

S M P • P S L

*Schweizer Milchproduzenten
Producteurs Suisses de Lait
Produttori Svizzeri di Latte
Producers Svizzers da Latg*

The economic importance
and the benefits of



Swiss
Milk

Lofty peaks, blue lakes, crystal-clear streams, green pastures grazed by happy cows reared by professionals in regional dairy farms. These are the criteria that differentiate Switzerland from other countries. They are indispensable for the production of Swiss milk and dairy products of impeccable quality. It is these very elements that make the dairy economy the largest sector within Swiss agriculture.



With its ample water reserves, Switzerland is ideally suited for dairy production [[page 4](#)]. In fact, all the conditions are in place for feeding cows with indigenous fodder [[page 5](#)] and rearing them in keeping with their needs [[page 6](#)].

Thanks to global management of farms [[page 7](#)] and the combined production of milk and meat, Swiss milk producers have a far better track record for greenhouse gas emissions than their counterparts abroad [[page 8](#)]. The short transport distances contribute significantly to this good showing [[page 9](#)].

Trained farmers produce uniquely high quality milk [[page 10](#)], an essential component of a balanced diet [[page 11](#)].

Swiss milk, a major part of the Swiss agri-food sector, is the pillar of an entire industry. The activities upstream and downstream of milk production provide work to a large number of people and help create value [[pages 13–19](#)].

The dairy economy also contributes to sustainable and decentralised land use [[pages 20–22](#)].

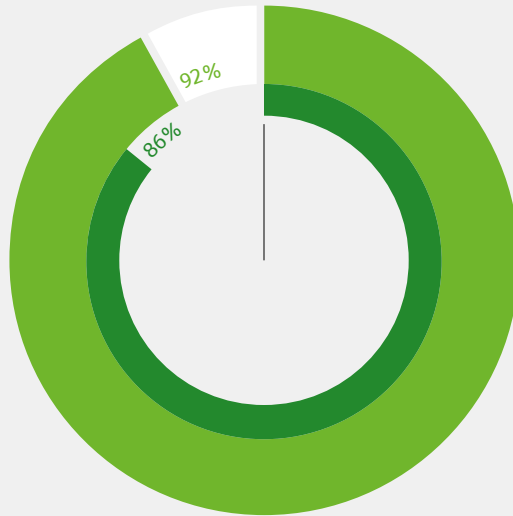
Only **2 %**

of our water consumption goes into agriculture
(on a worldwide basis, this figure is almost 70 %)

**Dairy farming is
particularly
appropriate for
Switzerland,
a country of grass
and water**

Thanks to topography, soil composition and climatic conditions, barely one-third of useful agricultural land is exploited profitably – that is to say with field crops used for producing foodstuffs. This means that over two-thirds is grassland – meadows and low-lying or mountain pastures – which offer abundant feed for cows.

In Switzerland, we have enough water at our disposal. Only 2 % is devoted to agriculture, whereas this figure is as high as 70 % worldwide. The natural conditions of our country, with its abundance of grass and water, are ideal for dairy farming.



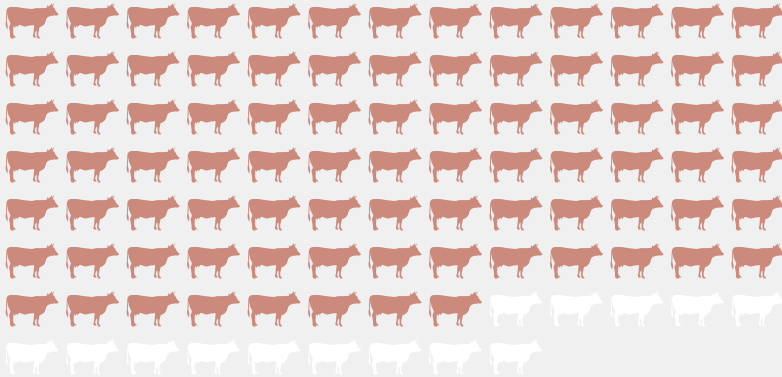
Some 92 % of feed for the cows comes from Switzerland. 86 % of this is coarse fodder.

**Swiss cows
mainly eat Swiss
coarse fodder,
which abounds in
the country**

Dairy cows consume fodder that is 92 % Swiss, primarily consisting of roughage like grass, hay, herbs or maize (86 %). A natural food suitable for cattle, coarse fodder abounds in Switzerland.

