the quantity management regulations by 31 May 2022. Points to be settled include delivery at one or more production sites, which will have to be clearly defined.*

An extraordinary meeting was convened on 20 December with two items on the agenda, and an entire afternoon was dedicated to the first presentation to the delegates of the findings of the Triesse Gressard survey

The first item on the morning agenda was the purchase of the Pinte des Vernes building, a highly emotional topic. This will anchor the Interprofession du Gruyère in Pringy, in Gruyères, close to the Maison du Gruyère. With this decision, the delegates have given the Interprofession du Gruyère the opportunity to own an administrative building which is steeped in history while also providing support for the new Maison du Gruyère. This will mark a new era in a spirit of constructive and forward-looking collaboration.

The second item on the agenda was the supplementary election to replace Mr Didier Germain on the Committee. The delegates elected Mr. Jean-Daniel Jäggi, a cheese-maker from Grandcour, to succeed Mr. Didier Germain as Vice-Chairman until 31 December.

One of the pillars of the Committee is thus leaving his management role within the Interprofession du Gruyère without, however, leaving the industry. Indeed, Didier Germain will be heavily involved in the renovation of the "small" demonstration cheese dairy in Ponts-de-Martel, to make it an even more effective tool for the next generation.



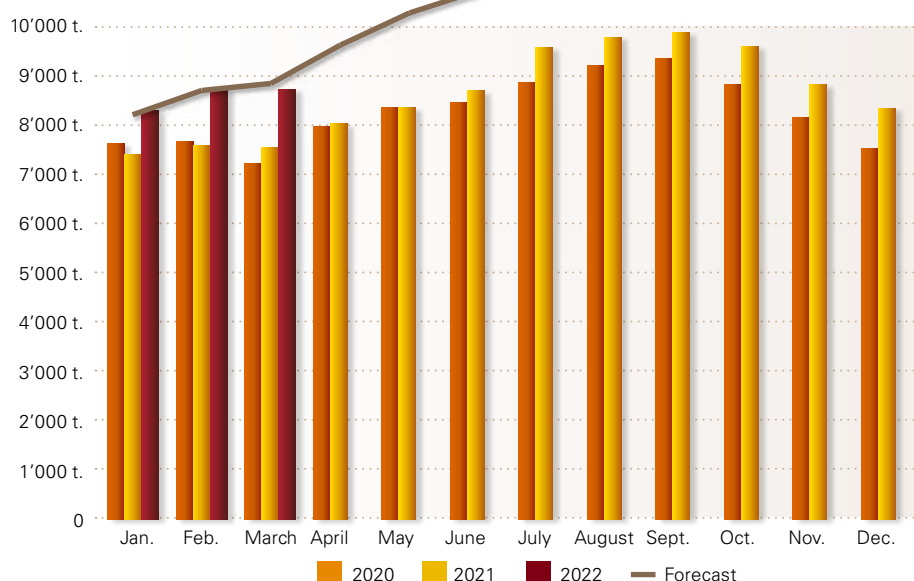
Didier Germain was an early pioneer in establishing the IPG's start-up fund. Shortly after the signing of the Gruyère Charter in 1992, he joined the resulting Commission in 1994 as representative for the Neuchâtel cheese-makers. His knowledge of the industry and his interpersonal skills quickly led him to become an important and influential player, both in the organisation of the new cheese market and the founding of the Interprofession du Gruyère on 6 July 1997. He was one of the key players in the drafting of the Specifications. He was born on a farm and made cheese in the mountain pastures, and as a cheese-maker he was also active in the sale of speciality products. Accordingly, he was well placed to build bridges (not over the Martel river) between the various stakeholders in the sector. As various organisations merged and his colleagues retired, he rose through the ranks of the IPG and the cheese industry to become both Chairman of the AFR and Vice-Chairman of the Interprofession du Gruyère. He has always carried these weighty responsibilities in the spirit of the interests of Le Gruyère AOP, without, however, giving up the pleasure of producing the cheese each day. He has therefore often acted as the historical conscience of Le Gruyère AOP, having been there at the founding of the IPG. He was a valuable member who set the tone for its leadership.

The various Commissions also performed their duties within the framework of their respective mandates.

The Alpage Commission held three meetings to address qualitative and quantitative issues. It should be noted that the La Neuva alpine cheese producer, located in the Vaudois Pre-Alps, first produced Gruyère d'Alpage AOP-certified cheese over an open fire pit in 2021.

The Bio Commission sat on three occasions, as did an ad hoc working group, to negotiate prices. Qualitative and quantitative aspects were also addressed. An exhaustive inventory of the potential organic quantities available in ex-

**Comparison of stock evolution excluding Alpage (end of March 2022) in tonnes**







isting vats was carried out. This showed that the potential for consistent increases in this sector is severely limited. It should be noted that the new Châtel-St-Denis cheese dairy, which is currently being renovated, will be able to produce organically from early 2023. At the end of the year, it was decided to increase the organic supplement from CHF 2 per kilo of cheese to CHF 2.60, following the new directives from Bio Suisse requiring the use of Swiss fodder, among others. It should be noted that the quantities produced by the sector in 2021 were 1% definitive and 12% temporary, according to the same provisions that will be specified in the chapter on quantities.

