

Resilience of the Swiss Agricultural Sector: An analysis of the agricultural policy with regard to the COVID-19 crisis

Research questions

- Did the Swiss agricultural policy allow the resilience of the agricultural sector to the covid-19 crisis?
- Does the Swiss agricultural policy provide conditions that make the agricultural sector resilient enough to face crises?

Methods

- Literary research
- 10 expert interviews
- Online survey (33 farmers)
- Economic analysis of income by sector and by farm



Results



I: Impact of covid-19 on Swiss agriculture

- Positive: development of new distribution channels, increase in demand, increase in direct sales, better image of agriculture
- Negative: loss of distribution channels, market deregulation

II: Effectiveness of emergency measures during covid-19

- Global measures = not useful for the resilience of the sector, more psychological
- Specific measures = useful for the branch concerned, improves resilience

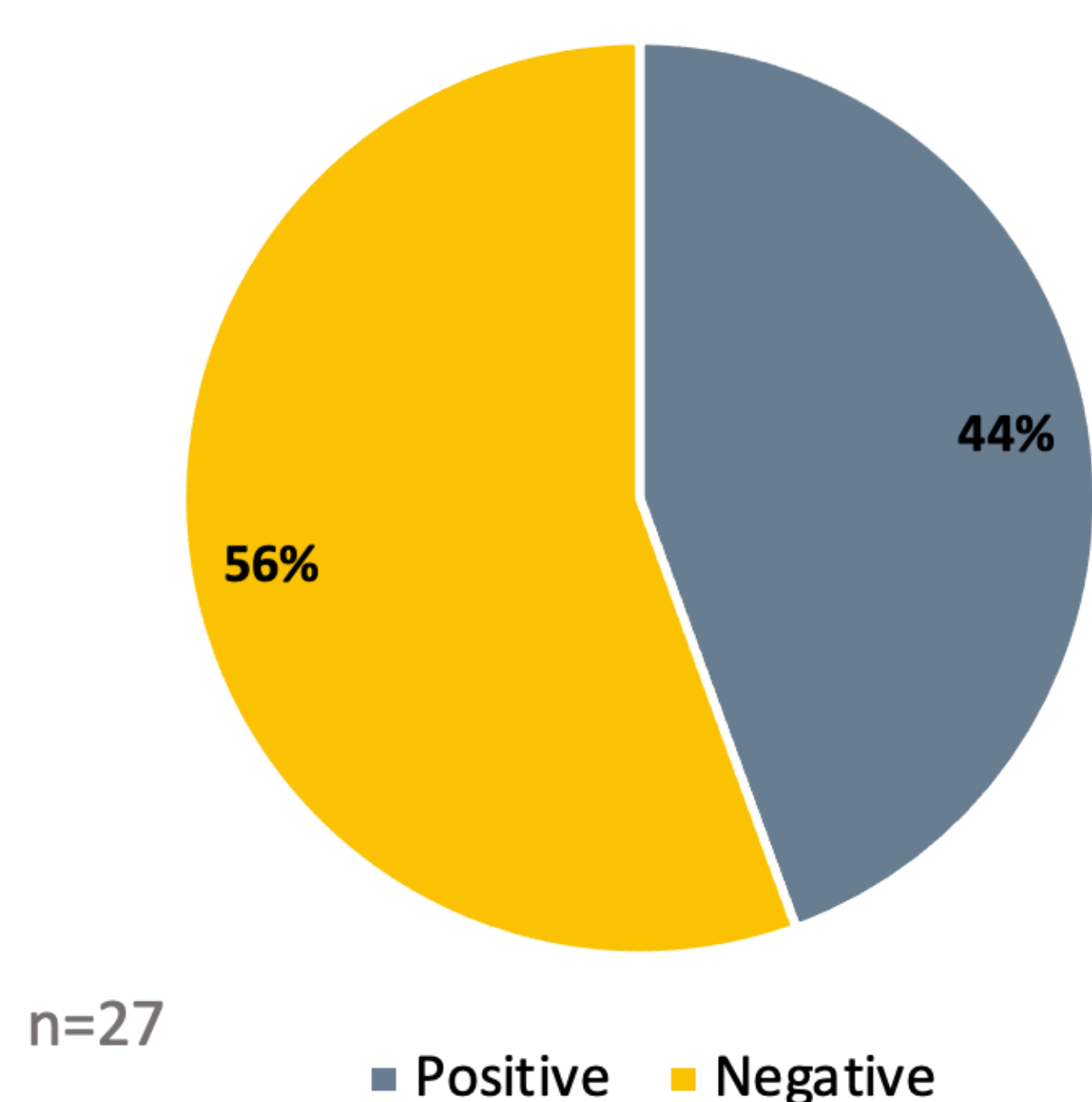
III: The resilience of the agricultural sector to the covid-19

- Resilient sector during the crisis = good adaptation and response to the crisis
- Post-crisis = loss of gains = not resilient without long-term focus

Table 1: Importance of the emergency measures to improve the resilience of the sector
1= not important, 3= very important

Measures	Response rate	Average
Advance payment of direct payments	70%	1.29
Aid to farmers	60%	1.00
Increase in partial tariff quota: butter, eggs	50%	1.40
Making the meat import regime more flexible	60%	2.00
Storage of veal	60%	2.83
Downgrading of AOC wines to table wine	70%	2.57
Reduction of controls on imported foodstuffs	40%	1.00
Adaptation of controls on a case-by-case basis	50%	1.00

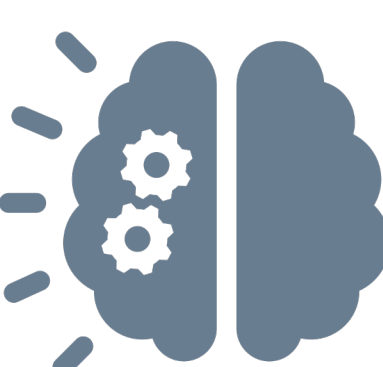
Figure 1: Impact of agricultural policy on the resilience of the sector



IV: Capacity of agricultural policy to improve the resilience

- Mixed results
- Positive: protected sector, good framework conditions, direct payments, flexible, effective measures
- Negative: too prescriptive, not enough focus on production, direct payments
- Lessons learned: need to improve food safety, increase consumer awareness, encourage know-how, improve diversification, improve collaboration in the agricultural sector

Conclusions



- Agricultural policy's impact on resilience is mixed, with both positive and negative effects
- Current agricultural policy lacks the necessary conditions for long-term sector resilience and crisis preparedness. Some advice for policy-makers can be drawn from this pandemic:
 - Policymakers should strike a balance between regulations, sustainability, and production
 - Tailored measures for each branch of agriculture are essential
 - Bottom-up approach and dialogue can inform policy improvements