Swiss roughage meets four-fifths of cows' nutritional needs. A cow eats between 70 and 80 kilos of indigenous grasses per day, and in winter between 15 and 20 kilos of hay. Maize and silage are other major feedstuffs of Swiss provenance.

Generally speaking, in Switzerland fodder should be free of genetically modified plants and animal meal. Palm oil has been banned from fodder intended for dairy cows since 2017.



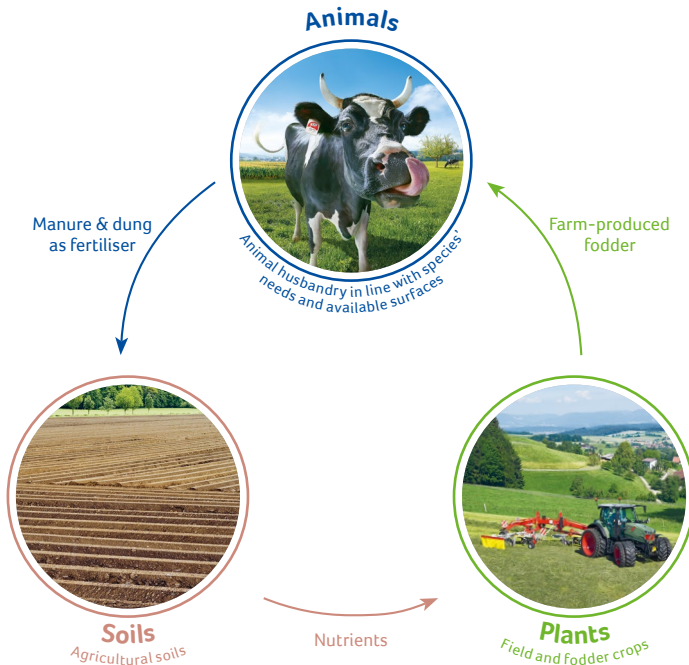
86 % of the cows spend at least 26 days per month in the open air between May and October.

Swiss cows are reared with respect for their species and live on family farms.

Livestock farming that is close to nature and animal-friendly is typical of Switzerland. Farms are generally run by families, who own an average of 26 animals with which they maintain a close bond. The fact that Swiss farmers give each of their cows a name is proof of this.

Swiss animal protection legislation is among the most stringent in the world, and 80 % of Swiss dairy operations participate in the Federal incentive programme SRPA (ROEL, Regular Outdoor Exercise for Livestock). This guarantees the animals regular outings in the open air.

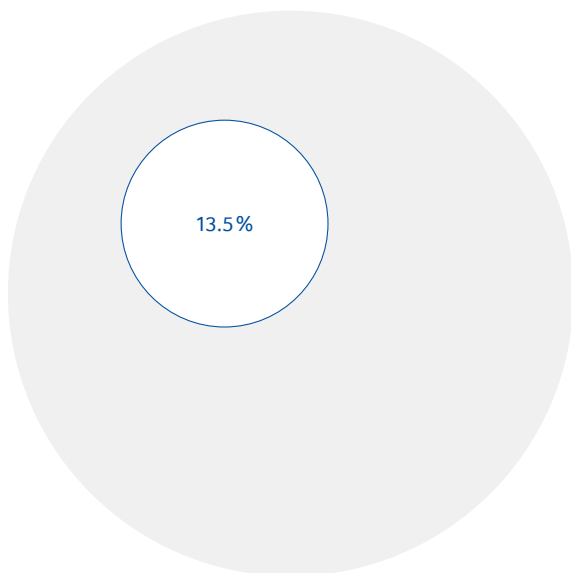
This programme benefits 86 % of cows, which spend at least 26 days per month in the open air between May and October and at least 13 days between November and April.



Producers care about the environment and apply ecological directives.

Swiss milk producers care about the environment and promote biodiversity. Over 95 % of them comply with the proof of ecological performance (PER) requirement, the Swiss environmentally-friendly agricultural standard.

Animal husbandry that respects productive livestock, balanced fertiliser use, ecological compensation areas, soil protection and regular crop rotation are among the requirements. This global approach to farm management also covers pastures and grasslands. Thus, Swiss farms differ from farms abroad, where these surfaces are not taken into account.




