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Green revolution in the food industry: New Roots wins the Green Business Award

The Swiss economy's most important sustainability prize goes to New Roots. Today, the jury led by former Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard honoured the Bern-based company as a true game changer for the country's cheese producing industry. The reason? New Roots makes plant-based cheese and dairy products but uses traditional Swiss methods when doing so. This reduces CO₂ emissions by up to 60% compared to conventional cheese made with cows' milk. Each year the Green Business Award honours companies that combine ecological innovation with economic success.

Annual per capita consumption of cheese in Switzerland is around 23 kilograms¹. Many consumers are unaware that cheese has the second largest ecological footprint of any food – exceeded only by beef². The production of Swiss cheese is resource-intensive and indirectly dependent on state subsidies. In addition to this, animal feed must be imported from abroad. This is precisely the ecological problem that New Roots is addressing with its plant-based cheese and dairy products and has also won it the Green Business Award “With its mix of innovation and tradition New Roots is not only making an ecological impact but is also economically very successful,” says jury president Doris Leuthard regarding the decision.

Cheese alternatives that generate up to 60% lower CO₂ emissions than cow's milk products

New Roots' history began with a sports accident. To aid his recovery from the injury, former mountain bike professional Freddy Hunziker decided to change over to a vegan diet. What he really missed were tasty alternatives to cheese. So, working together with Alice Fauconnet, he began to look into alternatives to conventional cheese. Since 2016 New Roots has been developing, producing and selling plant-based, high-protein cheese and dairy alternatives made from cashews, lupins or chickpeas. These products generate around 60% less CO₂ and use 40% less water than cow's milk products, thus significantly reducing their ecological footprint. New Roots uses traditional Swiss production methods and works closely with local dairies and farming businesses. “Our goal is to preserve traditions while also enriching them with new ideas. That's why we believe in the artisanal process of natural fermentation and maturing, which goes back hundreds of years. The only difference is that we use plant-based milk as the base ingredient,” says Alice Fauconnet, co-founder of New Roots. The company's first products were sold at Thun's weekly farmers' market. Today, their plant-based cream cheese, fondue cheese and raclette alternatives can be found in branches of the Migros and Coop supermarket chains as well as in food and beverage outlets throughout Switzerland, Germany and Austria. New Roots also has plans for further expansion into other countries. It employs 40 workers at its headquarters in Oberdiessbach (Bern canton).

1 <https://www.eda.admin.ch/aboutswitzerland/de/home/gesellschaft/schweizer-kueche/schweizer-kueche---fakten-und-zahlen.html#:~:text=Niemand%20isst%20mehr%20Schokolade%20als,Pro%20Jahr%20und%20Person%203kg.>

2 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325532198> Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers



The Swiss economy's most coveted sustainability prize

The Green Business Award was presented today at an event organised by Impact Gstaad. Co-founder Freddy Hunziker commented on the win: "Believing in something that doesn't yet exist requires courage and determination. The Green Business Award is proof that our perseverance has paid off and we are on the right path." Vegan dairy producer New Roots beat two other finalists: Algrano, the online marketplace for green coffee beans, and Selfrag, which recovers valuable resources from the clinker produced at waste incineration plants.

Since 2019, the Green Business Award has honoured companies that combine ecological innovation with economic success. "In cooperation with Impact Gstaad we provide our finalists with unique access to growth capital, enabling role models such as New Roots to make an international impact. In addition to this, we raise our finalists' profiles, because change starts with role models," says Cédric Habermacher, director of Green Business Switzerland. The selection process is based on a multi-stage procedure. The main jury is made up of 16 well-known personalities, including Mobiliar CEO Michèle Rodoni, Swiss Post CEO Roberto Cirillo and ETH professor Reto Knutti.

[Press release and image material](#)

[Further information on the 'Green Business Award'](#)

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Green Business Award

Each year since 2019, the Green Business Award has been honouring the most innovative Swiss companies that combine ecological innovation with economic success. In the first phase of the selection process, around 20 national scouts from the realm of business and environmental protection nominate the best solutions from their sector for the award. From these, an interdisciplinary expert jury distinguishes the five best solutions with the Green Business Excellence Label. These five companies present their business pitch to the main jury presided over by former federal councillor Doris Leuthard. The jury is also made up of 14 other well-known personalities, including Reto Knutti (ETH professor in climate physics), Michèle Rodoni (CEO die Mobiliar), Roberto Cirillo (CEO of Swiss Post) and business journalist and entrepreneur Patrizia Laeri. Three of these five companies are selected as finalists for the Green Business Award, with the winning company presented with the coveted award on 14 February 2025 during the Impact Circle event organised by Impact Gstaad. In order to further expand the high requirements of the selection process for the best solutions, Green Business Switzerland has been working with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) as its scientific partner since 2024.

Green Business Switzerland

Green Business Switzerland focuses on the positive connection between business success and sustainable action. The forward-looking cooperation of key players from business and environmental protection is backed by Go for Impact, the FOEN, economiesuisse, öbu, Pusch, the Schweizerische Umweltstiftung, Scienceindustries, Swissmem, Swiss Textiles and WWF Switzerland, among others.

Partners

Swiss Post and Mobiliar support the Award as its partners, while simultaneously acting as trailblazers for sustainability in their industries.