



# Master in Life Sciences

A cooperation between  
BFH, FHNW, HES-SO, ZFH

<b>Module Title</b>	<b>Consumer Behaviour, Markets and Trade</b>
<b>Module Code</b>	MCLs025
<b>Module</b>	AF-12
<b>Degree Programme</b>	Master of Science in Life Sciences (MSLS)
<b>ECTS Credits</b>	5
<b>Workload</b>	150 h: Contact 50 h; Group Exercise 10 h; Self-study 90 h (online only for HSWT students)
<b>Module Coordinator</b>	<p><b>Name</b> Dr. Phatima Mamardashvili</p> <p><b>Phone</b> +41 31 848 55 46</p> <p><b>Email</b> <a href="mailto:phatima.mamardashvili@bfh.ch">phatima.mamardashvili@bfh.ch</a></p> <p><b>Address</b> Bern University of Applied Sciences, School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences, Laenggasse 85, 3052 Zollikofen</p>
<b>Lecturers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Claude Garcia</li> <li>• Dr. Franziska Götze</li> <li>• Dr. Phatima Mamardashvili</li> <li>• Guest lecturers</li> </ul>
<b>Entry Requirements</b>	<p>Knowledge of the principles of economics and marketing: Work through chapters 1 and 2 in Hudson (2007) and check your understanding by doing the pre-course test questions in the book.</p> <p>Basics of markets and policy in food, timber or agricultural markets.</p>
<b>Learning Outcomes and Competencies</b>	<p>After completing the module, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe and analyse the characteristics and functioning of selected agricultural, food and forest products using basic economic tools and models;</li> <li>• explain current developments in these markets, from the perspective of producers, consumers and investors, and against the background of international trade, market structures and government policies;</li> <li>• use economic thinking to analyse the impact of national and international policies on agricultural, food and forest products;</li> <li>• analyse and explain the influence of selected marketing and pricing strategies;</li> <li>• draw conclusions for the management of value chains;</li> <li>• have an overview of the different concepts that influence consumer behaviour, explain the consumer decision making process;</li> <li>• explain the different trends and their importance in marketing;</li> <li>• present and explain the different methods of market research, their features and their use;</li> <li>• gain initial experience in the application of market research methods, critically evaluate market research tools.</li> </ul>
<b>Module Content</b>	<p>The module will deal with the following topics by drawing on examples from agriculture and forestry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic principles of production and consumption</li> <li>• Consumer behaviour</li> <li>• Consumer trends</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market research</li> <li>• Market and price theory with applications</li> <li>• Economics of international trade</li> <li>• Framework conditions: market organisations and government policies; characteristics of agricultural, food and timber/forest products markets in different countries, with presentation of selected case studies</li> <li>• Market data and market analyses</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	Lectures, self-study, learn-team coaching, seminars with representatives of selected industries and organisations, as well as students' presentations and joint discussions.
<b>Assessment of Learning Outcomes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group work: Case study and its presentation (50%), max. points 50       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part 1: Extended abstract (max. points 20)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Criteria: structure &amp; formal aspects; overall content (market analysis and marketing plan), discussion and conclusions, sources</li> </ul> </li> <li>Part 2: Presentation (max. points 30; out of it 15 points are individual grade)           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Criteria: attractiveness; choice of content, key information; level of complexity; answer to the questions of the audience &amp; evaluators; fluency, language; time management</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Written exam (50%), 60 minutes; max. points 50 (general part 30 points, forest part 10 points and consumer behaviour part 10 points)</li> </ol>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<p>Barkley A, Barkley PW, 2020. The Principles of Agricultural Economics, 3rd edition. Routledge: London/UK.</p> <p>Blackwell RD, 2006. Consumer behavior (10th ed.). Thomson/South-Western, Mason (Ohio), 790 p.</p> <p>Costanza R, d'Arge R, de Groot R, Farber S, Grasso M, Hannon B, Limburg K, Naeem S, O'Neill R, Paruelo J, Raskin RG, Sutton P, van den Belt M, 1997. The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital. <i>Nature</i>, 387: 253-260.</p> <p>FAO, 2020. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 – Key findings. Rome. <a href="https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8753en">https://doi.org/10.4060/ca8753en</a></p> <p>FAO, 2022. The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2022. The geography of food and agricultural trade: Policy approaches for sustainable development. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Rome/Italy.</p> <p>FAO, 2024. The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets 2024. Trade and nutrition: Policy coherence for healthy diets. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Rome/Italy.</p> <p>FAO, 2024. The State of Food and Agriculture 2024. Value-driven transformation of agrifood systems. <a href="https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-and-agriculture/en">https://www.fao.org/publications/home/fao-flagship-publications/the-state-of-food-and-agriculture/en</a></p> <p>Hudson D, 2007. Agricultural Markets and Prices. Blackwell: Malden/USA, Oxford/UK, Carlton/Australia.</p> <p>Mankiw NG, 2015. Principles of Economics. Cengage Learning: Stamford/USA.</p> <p>Mooij MK de, 2011. Consumer behavior and culture. SAGE, Los Angeles, Calif. [u.a.]. (Consequences for global marketing and advertising).</p> <p>Noel H, 2017. Basics Marketing 01: Consumer Behaviour. Bloomsbury Publishing, 178 p.</p> <p>OECD/FAO, 2024. OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2024-2033, OECD Publishing, Paris, <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2024-2033_4c5d2cfb-en.html">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-fao-agricultural-outlook-2024-2033_4c5d2cfb-en.html</a></p> <p>Schiffman LG, Schiffman LG, 2015. Consumer behavior (11th ed., global ed.). Pearson, Boston. (Always learning).</p> <p>Sethna Z, Sethna Z, 2016. Consumer behaviour (3rd edition.). SAGE, Los Angeles.</p> <p>Timmer P, 2009. A World without Agriculture. The Structural Transformation in Historical Perspective. The AEI Press, Publisher for the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C. UNECE/FAO, 2019. Forest Products Annual Market Review 2018-2019. <a href="https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/SP48.pdf">https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/timber/publications/SP48.pdf</a></p> <p>In addition, a list with selected references and readings will be made available before the start of the module.</p>

<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Comments</b>	Attendance is compulsory: The sequences in the second week (CW39), lectures with Claude Garcia, guest lecture and the student seminar where case studies are presented are compulsory for students. The detailed schedule with the dates of the compulsory sequences will be uploaded on Moodle 4 weeks before the start of the module.
<b>Last Update</b>	14.01.2026 / Phatima Mamardashvili