Agriculture is responsible for 13.5 % of Switzerland's CO₂ emissions. However, the meadows and pasture-lands are **major carbon traps**.

Cows are not climate enemies

In principle, every living being on earth is linked to the production of carbon dioxide. Apart from milk, cows produce methane, which, like CO₂, is a greenhouse gas. The methane emitted by cows in Switzerland is equivalent to 6.2 % of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions. Thanks to dual-purpose breeds, milk production is often combined with meat production, helping to improve this aspect. Thus cows are not enemies of the climate.

Methane emissions from digestion could be reduced by increasing the proportion of concentrates in fodder. However, this would require increasing fodder farming. We should also not forget that the meadows and pastures where cows graze are major carbon traps. This is one of the essential points that differentiate Swiss from foreign dairy production.





Compared to other countries, Switzerland is characterised by small spaces. It is also known for its regional production and processing. Finally, transport distances are very short.

Short transport distances are ecological; they guarantee that foodstuffs are processed rapidly and always fresh, as the products go from stable to plate in no time.

**Short distances
guarantee
fresh products**



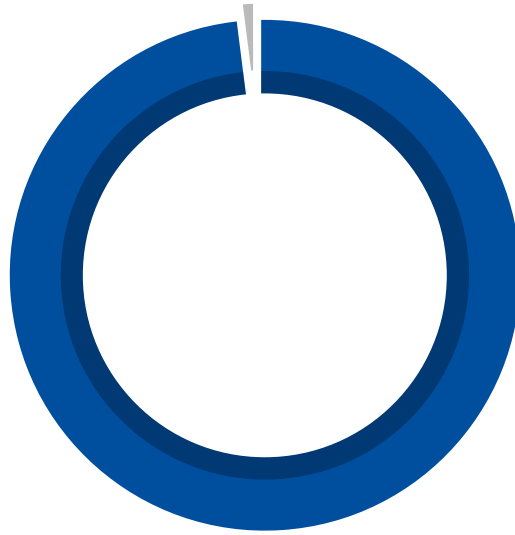
Milk and dairy products three times a day: that's what's needed

Dairy products should be consumed daily, as they are rich in nutritive substances that are important for a balanced diet. They constitute a valuable source of nutrients at any age. This is why the Swiss Society of Nutrition recommends consuming three portions of milk or dairy products per day.

Milk and dairy products are an ideal and easily accessible source of calcium. A balanced diet rich in calcium combined with regular physical activity maintains bones in good condition.

Milk is an ideal drink for recovering after sport. It compensates loss of liquids and repairs the muscles. As chocolate milk, it is ideal for stocking up on energy.

Milk is good for the figure: proteins have a lasting effect on your appetite. As for calcium, it encourages the burning of fats and slows down their storage.



In 2017, out of 450 000 samples analysed for germ content, **99.93 % were impeccable.** By international standards, this is an excellent result!

**Strict controls
guarantee safe,
high-quality
milk and
dairy products.**

Swiss milk is free of residues and additives. When drugs are administered to sick animals, their milk cannot be released for consumption for a specific period of time. Furthermore, performance-boosting hormones and antibiotics for animals are prohibited in Switzerland.

Our country is known worldwide for the quality and safety of its foodstuffs. In order to monitor the entire process, the competent authorities verify compliance with animal holding requirements, checks on milk as well as hygiene in processing operations.



The Swiss milk sector

The value creation chain for Swiss dairy production is an essential pillar of the country's economy. The sectors upstream and downstream are a source of income for numerous families in Switzerland.



1. Jobs upstream of milk production

Research acquires knowledge and puts it into practice. This consolidates the professionalism of Swiss milk producers and gives them the tools to deal with future challenges.

Jobs in companies upstream of milk production

	as a %	Work positions
EPF, agronomic sciences	35	15
Plant selection and reproduction, protection of species	35	3 012
fenaco cooperative company	35	3 520
Agroscope milk domain	100	150
Agroscope meat domain	85	128
Rest of Agroscope, including ADCF	35	210
Agridea extension	35	43
Agricultural school	35	627
Total positions upstream		7 705

Source: FPSL 2017

Key figure

7705 people are active in the production environment of Swiss milk producers.

