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Agroscope Swiss National Stud Farm



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Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
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Agroscope

The Swiss National Stud Farm – from yesterday to today

Founded in 1898, the Swiss National Stud Farm has, over the years, developed into a national centre of competence in horse breeding and equine husbandry.

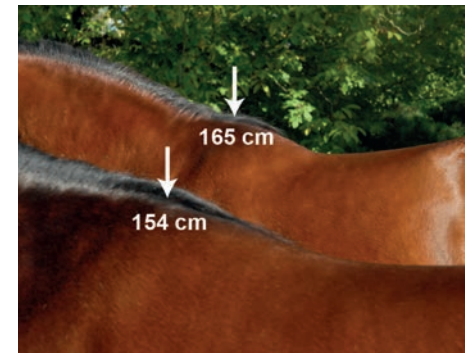
- 1874 Federal council resolution leads to the establishment of a federal foal barn in Thun dedicated to raising potential breeding stallions.
- 1898 Founding of a federal stallion and foal barn in Avenches.
- 1910 Addition of an equine infirmary to the federal stallion and foal barn.
- 1927 The acquisition of 10 Franches Montagne mares turns the federal stallion and foal barn into the federal stud.
- 1942 Acquisition of the Domaine Peu Claude in the Jura.
- 1959 The stud is extended to include an equine clinic.
- 1969 Birth of the first foal conceived through artificial insemination with frozen thawed semen. The foal is named „Icecream“.
- 1980 The federal council declares equestrian sport a breeding objective. The stud's best stallions successfully compete on an international stage, becoming the first breeding stallions from state run studs in Europe to take part in international competitions.
- 1994 A federal council resolution regulates the restructuring of the stud, leading to the privatisation of the associated agricultural farm.
- 1998 The federal stud becomes the Swiss National Stud Farm (SNSF).
- 2000 The federal government decides on a performance mandate and on a global budget for the management of the SNSF.
- 2008 The SNSF and the research centre Agroscope Liebefeld-Posieux ALP begin the process of merging, developing a joint management to eventually form a unit known as the ALP-Haras.
- 2011 After the near-closure in 2010, the SNSF is given increased protection in the new agricultural legislation (Art. 147) which states that “in support of the horse breeding industry, the federal government maintains a stud (the Swiss National Stud Farm) in Avenches”. The new agricultural legislation comes into force on the 1st January 2014.
- 2012 The SNSF is integrated entirely into the research department of the research unit Agroscope-Liebefeld-Posieux (ALP-Haras). The stud's equine clinic merges with the equine clinic of the Vetsuisse faculty of the University of Bern to create the Institut suisse de médecine équine ISME.
- 2014 Federal agricultural research centres are consolidated under the name Agroscope to form one national research institute for the agrifood sector. This unit replaces the existing research centres Agroscope Changins-Wädenswil ACW, Agroscope Liebefeld-Posieux ALP-Haras and Agroscope Reckenholz-Tänikon ART. The Swiss National Stud Farm becomes part of Agroscope's Institute for Livestock Sciences (ILS).



Classical riding and carriage driving – expertise at the SNSF



Research – accurate interpretation of equine behaviour is vital for successful horse management. Differences in equine stature - how much is down to genetics?



The Swiss National Stud Farm (SNSF)

The SNSF is the federal centre of competence for all equine related issues within Agroscope. It serves as a centre of research and development, is involved with the transfer of knowledge and completes the assistance measures for the rural horse keeping industry in Switzerland. The Swiss National Stud Farm represents a unique pool of knowledge surrounding the horse and its associated cultural heritage.

The SNSF is a member of the European State Studs Association ESSA (www.european-statestuds.org) and together with other member studs contributes to the preservation of the heritage of European equine culture and the traditionally associated professions.

Breeding

Horse breeding activities at the SNSF mainly focus on the Franches Montagnes (FM) horse breed – the only remaining native horse breed in Switzerland. The SNSF owns around sixty FM stallions which are made available to breeders throughout Switzerland to carry out their covering duties in various outlying studs during the breeding season. Alternatively, breeders can access frozen semen from any of a large number of stallions whose semen is stored in the stud's sizeable sperm bank. Breeding related research emphasis is placed on projects involving the maintenance of the FM breed's genetic diversity and the enhancement of its market appeal. Furthermore, the SNSF supports the horse

breeding industry in Switzerland with a variety of measures, such as providing a highly specialized breeding infrastructure for reproduction and the organization of public events.

Research

The many specialists at the Swiss National Stud Farm, agronomists, biologists, veterinarians, equine professionals and apprentices conduct research on horse breeding, reproduction, health, husbandry, behaviour, utilisation, and on socio-economic aspects of equine husbandry. They cooperate closely with other representatives of the equine industry and research institutions, both nationally and internationally. Examples of recent research projects include how various husbandry systems can be optimised with respect to the latest ethological findings; apart from animal welfare aspects, economic and work-efficiency related issues are examined and recent developments in equine infrastructure are tested. Other



Knowledge transfer – instruction in equine husbandry

projects focus on the genetic basis of conformational, behavioural or health related features attained through analysis of DNA, and on processing and presenting these findings so that they can be practically applied by the horse breeding industry. A large number of scientific and trade publications, as well as leaflets on various aspects of the Swiss equine industry or specialized issues such as optimizing feed quality are further examples of the multitude of projects and activities taking place in Avenches.

