

Explorative market research on a family farm business in Switzerland

**How can a family farm business effectively implement a
marketing strategy in order to be profitable and grow in the
meat industry in Switzerland?**

**Bachelor Project submitted for the degree of
Bachelor of Science HES in International Business Management**

by

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**Geneva, 21th of August 2020
Haute école de gestion de Genève (HEG-GE)
International Business Management**

Disclaimer

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Geneva, August 21st, 2020

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Acknowledgements

The realization of this bachelor thesis was made possible thanks to the assistance of several people to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Timothy Connerton, for being such an inspiring and encouraging project supervisor. I would also thank him for his constant availability, his guidance all along this research and above all his judicious advices and insights, without which this project would not have been possible.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Laura Moser-Weber, the farm manager of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and Jean Weber, the owner of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* for their unlimited availability of time and their precious collaboration. I would also thank them for their valuable advices and for always being supportive to my work.

My sincere gratitude to Charlotte Nuber, who, since the beginning, proof read my work, supported me and demonstrated enthusiasm towards my work. Also, a particular thanks to Nathalie Weber who proof read the analytical parts of my primary data analysis and always encouraged me throughout the writing of the bachelor thesis.

Many thanks to all the survey and interview respondents who took time for my research, highly enhanced the quality of my statements and enabled the accomplishment of this research paper.

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to William Schick, Maëla Welti and my family for always encouraging and supporting me throughout the writing of this thesis. They have always pushed me to go beyond my limits and give the best of myself. Thanks to them, without whom this thesis would not be what it is.

Executive Summary

On average, three farms disappear every day in Switzerland. Small-scaled farms are the most affected by this downturn (Conrad Widmer, 2019). However, larger farms (over 50 ha) have increased. The consequence of this trend is that larger farms represent now a bigger share in Switzerland farming market, at the expense of smaller farms. How can small farms survive in this fast changing and complex environment? Implementing effective differentiation and marketing strategies are key factors to success and to the survival of small farms. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is a family farm located in Gingins and is currently facing a challenging situation regarding its meat production. The general decrease in meat consumption as well as consumers changes in consumption habits are factors that directly impact the farming industry. In addition, with the recent takeover of the farm by the owner's daughter, neither accurate differentiation nor marketing strategy are put in place. This research aimed at answering the following question; how can family farms implement effective marketing strategy in order to be profitable in the long-term and grow in the meat industry in Switzerland? The research suggests viable and sustainable recommendations for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* in order to be profitable in the long-term and create value in the market place.

Thanks to surveys and in-depth personal interviews, the research highlighted the fact that consumers are seeking to eat more local and healthier products. Quality, origin and proximity are the most important criteria in people's decision to directly buy at the farmers' place. Moreover, the research identified that consumers are willing to experience agritourism activities on farms and that demand for such events exists.

La Ferme du Château-Blanc already sells some of its beef production directly to customers. In order to expand and diversify its business, the farm should develop agritourism events and open a store on the farm. By collaborating with local producers, the farm can enlarge its product offering and satisfy customers' expectations. Besides, the farm location enables the organization of activities and events on the farm. Brunches, cooking classes and educational workshop are the main activities *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should focus on and base part of its differentiation strategy.

Emphasis will be placed on communication about the farm's constant research to improve meat quality, but also on transparency towards customers. In addition, building trust and solid relationship with customers will be key components of the farm's success. Finally, this model could also be a source of inspiration for other family farms.

Contents

Explorative market research on a family farm business in Switzerland	1
How can a family farm business effectively implement a marketing strategy in order to be profitable and grow in the meat industry in Switzerland?.....	1
Disclaimer	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Contents	iv
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures.....	viii
Abbreviations & Acronyms.....	x
1. Introduction	12
1.1 Motivation	12
1.2 Agricultural Overview.....	13
1.2.1 <i>International Agriculture</i>	13
1.2.2 <i>Swiss Agriculture</i>	14
1.3 Problem Statement & Research Question	22
1.3.1 <i>Research Objectives</i>	23
1.3.2 <i>Expected Outcomes</i>	24
2. Case Study - La Ferme du Château-Blanc	25
2.1 Firm's History	25
2.2 Firm's Capabilities & Resources.....	27
2.2.1 <i>Tangible Resources</i>	27
2.2.2 <i>Intangibles Resources</i>	28
2.3 The Firm's Beef Production.....	30
2.3.1 <i>Livestock Management</i>	30
2.3.2 <i>Births</i>	32
2.3.3 <i>Production Process</i>	32
2.3.4 <i>Fodder Method</i>	34

2.4	Regulations & Controls	36
2.4.1	<i>Controls</i>	36
2.4.2	<i>Animal protection & Certification Labels.....</i>	37
2.5	Firm's Competitors.....	39
2.5.1	<i>Map of Competitors.....</i>	40
2.5.2	<i>Direct Competitors.....</i>	40
2.5.3	<i>Indirect Competitors</i>	43
3.	Literature Review.....	47
3.1	Swiss Agriculture in the Economy.....	47
3.1.1	<i>Importance of the Swiss Agriculture</i>	47
3.1.2	<i>Agritourism</i>	47
3.1.3	<i>Farms disappearing in Switzerland.....</i>	49
3.2	Digital Transformation in the Agricultural Sector	50
3.2.1	<i>Digitization, Digitalization & Digital Transformation.....</i>	50
3.2.2	<i>Digital Agriculture</i>	52
3.2.3	<i>Digital Agriculture in Switzerland</i>	54
3.3	Family Farms.....	55
3.3.1	<i>Family Farm Definitions</i>	56
3.3.2	<i>Personal Definition</i>	60
3.4	Marketing Strategy	60
3.4.1	<i>Definition of a Marketing Strategy.....</i>	61
3.4.2	<i>Marketing Process Model.....</i>	61
3.4.3	<i>Marketing in the Agricultural Sector & Differentiation.....</i>	66
3.5	Effectiveness.....	68
3.5.1	<i>Key Performance Indicators to measure Effectiveness</i>	68
3.5.2	<i>Conclusion.....</i>	73
3.6	Success	74
3.6.1	<i>Setting Clear Objectives.....</i>	74
3.6.2	<i>Means of measuring Success.....</i>	75
3.6.3	<i>Conclusion.....</i>	79
3.7	Growth & Profitability.....	79
3.7.1	<i>Means of measuring Profitability.....</i>	79

3.7.2	<i>Conclusion</i>	83
3.8	Findings of the Literature Review	83
4.	Research Methodology	86
4.1	Type of Research	86
4.2	Source of Data	86
4.2.1	<i>Primary Data</i>	86
4.2.2	<i>Secondary Data</i>	87
4.3	Means of collecting Data	88
4.3.1	<i>Survey</i>	88
4.3.2	<i>Personal Interviews</i>	89
4.4	Remark	90
4.5	Limitation of the Study	90
5.	Primary Data Analysis & Insight	92
5.1	Survey	92
5.1.1	<i>Response Collection</i>	93
5.1.2	<i>Population Analysis</i>	94
5.1.3	<i>Purchasing & Consumption Habits Analysis</i>	96
5.1.4	<i>Product's Perception Analysis</i>	103
5.1.5	<i>Communication Channels Analysis</i>	110
5.1.6	<i>Farm Activities Analysis</i>	116
5.2	Interviews	122
5.2.1	<i>Interviews Overview</i>	123
5.2.2	<i>Interviews Analysis</i>	128
6.	Discussion	142
6.1	Key findings	142
6.1.1	<i>Literature Review</i>	142
6.1.2	<i>Primary Data</i>	145
6.2	Recommendations	150
6.3	Suggested Business Model Canvas	157
6.3.1	<i>Business Model Canvas</i>	158

6.4	Biases & Suggestions for Future Research	161
6.5	La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Boutique	162
6.6	Considerations.....	162
7.	Conclusion	164
8.	Bibliography	165
	Appendix 1: Survey Questions	174
	Appendix 2: Survey Answers Question 20	192
	Appendix 3: Guide for interviews with consumers	197
	Appendix 4: Transcript of interview with consumer 1	201
	Appendix 5: Transcript of interview with consumer 2	205
	Appendix 6: Transcript of interview with consumer 3	209
	Appendix 7: Guide for interviews with butchers	212
	Appendix 8: Transcript of interview with butcher 1	216
	Appendix 9: Transcript of interview with butcher 2	219
	Appendix 10: Guide for interview with restaurant.....	222
	Appendix 11: Transcript of interview with restaurant.....	224
	Appendix 12: Guide for interview with milk producer.....	226
	Appendix 13: Transcript of interview with milk producer	230
	Appendix 14: Guide for interviews with retired farmer	233
	Appendix 15: Transcript of interview with retired farmer	235

List of Tables

Table 1 Digital Transformation Timeframes & Growth Rate	52
Table 2 Survey Structure & Type of Questions	92
Table 3 Survey cleaning up Process	93
Table 4 Summary Best Experience on a Farm	120
Table 5 Interviewees' Profile Overview.....	127
Table 6 Interview Themes to be analyzed.....	128
Table 7 Consumers' Interview Results	129
Table 8 Interviews Referencing	134
Table 9 Supply's Interview Results	135

List of Figures

Figure 1 Distribution of Farms by Size Class 2000,2017 & 2018	16
Figure 2 Evolution of Meat Consumption per Inhabitant 2009-2018	17
Figure 3 La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Domain	26
Figure 4 The cows on the Mountain La Dôle.....	31
Figure 5 The Cows that are being fed	33
Figure 6 Use of Land.....	36
Figure 7 The Herd grazing in Springtime.....	38
Figure 8 Natura Beef & SwissPrimGourmet Certification Labels.....	39
Figure 9 Map of La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Competitors.....	40
Figure 10 Swiss Future Farm Site in Thurgau.....	55

Figure 11 Differentiation Criteria for Family Farm.....	59
Figure 12 A Simple Model of the Marketing Process.....	62
Figure 13 A/B Testing Process.....	70
Figure 14 Gross Profit Margin per sector in the US	81
Figure 15 Gross Profit Margin & Net Profit Margin per sector in the US	83
Figure 16 Gender, Place of Residence, Age Range & Professional situation	95
Figure 17 Meat Consumption	96
Figure 18 Beef Meat Consumption.....	97
Figure 19 Beef Consumption Habits during COVID-19	98
Figure 20 Monthly Budget & Household Consumption	99
Figure 21 Main Places of purchasing Beef	100
Figure 22 Online Beef Purchase	101
Figure 23 Farmer or Producer's Place of purchase	102
Figure 24 Importance of Criteria when buying Beef.....	105
Figure 25 Main Categories defining Beef Quality	107
Figure 26 Certification Labels.....	109
Figure 27 Beef Meat Cuts.....	109
Figure 28 Beef Advertising Communication Channels	112
Figure 29 Recipe Advertising Channels.....	116
Figure 30 Activities on the Farm.....	118
Figure 31 Château-Blanc Awareness.....	121
Figure 32 How La Ferme du Château-Blanc was known	122
Figure 33 Map of Interviews' Place	124
Figure 34 La Ferme du Château-Blanc's New Business Model	157

Abbreviations & Acronyms

AFF	Administration fédérale des finances
Agriscope	Swiss Confederation's competence center for agricultural research
ARMS	Agricultural Resource Management Survey
ATS	Agence télégraphique Suisse
B2B	Business to business
BAE	Bureau of Agricultural Economics
BDTA	Banque de données du trafic des animaux
CIM	The Chartered Institute of Marketing
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
ESA	Agricultural Development Economics Division
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
HA	Hectare
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
OCDE	Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques
OFAG	Office fédéral de l'agriculture
OFCOM	Office fédéral de la communication
OFS	Office fédéral de la statistique
OMC	Organisation mondiale du commerce
PER	Prestations écologiques requises

Prométerre	Association that promotes the earth trades
PRS	Présence Suisse
ROI	Return on Investment
SAU	Surface Agricole Utile
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
SPB	Surface de Promotion de la Biodiversité
SRPA	Sortie régulière en plein air
SST	Système de stabulation particulièrement respectueuse des animaux
UN	United Nations
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USP	Union Suisse des Paysans

1. Introduction

1.1 *Motivation*

The purpose of this study is to suggest concrete solutions for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, a family farm business located in Gingins, in the canton of Vaud, to be profitable in the long-term and grow in the meat industry. In order to reach this objective, this report will present an effective marketing strategy that can be implemented by the farm. It will be shown how *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* needs to differentiate its meat production and distribution from competitors in order to be profitable in the long term.

Everything started 2 years ago, when the researcher attended her first classes of marketing in the scope of the International Business Management course. She understood what marketing meant and became aware of the importance of marketing for businesses. The theory learnt in class could serve a wider cause; it could actually be applied to a real-life business; to her family business. At first, there were no real expectations regarding this field of study, but through the lessons learnt and the interesting subjects seen in class, marketing eventually generated enthusiasm and interest. Marketing is a broad subject and involves various aspects, like creativity, inventiveness and adaptability, to quote only a few. Those aspects made this research object intellectually challenging and allowed to have a wider vision. There was a continuous growing interest for the subject, so the researcher decided to deepen her knowledge in this field through the completion of minors in International Marketing and Sales, but also in Social Media and E-business. These learnings allowed to have a wider vision of marketing and see how it is interrelated with almost every aspect in life. As a consequence, marketing will be a major topic of this report.

As mentioned above, this report will be applied on a real-life business case and will be helpful for the growth of an existing organization. The story of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is described in detail later in this report. It was taken over at the same time as the drafting of this study. The farm having no clear marketing strategy put in place for the future, it seemed obvious to combine the business' issue with marketing's strategies.

Finally, small-sized farms continuously disappear in Switzerland and there is a clear willingness from consumers to get back to a more local consumption. This paper will explore the multiple aspects touching *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and offer the best possible solutions for both actors; consumers and the farm.

1.2 *Agricultural Overview*

1.2.1 International Agriculture

Agriculture has always played a major role in the world economy and is still the main way to achieve food security. Agriculture does not only contribute to global economy, but it has direct and indirect impacts on people's health and life, on environment and on biodiversity. Today, agriculture is becoming even more important with the worldwide implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) to be achieved by 2030. The SDG n°2 aims at "*end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture*" (UN, 2015). There is a rise of concern to achieve these goals and to reach an agriculture that is more sustainable.

Although agriculture only accounts for a small part of the global economy, 3% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 (The World Bank Group, 2017), it still remains essential for people's life. In 2018, almost 30% of all workers were employed by the agricultural industry (The World Bank Group, 2020) meaning that almost one third of the economically active population gets its income from the agricultural industry (The World Bank Group, 2020).

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) agricultural development economics working paper from 2019 and based on its statistical yearbook made in 2014, there are more than 570 million farms worldwide (Lowder et al., 2019). The State of Food and Agriculture made by the FAO in 2014 states that over 90% of farms are mainly managed by an individual or a family, and occupy 70 to 80% of farm lands, producing over 80% of the world's food (Naeem, Kodikara, 2014). Moreover, the vast majority of the world's farms are either small (1-2 ha) or very small (less than 1ha), and account for almost 85% of all farms, but operate only about 10% of all agricultural land. Family farming is therefore the most frequent worldwide form of agriculture. On the opposite, large farms (larger than 50 ha), account for less than 1% of all farms and control 65% of the world's agricultural land (Naeem, Kodikara, 2014).

The majority of the farms are found in Asia (China 34%) followed by India (24%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (12%). Most of the farms are small-scaled farms and family farms (Lowder et al., 2019). There are only 2% of farms located in high-income countries, whereas the majority are in lower-or upper-middle-income countries.

1.2.2 Swiss Agriculture

The data, information and numbers used to illustrate the context of agriculture in Switzerland and its subsections are mainly based on years 2017- 2018.

Switzerland being a high-income country, the agricultural sector is only a small part of the country's economy. Nevertheless, it plays an important role in the country's food security and the tourism industry. Food security is vital, because it assures the availability of enough food all the time to Swiss citizens, without any shortage. By achieving food security, Switzerland prevents future food shortage that could occur, such as drought, war or any other problems that could impact the country's food security (OFAG, 2016). Moreover, food security avoids being dependent on other countries' food production and exports. Externalities of agriculture, such as well-kept landscapes, unspoiled nature with great biodiversity or authentic food products have positive impacts on other economic actors, like tourism industry. The tourism industry is an important part of the Swiss economy and agriculture contributes directly to it through agritourism for instance. The agricultural sector on the other hand, benefits from tourism because it creates jobs in rural areas and provides additional income for agricultural work (USP, 2019a).

Agriculture has always been part of Switzerland's DNA and the country is very protective of its agricultural industry. One third of the country's land is dedicated to agricultural production and pasture. In 2018, the primary sector, which includes agriculture, forestry and fishing contributed to the country's GDP by around 0.7% (The World Bank Group, 2019). The annual revenue is generated by livestock and crop farming, which amounted to 10,8 billion Swiss francs in 2018 (OFS, 2018). The agricultural sector remains essential for Switzerland, especially for food self-sufficiency, which partly guarantees the country's food security. In 2017, Switzerland produced 59% of the food consumed in the country (Alessandro Rossi, 2019). In 2018, 152'442 people were working in the agriculture industry, which represents approximately 2,8% of the total number of economically active persons.

1.2.2.1 Subsidies

In order to encourage domestic production, the state imposes high import taxes and subsidizes farmers. The state applies higher tariffs on the importation of agricultural products. Depending on the competitiveness of the imported products, the state will adapt the rate of customs duty applied to a product, making them higher or lower, depending on the competition it exerts on indigenous production. For instance, if the

product imported is practically not produced or not at all in Switzerland, like fish or cotton, customs duty will be low. On the opposite, when products are largely produced, such as milk or beef meat, the customs duty will be very high. Additionally to custom duties, there are also imports quotas regarding each products imported (Dacorogna et al., 2019). Switzerland has, on average, high import taxes compared to other countries. In 2018, import tariffs on agricultural products amounted 36,5% in Switzerland, whereas the average tariff rate in Europe was 12% and only 5,3% in the United-States (OMC, 2019). By applying custom duties and quotas, the state encourages domestic production and consumption.

Another way to encourage domestic production is through subsidies for farmers. Every 4 years, the state adapts its agricultural policy. The state's expenditures are reviewed, and the way amounts are dispatched can also be modified. The total budget allocated to agriculture and food for the period 2018 to 2021 amounted to 13,56 billion Swiss francs. This amount was divided in 3 main groups (AFF, 2020):

1. Direct payments (CHF 11,25 bn)
2. Subsidies for production and sales (CHF 1,747 bn)
3. Fundamental improvements and social measures (CHF 0.56 bn)

In 2019, the Swiss Confederation has allocated over 5% of its national budget to agriculture and food, which represented 3,658 million Swiss francs (AFF, 2020). Over the past years, the parliament's total budget for agriculture and food has remained constant. However, a 1,7% decrease in the budget can be observed for the period 2018-2021 compared to 2014-2017 (OFAG, 2019). The new agricultural policy that will be implemented on the 1st of January 2022 until 2025 is set at 13,77 billion Swiss francs and will focus on ensuring farmers' future and on promoting sustainable farming. The new goals set through the agricultural policy of 2022 will allow better development of products, enhance efficiency of operations and therefore seek to reduce environmental impact in order to commit to the SDG set by the UN (24Heures, 2019).

1.2.2.2 Farms Downturn

Even though there are various financial supports made by the states, the agricultural sector has seen the number of farms declining in the past years. Since 2000, over 19'650 farms disappeared, which is a decrease of 1.8% per year on average, and which accounts for about 3 farms closed every day (Conrad Widmer, 2019). The downturn of farms decreased simultaneously with the number of jobs in the sector.

The total number of farms between 2018 and 2017 decreased by 1,5%, however larger farms (more than 50 ha) have increased by 3,5% (Conrad Widmer, 2019).

Figure 1 Distribution of Farms by Size Class 2000,2017 & 2018

Évolution du nombre d'exploitations par classe de grandeur					
Classe de grandeur	Nombre d'ex-ploitations	Nombre d'ex-ploitations	Nombre d'ex-ploitations	Variation annuelle en %	Variation en %
	2000	2017	2018	2000 – 2018	2017 – 2018
0 – 3 ha	8 371	5 440	5 342	-2,5	-1,8
3 – 10 ha	18 542	9 511	9 271	-3,8	-2,5
10 – 20 ha	24 984	15 324	14 873	-2,8	-2,9
20 – 30 ha	11 674	10 725	10 576	-0,5	-1,4
30 – 50 ha	5 759	7 870	7 944	1,8	0,9
> 50 ha	1 207	2 750	2 846	4,9	3,5
Total	70 537	51 620	50 852	-1,8	-1,5

Source: OFS 2019-Relevé des structures agricoles (OFS,2019b)

The consequence of this change in the size of existing farms, is that larger farms represent now a bigger share of Switzerland's farms, and this at the expense of smaller ones. Today, 80% of the agricultural production is retailed through wholesalers, which encourages large farms to produce larger quantities in order to reduce prices and drive demand (SWI, 2018).

Various reasons contribute to this general trend, such as the changing structure of the Swiss economy and competition from countries with lower agricultural production costs (PRS, 2017). Though, the main reason is that farmers are not able to make a living out of their farming.

1.2.2.3 Agricultural Production

Livestock farming, and crop farming are the two main activities that constitute agriculture in Switzerland. The *Surface Agricole Utile* (SAU), which means the useful agricultural area, includes arable crops, perennial crops located outside the arable lands, natural meadows and pastures. The SAU is needed both for crop farming or for livestock farming representing around 1,05 million hectares and approximately 25% of Switzerland's surface area in 2017 (Mestiri, 2019). The crop farming includes special and arable crops as well as fields for forage production. The total production of crop farming represented 4,12 billion Swiss francs in 2017, which accounted for 40% of the total agricultural

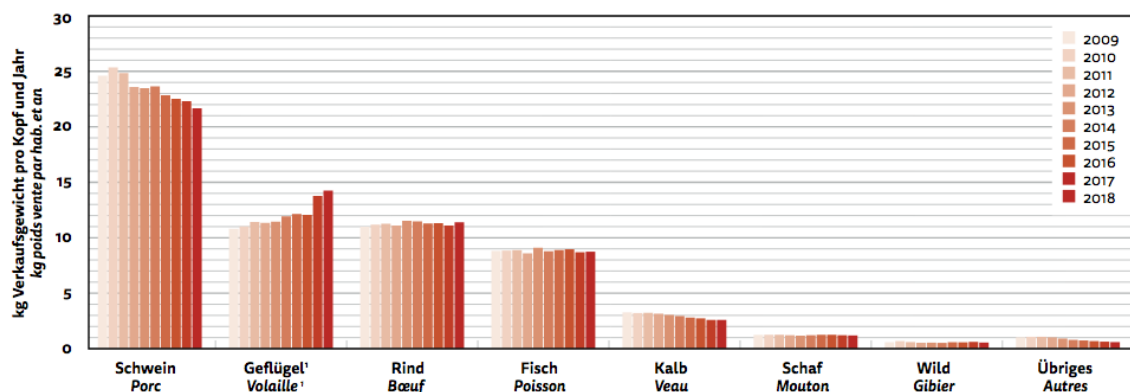
production (OFS, 2019a). Weather issues, during the year 2017 and several frosts nights had harmful impact on crop farming, being the main reason of a lower annual revenue in 2017 compared to 2018 and 2019 (ATS, 2018). The annual revenue in 2018 amounted 10,6 billion and 11 billion in 2019 (OFS, 2019b).

1.2.2.4 Meat Production

Livestock farming represented more than 49% of the total agricultural production in 2017, over 5 billion (OFS, 2019a). Livestock farming includes meat production (beef, pork, lamb, mutton and poultry), dairy milk and eggs. Livestock farming and meat production, particularly beef, are key activities in the agricultural production, but also in the guarantee of the country's food security. Meat consumption in Switzerland remained relatively stable over the past years, although a slight decrease can be observed (Leuenberger, 2019).

According to figure 2, pork is the most consumed meat in Switzerland, approximately 21 kg per year and per person (Proviande, 2018), with a slight decrease in 2018 (-2,5%). Poultry is the only sector growing in the fresh meat segment (Le Matin, 2019), with a growth of almost 4%.

Figure 2 Evolution of Meat Consumption per Inhabitant 2009-2018



¹ Methodenänderung ab 2017: Anpassung der Ausbeutefaktoren, Zunahme der Menge verkaufsfertiges Fleisch.

¹ Changement de méthode à partir de 2017: modification des facteurs de rendement, augmentation de la quantité de viande prête à la vente.

Source: Le Marché de la viande 2018 (Proviande, 2018)

In 2018, annual meat consumption per inhabitants was around 52 kg. There was a slight increase in the global consumption compared to previous year (+ 0.4%), which does not represent an increase in the consumption per inhabitants, because there was at the same time a demographical increase of 0.5% in Switzerland (Proviande, 2018). Regarding beef meat, Swiss consumers eat on average 11,36 kg per year, and almost 85% of it is produced inland (Proviande, 2018). Beef production and beef consumption

declined from 2013 to 2017, but since 2018, a slight increase can be observed. This increase is mainly due to the fact that there was drought in Switzerland in 2017. The weather issues did not allow an effective use of pastures and the drought from 2017 made grazing temporarily impossible. There was not only a shortage of forage, but there was also a lack of fodder for the coming winter. As a result, many farmers, meat and dairy producers, decided to adapt the number of their cows and had their animals slaughtered (Agri, 2019b), which constitutes the main reason for domestic meat production growth since 2018.

1.2.2.5 Imports & Exports

The national production of indigenous meat alone does not guarantee the supply of meat needed in Switzerland. Although there is an increase in indigenous meat production, there is a high demand for fine pieces. The high demand cannot be satisfied with domestic production only. In order to meet the demand for all sorts and parts of meat, imports are essential and large amounts of meat, such as poultry, mutton and beef had to be imported in 2018 (Proviande, 2018). Germany, Brazil, Australia and New-Zealand are the main countries, among many others, from which Switzerland imports. In 2018, Germany was the main beef and pork supplier, providing over 25% of beef consumption and more than 40% of pork consumption. Brazil exported over 40% of poultry consumption and Australia and New-Zealand supplied Switzerland with almost 65% of lamb meat consumption (Leuenberger, 2019).

However, when comparing 2017 to 2018, the total imported meat decreased by 3,6%, mainly due to the increase of domestic production. The beef segment had the biggest diminution with 7.9% less imports in 2018 compared to previous year (Proviande, 2018).

Regarding exports of Swiss meat for human consumption, it decreased by 8.1% from 2017 to 2018. The decline of exports is mainly due to the global slowdown in growth in the world and due to the Swiss franc depreciation, which rendered exportation expensive and unaffordable for many foreign countries. Pork meat was the most affected segment with a downturn of almost 47%. On the opposite, exportation of beef meat increased by 16%, representing 5252 tons of meat (Leuenberger, 2019).

1.2.2.6 Meat Consumption decrease

The general decrease in meat consumption can be explained by several factors.

First, the worldwide climate change issues and the environmental concerns from consumers drive the tendency of less meat consumption. According to the report made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), new farming methods have to be implemented and consumption habits changed if global warming wants to be reduced (IPCC, 2019). Consumption habits that aim at cutting meat from diet, such as veganism and vegetarianism are becoming increasingly present in today's society. There is only little information regarding Swiss citizen and how these trends are applied to them. There is lack of current representative polls of Switzerland because studies and surveys carried out by certain organizations do not have always unequivocal questions. Moreover, representative surveys are expensive (Renato Pichler, 2017) and only rough estimations can be achieved. The data that is presented below is based on a representative survey that has been conducted in 2017 by DemoSCOPE AG, Switzerland's biggest market research company. The survey was requested by Swissveg, the largest body representing the interests of vegetarians and vegan in Switzerland. The independent organization aims at reducing durably meat-consumption by promoting plant-based food as a healthy, attractive and accessible lifestyle for all (Swissveg, 2017). According to the survey's finding, one person out of seven does not consume meat products. 11% of the Swiss population are vegetarian and 3 % are vegan, which represented almost 248'000 persons in 2017. In addition to these estimations, there are 17% of flexitarians (Swissveg, 2019). Flexitarianism, also called casual vegetarianism, is a movement including people who have a regime that is mainly vegetarian, but still allows some occasional meat consumption. This new eating regime is mainly due to the rising concern about environmental sustainability (Delaney, 2018). However, flexitarians can be an interesting market for farmers. Flexitarians want to eat less meat but one that is of higher quality. This represents an opportunity for farmers who want to differentiate themselves by their meat quality, local production and emphasis on healthy products. It is a win-win situation for both parties. On one hand, there is a demand for a unique product that has been raised under healthy and ethically conditions and on the other hand, there is a supply that meets these criteria.

In total, more than 30% of the Swiss population has eliminated or cut back on meat consumption. These figures are based on self-declaration, that is why there is the need to consider this estimation carefully (Swissveg, 2019).

Second, the worldwide increase in alternative offers to meat consumption also impacts the decrease in meat consumption. Meat-free products and plant-based food became more and more popular in the past years, mainly due to the change in consumers' habits towards a diet free of meat and reduced in meat. People became more aware of their health and of environmental issues, which has driven meat demand downwards.

According to a study released in 2019 by Mintel the world's leading market intelligence agency and market research provider (Mintel Group, 2020a), 23% of new products launch in the British market in 2019 were labelled as vegan, which is an increase of 6 % compared to 2018 (Mintel Group, 2020b). The sales of meat-free products in the UK has risen by 40% from 2014 to 2019, which reinforces the global trends to cut back meat and seems promising for the future of plant-based products (Mintel Group, 2020b). Moreover, the study highlights that 48% of British consumers think that diminishing meat consumption is a good way to tackle environmental issues (Mintel Group, 2020b). This new market segment offers opportunities to companies and enables them to meet the growing demand for such products. Companies such as Beyond Meat or Impossible foods took the opportunity to develop their products and became leaders in the plant-based market (Garcia, 2019). Nevertheless, competition in the segment is strong, and new companies, such as Nestlé launched in 2019 its own plant-based burger to be sold in Europe and to be extended to the United- States (Nestlé, 2019). As seen before, plant-based products and meat-free food is a growing market. The global market for animal-free meat substitutes has high chances to reach \$140 billion by 2029, which might influence the Swiss citizens' meat consumption (Richter, 17.062019).

The third factor that impacts the diminution of meat consumption is linked to the overall food consumption decrease in the last 3 years (USP, 2019b). Swiss citizens eat less quantities of food than before. This phenomenon can be explained, for instance, by the increase of seniors (65 and over) while the percentage of youth (under 20) and people of working age (20 to 64 years old) has declined over the past years (OFS, 2019c). Having an aging population means that people will eat less. Other reasons can explain the general decrease of overall food consumption. In professional life, there is today a lack of physical activities due to automatization, therefore, people burn less energy and need to eat less. Finally, the change in consumption habits, such as consuming less, but better or the increasing awareness of people in relation to their health, are certainly a factor that influences this downward trend (USP, 2019b).

1.2.2.7 Direct Selling

In order to counterattack the decrease of meat consumption in Switzerland, farmers need to find solutions that are effective and that enable them to be profitable. One solution is to take back the control over the products' distribution and therefore avoid intermediaries and potential lower margins for the farmers.

Today, more and more farmers decide to sell directly to consumers and to enlarge their activities through diversification. In Switzerland, direct selling significantly increased from 2010 to 2016. Over 60% of farms decided to sell through this channel (OFS, 2017). Direct selling is done mainly through shops on the farms, markets or home deliveries. New selling methods, such as vending machines or online sales are adopted by farmers (LeJeune, 2017). These recent selling methods are soaring in the agricultural sector and offer farmers opportunities to differentiate themselves from competitors. Regarding meat, direct selling is mainly done through butchers' shop, retailers and some farmers who sell directly from their farm. Direct selling enables farmers to be closer to customers and to develop the relationship customer-producer. Through this selling method, farmers are able to retain a higher margin on their sales and consumers have the opportunity to buy locally and to have a better control over traceability (Foggiato, 2020).

The increase of direct-selling in the agribusiness requires farms to have an effective communication strategy. There is only little information about marketing in the agricultural sector in Switzerland. However, marketing remains essential for any business to be successful and profitable in the long term. Communication and marketing play an important role in the customer relationship, to attract and retain them, and to build a strong and long-lasting relationship with added value for them (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018). Having an effective marketing strategy is key for farmers, especially today where consumers are changing their consumption habits and are more conscious of what they want to eat (Dereuder, 2019).

To conclude, more small-scaled farms are disappearing, domestic meat consumption is decreasing, and movements such as vegetarianism or veganism are rising. Those trends make it hard for farmers to compete in the meat industry in Switzerland. One of the solutions to this problem is to focus distribution channels on direct selling, which increases farmers' margins. An effective communication and marketing strategy are essential to differentiate from competitors and stay important actors on the market.

1.3 Problem Statement & Research Question

As briefly explained in the introduction, the development of larger farms in Switzerland is increasing at the expense of smaller farms that are disappearing. Despite the States' subsidies, financial help is not sufficient to support farmers and to make businesses profitable. Yet, agriculture is essential in Switzerland because it contributes to Swiss economy, to food security, but also to landscape maintenance and the biodiversity preservation. It also contributes indirectly to tourism through Swiss traditions and living customs and directly through agritourism. Agritourism being all the activities developed for tourists on farms, such as rural lodges, direct product selling, commented tasting, and guided farm tours. Agritourism is explored further in this report.

A factor contributing to the progressive disappearance of small-scaled farms concerns the familial handover, when no family member wants to take over the farm, due to lack of motivation or lack of profitability. Many farmers work based on traditional farming and do not have an effective strategy that will allow them to perpetuate over the long-term. Additionally, external factors such as changes in consumption habits and food trends like veganism or vegetarianism also impact directly the farming industry. All those factors make the business unattractive for the next farmers' family generations.

Marketing strategy is key and essential to make a business sustainable and profitable. The agricultural sector especially has not been able to implement those strategies, because farmers do not use them. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is facing a challenging situation regarding its meat production and the implementation of an appropriate strategy to differentiate and to create value in the market place. The decrease in meat consumption, the shifting in consumption habits and the fast-changing environment of digitalization and technology, impact highly the small farm *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Therefore, this explorative market research on a family farm business in Switzerland will attempt to answer the following question: ***“How can a family farm business effectively implement a marketing strategy in order to be profitable and grow in the meat industry in Switzerland?”***.

1.3.1 Research Objectives

The study's objective is to suggest *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* some realistic and applicable recommendations in order for them to continue competing in the meat industry, but also in the other business units that will be developed, such as the event activity. The aim will be that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* can implement strong sales and marketing strategies so that the business can grow in the long-term. In order to achieve this goal, three research objectives will be set; understanding of the market, marketing strategy and profitability.

Firstly, it is essential to determine and understand fully the meat industry in Switzerland, as well as customers' expectations regarding meat (more precisely beef). The goal will be to identify the different factors that drive this market, internally and externally. Complementary to this, there will be a closer look at the influence of current trends such as vegetarianism, veganism or plant-based meat substitutes. Lastly, the impact of imports will also be taken into consideration. The outcome of this research should allow the identification of opportunities in which small farms in Switzerland can compete.

Secondly, it will be important to see how to implement an efficient marketing strategy to distinguish *La Ferme du Château- Blanc's* products and to identify the most suitable channels to market while fitting business' capabilities. The aim is not only to determine an efficient marketing strategy, but also to bring meat quality to a superior level. The communication will be based on high-quality meat and on other differentiation factors, such as the localness and the expertise of the meat production.

Thirdly, realistic and viable recommendations will be suggested so that profitability can be reached in the long-term. Solutions such as redesigning the distribution channels or focusing on high-profitable activities will be explored.

The end goal of this report is to apply accurate and viable solutions to a real business, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. The overall strategy will focus on the offering of a unique experience to customers.

1.3.2 Expected Outcomes

Based on the research objectives set previously, there will be four main expected outcomes that will lead to the main outcome of this project, which is to recommend relevant and feasible suggestions to an existing family farm business that is facing challenges in order to improve their current situation. This research seeks to identify solutions to improve a business model in the long-term and to drive profit on a long-term vision.

The first expected outcome concerns the understanding of the market. The outcome will be a full understanding of the meat market and its various drivers and threats, as well as a full understanding of the consumers' consumption preferences. The outcome of this research objective should allow the identification of opportunities in which small farms in Switzerland can compete, but also draw a strategy that fits to the farm's capabilities.

The second expected outcome concerns the marketing strategy. An efficient and strong marketing strategy will be established and applied to the current situation of the farm based on market research, survey and interviews. The outcome of this market strategy will be to establish uniqueness and create competitive advantages. Other important outcomes include an increase in brand awareness and a strong brand image. Also, a strong communication strategy will enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to gain customers. Concretely, the outcome will be to increase the number of followers on social media having at least 100 followers within 2 months.

The third expected outcome concerns profitability. The objective is to have a concrete strategy that drives profitability. The expected outcome for the farm is to be sustainable and profitable by 2021.

The fourth expected outcome concerns the reevaluation of the firm's current business model. The objective is to have tangible recommendations providing a range of alternatives to the firm's current product offering and allow them to offer a unique value proposition to customers.

Finally, the intention of the research is to show that even though the farms' future is highly uncertain, hopefully small farms will continue to play a role in Switzerland.

2. Case Study - La Ferme du Château-Blanc

2.1 Firm's History

La Ferme du Château-Blanc is a farm located in the western part of Switzerland in the canton of Vaud, in Gingins. The *Château-Blanc* estate exists since 1791, and includes a castle, a farm and many fields. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has been in the Weber Family since 1974, when Hans Weber Senior, the grandfather of the family, purchased the farm after 16 years of working at the farm and 8 years of land renting. In 1984, Hans Weber Junior took over the farm and developed the farm's activity, which was to produce and sell vegetables. Later on, in 1997, the farm made the move from dairy cows to beef cattle. There was a transition from the dairy cow's species to beef cattle for meat, changing from Simmental to Limousine cattle. The meat was first sold to a wholesaler called Vianco. Thanks to the farm's strong customer base, acquired through the direct selling of fruits and vegetables, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* was able to sell from 2002 to 2011 its meat directly to final customers. The high demand for local produced meat, allowed *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to sell also pork meat. In 2011, the choice was made to stop selling meat directly to customers because the market gardening has grown too much and too fast. It was therefore difficult to follow with the meat production.

The meat was produced and sold under the licensed label Natura Beef. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* sold their products directly to customers at the farm but also in local markets in Nyon and Gland. The company diversified its product offering and collaborated with local farmers and producers in the region in order to offer a wider range of products to its customers. After more than 65 years of activity and encountering a lot of success, the company was shut down end of 2015 and all commercial activities such as direct selling of fruits and vegetables were stopped. This decision has been made, because the farm's owners were close to retirement and no one out of the four children wanted to take over the farm at that time.

Since 2017, Laura Moser Weber, one of the Weber family's children, has decided to take over the farm and start a new business out of it. She has a bachelor's degree in nursery and worked for several years in the management of a health center in Geneva, called *Helveticare*. She was in charge of the communication, the human resources, the administrative tasks and the supervision of the center in general. In order to make a transition from the health sector to the agriculture industry, she completed a 1-year training that allowed her to start the procedures for taking over the farm.

She is currently working with Hans Weber Junior, who facilitates the taking over of the farm. He supports her in the process and helps her gain more experience.

The goal is to do and offer something different from before. A couple of decisions were taken in order to reach this goal. First, the meat will be sold directly to final customers, avoiding wholesalers, which enables to have a higher margin for the farmer, but also to be directly in contact with the customer. Even though there is the potential for a higher margin, there is also more workload for the farmer. Second, another business unit will be developed in order to diversify the farm's activity. This new business unit will include the organization of events at the farm. This new activity gives a positive social image of the business; bringing people together and celebrate important and joyful moments. These events will also rise people's awareness of the existence of the farm and develop the sale of meat. The farm already has some experience in event organization. For instance, *La fête du Poulet* used to take place at the farm in the past. This event allowed people to taste roasted chickens from the farm. Other events like weddings, baptisms or birthdays were also organized at the farm, because people asked to rent the facilities. The aim would be to develop and offer these services as part of the farm's main activities. The business' vision is the same than before, to feed people with quality, fresh and healthy products, but also to welcome people and offer customers a new experience.

Figure 3 La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Domain



Source: *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* archives

2.2 Firm's Capabilities & Resources

2.2.1 Tangible Resources

The data, information and numbers used to illustrate the farm's actual situation and context are based on years 2018- 2019.

2.2.1.1 Physical Assets

The farm's total surface area is 26 ha, including lands for field crops, pastures, grassland for livestock, forest and various areas for *Surface de Promotion de la Biodiversité* (SPB).

These areas comprised in 2018, 27 fruit trees, 11 isolated trees and 27 walnut trees. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* estate is made up of 3 residential homes, 2 main farm buildings, one that was used before for market gardening and one for the cattle. There are also 2 sheds and 1 henhouse.

The farm is subdivided into various sectors such as;

- Cattle farming
- Poultry farming
- Apiculture, with 2 apiaries
- Land renting for market gardening
- Cereal crops
- Oilseed crops
- Fodder production for the livestock
- Walnuts production
- Prairie, pastureland, mowing
- Manufacturing of homemade products (such as jams, chutney, syrups, salad dressing and so on).

In 2019 the livestock accounted for 85 bovines from the Limousine breed intended for meat production. The livestock contained:

- 1 bull
- 28 mother cows
- 28 suckling calves
- 14 heifers
- 14 bovines for fattening

During the summer, the livestock moves to summer pastures on the mountain *La Dôle* and at the *Reculet* until end of October. In the meantime, the empty stabling is sometimes used for heifers to get fattened.

2.2.1.2 Financial Resources

On the 1st of January 2020, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* was taken over by Laura Moser Weber and has therefore a new financial position. The farm's land as well as the buildings are now rented. Until the company was closed in 2015, the financials from the business were healthy and there was a low level of debts, which is very important to get a positive return on investments. Thanks to the previous activity, which was the sale of vegetables and fruits, there has been enough cash and liquidities to pay the various bills and enable the company to be sustainable. The aim today will be to maintain the finances so that there is a right balance between the amount of work that has to be done and the expected return on investment. At the moment there is only 1 person working full-time at the farm. Knowing that there is much more workload and effort required to get a positive return on investment, it is important to implement a strong marketing strategy in order to assure the viability of the farm and its activities.