2. Jobs and enterprises connected with dairy farming

Dairy production on Swiss farms is a source of income for a variety of suppliers, who in turn entail costs. Consequently, they are a factor that impacts the profitability of the farm itself and the sector as a whole.

Suppliers, feedstuffs and auxiliaries

	as a %	Work positions	Enterprises
Farm work firms	35	90	256
Suppliers of machines and devices	80	52	25
Federal offices	35	154	3
Cantonal agricultural departments	35	528	26
FPSL and member organisations	100	145	13
Fodder producers / importers	35 / 85	439	965
Suppliers of auxiliaries and fertiliser	35	2 861	75
Total suppliers, feedstuffs and auxiliaries		4 269	1 363

NB: construction and installation companies are not taken into consideration.

Source: FPSL 2017

Explanation on the number of work positions indicated in the tables.

X% of the total number of positions are linked to the dairy economy.

3. Jobs and companies directly linked to dairy cows

	in %	Work positions	Companies
Animal husbandry ¹	85	84	3
Livestock vets ²	100	539	
Mixed vets ²	50	270	700
Inseminators ³	85	236	1
Controls and laboratories (excl. cantonal departments) ¹	100	351	6
Data bank on animal movements (BDTA), Identitas ¹	85	70	1
TSM Fiduciaire Sàrl ¹	100	15	1
People working on a dairy farm (producers / employees / apprentices) ⁴	100	79 465	27 339*
Total		81 030	28 051

Source: 1 FPSL 2017 2 SVS 2017 3 Data: Swissgenetics 4 OFS 2018

* including 20 372 farms producing commercial milk

Key figure

79 465 people work on Swiss dairy farms.

The transport of milk and meat from the production to the processing enterprise generates a considerable amount of work and income.

4. Jobs and enterprises in milk transport and trade

	in %	Work positions	Enterprises
Slaughterhouses / trade and processing of meat ¹	85	15 966	834
Organisations for milk marketing ²	100	426	18
Transport of raw milk ²	100	334	7
Total		16 726	859

Source: ¹ OFS 2018 ² FPSL 2017 NB: Enterprises trading in animals are not taken into consideration.

5. Jobs and enterprises in the processing of milk

	in %	Work positions	Farms
Cheese dairies ¹ and milk dairies ²	100	12 688	2 070
2 nd processing level ³	60	51 900	2 880
Switzerland Cheese Marketing AG SCM ⁴	100	35	6
Total		64 623	3 580

Source: ¹ TSM (cheese dairies, incl. mountain dairies) ² TSM (milk dairies) ³ OFS 2018 ⁴ SCM

The Swiss dairy economy must be able to count on competitive processing enterprises. A great many jobs and strong value creation depend on this.

6. Jobs and enterprises in the retail trade, catering and tourism

	as a %	Work positions	Enterprises
Food retail trade ¹	13	11 863	1 485
Food wholesale trade ¹	13	4 433	442
Catering in Switzerland ¹	50	85 650	13 200
Total		101 946	15 127

Source: ¹ OFS 2018

The positive image of Swiss milk producers provides retailers and caterers with strong sales arguments.

Key figure

11 863 people work in the retail trade, thanks in particular to the good image of Swiss dairy products.

Number of work positions and enterprises in the dairy economy

	Work positions	Enterprises
Jobs upstream of dairy production	7 705	1 251
Jobs and enterprises in dairy farming	4 269	1 363
Jobs and enterprises directly linked to dairy cows	81 030	29 414
Jobs and enterprises in milk transport and trade	16 726	859
Jobs and enterprises in milk processing	64 623	4 956
Jobs and enterprises in the retail trade, catering and tourism	101 946	15 127

Creation of added value in the dairy economy

Turnover in Swiss francs	Total	in %	Dairy economy
Benefits upstream agriculture / dairy economy ¹	6 214 721 000	35	2 175 153 400
Production agriculture / dairy economy ¹	10 085 337 000	35	3 529 867 950
Processing of dairy milk ²	5 559 000 000	100	5 559 000 000
Processing of cheese milk: artisanal dairies, excluding production ³	1 000 000 000	100	1 000 000 000
Foodstuffs in the retail trade ⁴	25 889 000 000	13	3 361 000 000

Source: ¹ Base: economic accounts of agriculture 2015 ² Dairy statistic 2018, chapter 10

