

Russia, Dairy

The pilot project "Schweizer Milch+", which was supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DEZA) from 1999 to 2002, established a dairy farm and introduced new production methods to the region of Kaluga, Russia. Due to the diminishing supply of milk in the Russian market and the increasing demand for high quality dairy products among the population, the project was successful, so far achieving a breakeven point in its financial operations. After DEZA discontinued financial and expert support, three Swiss farmers decided to take over the farm. Two of them immigrated to Russia.

Operation of "Schweizer Milch+" guarantees a sustainable production of fresh quality milk and other dairy products, such as curd and cream to the locality, and secures the jobs of the thirty two farm employees and those of local companies servicing the farming equipment. Thanks to the vertical integration of milk production -- from cultivation of fodder to the packaging and delivery of the finished product -- the farmers are able to minimize the risks associated with bureaucracy and animal health problems. The project could become a nucleus of Swiss farming in the region, attracting others to invest in neighboring bankrupt farms.

The sponsors received a loan from the SECO Start-up Fund to finance parts of the costs of upgrading and expanding the farm.