In view of the Covid problems, which restricted promotion opportunities, the Marketing Commission only held one meeting.

The Quality Commission held three meetings. As well as quality-related subjects and the application of standards in this area, the issue of teat plugs was also addressed.

Unfortunately, these auxiliary systems are based on the use of Bismuth and had to be temporarily prohibited. In fact, they cause black spots in the cheese, making it unsuitable for consumption, even though the product is not dangerous for human health. An active search for alternatives is ongoing to continue reducing the use of antibiotics in the sector.

The Planning Commission held six sessions which, in addition to ongoing matters, handled the drafting of new articles for the Quantity Management Regulations enforcing the new standards accepted by the Assembly of Delegates on 24 November. The Commission's decisions gave rise to a meeting of the Quantity Management

Appeals Commission. Of several appeals examined, only one was partially admitted.

In order to keep track of market developments and to react to them as quickly as possible, a Market Commission, made up of the five affineurs sitting on the Committee and the Director, was set up in 2021. It has held six sessions. Monthly meetings are to be scheduled following the publication of stock levels, in order to prepare for Committee meetings.

To address the initial findings of the Triesse Gressard survey, a Value Distribution Working Group was set up with two representatives from each group. Two sessions were held, which primarily defined the essential roles required to create anchor points for each profession: producers, cheese-makers and affineurs, enabling an objective analysis of the evolution of costs. This group will continue its work through 2022.

Another working group was set up to establish clear and precise foundations for concluding contracts between the various actors in the sector. Called the Legal Entity Working Group, its purpose is to define, for example, the responsible entity in the context of an SA and a Sàrl. It is clear that the goal of the sector is to have responsible and independent persons heading up the companies that make Le Gruyère AOP on a daily basis.

It should be noted that a Technology Watch Commission will be appointed in 2022 in response to the industry's questions in this area. We need to know how new working methods can be incorporated, without touching the very essence of Le Gruyère AOP, which is its strength in the eyes of consumers.





The various bodies of the Interprofession du Gruyère are still chaired by Mr. Oswald Kessler. However, he will not be running for another term of office at the 2022 statutory elections. A Chairmanship Commission was appointed to replace him, made up of the members of the extended Board. A number of sessions were held and several candidates were approached, with a general hearing before the delegates in September. The choice fell on Mr Pierre-Ivan Guyot, who will be presented to the Assembly of Delegates on 31 May 2022. Mr Pierre-Ivan Guyot, a former Director of Fromco in Moudon, is currently Head of the Agriculture Department of the Canton of Neuchâtel.

The Interprofession du Gruyère is currently being managed by Mr Philippe Bardet, the Director, and Mr Marc Gendre, the Deputy Director.

A scientific collaborator also joined the body in September, in the person of Ms Lucie Horvath. She is responsible for looking after and coordinating the Technology Watch Commission in the future, among other duties. She is also preparing statistical reports for the General Management and the Committee.

In the marketing division, Mr Denis Kaser is in charge of international activities. Ms Marie L'Homme manages national promotions and support for certain sponsorship files. Mr Philippe Gremaud is responsible for trade fairs and providing support for various other events. Ms Catherine Merian provides support for the various Swiss Cheese Marketing campaigns and also accompanies external visitors. Digital sponsorship and social networks were handled by Ms Anaïs Grandjean. The new Le Gruyère AOP website was constructed under her aegis. However, Ms Grandjean decided to leave IPG marketing on

31 December 2021. Mr Gaspard Cuenot took over her duties on 1 February 2022.

Quality and support for quantity management are handled by Messrs Christophe Magne and Thierry Bize. It should be noted that it is they who conduct monthly 'taxations' (inspections); and that during certain months the Covid measures imposed by the Confederation required these to be conducted under special conditions. Despite these difficulties, this sector was able to carry out all tasks required to enable the highest quality Gruyère cheese to reach the shelves, both in Switzerland and abroad.

Secretarial duties are still handled by Ms Christine Grandjean and Ms Julie Sudan.

Accounting is handled by Ms Magali Vuichard and Ms Sandy Uldry. However, after over 10 years at the Interprofession, Ms Uldry has decided to take up a new challenge within the industry, leaving on 31 January 2022. Her position has been filled by Ms Karine Pharisa, who starts on 1 April.

The whole team was proud to be able to celebrate the 20th anniversary of AOP recognition and to be involved in the 25th anniversary of the Interprofession du Gruyère in 2022, so as to pay tribute to the people who have contributed to the current market success of Le Gruyère AOP, both nationally and internationally.