³ Annual report 2017 of Fromarte ⁴ Retail Scan + OffScan 2017 by Nielsen

The number of milk producers is constant declining – a trend which poses a problem in the grassland regions

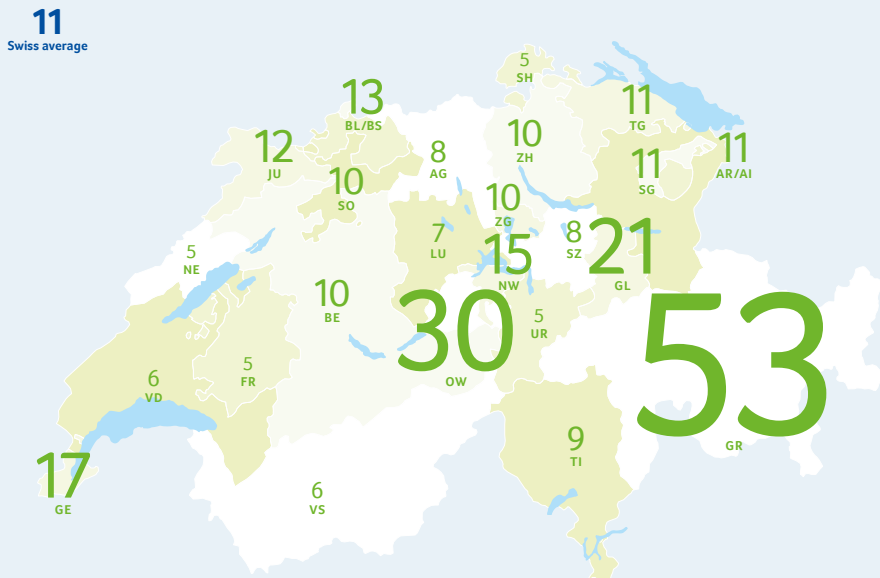
Total farms with dairy cows, whether or not they produce commercial milk



Source: OFS 2017

The number of organic dairy farms is increasing year by year in Switzerland

Percentage of organic dairy farms per canton



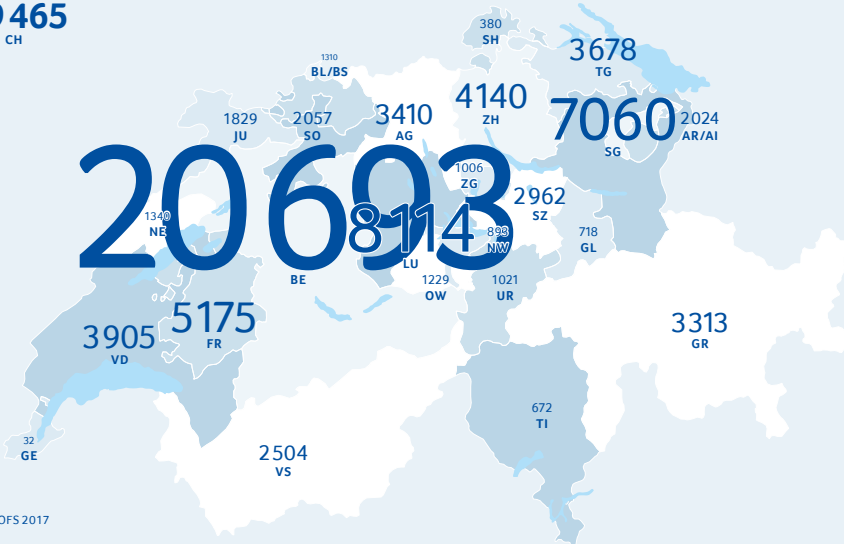
Source: OFAG, dairy production data 2017