2.2.2 Intangibles Resources

2.2.2.1 Reputation & Skills

La Ferme du Château-Blanc is known by a lot of people in the region of Nyon. Until the business was shut down, it acted as a major player in the markets in Nyon, Gland and at the farm. It had a highly diversified product offering and a good customer service. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s main purpose was to feed people through healthy, quality and fresh products.

The continuous tests and experiments made over the years allowed the farm's owner and his employees to gain expertise and to create and provide innovative products that were not produced before.

In addition, the exceptional care dedicated to their products and to customers as individuals, enabled *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to build a strong reputation. The know-how and passion were transmitted through generations and allowed to keep high standards of qualitative and diversified products.

Furthermore, the successful practice in the meat production allows the farm to develop further this sector without having to make important infrastructural changes. The long-lasting experience and knowledge of this industry and the production method enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to focus its effort more on the development of the activity rather

than the production process itself. The development of the activity itself creates opportunities to offer a real experience to the customer and not just simply meat.

The company has always been able to adapt to unexpected events, and new challenges. The two fires occurred on the farm in 1995 and 1997 were probably the biggest challenges that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* had to face so far. Strong willingness, adaptability and flexibility were the life motive of this time and allowed the farm to overcome these painful situations. The farm has continuously improved its services and updated its production processes in order to be more efficient.

Additionally, there has always been a concern to reduce waste and to optimize production so that it does not hurt the environment. The unsold items, like fruits and were transformed into jams and syrup. Unsold vegetables were either transformed into sweet and sour zucchinis or pumpkin pickles cans or given as fodder to cows. The farmer's experience allowed the farm to have low quantities of unsold items. Another manner *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* tried to reduce its impact on the environment was through the implementation of its water dripping system. The dripping system enabled the farm to control better its water consumption and therefore to save water. Lastly, the farm has put in place various methods to avoid having to treat its fields unnecessarily. The establishment of a net against the cabbage fly or against insects, are concrete examples where the farm avoids using pesticides.

The name *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has already a strong reputation that was built on the previous activities. The name and image of the farm will therefore be kept and used for the current and future activities. The words "*Château-Blanc*" have positive connotations, "*Château*" (Castle) being associated with richness, prestige and luxury, and "*blanc*" (white) being associated to purity, perfection and cleanness. Therefore, there is a huge potential to use even further the name and create a brand recognition related to this name.

2.2.2.2 Communication Strategy

At the moment, there is no real communication strategy. The farm is present on two online channels, Instagram and Facebook, but they are not really used. A website is being developed but is not available yet. Since the farm's takeover occurred recently, there is no effective strategy in place. Until now, the communication was mainly made through flyers and word-of-mouth. The goal is to implement an effective strategy so that every communication channel can be used at its highest potential.

2.3 The Firm's Beef Production

2.3.1 Livestock Management

The farm's entire livestock is dedicated exclusively to cattle farming and beef production. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is practicing traditional farming. There are approximately 15 to 18 bovines that are intended for beef consumption. Part of it is sold to the major wholesaler in Switzerland Vianco and the other part is intended for customers' consumption. The proportion of cows sold to Vianco in 2019 was about 16 and only 2 cows were sold to final individual customers. The goal for 2020 is to reverse the trend and to sell $\frac{3}{4}$ of the meat production directly to end-consumers and $\frac{1}{4}$ to Vianco, if not less. There are several motivations to sell directly to customers. First, it allows *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to be closer to the end-consumers and explain better the process of meat production. Second, it offers customers a direct exchange and a personalized relationship with the farmer. The farmer is available and willing to answer the customers' questions and is able to adapt the delivery to the customer's needs. In this way, the farm can manage and control each step of the production and supply chain until the final delivery. Thirdly, it is crucial for the farm to communicate better its brand image and product offering. By selling directly to customers, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has a better control over the creation of brand awareness, customization and differentiation from competitors. Finally, by avoiding selling through Vianco, the farm can plan differently the production of its meat and is not dependent on someone else. Selling directly to customers will allow the farm to disintermediate and take full control over the selling process.

The herd of cows is living on a free stabling, meaning that the cows have a direct and unlimited access to the outside. The free stabling is connected to the barn. The cows stay on the farm from mid-Autumn until mid-Spring (20th of October to 20th of May), during this period they regularly go outside on the fields annexed to the farm. However, cows that are getting fattened, are not going on the pastures because it would slower the process of fattening. Usually from the 20th of April until 1st of May, the cows are outside only throughout the day and are taken to the stabling in the evening to be fed. From the 1st to the 20th of May, the cows are outside all the time until they leave for the summer pasturage on the mountain. The same happens when they come back from the mountain, they stay outside from mid-October to mid-November.

During the summer, the livestock go to the mountain *La Dôle* and at the *Reculet* for a period of 130 to 140 days. Nevertheless, there are some heifers coming down earlier from the mountain, either because they will get fattened or because of the weaning process, which allows the cows to rest before parturition.

Figure 4 The cows on the Mountain La Dôle



Source: *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s archives

La Ferme du Château-Blanc is part of a trade union and its cows are mixed with other farmers' cows. There are several advantages to put the livestock in the mountain in the summer. First, the quality of the fodder and the soil is different. The flora is more diversified than the one in the plains, which can give a better quality of milk. The animal's well-being is also better and impacts therefore the meat. The mountain's soil improves the health of the cows' hoof. Second, there are less flies in the mountains than in the plains. If cows stayed in the plains during summer, they would have to stay inside in order to avoid the flies. Third, farmers are able to focus their time on other activities, such as cultivating the fields, check the fodder's stock and do the stabling's annual cleaning. But most importantly, the fact that the livestock is on the mountain enables the farmer to ease a little bit off. Finally, having the cows in the mountain highly contributes to landscape maintenances.

A cowherd is living in the mountain with the cows and takes care of them. He communicates with the farmers if any problem. He also ensures that there is enough food until the end of the summer.

There is no obligation for the farmers, except in case of emergencies, to visit their livestock during the summer. However, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s owner regularly checks his livestock, on average twice a month, to ensure that his cows live in good conditions.

2.3.2 Births

The births are usually foreseen in winter when the mothers are in the farm, which allows to better supervise the calving and enables to provide the required care if needed. There is a space in the barn that can be closed, and this space is specifically intended for calving. The calves stay constantly with their mothers, but they also have a space dedicated just for them where they can rest and can be fed by the farmers, as a complement to the milk they get naturally.

Part of the stabling is covered with new fresh straw twice a day, every day, which keeps the area sanitary and promotes the cows' well-being and cleanliness.

2.3.3 Production Process

The calves stay permanently with their mothers and when they reach 10 months they are put in a separated area. If calves are male, they are placed in a space to get fattened. If the calf is a female and has good genes, it is kept for breeding. Genetic backgrounds such as the parents' characters, and conformation are taken into account in the decision of keeping the calf or not. Sentimental aspects sometimes play a role in the decision making. Calves are weighted once per month during the whole winter period, which enables to have a consistent follow-up and to bring beef meat to a better quality.

In order to avoid consanguinity, the farm has one bull per year for reproduction and is replaced every year. The cows' reproduction process used by the farm is natural, meaning that there is a risk that cows are not being serviced. The farm does not use artificial insemination, the main reasons are the costs, the higher level of supervision required, and the difficulty to determine the appropriate time to do the insemination. Besides, there is only little chance that the cow gets pregnant at the first try.

The fodder is different depending on the animal's category and on the year's period. Before and after summer pasture, the cows are on pastureland, therefore they eat only grass. When the temperatures are going down, the cows go back to the cowshed every evening and receive a fodder ration depending on what they eat during the day. The fodder acts as complement to the grass they eat during the day and help regulate the animals' digestion.

During the winter, the cows are fed twice a day, receiving exclusively food that is produced by the farm. Depending on if the animal is a mother, a calf, a heifer or in the fattening area, the food will be adapted.

Figure 5 The Cows that are being fed



Source: *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* archives

Since 2017, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* started to train the heifers according to the *Souvignet* method. This technique has to be applied 2 weeks following the weaning. It is during this time that the animal is the most receptive to the implementation of new habits. The aim is that the heifer gets used to the farmer and respects its authority. In order to achieve this result, it is necessary to tie the heifer during two consecutive days (twice 8 hours). Tying the animal with a certain distance from the fence allows the animal to get

calmer and to develop respect for the rope. Subsequently, it is easier for the farmer to guide the heifer. Moreover, the *Souvignet* training is an effective method to know whether the heifer can be tamed or not. If the animal is not calm after the two days, it is part of the 10% of animals that cannot be tamed and that will always have some nervous and unpredictable characteristics.

To execute the training, a separated area is needed. This training method has been used and recognized for many years in the agricultural sector (Olivieri, 2017). The *Souvignet* process allows the herd to be calmer, more confident and obedient, which is especially important when there is a need for handling, during veterinary interventions or loading in the cattle truck. The cows are brought to the slaughterhouse by *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s people themselves in order to keep the animal in an atmosphere of confidence, without stress, which brings a better meat quality.

When the cows are ready to die, they are brought to the abattoirs of Vich or Rolle on Monday mornings. Once the animal passed away, there is a veterinary control done within 24 hours to ensure that the meat is in accordance with the regulations and ready to be taken back by the farmer. When bringing the meat from the abattoir to the farm, there are sanitary rules to follow such as having a refrigerated van and making sure that the cold chain is respected. The carcass is then cut into pieces, packed and vacuumed, ready to be sold to customers.

Customers have the possibility to order boxes of 25kg or 10kg of meat. These boxes are mixed with various meat packages. There is the possibility to order either normal or deluxe boxes, which will contain more prestigious meat parts.

2.3.4 Fodder Method

On the farm, there are two grain silos having both a capacity of 120m³ and containing the farm's corn production. There are also other resources produced and stocked on the farm such as straw, hay and regain. All these various fodders are produced on the farm's fields, which enables to have a full control on the manufacture, collection and stock. The fact that fodders are produced directly on the farm considerably reduces the transportation costs, the transportation itself and therefore the emission of CO₂ gaz. Approximately 5% of the fodder is lost either in the feed trough or on the fields during the manufacturing process.

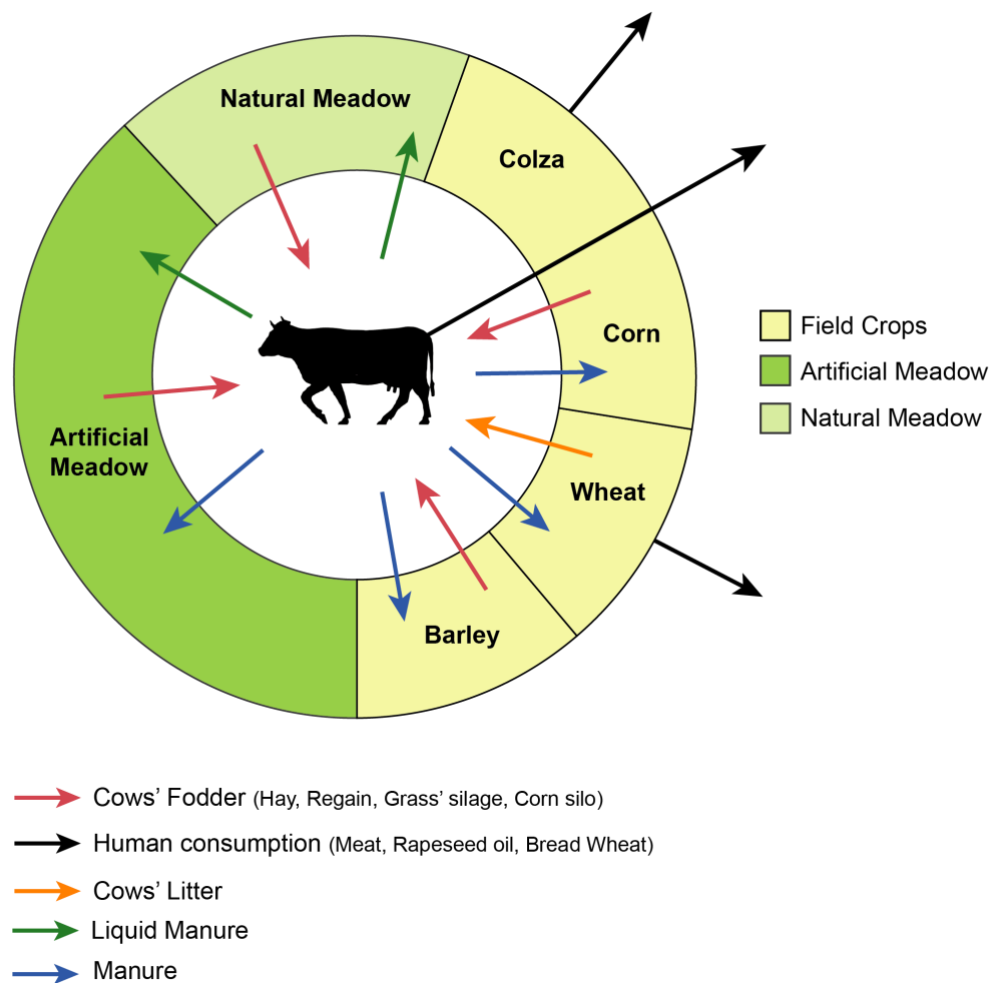
Even though all the animal's fodder is produced on the farm, there is only about 60% of the straw used for the cows' bedding that is produced on the farm. The 40% missing is bought from other farmers nearby Gingins, but the straw is not delivered in straw stacks. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* needs to go to the other farmers' wheat fields and do the whole process of harvesting and doing the straw stacks. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* cannot produce more straw on its own because of the land rotation needed to maintain the fields and the soil fertile.

The major factor that will impact the fodder's quality is the weather and it varies to a great extent from one year to another. If it is too hot, for example, there is less hay, but there are more qualitative nutrients for animals. On the opposite, if it is too rainy, there is more quantity but less quality. The advantage at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is that they produce the fodder needed for their livestock, but do not produce to re-sell, meaning that they are not looking to be at maximum output (which often lowers the hay's quality), but rather to produce quality fodder. There are several grass cuts and depending on the period, hay's structure, nutritional values and quality vary. The first cut is usually rougher than the following ones, which is beneficial because cows are herbivores and need fodder with more structure and fibrous. The following grass cuts are generally richer in proteins and can either be dried, which is known as regain, or packed in silos, which is known as silage of grass. The high level of protein favors the cows' milk production but is also suitable for the cows that will get fattened. The cows' fodder always needs to be balanced with other food such as corn that is richer in energy. When food is unbalanced, it is problematic for the animals' digestion.

Haystacks and straw stacks can easily be kept from one year to another and can be kept over 10 years. There is a regular rotation within the stock. However, the longer the haystacks are kept, the bigger the loss of nutrients. Regarding the silage of grass, corn silo and the regain it has to be consumed in less than a year.

Concerning fields' maintenance and nourishment, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* uses natural fertilizer, such as manure produced by the animals. In addition to manure production, the farm buys nitrogen to complete the plants' needs according to the crop that will grow. The fact that almost everything is produced on the farm creates a circular process, where wastes are used to produce and where processes respect the law of nature.

Figure 6 Use of Land



Source: The Author, based on the firm's information

2.4 Regulations & Controls

2.4.1 Controls

La Ferme du Château-Blanc is controlled by external entities several times per year. The farm is controlled regarding farming processes, lands' biodiversity and animal ownership. There are several journals the farmer has to keep updated and they constitute the main base of the external entities' controls. The main journals are the outings journal, where outings of the cows are recorded, the treatment journal, where cares and veterinary treatments are recorded, and the field journal, where the seeds and fertilizers used on the fields are recorded. These are only some examples of journal entries among many others. Those three journals are part of the requirement to get certification labels.

In case of emergency, the medicines are administrated to the cows by the regional veterinarian. Nevertheless, the farmer manages on its own various illnesses such as pneumonia or infections. The medicines are stored in a specific and clean area. Farmer must keep a journal, where all the treatments administrated to the animals are recorded. Moreover, this journal lists all the information about each cow, the interventions they had, and all aspects related to the cows' life. This journal is meticulously controlled by the veterinarian, but also by external entities like the *Protection Suisse des Animaux*. Syringes and needles are frequently renewed. Additives stimulating growth, proteins or GMOs are not used in the production process. The farmers keep a journal listing all the treatments given to each animal, with dates, amounts and particularities regarding each animal. Unpredictable controls are made by the cantonal veterinarian to check if everything is consistent.

Other unpredictable controls are performed over the year for the meat production, but also for other programs such as the *Prestations écologiques requises* (PER), a program that checks ecological measures of the farm, and the *Promotion de la biodiversité*, a program that promotes the biodiversity on farms. The PER program enables farmers to get compensation from the state. The organization *Protection Suisse des animaux* checks animals' well-being and sanitary and makes sure everything is respected according to Swiss laws. These controls are most of the time unexpected and depend on whether the organization believes a farm needs to be controlled.

Other unpredictable controls are periodically performed by *Beef Control*, an organization that is commissioned by *Vache Mère Suisse*, to check if calves stay with their mothers, if they are registered in the *Banque de données du trafic des animaux* (BDTA), or if the farmer respects the rules set by *Vache Mère Suisse*.

2.4.2 Animal protection & Certification Labels

2.4.2.1 SST & SRPA

La Ferme du Château-Blanc holds its livestock according to Swiss laws about animal detention, and implements optional ethological programs such as *Système de stabulation particulièrement respectueuse des animaux* (SST) and *Sortie régulière en plein air* (SRPA). The animal's comfort and health has always been at the core of the business since the beginning. These programs set much higher requirements regarding animal well-being than what the Swiss confederation requires.

In order to be part of SST program, several criteria must be respected. For instance, the farm needs to have multiple areas partly covered and lighted with daily light. Also, the livestock needs to be kept in groups, which allows them to move freely within the various detention areas and which offers them spaces to rest and to adopt their natural behavior.

The other optional program, SRPA is aimed at ensuring that animals have enough opportunities to be outside and to benefit from daily light, natural grass and fresh air. An important requirement to be part of the program is to have at least 26 monthly outings between the 1st of May and the 31st of October. During 1st of November and the 30th of April, only 13 monthly outings are required.

The farm keeps a journal of the livestock's outings that has to be shown when controls occur. These programs focus on the animal's well-being and contribute therefore to higher meat quality. Nevertheless, these farming practices involve higher costs for the farmer.

Figure 7 The Herd grazing in Springtime



Source: *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* archives

2.4.2.2 *Natura Beef & SwissPrimBeef*

La Ferme du Château-Blanc is also part of the association *Vache Mère Suisse*, whose aim is to favor the lactating breeding and to offer consequently a better meat quality. This practice also meets the consumers' expectation by having an agriculture closer to nature and more respectful towards animals. This association offers various certification labels, such as Natura Beef, Natura-Veal, Swiss PrimGourmet and some others that are acknowledged in Switzerland by consumers, but also by large retailers like Coop or Manor. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has the Natura Beef and SwissPrimBeef certifications. Both certifications focus on meat quality and on animals' detention. They focus their efforts on the carcass' quality and on the specific cows' race that are good for meat production (Vache mère Suisse, 2020b).

Moreover, the Natura Beef program imposes the livestock's detention to be partly outside and the calves to never be separated from their mothers until they reach 10 months. This program encourages on one side the extendible farming of pastures and its conservation and on the other side, the production of quality meat, due to the fact that animals can be outside. The calf's fodder is mainly composed of mother's milk and is completed with grass and hay. It is forbidden to have soya in the calf's food. In order to get certified, there are various controls and rules that have to be implemented and followed, such as the ones exposed above (Vache mère Suisse, 2020a).

Figure 8 Natura Beef & SwissPrimGourmet Certification Labels



Source: Vache Mère Suisse (Vache mère Suisse, 2020)

2.5 *Firm's Competitors*

La Ferme du Château-Blanc has various direct and indirect competitors. Some of them are offering meat while others are suggesting food products such as vegetables, fruits or handmade products. This chapter presents *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s direct and indirect competitors, shows how competitors differentiate from the farm and describes their position in the market. However, information available on competitors in Switzerland is extremely limited. This analysis is therefore based only on information available, but readers should be aware of potential gaps in the documentation.

2.5.1 Map of Competitors

Regarding *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s competitive environment, there are different direct and indirect competitors located in the cantons of Geneva and Vaud. Since the farm has no delivery service, the focus will be made on competitors located within 15 km around the farm, in Gingins. Thus, not all competitors on the map below will be analyzed.

Figure 9 Map of La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Competitors



Source: Adapted from Google Maps, 2020

2.5.2 Direct Competitors

2.5.2.1 *La Ferme en Orset*

La Ferme en Orset is a farm located in Trélex, in the canton of Vaud. The farm mainly produces beef meat and sells it directly to customers through its self-service store. The farm also offers processed meat, such as ground beef or sausages for BBQ. Vegetables and fruits produced by the farm can be found in the self-service as well. The self-service shop is open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Regarding its communication channels, *La Ferme en Orset* only has a Facebook account where they provide information from time to time, but there is no major activity since 2015, so it can be deduced that they do not use it as main communication tool. They do not have a website or an Instagram account. On the side of the road, the farm has placed a board indicating what the farm offers.

The farm is the most direct competitor of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, due to its close geographical proximity, Trélex being the next village after Gingins, and also because *La Ferme en Orset* offers beef meat to its customers. Moreover, both farms raise the same breed cows and offer the possibility to buy meat packages with a mix of various meat cuts.

2.5.2.2 Bolay- Charolais

Bolay-Charolais is a farm located in Genolier in the canton of Vaud. The family farm has a herd of Charolais breed and a herd of Salers breed, as well as other animals. The cows are naturally fed with meadow grass and various cereals from the farm's production. The cows are bred for meat production.

The farm sells packages of pork and beef meat, each weighing between 10kg and 45kg. Consumers can also order lamb meat depending on availability. All meat pieces are vacuum packed either in pairs or individually, which allows to serve all kind of customers. Once the customer has placed its order, *Bolay-Charolais* sends a cutting file in order to prepare it according to the customer's desire.

The farm sells other products such as delicatessen, terrine or salami, through its self-service store. The self-service store is open from Monday to Saturday from 9:00 to 19:00, and Sundays from 9:00 to 17:00. The farm also sells products from other producers in the region, such as vegetables, fruits, cheese and many other handcrafted and local products.

Finally, beside its website, the *Bolay-Charolais* is present on social media on Facebook. The farm uses this channel to communicate about the potential changes in opening hours and the restock of vegetables, fruits and meat. Facebook is also used to announce special events such as wine tasting from local producers.

The *Bolay-Charolais* brings together producers and consumers through its self-service store open every day. The farm's purpose is to enable consumers to come and discover all products of the farm and to meet producers of the region (Bolay-Charolais, 2016).

2.5.2.3 Agriboutix

Agriboutix is a shop on a farm located in Gimel, in the canton of Vaud. *Agriboutix* exists since 2018 and sells directly to customers. The shop sells meat (beef and pork), as well as vegetables, fruits and other handmade products such as oils, pastas or lentils. The farm has 3 main sectors of production;

1. Milk production for the manufacturing of cheese Gruyere AOP (*Appellation d'origine protégée* (AOP))
2. Fattening bulls for direct selling
3. Field crops, such as cereals, rapeseed and corn

The shop is open 4 times a week, Monday and Saturday morning, Friday afternoon and Wednesday the whole day.

Agriboutix's customers have the possibility to book online the products present in the store before they come physically for paying and picking up the booked products. Beef meat can also be ordered online, and the store delivers the meat directly to customers' places. This delivery service is not proposed for the other products. For bigger quantity of beef meat, *Agriboutix* offers 10kg packages that can be picked up at the store.

Agriboutix is active on social media on Facebook and uses this tool to communicate about their offers and to keep customers updated.

Agriboutix's purpose is to create a direct line between the farm's production and the consumer's food, in order to develop local production and to get closer to consumers (*Agriboutix*, 2019).

2.5.2.4 Boucherie Le Moal

The *Boucherie Le Moal* is an online butcher's shop that was created in 2017. The purpose of this online shop is to provide customers with the best of each cut, and to offer superior professional customer service. The beef meat is exclusively sold online. There are different races of meat that are selected by the *Boucherie Le Moal*. The main ones are Angus, Limousine, Hereford or Simmental. The beef wedges are carefully selected for their superior quality and marbling.

Boucherie Le Moal differentiates itself through its high-quality product offering. For instance, its meat is matured for 4 to 8 weeks. The maturation "Dry Age" consists in

preserving the quarters of meat in an environment that is controlled in humidity and temperature. Through this maturation's process, the meat dries and losses up to 30% of its weight in water, which enables its aromas to concentrate.

Furthermore, the butcher organizes and participated in events, such as the open-door event organized by *SwissGrapes*, an online store that sells and exports Swiss wines. (SwissGrapes, 2020). The participation in such events enables the butcher's online store to show his product and to raise awareness. Since there is no physical shop, it is a great way to meet potential customers and to start building a relationship with them.

Finally, the *Boucherie Le Moal* is present on social media on Instagram and Facebook. These communication channels are used to communicate about the product offering, the events the brand participates in and recipes on how their meat can be cooked. The brand's website also has a section called "Tips & Tricks", where the butcher gives advices on how to cook or season the beef cuts.

The *Boucherie Le Moal*'s aim is to select the best beef wedges with superior marbling in order to offer customers an extraordinary tasting experience of perfectly refined meat (Le Moal, 2017).

2.5.3 Indirect Competitors

2.5.3.1 *Domaine des Avouillons*

The *Domaine des Avouillons* is a farm located in Gland, in the canton of Vaud. The farm mainly produces milk and field crops. The farm sells its products directly to consumers through a self-service shop that is located on the farm. They sell their own products such as fresh milk, fresh cheese and yoghurts, but they also offer products manufactured by other nearby farmers or crafts persons, like jams, salami or bread.

The self-service store is open from Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The farm invested in an automated machine that refills the customers' bottles with fresh milk at any time, even during closing hours. Additionally, the farm's products can be found once per week on the market in Gland.

In order to guarantee the farm's sustainability, the *Domaine des Avouillons* had to diversify itself and regularly welcomes classes to teach farming. It is a great opportunity to educate children about farm life, animals and nature. Lastly, the *Domaine des Avouillons* is active on the social media on Facebook. This communication channel is mainly used to keep customers updated with new product arrivals or with restocking.

The *Domaine des Avouillons* 's aim is not only to promote localness and proximity, but also to develop awareness of the farm's dairy production, be close to the consumer and promote the benefits of milk and farm products (Avouillons, 2020).

2.5.3.2 *Domaine de Bois-Bougy*

The *Domaine de Bois-Bougy* is a domain located in Nyon in the canton of Vaud. The farm has a dairy production and a vineyard, but they also produce vegetables, cheese and eggs. In order to complete their product offering and sell fruits and vegetables as a complement to their own production, the *Domaine de Bois-Bougy* often partners with other producers. In addition to these production activities, the farm offers services such as Bed and Breakfast and horse barn renting.

The *Domaine de Bois-Bougy* grows various products on the farm such as grapes, sugar beets, flowers and field crops that include corn, wheat and rape seed. In order to have a local dairy production, the cows' fodder is produced mainly on the farm. Customers can buy fresh milk, cheese, eggs, yoghurt and depending on the season, jam, flowers and salami. All these products are produced on the farm. The self-service store is open 7 days a week.

The farm's owner purpose is to provide local products to consumers and to be the link between the city and the countryside (Domaine Bois-Bougy, 2013).

2.5.3.3 *Bio C' Bon*

Bio C' Bon is a French chain of stores existing since 2008. The brand's main objective is to make organic food accessible to everyone, through proximity, prices and personal advices in stores. The purpose is to make organic food the standard and no longer a marginal way of consuming (Bio C'Bon, 2020).

Bio C' Bon opened its first store in 2016 in Lausanne, Switzerland. Since then, the brand opened two additional stores located in Geneva and in Nyon. *Bio C' Bon* offers various organic products, such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, and transformed products like juices, chocolate and coffee, among many others. Additionally, the brand sells dietary complements, essential oils and meat like ham, sausages and beef steaks. However, there is no possibility to buy fresh meat.

Bio C' Bon is the biggest organic supermarket in Nyon. The store is open from Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 or 7 p.m. The store is located very close to the train station,

which allows them to target a wide range of customers. The brand is actively present on social medias like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Tweeter and LinkedIn.

2.5.3.4 Swiss Supermarkets

Supermarkets such as Coop, Migros and Manor represent indirect competitors for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. These supermarkets have most of the time a butcher area in their food sector where it is possible for customers to buy fresh meat and have the desired quantity.

At Coop, customers have the possibility to buy meat that is certified Natura Beef or Natura Veal, both certification labels are delivered by *Vache Mère Suisse*. Additionally, the supermarket offers the possibility to consumers to order meat online.

Regarding Manor, the supermarket partly sells meat that is certified SwissPrimGourmet. In addition, the supermarket makes it a point of honor to sell locally produced vegetables and fruits. Moreover, by partnering with farmers, Manor aims to promote local products, support farmers and local businesses. Manor's objective is to ensure that its suppliers are located within a radius of 30 km of the store (except for the canton of Valais and Graubünden) (Manor AG, 2020). Currently, Manor Zurich is the only Manor providing meat from a local producer. Indeed, since 2018 Manor is a partner of a local butcher's shop in Zurich.

2.5.3.5 Conclusion

To conclude, there are many other farms around Gingins offering the same or similar products than *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. Each of the competitors mentioned above found a way to implement a strategy that suits their business and allows them to be slightly different from the others. Whether it is through investing in infrastructure, hosting classes or offering bed and breakfast services, competitors try to differentiate themselves and offer unique products or services to their consumers.

However, gaps still exist, and *La Ferme du Château* is there to fill those gaps. For instance, almost all competitors mentioned above directly sell to final customers, whether it is through a physical store, a self-service shop or an online store. Also, there is often a lack of communication and visibility. Farms do not explain accurately what they are doing or offering, which can really harm their business. The misuse of social media or online communication channels such as websites can prevent farms from acquiring and retaining customers. Additionally, most of the farmers have various activities and do not

always offer their products or services during the whole year. It is even more important for them to have a suitable communication strategy.

Nevertheless, competition is relatively high in the region of Gingins. It is essential to implement a strong marketing strategy that will differentiate *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* from competitors and offer a unique value proposition to customers.

3. Literature Review

3.1 *Swiss Agriculture in the Economy*

3.1.1 Importance of the Swiss Agriculture

Switzerland is known for its agricultural sector which represented 8,8% of the Swiss economy structure in 2017 (OFS, 2019d). Even though the agriculture's share of GDP was less than 1% in 2018, agriculture is very important for the country's sustainability, because this sector contributes to the economy through many aspects that are exposed later.

Primary, GDP is only one measure of the economy and does not include all aspects of a country's welfare. In order to measure the agricultural impact on Switzerland's economic wealth, there is the need to consider all positive externalities of agriculture. Examples of positive externalities include the creation of jobs in upstream and downstream sectors of the agriculture (that would not exist without the agricultural production) and the maintenance of rural landscapes. Without this landscape maintenance, Switzerland would be covered by forests (USP, 2019a).

Additionally, to food production, Swiss agriculture provides various services of public interest to Swiss citizens, such as the maintenance of activities in rural areas or the promotion of biodiversity. Such goods, called "public goods", cannot exclude anyone from their consumption but no one is willing to pay for their use, although the benefits derived from them are widely recognized. In order to monitor those goods, rules and regulations have to be put in place and agricultural policies are based on those principles (Agri, 2019a).

Lastly, the agricultural sector contributes the country's food security. Over the past years, the self-sufficiency rate was on average 60% of domestic production (Alessandro Rossi, 2019).

3.1.2 Agritourism

Agritourism also represents an important positive externality of agriculture. This sector contributes to the Swiss tourism industry and includes for instance authentic food products or traditional Swiss events. Agritourism is growing in Switzerland and has a lot of success. This sector of activity represents a huge potential for farmers because demand keeps growing. According to *Agritourisme Suisse*, the largest marketing platform for agricultural tourism offers in Switzerland, overnight stays increased by 10%

between 2017 and 2018 in Agritourism. The majority of tourists came from Switzerland, followed by Germany (Vakaridis, 2019). The strengthening of the Euro probably contributed to the fact that foreign tourists came to Switzerland.

Agritourism englobes many different activities such as direct product selling, commented tasting, guided farm tours, gathering or farm accommodations, to just quote a few. However, legal constraints linked to the land use plan in rural areas and the large investments needed are the main barriers for farmers to develop such activities. Indeed, laws regarding construction outside construction zones allow buildings to be enlarged in agricultural zones only if it is directly linked to agricultural production (Marti, 2018).

Through the creation of jobs in the sector, agritourism contributes to Swiss tourism and in turn to national economy. For instance, a farm deciding to develop its agritourism offer by developing its farm accommodations, has to hire someone who takes care of the cleaning and the management of the rooms or if the farm specializes itself in educational farm, there is the need to hire specialized persons (Davis, 2018). The development of the activity will anyway generate some new job opportunities for people, it can be part time, full time or for a dedicated period. Depending on the size of the farm and the development of the activity, agritourism creates job opportunities even further with higher position jobs, such as manager of certain business units of the farm or private guides for specific farm tour. Moreover, the development of agritourism in smaller towns or villages can highly contribute to the local economy. If a farm implements agritourism activities and has a strong communication strategy, there will be many tourists coming to visit. The flow of people creates opportunities for other artisans to showcase their products and activities and perchance sell them. Farmers can also partnership with other producers and artisans in order to drive demand for agritourism and subsequently contribute to the local economy. The implementation of such activities and partnerships can increase the number of visitors in smaller towns, strengthen local economy and reinforce the contribution to the tourism industry.

Agritourism has also educational purposes, by introducing children and young people to agriculture and its environment, farms offer the possibility to learn more about the origin of products. Today, parents are getting more invested in educating their children about where the food comes from and how it is produced. Education allows people to become aware of the whole production process, from the starting point, to what they eat and consume every day. The concept of educating people on rural aspect can be developed further and lead to educational farms. Educational farms have as aim to raise their

animals and cultivate their fields for educational purposes to welcome and teach children, students and visitors. Besides, care farms can also help and impact children and younger people's life when they face social issues or are vulnerable (Hambidge, 2018). Due to such farms, farmers can transmit their know-how and the Swiss tradition. Thanks to the transmission of knowledge and expertise, the sector could become more attractive and could generate long-term sustainability for the agricultural industry.

Agritourism enables farmers to have an additional stream of income and could become an important part of their business strategy. Indeed, farmers already owe the land but often face challenges using their land efficiently due to weather issues which are a direct threat to goods' production. Agritourism enables farmers to fulfill potential gaps by generating revenue when production is off. Moreover, agritourism is an opportunity for farmers to interact with consumers directly and to create strong relationship that might lead to future customers in their other activities. Lastly, one of the biggest advantages for farmers is that they become price- makers. They can establish their conditions and are not dependent from another party (Lindsay, 2018).

To conclude, today, there are no real hard statistics from the Swiss government on farms offering agritourism activities in Switzerland nor the tangible benefits for farmers to implements such activities. However, there is a lot of promotion on the internet for such activities. Indeed, *MySwitzerland*, the major body promoting Swiss tourism proposes a lot of various activities related to agritourism (Suisse Tourisme, 2020). There is an existing opportunity for farmers to develop further such activities and to have an additional revenue. Agritourism can on one hand contribute to farmers' prosperity, especially to small-scaled farms that struggle to survive, and on the other hand contribute to local and national economy.

3.1.3 Farms disappearing in Switzerland

Today, 4 farms on average disappear every day in Switzerland (Conrad Widmer, 2019). Direct payments and other financial supports implemented by the state are unfortunately insufficient to slow down the extinction of farms, especially smaller ones. The know-how and the principles of what made Switzerland a country disappear with them. The downturn of farms is influenced by various factors, directly and indirectly linked to the Swiss agriculture. Factors such as the changing structure of the Swiss economy, as well as foreign competition have seriously impacted the decrease in the number of farms (PRS, 2017). Other elements directly related to the farmers' environment such as the

difficulty of finding someone to take over the farm or financial issues also contribute to this decrease.

In the agricultural sector, investments for machineries, buildings and transformation always represent significant amounts. Most of the time, it is complicated to reimburse debts rapidly and they are spread over 30-50 years, which brings additional pressure to farmers (Dubath, 2016). Investments are often made to adapt to new norms set by the state, to modernize farms in order to be able to compete or to replace old machineries. Substantial debts make the profitability of a farm complicated and without investments, it is not possible to continue producing and competing. This issue makes farmers, especially small-scaled ones, dependent on financial institutions and do not allow them to be independently profitable.

Additionally, external pressure put on farmers by the market to produce faster and higher quantities, like in the milk industry, is also a factor that contributes to the disappearance of farms (Keller, 2018).

Financial issues, no taking over of farms and external pressure are all aspects that can unfortunately lead to suicide. The risk of suicide for a farmer compared to other Swiss citizens is 37% higher. Even though there is little information available regarding suicides in the agricultural sector, in 2014, agriculture is the second sector of activity that had the highest risk of suicide (Guseva Canu et al., 2019). Although there are various organizations, such as Prométerre, an association for the promotion of the earth trades, which has set up support and help for farmers, there are still too many suicides due to the bad conditions mentioned above.

3.2 Digital Transformation in the Agricultural Sector

3.2.1 Digitization, Digitalization & Digital Transformation

Digitization, digitalization and digital transformation are terms widely used today and are often mixed up. In order to implement an accurate and effective strategy, it is necessary to understand them properly.

According to Gartner, a leading American consulting and research company in the field of advanced techniques (Gartner, 2020), digitization is *“the process of changing from analog to digit form”* (Bloomberg, 2018). It means to convert handwritten text into digital forms that computers can store, that is, to transform physical information into digital one.

The information is digitized, not the process. Digitization of information has many benefits such as cost-efficiency, increase of productivity, easy access, security improvement, and is environmentally friendly.

Digitalization is the next step after digitization. Digitalization is the process of taking advantage of digitization in order to improve business processes. The aim is to make the digitalized information useful and valuable for the company through the implementation of technologies. For instance, using digital technologies to collect and analyze data is one aspect of digitalization. Digitalization has many different definitions and includes various aspects such as business models, business operations or social interaction, depending on the definition chosen. For the purpose of this report, the following definition of Gartner is the most adapted; digitalization is defined as

“the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business” (Bloomberg, 2018).

Digital transformation (DT or DX) is different for each company because it has to adapt to different operational processes. Nevertheless, digital transformation can be described in some general terms as being

“the process of integration of digital technology into all areas of a business, profoundly changing how it operates by creating new - or modifying existing - business processes, customer experiences, and organizational culture” (Jarocinski, 2020).

Digital transformation is not just moving to digitalized processes, but it is a strategic business transformation that leads to disruptive technologies and radical changes in the industry (AOE, 2020). E-commerce, artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), are just a few examples of disruptive technologies that lead to digital transformation. There are many different examples of successful digital transformation. Below is a table (Table 1) showing companies that made strategic decisions and implemented digital transformation effectively. As shown in table 1, Nike's stock price growth rate increased very fast, even in a short timeframe of 2 years. This shows that strategic changes and transformation are not done overnight, but when investing in digital transformation efficiently, it can lead to substantial financial impacts (Morgan, 2019).

Table 1 Digital Transformation Timeframes & Growth Rate

	YEARS IT TOOK FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	STOCK PRICE GROWTH RATE
 MICROSOFT	5 YEARS	258%
 HASBRO	7 YEARS	203%
 BEST BUY	7 YEARS	198%
 HONEYWELL	3 YEARS	83%
 NIKE	2 YEARS	69%
 TARGET	8 YEARS	66%
 HOME DEPOT	2 YEARS	59%

Source: BlackMichelleMorgan (Morgan, 2019)

When implemented effectively, digital transformation can be beneficial for companies on many aspects such as fostering innovation and agility, encouraging a digital culture, enabling better customer experience, and empowering employees, to quote just a few. However, digital transformation is often a risky move surrounded with high uncertainty, which does not encourage companies to make the jump.

3.2.2 Digital Agriculture

Today, everything is going faster, at a larger scale and cheaper. Digital technologies have been transforming the world since many years now and are present in all sectors. The agricultural industry is also part of this changing path by including more and more digital technologies in processes and management. Digital technologies include many components such as internet, data analysis, artificial intelligence, mobile devices and technologies, and services and apps that are digitally delivered. All these technologies are highly changing the way agriculture is done worldwide. Not only agriculture, but the whole food system is impacted (OCDE, 2019). The automatization of machineries, soil

scanning through sensors and mobile apps helping farmers plan their crops are only a few examples on how digital technologies are involved in the agricultural sector.

Digitalization and digital technologies are part of a wider scope which is digital agriculture. This term being broad, it can also be defined as “e-farming” or “smart farming”. According to the FAO, e-agriculture is

“a global Community of Practice, where people from all over the world exchange information, ideas, and resources related to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for sustainable agriculture and rural development” (FAO, 2007b).

The aim of the FAO is to act as promotor for institutions and individuals in rural development and agriculture by sharing knowledge and enabling to learn from each other, which leads in turn to more effective decision making. The objective is to empower rural communities and to improve their living in order to build sustainable agriculture and food security (FAO, 2007a). E-agriculture connects farmers worldwide and aims at putting in place sustainable farming in order to achieve SDG N° 2 (as mentioned in the introduction) set by the United Nations.

Smart farming is defined as a smart operations management technology for farmers. The technology combines classical farming with digital and technical solutions. The aim of the technology is to support farmers in their daily work on the farm and enables them to become more efficient (Barto, 2019). Additionally, the goal of smart farming is to provide farmers with infrastructures to leverage technologies like sensors, telecommunications, data analytics, big data management and software for specialized purposes. Through the use of modern and updated technologies, farmers increase the quality and quantity of their products and prevent them from potential diseases. For instance, smart farming allows to effectively monitor the requirements necessary for field cultivating or for livestock’s needs (Rouse, 2019). Technologies and digitalization can be part of every step of the agricultural value chain.

