

TWO DECADES OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP AT ANIMALCO/ SWITZERLAND

Prof. Dr. Rudolf Preisinger
Senior Group Advisor Breeding & Biotechnology
EW GROUP GmbH



When it comes to animal welfare, Switzerland is considered a pioneer. In the area of parent stock management and chick production, this is especially true for Animalco AG in Switzerland.

Magnus Döbeli & Familie

Magnus Döbeli has been running this business for more than two decades, focusing on education and innovation with an emphasis on animal welfare and sustainability.

Coming from a cattle farming background, Mr. Döbeli has continuously trained himself in poultry management at the Aviforum.



In addition to the families's own pullet rearing, which is managed by his wife, their son Andreas has also joined Animalco in the meantime.

All organic - an investment that pays off

Supported by the board of directors and the shareholders, Animalco AG invested almost 15 years ago in the first organic hatchery with attached parent stock facilities with a winter garden and free-range area.

In order to ensure capacity utilization and an economic operation, organic broilers and organic layer chicks were hatched there from the very beginning. The hatchery quickly became too small and a new building was taken into operation in 2019.

Today, almost 2 million chicks hatch there every year. Predominantly slow-growing broilers and about 50 % of all organic layers in Switzerland.

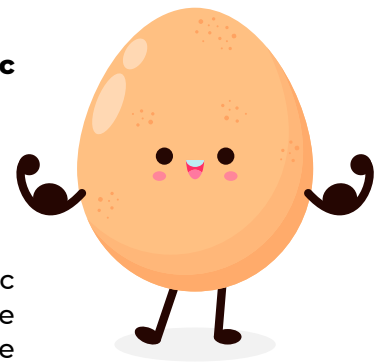
In the meantime, the competitor has also put an organic hatchery into operation.

“Das Ei kanns” (The egg can do it)

In food shops in Switzerland, you can only find eggs from organic or free-range production. Eggs from Swiss floor management have disappeared from the shelves. During the Corona pandemic, the demand for Swiss eggs increased enormously.

Currently, the market is oversupplied with eggs, as many consumers are once again buying from neighboring countries.

The broad-based marketing campaign: “Das Ei kanns” (The egg can do it) aims to get the demand for Swiss eggs back up to a higher level.



LOHMANN DUAL

The phasing out of chick-killing is also a big issue in Switzerland. For almost 10 years, on the initiative of Mr. Döbeli, Animalco has been keeping dual-purpose parents from the breed LOHMANN DUAL.



Together with the food retailer Coop, the LOHMANN DUAL males are fattened and marketed in the organic sector. The females are used to produce table eggs.

As it was difficult to sex the offspring of the early generations of parents accordingly, Animalco has been pushing LOHMANN BREEDERS and is testing now a new form of dual-purpose birds that can be sexed on the basis of feathering speed on the first day of life.

LOHMANN SANDY according to the Austrian model

Furthermore, the LOHMANN SANDY is used as a dual purpose layer in the organic sector similar to the concept of the egg producers from Austria. Comparable to Austria, all males are raised and the hens are used as laying hens on organic farms because of their particularly good livability.



As the Swiss organic sector has decided to completely phase out chick-killing by 2026 and sexing in the incubation process is also not to be an option, all males must be reared and their meat used for human consumption.

The modernisation continues

Animalco is currently planning the next level of modernization under the direction of Mr. Döbeli. Since the currently existing hatchery does not allow for any further structural adaptation and sex determination procedures will have to be used in the medium term, a hatchery specialized in laying hens with the option of sex determination has to be built in the immediate vicinity of the organic hatchery.



The effectiveness and costs of different methods are currently being examined. The goal should be to determine the sexes as early and safely as possible, which can be used automatically and autonomously in Switzerland.

THANKS!

We would like to thank Mr. Döbeli for the excellent cooperation over two decades and wish him much success and luck in mastering the next challenges.