Even in the remotest regions, a great many people work on dairy farms

Number of people working on a dairy farm with and without commercial milk

79 465

CH



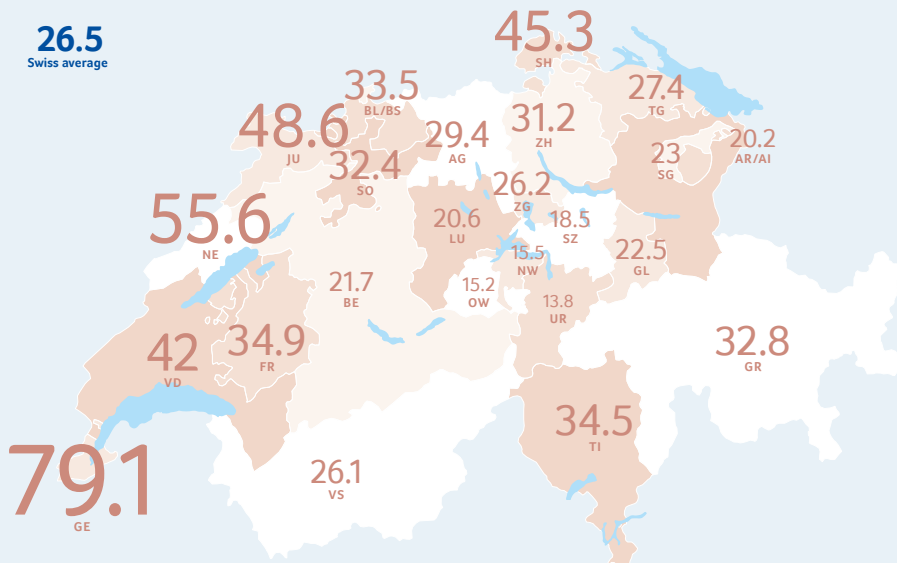
Source: OFS 2017

Milk is produced in all the cantons. The smallest farms are in the mountains, the largest on the plains

Average surface area of dairy farms in hectares

26.5

Swiss average



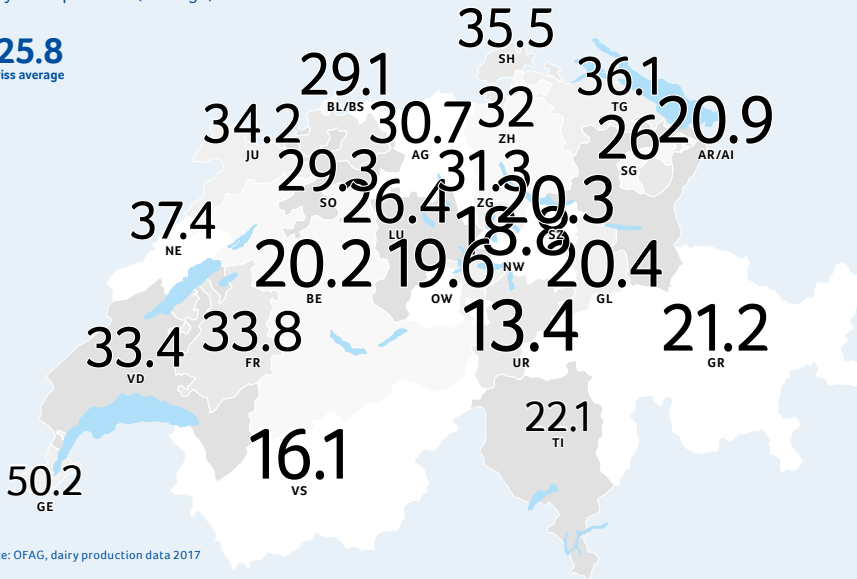
Source: OFAG, dairy production data 2017

Small family farms are typical of Switzerland and guarantee that the dairy cows are well treated

Dairy cows per farm (average)

25.8

Swiss average



Source: OFAG, dairy production data 2017

By European standards, the quantities produced are small. However, farm managers display great professionalism

Milk marketed per farm and per year in thousands of kilos

163

Swiss average



Source: OFAG, dairy production data 2017

All documents and statistics are available online:

swissmilk.ch/producteurs
bfs.admin.ch
swissgenetics.ch
myswitzerland.com
bobutter.ch
fromarte.ch
blw.admin.ch
fromagedalpage.ch
tsmtreuhand.ch
swiss-milkpowder.ch
milchindustrie.ch/fr
agriculture.ch
ip-lait.ch
agristat.ch

Other publications:

The Swiss dairy economy in figures 2018/19
Report on the market situation
Monitoring the price of milk

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Hit parade of names in French-speaking Switzerland in 2017

Females

- 1 Bella
- 2 Fiona
- 3 Nora
- 4 Sina
- 5 Bianca
- 6 Tina
- 7 Belinda
- 8 Nina

Males

- 1 Max
- 2 Leo
- 3 Nero
- 4 Moritz
- 5 Bruno
- 6 Reto
- 7 Remo
- 8 Felix

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