

# Newly Launched: Swiss Center of Excellence for Raw Milk Products

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## Deepening the cooperation with the practice

In 2021 Agroscope, together with the Canton of Fribourg and its Agricultural Institute in Grangeneuve, has launched a center of excellence for raw milk products to optimize the production chain of raw milk under practical conditions. The collaboration, which has a time horizon of at least eight years, aims to conduct research to further improve the added value and safety of raw milk-based foods.

## More diverse microbiota in raw milk cheese

In a first joint study, the influence of the season and the

newly developed AOP starter culture on the microbiota of Vacherin fribourgeois AOP cheeses will be investigated. Cheeses made from raw and thermized milk will be analyzed using state-of-the-art molecular biology methods and compared with the results of classical microbiology. In addition, an easy and practical method to selectively enrich the desired microflora from raw milk before processing will be developed to broaden the microbial biodiversity in cheese without negative impact on food quality and food safety. The aim is to increase the typicality of raw milk cheeses and strengthen the link with their terroir.

## Consumers like diversity

In an extensive consumer study with 245 participants, Vacherin fribourgeois AOP cheeses made from raw milk and thermized milk, each with 2 stages of maturation (young and mature), were compared. Vacherin fribourgeois AOP is a traditional semi-hard cheese variety from Switzerland with a long-standing tradition and strong ties to production in the mountain region. Today, the milk is usually thermized before cheese-making. Only about 5% of cheeses are made from raw milk, mostly in the Alps.

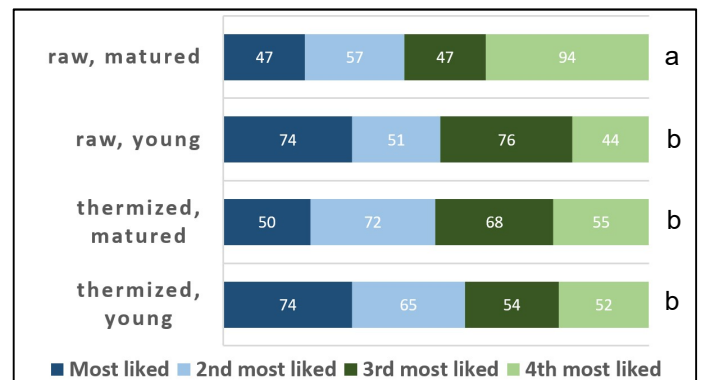


Fig. 1: Overall liking frequency distribution (distinct letters = significant difference)

The mature Vacherin fribourgeois AOP cheese made from raw milk was significantly less liked compared to the other 3 cheeses.

For almost half of consumers, one of the two raw milk cheeses ranked first in liking, which indicates a considerable market potential not yet being exploited today.

Today, raw milk cheese is generally matured longer than cheese made from heat treated milk. This study indicates that this method of production might not be the most suitable way for all cheese varieties to achieve a high level of liking with consumers



## Save-the-Date

From 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Centre of Excellence for Raw Milk Products will host the 13th Conference of the FACE Network. The conference will be themed "Roh - Cru - Raw" and will provide a comprehensive overview of the current research results on the main topics of sustainability, safety and quality, health effects, as well as microbial biodiversity.

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