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Photo: Keystone

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Cover photo: taken from the book “Landwirtschaft Schweiz”, 2014, published by AS-Verlag, by Zurich photographer Markus Bühler.

We, the farmers



Copy deadline! Everything's ready for this edition. Almost everything: the deadline's looming, but we still need a cover picture. It has to be something to do with farmers. Something about the emotional well-being of Swiss farmers, since they are the focus of this issue. They drove their big, imposing tractors through the streets during the spring in protest. You could tell they were hopping mad.

So what shall we put on the cover? Angry Swiss tractor drivers at their admittedly very well-organised demonstrations? Or lush meadows and grazing cows? Or an agrarian theme: a tractor with a plough tracing a precise line through the field, with the Alpine mountain range as a backdrop? Or should we show farmers threatening to administer lethal injections? Perhaps the Alpine cattle drive with herds of cows adorned with flowers? Or an industrial pig-fattening farm?

Our struggles to find the right picture are symptomatic. In Switzerland, we all see ourselves a little bit as farmers. We are also very familiar with the beautiful landscapes of picture postcard Switzerland. Some of us even have our own personal four-wheel-drive vehicles packed with horsepower, as though we had to be able to drop everything and drive out to the fields at any moment. At the same time, we no longer have a clear image of who Swiss farmers actually are. Or what exactly they do. They might be the public face of Switzerland, but there are no longer very many of them. Barely two per cent of Swiss people today live on a farm. Our Focus on page 4 investigates the current mood amongst farmers.

We have made our decision: the “Review” cover will show a farm boy pushing determinedly to get a massive hay bale moving. On the one hand, it is a good illustration of the sheer hard work involved in farming. The picture also shows the extent to which the 98 percent of us who are not farmers romanticise the profession these days: we like to look at it that way, because it still reminds us a little of the way things once were. But today's Swiss farmers no longer move their hay bales by hand. They drive powerful tractors. Through their fields. And sometimes, also – in protest – right through town.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“Swiss Review”, the information magazine for the “Fifth Switzerland”, is published by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

**Swiss
Community**