Committee members as of December 31, 2021

## Committee of the Interprofession du Gruyère

President	Oswald Kessler*	Yverdon-les-Bains
Producers	Romane Botteron Didier Roch*# Nicolas Savary Pascal Surchat	La Sagne Ballens Sâles (Gruyère) Blessens
Cheesemakers	Jean-Daniel Jäggi René Pernet* Adrian Scheidegger Nicolas Schmoutz	Grandcour Peney-le-Jorat Niedermuhren Mézières FR
Affineurs	Jean-Marc Collomb Gilles Margot* Jean-Charles Michaud Ralph Perroud	Fromco SA, Moudon Margot Fromages SA, Yverdon Mifroma SA, Ursy Fromage Gruyère SA, Bulle
Guests	Jean-Pierre Huguenin Daniel Koller Roland Sahli <sup>1</sup> Schmutz Christian <sup>2</sup>	Avocat, Boudry PSL, Bern Gourmino AG, Lenzburg Fromarte, Bern

# Vice-president

\* Member of the board of direction

<sup>1</sup> Affineur coordinator

<sup>2</sup> Coordinator of Cheesemakers

# Outlook for 2022

In 2022, the bodies of the Interprofession (inter-branch organisation) will be able to analyse the findings of the Triesse Gressard study while remaining attentive to the evolution of sales and prices of Le Gruyère AOP. This work will be carried out on the basis of the principles defined previously, which are:

## Quantity

- Apply a management and planning tool (cockpit) in a spirit of transparency and confidence with the aim of achieving qualitative growth. -> *Alert thresholds on stocks, production and sales are continuously monitored so as to best respond to market variations.*
- Implement the 10-year campaign plan adopted by the Assembly of Delegates on 24.11.2021.
- Strengthen measures and decisions to ensure compliance with the rules and to combat imitations. -> *The IPG, together with the Association of AOP-IGP, will demand the application of the Savary motion ensuring the installation of sworn watchdog officials within the Interprofessions.*

## Quality

- Analyse the evolution of the breakdown in fat and protein in milk to guarantee quality production of Le Gruyère AOP.
- Introduce monitoring of the evolution of production and installation techniques in relation to the quality of Le Gruyère AOP. -> *Collaboration with the research and advice bodies Agroscope, Arqha and Casei is required. A commission placed under the coordination of an appointee from the administration.*

## Profitability

- Ensure the profitability of the sector, its actors and its administration. -> *An analysis will be made of the distribution of added value among the different groups.*

## Customer

- Analyse and define the image, history, strengths and particularities of Le Gruyère AOP. -> *The issue of craftsmanship and sustainability should be analysed in each group, and more particularly what makes the difference within a trade of the AOP sector compared to generic production.*
- Analyse and define what we wish to convey to the customer and the consumer. *Le Gruyère enjoys a very good brand image, which requires further strengthening.*

## Brand and Marketing

- Establish a clear brand and marketing strategy through an objective analysis of the current situation. -> *This strategy is based on the General and Marketing Good Practices Guide as well as on the Specifications.*
- Strengthen the IPG's marketing structure by redefining the objectives, tasks and responsibilities of the actors concerned.
- Communication based on real images of the sector will be strengthened on all media, especially new media.

## Future of the IPG

- Introduce a risk analysis system for the IPG.
- Promote and encourage identification of members with the sector to which they belong. -> *Each member of the sector promotes the brand Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland.*

The Interprofession intends to fulfil these tasks so that Le Gruyère AOP evolves in the interest of the consumer, while ensuring fair distribution of economic added value among all the actors who produce this noble cheese on a daily basis.

## Recapitulation of the distribution of the total production potential for Le Gruyère AOP per cheese dairy and per canton for 2022 (with turnover)

Canton	Villages			Bio			Villages + Bio		Alpages			All		
	Quantities (Kg)	(%)	Nbr	Quantities (Kg)	(%)	Nbr	Quantities (Kg)	(%)	Quantities (Kg)	(%)	Nbr	Quantities (Kg)	(%)	Nbr
FR	16'415'672	50.82	80	466'345	29.02	4	16'882'017	49.78	202'657	34.81	32	17'084'674	49.53	112
VD	9'029'774	27.95	37	402'693	25.06	3	9'432'467	27.82	358'905	61.65	22	9'791'372	28.39	60
NE	3'198'969	9.90	15	227'750	14.17	2	3'426'719	10.11				3'426'719	9.93	15
JU	771'132	2.39	3	180'957	11.26	1	952'089	2.81				952'089	2.76	3
JUBE + al.	960'159	2.97	5	135'719	8.44	1	1'095'878	3.23	20'639	3.54	3	1'116'517	3.24	8
BE	948'718	2.94	7	171'827	10.69	1	1'120'545	3.30				1'120'545	3.25	7
Other cantons	979'035	3.03	7	21'846	1.36	1	1'000'881	2.95				1'000'881	2.90	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>32'303'459</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>1'607'137</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>13*</b>	<b>33'910'596</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>582'201</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>34'492'797</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>212</b>

\* Cheese dairies producing Bio: 12 cheese dairies producing both Traditional and Bio Gruyère AOP plus 1 dairy producing only Bio.



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