To conclude, digital agriculture is beneficial to the farm in many aspects. It improves the farm’s management and the efficiency of production, and it represents a helpful tool for decision-making. Since technologies can be implemented all along the value chain, it allows better quality control and optimization in the supply chain. Digital agriculture has also valuable impacts on the environment and on the development of rural communities through the sharing of knowledge and information.

3.2.3 Digital Agriculture in Switzerland

Digital technology fosters always more people's life and is present everywhere, in everyone's life. Thanks to its stable political system and its high innovation capabilities, Switzerland can be a model for others in terms of effective digitalization implementation. Digital transformation allows sustainable development in Switzerland. In 2018, the Swiss Confederation adopted the "Digital Switzerland" strategy, which aims at fully exploiting all opportunities offered by digitalization. This strategy sets guidelines and actions to be implemented not only by the state, but also by institutions, private sectors and politics. It is crucial for all parties to work together to shape the digital transformation process and for the outcome to be beneficial for everyone (OFCOM, 2019).

Regarding the Swiss agricultural sector, there is also a clear transition to digitalization. It is essential for the Swiss agriculture and the food sector to have continuous exchanges between all actors and to reinforce their cooperation in the use of agricultural data. This need resulted in a Charter on digitization in agriculture and Swiss agri-food sector, to define the major principles of digital transformation (OFAG, 2020). Moreover, the main goal of Agroscope, the Swiss Confederation's competence center for agricultural research, is to increase the competitiveness in the Swiss agriculture thanks to smart-farming. Agroscope, through smart-farming and technologies, offers help to farmers in their decision-making. With three other companies, Agroscope developed a demonstration farm for smart-farming technologies, called Swiss Future Farm. This innovative farm is located in the canton of Thurgau, where Agroscope is based. The site studies how new technologies in agriculture and agri-food sectors can be applied and fully optimized. Swiss Future Farm site is unique in Europe. The collaboration among the various entities results in unique opportunities for new synergies between research, consultancy and innovative technologies. The site creates an ideal basis for research and development in agricultural engineering as part of a professional exchange on an equal footing with farmers (Swiss Future Farm, 2020). Smart-farming technologies should help farmers in their daily-life, allow them to use their labor time more efficiently, and exploit their resources at their best.

Figure 10 Swiss Future Farm Site in Thurgau



Source: Agcocorporation (Fuse, 2017)

Although the implementation of such technologies can bring significant benefits, some farmers are reluctant to change. Most of the time, the reason is their feeling of not being in line with technology or they are overwhelmed by it. This issue is one of the reasons why Swiss Future Farm was created, to enable everyone to have access and to use these technologies efficiently. The objective is to combine technologies and agriculture activities in order to make the use of smart-farming easily applicable and understandable for farmers. Even though some farmers are reluctant, smart-farming technologies offer new possibilities in terms of profitability, like the reduction of costs, and the increase in efficiency, like the minimization of emissions for instance, by having better control over water-pollution, or by improving animal's welfare and health (Agroscope, 2020) .

3.3 Family Farms

The term "Family farm" has many definitions and differs depending on the context and the countries. The definition "Family farm" varies considerably regarding the criteria, such as size, farming capacity or orientation. According to the working paper of Agricultural Development Economics Division's (ESA), published by the FAO, there are over 36 definitions and uses of the term "Family farms" given by universities, governments and societal organizations (Garner, Paula de la O Campos, 2014). Therefore, in order to fully understand and chose the accurate definition regarding the case study of this report, several definitions will be exposed.

3.3.1 Family Farm Definitions

3.3.1.1 Dictionary's Definition

The etymological definition of a family farm according to the Canadian Oxford dictionary, is: *"a farm that is owned and operated by a family, especially one that has been handed down from one generation to another"* (Barber, 2004).

3.3.1.2 The Bureau of Agricultural Economics' Definition

According to an article published in 1947 by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE) of the United-States, called *"Measuring the family farm"* (Scoville, 1947), the writer Orlin J. Scoville defines family farm in 3 ways:

1. *"A family farm is one on which the farm operator makes most of the managerial decisions, participates regularly in farm work, and on which his role as employer of labour is minor relative to his other functions."*
2. *"A family size farm is one which, operated by a family of average size and managerial ability, will permit reasonably efficient use of labour-saving equipment and of the family labour force over the life cycle of the family."*
3. *"The desirable size of farm for the family of average managerial ability would be a farm that would permit the reasonably efficient use of labour-saving equipment and of the family labour force over the life cycle of the family and provide with average management a labour and management return adequate to maintain a socially acceptable level of living." (pp 518-19)*

Orlin J. Scoville focuses its definition of family farm on 3 main pillars, the **management** aspect, the **family labor** and the **size** of the farm.

3.3.1.3 The United States Department of Agriculture's Definition

The United States Department of Agriculture 's (USDA) definition of "Family farm" is broad and related information differs. The department stated the family farm's concept as being

"one in which ownership and control of the farm business is held by a family of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Family ties can and often do extend across households and generations" (USDA, 2017).

The sub-mentioned concept was accurate previously, because farmers owned their land, owned the capital of it, and provided themselves the labor force for the farm. However,

times have changed and today, farmers rent their land, hire non-family employees and establish contract for farm services. The definition of “Family farms” evolves and changes over time. That is why slight changes of the definition were made, extending the term of ownership, going from “family held” to “operator” (USDA, 2017).

The current definition of family farm, used since 2005 and based on the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), defines family farm as including

“any farm where the majority of the business is owned by the operator and individuals related to the operator by blood or marriage, including relatives who do not reside in the operator’s household. Nonfamily farms include any farm where the operator and relatives do not own a majority of the business” and “any farm organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or family corporation. Family farms exclude farms organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms with hired managers” (Hoppe, Banker, 2010).

This definition mainly highlights the **ownership** of the farm but does not consider the size of the farm. Therefore, there are many different family-farm sizes in the United-States.

3.3.1.4 Gasson & Errington’s Definition

A citation regarding family farm that came up very often when looking at family farm definition is the one stated by Ruth Gasson and Andrew Errington, who are the authors of the book “The farm family business”, published in 1993.

According to Gasson and Errington, the family farm households present 6 distinctive characteristics:

1. Business ownership is combined with managerial control in the hands of business principals.
2. These principals are related by kinship or marriage.
3. Family members (including these business principals) provide capital for the business.
4. Family members, including business principals, execute farm work.
5. Business ownership and managerial control are transferred between generations with the passage of time.
6. The family lives on the farm. (Garner, Paula de la O Campos, 2014, p.5)

The definition of family farming exposed by Gasson and Errington focuses mainly on **family and territory ties**, but also on **management** and **family labor** (Garner, Paula de la O Campos, 2014).

3.3.1.5 FAO's Definition

The FAO uses the term family farming to define family farms. The agricultural organization has a substantive definition and a statistical definition for family farming. The substantive definition considers family farming as being: *“a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family capital and labour, including both women’s and men’s. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions.”*

The statistical definition defines family farm as being: *“an agricultural holding which is managed and operated by a household and where farm labour is largely supplied by that household.”*

These definitions do not only include the management of the farms or the role of the family in the labor, management or production process, but also include other aspects such as the **current agricultural and rural landscape, economics, environmental and cultural aspects** (Garner, Paula de la O Campos, 2014).

3.3.1.6 Switzerland's Definition

Switzerland does not have an official definition of what a family farm is. Nevertheless, family farming is a commonly-used term considering several criteria that shape the definition in Switzerland. Those criteria include for instance the size of farms, the importance of family labor, decision making within the family, and family’s income and capital. In order to determine those criteria, some questions need to be asked. Who is taking the important decisions? Who is taking the risks? What is the link between family and farm? Or how is the transfer of assets planned? All these questions define elements to differentiate a family farm from a non-family farm (USP, 2013).

Although the definition of family farm in Switzerland is unclear, one point is certain: family farms are an extremely important part of farms in the country

Figure 11 Differentiation Criteria for Family Farm



Source: Rapport de situation 2013 (USP, 2013)

3.3.1.7 People's Individual Definition

Family farming has also a personal and emotional definition for people and is defined according to their perception and potential experience. The perception that people have about family farming can sometimes differ from reality. Stereotypes and ideologies about family farms are often illustrated and sometimes reinforced in books, movies and storytelling. Sometimes, people do not differentiate reality and fiction. On the other hand, there are more and more real-life documentaries and books made about agriculture and farming. These documentaries hardly ever ban sensitive pictures. An example of such documentaries is *Cowspiracy: The sustainability secret*, made in 2014. This documentary explores the impact of animal agriculture on the environment and questions the positions of environmental associations on this issue (Andersen, Kuhn, 2014). The romantic image that people might have of family farm, such as birds singing in the early morning, sunny weather all the time and farmers having time to play with their children, is changing a lot through the sharing of news, testimonies and digitalization. This quiet and romantic farming that was conveyed before is also changing thanks to movies and documentaries showing the various ways of doing farming, such as industrial farming or traditional farming. People's perception of family farming is external to family farming itself and they are usually not directly involved in the agricultural sector, which makes it even more complicated for them to imagine how the reality really is.

To conclude, it was shown that, through the various definitions, the term “family farm” is complicated to define in a fast and accurate way. Whether it is the dictionary, the FAO or an emotional definition, there are many factors defining family farm. Common roots among these definitions can be identified, such as the ownership of the farm or the family.

3.3.2 Personal Definition

As a result of the research and analyses exposed above, the definition of a family farm is based on several criteria. Elements such as the ownership of the farm, the decision-making, and the importance of the work provided are key criteria determining what a family farm is.

For the purpose of this report, a family farm is defined as follows:

“A family farm is managed and owned by a family or a member of it, including women and men. The farm is passed on from one generation to the next one and the farm’s owner must live on the farm. Family member(s) must own the majority of the farm, execute most of the labor on the farm and provide the capital necessary to the proper functioning of the business. In addition, managerial decisions are in the hands of the owner and it is his/her duty that these decisions preserve the environment and contribute to the landscapes’ preservation”.

The farm’s size is not considered in the above-mentioned definition for the following reasons. As mentioned previously in the report, small-scaled-farms in Switzerland are disappearing and bigger ones are increasing. Those farms having larger agricultural areas (over 30 ha) are usually not managed by a single person, and the farming labor is not always done by the owner. In addition, it is difficult to determine how much a single person works on these large surfaces, and therefore to determine if the owner does the majority of the labor on his own. The workload on the fields and on the farm depends on the type of crops produced, and if there are animals or not. For all the reasons elaborated above, the notion of size is not taken into account in the personal definition of a family farm.

3.4 Marketing Strategy

Today, marketing is key and essential in every business’ communication strategy. To be able to create value for customers and differentiate a company’s product from another one, it is vital to have an efficient marketing strategy. In order to set a clear marketing strategy for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, it is important to define and understand what a

marketing strategy is. This chapter will expose the various steps of a marketing process as well as the main components of a marketing strategy.

3.4.1 Definition of a Marketing Strategy

Before defining what, a marketing strategy is, it is necessary to outline what marketing is. According to Philip Kotler, one of the world's leading authorities on marketing, and Gary Armstrong, award-winning teacher of undergraduate business students (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 7) marketing is defined as being:

“the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return” (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 27).

In other words, the goal of marketing is to create value for customers, but also to deliver superior value to them, which allows brands to build customers' relationship and get the loyalty of customers. On one hand, marketing aims at attracting new customers and on the other hand at keeping the current customers satisfied. Succeeding in marketing is even more challenging today in a constantly changing environment. Current technologies, innovations and online markets are growing exponentially. Companies need to focus on customers, understand them and their needs, satisfy them and deliver high value. Not only the general environment is changing, but also the consumers' consumption habits. Customers spend their money more carefully and are continuously comparing brands' offerings and prices. Marketing being directly in contact with customers, its role is to build strong customers' relationship based on solid basis and long-term value (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 26). Having a strong marketing strategy is therefore essential, especially today with the fast-changing world in which companies operate.

According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, a marketing strategy is defined as being: *“the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create customer value and achieve profitable customer relationships”* (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 73) In order to build a strong customers' relationship and implement an effective strategy, a five-step model of marketing process can be put in place.

3.4.2 Marketing Process Model

The five-step model is a framework that presents the major steps in the marketing process. Each step has its importance and is built upon the previous one. The first four steps are dedicated to understanding the customer, design a customer-driven strategy,

create consumer value and build profitable customers' relationship. Figure 12 below shows the various steps of the marketing process and each step's purpose.

Figure 12 A Simple Model of the Marketing Process



Source: Principles of Marketing (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018,p.27)

3.4.2.1 Customer Needs & Wants

The first step aims at understanding the customer's needs and wants, but also the marketplace in which the business is operating. This step is the foundation of the whole process and it is therefore very important to be extremely precise and to analyze in depth all factors. Human needs are the most fundamental concept that shapes marketing. Human needs include physical needs, such as food, clothing, safety, but also social needs. Social needs are the fact that individuals need affection and the feeling of belonging. According to Kotler and Armstrong, a need is defined as: *"Human needs are states of felt deprivation"* (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 27). Even though these basic needs are part of every human being, they are shaped by the individuals' personality and their culture and they become wants. This is where wants differ from one individual to another. When consumers' needs are not satisfied and helped with their buying power, these unsatisfied needs become demands. It is essential to understand the customers' needs and wants in order to design a strategy that can fulfil their unsatisfied needs and bring them value(Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 27).

The consumer's needs and wants are satisfied through market offerings. Market offerings are not limited to physical products only, but they are composed of several factors including services, information, communication or customers' experience. It is essential for marketers to look beyond the product itself and to also consider the benefits and experiences around the product (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 29).

3.4.2.2 Target Customer & Value Proposition

The second step aims at designing a customer-driven marketing strategy. Once the consumer's needs and wants are fully understood, the next step is to design a marketing

strategy that is customer-driven. In order to have a strategy that is efficient, two key questions have to be answered:

- What is the company's target market? That is, what kind of customers will they serve? The company has to decide to whom they want to sell their products and who they target.
- What is the company's value proposition? That is, how can the company serve its target customers best? How the company differentiates their brand or products from competitors?

The selection of customers to target and to serve can be done through market segmentation, which is to divide the market into segments of customers. Once this step is done and the market has been divided in various parts, there is the need to select which segment to go after, which is target marketing.

Once the target customer is chosen, the company has to select a value proposition, that is, how it will differentiate from and position itself compared to competitors. The question of how the company creates value for customers is at the core of serving them. According to Kotler and Armstrong, a value proposition is defined as being: *"the set of benefits or values it promises to deliver to consumers to satisfy their needs"* (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 31). It is key to define a strong value proposition in order to gain an advantage in the market place, to differentiate from competitors and to develop strong customer relationships. A company can differentiate itself on various levels such as product offering, selling strategy or marketing strategy, to quote just a few. Product concept aims at offering the best product's quality performance. The selling concept aims at selling as much as possible and the marketing concept aims at delivering customers their desired satisfactions better than competitors (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 32).

3.4.2.3 Integrated Marketing Program

Once the customer-driven strategy is defined, the company needs to build a plan to program and implement the strategy. The goal of the integrated marketing program is to have a plan that communicates and delivers superior value to targeted customers (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 34). In order to successfully implement the strategy, the marketing mix can be used. The marketing mix is a set of tools used to put in place the marketing strategy. The marketing mix is made up of four main categories; the product, the price, the promotion and the place. The product includes the product or service itself. Marketers have to define all choices and actions that concern the company's product or service, such as, for instance, the name, the quality or the aspect. The price is the second

aspect that will be defined. At what price will the product or service be sold? What type of discount will be offered and how much will the discount be? Questions like these have to be answered when making decision about prices. The promotion is the aspect related to the way the product or service will be promoted. What kind of communication will be made around the product? What communication channels will be used? Sales, advertisement or direct marketing? Defining clearly the way the product or service will be promoted and presented to the targeted audience is very important. Lastly, the place concerns how the product or service is distributed, which distribution channels are selected, how they are stored and what is the level of logistics needed?

In 2009, The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), the world's leading professional marketing body located in the UK (CIM, 2020), adopted a definition of marketing mix made up of 7 variables (7 P's). The four main ones being the same as before, three additional P's are presented; people, process and physical evidence. Process and physical evidence are more related to the service industry, but it is important to consider them as well because products and services are always tightly linked.

- People encompasses anyone that is in contact with the customer and has therefore an impact on the customer's satisfaction. It shows the importance of employees' motivation, training and involvement. Moreover, people can go beyond the company's employee and offer for instance personalized services or products to customers.
- Process is everything included in the process of delivering a service and considers all people involved in this delivery. Process looks at issues such as waiting time, helpfulness of the staff or after-sale services. Process is an important factor to consider because it looks at everything that might alter or impact negatively or positively customer satisfaction. For instance, not answering a customer's call can substantially impact business' sales and reputation.
- Physical evidence covers everything that helps customers understand and facilitate the purchase of a service. When buying a service, a customer cannot experience it before it is delivered. Therefore, they might perceive the purchase as risky, because there is a lot of uncertainty around it. In order to reduce this uncertainty and help customers see what they are purchasing, companies can put in place several tactics, such as for examples, testimonials from other customers on the company's website, tidy and clean reception areas, or recommendations. Since the customer is purchasing an intangible product, it is

very important that the physical evidence demonstrated by the company confirms the customer's assumptions (CIM, 2015).

Today, an eighth P could be added; planet. This last P takes into consideration the environment in which the marketing mix is implemented and how products and services are delivered. It relates to how much a company's product or service will impact positively or negatively the environment.

To conclude, having a well-defined plan to implement a company's marketing strategy is key. This important tool is time-saving and creates an impactful marketing strategy. The choices made through the creation of the marketing mix can save time and money. The marketing mix enables companies to influence demand for their products and to satisfy customers' expectation (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 76).

3.4.2.4 Building Customer Relationship

The three previous steps all lead to build and manage customers' relationships. The aim of the marketing process is to satisfy customers' needs and to create value for them, who will in return purchase the brand and be loyal to the company. In order to achieve the objective of capturing value from customers, companies need to manage relationships with their customers. Customer relationship management (CRM) is “ *The overall process of building and maintaining profitable customer relationships by delivering superior customer value and satisfactions*” (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 34). The aim is to build engagement with customers and strengthen the relationship. When having strong relationships established with customers, it enables the company to capture value from customers in return. There are various ways to build and maintain customer relationship and thus develop customer loyalty. The importance of customer loyalty and how it can be used to measure the effectiveness of a marketing strategy is exposed later in details in this report.

3.4.2.5 Capturing Value

The last step of the marketing process is to capture value from customers. The objective of a well-implemented marketing strategy is to get purchases from customers, but more importantly, to get loyalty back from them. The final objective for the company is to create profits and customers equity, but also to increase their market share and the size of their customers' pool. When building customer equity, it is important to build the right relationship with the right customer. There are many different types of customers and it is essential to build and manage relationships according to the type of customers. The

purpose for companies to capture value from customers is to further develop their activities and to create new products and services that will fulfil customers' needs and satisfaction.

To conclude, the marketing process is a long and challenging process to apply. Nevertheless, when well implemented, it can be very successful for companies. The central element that is and should always be at the core of a company's marketing strategy is the customer.

3.4.3 Marketing in the Agricultural Sector & Differentiation

There is only little information about marketing in the agricultural sector in Switzerland. However, it is crucial for a company to have a marketing strategy to boost sales and profit. It is even more important for small-scaled farms to have a suitable strategy implemented. There is no typical "agriculture marketing strategy", but it can be observed that more and more farms introduce direct selling in their business. As explained before, one way for farmers to differentiate themselves and to take back control over their distribution channels is to sell directly to customers.

There are other ways farmers can differentiate themselves and create value for consumers. First, it is important to determine the criteria on which the farmer wants to differentiate. Differentiation criteria could be tangible aspects, such as product's quality, its practicality and usability or its nutrition values. Or, the farmer could focus on differentiation criteria based on intangible aspects such as ecological and ethical aspects, like animal's protection or production processes that are linked to tradition or religion, as for instance, the production of halal meat. Nevertheless, the consumer will most likely evaluate the product as a whole and might not see all the different aspects. Therefore, it is key to have a clear communication strategy that shows the farmer's value proposition.

According to a study on consumption habits and the marketplace in Switzerland made by DemoSCOPE in 2016, a non-negligible part of the respondents indicates that they only or mainly take quality into account when buying Swiss food and consider only little the price. Moreover, the report indicates that the principal characteristics by which Swiss products differentiate themselves is through the production process. This production process includes several aspects such as the animal's welfare and treatment, short transportation time which reduces damage to the environment, and support for the regional economy. Consumers consider the quality of Swiss products higher than foreign

products. Lastly, certification labels represent an important indicator in the food market in Switzerland. Certification labels allow to easily indicate what the added-values are and customers feel more confident buying labialized products. A certification label that is well - established can transmit lots of information simply through a pictogram or a symbol. In order to assure that the promise made through the certification labels is well respected and that the consumer can trust the certification label, unexpected visits and controls are made by external organizations on the farms. Unfortunately, there are always more licensed labels and certifications in Switzerland, and it is therefore complicated for consumers to know which certification label corresponds to which product. For all reasons developed above, it is important to consider the production methods and the certification labels that will be associated with the products (USP, 2016).

Swiss farmers can also differentiate themselves through diversification, if they choose to offer additional activities to their main one. It can be done through direct selling on the farms, on markets, online or through collective sale stores. As exposed previously, agritourism and rural tourism such as accommodations or catering on the farm are other ways of diversification. Lastly, educational activities such as guided walks and educational offers for classes are other options to diversify (AGRIDEA, 2020).

In order to communicate their offerings, build strong customers' relationship and share the farm's value proposition, farmers can attend agriculture and non-agriculture events. Agriculture trade shows or farming-related seminars offer the opportunity to show what they are doing and what they are offering to people who know the agricultural sector. Participating in events that are not related to agriculture, such as food festivals or family-oriented festivals, offer the opportunity to farmers to talk directly with potential customers and to expose their products or services (KG2, 2017). Direct contact is the best way to explain and communicate efficiently what a farmer has to offer. Non-agriculture events represent a worthy way to target customers that are outside of the usual market's segment. Targeting new customers and showing them the product or service's added-value is a great start to increase a farmer's customer base. This increase in customer base might lead in the future to an increase in sales and market share, which can in turn generate more profit.

Finally, there is no concrete or general marketing strategy that is applied in the agricultural sector. However, farmers have to diversify themselves in order to survive to the fast-changing world and the disappearance of small-scaled farms. In order to stay competitive and profitable in the long-term, various differentiation strategies are applied

in the agricultural sector. It is essential to choose the adequate differentiation strategy for the farm to create superior value to customers.

3.5 Effectiveness

When talking about marketing strategies, it is essential to measure the effectiveness of the chosen strategy. How can effectiveness be defined and measured? Effectiveness is a broad word and a concept that englobes many aspects. Effectiveness can be defined as being *“the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success”* (Stevenson, Lindberg, 2010). There are several ways to measure effectiveness depending on the items to be measured. When related to marketing, measuring effectiveness can become complex. In order to base results on objective data, marketers often use key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs are quantifiable information that measures a company's performance against pre-defined targets and objectives (Wille, 2020). For the purpose of this report, several ways of measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies will be exposed. The presentation of the various KPIs will allow to choose the most accurate ones for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* strategy.

3.5.1 Key Performance Indicators to measure Effectiveness

3.5.1.1 Conversion Rate

In order to measure the effectiveness of an online marketing strategy, the conversion rate can be used. The aim of this KPI is to compare the number of visitors on the company's website and the ones who have completed an objective, such as a purchase or a subscription to the company's newsletters. The assessment of both factors gives a ratio that can be compared over the months. This measure enables to look at the relevance of the company's target audience and to check in real time the effectiveness of the marketing strategy. When the ratio is low, marketers can be reactive and quick adjustments can be implemented in order to bring up the conversion rate. The higher the conversion rate the better, because it means that a lot of visitors became customers (Bathelot, 2020b).

This mean of measurement can also be applied to a physical shop. The number of visitors is counted and compared to the number of visitors who bought something and became customers. The measurement can even go deeper, when the company analyses

for instance the average number of products purchased by the customer and thus see which products are the most popular. The conversion rate can easily be calculated.

$$\text{Conversion Rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of conversion or customers}}{\text{Total number of visitors on the website}} * 100$$

3.5.1.2 Bounce Rate

In order to complete the analysis of the website's performance, the bounce rate can also be calculated. This rate is generally used for digital marketing and on platforms such as websites, social media and mobile app. The objective of the bounce rate is to look at the number of visitors that came to the company's website but left quickly and did not go further on the website's pages. Often, people look just at one page and leave. Having a high bounce rate means that visitors do not stay long on the website and that key elements, such as the digital marketing strategy or the search engine optimization (SEO) of the website are not well implemented. Even though bounce rate varies depending on the industry and the company's goals, the lower the bounce rate, the better (Bathelot, 2020c). There are many ways to lower the bounce rate, the main ones being to improve the SEO strategy, to rethink the usability and the design of the website, but also to improve calls to action on the webpage.

The bounce rate can be calculated as follow:

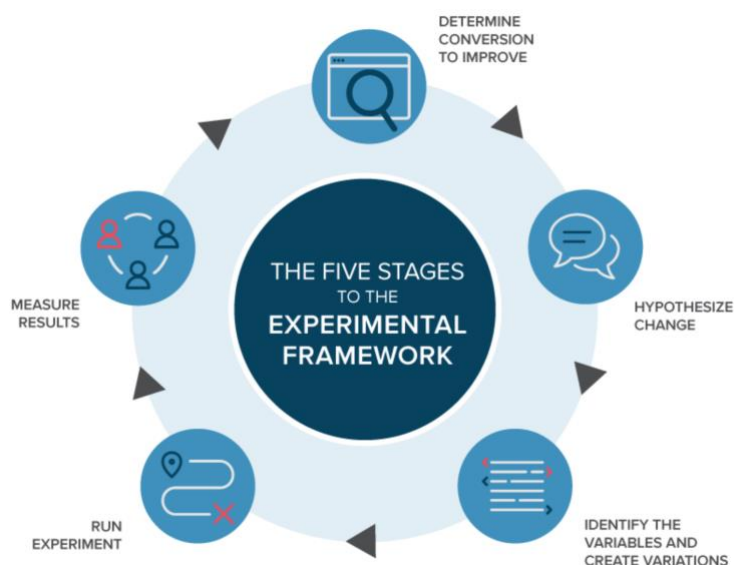
$$\text{Bounce Rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of one – page visits}}{\text{Total number of entries on the website}} * 100$$

3.5.1.3 A/B Testing

A/B testing is more and more used today, especially for the optimization of conversion rate on websites of e-commerce or for email marketing. The aim of A/B testing is to create two versions (Version A and version B) of a same webpage or message content and to test them against each other. The versions are exposed to two different samples of people. These two versions have only one or two criteria that are different from each other. Having only slight changes, such as a color, a picture or a font, allows to measure and analyze which one was more effective. The effectiveness of the version is based on the percentage of purchases or the number of clicks made on a website (Bathelot, 2020a). A/B testing is easier and less costly to implement for digital marketing purposes than for traditional marketing, and this mainly because the digital environment facilitates the implementation of tests and the collection of results. It is also possible to implement the test with hard-printed elements, by sending two types of flyers for example or putting two versions of billboard on the street, but this method is time consuming and expensive.

In order to create an accurate A/B testing, it is important to follow the five stages model. First, marketers need to identify the potential areas to be improved or optimized. Secondly, they create hypotheses why it should be better than the current version. Then, they create versions to be tested, and run the experiment in turn. Finally, they analyze the results in order to make the best decisions (Optimizely, 2020).

Figure 13 A/B Testing Process



Source: Optimizely Optimization Glossary (Optimizely, 2020)

3.5.1.4 Return on Investment

Return on Investment (ROI) is a KPI that is used to measure the efficiency of an investments. The aim of this KPI is to measure the return that is generated from an investment. The ROI looks at two main components: the current value of the investment and the cost of the investment. The ratio generated by the calculation can be compared to other investment ratios and it represents a strong basis for further effectiveness measurement. This ratio is also used to compare different alternatives. The higher the ratio, the better (Chen, 2020).

The calculation of the ROI can be calculated as follow;

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Current value of the investment} - \text{The cost of the investment}}{\text{The cost of the investment}} * 100$$

The KPI can be developed further in the marketing context and is known as marketing return on investment (marketing ROI). The aim of marketing ROI is to measure campaigns' success and establish a basis that might help for future campaigns. Also, this KPI can help justify marketing expenditures and can be used to make competitive analysis. However, measuring efficiently marketing ROI can be challenging, because there are many factors to be considered and the ratio is most of the time focused on short-term results (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 82). Moreover, it is complicated to determine clearly to which extent marketing contributes to a high ratio.

The calculation of marketing ROI can be calculated as follow;

$$\text{Marketing ROI} = \frac{\text{Net marketing contribution}}{\text{Marketing expenses}} * 100$$

3.5.1.5 Marketing Return on Sales

Another way to measure effectiveness of marketing strategy and its impact on profit is through marketing Return on Sales (marketing ROS). Marketing ROS looks at the ratio between the marketing contribution and the sales made by the company. The measure shows the percentage of sales that can be allocated to marketing contribution. The higher the percentage, the better, because it means that net marketing contribution highly contributed and influenced net sales (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 656). But in practice, it is complicated to determine precisely which percentage of sales can be allocated to marketing, to define on which criteria the ratio is based and to identify the direct link between marketing and sales.

Marketing ROS can be calculated as follow;

$$\text{Marketing ROS} = \frac{\text{Net marketing contribution}}{\text{Net Sales}} * 100$$

3.5.1.6 Customer Loyalty

Marketing strategy effectiveness can be measured through customer loyalty. Customer loyalty and retention are the results of the last step in the marketing process of building customers' relationship. Before being able to measure customer's loyalty, markers need to establish a strong customer relationship management (CRM). The last step of the marketing process aims at capturing value from customers in return, so that more profits are generated, and market share gains are achieved. In turn, this last step creates satisfied and loyal customers. When having a strong CRM, customers are satisfied and will in turn remain loyal to the brand and talk favorably about it (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 41-52).

In order to build strong customer loyalty and retain them, companies can offer various loyalty programs. The most common loyalty program is the one rewarding customers for their purchases through the collection of points, for example. Points are in turn used for benefits such discounts or special offers. Another common loyalty program is the one offering an item after having purchased a certain number of the same item. For instance, loyalty cards offering the 11th coffee after having purchased 10 coffees.

Measuring the customer loyalty depends to a great extent on the business and on the industry. Companies can consider a loyal customer as someone who comes back once or twice, or once a year, or every quarter. It depends on what the company sells. For instance, for a company that sells computer antivirus licenses, a loyal customer is a customer who comes once a year, because licenses are typically renewed every year. That is why it is important to set a quantifiable objective and define clearly what a loyal customer is to the company. The definition of a loyal customer will enable the company to measure how loyal customers are and if there is a need to improve the strategy.

3.5.1.6.1 Customer Retention Rate

There are various means of measuring customer's loyalty, the main ones being the customer retention rate and the churn rate. The customer retention rate looks at the number of customers the brand already has and at the number of them who will make further purchases. In order to calculate the retention rate, marketers need to set a time

period, for instance 3 months, in which customers are expected to re-order or re -make a purchase. The period taken to calculate the retention rate is compared to the previous periods and provides information about how many existing customers re-ordered or re-purchased within the expected time frame. This means of measure does not consider new customers, as the churn rate does (Bird, 2020).

The retention rate can be calculated as follow;

$$\text{Retention rate} = \frac{\text{Number of actual customers who ordered from January – March}}{\text{Number of actual customers who re – ordered from April – June}} * 100$$

The higher the rate, the better, because it means that customers re-ordered or made again a purchase and became loyal to the brand or to the company.

3.5.1.6.2 Churn Rate

The churn rate, also known as attrition rate, measures how long customers stay with the brand over time and how many clients were lost by the brand. This rate shows the percentage of customers who did not return after having made a purchase or an order. The churn rate can be defined as “*being a percentage of customers who end their relationship with a company in a particular period*”(Gallo, 2014).

The churn rate is calculated as follow:

$$\text{Churn rate} = \frac{\text{Total number of customers who left the brand in a given period}}{\text{Total customers at the beginning of the period}} * 100$$

The lower the percentage, the better. When having low churn rate, it means that the loyalty programs and the marketing strategies put in place were successful and that customers did not left the brand.

Acquiring new customers is much more costly than retaining them. It is therefore crucial to have a strong value proposition that differentiates the company from competitors and that will in turn increase the customer retention rate and lower the churn rate.

3.5.2 Conclusion

To conclude, there are many means of measuring effectiveness of marketing strategy. The increase in sales or growth in customers’ base represent suitable indicators of whether the chosen strategy is effective or not. For the purpose of this research, several KPIs will be used to measure the effectiveness of the chosen marketing strategy. The choice of KPIs will depend on the marketing strategy to be implemented and on the

results that will come out of the data collection. The chosen means of measuring are discussed later in the discussion of the research.

3.6 Success

Success can be related to every life's aspect; job interviews, personal relationships, social status or project achievement. But how can success be defined and on which criteria is it based? For the purpose of this research, several means of measuring success will be exposed. Success can be defined broadly as being "*The accomplishment of an aim or purpose*" (Stevenson, Lindberg, 2010). Success focuses more on the outcome of a project or a strategy, than on the way the success has been achieved. Having an effective marketing strategy is a suitable start to drive success. The aim of this chapter is to determine the criteria that will be used to define and measure success and that will be applied to the case study *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

3.6.1 Setting Clear Objectives

There are various ways to measure if a project or a strategy is successful. The notion of success is tightly linked to effectiveness and to the KPIs used to measure effectiveness. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate success and effectiveness. The line between both concepts is often blurred. Effectiveness looks more at the various stages to achieve success, whereas success focuses more on the end results. First, it is important to define the criteria on which a project's success will be based. What are the main factors that will drive and measure success? When setting clear objectives, evolution can be identified, potential issues can be spotted, and adjustment can be implemented if needed.

3.6.1.1 S.M.A.R.T.

In order to set well-defined goals and objectives and thus measure success, the S.M.A.R.T. indicators can be used. The acronym stands for *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Timely*. The S.M.A.R.T. indicators help to define objectives in a clear and precise manner.

The objective should be:

- *Specific*; the objective should be well-defined, clear and explicit. In order to do so, the 5 "W" questions can be asked:

- *Who?*
 - *What?*
 - *Where?*
 - *When?*
 - *Why?*
- *Measurable*; the objective needs to be measurable, either quantified or qualified, and there should be an indicator of progress.
 - *Achievable*; the objective has to be achievable and attainable, it should be not too big to achieve, but still challenging.
 - *Realistic*; the objective has to be realistically achievable regarding the available time and resources.
 - *Timely*; the objective has to be set in a defined timeframe and with concrete deadlines (CFI, 2020).

The S.M.A.R.T. indicators give direction and guidelines for projects or strategies to implement. Moreover, these indicators can bring a sense of belonging within a team and generate more involvement because they feel concerned about the project and have a clear idea of what needs to be achieved.

3.6.2 Means of measuring Success

Since success is more related to an outcome, one way of measuring it is by looking at concrete facts and figures. The aim is to link the pre-defined KPIs to the actual business outcomes. This comparison shows if success has been achieved regarding the objectives previously set. The success of a project strongly depends on the goals determined by the company and is therefore very specific. However, there are some general ways of measuring the success of a project or a marketing strategy that can be tailor-made or developed to specific projects.

3.6.2.1 Revenue Generated

Looking at the revenue generated by the implemented strategy is another way to measure the success of a project. When the goals previously set are correctly measured and results are clearly demonstrated, it is possible to see how much a marketing strategy contributed to the revenue. This can be illustrated when comparing the marketing spending and the revenue generated from these expenses. If the revenue generated by the marketing strategy is higher than the expense, then the outcome is successful (Sullivan, 2019). However, the reality is more complicated because it is very difficult to

determine which revenue was generated from the marketing expenses. So, this mean of measuring success is in theory easy to implement, but in reality, much more complex.

3.6.2.2 Targeted Revenue

Another way to measure the growth, the sustainability and the success of a project is by setting a revenue target. By having an objective to achieve a revenue in a certain timeframe will not only allow companies to see where they stand but also enable them to have a clearer vision. Targeted revenue can also be a source of motivation for managers and employees, because they know for what they are working and where they are going.

There are different options in setting a targeted revenue, but the most common one is to set a targeted revenue based on the one from previous years and to add a targeted growth percentage. When a company is healthy and stable, it is normal to expect growth. An alternative option to estimate the targeted revenue is based on the current business capacity in terms of employees. The revenue is calculated on how much each employee costs the company. Lastly, another option for companies to set targeted revenue is based on sales quota, where the targeted revenue is built on the sales that have to be achieved by the company's sales team (Sakas, 2018).

In order to achieve the targeted revenue, monthly targets should be implemented. By having monthly goals, the tracking of the targeted revenue is easier and more effective. Frequent ratio analyses allow to see if the company is on the good path or if adjustments should be made. Clear and precise goals have to be communicated among the teams and departments, in such ways that the whole company focuses on the same objectives. To set targeted revenue, it could be helpful for companies to use the S.M.A.R.T model, exposed at the beginning of this chapter.

3.6.2.3 Resulting Profit

Another way to measure successful outcomes is through the profit resulting from the strategy. A positive revenue does not mean that the profit is positive as well. Looking at the revenue only is not enough to see if a project or a strategy is successful. It is essential to consider profitability as well. When analyzing profit, it is helpful to look at margins. If the customer-margin is low, even if the marketing strategies fosters sales, the outcomes and the profits generated will be of low impact, and the purpose of implementing a successful strategy is lost. Looking at the profit can be a suitable mean of measurement,

but it is important to take all aspects into consideration and not only the final numbers (Sullivan, 2019). Determining how much a marketing strategy contributed to the profit is as hard as determining how much the strategy generated revenue. This measurement is very suitable in theory, but more complex to implement in practice.

3.6.2.4 Increase in Sales & Volume ordered

Measuring the success of a marketing strategy can also be achieved through sales indicators. When sales increase or when the volume of products ordered by customers grows, it usually is a positive indicator for a business. However, it is key to take into account the possible products returns. When not considering the return rate, the way of measuring success is biased, because it only looks at gross sales. Sales indicators can be broken down into the various sectors of the business or into the different categories touched by sales. For instance, looking at the sales made by existing customers or identifying which products' categories are making the biggest profit are ways to dig deeper into data that might drive success. Having regular measures and keeping track of these data enables the company to adapt its strategy when needed or to push forward in case of success. Looking at such information allows a company to investigate more accurately the issues and to make targeted changes that will foster success (Tyler, 2020).

3.6.2.5 Customer Satisfaction

Every company needs to have customers and there is no limit of having too much of them. Customers are the main component of a company's success. An increase in the number of customers is already a positive sign for a company or a brand. However, an increase in customer base is not enough. Customers' relationship has to be developed and customer loyalty is a long-term process. It is therefore highly important to measure the level of customers' satisfaction.

According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, customer satisfaction is “*The extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations*” (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 37). When knowing how satisfied customers are with a company's product or service, companies can measure how successful it is, and they can implement changes when needed. Customer delight highly contributes to customer loyalty, which in turn contributes positively to the company's performance and success (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 37). When customers are satisfied, they talk about and recommend a company's product more easily and they share their positive experience. Satisfied consumers become indirectly promoters of the brand. For a company, word-of-mouth

influence is one of the most powerful way to promote a product or a service and to influence a consumer's buying behavior. Word-of-mouth influence can be defined as *"the impact of the personal words and recommendations of a trusted friends, associates, and other consumers on buying behaviors"* (Kotler, Armstrong, 2018, p. 163).

Checking customers' satisfaction frequently is key to measure success. Nevertheless, it is important to consider all the other aspects than the product or the service itself, such as after-sales services or delivery time for instance. It is essential to look at every point of contact customers might have with the brand or the company. Measuring customers' satisfaction, and thus success, is a long-term process and needs to be previously well-defined. Customer delight is the positive outcome of several steps built upstream.

3.6.2.6 Employees' Satisfaction

Satisfied and motivated employees reveal a lot about a company's success. Motivated and hard-working employees drive to higher productivity, which is a major component of company's success. Moreover, happy employees in their work environment welcome customers in a friendly and positive manner, encourage sales and success. Employees are one of the driving forces of a company. If they work and are involved more than their basic tasks, the business is likely to prosper and grow in a positive way (Kulkarni, 2016).

In order to create a comfortable work environment and a positive atmosphere for employees, various methods can be implemented. Financial compensations, such as bonus plans, participation in health assurance or in fitness subscription, represent valuable ways to improve employees' satisfaction. However, non- financial benefits can have significant and long-term impacts on employees. For instance, companies can offer employees flexibility and more control over their work schedule and over their working habits. Companies can also encourage social interactions by creating a structure where communication is easy, or by fostering the celebrations of birthdays among the working-teams or by organizing teambuilding activities. All those examples contribute to create a positive work environment and tighten employees' relationships. Another important element to generate employee's satisfaction and loyalty is the implementation of ongoing trainings and workshops within and outside the firm. These trainings allow employees to feel important within the company, and also take them out of their usual work routine. These trainings are fresh air for employees and give them the possibility to explore new skills and to expand their knowledge (Shetrone, 2011).

Satisfied employees remain loyal to the company and are more productive and motivated to face every challenge. Employees are the core engine of a business' success and it is primordial to take care of them. Employees' satisfaction reflects a business' success.

3.6.3 Conclusion

To sum up, there are many ways of measuring success of projects or marketing strategies. The increase in sales, the customers' and employees' delights are suitable ways to measure the chosen strategy's success. For the purpose of this research, several means of measurement will be chosen to define and quantify success. The choice of the measurements will depend on the marketing strategy to be implemented and on the results that will come out of the data collected. The chosen means of measuring success will be discussed later in the discussion of the research.