Consultancy and knowledge transfer

The husbandry of horses raises many questions, and the equine advisory centre at the SNSF is there to provide answers. With a network of equine specialists from all branches of the equine industry, the equine advisory service provides expert support and impartial advice to owners, breeders and yard managers as well as to equine organisations, equine professionals, authorities and any other interested persons. The SNSF also offers vocational training for people in, or thinking of entering, the equine industry, and provides training services for horses in a variety of disciplines. Vocational training and courses (e.g. Equigarde®) are often run in association with partner institutions such as the School of Agricultural, Forest and



Reproduction – a sperm and an egg cell join to create the next generation

Food Sciences HAFL in Zollikofen. Teaching activities at Universities and practical courses round-off the activities at the SNSF. Other projects associated with knowledge transfer are specialist symposiums such as the annual meeting of the Swiss Equine Research Network in Avenches. An extensive on-site equine documentation centre containing more than 12,000 historical and contemporary articles and books related to the horse is open to the public and is an ideal place of research for anyone with an interest in the horse.

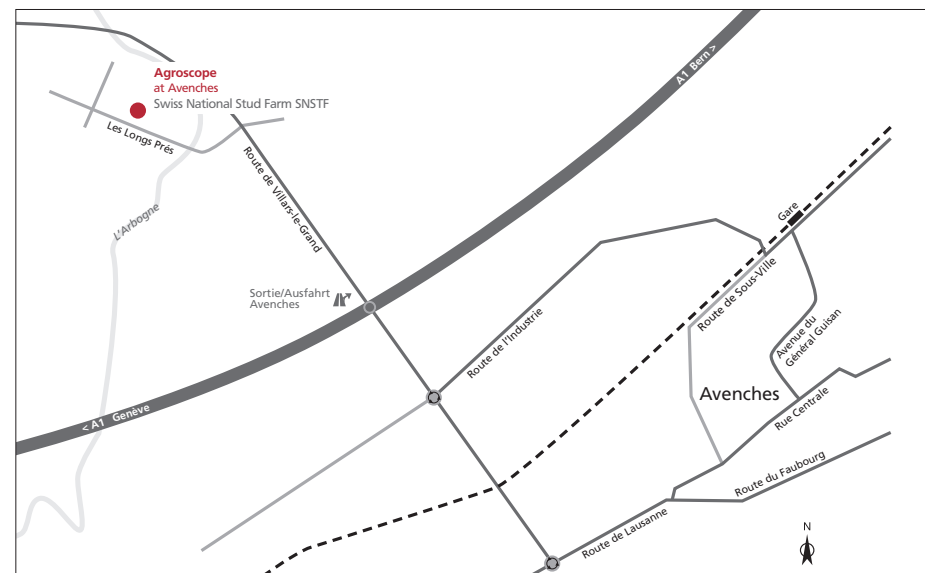


Equine clinic and reproduction centre ISME

To consolidate expertise in the veterinary sector, the equine clinic at the Swiss National Stud Farm joined forces with the equine clinic of the Vetsuisse Faculty of the University of Bern to create the Swiss Institute of Equine Medicine (Institut suisse de médecine équine, ISME). The ISME specializes in internal and reproductive medicine; areas in which it has rapidly attained international renown. The ISME in Avenches incorporates an EU accredited reproduction centre, a department for equine sports medicine and a centre for equine fitness and rehabilitation. The ISME is also involved in the training of veterinarians.



*Historical buildings with nesting storks
Equine professions*



The Swiss National Stud Farm (SNSF) is part of Agroscope, the Swiss federal centre of excellence for agronomic research. Agroscope SNSF is under the authority of the Research and Advisory Department of the Federal Office for Agriculture of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER)

Individual and organised tours of the Swiss National Stud Farm, carriage tours

The Swiss National Stud Farm can be visited daily throughout the year. Numerous information panels situated throughout the stud introduce the visitor to the world of horses and provide an insight into the history and the daily activities of the SNSF. During the week, guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more visitors with prior reservation as well as carriage tours in a covered wagon.

Masthead:

Publisher: Agroscope | Swiss National Stud Farm SNSF
Les Longs-Prés, 1580 Avenches, Switzerland, www.nationalgestuet.ch

Editing: Agroscope, SNSF

Design: Natacha Vioget, Cotterd

Photo credits: Agroscope, SNSF; Kristel Richard; Philippe Dutoit;
Martin Rindlisbacher, Bleiken; Gerlinde Trinkhaus, Reutlingen

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Information: harasnational@agroscope.admin.ch or www.nationalgestuet.ch