



Case Study: RISE sustainability advice for farmers

Swiss farmer uses RISE results for sustainable farm development

Claude-Alain and Marie-Claire Gebhard are the third generation to run their mixed farm in 1126 Vaux-sur-Morges, Switzerland. The RISE sustainability consultation provided the farming couple with an analysis of the current farm situation and gave them the opportunity to develop a viable farm strategy based on the assessment. Today, the Gebhards are very happy with their decision to install a photovoltaic system and to convert to organic farming: the investment pays off for them in ecological, social and above all economic terms.



The farm

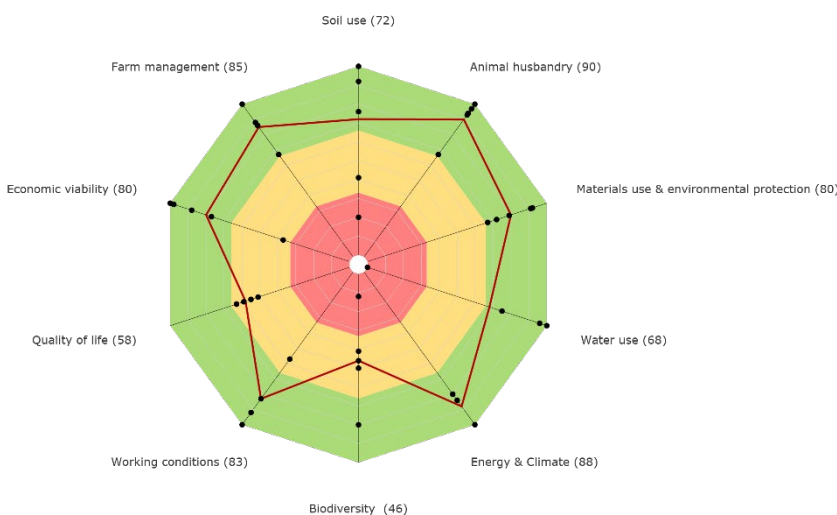
The Gerhards farm roughly 70 ha of land in Vaux-sur-Morges. They have a 40-strong suckler herd and 50 ha under tillage. Closed cycles play a key role in all enterprises. They have long practised a 7-year crop rotation, with grass leys, maize, wheat and oilseeds. They specialise in seed production of wheat, spelt, triticale and red clover, producing Bud-label certified organic seed crops since 2015. Since 2019 they have also been Demeter certified. Moreover, the farm has been producing electricity from a photovoltaic (PV) system since 2013, which is fed into the grid.

Why RISE?

During his studies at the School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL, Claude-Alain Gebhard got to know the RISE method*. RISE analyses the social, ecological and economic sustainability of a farm with a view to identifying positive adjustments. Since holistic sustainability has always been a major concern for him, he decided to undergo a RISE assessment.

Results and benefits

The RISE analysis provided a visualisation of all sustainability themes and identified potential beneficial measures:



RISE sustainability polygon

Conversion to organics and investment in photovoltaics seemed good choices with a view to a more sustainable farming strategy. RISE visualised potentially conflicting objectives: While conversion to organics led to lower pesticide use and more fertile soil, diesel use increased. At the same time, however, the farm

now generates renewable energy with the PV system.



The system now produces 400,000 kWh per year and supplies the farm as well as another 120 households.

«RISE gave us courage»

RISE encouraged Claude-Alain Gebhard to holistically implement sustainability. For him, the farm is a «living organism that must be nurtured. All aspects must be brought into harmony», meaning that a farm must offer good working conditions, with sufficient free time and good wages, but it must also treat the animals well. Claude-Alain Gebhard recommends a RISE consultation to farmers who want to improve the sustainability of their holding.



«RISE encouraged me to change our farming strategy and to overcome challenges.»

Claude-Alain Gebhard

What is RISE

RISE is an acronym for Response-Inducing Sustainability Evaluation. RISE assesses ecological, economic and social sustainability performance across 10 themes captured by a total of 46 indicators. The results provide a “360-degree view” of the farm and identify where there is potential for optimisation. RISE was developed at HAFL and has so far been used on almost 4,000 farms in 59 countries.

Contact

Feel free to contact us at any time for a no-strings discussion of your ideas or questions:

HAFL / RISE-Team
Länggasse 85
CH-3052 Zollikofen
+41 31 910 2924
rise.hafl@bfh.ch