3.7 Growth & Profitability

The key component to a sustainable and growing business is profitability. Most of the time, profitability is the first objective to be achieved by companies. But how can profitability be defined and measured? Is it only related to financial figures or also linked to other indicators? For the purpose of this research, various KPIs and ratios measuring business' profitability will be exposed, and the most accurate ones will be chosen for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

3.7.1 Means of measuring Profitability

Profitability can be summarized as follow. When a company's revenue covers its expenses, the company is generating positive cash flow; profit. Having positive cash flow enables a company to run its operations and to develop and grow its business sustainably. However, when looking at the company's profit only, it becomes complex to clearly identify which areas are generating profit. In order to see more precisely which areas are generating profit and which areas need improvement, various KPIs and metrics can be calculated (Chris Scott, 2018).

3.7.1.1 Profitability Ratios

Profitability ratios allow companies to see whether they are profitable or not and allow to assess their financial health and stability. Examples of these ratios are gross profit margin, operating margin and net profit margin. Return on Investment ratio is an important indicator of profitability, but this ratio was developed above in part 3.5.1. This

chapter will focus on margin ratios. Some important figures on the company's income statement need to be understood:

- **Gross profit** = Net Sales or Revenue – COGS (Cost of goods sold)
- **Operating profit** = Gross profit – Operating costs
- **Net Profit** = Operating profit + any other income and/or – additional expenses
(Chris Scott, 2018)

$$\text{Profitability Ratio} = \frac{\text{Net Sales or Revenue} - \text{COGS}}{\text{Gross profit} - \text{Operating Costs}} = \frac{\text{Operating profit} + \text{Any Other Income} - \text{Additional Expenses}}{\text{Net Profit}}$$

In order to analyze a company's profitability more accurately and compare it to others in the same industry, these numbers can be used to calculate ratios. The conversion of these numbers into ratios allows to compare them more easily and to have a faster overview of the situation (Chris Scott, 2018). Each of the three margin ratios mentioned above will be explained in detail.

3.7.1.1.1 Gross Profit Margin

The gross profit margin takes into account all the direct costs linked to the business' activity such as the cost of labor and materials directly used for the production or for the selling of the goods or services. The gross profit margin is healthy when it remains stable over the years and when it is positive, because it means that the companies' revenue covers the primary costs related to the activity. When the gross profit margin is high, companies benefit from a margin that can cover their indirect costs without incurring losses. A positive gross profit margin also shows that management efficiently generates revenue regarding the costs involved in making or selling the products or services.

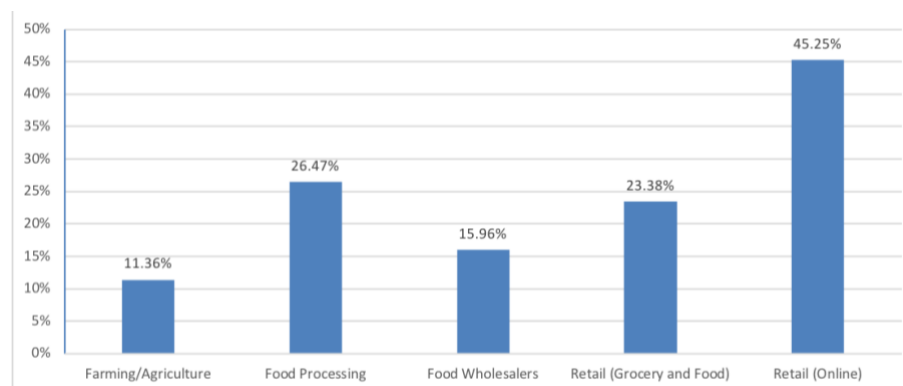
The net profit margin is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Gross Profit Margin} = \frac{\text{Gross Profit}}{\text{Revenue}} * 100$$

Finally, the gross profit margin depends on the industry. Some general averages of gross profit margins per sector exist and companies can use them as benchmarks. However, these averages might differ depending on the country, on the region and on the general environment in which the company operates. Many factors need to be taken into account

when looking at these averages, but they still give a general idea and can be useful for companies. For instance, in the United States, the gross profit margin is, on average, 26.47% for the food processing industry, 23% for the retail industry (Grocery and Food), and 45% for the online retail. For the farming and agriculture industry, the ratio barely exceeds 11% (Damodaran, 2020). In order to make a relevant analysis of the gross profit margin ratio, it is important to compare ratios within the same industry and to reiterate frequently over several periods to identify potential trends (Maverick, 2020).

Figure 14 Gross Profit Margin per sector in the US



Source: Excel file (Damodaran,2020)

3.7.1.1.2 Operating Profit Margin

Another useful profitability indicator is the operating profit margin. The operating profit margin considers all the costs linked to the business' activity indirectly used for the production or for the selling of the goods or services.

The operating profit ratio is calculated as follow:

$$\text{Operating Profit Margin} = \frac{\text{Operating Income}}{\text{Revenue}} * 100$$

The operating profit is the company's profit after all the operational charges have been deducted but before all the accounting and financial charges such as interests, taxes, depreciation and amortization have been incurred. The operating profit margin shows of how efficient a company is at earning revenue and at being able to turn its sales into pre-tax profits. The operating profit margin deducts from the gross profit all the costs indirectly linked to the operation of the activity, such as rents, salaries, insurances and marketing costs. An increase in the operating margin is positive and shows a company's financial health.

3.7.1.1.3 Net Profit Margin

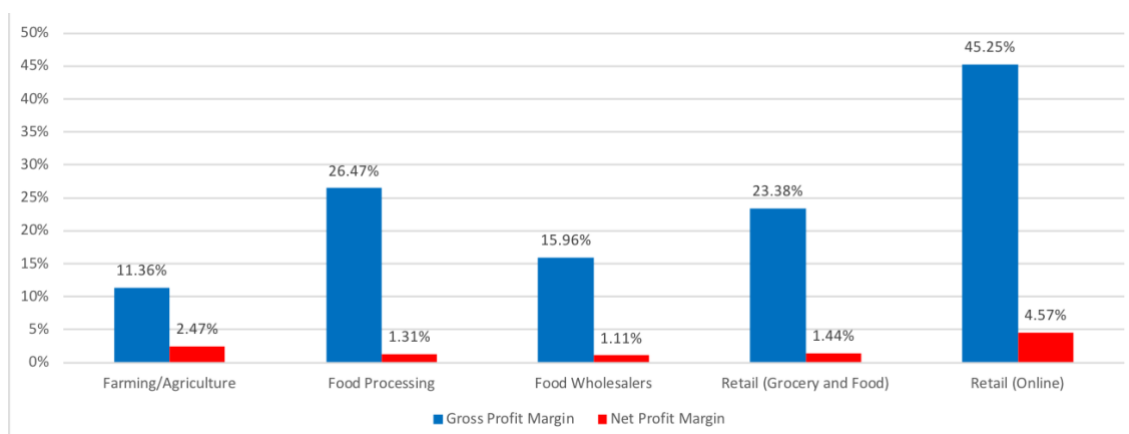
Lastly, the net profit margin is an important indicator of the company's profitability. It is the final result after all the operating and additional costs have been deducted from the revenue. The net profit margin compares total revenue to total expenses. This ratio determines whether the company generated profit or incurred loss over the year. For companies, this ratio can easily be used to compare themselves to others in the same industry. The net profit margin varies depending on the industry. The higher, the better, because it means that all costs, including financial and accounting charges, have been absorbed by the earnings. When net profit margin is negative, it means that the company incurs a loss, but it does not mean that the loss will perpetuate over the next periods, because non-recurring charges are included in this ratio. Indeed, various reasons can be at the origin of a loss, as for instance an increase in the cost of labor or natural disasters (Damodaran, 2020).

The net profit margin is calculated as follow:

$$\text{Net Profit Margin} = \frac{\text{Net Income}}{\text{Revenue}} * 100$$

By comparing gross profit margin and net profit margin, investors or executives can see how efficiently managers run the company's operations and how much profit they are making relative to the costs involved (Maverick, 2020). The farming and agriculture industry has a gross profit margin lower than the processing industry, 11.36% versus 26.45%, respectively. This difference is due to higher direct costs in the farming industry. Indeed, the costs related to the production of the vegetables and fruits, such as the costs of machinery, water and labor for examples are relatively high. That is why, the management and the optimization of indirect costs are extremely important, especially in the farming and agriculture industry where the gross profit margin is small, 11,36 %.

Figure 15 Gross Profit Margin & Net Profit Margin per sector in the US



Source: Excel file (Damodaran,2020)

3.7.2 Conclusion

To conclude, there is not only one way to measure profitability. On the contrary, the various means of measurement complete each other and highlight different aspects of a company's profitability. For the purpose of this study, profitability will be calculated in Swiss francs. The chosen profitability ratios for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* will be presented later in this report.

3.8 Findings of the Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and expose the main topics related to the research question, but also to highlight the major opportunities to answer to *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* new situation. In addition, this section aims at identifying and revealing the gaps left in the literature review. Through the collection of primary data, this paper will attempt to fill those gaps.

The first section of the literature review highlights the importance of agriculture in the Swiss economy. The agriculture is not only essential for ensuring the country's food safety but is also an important contribution to the Swiss tourism industry. Even though demand for agritourism activities has risen over the past years, there are currently no real facts and figures showing the number of farms offering agritourism, and there is no data about the benefits for farmers to implement such activities. Nevertheless, there are many existing opportunities for farmers to implement agritourism in their business and to contribute to local and national economy. As exposed in this research, farms are disappearing, especially small-scaled ones. These disappearances reveal the urgent

need for farmers to change their business model and to adjust their way of farming. Agritourism could be a suitable solution to this issue.

In addition to the decrease of small-scaled farms in Switzerland, the general environment in which farms operate is dramatically changing. The ongoing implementation of new technologies and digitalization in the agricultural sector can be beneficial for farmers in many aspects. Although digitalization is in everyone's life, farmers are sometimes reluctant to implement such technologies, mainly because initial implementation is costly in the short-term and also because they perceive risky to take the step to digitalize farming. Even though digital agriculture turned out to be beneficial on some aspects such as superior consumer experience or valuable impact on the environment, there is not yet enough hindsight today to measure the actual impacts.

Various distinct definitions of family farm were found during the research. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of family farm is based on criteria such as ownership, decision-making and work provided.

Marketing strategy being a main component of the research question, this topic was explored in depth in the research, and was applied to the agricultural sector in Switzerland and abroad. Currently, there is no concrete marketing strategy applied in the agricultural sector and there is only little information about it. However, during the research, direct selling came out to be the main marketing strategy implemented by farmers. This mean of differentiation allows farmers to take control back over distribution channels and to be directly in contact with end customers. The research revealed that marketing strategies can be applied to agriculture as they are applied to any other sectors. It was found that marketing processes are key to have an effective implementation. Targeted markets, company's value propositions and tools like the marketing mix are fundamental elements that have to be judiciously and accurately defined. In addition, it is key to choose the right strategy for the right business in order to create value for customers and to manage customers' relationship and loyalty. Implementing an effective marketing strategy takes time and is a long-term process. It is therefore highly important to schedule each task and each step of the process.

The study explored the definitions of "effectiveness" and "success", and presented several ways of measuring those two elements. The research highlighted some suitable options for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to measure the effectiveness and the success of their future marketing strategy and their communication strategy. In order to measure

effectiveness, KPIs such as Return on Investment (ROIs) and customer loyalty (retention rate) were used. Regarding “success”, employees’ and customers’ satisfaction are the main methods to measure a strategy’s outcome.

The research explored the key component of a sustainable and growing business; profitability. There is not only one way to measure profitability, but many different measures are used and complete each other. Variety of measures offer a global and comprehensive view of a company’s financial health. The gross profit margin and the net profit margin are the most important profitability ratios to be used.

Lastly, the study investigated about the Swiss citizens’ consumption habits regarding beef meat and the research focused on the region of Western Switzerland. The purpose was to understand better the consumers’ meat perception, their understanding regarding various meat cuts, their perception of quality and the importance of prices in their decision-making, to quote just a few elements. Today, there is no concrete and reliable data about this topic for the selected region. In order to deepen knowledge about the consumers’ consumption habits, primary data needs to be collected.

After having explored the various topics mentioned in the literature review, it is still challenging to fully answer the research question of this study, and to suggest viable recommendations to *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. In order to fill those gaps, primary research will be conducted to elaborate, develop further, confirm or deny the elements found in the primary data.

4. Research Methodology

The collection of data is a long and complex process. It usually takes time and is costly. Moreover, the results obtained do not give the expected results or are sometimes biased, which can generate issues for the analysis or for the project. In order to avoid these issues, it is essential to be well prepared, to have a structured and planned method and to determine a well-defined area of investigation.

4.1 Type of Research

This study is an exploratory, qualitative and quantitative market research on a family farm business in Switzerland. The research question is the following:

“How can a family farm business effectively implement a marketing strategy in order to be profitable and grow in the meat industry in Switzerland?”.

In order to answer this research question and fill the gaps identified in the literature review, primary data and secondary data will be collected. Primary data will be based on surveys and personal interviews. The collection of data aims at better understanding the research question’s context and at defining problematics around this research question. The final objectives are to answer the question as accurately as possible, and to give concrete solutions to the family farm.

4.2 Source of Data

4.2.1 Primary Data

Primary data is data collected from first-hand sources using survey, interviews or experiments. The main advantage of primary data collection is the high degree of accuracy, reliability and availability. Secondary data is not always available for some specific enquiries. The collection of primary data will be mainly carried on in the region of Arc Lémanique. The data will be analyzed quantitatively and illustrated with graphics and tables in order to identify trends, correlations and variations. This information will help build a strong marketing strategy for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. For the purpose of this research, surveys and personal interviews will be carried on (Harboe, 2018).

4.2.1.1 Survey

The survey will aim at understanding consumers' expectations, habits and tendencies regarding meat. The survey will give useful information about the elements influencing the purchasing behavior of consumers. What are they looking for when buying meat; quality, price, meats' origin, brand image, certification labels? Moreover, the survey aims at identifying the most impactful and suitable communication channels for meat consumption and purchases. Lastly, the questionnaire should identify the extent to which consumers are receptive to farms' other products, activities or experiences.

The answers provided by the survey should help identify trends and opportunities for small farms to more efficiently invest their time and to select their prioritized activities.

4.2.1.2 Personal Interviews

For the purpose of this research, personal interviews will be carried on in order to understand even deeper consumers' behavior. The thorough exploration of personal interviews could be used as a brainstorming of ideas that could in turn be useful in the development of a business model.

The personal interviews will focus on farmers (supply side), restaurants, and butchers. These people will provide insights on specific subjects, such as the company's take over, the challenges encountered or success factors. Final consumers will also be interviewed in order to understand even deeper their perspectives, their needs and their demands.

More precisely, the targeted population to be interviewed will be:

- Supply side: butchers, restaurant and farmers who took over the farm or had successful business strategies that could give beneficial insights to answer the research question.
- Demand side: end-consumers that could help identify elements to build a strong marketing strategy and to better understand consumption behavior.

4.2.2 Secondary Data

For the purpose of this research, secondary data will be used to have an understanding of the agriculture context in Switzerland and abroad. The literature will clarify where Switzerland positions itself in an international context. The literature review shows the current situation of the agricultural and meat markets in Switzerland. The readings will also highlight challenges and issues that the industry is facing in a constantly changing environment. Furthermore, the literature will outline additional topics related to the

research question, such as marketing strategies and digitalization in the agricultural sector. Lastly, secondary data will be used to present the different ways of measuring effectiveness, success and profitability.

The secondary data are mainly collected from articles, statistics, reports, websites and books.

4.3 Means of collecting Data

The 2 main methods used to collect data for this project are an online survey and personal interviews.

4.3.1 Survey

Since it is time consuming to perform questionnaires face-to-face, the choice was made to use a digital questionnaire tool called Google Forms. The tool is not only faster, but it also generates an excel file with all results. which is very helpful when collecting primary data.

Statistically, one person out of three will answer the survey (Lindemann, 2019). Thus, the targeted group should be large enough to include the percentage of non-respondents. For this project, the sample size was determined to be at least 100 respondents, which will give a decent overview of the general trend. The survey is going to be in French and in English, in order to be able to target a wider range of people. The targeted audience will be people aged from 18 to 65 years old who consume meat and do their grocery shopping themselves. Lastly, the targeted location will be the Arc Lémanique and its surrounding towns.

The survey's structure will contain approximately 20 to 25 questions, starting with some general questions about consumers' meat consumption and finishing with some demographic questions, such as the person's age, location and current situation. Other questions will focus on marketing and communication channels. Some questions will be open questions and will require written answers where people can give their opinion. The written responses will help better understand purchasing behaviors of participants, decision-making influences and potential adjustments that have to be considered by farms. The length of questions will be short in order to make it easy for people to understand and to avoid any misinterpretation. Participants should complete they survey in five to ten minutes. The survey will utilize a variety of question approaches; yes or no

questions, questions that need written answers, Likert scale questions , and multiple choices questions (Harboe, 2018).

In order to get as many answers as possible, the survey is going to be sent through various online channels, such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp groups as well as personal contacts. In order to avoid any exclusion from people answering, a small introduction will explain the purpose of the research and will let people know that it is anonymous. The choice of conveying the survey through those channels is due to easiness, time- and cost-effectiveness.

4.3.2 Personal Interviews

The personal interviews will target various stakeholders who are involved directly or indirectly in the meat industry such as farmers, butchers, restaurants and end consumers. Those interviews will help better understand market perceptions and current trends in the local market. Additionally, the interviews will explore the strategies that were implemented by these stakeholders and that worked with success. Successful strategies could act as a source of inspiration to build a business approach for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

There will be two types of targeted interviewees on the demand side; customers who already purchased meat at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, and customers who never bought at the farm. The personal interviews with customers will give detailed information about consumption habits and preferences. Interviewing people who have already purchased at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* will give highly valuable information. Answers will give insight on customers' motivations to purchase, on the ways they heard about the farm and on the elements influencing their decision to go to the farm instead of somewhere else. Existing customers' answers will also lead to potential adjustments that need to be implemented by the farm, or, on the contrary, to strengthen positive aspects highlighted by the interviewees. Interviews with customers who never bought or came at the farm will enable to understand other aspects that are sought by consumers and that farmers might not offer. Moreover, these interviews will allow to gain insight on other strategies that were put in place to attract the consumer and understand deeper, why consumers may be holding back on buying produce from the farm.

Regarding the interviews' structure, an interview guideline with pre-defined questions will be prepared in advance. These questions will be open-ended, which will provide a more detailed discovery of what drives this industry. The main goal of these interviews will be to answer the questions *What? Why? And How?*. For instance, *what* strategy should a

company implement to best satisfy its stakeholders and shareholders? *Why* should this company choose one strategy and not others? *How* to best implement the chosen strategy? These questions will be tailored to the interviewee. There will be on average 10 topics, regrouping a few questions and the meeting should last between 30 and 60 minutes. In order to have a track of the discussion and the possibility to listen to answers again if needed, the interviews will be recorded. In order to avoid influences, biases and personal points of view, the interviewer should not know personally the interviewees (Harboe, 2018). But in practice, it is valuable to use the farm's existing network to carry out those interviews, so the interviewer might already know the interviewees. Despite the situation, the interviewer will remain as partial as possible when preparing questions and during the discussion.

4.4 Remark

Due to the current worldwide Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, a new opportunity was grabbed by *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. The farm decided to re-open its shop on the farm for direct selling. Indeed, since people were reluctant to go to big stores and meet people, they were willing to buy differently in smaller places. Results of the shop come later in the report. Also, the virus delayed the research on some aspects, because people were preoccupied with the situation's uncertainty and they needed to get used to their new lifestyle.

4.5 Limitation of the Study

During the research, the following limitations were faced:

- Some interviews were delayed or failed to happen, because of the current situation of Covid-19 or because of the unavailability of due to harvest time.
- Most of the participants of the online survey live in the Arc Lémanique, more precisely in the canton of Vaud because of the targeted audience. Therefore, the outcome of the study is limited to a specific and relatively small region.
- The respondents of the online survey may not include all age ranges because of the researcher's network.
- The consumption habits regarding meat may vary or change regarding the current situation of Covid-19, therefore the results may not be representative of the reality.

- The various stakeholders who will be interviewed such as butchers, farmers and restaurants, may not share their company's current situation and strategies.
- The personal interviews are carried on with people the interviewer might already know, which could lead to some biases.
- The researcher is a member of the family who owns *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. This belonging could lead to over-optimistic perspectives.
- The current situation with COVID-19 creates an uncertain climate, where making forecasts, assumptions and predictions is even more challenging than in normal circumstances. Besides, answers of interviews and surveys might be biased by this tense situation.

5. Primary Data Analysis & Insight

5.1 Survey

The survey has been designed through the digital questionnaire tool called Google Forms. The questionnaire can be consulted in Appendix 1 in English and in French. The survey contains 27 questions in total and uses a variety of question approaches; yes or no questions, open questions that need written answers, Likert scale questions, multiple choices questions and checkbox questions (Table 2). The survey is divided into the following 6 sections: Introduction, Purchasing & Consumption habits, Product's perception, Communication channels, Farm activities and Demography (Table 2).

Table 2 Survey Structure & Type of Questions

Type of Questions	Number	Section Name	Number of Questions
Yes or No Questions	5	Introduction	1
Open Questions	6	Purchasing & Consumption habits	8
Checkbox Questions	6	Product's perception	7
Likert Scale Questions	1	Communication Channels	3
Multiple Choice Questions	9	Farm activities	4
Total	27	Demography	4
		Total	27

Source: The Author, 2020

5.1.1 Response Collection

The survey was sent through the online channels Facebook and WhatsApp. The link of the survey was promoted with the help of several Facebook users, who accepted to share the link from their account, which allowed the researcher to reach a border audience.

In order to reach as many people as possible, the survey was established in English and in French. Due to the targeted region, the Arc Lémanique, the results collected were in French. The goal to obtain at least 100 respondents was achieved successfully with a total of 182 respondents. Before analyzing results in detail, the data had to be cleaned. The first step of the cleaning process was to translate the answers in English for a proper use of the data. The second step was to delete duplicated respondents. Thirteen duplicates were identified and eliminated. Unfortunately, the reason behind the duplicates could not be determined. After these cleaning steps, there were 169 answers. The next cleaning step was to take out irrelevant respondents; vegans and vegetarians (8 in total) who participated in the survey gave irrelevant answers because they do not consume meat (Table 3).

Table 3 Survey cleaning up Process

Total Survey Answers	182
Duplicates	- 13
Vegans	- 2
Vegetarians	- 6
Total	161

Source: The Author, 2020

The results of the survey are going to be discussed and analyzed below, section by section.

5.1.2 Population Analysis

The survey population's demography information can be seen on figure 16. There is a total of 161 participants. Almost 50% of them are aged between 26 and 34 years old, which might be related to the researcher's network and collecting tool. 80% of the respondents aged between 26 and 34 are employed, 10 % are students, and 10% are freelancers or unemployed people. About 20 % of respondents are aged either between 18 and 25 or between 35 and 50. 14 respondents are aged between 51 and 64 and only 6 over 64. Only one respondent is aged under 18. Figure 16 gives a clear overview of the targeted population's age.

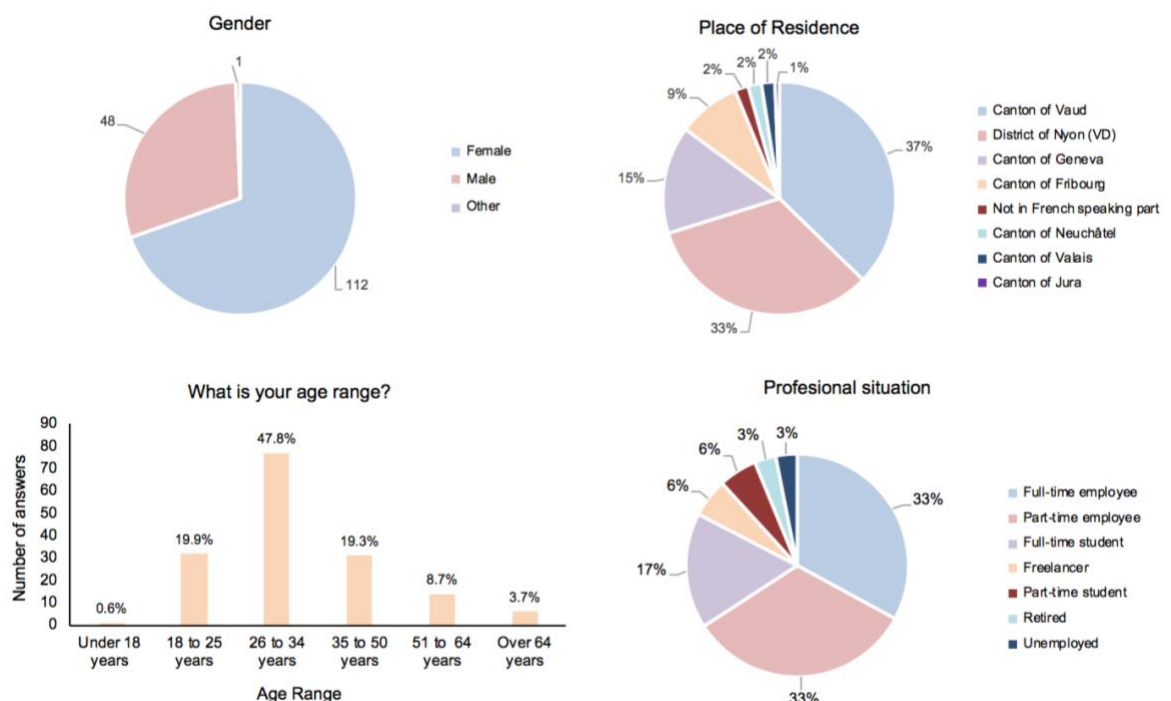
Regarding the gender, almost 70% of respondents are women. This might be related to the fact that women are more often in charge of the groceries in the household. 30 % of respondent are men, which can hypothetically be explained by the fact that women might feel more concerned by grocery shopping than men and are more likely to respond to this type of questionnaires. Nevertheless, the collection of data does not allow to support this theory and further researches need to be done. One person did not communicate its gender.

About two-third of respondent (66%) are employed, either full time or part time. The second biggest category is represented by full time students and counts for 17% of the respondents. Among students, over 80% of them are aged between 18 and 25. Freelancers and part time-students both represent 6% of the survey population. It is common for part time student to have a job in order to be able to live on their own. Finally, retired and unemployed people represent only 3%, respectively 5 people for each professional situation. The variety of the respondents' professional situations enables to get a varied target audience and a wider overview of the meat consumption.

Regarding the participants' place of residence, over 70% live in the canton of Vaud, out of which 33% lives in the district of Nyon. The district of Nyon was analyzed separately to obtain a deeper analysis of the region and to see the extent and effectiveness of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s communication strategy. Having a narrow area also allows to understand deeper the consumption habits in a specific region. The targeted population being people living in the Arc Lémanique, it is rational to see the majority of respondents living in the canton of Vaud. Another reason explaining the number of respondents living in the Canton of Vaud is the researcher's network.

15% of respondents live in the Canton of Geneva. For further research, it would be interesting to investigate whether these people live in cities close to Nyon, in Geneva city or close to the French border. Those different locations might provide different results and could help create tailored and optimized strategies. The canton of Fribourg represents 9% of the total respondents. The canton of Neuchâtel and Valais constitute only 2% of the survey population. Together with the canton of Jura, those three cantons represent the minority of the respondents. 3 respondents do not live in the French part of Switzerland, either because they live in another region of Switzerland, or because they live abroad.

Figure 16 Gender, Place of Residence, Age Range & Professional situation

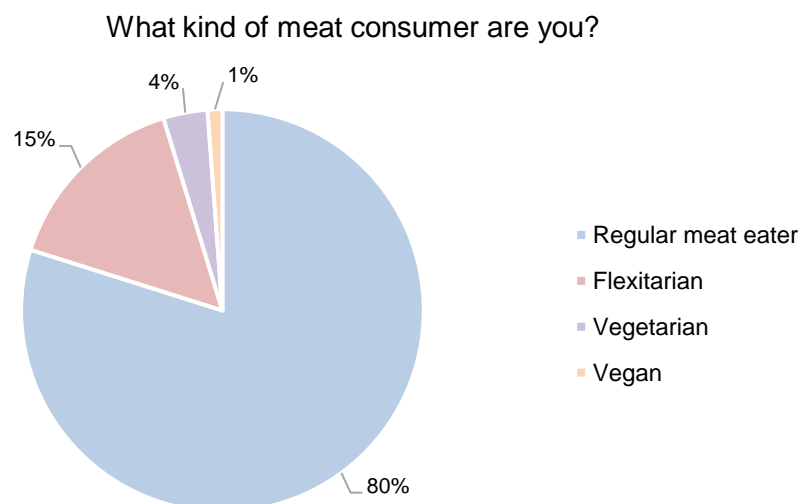


5.1.3 Purchasing & Consumption Habits Analysis

This section's purpose is to better understand consumer's consumption and purchasing habits regarding beef meat.

The first question asked to participants in the introduction section was: What kind of meat consumer are you? This question aimed at determining the participant's consumption profile. Since it was the first question of the survey, 169 participants responded because vegetarians and vegans were also considered. Over 80% of the respondents (135) consider themselves as regular meat eaters, meaning that they eat meat at least twice a week. 26 participants consider their diet as being flexitarian, meaning that they primarily have a vegetarian diet but occasionally eat meat or fish. Lastly, 6 participants are vegetarians and 2 are vegans, which represents 4% and 1%, respectively.

Figure 17 Meat Consumption

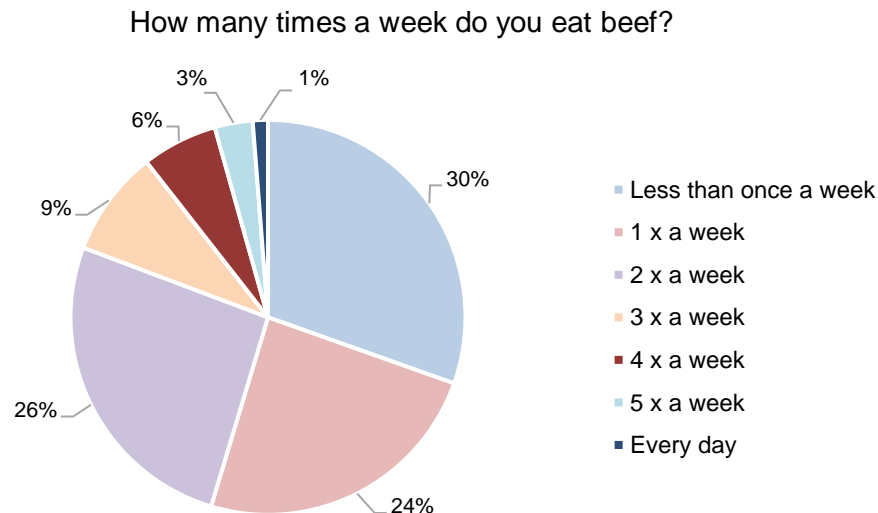


Beef Meat Consumption

In order to understand the frequency of the consumers' beef consumption, the question asked about the number of times they eat beef in a week. Almost one third of the participants eat beef less than once a week, 24% consume beef once a week and 26% eat beef twice a week. These results show that the general trend is to eat only a little beef in a week, but still 15% of respondents, representing 24 people, consume beef at least 3 times a week. Finally, only 1% of the participants eat beef every day. When looking at the results, it can be speculated that the general trend is to decrease the consumption of red meat. Indeed, figure 17 shows that people eat meat, including every

type of meat, at least twice a week. However, figure 18 illustrates that the majority of the participants eat beef meat less than once a week. Therefore, this analysis suggests that people do not predominately eat beef.

Figure 18 Beef Meat Consumption



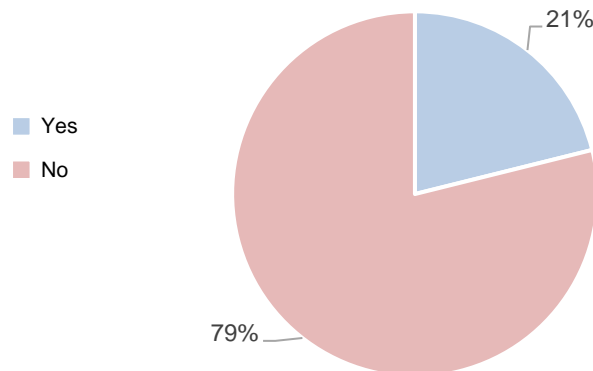
Beef Meat Consumption during COVID-19

This questionnaire included an interest about the impact of the COVID-19 situation on the respondents' beef consumption. 79% answered that the pandemic did not have an impact on their meat consumption. The remaining 21% of the respondents have seen a change in their consumption habits during the pandemic. They tended to eat less meat because they went grocery shopping less often, went less to the restaurant or had fewer dinners with friends. In addition, some respondents said that they had less income, which did not allow them to spend money on meat or noble cuts.

Interestingly, some respondents answered that quantity and frequency of their beef consumption did not change, but that their purchasing habits changed on other aspects. For instance, respondents said that they preferred going directly to the farmer or butcher's place rather than going to supermarkets as before. Some respondents became more aware that quality is important and sought to consume more locally. They were willing to eat and consume in a smart way. Finally, some respondents affirmed that they were able to save more money during the pandemic by not eating at the restaurant, for instance, and thus they could buy beef more often and of better quality.

Figure 19 Beef Consumption Habits during COVID-19

Has the Coronavirus situation influenced the way you eat beef meat?



Monthly Budget & Household Consumption

The charts below show the average monthly budget that a consumer spends on beef and the number of people eating beef in the household. This information gives a clearer picture of household's spending and shows whether it the spending is related to employment status, place of purchase or the number of people eating beef in the household. 38 of the respondents, representing 24%, have a monthly budget below 30.-. This result can be explained by the fact that 25 out of the 38 respondents consume beef less than once a week and that they are often the only ones eating beef in their household (Figure 20).

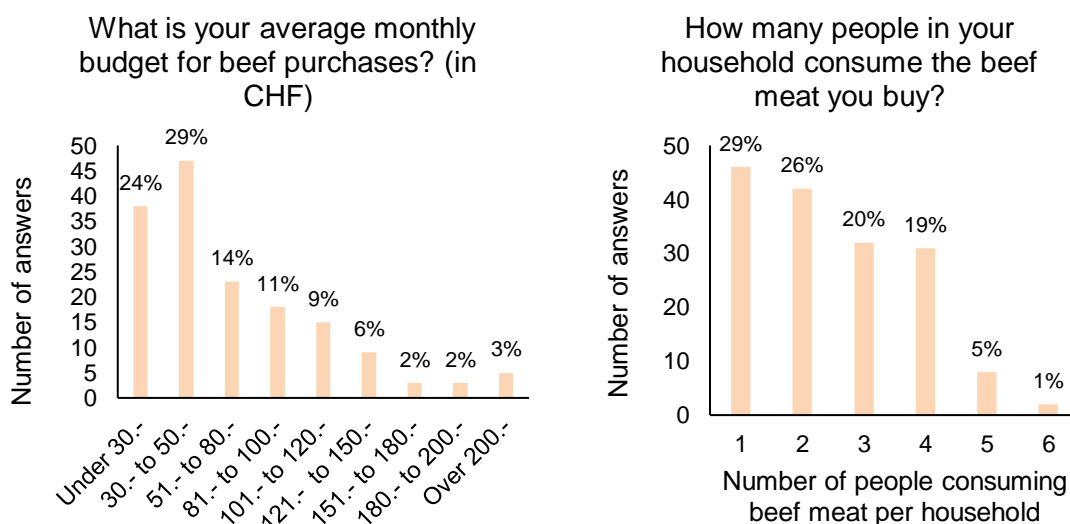
29% of participants have a monthly budget between 30.- and 50.-. Over 75% of those 47 respondents eat beef once or twice a week.

34% of respondents reported having a monthly budget for beef between 51.- and 120.-. Those three categories together (budget between 51.- to 80.-, 81.- to 100 and 101.- to 120) seem to be the average as it is the biggest one after the 29% described above. The household's beef budget can be linked to several explanations like the number of people in the house eating meat or the employment status. However, results of the survey do not allow such a detailed analysis and it would be interesting to further investigate this group of people in the future.

The budget categories exceeding 121.- per month, representing only 13% of the total respondents, include households with 3 to 5 beef eaters.

Finally, some respondents are considered as outlier. Indeed, three people answered that their monthly budget for two people is between 151.- and 200.-. Those expenses could be explained by the fact that they buy noble cuts such as tenderloin or rump steak.

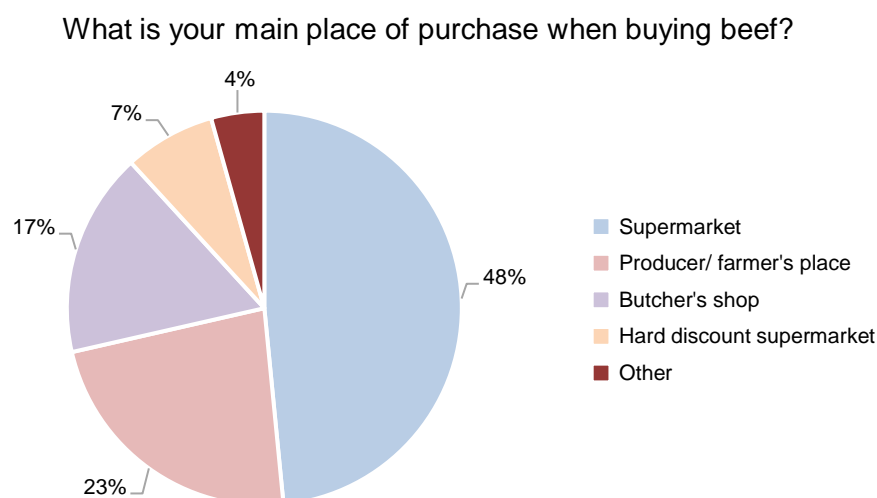
Figure 20 Monthly Budget & Household Consumption



Purchase Places

Nearly 50% of respondents reported purchasing their beef at supermarkets such as Coop, Migros or Manor. This can be easily understood as supermarkets are the simplest and quickest ways to get all groceries at once. Based on this assumption, it could be important for farmers or independent producers to boost awareness through advertising using for example social media. 64 respondents purchase their meat directly at the farmer's or at the butcher's place, representing 40% of the respondents and the second biggest place of purchase. Out of the 64 people, 25 % have a monthly budget between 30.- and 50.-. Their monthly budget does not differ from the monthly budget of people going to the supermarkets. Based on this result, it could be helpful for farmers to make population aware that going to the butcher or the farmer is not necessarily more expensive than going to the supermarket. Only 7% of respondents buy meat at hard discounters such as Lidl or Aldi and spend either under 30.- per month or over 81.- per month depending on how many people in the household eat beef meat. Finally, the 4% of respondents remaining include people who buy at other places of purchase such as Denner, Aligro or France.

Figure 21 Main Places of purchasing Beef



There was no clear correlation found between the various budget's categories and the employment status or the place of purchasing beef.

Online & Producers' Place of purchase

Over 90% of respondents stated that they have never bought beef online. Various reasons could explain this trend. First, over 23% of respondents who never bought beef online stated that they like to see the product and to have the opportunity to choose. The second reason was their preference to buy directly from the farmer's or the butcher's place, so that they buy locally and know exactly where the meat comes from. In their opinion, buying meat online does not allow to have the same control over the product's traceability or over the condition of breeding. Moreover, when buying online, there is no direct contact with the seller and no possibility to get advices. Those two elements were important criteria for respondents in their beef purchase decision making. Thirdly, 20% of respondents reported not having the opportunity of buying meat online, or never thought of buying meat online, because it is not in their purchasing habits, especially for fresh products. Another important aspect that came out of the survey was that some people like to buy everything at the same place, like in supermarkets, and do not want to split their grocery shopping. Lastly, 14% of respondents do not trust online shopping and expressed doubts about the quality and the freshness of the meat. Some participants communicated fears about the respect of the cold chain and expressed the complexity to be at home on the day and at the time of delivery.

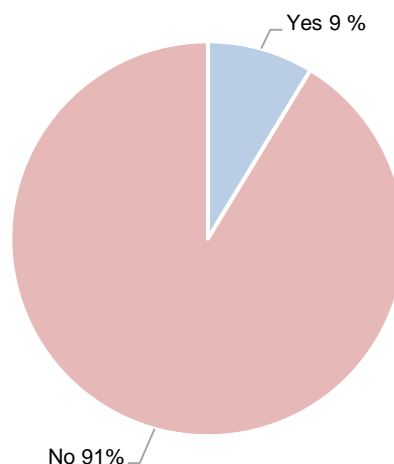
People who buy meat online represent 9% of the survey population. Most of them buy meat online due to special circumstances. For instance, some online buyers have a subscription to monthly baskets, where they receive every month products from the farm delivered in a basket that includes meat. Other people buy online when delivery service companies, such as Coop@home or Migros, make special promotions or special offers. Some respondents also pointed out that the current COVID-19 situation encouraged them to order meat online and that having meat directly delivered at home is convenient.

So, the main reasons not to buy beef online include:

- customers like to see and choose the product
- customers have the possibility to talk and have a direct contact with the seller
- customers can buy locally and control the product's traceability
- customers do not trust online shopping for food or fresh products.

Figure 22 Online Beef Purchase

Have you ever bought meat online?



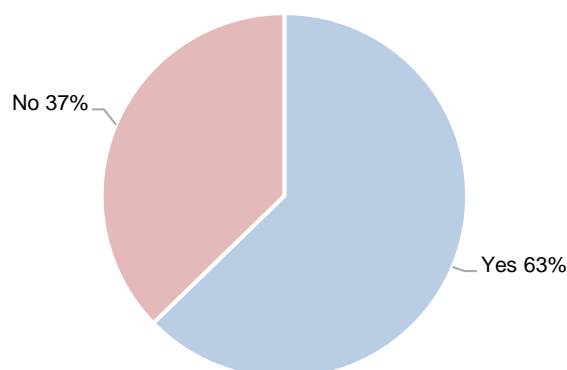
In contrast to online beef purchase, the majority of the participants has bought meat at least once directly from the farmer or producer's place. Indeed, 63% of participants responded positively to the question. There are various reasons why people go to farmers/producers. First, over 40% of people who answered positively said the main reasons include meat quality, freshness and healthiness. Second, 25% of respondents said that traceability is a criterion to purchase directly from the farmer. Knowing the origin of the meat is important to them. In addition to traceability, 23% of respondents stated that the main reasons of buying directly at producer's place were the transparency of the production conditions and the knowledge on the animal's breeding and well-being. Fourth, 23% of respondents said that their motivation to buy directly at the farm is to

support farmers and to value their work. In their opinion, eating local and having less impact on the environment by purchasing meat from close places are also important aspects. Finally, other motivations coming out of the questionnaire included direct contact with producers, fair prices, and personal relationships with farmers/producers who sell directly on their farms.

The remaining 37% respondents who never went to a farmer or producer's place explain their purchasing behavior by the convenience and easiness of supermarket's product offering. Indeed, 38% of those respondents expressed issues with distance and accessibility to the farmer's place and voiced a lack of time. Over 23% of them affirmed they did not know any producers or places where to buy directly their meat. Based on this finding, it could be helpful for farmers to inform consumers where their products can be found through an effective communication strategy. Finally, other reasons for respondents not to buy directly from farmer's place included lack of opportunity and expensive prices. It could be helpful for farmers to educate people about their prices so that consumers become aware that meat at the farm is not necessarily more expensive. Indeed, lots of people are misinformed regarding the prices in smaller shops.

Figure 23 Farmer or Producer's Place of purchase

Have you ever purchased beef directly from the producer/farmer?



To summarize, the main reasons to buy beef directly from the producer are:

- beef is healthier, better quality and fresher
- customers know the meat's origin and traceability

- customers know the breeding conditions of the animals and the production processes
- local economy and farmers are supported, and their work is valued
- personal contact with the producer and fair prices

The main reasons not to buy directly from the producer are:

- lack of time
- difficulties to access the farmer's place
- respondents do not know places or producer to buy from
- respondents think meat is more expensive on the farm

5.1.4 Product's Perception Analysis

This section had as purpose to better understand the consumer's product perception and its expectation regarding beef.

Buying Criteria

In order to explore this aspect, the respondents could choose several options regarding their decision making to buy beef (see Figure 24).

Knowing on which criteria consumers base their purchasing choice is precious information especially when building marketing and communication strategies, hence the importance of the question in the survey. Moreover, it was interesting to see whether the answers given are aligned with *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* product offering and concept. When the question was asked which three criteria are the most important when buying beef, respondents answered the origin, the price and the proximity.

Over 27% of respondents (128) said that the origin was an important criterion and out of those 128 respondents, 69 said it was the most important one. The origin of the meat is especially important for the people aged between 26 and 50 years old, representing 66% of the answers. The fact that the origin is the most important condition when buying beef reinforces the results found before, namely that reasons not to buy online was because respondents could not have a control over the product's traceability and, on the opposite, buying directly from the farmer's place enables them to know exactly the origin of the product. Through the results gathered from respondents the origin is defined by knowing where the animal comes from (location), whether the meat is Swiss or not (country) and even sometimes by knowing producers. For further investigation, it would be interesting to explore whether there is an aspect of the origin that may be more important than the

others. It could also be interesting to investigate if the three aspects (location, country or producer) have the same importance regarding the age range.

Price was the second most important criteria. Over 17% of respondents (81) acknowledged that it was a major criterion for them. Out of these 81 responses, 45 were given by people aged between 26 and 34 years old. The second age range that considered the price as being the most important criteria includes people aged between 18 and 25 years old, representing 25% of the answers. This could be related to the fact that the majority of people being in this age range are students and that their budget is often tight, thus the price is an important factor in their purchasing decision. However, the survey does not allow to see the reasons why price is an important criterion. Price could be important due to expensiveness, or because people are willing to pay fair prices and support farmers. In order to understand deeper what is exactly meant by the price factor and if for instance it is really related to the student's income or not, further investigation needs to be done.

For 15% of the survey population, the proximity was an important criterion when buying beef and for 22%, the second most important one. The importance of this criteria might be related to the fact that it is not always easy to go to the farmer. Nevertheless, no respondent indicated the proximity as being the most important criteria. Over 72% answered that proximity is the third most important criteria. The proximity being in the three main criteria when buying beef, it strengthens the trend found before which was that buying from the producer's place is local, near to go and promotes the contact with the farmer. Moreover, proximity is indirectly linked to have a positive impact on the environment as there is less transportation needed when the animal's breeding and its meat selling is made directly on the farm.

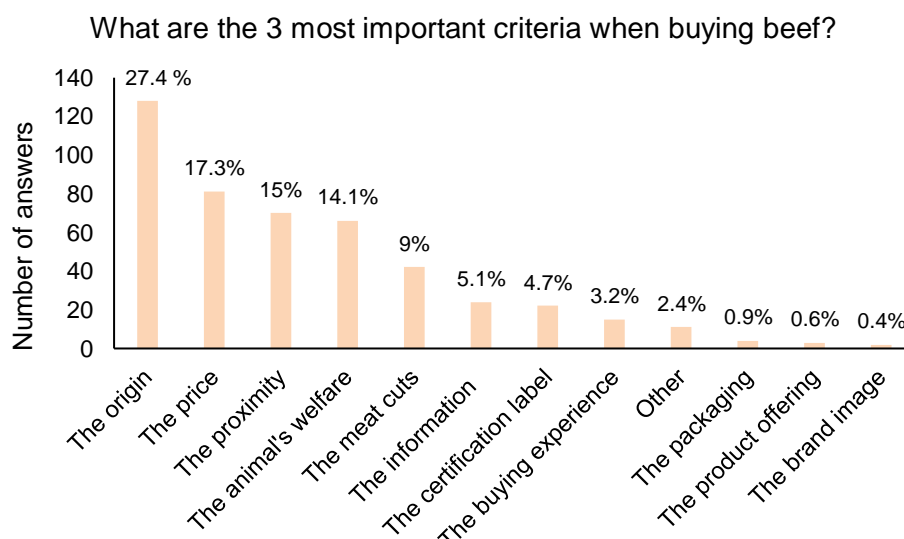
Finally, it can be observed that the animal's well-being is almost as important as the proximity when buying beef. The rising concern about the animal's breeding condition and production process can be illustrated through this result. Indeed, the main reason why people buy on the farm was because the production conditions were known, and they could see how the animal was bred.

Regarding the meat cuts category, 9% of the respondents indicated that it is essential for them to have specific meat cuts and over 90% of them said that it is the third most important criteria when buying beef. Only 4.7 % said that the certification label is important. The other criteria included in the survey were the product, the buying

experience, the packaging, the product offering or the brand image, and they only represent 12% of the total answers.

2.4% of respondents indicated other criteria that are important for them when purchasing beef, such as the beef's quality or aspect, the type of production (BIO or not for instance), the breeding conditions or the product's expiry date.

Figure 24 Importance of Criteria when buying Beef



Quality Beef Definition

In order to understand the consumer's perception regarding beef meat and its expectations, the aim was to know how the consumer defines quality meat.

30% of the survey population answered that tenderness and taste define quality beef. Indeed 16% of respondents answered that quality beef has to be tender and melting when it is eaten and over 14% stated that beef has to be tasty and flavorsome. For those first 30%, it can be observed that quality beef is based on the product itself and not the packaging nor the service or the price.

Breeding conditions and respect of animals' welfare came out as being the second aspect that defines quality beef. 17% of respondents stated that an animal that is well breed, that was risen outside and where the production process is aligned with the animal's well-being is synonym of meat quality. Moreover, out of the 17%, 21% of respondents said that animal's fodder and pasturage are also very important aspects when defining beef's quality. Nevertheless, when comparing to figure 24, it can be seen that animal's welfare only comes in 4th position when buying beef, which is in opposition to the respondents' answers regarding beef quality. This might be explained by the fact

that when purchasing beef, it is not always possible to see the animal's breeding conditions and to know what its fodder was, as for instance when buying at the supermarkets or the butcher's place.

The color, the texture and the aspect of the beef are the third category of criteria characterizing respondents' definition of meat quality. 9% of the survey population thinks that having a piece of beef that is red-colored, that has a nice aspect and that looks appetizing defines quality.

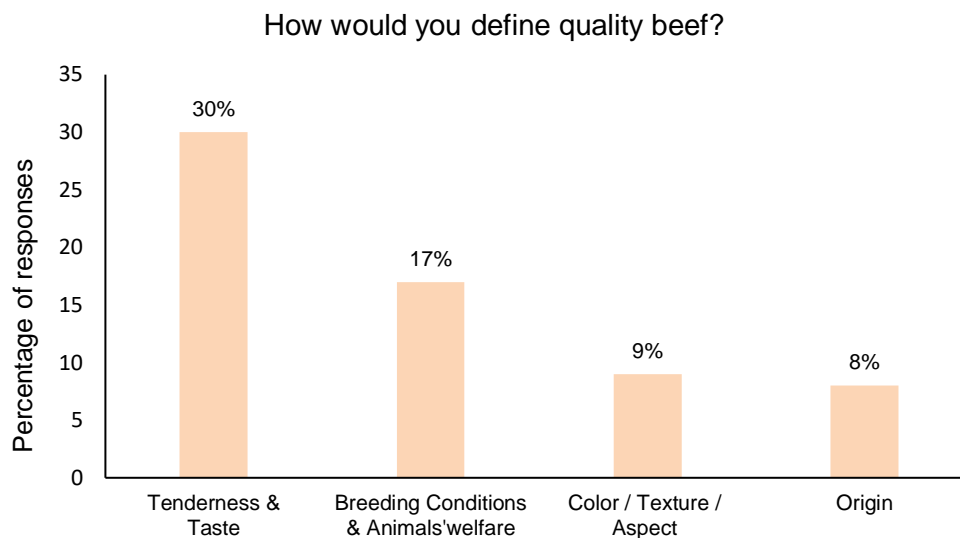
The origin of the beef comes at the fourth place. Indeed, 8% of respondents think that Swiss beef as well as the origin are synonyms of beef quality. In addition, traceability is a complementary criterion when defining the quality of beef. Knowing where it comes from and having transparency over the whole supply chain reinforce the definition of the origin of meat. When comparing with figure 24, the origin was at the first place when purchasing beef, however, when it comes to define beef's quality, origin is only at the 4th position. These two questions are completely different in people's mind and they do not base their decision on the same criteria when buying beef or when defining quality. For further research, it could be interesting to know which one of these two aspects is the most important.

7,7% of respondents answered that quality is linked meat that has little fiber and nerves and beef that is not too fatty. For 6,7% of the participants, meat that has been stale, or marbled can be considered as quality. Almost at the same level, 6.3% of the survey population said that proximity and local production guarantee meat quality.

For 4,3% of the respondents, the freshness of the product as well as the respect and monitoring of the cold chain are quality criteria. Certification labels, such as *BIO* for example, are for 4% of the respondents a guarantee of the quality of the meat. This rather low result confirms the fact that certification labels are not necessarily the basis for purchasing decisions (Figure 24).

Lastly, other aspects such as a good value for money, how the meat is cut or a good holding of the meat when it cooks, and which does not reject too much water, are some of the criteria that define meat quality.

Figure 25 Main Categories defining Beef Quality



Certification Labels

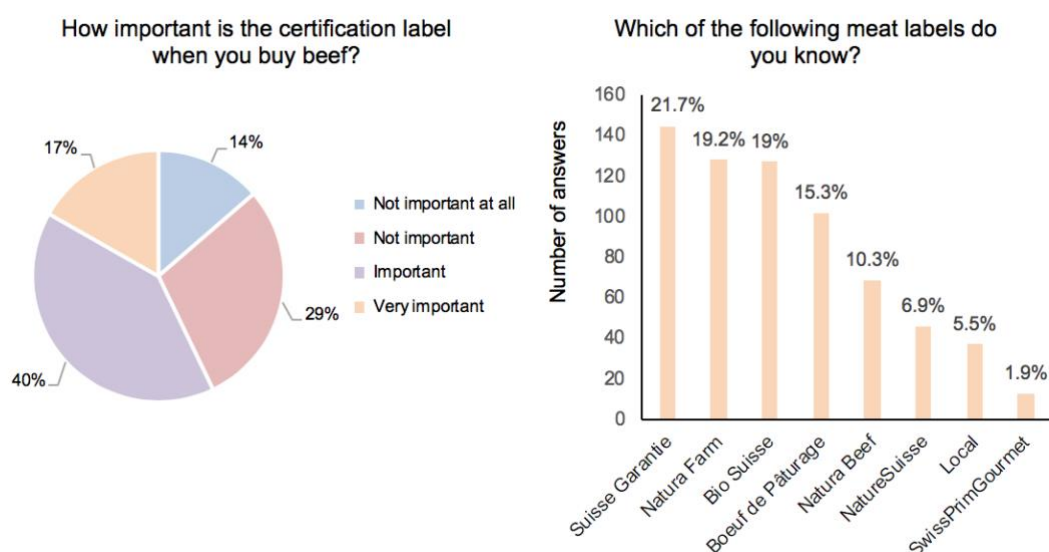
Regarding certification labels known by participants, they could choose multiple options (see Figure 26).

This survey also aimed at knowing if certification labels were important when buying beef for the respondents and whether they know them or not. The answers got from the survey indicated that certifications labels are likely to be important. Indeed, 40% of the respondents said that certification labels were important. Nevertheless, when comparing with figure 24, the certification label is only at the 7th place out of 12. This means that the criterion becomes important only when it is isolated and pointed out, and that other aspects like proximity and origins are more valued than certification labels. 29% of respondents said that the certification label was not so important and 14% indicates that it was not important at all, which supports figure 24 showing that other aspects are more important when buying beef.

Regarding meat certification labels known by participants, *Suisse Garantie*, was the one that people are the most familiar with. Indeed, 21% of the survey population knows it. This can be partly explained by the fact that the certification label is not only applied to meat, but also to other products such as vegetables or fruits. In addition, the certification label makes a lot of advertisement on TV spot, which reinforces the brand awareness. Therefore, it is essential to make a strong communication strategy when having a certification label in order to raise brand awareness and to enable customers to identify the product easily.

Close to the previous certification labels, *Natura Farm* and *BIO Suisse* are known by 19% of the respondents. The certification label *Natura farm* can be found exclusively at Coop, since they have created this independent private certification label. The fact that respondents know more this certification label, rather than the one from its competitor Migros (*Boeuf de Pâturage*), might be linked to the fact that Coop is doing a lot of advertising on TV but also on digital platforms, such as Youtube. Another reason could simply be linked to the respondents' purchasing habits, maybe preferring Coop to Migros. *BIO Suisse* is the official certification label for organic production in Switzerland, thus most of the respondents know it. Migros sells products that are certified *Boeuf Pâturage*. 15% of respondents know this certification label. 10,3% know the certification label *Natura Beef*. The product with this certification label is not only found at Coop, but also directly at the farmer or butcher's place. Respondents might know this certification label because of their consumption or purchasing habits. Lastly, *NaturSuisse*, sold by Aldi and *Local*, sold by Manor are with *SwissPrimeGourmet* the certification labels that are the least known. The fact that only fewer respondents know *NaturSuisse* can partly be explained by the fact that the certification label targets customers that do their grocery shopping at Aldi and the brand does not do a lot of advertisement for its certification label. 5.5% of respondents know *Local*, which represents 37 people. The certification label is also used for fruits, vegetables and other products. Finally, less than 2% know *SwissPrimGourmet*, which can be related to the fact that it is mainly sold in restaurants, specific butchers' shops or in specialist retailers such as Manor for instance. Manor offers products that are slightly more expensive than the ones found at Coop or Migros, which can explain why people go less to Manor and therefore do not know the certification label *SwissPrimGourmet*. It would be of interest to investigate whether the participants know the difference between the various certification labels or if their buying decisions are influenced by the advertisement.

Figure 26 Certification Labels

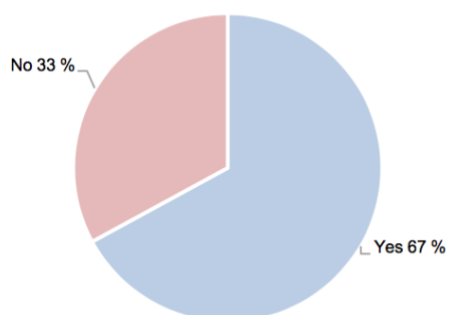


Beef Meat Cuts & Consumption

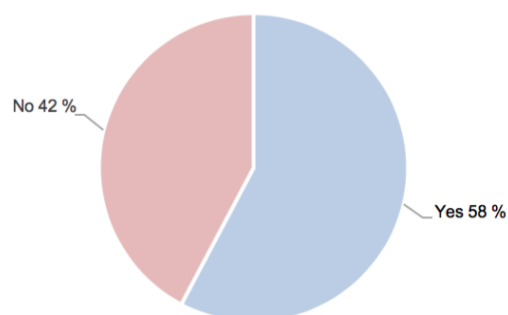
There was an interest in knowing whether the survey population knows the various parts of beef meat cuts and if they know how to cook them or not. The aim was to identify whether or not there is a potential opportunity to educate people about the various cuts of meat and to be able to develop a strategy for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. 67% of the survey population answered that they know the different cuts of meat, and almost the same percentage, 58% know how to cook them. It seems coherent to know how to cook a meat cut when it is bought. Nonetheless, 33% of respondents stated that they do not know the various cuts of beef and 42% do not know how to cook them. It can be hypothesized that since they do not know the cuts, they do know how to cook them either. Moreover, the question does not answer if the respondents know all the different cuts of meat or just some of them.

Figure 27 Beef Meat Cuts

Do you know the different cuts of beef meat ?



Do you know how to cook the different cuts of beef ?



In order to complete the understanding of beef meat cuts consumption, the researcher investigated if the respondents consume some meat pieces more than others and why. The most consumed cuts of meat are fillet of beef (32%), steak (27%) and rib steak (26%). For respondents, the choice of consuming fillet of beef or rib steak is mainly because these meat cuts are tender, very tasty and easy to do. Regarding the steaks, it is mainly because it is very easy and fast to cook and because it can be used for BBQ.

Minced meat is the fourth most consumed meat. 21% of the participants answered that they eat it because it is very easy to cook, cheaper and it offers a lot of cooking possibilities. Next comes stew, with 16% of respondents who eat it regularly because it is easy and there are many recipes. However, this meat is eaten more in winter, perhaps because it is not used for the BBQ, but more for stewpots. Finally, rump steak is the fifth most consumed beef cut. People stated that they choose rump steak mainly because it is a higher quality of meat while still affordable and that it has much more taste than other pieces of meat.

Other meats such as dried meat, shank or lesser known cuts are also eaten but do not stand out particularly from the answers. It can be seen from the results that people are willing to spend money on more noble cuts, such as tenderloin or entrecote, for tenderness, taste and cooking conveniences. Furthermore, these results can also be related to the fact that there are often advertisements on TV or digital platforms that are made for beef fillet, rib steak or steaks and that consumers are maybe more aware of these pieces rather than others. Therefore, it could be interesting to see how farmers can differentiate themselves or adapt their strategy in order to explain how to use the other pieces of meat less consumed and to make them more attractive to consumers.

5.1.5 Communication Channels Analysis

The purpose of this section aims at identifying strategies and communication channels that could drive meat purchases and give insights to build a strong marketing strategy.

Beef & Communication Channels

In order to understand how the beef industry and brands communicate about their products, it was interesting to know what advertisement was seen last by the respondents. Moreover, the aim was also to see on a customers' perspective, how they would advertise about beef and which communication channels they would find appropriate.

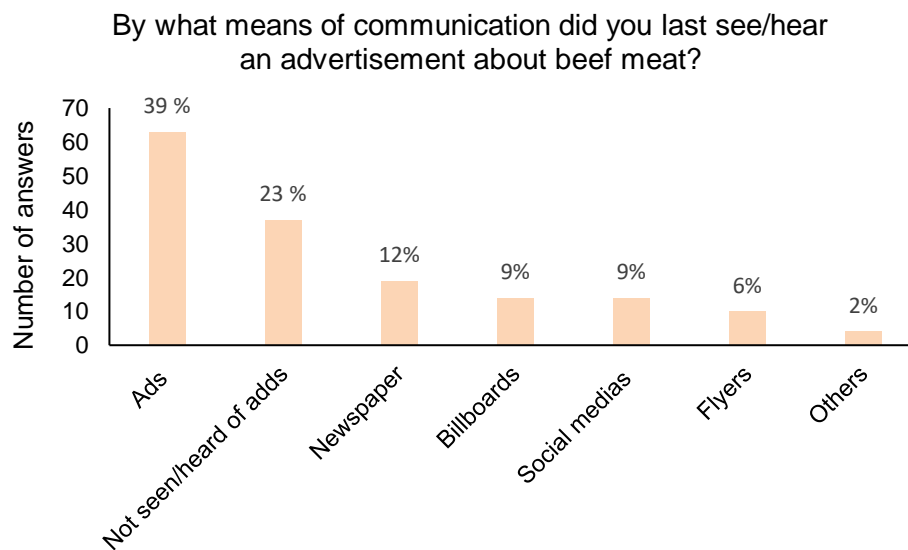
Over 39 % of people (63) answered that they have seen an advertisement about beef on TV lastly. This result can partly be explained because advertising on TV reaches mass audience and it is possible to target a wide range of people. The audience is more captive, since they chose to watch TV and the brand or company can chose when they want their advertisement to be shown. It could be interesting to investigate deeper this result and to see when respondents have seen the advertisement. Indeed, maybe supermarkets or brands show more ads directly before lunch time or during special seasons of the year, as for instance during summer with BBQ.

On the opposite, 23% of respondents have not seen or heard beef advertisement. The reason behind this result is that they might not have a TV at home and that the other communication channels, such as digital platforms, flyers or newspaper do not appeal to them. 12% of the people stated that they saw an advertisement regarding beef in the newspapers. 35% out of the 12% are aged between 26 and 35, surprisingly only 4 people aged above 50 answered that they have seen an advertisement in newspapers. However, all age ranges answered that they have seen ads in newspaper, which indicates that communication through newspapers can be efficient and targets everyone. Example of newspaper could be the ones received for free in the mailbox or published by Coop or Migros.

Both billboards and social media have 6% of respondents who stated that they have seen an advertisement through these communication channels. Over 70% of the survey population (10 people) who answered to have seen beef advertisement on social media, was aged between 26 and 34. Surprisingly, there was no answer gathered from people aged between 18 and 25. This might be explained by the fact that they follow profiles and accounts that are not related to meat industry or other communication channels appeal more to them when talking about meat. Furthermore, this result could also be explained by the fact that sponsored ads or pop-up ads are related to the respondent's online research. Therefore, people not used to buy meat online will not see any pop-up advertisings showing up in their computer. The category of social media included Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. Those social media are maybe not used a lot by people aged between 18 and 25. Indeed, other social medias such as Snapchat, Tik Tok or Youtube have not been mentioned and might correspond more to this age range.

Finally, 6% of respondents said that they have seen beef advertisement on flyers, which could include flyers send through mailbox, in shops or directly distributed to customers in the street. The two remaining percent includes people who have seen an advertisement either at events, on a company's website or through a newsletter.

Figure 28 Beef Advertising Communication Channels



In order to better understand how the customers would advertise beef and thus to understand by which means of communication they might be sensitive, they were asked the following question; *In your opinion, what is the most appropriate communication channel to use when communicating about beef?*

25% of respondents answered that advertisements on social medias, internet or the brand's website would be the most appropriate tools. In addition, a respondent stated, *"I would say a website is mandatory these days"*, which reinforces the fact that websites are important to communicate about a brand, a product or a service. Social media or websites enable to have an exchange between the brand and the customer, it allows communication on both ways.

TV ads are the best way to advertise beef for 21% of respondents, which confirms the results found in figure 28 and is reinforced by a respondent's comment:

"I think the TV commercials are working great. Then I think that all methods of communication are good as long as we can add visual support. So not convinced by radio anyway".

However, a respondent also said he would not choose TV as communication channel to advertise because it is easy to skip TV commercials and that it depends on the target audience. The respondent who cited this is aged between 18 and 25 and stated that social media would be a great way to advertise for younger people.

Over 10% stated that newspaper is an effective way to promote beef. This outcome supports the fact found previously in figure 28, namely that newspaper is the second means of communication where respondents have seen beef advertisement. One respondent commented

“Newspaper, website, TV. I don’t think social networks are a good idea, because it would be subject to criticism from vegetarian extremists and would be immediately public and create unnecessary controversy.”

Newspaper is a communication channel that is one way. This means of communication can on one hand be positive because it stops any possibility of viral propaganda but on the other hand it does not allow the receiver of the message to interact with the brand directly, as it could be possible for some online tools.

The fourth tool that communicates effectively about beef is word-of-mouth and direct discussion with producers. Having a direct exchange with the producer and talking about personal experiences to friends and family are the most effective tools to advertise beef for 8,5% of the survey population. This result is strengthened by the following respondent’s statement:

“Promote word-of-mouth for local businesses. The customer experience is the best way to communicate the quality of meat! And social networks to keep up with the times and reduce communication costs.”

In the respondent’s opinion, being able to communicate about the product directly to customers and build the brand’s reputation through word-of-mouth is the most effective communication channel. Interestingly, the results of this survey support the findings found and discussed previously in the literature review.

8% of respondents answered that they do not know what to answer to this question. One respondent stated that it is difficult to answer this question because she finds that customers are already overloaded with information and advertising.

Finally, advertising directly in stores is an appropriate way to communicate about beef for only 4,5% of the survey population. Whether it is directly in supermarkets or at the farmer or butcher’s store, having advertisement directly at the place of purchase could influence the buying decision. The following statement illustrates this outcome:

“As far as I’m concerned, directly to the supermarket. Otherwise on the internet, targeted ads are sometimes a good way. If I saw an advertisement on beef just before a meal hour I think it would influence me, just see the results of my shopping when I’m hungry.”

Regarding the remaining answers, respondents cited means of communication such as advertising panels, posters, events, flyers, newsletters and radio. The percentages of these communication channels being rather low, they will not be further analyzed.

To summarize, in respondents' opinion, the most appropriate means of communicating about beef are:

- Brand's website, social media & internet
- TV ads
- Newspapers
- Word-of mouth & direct discussion with the producer

Recipe Communication Channels

Concerning communication channels to advertise recipes, the participants had multiple options to choose from (see Figure 29).

There was also an interest in knowing which communication channels respondents would use to advertise and share beef recipes. The purpose of this question was to gain insights that might help build an effective communication strategy and might enable farmers to differentiate themselves and their products.

As seen on figure 29, 29% of the survey population would use social networks, meaning posts and stories on Instagram and Facebook. Over 46% of respondents out of the 29% are aged between 26 and 34 years old. The result completes and supports the findings exposed above, namely that social media would be the most appropriate means of communication for beef meat. This means of communication is especially accurate today, where a lot of influencers and brand ambassadors share products and tips with their community on their stories and posts. Finally, over 87% of people aged between 18 and 25 years old stated that social networks would be the most appropriate channel to communicate about beef recipes, which is in opposition with the previous results, where none of this age range chose social media to advertise about beef. This contradictory result might be explained by the fact that the recipe question was not related directly to social media, but more to the way of sharing information, namely through posts and stories.

25% of respondents answered that online platforms such as websites or phone applications would be an adequate communication tool to share beef recipes. As explained before, it is crucial today for companies to have a website to expose their

products and services. Moreover, when looking for specific information about a brand, most of the time customers go to the brand's website. Websites can therefore be a suitable channel to share recipes depending on the company's product offering. 85% of respondents out of the 25% are aged between 26 and 50 years old and the remaining 15% are aged between 18 and 25. There was no answer given by respondents aged over 50 years old, which might be explained by the fact they are less at their ease with digital tools or websites. Other reasons could be that they have cooking books or that they are used to cook and know the cooking technics without any supports.

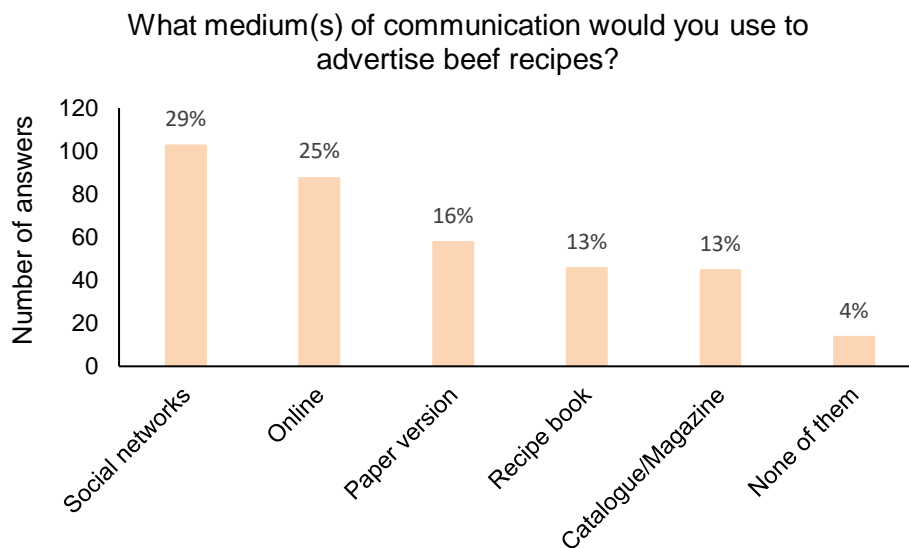
The third means of communication that should be used, according to 16% of the respondents, is the paper version. To find recipes on paper version directly at the store or next to a specific product, as it can be proposed by Coop with its *Fooby* recipes, seems to be an effective way to communicate about beef recipes. Having the opportunity to get inspired by recipes while doing grocery shopping or getting suggestions from the sellers can highly influence the purchasing decisions. Moreover, when taking the example of the *Fooby* recipes, it is possible to collect them and add personal notes.

Recipes book and catalogue or magazines were equally chosen by respondents, which represented 13% or 46 people per category. Magazines or catalogues may include culinary magazines specifically dedicated to the world of cooking or it can be, for example, magazines directly edited by the supermarkets like Coop or Migros.

4% of the survey population said they would not use any of the suggested options.

Finally, it would be interesting to investigate further why people chose these communication channels over others. This could be done through personal interviews for instance. Furthermore, it could be interesting for the researcher to know when the respondents would post recipes on social networks and if there are timeframes that are more efficient than others or if it depends on the targeted audience.

Figure 29 Recipe Advertising Channels



5.1.6 Farm Activities Analysis

This last section has as purpose to identify which activities people were ready to pay to participate in, and what kind of experiences they have already had on a farm. In addition, there was a question related to the case study, whether people had heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* before and if so, through which means. The aim of this question is to identify the means of communication but also to see the scope and effectiveness of them, which will allow to gain insight of potential differentiation strategies.

Activities proposed on a Farm

Concerning the activities proposed on a farm, the participants could select multiple options (see Figure 30).

The activities proposed by farms were rather well received by the survey population, with only 1,5% of respondents (7) not wishing to pay for these events. Over 83% of respondents (134) are willing to participate in and pay for a brunch on the farm. As every respondent had the opportunity to select several answers, the brunch on the farm got the most success with 29 % of selections. Out of this 83%, over 50% of respondents were aged between 26 and 34 years old. This result might be related to the fact that this age group corresponds to when people start having children and maybe it is a great activity to do with the family. It would be interesting to investigate this question deeper in order to understand people's expectations and budget regarding such events.

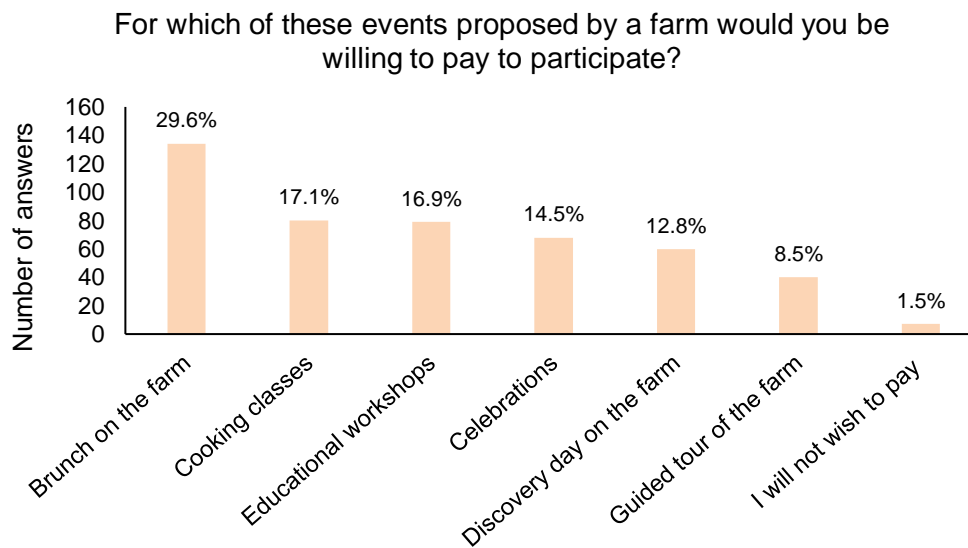
Cooking classes came second with 17%. However, it could be observed that no respondents aged between 26 and 34 years old chose this option as first choice, which can be related to the fact that over 88% of this age range chose to participate in a brunch in the first place and cooking class only came in the second place. The respondents might choose the cooking class option to learn something new and enlarge their knowledge, such as learning how to cook different pieces of meat or just having a good time. This result approves the result found in figure 27, showing that 42% of respondents do not know how to cook different pieces of meat. There is therefore an opportunity to be seized and developed for farmers or meat producers.

Educational workshops were chosen by 64 of respondents, representing over 16% of all answers. The 26 to 34 years old range was the age range privileging this option. This might be related to the fact that they have families and that it could be interesting to have educational workshops for their children. Educational workshops can be for children, but also for adults or groups. It could be interesting to investigate further this question to understand what kind of workshops respondents expect from farmers and how these workshops can stand out.

Celebrations such as marriage, birthday or baptism were chosen by 14.5% of respondents. It would be interesting to dig deeper and see which event people would choose the most over the others. This could give an insight of possible opportunities for farms to specialize themselves in such events. Discovery days or weekends on the farm were chosen by 12.8% of respondents. It can be observed that it is the second option which people are less likely to pay for. It might be explained by the fact that they do not know exactly what this experience offers, or on the opposite, they have already experienced such events and were not convinced by the offer. However, this survey does not allow to confirm this theory and further investigation has to be done, as for instance through personal interviews or through another survey.

Lastly, only 8.5% of respondents are willing to pay for a guided tour on the farm. This can hypothetically be explained by the fact that the experience is not seen as special enough to pay for, or that when they go to a farmer's place, they often have the possibility to walk around and have a look themselves. As said before, in order to confirm this theory, further investigations need to be done.

Figure 30 Activities on the Farm



Experiences on a Farm

The survey also aimed at knowing what the best experiences respondents had on a farm. The purpose of this question is to gain insight about experiences proposed by farms, but also to see whether these experiences were related to a specific event, context or atmosphere. Since the answers gotten from this question were written and very diversified, only the most accurate ones are presented and analyzed below. For further information refer to appendix 2.

First of all, out of the 161 respondents, over 19% of the survey population (32) indicated that they either did not have the opportunity to have an experience on the farm or did not understand the question. Regarding the other answers, it was observed that experiences on the farm with animals had a great impact on people (13%). Activities, such as petting animals, feeding them or just seeing them are some of the best experiences they have had on a farm.

Second, going to the farm and having the opportunity to have a wide range of fresh and local products was the next best experience for respondents. In addition, being able to talk directly to sellers who know their products and who manage well the relationship with customers is another factor that reinforces the experience to buy at the farm.

The third experience that respondents highlighted was the possibility to be directly in contact with the farmer. This experience includes aspects such as having the opportunity

to talk to him, to learn more about his job and to have explanation about products and farming. Furthermore, these live testimonials create a direct and strong relationship between farmer and consumer unlike when people just buy their products in a shop. Talking directly to the farmer enabled respondents to see and understand the whole production process and the supply chain. Some respondents also highlighted the kindness of farmers and said this kindness was part of their best experience on a farm. Finally, some respondents said that the contact with the farmer and the love of the profession were key in this experience.

The fourth experience that came out strongly in the survey was the experience of seeing a cow calving. Even one respondent stated that she could help the cow calve. Other activities such as milking a cow or a goat or drinking fresh milk directly after milking the animal were other experiences that were mentioned as best experiences in participants' mind.

Experiences such as brunch on the farm, the possibility to help with chores and the ability to buy large quantities of meat were all cited at the same level. Some participants said that being able to help with farm chores and to take care of animals and livestock were the best experiences they had. Other participants said that being able to buy meat in large quantities, such as 1/4 beef for example, directly from the producer was their best experience. Other experiences were cited such as farm stays including school camps, guided farm tours or holidays spent on the farm.

Finally, some of the respondents stated *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* as their best experience, citing that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* offers a large variety of products and that it is possible to buy everything in one place. In addition, one participant mentioned the friendliness and professionalism of the farm's employees as being one of her best experiences on a farm.

To conclude, there are a large variety of answers. However, the main experiences cited and explained above are mainly related to the particular context and environment that farms can provide. Moreover, direct contact with farmers and people working on the farm being able to explain to customers the products and production processes are elements that came out of the answers. There is an opportunity for farmers to put effort in communicating and sharing their knowledge with customers, who are apparently willing to know more about the farm's life. Making the customer's buying experience special and unique should be part of the farmers' strategy of differentiation.

Table 4 Summary Best Experience on a Farm

Best experiences on a farm	Attributes
Be with animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See, pet and feed them
Groceries at the farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide range of fresh & local products • Knowledge of products & customer relationship
Direct contact with farmer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about job, products, farming • Building of customer relationship & kindness • See & understand the production processes
Be in contact with the animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See or help a cow calve • Milking a cow or a goat, drink the fresh milk
Activities & offering on the farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunches • Helping with the chores • Buying large quantities of beef
Farm stays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School camps • Guided farm tours • Holidays
Ferme du Château-Blanc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large variety of products • Buying everything at once • Friendliness and professionalism of employees

Ferme du Château-Blanc

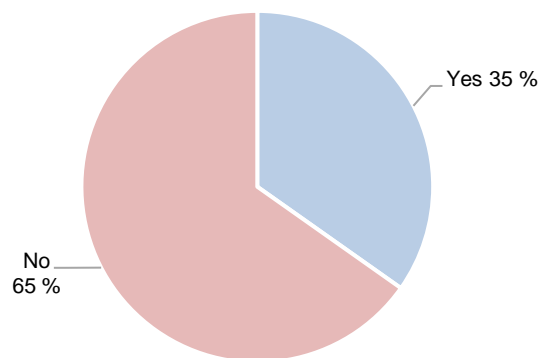
The final aim was to see whether respondents have already heard from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and if so, through which communication channels. The goal was also to see the scope of awareness of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

The majority of respondents do not know *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. 65% of respondents said that they have not heard from the farm located in Gingins in district of Nyon. Out of the 65% people not knowing *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, over 61% live in the canton of Vaud. When looking deeper at the respondents living in the canton of Vaud, 46% of them live in the district of Nyon and over 39% of them did not hear of the farm. It can clearly be observed that over one third of the respondents living in the district of Nyon do not know the farm and that there is an opportunity for the farm to communicate

more about its activities and to gain brand awareness. Regarding the respondents who are living in the other districts, over 73% of them stated not to have heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. This result reinforces the fact that the farm should definitely put in place a strong communication strategy in order to reach a wider customer base and to raise awareness about its product offering. Concerning the other cantons that do not know the farm, mainly the canton of Fribourg, it can be explain by the fact that the farm is located far away from the people living in this canton.

Figure 31 Château-Blanc Awareness

Have you ever heard of the Ferme du Château-Blanc and its boutique?



Regarding the respondents who have already heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, they represent only 35% of the survey population.

Regarding the means of communication through which respondents heard of the farm, the participants had multiple options they could choose from (see Figure 32). However, after analyzing the results, an imperfection in the questionnaire became apparent. The researcher finally considered the “recommendations” and the “word-of-mouth” options as the same and put these two results together for the analysis and named the category “word-of-mouth”. Due to this imperfection, the final options to be analyzes are only 4.

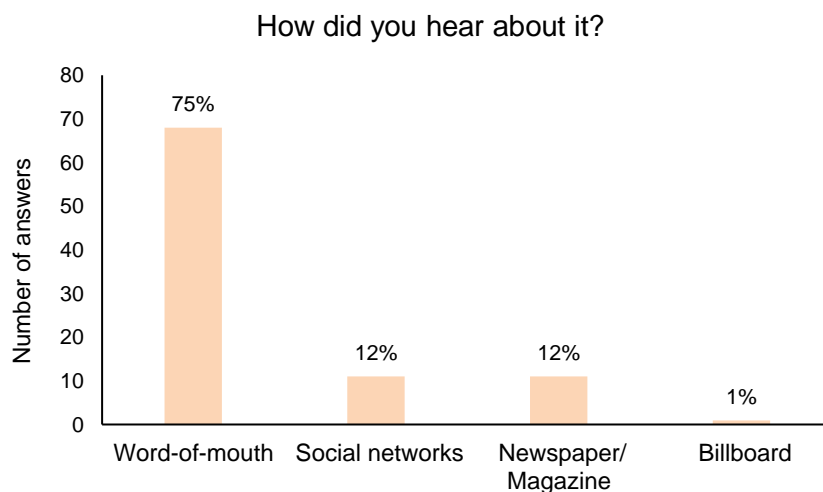
The channel “word-of-mouth” came out first with 75% of respondents who chose this option. Out of the 75% over 44% of respondents stated that they heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* thanks to recommendations from family, friends or colleagues. The recommendation comes from a close member of the respondent. This result might be explained by the fact that respondents know the researcher and first heard of the farm from her. Moreover, it strengthens the fact that, often, brands, products or services are first known through family and friends. Having the word-of-mouth as the first way

respondents heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* strengthens the fact found previously in the literature review, stating that word-of-mouth has a strong impact in gaining brand awareness and that it can influence buying decision.

12% of respondents stated that they have heard of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* either through social networks or through newspapers or magazines. Social networks include Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn. The fact that 12% of participants heard of the farm through these platforms might be explained by the fact that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has a Facebook and Instagram account. Regarding the people who answered having heard of the farm through newspapers, it might be related to the fact that several articles were written when the farm closed its business a few years ago or because of the recent reopening of a boutique on the farm.

Finally, one respondent stated that she also heard from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* through billboard advertisement.

Figure 32 How La Ferme du Château-Blanc was known



Conclusion

Keys findings and recommendations coming out of this survey analysis will be addressed in the main discussion below.

5.2 Interviews

In order to complement the primary data collection that was done through the online survey, eight interviews were conducted. The aim of the interview was to have various

insights on different subjects and to use them as a brainstorming of ideas that could in turn be useful in the development of a business model for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. In order to have a scope large enough of possibilities and opportunities, there was the goal to have a variety of people to interview. For this reason, it was decided to explore both, demand and supply side including various stakeholders, directly and indirectly involved in the meat industry.

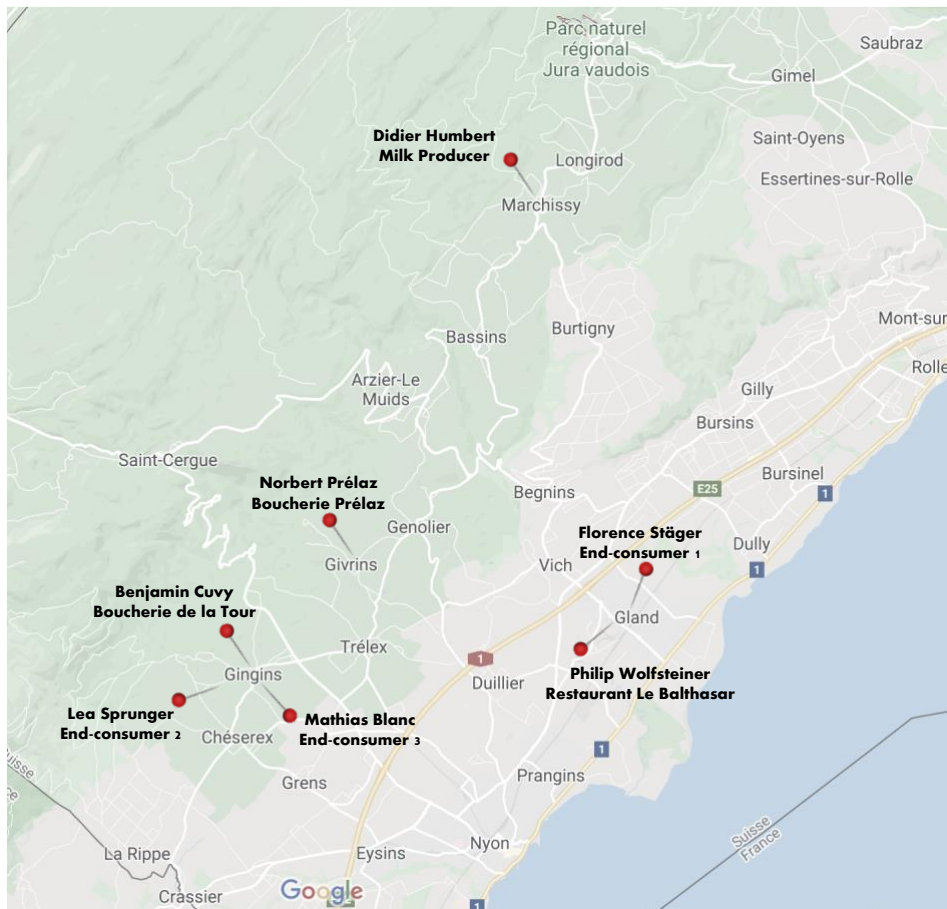
5.2.1 Interviews Overview

Due to the current situation of COVID-19 it was sometimes difficult to fix and conduct interviews. In addition, most of the people interviewed had occupations with busy working hours that do not necessarily allow them to be available for interviews. All interviews were conducted in the district of Nyon and mainly all of them were done face-to-face, except for one that was done by phone.

The personal interviews focused mainly on farmers, butchers and restaurants (supply side). These interviewees provided insights on specific subjects, such as the company's take over, the challenges faced or success factors they encountered. Moreover, they also highlighted trends in the meat industry and the customers' consumption habits. End-consumers who participated first in the survey, were also interviewed. This was done in order to understand deeper their answers and thus their expectations and decision making. In addition, the purpose was also to identify elements to build a strong marketing strategy and to deepen the knowledge about their consumption behavior.

Interviews were directly conducted at the interviewer's or at the interviewee's home so that interviewees could express themselves freely and be in an environment where they feel comfortable. The interviewees were generally very open to discussion and happy to share their expertise, experience and knowledge in the different areas presented by the interviewer. Interviews generally lasted between 40 minutes and more than an hour and a half, depending on the interviewee. Due to the reduced availability of the manager, the interview with the restaurant was about 15 minutes. Most of the interviewees came from very different backgrounds, which enabled to have a wide variety of opinions and perspectives on the meat industry, both on the consumption and on the supply side. As regards the age of the respondents, the youngest was 28 years old and the oldest 66 years old and one interviewee did not mention his age.

Figure 33 Map of Interviews' Place



Source: Adapted from Google Maps, 2020

5.2.1.1 Interviewees' Profile

Florence Stäger

The first interview was conducted with Florence Stäger. She is an operating room technician, working part-time (60%) at the hospital of La Tour in Geneva which allows her to take care of her two boys. She eats regularly meat, pork, chicken and beef and buys the majority directly at the producer's place. She mainly buys her meat at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and heard from the farm through recommendations, such as family. She was chosen because she already bought beef from the farm and could give interesting insight regarding *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s current strategy and product offering.

Norbert Prélaz

The second interview was conducted with Norbert Prélaz. He is a butcher and opened its butcher shop, *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz* in 1988 in Genolier. He is working 100% and is the owner and the manager of 8 people. He favors local origins for the meat he is selling and has a wide network of farmers who supply him beef. The butcher's shop offers a variety of products, not only meat but also local products, fruits and vegetables. Moreover, *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz* proposed catering services. There was an interest of the interviewer to have a deeper understand and opinions from a butcher who has a lot of experience and that has already a well-established reputation.

Lea Sprunger

The third interview was conducted with Lea Sprunger. She is a professional athlete, double European champion in the 400m and 400m indoor. She lives partly in Switzerland and partly abroad when she has competitions or for sports training in South Africa and Holland. She eats regularly meat, pork, chicken and beef and buys the majority directly at the farmer's place. However, due to her ongoing travelling and competitions around the world, it is difficult to consume only Swiss meat. She tries to consume as locally as possible. She was chosen to be interviewed because she recently implemented to buy more local and she already bought meat at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. Moreover, it was also of interest to know whether beef meat influences her sport performances or not.

Didier Humbert

The fourth interview was conducted with Didier Humbert. He is a farmer and milk producer, exclusively producing milk for industrial purposes. He took over his parents' farm in January 2019. The implementation of the milking robot was made in August 2015 and since January 2020, the farm is organic conversion. The interviewee has been chosen, because it was of interest to gain insight on a farm that had implemented technology in its farming process and to understand the taking over of the farm.

Benjamin Cuvit

The fifth interview was conducted with Benjamin Cuvit. He is a butcher and co-owner of *La Boucherie of La Tour* in Trélex and is working full-time. He is in charge of the butcher's shop and the catering service. He favors local origins for the beef and veal, and Swiss for the pork. The butcher's shop opened in December 2017 and offers variety of products. There was an interest for the interviewer to have a point of view from a butcher who recently opened his store.

Mathias Blanc

The sixth interview was conducted with Mathias Blanc. He is an HVAC engineer and project manager, working at Effin'Art in Lausanne and is working full-time. He eats regularly meat such as pork, chicken and beef and buys essentially at Manor. He never bought meat directly from the producer and prefers to go to Manor, mainly because everything is sold at one place and it is easily accessible. He was chosen to be interviewed, because he mainly buys meat at Manor. There was an interest of understanding why this place of purchase rather than others.

Philip Wolfsteiner

The seventh interview was conducted with Philip Wolfsteiner. He is the director and owner of the restaurant Balthasar Grill in Gland. He opened another restaurant in 2017 also in Gland named Le Yaca. The choice was made of the Balthasar Grill restaurant, because they are specialized in grilled meat and have a good reputation. Moreover, the restaurant comes out in the top ten restaurants on Tripadvisor in the canton of Vaud and received since 2017 the excellence certification and from this year on the Travelers Choice. In order to get these certificates, restaurants need to receive regularly very good reviews from travelers and restaurant are then ranked among the top 10% of establishments on Tripadvisor. There was an interest of the interviewer to gain insight from another stakeholder and to see the point of view from a restaurant.

Hans Weber Junior

The last interview was done with Hans Weber Junior. He is a retired farmer and market gardener. Nevertheless, he still works a lot on the farm. He is the owner of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. He took over the farm from his father in 1984 and gave the farm over to his daughter in 2017. The interviewee helped a lot the researcher for the writing about *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* history and the presentation of the case study in general. There were several meetings made between Mr. Hans Weber Junior and the researcher in order to complete or understand information about the farm. There was an interest from the interviewer to gain a deeper knowledge than what was already exposed during the introduction of the case study. Moreover, the interest was also to have a point of view from someone who has seen the agricultural sector changing a lot over the past years and his insight could be helpful to draw a strategy for *La Ferme du Châteai-Blanc* that his daughter is now in charge of.

Table 5 Interviewees' Profile Overview

Demand / Supply side	Interview status / Company	Contact & Profession	Age	Location of interview	Have had beef from <i>La Ferme du Château-Blanc</i>	Appendix Reference
Demand	End- consumer 1	Florence Stäger - Operating Room Technician	32	Gland	Yes	Appendix 4
Demand	End- consumer 2	Lea Sprunger – professional athlete	30	Gingins	Yes	Appendix 5
Demand	End- consumer 3	Mathias Blanc - HVAC engineer	37	Gingins	No	Appendix 6
Supply	<i>Boucherie Prélaz</i>	Norbert Prélaz - Butcher	57	Givrins	No	Appendix 8
Supply	<i>Boucherie de la Tour</i>	Benjamin Cuvit - Butcher	28	Gingins	Yes	Appendix 9
Supply	<i>Restaurant Le Balthasar Grill</i>	Philip Wolfsteiner - Manager	-	Gingins	No	Appendix 11
Supply	Milk producer	Didier Humbert – Milk producer	33	Marchissy	No	Appendix 13
Supply	<i>La Ferme du Château-BLanc</i>	Hans Weber – Former farmer & market gardener	66	Gingins	Yes	Appendix 15

5.2.2 Interviews Analysis

In order to analyze the various insights given by interviewees and to highlight the elements that could be useful in building up a business plan, there was the choice made to expose only the winning points interviewees have given. The researcher decided to separate the answers given by the consumers from those given by the other stakeholders in the meat industry. Among many interesting information given by interviewees and after pooling the interviews, several interesting themes for the research could be highlighted for both parts, supply and demand. The analysis of the interviews is based on the following themes:

Table 6 Interview Themes to be analyzed

Demand:	Supply:
Reasons to buy at the farmer's place or elsewhere	Successful factors
Additional activities on a farm	Differentiation strategies
Differentiation strategies	<i>La Ferme du Château-Blanc's</i> concept
Interviewees' personal insights	Interviewees' personal insights

5.2.2.1 Consumers' Analysis

The interview questions were mainly based on the survey's questions. Moreover, there were a few additional questions regarding the impact of meat production on the environment, the future of farms in Switzerland and some related to Lea Sprunger's diet and potential impact on her athletic performances. The guide for the interview can be seen on appendix 3. In the following paragraphs, only the winning points for the research will be exposed and analyzed. Further information on the consumers' interview can be found in the appendix 4 (Florance Stäger), appendix 5 (Lea Sprunger) and appendix 6 (Mathias Blanc).

Table 7 Consumers' Interview Results

Interviewees' Name	Reasons to buy at farmer's place or elsewhere	Additional farm activities	Differentiation strategy	Interviewee's personal insight
Florence Stäger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of product • Know the origin & breeding conditions • Support the farmer 	Small piece of land for camping	Find the thing, but while keeping authenticity & not diversify too much	Social medias best way to advertise for small infrastructures
Lea Sprunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localness of products • Product offering • Support the farmer • Avoid intermediaries 	Having the opportunity to pick up flowers in a field	Farmers have to try to diversify and attract customer	Buying at the farm is a concept
Mathias Blanc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy all at once • Small structure • Family atmosphere • Not too many choices 	Bed and breakfast experience	Huge potential for farmers to differentiate and on the other remain very limited	About agriculture being close to the environment

Reasons to buy at the farmer's place or elsewhere

Regarding the reasons to buy beef directly at the farmer's place, supporting the farmer came out as being an important aspect for both interviewees who already bought beef at the farm. This is an important aspect that is not related directly to the product itself, namely beef, but to the farmer's job and to his livelihood. There is conscious of avoiding intermediaries and go directly to the source. Avoiding intermediaries was another reason to buy directly from the farmer's place. By avoiding intermediaries, there is an aspect of being in contact with the producer and to have a direct exchange and thus develop a customer-producer relationship.

The product's quality was also a reason to go to the farmer for one interviewee (Florence Stäger, see Appendix 4 for further details), as well as knowing the origin and the breeding conditions of the animal. She defined quality beef as "*...having a good-looking appearance, a color that makes you want to eat it, a well cut and most importantly it has to be tender.*". Quality being an important criterion, especially when having children, the interviewee has the guarantee to find all the criteria when buying directly at the farmer's place. She is willing to make the effort to go to the farm and to have to make several places to make her groceries. This indicates already that she trusts in *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* products and that she is willing to pay for such products. Satisfied customers can easily talk about the product and become a communication channels for the brand and even become brand ambassadors.

In addition, the localness and the product offering were also important criteria when reasons to buy directly at the farm were mentioned. These answers support the trends previously found in the analysis of the survey results. There is therefore an opportunity for farmers to highlight their production process, the localness of their products and to offer a wide product offering. If customer can identify themselves to the brand's value and are satisfied with the product, they will more easily become loyal customer and even more it is related to their health.

Regarding the interviewee (Mathias Blanc, see Appendix 6 for further details), who mainly buys meat at Manor: The reasons of this choice were that he had the opportunity to buy everything at once and that he had a large product offering, without a surplus of choices. He also buys at Manor because it is higher quality than the other supermarkets and that he can afford it. The fact to have the possibility to buy everything at once is convenient, which is a reason for him to buy in such places. However, it will not be possible for farmers to offer the same as supermarkets and it is not the goal either. One interesting option could be to offer a range of seasonal and local products in partnership with other producers so that they can offer a wider range of products. Lastly, the interviewee mentioned the family atmosphere that can be found at Manor Morges, which is certainly linked to the small structure of the supermarket's food

department. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that supermarkets are also able to create that sense of belonging. According to him, the elements that make up this sense of belonging are getting to know the employees, having his habits and knowing the products and their very local provenance.

Additional Farm Activities

In the survey's result analysis, it could be seen that there was a high incentive from respondents to pay to participate in the suggested activities, such as brunch, educational workshops and cooking classes, to name just a few. This result was also confirmed by the interviewees responses, who were more than willing to participate in such events. They give interesting insights regarding brunch, emphasizing mainly the fact that such events should offer areas for kids to play, but also local and handmade product. This idea was cited by one of the interviewees (Florence Stäger see Appendix 4 for further details):

“It should include local and handcrafted products such locally produced cheese, bread and so on. Moreover, it could be interesting that sometimes various producers are on site to explain how they make their products and the processes used.”.

There is the wish not only to taste the products, but also to learn from their origin and how they were made, which can potentially offer possibilities to make partnership with other producers.

Educational workshops were also mentioned by interviewee (Lea Sprunger see Appendix 5 for further details), where themed activities could be created and enable to educate children on how to behave with animals and share the value of respecting the farmer's work and the animals. Examples of such activities could be picking up the potato or learn how to feed the cows. There is a chance for farmers to develop such activities and create value for the participants, as it could also be an opportunity for a special sharing time between parents and their children. Finally, there were additional activities suggested by interviewees such as having the possibility to pick up flowers in a field or experience bed and breakfast. There was also the suggestion for farmers to have a small piece of land that could be at the disposal of people who do camping. The interviewee said that this concept is based on the fact the farmer offers a place for campers to sleep, and they have to leave the place after 24 hours and on counterpart they buy products from the farm or help. This option could be a solution for farmers who do not have the possibility to implement bed and breakfast infrastructure on their farm, but still have the possibility to offer agritourism activities.

Differentiation Strategy

When the questions related to the future of farms in Switzerland were asked, the topic of differentiation strategy emerged. It seemed natural to ask interviewees how, in their opinion, farmers could differentiate themselves in order to survive, but also to create value for the customer.

One interviewee (Florence Stäger see Appendix 4 for further details) said that farmers have to find the thing that will make the difference without losing their authenticity. Moreover, she said that it is important to diversify and probably necessary, but not too much, rather do few things but quality things. It can be observed that for her it is important that the authenticity of what a farm is stays. In her opinion key factors for farms to survive are: *“to have a good contact, to make people feel at ease, to welcome them, to be helpful and to offer a great customer service, what we can currently find at La Ferme du Château-Blanc.”*. These are good practices that are the basis of a great customer service, it is therefore essential that those aspects can be found each time when going to the farm. It has to be embodied in the farm's value.

Another interviewee (Lea Sprunger see Appendix 5 for further details) stated that for her farmers have to make the effort to diversify themselves in order to attract consumers and to make it accessible. However, she also said: *“...consumers have to buy locally, support small shops and farmers.”*. This statement strengthens the fact that two parties are needed in the process of supporting farmers. Of course, farmers have to put in place strategies to differentiate, but consumers also have to come and buy at the farmers place.

Lastly, one interviewee (Mathias Blanc see Appendix 6 for further details) said that it was hard for him to answer the question of how farmers should differentiate. On one hand, he stated that the role of agriculture is potentially huge and that there are opportunities for farmers to differentiate themselves. On the other hand it remains limited, quoting that apart from beef and milk, nothing else is produced in self-sufficiency. So, there is the reality that even though farmers might want to specialize in a specific area regarding field crops for instance, it remains difficult because of the country's regulation and trade agreements.

Interviewees' Personal Insight

There were very interesting insights or remarks given by interviewees that did not fit in one of the previous categories, therefore they will be explained in the following paragraph.

Advertisement through social medias is the best communication channel for small infrastructures for an interviewee (Florence Stäger see Appendix 4 for further details).

According to her, there is no need to post daily information, but more when there is something special as for instance the season of strawberries or let the consumer know that there is a lot of meat for BBQ. The aim is more to use the social medias to inform customers with the latest updates and to boost sales. It could be interesting to make further research on this topic and to see which time would be the best for publishing and with which frequency according to the farm's community.

One interview (Lea Sprunger see Appendix 5 for further details) indicated that she is not really enthusiast about the self-service shops on farms and that buying at the farm is a concept. She stated:

"... going to buy at the farm is quite a concept: meet the producer, having cats and dogs, it is part of a whole. A farm is supposed to be alive. For me it is more important to know the farmer and to know from where the products come from, than having the opportunity to go anytime at a self-service, without any contact."

This statement reinforces the fact that when buying directly at the farm, it is more than just doing groceries. It is a whole and every element of it, such as seeing cats or meet the producer have their importance and brings this farm atmosphere and experience alive.

Lastly, one interview (Mathias Blanc see Appendix 6 for further details) said that for him there is sometimes a gap when talking about agriculture being close to the environment. Meaning that for him, there is a false image of agriculture being close to the environment and that finally farmer's produce without really caring about environment and ecology. There is an opportunity for farmers to show their production processes and be even more transparent with consumers, which can also become a way to differentiate from others.

Impact on the environment & athlete's diet

Regarding the impact of meat production on the environment, all three interviewees mentioned that is difficult to answers this question. The main reason was because it is complicated to compare Switzerland with other countries that are bigger and have other regulations regarding beef production.

Concerning Lea Sprunger's diet as an athlete and whether beef consumption had an impact on her athletic performance, the interview did not identify any specific information to this subject. Nevertheless, she did stipulate that she does not consume red meat the day before a competition.

Conclusion

Keys findings and recommendations coming out of these consumers' interview analysis will be addressed in the main discussion below.

5.2.2.2 Meat Industry Stakeholders' Analysis

With respect to the interviews with other stakeholders in the meat industry, the questions were more or less based on the same themes. However, according to the interviewee, the questions were adapted to his sector or company. In the following paragraphs, only the winning points for the research will be exposed and analyzed. Further information on the stakeholders' interview guidelines as well as their transcript can be found in the appendixes (Table 8).

Table 8 Interviews Referencing

Interviewees' Name	Interview Guidelines	Interview Transcript
Norbert Prélaz	Appendix 7	Appendix 8
Benjamin Cuvit	Appendix 7	Appendix 9
Philip Wolfsteiner	Appendix 10	Appendix 11
Didier Humbert	Appendix 12	Appendix 13
Hans Weber	Appendix 14	Appendix 15

Table 9 Supply's Interview Results

Interviewees' Name	Success Factors	Differentiation strategy	Château-Blanc's concept	Interviewees' personal insight
Norbert Prélaz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local production Personal advices Expertise & knowledge Quality/price ratio 	Diversification of products & Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with professionals Delegate what is not the company's strength 	The quality meat has been improved over the past year
Benjamin Cuvit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local production Welcoming & cleanliness Accessibility 	Manufacture as much possible & offer ready to eat meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities to discover the farm Implement properly, so no disloyal competition 	Château-Blanc's constantly trying to improve its quality meat
Philip Wolfsteiner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local production Constant quality Service Quality/price ratio 	Be specialized and offer quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target private customer Local market 	Customers' way of consuming changed
Didier Humbert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location of the farm Need to be flexible Talk directly to consumers 	Having a certification label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering various fresh products Collaboration with farmers 	Even with implementation of technology, need to go see, be in contact and observe
Hans Weber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Love the profession Be honest Be open to change Question yourself 	Offer quality & stay on top	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future outside of the purely agriculture Environment of potential 	Every time a farm disappears, or a baker or butcher closes down, all the know-how is lost forever

Success Factors

Local production was cited by three interviewees as being an important factor for success. Since the interviewees were either butchers or restaurant's owner, local production can be understandable because it is part of their product offering and for some their way of differentiation. Another factor of success cited by interviewees, was to have a great quality- price ratio. Meaning that it is important for them to be able to offer to customer quality, but not at every expense. Lastly, being flexible and open-minded to changes are other success factors mentioned by two interviewees. It is especially important with the fast-changing environment and the ongoing opportunities presented to farmers. Being able to quickly adapt and continuously offers products to customer can be factors that lead to success.

One interviewee (Norbert Prélaz see Appendix 8 for further details) stated personal advices, expertise and knowledge as being the most important criteria to be successful. Expertise in a specific area can be developed through experiences and practicing. It needs often time to gain this expertise and master the various subjects. It can also be a way of differentiation, because what is learnt and done by someone is not necessary done the same way by someone else. Personal expertise is precious, and a well-established reputation can easily drive to success.

For one interviewee (Benjamin Cuvit see Appendix 9 for further details), success factors are related to welcoming and cleanliness of the infrastructure, but also to accessibility. For him product's quality and origin are the most important. However, aspect of welcoming the customer in a clean and welcoming place is as much important. It is not only the product that has to be attractive, but also the area in which it is sold. Lastly, accessibility is for him an important aspect as well, because if it is not easily accessible, there is the potential loss of customers.

According to another interviewee (Philip Wolfsteiner see Appendix 11 for further details) In the context of a restaurant, being able to offer constant quality with a high customer service are key factors to be successful. As he said, it crucial to have a constancy and a regularity in the product or the service you offer. Indeed, if you fail to deliver what you promised, customers will go elsewhere, and your reputation will take a hit. It is therefore important than when choosing the differentiation strategy and the value proposition for a company, to be certain and be able to deliver them flawlessly.

One interviewee (Didier Humbert see Appendix 13 for further details) mentioned that it is important to talk directly to customers and to explain them the essence of the farmer's profession. He stated:

"...it is essential to talk more and directly to consumers, to help them understand why we do things this way or why during the summer we will harvest until very late in the night and on week-ends, or why for instance cows may moo. Try to explain them our profession and try to anticipate problems or misunderstandings. It is not always easy, but I think it is also part of our responsibility."

Anticipating and communicating are for him elements that contribute to success. There is also the idea of educating people or customers on why certain things are done one way rather than another.

Finally, one interviewee (Hans Weber see Appendix 15 for further details) stated that in order to be successful in a business, it is crucial to love your profession, but also to be honest and transparent towards your customers as well as to the people involved, directly or indirectly in your business. These success' factors are especially relevant today when there is a real search for traceability and transparency from consumers.

Differentiation Strategy

Interviewees shared which factors are important for them to differentiate from competitors. Most of these differentiation strategies are implemented in the interviewees' business and give an interesting overview of possible differentiation strategies.

For the first interviewee (Norbert Prélaz see Appendix 8 for further details) a way to differentiate its business from others is through the diversification of products and services. Indeed, he sells not only meat in his butcher's shop, but also a variety of other products made by local farmers. This system allows the butcher to have a wide range of products and enables him to propose more than just meat, and therefore attract more customers. Moreover, his precious advice and concern for his clientele reinforces the personalized customer services and the success of its butcher shop.

Manufacturing as much as possible, offering ready-to-eat meals and selling only very local meat is the differentiation strategy of the second butcher (Benjamin Cuvit see Appendix 9 for further details). Being able to manufacture almost all the products enables the butcher to have a complete control over the preparation process. Moreover, by having very local meat and partnership with some producers from the region, it assures a quality in the meat he sells and its manufacturing. He also stated that the customers' consumption habit changed and that there is an increasing demand for ready-to-eat meal. It is therefore essential to diversify its product offering and adapt to the demand,

without straying from his core business. As mentioned at the beginning flexibility and open-mindedness is needed to bring its business to success.

Being specialized and offering constant quality is the *Balthasar Grill's* differentiation strategy. For the owner of the restaurant (Philip Wolfsteiner see Appendix 11 for further details) if there are no specialization, customers cannot identify the company's product offering and restoration being a sector with a lot of competition, it is key to differentiate through a specialization. Moreover, the restaurant builds part of its differentiation strategy on the customer service, as the interviewee stated for him a successful restaurant must:

“...be of good quality, a warm welcome and a good price-quality ratio. After in the restaurant business, I think it's essential that there is a real consistency in quality and that we can always offer the same standards.”.

It can be observed that there is on one hand the product's aspect, with the quality, and on the other the aspect of service with a good customer service. Both elements are extremely important and need to be assured all the time, especially when directly in contact with customer.

For one interviewee (Didier Humbert see Appendix 13 for further details) the differentiation strategy is to have a certification label. This is not only an assurance for him that his product is protected by the certification label and paid at its fair value, but also a guarantee for the consumer. Using certification label as differentiation strategy can be valuable, especially if it is important for respondents and as seen in the survey's results 40% of respondent attaches importance to it. However, it is important to choose a certification label that is known and valued by consumers, otherwise the differentiation strategy can be hard to implement.

Finally, for the last interviewee (Hans Weber see Appendix 15 for further details) differentiation strategy is to offer quality, whether it is through the product offering or the customer service. Moreover, there was also a constant search to be on the cutting edge and to master what the farm offered to the client. Lastly, the farm's differentiation strategy was also to include the customer in the business' family spirit. The interviewee stated:

“... above all the most important was to offer a quality service, whether it was through products or through the service we offered to customers. Quality was always our target. In addition, it was also important as said before that customers could be integrated in our family spirit and way of doing.”.

Differentiation strategy can also be done through the creation of an atmosphere or a sense of belonging where the customer can identify himself. However, such ways to

differentiate takes time to be implemented and rely heavily on the company's employees, as they must also have the same mindset and way of thinking.

Château-Blanc's Concept

There was an interest from the interviewer to know what interviewees might think of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* concept. They gave their opinion and interesting insights that can be helpful for the development of a business mode for the farm.

Regarding the production and the direct selling of beef meat on the farm, one interviewee (Norbert Prélaz see Appendix 8 for further details) stated that it is a profession to be a butcher. He also added that not everyone can make up their own butcher. This is why it is very important for farms to surround themselves with professionals and to delegate tasks where people working on the farm are not experts. By delegating and focusing on the tasks that are mastered, the farm or company can offer a better quality of product and service to customers.

One interview (Benjamin Cuvit see Appendix 9 for further details) stated that implementing activities to discover the farm, such as educational workshops or brunches would be a great idea. However, since he is a butcher, he could also observe that farms do not necessarily have the same standards to follow, when implementing such events. Therefore, he stated: *"I would say if farmers want to implement such activities, they should do it properly, so that there is no disloyal competition."* When implementing such activities, there is the duty for farmers to consider other stakeholders in the same industry and to take care of the relationships with them and this especially for small structures.

For another interviewee (Philip Wolfsteiner see Appendix 11 for further details), *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should rather focus on targeting private customers and do local markets. Getting into the catering sector is complicated for a small producer, because restaurants do not have the guarantee the farm will be able to supply enough products and on time.

Offering fresh products and collaborating with farmers are elements that were cited by one interviewee (Didier Humbert see Appendix 13 for further details). He thinks that by selling directly meat through a store can be beneficial for customers, especially when they do not have a freezer to buy larger quantities of meat. In addition, being in contact with the farmer can be an advantage for customers, because they can directly ask their questions. Lastly, collaborating with farmers could enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to offer a wider range of products.

Finally, the last interviewee (Hans Weber see Appendix 15 for further details) stated that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has a huge potential to develop something outside from traditional farming. He stated:

“I think that the farm, because of its geographical location and the environment in which it is located, is conducive to develop something good. Above all, we are in a region where people have money, which also favors development outside the purely agricultural sector.”.

This point of view might be related to the fact, that the interviewee encountered success with his farm during several years and is aware of the potentials and possibilities of the farm. Furthermore, the location and the environment in which the farm is located are suitable factors to for building a successful business model.

Interviewees' Personal Insight

There were very interesting insights or remarks given by interviewees that did not fit in one of the previous categories, therefore they will be explained in the following section.

The first interviewee (Norbert Prélaz see Appendix 8 for further details), who has more than 30 years of experience and expertise as a butcher, stated that he could observe that quality meat has been improved over the past years. He said that this improvement is linked to a consciousness of the farmers and that the animal's fodder is very important. Farmers are more aware of this aspect and that it can influences the quality of meat.

The second interviewee (Benjamin Cuvit see Appendix 9 for further details), who is also a butcher and already collaborated with *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* stated that he was always satisfied with the quality meat the farm offered. Moreover, what he particularly appreciates is the farm's seek for excellence and continuously trying to improve its quality meat. He stated:

“...they constantly try to improve the quality of their meat by importing bulls that have good genes. They always strive for excellence whether it is through the forage, animal genetics or the animal's welfare.”.

This statement supports the fact that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* produces and offers quality meat. Moreover, they try to improve themselves and they are looking for the best quality possible for their business to business (B2B) customers, but also for their private customers. It could therefore be interesting to inform the end consumers about these efforts made by the farm to seek excellence.

One interviewee (Philip Wolfsteiner see Appendix 11 for further details), mentioned that customers' way of consuming changed a lot over the past years. Before it was an event to go to the restaurant and most of the time people stayed the whole evening. Now it is different, customer come in, eat and leave. This insight reinforces what was mentioned before by a butcher, namely that people consume more ready-to-eat meals and that their way of consumption changed. There is a need to adapt to the changing environment and way to consume.

On interview (Didier Humber see Appendix 13 for further details) gave an interesting personal insight regarding the implementation of technology in the farming process. He stated that even though technology is helpful and allows flexibility in the farming tasks, there is the need for the farmer to go and see what is happening in the stable for instance. For him it is necessary to observe and be in contact with the animals and this in order to have the guarantee that everything goes well. It is not possible to delegate everything to technology. Even if it is practical and allows better management, there is no denying that it is necessary to check things.

Ultimately, one interviewee (Hans Weber see Appendix 15 for further details) said that each time a farm, a baker or a butcher closes down, all know-how is lost forever. There is not only pure agriculture that is gone, but all what is related to it. Therefore, it is important to educate people and raise awareness of what farmers are doing and how it contributes to people's life. Being close to people and being able to pass on a little bit of knowledge can be a potential strategy for *La Ferme du Château blanc*.

Conclusion

Key findings and recommendations coming out of these consumers' interview analysis will be addressed in the main discussion below.

6. Discussion

6.1 *Key findings*

6.1.1 Literature Review

Swiss Agriculture in the Economy

Swiss agriculture plays an important role in the country's economy. The agricultural sector is not only essential for ensuring the country's food safety but is also an important contribution to the Swiss tourism industry. Even though there are no real hard statistics from the Swiss government on farms offering agritourism activities, there are a lot of promotions made on the internet for such activities. Indeed, the major Swiss organization promoting Swiss tourism, *MySwitzerland*, presents a large variety of activities related to agritourism. *MySwitzerland* highlights over 100 places between Geneva and Bern where it is possible to experience agritourism activities for instance. Moreover, it could be observed that the demand for such activities has risen over the past years. There are many existing opportunities for farmers to implement such activities. Unfortunately, over the past year farms are disappearing, especially small-scaled ones. These losses expose the urgent need for farmers to change their business model and to adjust their way of farming and this in order to offset the shortfall of income.

Family Farming

The term "family farming" has been exposed and analyzed previously in the literature review. A large variety of definitions has been highlighted and it has been seen that they vary depending on the context and the countries. Moreover, the analysis of various factors defining a family farm done in the primary data research completed the definitions exposed in the literature review. Family farming is an important aspect of this research. As exposed earlier, its definition depends on the context and its country. Therefore, it was decided, for the purpose of this study and for Switzerland's context, to define family farming based on the following main pillars:

- Ownership
- Decision making
- Work provided

Marketing Strategy

There is only little information about applied marketing in the agricultural sector. Nevertheless, the study enabled the researcher to identify direct selling as being the most implemented marketing strategy by farmers. Having the opportunity to sell directly to customers allows farmers to take back control over the various distribution channels, such as wholesalers or retailers. After primary and secondary research, taking back control over the distribution channels appeared to be a clear marketing strategy for farmers. Reducing intermediaries between the producer and the end-consumers will enable farmers to have a higher margin on their products and to promote themselves directly to customers. Farmers will be able to explain and show the whole production process, share their knowledge and know-how. Being directly in contact with consumers also allows farmers to develop and build a stronger customer-producer relationship.

The aspects regarding the customer-producer relationship were not analyzed and thoroughly defined during this research, however it will be presented below. Indeed, this research raises new questions and it is important take them into consideration to effectively implement *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* future recommendations. When looking deeper at the customer-producer relationship it is essential to understand and decide how to connect with the customer and who will be targeted. In terms of the target audience, farmers should aim for everyone. The end goal is to reach as many people as possible and to include everyone. The targeted customers should be separated by demographic segments because each segment requires a different marketing strategy and aims at satisfying different needs. By dividing the population into segments, it will allow adapting the communication strategy, but also the product and event offerings.

These segments can be created according to age categories, life cycles, religion or lifestyles, to name just a few. For the purpose of this research it would be suitable to define the segments by age category, but also to consider customers' life stage. It would therefore be wise to define 5 distinct age groups (those aged between 18 to 25, 25 to 40, 40 to 55, 55 to 70 and those aged over 70).

The segments' establishment will enable farmers to target customers more precisely and accurately, whether it is through communication strategy or the special offerings. The events can be specifically tailored-made and targeting a certain age category. If taking the example of the 25 - 40 age group, customers can be either young families, looking to eat healthy food or singles who like to share a good time with their friends. Therefore, offering Sunday brunches to them could be a worthy idea. There will be a need to create a communication strategy that appeals to them and makes them want to participate in

the event. Other activities such as cooking classes could be created and organized for a slightly older age group (40 - 55 years old) who enjoys learning to cook surrounded by experts in the field. Music events or BBQs could be a target for a younger age group 18-25 years old for instance.

As far as the communication strategy and the means of reaching the different segments is concerned, it will also be important to define precisely which means are the most effective according to the age group. Social networks such as Instagram and Facebook should be the ones used in the first place. However, in order to include also people who are not sensitive to this kind of communication channel, other alternatives should be found. The creation of WhatsApp groups or the implementation of newsletters can be used to target people who are not on social networks or who are not active on them. In order to increase the awareness of direct selling and the events offered by farms, farmers should promote their services through direct discussions with potential future customers. These talks could take place at conferences, trade fairs, through professional organizations or at societal or sports clubs. This wide choice of places and sites would not only allow farmers to target new people, but also to promote themselves in new sectors.

Finally, to have a marketing strategy that is effective and where farms can differentiate themselves, it is essential to know how to connect with customers and to reach them, but above all to understand the needs and expectations of each individual. That is why it is key to adapt its offer and communication strategy to each individual. In order to accurately determine the different age categories, the activities and events created and proposed for them, a detailed and more in-depth analysis of the age categories should be done. Lastly, the research revealed that marketing strategies can be applied to agriculture as any other sector.

Success and Effectiveness

In order to see whether a marketing strategy is effectively implemented and successful, several KPIs, such as conversion, bounce or customer retention rate, to name just a few, were highlighted. ROI and customer loyalty were some KPIs among many that came out as being the most used and enabling to get a fast overview of the strategy's implementation. To measure the success of a project or a strategy, hard financial data such as a company's revenue or expenses are often used. Looking at a company's orders and whether there is an increase in sales, for instance, is another suitable

indicator of a successful strategy. In addition to these means of measurement, factors such as employees and customers' satisfaction have also to be considered for this research. The employees' and customers' satisfaction could be measured through satisfaction surveys, collection of oral feedbacks and during annual interviews made with employees in the company.

Profitability

Profitability is an essential factor for a company to grow and be sustainable in the long-term. Several means of measuring profitability were highlighted previously in the literature review. The gross profit margin and the net profit margin are the ones that give already a suitable overview of the company's financial health. Every company aims at having high margin ratios, more importantly for the net profit margin. It indicates that the company's expenses were all absorbed by its earning. Having positive margin ratios are objectives that will be achieved by *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and this in a constant manner. In order to ensure the consistency and control of the farm's sectors working well, but also to identify areas for improvements, it will be essential to do the farm's profitability ratios over several periods. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* will need to implement some periodical controls and frameworks that will help track and measure the farm's profitability overtime. Lastly, these margin ratios will enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to compare itself to others in the same industry who offer similar products and services.

6.1.2 Primary Data

The collection of primary data seized insights from both the supply and the demand side. The survey enabled to identify consumers' expectations, habits and tendencies regarding meat as well as some elements influencing their purchasing behaviors. Thanks to some personal interviews with consumers, it was possible to deepen the results previously found through the questionnaire. Interviews with other stakeholders of the meat industry (supply side) allowed the identification of several elements and ideas beneficial for the creation of viable recommendations and for a business plan for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

6.1.2.1 Survey

The survey identified several important aspects regarding participants' purchasing habits as well as factors influencing them. In addition, the survey enabled the identification of aspects related to communication channels for meat and insights on farm activities.

Consumption Habits

The majority of the respondents consider themselves as regular meat eaters, meaning that they eat meat at least twice a week. However, it includes all type of meat. When looking deeper at the results, it can be seen that the majority of respondents consume beef only once a week or less. There is also a wish from consumers to consume in a smart way and to consume less, but better quality. Producers should therefore show their products' quality.

Beef Quality Definition

The quality of beef is defined through various elements and changes according to the respondent's answer. However, there are some common roots among the answers, and quality beef can be defined as being tasty, tender and having a nice color. Those are all important aspects and quality is enhanced by the animal's breeding conditions, the origin and the localness of the product. It is therefore difficult to define quality beef just with a few words. It is a whole that makes beef's quality. Farmers should consider all these factors when producing beef and highlight them when selling their products.

3 most important purchasing criteria

The three main criteria when buying beef are:

- The origin
- The price
- The proximity

When selling beef, farmers should pay attention to these factors and highlight the animal's breeding conditions and show the product's traceability. Producers should also be able to offer a price-quality ratio that is attractive to customers. Lastly, farmers should ensure proximity to their products by being local, accessible and promoting the contact with the customer.

Factors influencing purchases at the farmer's place

The main reasons to buy beef directly from the producer are because:

- beef is healthier, better quality and fresher
- customers know the meat's origin and traceability
- customers know the breeding conditions of the animals and the production processes
- local economy and farmers are supported, and their work is valued
- personal contact with the producer and fair prices

Producer should therefore put effort on communicating about their production processes, the quality of their meat and build a strong customer relationship. They should use these elements to differentiate from competitors and foster success.

Most Appropriate Means of Communication

In respondents' opinion the most appropriate means of communicating are:

- Brand's website, social medias & internet
- TV ads
- Newspapers
- Word-of mouth & direct discussion with the producer

Hence, farmers should have effectively implemented a company's website and social medias' accounts. As TV ads can be expensive, especially for small infrastructure, it is even more important to be effective in the other communication channels and provide updated information and interesting content on their website or social medias.

Moreover, results by the survey suggested to share cooking recipes on social medias. This could be used by a farmer or producer to enlarge his advertising strategy and reach a wider customers base.

Farm Activities

Farm activities such as brunches or educational workshop for children for instance were well received by the respondents. The majority of respondents were willing to pay and participate at brunches on the farm, which represents a huge potential for farmers. It also strengthens the fact that there is a demand for agritourism activities. Farmers who want to offer such events, should differentiate their offer and make the experience for customers special.

In addition, it also came out that people are enjoying simple experiences on farms, such as seeing the animals and talk with the farmer/producers. Hence, it could be a good strategy to have a tidy, good looking farm in which animals can easily be accessed so that people can enjoy them and eventually buy meat.

6.1.2.2 Interview

For the purpose of this study and based on the results and analysis of the interviews, the following insights can be highlighted and exposed.

Supporting Farmers

Supporting farmers was one of the main reasons to buy directly at the farmer's place. There is a wish from consumers to avoid intermediaries and thus develop a relationship with the producer. Moreover, there was an interest from interviewees to learn from the product's origin and production processes. Therefore, producers should highlight their production process, the localness of their products and offer a wide product offering.

Additional Activities

There was the opportunity to deepen the answers of the consumers and in particular the activities proposed by the farm. It appeared that other activities such as having a camping spot, picking flowers or a bed and breakfast experience, are opportunities that consumers could pay to participate in. It could be interesting for farmers to invest in smaller activities, as already seen in the survey results.

High Quality Products and Service

Offer constant quality to customers, whether it is in the product offering or the service, quality came out as a major element when talking about differentiation strategy. Other elements such as specialization, diversification of product offering and stay on top were also differentiation strategies cited by interviewees. Deciding of the differentiation strategy companies want to implement is key for their success and long-term sustainability, it is therefore extremely important to define clearly on which elements the strategy is based.

Success Factors

Local production was one of the main factors defining success. Having the opportunity to offer local products to consumers and knowing the origin of them can be part of a company's success. Moreover, local production enables farmers to have a control over

the supply chain and its traceability, and therefore be transparent to customers. The interviews highlighted another element, which support the previous statement, namely the fact that it is important to be transparent with the customers, but also with the various stakeholders involved in a company. In addition, being able to offer a great quality-price ratio to customers is also a criterion that came out of the interviews and defines success. Lastly, being open-minded and flexible in the fast-changing environment in which businesses have to evolve, are the last criteria to define success.

Quality Meat

Another strong insight given by interviewees is that the quality of meat improved over the past years. This has been observed because some farmers are looking for excellence in their meat production. Factors such as feed or good genes may be the cause of better quality. Lastly, the animal's breeding conditions are also elements, among many others, that contribute to higher quality beef.

Ferme du Château-Blanc's Concept

Concerning *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* concept and ideas mentioned by interviewees several elements came out:

- Work with professionals and delegate expertise that are not fully mastered
- Target private customers and local markets
- Implement activities to educate people about the farm
- Offer various fresh products and collaborate with farmers

The ideas and inputs given by interviewees brought up new possibilities for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's* differentiation strategy. Moreover, these ideas are impactful insights for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to build a business model and a strong marketing strategy.

6.2 Recommendations

After exploring and analyzing primary and secondary data, this research will now enable the researcher to determine how small farms in Switzerland can improve their business. The appropriate strategy to differentiate, be profitable in the long term and create value in the market places will mainly be applied to *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. Furthermore, the following recommendations will enable the building of a business model for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Develop Direct Selling and build Event Business Unit

The first recommendation for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is to further develop its current activity of direct selling and use this approach as the main marketing strategy. Since there was a customer base developed through the selling of beef, there is already a suitable base to build on further. The research highlighted that there is a willingness from customers to buy and eat local products and to support farmers. Therefore, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should open a store on the farm where customers can come and buy fresh products. In addition, the research demonstrated that there was a high demand and willingness to pay for specific activities proposed by farms. Hence, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should build and develop this business unit that offers specific activities to customers. The development of direct selling and the business unit regarding events and activities can therefore be aligned with the farm's vision and values.

Value Proposition

La Ferme du Château-Blanc's value proposition will first and foremost be to offer quality products, quality meat and be an expert in its field. In addition, the farm's value proposition will be to offer fresh and healthy products. The farm's mission will also be to welcome people and offer customers a new experience, enabling them to learn new aspects of farming, but also to allow them the opportunity to reconnect with nature. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s main purpose will not only be to feed the population with local and healthy products, but also to offer a unique experience to its consumers, either through the sale of products, events or activities. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s priorities will be to have a variety of offers that will suit everyone who would like to participate. Whether it is for families, couples, single persons, young or old people, the farm will have an offer that suits everyone. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* will be happy to welcome and take care of its current and future customers and create value for them so that their

experience is exceptional. The aim of creating value is to make customers come back and enlarge their experience. Experiencing all of this in a welcoming and caring atmosphere will be key elements in the delivery of the farm's value proposition.

La Ferme du Château-Blanc will not only satisfy its customers with its offer of quality products, but will also allow visitors to share and enjoy a friendly atmosphere and to consume healthy products. In addition, there will be the sharing know-how and passing on a little bit of craftsmanship for life on the farm, to children and to those who wish to do so. Creating a connection and establishing a relationship of trust allowing freedom of expression and learning will be values established by *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Lastly, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* aims not only to create value for its customers by offering them new experiences, but also to allow them to see and understand farming in a new way. Furthermore, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* is committed to contribute to the local economy and to support stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The farm will therefore make potential partnerships with local farmers.

Develop Quality Awareness

Above all, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should develop quality awareness regarding its products, more specifically beef meat. The farm's purpose should be to put more effort on communicating about the quality of its meat and raise awareness about its product. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should emphasize all aspects related to the production of such meat quality. Breeding conditions, fodder produced exclusively on the farm or the constant search to improve the meat by having meat breeds with very good genes are only some aspects the farm should highlight. Other elements such as animal welfare, meat preparation and resting should also be better communicated to consumers. These factors create the meat quality found at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and is a differentiation strategy. It should therefore be communicated.

Product Offering

Having a variety of products and choices is an important aspect for the customer when buying groceries. Therefore, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should enlarge its product offering in its shop and partnership with local farmers who produce products such as vegetables, fruits and staple foods as eggs for instance. Moreover, the farm should also sell its cuts of beef directly in the store and not only through boxes of 10 or 25kg. Localness and origin being main customers' concerns when buying beef, there should be the same selection for products from local farmers. Therefore, there should be an emphasis on choosing the producers *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* wants to partner with.

The product offering should be very local and only seasonal, avoiding products that are not from Switzerland. The origin and the production process should also be known. It will thus be possible to control the traceability and be transparent to customers, as for the production process of the beef. In a second step it could be interesting to develop the product offer further and to propose fresh products such as bread, milk or cheese. Other products with a longer shelf life, such as flour, oil or wine could also be implemented during this second phase. In addition, regarding the farm's beef production, it could be interesting to develop the range of processed products and offer products such as terrine, sausage or dried meat. If *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has the capabilities to manufacture these products itself, they should do it. However, if the capabilities are not present, they would rather partner with a butcher for example, in order to ensure to offer high quality products to customers.

Key Activities

Direct selling being one of the farm's key activities, there is also a recommendation to build and develop a durable event business unit. Brunches, cooking classes and educational workshops were the activities that had the most success. Hence, these activities are an opportunity for the farm to be developed. Regarding brunches, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should organize them once a month on Sundays and have specific themes related to them. The fact to have brunches only once a month enables the farm to prepare and organize them with care and to propose other activities besides. Moreover, these brunches could occur from the end of May to mid-November. Using this time frame would allow the farm to offer such events while cows are on the mountain and while school and summer holidays occur. The components of the brunches will have to be defined more precisely according to the theme and the availability of products. However, it goes without saying that it will be a selection of home-made, fresh and regional products in partnership with producers. In addition, as mentioned earlier in the research, this could be an opportunity to have producers present during the brunch, who can explain the production process of their products and how they are made. Finally, in a second step, these brunches could also be an opportunity to implement additional activities created for children and enabling parents to have a wider offer, including children.

Cooking classes was also an activity that should be developed by *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. Even though people mostly know the various cuts of beef, the research highlighted the fact that they do not know all of them and that a majority do not know how

to cook the cuts they are not used to buy. Offering cooking classes would enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to teach participants how to cook the various cuts of meat, to avoid the usual mistakes made and enable them to learn other ways to cook beef cuts, as cooking stew on the BBQ. Cooking classes can be an interesting way to make people discover beef and the variety of products the farm has to offer. It is also a suitable manner to show the quality of the meat, to explain the breeding conditions and to educate the consumer about the whole production process. There is full traceability and a direct exchange between the farmer and the participant. The aim is to share knowledge and know-how with the participants, and therefore build customer relationships. In addition, this opportunity allows the farm to sell potential unsold cuts related to retail sales and customer consumption habits. Since *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* does not master cooking classes, it should collaborate with professionals in the cooking sector and thus offer high quality cooking classes to participants and a great experience. Moreover, by collaborating with experts, quality beef will be sublimated and valorized. In a second phase, these cooking classes could be adapted to groups and be proposed as team building activities for companies or for bachelorette parties.

Educational workshops are the third activity *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should develop and implement on its farm. These workshops would be for children as well as adults and could occur all year around. These activities should be offered on Wednesdays afternoon and week-ends, so that children and parents can be available. There could be the creation of themed activities where participants could gain knowledge about farming and value the farmer's work. The workshops would aim to educate children on how to behave with animals, but also on the animal's breeding conditions and all the elements necessary to beef production. During the time where cows are on the farm, there could be workshops where children can feed the cows and prepare their bedding. Such activities are also interesting for adult participants, because they can learn about the cows' fodder, breeding conditions and have the opportunity to ask directly questions to the farmer. Once again, the purpose is to be honest and completely transparent with participants and customers, and through such activities it is possible to educate people about farming and agriculture, but also to transmit know-how and develop a durable and strong customer-producer relationship. The implementation of these three activities' category should enable *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to have an additional revenue without hindering the primary activity, which is beef production. Furthermore, it is an excellent way to make people discover the farm's products, the activities that can be experienced and through this way differentiate from competitors.

Finally, facilities such as bed and breakfast or providing some land for campers are not options that the farm should provide. On the one hand, because bed and breakfast require a lot of financial investment and with the recent takeover of the farm, there are other financial priorities. On the other hand, fields are used throughout the year and the provision of land could hinder good field rotation, cows' fodder and damage them.

Customer Relationship

La Ferme du Château-Blanc should put emphasis on building a strong customer relationship, which will lead to customer loyalty and enable the farm to be profitable. There should be a focus on building customer relationships whether it is through the direct selling of products or the various events customers can participate. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should put efforts into offering always a quality customer service and create an atmosphere where customers feel at ease. The farm's goal should be to create an environment where customers can feel comfortable and feel important, which creates a sense of belonging. A clean and tidy place and warm and friendly welcoming are factors that contribute to the creation of an openhearted environment. In order to build a strong customer-producer relationship, the farm should communicate more about its beef production processes and show customers how animals are raised for instance. In addition, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has to choose its employees and partners wisely. The choice of employees is a determining factor for the development of the customer relationship, as employees are directly in contact with the customer. This is why it is crucial to choose employees who have the same vision and who are in the same mindset as the farm. They will represent the farm when selling the products. In order to ensure the success of the farm, it is important to assess the satisfaction of both customers and employees.

Communication Strategy & Tools

The aim through the effective use of communication channels is to leverage the farm's name and to raise brand awareness as well as highlighting the farm's quality products. So far only word-of-mouth and flyers were used to communicate about the farm. As the research pointed out, website, social media and the internet are the most impactful communication and advertising tools. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should therefore implement an attractive, user friendly and well-structured website. Moreover, the website should be used to communicate about the farm's production process, how the animals are raised and how meat is brought to such a higher level of quality. This means of

communication should be used as a showcase of the farm and allow people to easily find information about the farm, its product and service offering. The website should act as the farm's business card. This platform could also be used to highlight the various partnerships the farm has with local producers and enable participants to subscribe for various activities.

La Ferme du Château-Blanc already having social media accounts such as Instagram and Facebook, their use should be better optimized. Facebook and Instagram should be used to interact directly with followers. Posting interesting content and keeping followers up to date with the latest farm news should be the first functions of these communication channels. There is no need to post daily information or content. Social media should have two functions for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. First, to create a community and share the farm's happening such as a calf's birth or the cows' descent from the mountain. The aim is to create a sense of belonging and to integrate the customers in the farm's life. Moreover, the purpose is also to raise brand awareness and to spread the farm's offerings. Second, to advertise about the farm's product offering or services and inform its community of the current products availability or the upcoming events.

In order to raise brand awareness more locally, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should carry out an information campaign on social networks, but above all by sending flyers in the district of Nyon, where many people are not aware of the products and services offered by the farm. In a second phase, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should participate in interviews on radios or magazines, which could raise brand awareness through another communication channel. These interviews would be the opportunity for the farm to share its expertise on specific topics such as the quality of its meat or the cows' breeding conditions. Moreover, it is a chance to talk about the various events that can be experienced at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

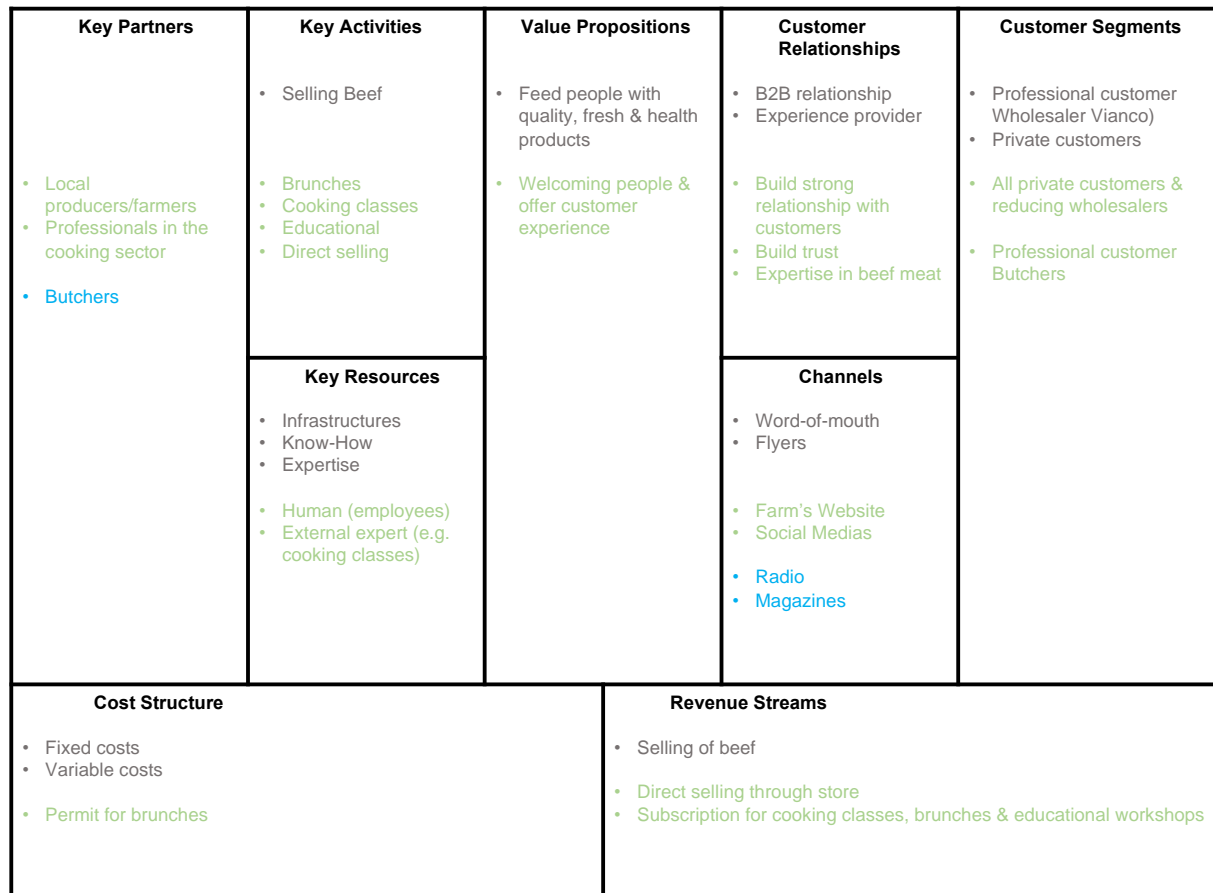
Measuring Strategy

Using the farm's website and social media can be a suitable alternative to TV ads, which are often expensive. However, there is the need to use social media and the farm's website suitably and to evaluate regularly if the chosen communication strategy is effective or not. In order to measure the effectiveness and the success of the chosen strategy several KPIs should be used. The conversion and bounce rate should be used by the farm to evaluate the effectiveness of its website. ROI and customer loyalty should also be used to measure the effectiveness of the strategy. However, since it is hard to define clearly how much marketing contributed to the overall success of the strategy, other KPIs should be used by the farm. In order to measure the strategy's outcome *La*

Ferme du Château-Blanc should have a target revenue, which will enable to have an objective and to make the necessary implementation and communication in order to reach it. Increase in sales and in orders of beef boxes for instance or subscription for brunches or other services proposed by the farm should be indicators *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* takes track of. An increase in sales or subscriptions allows the farm to see whether the communication strategy is effective and well-chosen. In addition, the farm should also measure the customers' satisfaction regularly as well as the employees' and partners' satisfaction, and thus see where improvement needs to be done in order to achieve successful outcomes. Finally, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should use profitability ratios to measure, whether its business is profitable and growing. Profitability ratios such as gross profit margin and net profit margin should be used above all.

6.3 Suggested Business Model Canvas

Figure 34 La Ferme du Château-Blanc's New Business Model



■ Business model before implementation of the recommendations

■ Business model after implementation of the recommendations

■ Second phase recommendations' implementation

6.3.1 Business Model Canvas

The business model presented in figure 34 is the suggested business model for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* after implementation of the recommendations. The grey areas are those currently implemented by the farm, the green areas are the new options based on the recommendations and the blue ones are the second phase implementation. In the following paragraphs the main components per category will briefly be explained. Further research could be carried out to define more precisely the different elements in each category and this in close collaboration with the farm.

Value Proposition

As explained previously, the value proposition will not change since it is in the farm's DNA and implemented since the beginning. The value proposition is therefore: to offer quality, fresh and healthy products, but also to welcome people and offer customers a new experience whether it is through events or activities. The aim is to deliver value to customers through the quality products and service offering. The goal is through the farm's products enable people to eat healthy products and this with a good quality-price ratio.

Customer Segments

So far, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* sold its beef directly to private customers, as well as to a Swiss wholesaler, Vianco. The farm's aim was to continue targeting private customers and to diminish the sales to the wholesaler. The farm's objective was to sell 75% of its beef production directly to end-consumers and 25% to Vianco. Nevertheless, after the analysis of primary and secondary research, it could be identified that there would be other opportunities for the farm to sell its meat to professional customers. *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* should keep selling 75% of its beef production or more to private customers and the remaining 25% to local butchers. By selling to local butchers, the farm can participate in the preservation of craft trades and support the local economy. Moreover, this new selling channel should allow the farm to have a regular income. However, there will be a need to increase the farm's private customer base and develop strong relationships with butchers in order to reduce sales to Vianco.

Customer Relationship

Regarding *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s customer relationship, the farm had so far business to business relationship and some relationship to private customers. The aim for the farm is to deepen the relationship with private customers in order to build trust.

Moreover, another goal will be to develop business to business relationships with butchers, which will represent a new professional customer segment. Since selling to a wholesaler is no longer a priority, there will not be any focus on developing this relationship further. However, there will be a maintenance of the professional relationship.

In order to develop the relationship and build trust with private and professional customers, the farm should offer constant quality products and services to customers. The farm should create value for customers through its experience and expertise in beef meat, but also through the specific activities proposed on the farm.

Channels

At the moment, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* was known only by word-of-mouth and the farm reached its customers once through a flyer campaign. Thanks to the implementation of the recommendations, new communication channels would be put in place to reach them and raise brand awareness. The creation of a website for the farm, as well as an effective communication strategy implement on social medias will allow *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to target a wider audience and be more connected to its customers. Finally, by participating in radio programs or magazine interviews, the farm can target a new audience and share its expertise in the field of quality meat.

Key Activities

La Ferme du Château-Blanc's key activity was the selling of beef. As exposed previously, the aim is to develop direct selling further and offer a wider range of products by collaborating with local producers. The implementation of this activity would be done through the opening of a store. Moreover, there was the potential to create and develop events and farm activities. There was the choice made, that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* will have other key activities besides direct selling, namely brunches, cooking classes and educational workshops.

Key Resources

La Ferme du Château-Blanc already had key resources such as infrastructure and buildings on the farm, which are necessary to produce beef. The know-how as well as the expertise in the production of meat, were key resources that were already implemented since the beginning. However, in order to deliver the value proposition exposed before and this respecting the implementation of the recommendations, other key resources will be required by the farm. Human resources, such as employees or

external experts, for cooking classes for instance will be needed. These new resources will be essential and key in the successful functioning of the farm.

Key Partners

So far, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* do not have any key partner in its business model. However, after the implementation of the recommendations, the farm will rely on various key partners such as farmers, local producers, professionals in specific sectors or butchers, depending on its activity and product making. It will therefore be essential to select them wisely and to entertain the relationship with them. The collaboration with these key partners should enable the farm to deliver to customers its value proposition as well as lead to the farm's success.

Cost Structure

Regarding the cost structure, the farm already has some fixed and variable costs. The main changes will be within the cost structure with more employees integrated, some working part time or some full time. There will be some costs related to specific activities, as for instance having a chef for cooking classes. There will also be various partnerships from which the farm will buy products. There will probably be an increase in the costs related to marketing. Moreover, since there will be more people on the farm, whether there are customers, employees or other people involved in the farm, there will certainly be additional insurance costs. Finally, there will also be costs related to the permit that might be needed when doing brunches.

Revenue Stream

La Ferme du Château-Blanc generated revenue through the direct selling of beef. After the implementation of the recommendations, there should be additional revenue for the farm. Revenue will be generated through activities such as brunches, cooking classes and educational workshops. These revenues are going to be sporadic depending on when the activities are going to take place. The other revenue stream will be through the direct selling of products found in the store and sold to butchers. This revenue will be more regular. However, it will depend on the number of customers and sales made. The actual split among revenue streams between sales of beef, sales of other products, brunches, cooking classes, educational workshops and other sources of income are still not being worked out yet, which does not enable a clear calculation of the revenue stream.

6.4 Biases & Suggestions for Future Research

During the research of this report, there was a risk of potential biases, but they were neutralized.

First, since the researcher is linked to the case study, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* her family being in charge of the farm, there could be some bias. Even though the researcher is not directly involved in the family business, the fact that it is run by her family might have an influence on her perception. The researcher always took a step back and involved a third party in her research, which enabled the research to be done in a manner that neutralized any family influence.

Second, there could be bias in the collection of primary data because this research was made a few months after the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. This situation may have biased some of the primary data collection about respondents' consumption habits regarding beef, because they may have been thinking about their buying habits during this special time which can be different from before. The researcher tried to partly neutralize this bias by asking if the respondents' consumption changed during the Covid-19.

Third, the survey population might have a bias as it is based on the researcher's network. In fact, most of the respondents live in the canton of Vaud or the district of Nyon. This might seem a problem, however, it could help *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* to target and optimize its marketing strategy according to the people's answer living close to the farm. This could then further lead to the customer's satisfaction and help to spread the reputation of the farm.

Suggestions for future research could be to deepen the results gotten from the survey such as investigate whether people established in the canton of Geneva are living in cities close to Nyon, Geneva city or close to the French border. Those different locations might provide different results and could help create tailored and optimized strategies.

It could also be interesting to enlarge the survey location in order to see if people in the French-speaking part have the same consumption habits or knowledge as the German-speaking part does have, which could give some interesting insight and provide precious data for the Swiss agricultural system.

Collecting more data could be helpful to deepen the knowledge of consumption habits in the Arc Lémanique, but also to have a better representation of the general population. In order to do so, it would be important to provide the questionnaire not only online, but also

in a paper version. This would allow the elderly to participate and would allow some new insight.

Another suggestion for future research could be to investigate deeper the digital transformation topic in the agriculture sector. Being in a volatile and fast-paced world, digital transformation also brings agriculture to be digitalized. The implementation of new technologies and digitalization in the agricultural sector can be beneficial for farmers in many aspects. However, farmers are sometimes reluctant to those technologies, mainly because the initial implementation is costly in the short-term and also because they perceive risky to take the step to digitalize farming. It could be interesting to investigate deeper this topic and see how it impacts the agricultural sector, but also how it can be developed further.

Finally, further research could be done on the new business model. By collaborating closely with *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, there would be the possibility to define more accurately and precisely each category's element.

6.5 *La Ferme du Château-Blanc's Boutique*

As explained previously, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* seized an opportunity during the worldwide Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and decided to re-open its store located on the farm. Thanks to high demand for local products and people having more time to go to farms, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* opened its boutique selling a large variety of products, as well as beef. This decision was initiated prior to the completion of the thesis, but no data was used from that operation over the last four months for this thesis and that is because it is still in the development process. The researcher continued to deepen its research and study with the aim of proposing viable recommendations to implement for *La Ferme Château-Blanc*.

6.6 *Considerations*

In order to take the next steps in the implementations of the farm's recommendations, other aspects, outside of the scope of this research, have to be considered. A detailed and complete financial plan will need to be established to accurately see the financial needs and resources of the farm. The purpose of this financial plan will be to monitor, control and guide the development of the farm's business model and its implementation.

Also, a thorough analysis of the costs will be carried out in order to have a comprehensive overview of the farm's financial situation and to determine the feasibility of the recommendations' implementation. This costs analysis will allow to identify areas where costs could be reduced through costs optimization or partnerships. Moreover, a more in-depth analysis of the investments required for communication and event promotion will also have to be explored. This analysis will allow to quantify the overall costs of marketing strategy and to determine to proportion allocated to communication.

Finally, the different business units of the farm will have to be segregated to allow an effective implementation of specific strategies and a thorough analysis of each unit's performance. For instance, the organization of events will have to be separated from the production of meat. This segregation will allow to target marketing efforts and pursue a sustainable integrated strategy. Also, clear and precise specifications to define the roles and responsibilities of each one will be established in order to all work in the same direction in an effective way.

7. Conclusion

This research aimed at suggesting viable and applicable recommendations for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, which is facing a challenging situation regarding its meat production. First, there was a need to understand the meat market in Switzerland and the various factors driving this industry. This objective was reached through secondary data research and primary data collection, such as interviews and surveys. The collection of primary data enabled to gain insights and learn about consumers' consumption and purchasing habits regarding beef. The data collection also helped emphasize their preferences on and expectations from beef meat. The identification of trends in consumption habits, such as favouring meat origin, local production, quality and direct exchange with producers, pointed out opportunities with which small farms can compete. The main differentiation elements to implement for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* are products quality, direct selling and events on the farm. The farm's location and capabilities would undoubtedly enable the implementation of such strategies.

Social media including Facebook and Instagram, as well as a website for the farm, were the most accurate communication tools identified. By implementing a strong and effective communication strategy, *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* could easily reach new customers and be profitable in the long-term. Since the business is new, regular controls will be needed to evaluate and measure the farm's communication strategy and make adjustments if needed.

Building customers' relationship and trust will be key components of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s differentiation strategy. The aim will be to raise brand awareness regarding its meat quality and service offering. The purpose of the farm will be to constantly improve in order to evolve with customers. The redesigning of the farm's business model and distribution channel will enable to be closer to consumers and to share the farm's know-how. Moreover, by taking control over its distribution channels, the farm will get higher margins on its products.

Finally, the business model exposed in this thesis could be used by other small-scaled farms and enable them to survive in a fast-changing and complex environment. By applying such strategies and setting similar objectives, small-scaled farms could counterattack the existing reality by not being one of the three farms closing down every day in Switzerland.

8. Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Survey – English



Bachelor Thesis Survey - Beef Meat consumption habits in Switzerland

As part of my Bachelor thesis conducted at the HEG, I am carrying out a study on beef consumption in Switzerland and how farmers can implement a marketing strategy to differentiate themselves.

The aim of this questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of consumption habits with regard to beef, but also the consumers' expectations associated to it. In addition, the survey aims to identify strategies and communication channels that could drive meat purchases and provide farmers with a differentiation strategy.

Your opinion is valuable at this stage of the research process and would be of great help to me!

This survey is being conducted for academic purposes and please be assured that the data collected is ANONYMOUS, so the answers cannot be traced back to you.

If you would like to receive more information on the results of the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following email address

jenny.weber@etu.hesge.ch

Thank you in advance for your participation and the time you took to complete the survey.

Kindly,
Jenny Weber

***Obligatoire**

What kind of meat consumer are you? *

- ☐ Regular meat eater (at least twice per week)
- ☐ Flexitarian (a person who has a primarily vegetarian diet but occasionally eats meat or fish)
- ☐ Vegetarian
- ☐ Vegan
- ☐ I do not eat meat

Purchasing and Consumption habits

How many times a week do you eat beef? *

- ☐ Less than once a week
- ☐ 1 x a week
- ☐ 2 x a week
- ☐ 3 x a week
- ☐ 4 x a week
- ☐ 5 x a week
- ☐ 6 x a week
- ☐ Every day

How many people in your household consume the beef meat you buy? *

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10 or more persons

What is your main place of purchase when buying beef? *

- ☐ Hard discount supermarket (like Lidl, Aldi)
- ☐ The supermarket (like Coop, Migros, Manor)
- ☐ At the butcher's shop
- ☐ Directly at the producer/ farmer's place
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Autre : _____

What is your average monthly budget for beef purchases? (in CHF) *

- ☐ Under 30.-
- ☐ Between 30.- & 50.-
- ☐ Between 51.- & 80.-
- ☐ Between 81.- & 100.-
- ☐ Between 101.- & 120.-
- ☐ Between 121.- & 150.-
- ☐ Between 151.- & 180.-
- ☐ Between 180.- & 200.-
- ☐ Over 200.-

Have you ever bought meat online? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What was the motivation for buying beef meat online or on the contrary what hold you from buying online? *

Votre réponse

Have you ever purchased beef directly from the producer/farmer? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

What was the motivation for buying beef directly from the producer/farmer or on the contrary why didn't you buy any? *

Votre réponse

Product's perception

What are the 3 most important criteria when buying beef?(max. 3 answers) *

- ☐ The price
- ☐ The origin
- ☐ The packaging
- ☐ The certification label
- ☐ The information provided about the product
- ☐ The product offering
- ☐ The buying experience
- ☐ The animal's welfare
- ☐ The brand image
- ☐ The proximity
- ☐ The meat cuts
- ☐ Autre : _____

How would you define quality beef? *

Votre réponse _____

How important is the certification label when you buy beef? *

	1	2	3	4	
Not important at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

Which of the following meat certification labels do you know? *



☐ SwissPrimGourmet



☐ Natura Beef



☐ Local



☐ Boeuf de Pâturage



☐ Bio Suisse



☐ Natura Farm



☐ NatureSuisse



☐ Suisse Garantie

Do you know the different cuts of beef meat ? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you know how to cook the different cuts of beef ? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Which pieces of beef do you eat the most and why choose these over others? *

Votre réponse

Communication channels

By what means of communication did you last see/hear an advertisement about beef meat? *

- ☐ Social medias (Instagram, Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn)
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Flyers
- ☐ Company's or brand's website
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ At events
- ☐ Billboards
- ☐ TV ads
- ☐ I haven't seen/heard any of them

In your opinion, what is the most appropriate communication channel to use when communicating about beef? *

Votre réponse

What medium(s) of communication would you use to advertise beef recipes? *

- ☐ Social networks (E.g. Post & story on Instagram, Facebook)
- ☐ Catalogue/Magazine
- ☐ Paper version at the store (E.g. Fooby recipe at the Coop entrance)
- ☐ Online (E.g. site web, application mobile)
- ☐ Recipe book
- ☐ I will not use the above mentioned communication channels

The end of the survey is approaching :)

What was your best experience on a farm? *

Votre réponse

For which of these events proposed by a farm would you be willing to pay to participate? *

- ☐ Brunch on the farm
- ☐ Educational workshops for children
- ☐ Guided tour of the farm
- ☐ Cooking classes (E.g. learning how to cook different pieces of meat)
- ☐ Weekend or discovery day at the farm
- ☐ Birthday/Marriages/Baptism Celebration
- ☐ I will not wish to pay to participate in these kinds of events.

Has the Coronavirus situation influenced the way you eat beef meat? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you ever heard of the Ferme du Château-Blanc and its boutique?
If yes, how did you hear about it? *

- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Recommendations (Family, Friends, Colleague)
- ☐ Social networks (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- ☐ Articles in newspaper/magazine
- ☐ Billboard
- ☐ I have not heard about

A little about you :)

What is your age range? *

- ☐ Under 18 years old
- ☐ Between 18 - 25
- ☐ Between 26 - 34
- ☐ Between 35 - 50
- ☐ Between 51 - 64
- ☐ Over 64 years old

What is your professional situation? **

- ☐ Full-time employee
- ☐ Part-time employee
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Full-time student
- ☐ Part-time student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Autre : _____

Please select your place of residence *

- ☐ District of Nyon (Canton de Vaud)
- ☐ Canton of Vaud (Other than the district of Nyon)
- ☐ Canton of Geneva
- ☐ Canton of Valais
- ☐ Canton of Fribourg
- ☐ Canton of Jura
- ☐ Canton of Neuchatel
- ☐ I do not reside in the French speaking part of Switzerland

Please indicate your gender *

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ I do not wish to share

THANK YOU for your availability!

Thank you very much to have taken the time to answer my questionnaire and I wish you a great summer!

If you are willing to participate in a virtual interview (Skype, Facetime, Zoom, Teams) in order to help me deepen my research on beef consumption habits, I let you give me your email address or phone number so that I can contact you for an interview.



Votre réponse

Survey – French



Thèse de Bachelor – Habitude de consommation de viande de boeuf en Suisse

Dans le cadre de ma thèse de Bachelor à la HEG, je fais une étude sur la consommation de viande de boeuf en Suisse et sur la manière dont les agriculteurs peuvent mettre en place une stratégie de marketing pour se différencier.

L'objectif de ce questionnaire est de mieux comprendre les habitudes de consommation en ce qui concerne la viande de boeuf mais aussi les attentes liées à celle-ci. En outre, l'enquête vise à identifier les stratégies et les moyens de communication qui pourraient stimuler les achats de viande et offrir aux agriculteurs une stratégie de différenciation.

Votre avis est précieux à ce stade du processus de recherche et me serait d'une grande utilité !

Cette enquête est menée à des fins universitaires et soyez assuré que les données recueillies sont ANONYMES, de sorte que les réponses ne peuvent pas être retracées jusqu'à vous.

Si vous souhaitez recevoir de plus amples informations sur les résultats de la recherche, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à l'adresse électronique suivante

jenny.weber@etu.hesge.ch

Je vous remercie par avance de votre participation et du temps que vous avez pris pour répondre à l'enquête.

Bien à vous,
Jenny Weber

***Obligatoire**

1. Quel genre de consommateur de viande êtes-vous? *

- ☐ Mangeant de la viande régulièrement (au moins 2 fois par semaine)
- ☐ Flexitarien (personne qui a un régime alimentaire principalement végétarien mais qui mange occasionnellement de la viande ou du poisson)
- ☐ Végétarien(ne)
- ☐ Végan(ne)
- ☐ Je ne mange pas de viande

Habitude de consommation & d'achat

Combien de fois par semaine mangez-vous de la viande de boeuf? *

- ☐ Moins d'une fois par semaine
- ☐ 1 x par semaine
- ☐ 2 x par semaine
- ☐ 3 x par semaine
- ☐ 4 x par semaine
- ☐ 5 x par semaine
- ☐ 6 x par semaine
- ☐ Tous les jours

Combien de personnes dans votre ménage consomment-ils la viande achetée par vos soins? *

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10 personnes ou plus

Quel est votre principal lieu d'achat lorsque vous achetez de la viande de boeuf? *

- ☐ Le supermarché hard discount (type Lidl, Aldi)
- ☐ Le supermarché (type Coop, Migros, Manor)
- ☐ A la boucherie
- ☐ Directement chez le producteur
- ☐ En ligne
- ☐ Autre : _____

Quel est votre budget moyen mensuel pour l'achat de viande de boeuf?
(en CHF) *

- ☐ En dessous de 30.-
- ☐ Entre 30.- & 50.-
- ☐ Entre 51.- & 80.-
- ☐ Entre 81.- & 100.-
- ☐ Entre 101.- & 120.-
- ☐ Entre 121.- & 150.-
- ☐ Entre 151.- & 180.-
- ☐ Entre 18.- & 200.-
- ☐ Plus de 200.-

Avez-vous déjà acheté de la viande en ligne ? *

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

Quelle a été la motivation d'acheter de la viande de boeuf en ligne ou au contraire pourquoi n'en avez-vous pas acheté en ligne ? *

Votre réponse

Avez-vous déjà acheté de la viande de boeuf directement chez le producteur ? *

- ☐ Oui
- ☐ Non

Quelle a été la motivation d'acheter de la viande de boeuf directement chez le producteur ou au contraire pourquoi n'en avez-vous pas acheté ? *

Votre réponse

Perception du produit

Quels sont les 3 critères les plus importants lorsque vous achetez de la viande de boeuf ? (max. 3 réponses) *

- ☐ Le prix
- ☐ La provenance
- ☐ L'emballage (Design, couleurs...)
- ☐ Le label
- ☐ L'information fournie sur le produit
- ☐ La largeur de l'offre de produit
- ☐ L'expérience d'achat
- ☐ Le bien-être animal
- ☐ L'image de la marque
- ☐ La proximité
- ☐ Les morceaux de choix
- ☐ Autre : _____

Comment définiriez-vous de la viande de boeuf de qualité ? *

Votre réponse _____

Quelle est le degré d'importance du label lorsque vous achetez de la viande de boeuf ? *

	1	2	3	4	
Pas important du tout	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Très important

Parmi les labels de viande suivants, lesquels connaissez-vous ? *



☐ SwissPrimGourmet



☐ Natura Beef



☐ Local



☐ Boeuf de Pâturage



☐ Bio Suisse



☐ Natura Farm



☐ NatureSuisse



☐ Suisse Garantie

Connaissez-vous les différents morceaux de viande de boeuf ? *

- ☐ Oui
☐ Non

Savez-vous cuisiner les différents morceaux de viande de boeuf ? *

- ☐ Oui
☐ Non

Quels sont les morceaux de viande de boeuf que vous consommez le plus et pourquoi choisir ceux-ci plutôt que d'autres ? *

Votre réponse

Moyens de communication

Par quel moyen de communication avez-vous vu ou entendu pour la dernière fois une publicité sur la viande de boeuf ? *

- ☐ Réseaux sociaux (Instagram, Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn)
- ☐ Journaux
- ☐ Flyers
- ☐ Site web de l'entreprise ou de la marque
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Lors d'événements
- ☐ Panneaux publicitaires
- ☐ Spot publicitaire (Radio, télévision, cinéma)
- ☐ Je n'en ai vu/entendu aucune

Selon vous, quel est le moyen de communication le plus adéquat à utiliser pour communiquer sur la viande de boeuf ? *

Votre réponse

Quel(s) moyen(s) de communication utiliseriez-vous pour publier des recettes de cuisine pour la viande de boeuf ? *

- ☐ Réseaux sociaux (Ex. Post & story sur Instagram, Facebook)
- ☐ Catalogue/Magazine
- ☐ Version papier au magasin (Ex. Recette Fooby à l'entrée de la Coop)
- ☐ En ligne (Ex. site web, application mobile)
- ☐ Livre de recette
- ☐ Je n'utiliserai pas les moyens de communication cité ci-dessus

La fin du questionnaire approche!

Quelle a été votre meilleure expérience dans une ferme? *

Votre réponse

Pour lequel de ces événements proposés par une exploitation agricole seriez-vous prêt à payer pour y participer? *

- ☐ Brunch à la ferme
- ☐ Ateliers éducatifs pour les enfants
- ☐ Visite guidée à la ferme
- ☐ Cours de cuisine (Ex. apprendre à cuisiner les différents morceaux de viande)
- ☐ Week-end ou journée découverte à la ferme
- ☐ Célébration d'anniversaire/Mariages/Baptême
- ☐ Je ne désirerai pas payer pour participer à ce genre d'événements

Est-ce que la situation du Coronavirus a-t-elle influencé votre manière de consommer de la viande? Si oui comment? *

Votre réponse

Avez-vous déjà entendu parlé de la Ferme du Château-Blanc et de sa boutique? Si oui par quel(s) moyen(s)? *

- ☐ Bouche à oreille
- ☐ Recommandations (Famille, Amis, collègue)
- ☐ Réseaux sociaux (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- ☐ Articles dans le journal, magazine
- ☐ Panneau publicitaire
- ☐ Je n'en ai pas entendu parler

Un peu de vous :)

Quelle est votre tranche d'âge? *

- ☐ Moins de 18 ans
- ☐ 18 - 25 ans
- ☐ 26 - 34 ans
- ☐ 35 - 50 ans
- ☐ 51 - 64 ans
- ☐ Plus de 64 ans

Quelle est votre situation professionnelle? *

- ☐ Employé(e) à plein temps
- ☐ Employé(e) à temps partiel
- ☐ Sans emploi
- ☐ Etudiant (e) à plein temps
- ☐ Etudiant (e) à temps partiel
- ☐ Retraité
- ☐ Autre : _____

Merci de sélectionner votre lieu de résidence *

- ☐ District de Nyon (Canton de Vaud)
- ☐ Canton de Vaud (Autre que le district de Nyon)
- ☐ Canton de Genève
- ☐ Canton du Valais
- ☐ Canton de Fribourg
- ☐ Canton du Jura
- ☐ Canton de Neuchâtel
- ☐ Je ne réside pas en Suisse Romande

Merci d'indiquer votre genre *

- ☐ Féminin
- ☐ Masculin
- ☐ Je ne souhaite pas le partager

MERCI pour votre disponibilité!

Je vous remercie infiniment du temps que vous avez prit pour répondre à mon questionnaire et vous souhaite un très bel été!

Si vous êtes disposé(e) à participer à entretien virtuel (Skype, Facetime, Zoom, Teams) afin de m'aider à approfondir ma recherche sur les habitudes de consommation de la viande de boeuf, je vous laisse m'indiquer votre adresse mail ou numéro de téléphone pour que je puisse vous contacter pour un interview.



Votre réponse

Appendix 2: Survey Answers Question 20

What was your best experience on a farm?
-
-
-
?
?
???
...
(does not understand the question...)
2 weeks holiday at the farm
A Cugy FR. We were pleased with their local services.
At the Château-Blanc Farm in Gingins
Buy a deliciously tender fillet of beef.
Task Help
Arriving at a shop with lots of local produce and a salesperson who knows where the produce comes from, who grew it, etc., can be a real challenge. If there is the possibility to taste some products it is always a plus.
Arriving at a farm to buy products that are made on the spot, seeing the animals in beautiful meadows which reassures you about the quality of the meat and other products (eggs, vegetables,...).
None
None
None
None
none because I never took the time and I don't know where to go.
No experience
No experience
No experience
I have no idea.
In the United States. A farm with a shop, very well stocked, where everything made you want to go and where the merchandise was very elaborate.
With my brother-in-law on his family's farm to see the calves, cows etc...
Barbecue with friends
Lots of choices, close to home, friendly people...
Bio village a cote
Drinking milk with udder
Brunch
Brunch
Brunch
Brunch and educational farm

It was my husband who took care of it...

😊 Mais the meat was excellent ! The problem was that we couldn't choose the pieces (1/4 of beef). So there was a lot of stew... And we don't like it too much...

School Camp

The one made every 6 months from a farmer from whom I buy an eighth of beef...

At my family's house in Italy

At my neighbors'.

At my uncle's, in the mountains, Natura beef and organic!

Contact with farmers and vision of his future meal

Contact with animals...

To be able to see the entire production line.

To bear witness to the passion of the farmer's trade

To see the animals and the good treatment they get!

Sleeping with the farmer's wife

Sleeping on straw

Sleeping on straw and meeting the farmers tending the livestock

School on the farm, sleeping in the straw, day on the farm, milking a cow, see the birth of a calf, brunch

When you go to a friend's house, eating fresh produce is a different matter!

In Italy... they treated everything... madness of taste...

On vacation with friends

As a child it was being in contact with animals.

Product Explanations

Farm creteigny bussy chardonay

Friendliness and quality. Respect for animals and work

Taste milk

Taste local products

Governing the cows on Sunday

I have family and friends who are farmers, so we usually go to the farm to say hello, give a hand or have an aperitif.

I grew up in the country and spent most of my free time on a farm as a child, so there are lots of them. I would say milking the cows and tending the calves.

I grew up on a farm

Unfortunately, I don't have one.

I wasn't

I went to camp there as a kid, we helped take care of the animals.

I spent my child going to the farm on Fridays and it was great to be surrounded by animals and nature...

I worked on a farm

I got bitten by a donkey...
I don't understand this question
I don't understand the question
I don't understand the question, but I like the farm, I live in the country and I go there often...
I don't remember
I don't know. I don't know.
I can't answer that...
I was born on a farm
day at the farm (child)
Warm welcome, presentation of the estate etc.
Reception, customer relations!
The birth of a calf
Explanation of the origin of the meat, from breeding to packaging.
The Weber family :-) of course
The Weber Farm
The freshness of the products
The birth of a calf.
The birth of a calf
The whole week tending the animals, including milking the cows. Tasting dishes directly from the farm.
The sympathy and professionalism of the employees of the White Castle
Milking cows / goats
The milking, the smells.
My uncle's lland meat
The barbeque at Jenny's house ;)
Brunch at the farm and federal youth days with market and other activities
The contact with the farmers and the love of their trade
The contact and exchanges with the farmer who explains and presents his animals, his daily life, etc..
The market
The grilling pack proposed by the Boucherie Chanson in La Chaux
Calving a cow
Pigs! That I could pet and play with!
Guided tours with children
When it is possible to have a coffee, do your shopping and enjoy the moment on the spot.
When I saw the passion and the amount of work needed throughout the year to produce a quality Swiss product
Sunday Lunch
Taking care of animals

Farm Store
Eating at the farm and talking to the farmer his life
Eat fresh seasonal fruit
Farm Market
Farmers' market
My horses are retired in a farm in France (Frangy-En-Bresse) and this farm makes organic beef. It's a farm close to the animals, clean, with people who love animals. It's a great experience every time I visit.
Birth of a calf.
Feeding rabbits, chickens and sheep with my grandmother's sister when I was 5-8 years old ...
Feeding chicks and rabbits :)
Feeding the vats
Feeding the calves
no experience
No experience
No concrete example
No experience
Not related to meat, but to milk: farm close to my home, fresh milk to be fetched Every day (timetables defined and posted on the door of the farm), the prices are posted on the door, so we know what we pay and the price is lower than in supermarkets.
Didn't get
Being able to help a cow calve
Being able to pet newborn babies
Being able to be in contact with animals
when I helped work as a teenager
When I was a kid I used to "help" the farmer take care of the cows. I liked it a lot.
Question too big
Meet the animals, attend the breeding
meeting with breeders
Study at the Château-Blanc 🤔, Spend days on my sister's godmother's farm (feeding cows and pigs, picking fruit, preparing ice cream for her shop, etc.).
Nothing special.
Self-service shop at the farm
Outing with the primary school, discovery of life on the farm
I spent a good part of my childhood there.
all the experiences I've had in mine lol
Milking cows
Milking and drinking fresh milk
Milking and drinking fresh milk
Milking cows

Milking a goat
Milking a cow
Milking a cow and making butter
A stay in which I helped the farmers in all their daily tasks
A farm in Marchissy
a farm with alpacas walking around and where you could see the different animals in their rural environment
An idea for a great recipe
Rabbit meat!
Variety of local and/or organic fruits and vegetables, and sale of seedlings
Variety of products. Possibility to buy everything at the same place (like at Weber :D)
Visit with my students
Visit to a farm
animal-friendly visit
Regular visits with children
Visit, contact with animals
Visit the different animal parks
Visits to farms
See kittens ;)
See live animals
Seeing the little calves being born
See a farm - direct contact with the producer
See a cow calve

Appendix 3: Guide for interviews with consumers

Interview – English

Purchasing & consumption habits (8)

1. How many times a week do you eat beef?
2. How many people in your household consume the meat you buy?
3. What is your main place of purchase when buying beef?
4. What is your average monthly budget for beef purchases? (in CHF)
5. Have you ever bought meat online and what was your motivation or on the contrary why didn't you buy any online?
6. Have you ever bought meat directly from the producer/farmer and what was the motivation or on the contrary why did you not buy directly from the producer/farmer?
7. Do you only buy retail pieces or also packages with a mix (e.g. 10 kg)?
8. Has the Coronavirus situation influenced your way of eating meat?

Product perception (5)

1. What are the 3 most important criteria when buying beef?
2. How would you define quality beef?
3. How important is the certification label when you buy beef?
4. Do you know the different cuts of beef meat and do you know how to cook them?
5. Which pieces of beef do you eat the most and why choose these over others?

Communication channels (3)

1. By what means of communication did you last see/hear an advertisement about beef meat?
2. What do you think is the most appropriate communication channel to use when communicating about beef?
3. What medium(s) of communication would you use to advertise beef recipes?

Farm activities (3)

1. What was your best experience on a farm?
2. For which events proposed by a farm would you be willing to pay to participate?
3. Have you thought about other activities?

La Ferme du Château – Blanc (3)

1. Have you ever heard about *La Ferme du Château - Blanc* and its shop? If yes how?
2. Do you think that *La Ferme du Château - Blanc* could be more effective in its communication strategy?
3. Would you be willing to be an ambassador for the farm? If so, how do you see this role?

Impact of meat production on the environment (2)

1. What do you think of the impacts that meat production has on the climate?
2. Do you think that farmers can implement practices to reduce the impact on the environment? If yes, which ones?

Future of farms in Switzerland (4)

1. What do you think about the fact that each day 3 farms disappear in Switzerland?
2. How do you think farms can be differentiated?
3. In your opinion, what are the main criteria on which a farm must be based in order to be profitable and sustainable in the long term?
4. Do you think you have a role to play in the preservation of farming activities? If so, how do you think you can make an impact?

* Questions added for the interview with Lea Sprunger, professional athlete.

Diet and potential impact on athletic performance (3)

1. How do you select your meat? Is it in relation to a diet?
2. Does the meat, the quality of the meat or the cut influence your athletic/sports performance?
3. Have you heard about the movie *The Game Changer* where some athletes change their diets and see specific changes, what do you think about it?

Interview – French

Habitude d'achat & de consommation (8)

1. Combien de fois par semaine mangez-vous de la viande de bœuf ?
2. Combien de personnes dans votre ménage consomment-ils la viande achetée par vos soins ?
3. Quel est votre principal lieu d'achat lorsque vous achetez de la viande de bœuf ?
4. Quel est votre budget moyen mensuel pour l'achat de viande de bœuf ? (en CHF)
5. Avez-vous déjà acheté de la viande en ligne et quelle a été motivation ou au contraire pourquoi n'en avez-vous pas acheté en ligne ?
6. Avez-vous déjà acheté de la viande directement chez le producteur/agriculteur et quelle a été la motivation ou au contraire pourquoi n'avez-vous pas directement acheté chez le producteur/agriculteur ?
7. Achetez - vous seulement des morceaux au détail ou aussi des cartons avec un mix (ex. 10 kg) ?
8. Est- ce que la situation du Coronavirus a-t-elle influencé votre manière de consommer de la viande ?

Perception du produit (5)

1. Quels sont les 3 critères les plus importants pour vous lorsque vous achetez de la viande de bœuf ?
2. Comment définiriez-vous de la viande de bœuf de la qualité ?
3. Quelle est le degré d'importance du label lorsque vous achetez de la viande de bœuf ?
4. Connaissez-vous les différents morceaux de viandes et savez-vous les cuisiner ?
5. Quelles sont les morceaux de viande que vous consommez le plus et pourquoi ?

Moyens de communication (3)

1. Par quel moyen de communication avez-vous vu ou entendu pour la dernière fois une publicité sur la viande de bœuf ?
2. Selon vous, quel est le moyen de communication le plus adéquat à utiliser pour communiquer sur la viande de bœuf?
3. Quel(s) moyen(s) de communication utiliseriez-vous pour publier des recettes de cuisine pour la viande de bœuf ?

Activités sur la ferme (3)

1. Quelle a été votre meilleure expérience dans une ferme?
2. Pour quels événements proposés par une exploitation agricole seriez-vous prêt à payer pour y participer ?
3. Avez-vous pensé à d'autres activités ?

La Ferme du Château-Blanc (3)

1. Avez-vous entendu parler de la Ferme du Château-Blanc et de sa boutique ? Si oui comment ?
2. Pensez-vous que la Ferme du Château-Blanc pourrait être plus efficace dans sa stratégie de communication ?
3. Seriez-vous prête à être un ambassadeur de la marque ? si oui comment vous-vous ce rôle ?

Impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement (2)

1. Que pensez-vous des impacts que la production de viande a sur le climat ?
2. Pensez-vous que les éleveurs puissent mettre en place des pratiques visant à réduire l'impact sur l'environnement ? Si oui lesquels ?

Futur des exploitations agricoles en Suisse (4)

1. Que pensez-vous du fait que chaque jour 3 fermes disparaissent en Suisse
2. Selon vous, Comment est-ce que les fermes peuvent se différencier ?
3. Selon vous, quels sont les principaux critères sur lesquels une exploitation agricole doit se baser pour être profitable et durable dans le long-terme ?
4. Pensez-vous avoir un rôle à jouer dans la préservation des activités agricoles ? si oui, par quel biais pensez-vous avoir un impact ?

* Questions ajoutées pour l'interview de Lea Sprunger, athlète professionnelle.

Régime alimentaire et impact potentiel sur les performances sportives (3)

1. Comment sélectionnez-vous votre viande ? Est-ce que c'est par rapport à un régime ?
2. Est-ce que la viande, la qualité de celle-ci ou le morceau influence vos performances athlétiques/sportives ?
3. Avez-vous entendu parler du film *The Game Changer* où certains athlètes changent leurs alimentations et voient des changements spécifiques, qu'en pensez-vous ?

Appendix 4: Transcript of interview with consumer 1

Interviewee: Florence Stäger - Operating Room Technician

Age: 32 years old

Location: Gland, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Friday July 24th, 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewee's home in Gland

Duration: 40 minutes

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is an operating room technician, working at the hospital of La Tour in Geneva, mom of two boys and she is working 60 % so that she can take care of her children. She eats regularly meat including pork, chicken and beef and buys the majority directly at the producer's place. She mainly buys her meat at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Purchasing & consumption habits:

- Regarding our consumption habits, I think that we eat a lot of meat, especially beef meat. On average, we consume meat at least 5 times a week. I think it is mainly because of habits, I would like to try to consume less, however it is quite complicated to change the habits and I have also a husband and two young boys who love to eat meat.
- Usually, I buy my meat directly at the farmer's place and sometimes at the butcher's shop and when I do not find what I want I go to the supermarkets, like Coop or Migros. I purchase mainly bacon and ham at the supermarkets, only because at the farmer's place they do not offer all the transformed meat. I like to go directly to the producer's place, especially with my kids because there are lots of animals to see on the farm and I can show them how the animals live, and it is also nice to share that special time with them. Moreover, by going directly to the farm, there is the possibility to ask question if I have some and to look at the products and see the pieces of meat I want to buy. I know also from where the meat is coming, how it is managed, and I also know the owner, so those are all the main reasons why I like to buy directly from the producer.
- My monthly budget for beef meat is between 81.- & 100.- CHF
- I have never bought meat online and even though I would have the possibility I would rather go to the farmer.
- I bought several times beef meat boxes with 10 or 25 kg per box, but since *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* opened its store I go there and buy pieces at retail. Both possibilities have their advantages and disadvantages: one we have a little bit of everything, and it is less costly. Moreover, we enlarge your knowledge. With the other we can choose the pieces we want the most, but at a higher price.
- The coronavirus did not change my or our way to consume meat, because we had the freezer full of beef meat, from the previous boxes we bought. It was the perfect opportunity to clear the freezer.

Product's perceptions:

- For me, the most important criteria when buying beef meat are the price, the origin of the meat and the product offering. I like to have the choice to choose the beef pieces I want. Even though the price is an important aspect, I never compare the prices between the butcher's shop, the farmer's place and the supermarket. I just buy what I like. Regarding the origin of beef meat, I only buy meat coming from Switzerland. For me it is very important to consume local and to support the producer. When we are on holidays I always try to buy meat that was produced locally or at least in the country.
- For me quality beef can be defined as having a good-looking appearance, a color that makes you want to eat it, a well cut and most importantly it has to be tender.
- I learnt to cook the various beef cuts mainly when I bought the first box of meat. There were a lot of pieces that I did not know, and I learnt through online recipes. I think it could be a great idea to add, for instance, a little flyer explaining from where each pieces of meat comes from or to add some tips on how to cook the pieces that we know less or cook less frequently. I think it could be very helpful.
- The pieces of beef that I consume the most are steaks, fillet and prime rib, mainly because it is fast and easy to cook. However, when I bought the meat box, I also cook other pieces of meat, but I would say that I buy the various pieces more according to the season, for instance in the summer I rather buy chunks to put on the grill.

Communication channels:

- The last time I have seen an add about beef meat was on Facebook, and in my opinion the most effective way to communicate about it is through social medias. But when looking broader than just *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, I think that Tv ads are also a good way to communicate about meat. However, I was more focused on the place where I buy my meat.
- If there would be recipes put in the store, I think I would take them because it could give other ideas to cook beef pieces. The recipes should be on paper version because I like them, like you can find some at the Coop for instance. On the other hand, today more and more people are connected on social medias, so I think it would be necessary to also have every now and then some recipes online.

Activities at the farm:

- Regarding my best experience on a farm it is quite complicated to say, because I had so many and each time I am coming to the farm I know I will have a nice time. I like to take care of animals, feed them and also help the farmer if I can. I also like to visit mountain pastures, even though it is not directly linked to a farm experience.
- If there were activities offered by a farm such as brunches on the farm, educational workshops for children or cooking classes I would love to pay to participate. If I take the example for the brunch, I think it is important that there is an area where kids can play and that is easily accessible. For me it would be important that all the products at the brunch are **HOMEMADE**, fresh and from the region. There should be an offering including a buffet with sweet and salty

products and that the drinks have to be paid besides or that only the basic drinks are included in the price.

- Regarding the educational activities it could be interesting for people who are not familiar with farming by creating themed activities such as educating children how to behave with animals, and also share the value of respecting the farmer's work and the animals. The aim would be to help them becoming aware of the basic of nature by doing workshops where they can learn how the animal lives, what it eats and how to take care of them.
- I think another activity that could be great for farms is to have a small piece of land that could be at the disposal of people to camp. This concept already exists elsewhere, it is based on the fact that the farmer offers a place for campers to sleep, and they have to leave the place after 24 hours and on counterpart they buy products from the farm or help.

La Ferme du Château – Blanc :

- I heard from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* through recommendations from the family, word-of-mouth, and through Facebook because I do not have Instagram or any other social media channel. I have also heard about the farm through a newspaper article published by *La Côte*.
- I think that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s communication strategy is already good and that there is no big need to go further. However, I think that it could be beneficial to post on Facebook, when there is something special as for instance when it is the season of strawberries to let the consumer know or to make the consumer aware that there is lots of meat to make BBQ. There is no need to post every day or week but from time to time just to boost a little bit more the consumer and to let him know the last updates.
- I would not have any problem to share the Facebook page of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* and to repost some of their posts, but I do not want to have to reach a certain amount of people by the end of the month or to have to target new people by sending them lots of invitation to like the farm's page. I like to have it done easily and that it is not a pressure. So I do not want to be an official ambassador for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- To be honest I do not really know what to answer on the beef meat's production impact on the environment. I do not have a clear opinion. For me the most important is to know from where the meat comes from, to buy it as local as possible and that it is Swiss.
- I think that it is complicated in Switzerland to put in place more practices that will reduce the impact on the environment. In my opinion, on the consumer's side it is very hard to have less impact on the environment than what we do. We try to go directly to the farmer's place, so less to drive with the car, to buy very local and seasonal products, which avoids all the transportations and we support the farmer's activities.

Future of farms in Switzerland:

- It is sad to hear that every year 4 farms disappear in Switzerland. I think a solution is to buy directly from the farmer's place and to support him in his or her activity. However, it is not possible to help everyone, and I try my best to support them and I try to be aware of the different aspects that could make a difference for them.

- I think also that farms have to differentiate in order to survive and that they have to find the thing that will make a difference, but while keeping the authenticity of what a farm is. In my opinion they should not diversify too much but instead do only a few quality things.
- In my opinion key factors for farms to survive are to have a good contact, to make people feel at ease, to welcome them, to be helpful and to offer a great customer service, what we can currently find at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.

Appendix 5: Transcript of interview with consumer 2

Interviewee: Lea Sprunger – Professional athlete, double European champion in the 400m and 400m indoor

Age: 30 years old

Location: Gingins, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Tuesday July 28th, 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewer's home

Duration: 48 minutes

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Remark: There were a few additional questions asked during the interview, regarding the athlete's diet and the potential impact on her performances.

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is a professional athlete, double European champion in the 400m and 400m indoor. She lives partly in Switzerland and partly abroad when she has competitions or for sports training in South Africa and Holland. She eats regularly meat including pork, chicken and beef and buys the majority directly at the farmer's place. However, due to her ongoing travelling and competitions around the world, it is difficult to consume only Swiss meat. She tries to consume as locally as possible.

Purchasing & consumption habits:

- I consider myself as a big meat eater, I eat meat almost every day. I really like to eat beef. Currently I am trying to diminish my meat consumption because I heard that it is not so good when you have inflammation. So far, I have not observed any improvements, so I am not sure it is very helpful. I think that my consumption habits are like that first because I was educated like that, when I was little we had almost everyday meat in our plates, second because I like meat and third because I am convinced that eating protein for my sport is good. I have a high protein diet. I also eat lots of lentils, quinoa and oats that are other sources of protein.
- When I am in Switzerland I buy my meat mainly at the farmer's place, but this way of purchasing meat was put in place only recently, because before I lived in the city and it was more complicated to go to a producer. That is why I purchased my meat in the supermarkets. My boyfriend and I have moved to the country side and it is now easier to buy directly from the farm. I think what pushed us to buy directly from the farmer, was also that when becoming older, we are more conscious of buying local and now we have also a freezer that has enough room to put meat. When I am abroad, I mainly buy my meat in the supermarkets.
- I never paid attention to the certification label and I would not pay a higher price if there is certification label, but I would pay more to be sure that the meat is from Switzerland.
- Our monthly budget for beef meat is between 101.- and 120.- CHF.
- I have never bought meat online, because I like to know the meat producer or to see the cut of meat before I buy it.
- For me, when buying beef directly from the farms, it is first to support the farmer and the local economy, second to avoid intermediaries and third because the meat is better. I already bought pork and beef meat boxes at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, but I like also to go to their shop and buy just a few pieces for

specific occasions. The advantage with the boxes is that you always have meat in the freezer.

- Our meat consumption did not really change during the coronavirus because we had lots of meat in the freezer.

Product's perceptions:

- In my opinion, the 3 most important criteria when buying beef meat is the origin of it, the proximity and the product offering. For me, the well-being of the animal is important of course, but it is more attached to a current trend, because when people buy their meat at Coop or Migros they are not really conscious about the animal's well-being. When buying directly from the farm or locally you know where it comes from, how the animal was raised, but also the persons who are in charge of taking care of the animal. It goes all together for me.
- Quality beef meat can be defined as follow; local production, an appetizing visual before eating it, meaning to have a stringy and beautiful color, it has to be tasty and be a Swiss product.
- Regarding the certification labels, there are important to me, because they are a guarantee of a good product. Nevertheless, I do not know them, and I think it could be a great idea that supermarkets put an explanation of each certification labels, so that we are less confused.
- I think I know a lot of beef cuts but not all of them.
- I have learnt to cook the various pieces of meat that I consume thanks to my parents. I always ask my mom first how she would do it, then I look up on the internet and lastly, I do it on my own with the various information a gathered.
- The pieces of meat I eat the most is fillet of beef because it is the most tender and ground meat because you can do anything with it.

Communication channels:

- The last time I have seen an ad for beef meat it was on flyers.
- For me one effective way to communicate about beef meat is through articles that can be found in magazine, as Coop or Migros have for instance. Flyers are also an effective tool to communicate. Social media or digitalized communication can be effective, but it is difficult to reach everyone, and I would use social medias to target people aged up to 40.
- When publishing recipes, I would use communication means like paper version that can be found in the store, as Coop is doing with their Fooby recipes. I think that by implementing recipes that customers can pick at the store, the farmer can highlight the seasonal and local products This mean of communication is friendly and I would have a quickly look at it to inspire myself for new recipes and get out of my comfort zone. I think to put the recipes online, either through a website or on an app for the phone, is important too. I would use it to check if I am on the good track with me recipe. However, I do not think that it is necessary to put recipes with the meat boxes that can be bought.

Activities at the farm:

- I have many different good memories that I experienced on a farm, like celebrating birthday or taking care of animals. What I like when going on a farm is the variety of the products and the possibility to buy everything at the same

place, like at *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. For me, the cleanliness plays a role. A nice farm where the entrance is well presented, having a big vegetable garden to go and see with children or having animals to pet, is very important and is what makes a farm.

- If there were activities offered by a farm such as brunches, educational workshops for children, cooking classes, discovery weekends or birthday and wedding celebrations I would pay for such activities. In my mind, educational activities could be for instance for classes who could come and visit the farm over two days and have various activities such as picking the potato or learn how to feed the cows. Regarding the brunch, I think it is important that there is a place for kids to play on their own, watched by the parents. In my opinion the brunch should be an all-you-can-eat buffet. It should include local and handcrafted products such as locally produced cheese, bread and so on. Moreover, it could be interesting that sometimes various producers are on site to explain how they make their products and the processes used. I already experienced a brunch at the farm, it was called the 1st of August Brunch, and organizers were struggling to keep up with demand and often found themselves with a shortage of products. I think I would be ok to pay 35.- all included expect the drinks, and maybe more for special occasions.
- I think that other activities such as learning how to cook a great soup could be nice or to have a field of flowers where you can go whenever you want to pick the number of flowers you want, and where there is a little box to pay, like a self-service.

La Ferme du Château – Blanc :

- I mainly heard from the farm *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* through family and friends, but I heard of its store through the newspaper article published online by *La Côte*. I also saw the sign of the shop shortly before going up to the farm, however I would advertise even more widely and would place several signs at the entrance of the village or on the main thoroughfares.
- I did not know that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* had a Facebook page nor an Instagram account. I know that Instagram works quite well, so I think there is always room to improve the communication strategy.
- Unfortunately, I cannot be an ambassador for *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* for free, especially in relation to my sponsors. If there is an official sponsor contract, there would be possibilities.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- I do not have a specific opinion regarding the impact of meat production on the environment. Of course, it is not ideal, but in my opinion, there are other aspects worse and that have greater impacts than the production of meat. Also, it depends what you compare, it is complicated to compare the beef production in Switzerland and the one in South America for instance. I know that when I am in South Africa for my training, I consume a lot of red meat and I know that the animals are certainly not treated as in Switzerland, therefore it is complicated to compare systems and regulations that are completely different. So, I would suggest consuming locally.

Future of farms in Switzerland:

- I think that everyone has to contribute in order to avoid that farms continue to disappear. The state has to help and support farmers. Farmers have also to make effort to diversify themselves, to attract the consumer and to make accessibility easy. Lastly, consumers have to buy locally, support small shops and farmers.
- In my opinion, the direct contact with the consumers is essential for farms to survive. I am not a fan of self-services, going to buy at the farm is quite a concept: meet the producer, having cats and dogs and so one is part of a whole. A farm is supposed to be alive. For me it is more important to know the farmer and to know from where the products come from, than having the opportunity to go anytime at a self-service without any contact. For me the point is missed when buying at self-services on farms.

Diet and potential impact on athletic performance:

- I do not have a specific diet to follow, but as said before I have a high protein diet. I try to eat chicken, fish and red meat at least once a week, and to alternate them during the week.
- The selection of the meat does not really impact or influence my sport's performance. However, I never eat red meat before a competition. On the competition's day I usually eat chicken and sometimes the evening before red meat.
- Regarding the documentary *The Game Changers* I have watched it, but I am not convinced. If we take the example of Lewis Hamilton, he was strong before he became vegan, then for me to be the strongest men in the world is not a sport. And if we take the example of the Australian Olympic sprinter Morgan Mitchel which is not the best in her discipline, she did not a world final and there was no physical improvement either, I would say there was more a negative impact on her performances. When talking with other athletes I had more reverse experiences and feedbacks, where athletes had less strength and not enough energy. The animal protein brings a different source of energy. I find this documentary very Americanized, drawing very hasty conclusions that are not always well founded. Then there are also very interesting facts like the water consumption needed to produce meat for instance. I think that by buying locally we will have a greater impact than by becoming vegan.

Appendix 6: Transcript of interview with consumer 3

Interviewee: Mathias Blanc – HVAC engineer and project manager

Age: 37 years old

Location: Morges, District of Morges, Canton of Vaud

Date: Friday July 31st, 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewer's home in Gingins

Duration: 44 minutes

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is an HVAC engineer and project manager, working at Effin'Art in Lausanne, he is working full time and is currently single. He eats regularly meat such as pork, chicken and beef and buys essentially at Manor. He never bought meat directly from the producer and prefers to go to Manor, mainly because everything is sold at one place and it is easily accessible.

Purchasing & consumption habits:

- Regarding my meat consumption I usually eat beef twice a week and a little more during the summer, because there are more opportunities to make BBQs. I would say that once a week I cook a piece of meat and otherwise it is consumed in sandwiches or through transformed meat products.
- I buy essentially meat at Manor, mainly by habit. But also because there is everything in the same place, the grocery store, the fish shop and the butcher's shop. Especially in Morges it is very small, there is not a surplus of choice and the quality is there. Additionally, the people working there have been there for many years and know the products they are selling, and the service is also very good.
- Usually my monthly budget for beef meat is between 101.- and 120.- CHF. I often try to buy meat pieces that are discounted. I'd rather not take a piece of beef if I cannot find what I want. I prefer to eat less but good cuts and which are of better quality. Eating beef meat has to stay a pleasure.
- I have never bought beef meat online and it would not come to my mind, especially for fresh products.
- I have never bought directly from the producer because I do not have an immediate proximity to a producer and I would be forced to go to several different places to do my regular groceries. I am a supporter of the supermarkets that offer everything at the same place and where it is not necessary to go to several places. I also like the fact that at Manor, it is possible to have single portions and that you do not have to buy large packages.
- I try to consume mainly Swiss meat. However, I also like every now and then to eat beef that comes from Ireland for instance. Regarding the lamb I never buy lamb coming from New Zealand or Australia, but I consider that what comes from the European Union is close enough.
- The coronavirus did not really change my way to consume meat.

Product's perceptions:

- In my opinion the 3 most criteria when buying beef meat are the origin of the meat, favoring Swiss meat, the purchasing experience, it is important that quality meat is there and that the customer service is good. Lastly, it is important for me to have various meat cuts and choice and therefore to have portion adapted to my desires. I do not like lean meat, but I like when the meat is tasty and marbled.
- For me, quality beef meat can be defined as being meat that has been stale or cured or that is marbled.
- Packaging like *Fine Food* are not the ones that attract me. I would avoid products that have a packaging that has been over studied.
- The certification labels have no importance for me and most of them I do not know them.
- I know most of the cuts of beef and I know also how to cook them, I have also some cooking books where I take a look sometimes. If there would be various possibilities to learn how to cook the different beef pieces through cooking classes or recopied that are given for free I would not participate or take them.
- The pieces of beef that I consume the most are ribs, entrecote aiguillette, bavette, sirloin mainly because it is tender, tasty and out of habits.

Communication channels:

- The last time I have seen an ad about beef meat it was at the entrance of Manor. I am not on social medias and do not get any advertising in my mailbox. Moreover, I do not watch very often TV, that is why I do not see that often ads.
- For me the most effective way to communicate about beef meat is directly at the point of sale. I chose this mean of communication because I am not really concerned by the others or it would be complicated to reach me as a consumer.
- I would use online services such as a website or an app to publish recipes, because it is essential today, but I would also use cooking books to advertise beef recipes. When I had my cooking period I often looked into cooking books I think it is a good basis. Now I prefer not to spend too much time cooking, also because I have long working shifts.

Activities at the farm:

- My best experience on a farm was when I was 5 – 8 years old and I had the opportunity to feed rabbits, chickens and sheep with my grandmother's sister.
- Regarding the activities proposed by a farm I would pay to participate for brunches, guided tour of the farms, discovery week-end or celebration or birthdays or weddings. However, I would maybe not participate to such activities in Switzerland but rather abroad.
- I think bed and breakfast experiences or the possibility to celebrate bachelorette parties could be a way for farmers to differentiate themselves.

La Ferme du Château – Blanc :

- I heard from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* through friends, but before I have never heard from it. I think it would be complicated to reach me as consumer since I am not on social medias and do not watch TV and do not get the advertising in my mailbox. One solution could be to advertise with a blimp.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- Of course, it is terrible, but it is also to be put into perspective. We always have American or French images in mind with very large industrial productions, over 1000 cows in small areas. Do we really have these meats at home? When you think about Swiss breeding, I do not feel like we are in this environmental disaster. I think we can limit transport and deforestation by choosing to consume Swiss meat and that we limit the disaster.
- Producing meat consumes a lot of energy, after all it depends on where the energy comes from if you have to make it yourself from processed food and transport it becomes a disaster. The same goes for water consumption. In Switzerland we do not have a problem with that, but in a desert place it will be a problem. We have to think of all the aspects and it has been seen, with the coronavirus situation, that the meat production is not what harms most the environment.
- I think it is like in construction, it's extremely complicated to calculate the grey energy and greenhouse gas emissions that your product requires in manufacturing. It is almost impossible, and we are forced to use indicators. It is obvious that if everyone consumed meat on a global scale, as we do in the West, it would not work, it is impossible. We should not think that it is others who should not eat it, but we should stick to something reasonable.

Future of farms in Switzerland:

- Yes, it's obvious that farms can differentiate themselves, but it is difficult to give a concrete answer. Of course, the role of agriculture is potentially huge, but at the same time it will remain limited, apart from beef and milk, nothing is produced in self-sufficiency.
- I think that sometimes, there is a false image about agriculture being close to the environment and that finally farmers produce without really caring about the environment. I think there is a role to play but I don't know what it is.
- I think that I have also a role to play as consumer, that through my choices of purchase I try to value the proximity, the local and also because I have the money and I am willing to pay more. I think it is also difficult for many people to admit that we should pay much more for what we eat.

Appendix 7: Guide for interviews with butchers

Interview – English

About the company (4)

1. Tell me a bit about the history of your butcher shop.
2. When did you take over the business? How did it work out?
3. What were the main difficulties/challenges involved in taking over or opening the butcher's shop and how did you deal with them?
4. What kind of meat do you offer at your butcher shop?

Differentiation (3)

1. Do you see farmers who sell their own meat as competition to your business?
2. How/by which strategy do you differentiate yourself from the surrounding competition that is very present? (such as butcher shops, catering, many self-service shops offering local products?)
3. How do you re-evaluate and adapt your strategy to the growing competition and the constantly changing environment?

Choice & preservation of meat to be sold (5)

1. How would you define quality meat?
2. How do you store and preserve meat?
3. How do you select the meat you will sell?
4. Where do the different meats you sell come from?
5. How do you dispose of your unsold meat?

Choice of suppliers (4)

1. On what criteria do you base your choice of suppliers?
2. Do you always use the same supplier(s)? Why ?
3. Have you noticed a difference in the quality of meat depending on the supplier that is chosen?
4. Do you have exclusive partnerships with certain suppliers/breeders?

Consumption habits of customers (4)

1. Which cuts of beef do customers consume/purchase the most?
2. Which cuts of meat (all species) do customers consume/purchase the most?
3. What is your typical customer base?
4. Have you been able to observe a difference in meat consumption as a result of the coronavirus?

Influence on meat sales (6)

1. Beef consumption has been declining in Switzerland for some years now, have you been able to observe this trend? If so, by which means, and have you found a way to counteract this trend?
 2. Do movements such as veganism or vegetarianism have any influence on your sales? If so, how do you counteract them?
 3. Does the introduction of plant-based meat and the growing popularity of vegetarian products affect your sales?
 4. Do you sell labelled meat, such as Natura Beef or SwissPrim Beef?
If so, do you indicate this in your butcher's shop? And if so, how?
-

5. In your opinion, is it an added value to indicate the labels?
6. In your opinion, do your customers know the different meat labels?

Impact of meat production on the environment (3)

1. What do you think of the impact that meat production has on the environment?
2. Do you think that farmers can/should implement practices to reduce the impact on the environment? If yes, which ones?
3. Have you ever received threats or had any problems with anti-speciesists?

Communication Strategy (5)

1. What is your communication/marketing strategy?
2. How do you evaluate whether your strategy is effective or not?
3. Are you on another social network than Facebook? Why?
4. Do you think that social networks are a good way to communicate?
5. Do customers contact you through social networks?

Château-Blanc farm as a supplier (3)

1. Have you ever collaborated with the Château-Blanc Farm? If yes
2. Did you see a difference in the quality of the meat supplied by the Ferme du Château-Blanc?
3. Did you see a difference in the sales of the meat supplied by the Château-Blanc Farm?

Future of meat consumption (3)

1. What is your opinion on the future of meat consumption?
2. What is your opinion on the future of the meat industry?
3. In your opinion, what is the future of your business?

Future of farms in Switzerland (4)

1. What do you think about the fact that every day in Switzerland, on average 3 farms disappear and with them a know-how?
2. In your opinion, how can the farms differentiate themselves?
3. Do you think you that you have a role to play in the preservation of agricultural sector/ activities? If so, how do you think you can have an impact?
4. In your opinion, what are the key ingredients for the success and the sustainability of a business?

Explanation of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s concept and ask for their opinion

Interview - French

A propos de l'entreprise (4)

1. Parlez-moi un peu de l'histoire de votre boucherie.
2. Quand avez-vous repris l'entreprise ? Comment cela s'est déroulé ?
3. Qu'elles ont été les principales difficultés, défis liés à la reprise ou l'ouverture de la boucherie et comment avez-vous fait face à ceux-ci ?
4. Quelles sortes de viande proposez-vous à votre boucherie ?

Différenciation (3)

1. Est-ce que vous voyez des éleveurs vendant leurs propres viandes comme de la concurrence par rapport à votre entreprise ?
2. Comment /par quelle stratégie vous différenciez-vous par rapport à la concurrence des environs très présente, tels que les boucheries, service traiteur, nombreux magasins en self-service offrant des produits du terroir ? (et si oui à la question précédente aussi inclure les agriculteurs qui vendent leur viande directement aux consommateurs)
3. Comment ré-évaluez-vous et adaptez-vous votre stratégie à la concurrence grandissante et à l'environnement constamment changeant ?

Choix & conservation de la viande à vendre (5)

1. Comment définiriez-vous une viande de qualité ?
2. Comment entreposez et conservez-vous la viande ?
3. Comment sélectionnez-vous la viande que vous allez vendre ?
4. D'où proviennent les différentes viandes que vous vendez ?
5. Comment faites-vous pour écouler vos invendus ?

Choix des fournisseurs (4)

1. Sur quels critères basez-vous votre choix de fournisseurs ? Pourquoi ?
2. Prenez vous toujours le (s) même (s) fournisseur(s) ? Pourquoi ?
3. Avez-vous pu remarquer une différence de qualité de la viande selon le fournisseur choisi ?
4. Avez-vous des partenariats d'exclusivité avec certains fournisseurs/éleveurs ? Si oui lesquels ? et pourquoi ceux-ci ?

Habitude de consommation des clients (4)

1. Quelles sont les morceaux de viande de bœuf que les clients consomment/achètent le plus ?
2. Quelles sont les morceaux de viande (toutes espèces confondues) que les clients consomment/achètent le plus ?
3. Quelle est votre clientèle type ?
4. Avez-vous pu observer une différence dans la consommation de viande suite au coronavirus ?

Influence sur la vente de viande (6)

1. Depuis quelques années, la consommation de viande de bœuf est en baisse en Suisse, avez-vous pu observer cette tendance ? Si oui, par quel biais et avez-vous trouvé un moyen pour contrer cette tendance ?
2. Est-ce que les mouvements tels que le végétarisme ou le véganisme ont-ils des influences sur vos ventes ? Si oui, par quel biais les contretez-vous ?

3. Est-ce que l'introduction de la viande d'origine végétale et l'engouement grandissant de ce genre de produits, ont-t-ils une influence sur vos ventes ?
4. Vendez - vous de la viande labélisé, style Natura Beef ou SwissPrim beef ? Si oui, est ce que vous l'indiquer dans votre boucherie ? et si oui comment ?
5. Est-ce une plus-value selon vous d'indiquer les labels ?
6. A votre avis, est ce que votre clientèle connaît les différents labels de viande ?

Impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement (3)

1. Que pensez-vous de l'impact que la production de viande a sur l'environnement ?
2. Pensez-vous que les éleveurs puissent mettre en place des pratiques visant à réduire l'impact sur l'environnement ? Si oui lesquels ?
3. Avez-vous déjà reçu des menaces ou eu des problèmes avec des personnes antispécistes ?

Stratégie de communication (5)

1. Quelle est votre stratégie de communication/ marketing ?
2. Comment évaluez-vous si votre stratégie est efficace ou non ?
3. Êtes-vous sur un autre réseau social que Facebook ? Selon réponse pourquoi ?
4. Pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux sont un bon moyen de communication ?
5. Est-ce que beaucoup de clients vous contact via les réseaux sociaux ?

Ferme du Château-Blanc comme fournisseur (3)

1. Avez-vous déjà collaboré avec la Ferme du Château-Blanc ?
2. Avez-vous vu une différence dans la qualité de la viande fourni par la Ferme du Château-Blanc ?
3. Avez-vous vu une différence dans les ventes de la viande fourni par la Ferme du Château-Blanc ?

Futur de la consommation de viande (3)

1. Quel est votre avis sur le futur de la consommation de viande ?
2. Quel est votre avis sur le futur de l'industrie de la viande ?
3. Selon vous quel est le futur de votre entreprise à long-terme dans l'environnement actuel ?

Futur des exploitations agricoles en Suisse (4)

1. Que pensez-vous du fait que chaque année en Suisse, en moyenne 3 fermes disparaissent et avec elles un savoir-faire ?
2. Selon vous, Comment est-ce que les fermes peuvent se différencier ?
3. Pensez-vous avoir un rôle à jouer dans la préservation des activités/secteur agricoles ? si oui, par quel biais pensez-vous avoir un impact ?
4. Selon vous, quels sont les ingrédients clés à la réussite et au succès d'une entreprise ?

Explication du concept de la Ferme du Château-Blanc et demande d'opinion personnelle

Appendix 8: Transcript of interview with butcher 1

Interviewee: Norbert Prélaz – Butcher and boss at *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz*

Enterprise : *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz*, in Genolier

Age: 57 years old

Location: Genolier, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Monday July 27th, 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewee's home in Givrins

Duration: 1 hour 40 minutes

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Website: <https://boucherie-prelaz.ch/>

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is a butcher and opened its butcher shop, *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz* in 1988 in Genolier. He is working full-time and is the director and manager of 8 people. He favors local origins for the meat he is selling and has a wide network of farmers who supply him with beef. The butcher's shop offers a variety of products, not only meat but also local products like fruits and vegetables. Moreover, *Boucherie Norbert Prélaz* proposes catering services.

About the enterprise:

- I started my business in 1987, when I was 24 years old. I rent the premises to the municipality in Genolier and when I took over the premises, I had to invest over 300'000 CHF to transform the locals and be up to standards, because it was first a creamery. At the beginning I worked only with my wife, now we are 8 people including the driver who makes deliveries. We also bought a refrigerated vehicle that is mandatory in order to ensure that the cold chain is not interrupted.
- I bought a small local in Trélex, which is used to store and stale the meat, because I do not have enough room in Genolier. Moreover, the local allowed me to create a freezing room, which is very useful and beneficial to store the meat.
- Now that the slaughterhouses in Nyon are closed we try to do as much as possible on our own and to take care of every process. For example, in Geneva where the slaughterhouses are also closed, butchers buy meat from wholesalers, which we do not.

Choice of meat & suppliers:

- The pork come from the Boley's farm in Genolier. The poultry comes exclusively from Switzerland and we collaborate with suppliers from Geneva and Neuchatel. The lamb comes from Switzerland in autumn and from Scotland the rest of the year. We only have Swiss lambs in autumn because there is not a lot of offer and Switzerland is not really a lamb raising country. I favor to take lambs that were all the time outside. In autumn, they come back from the mountain, that is why I only have them in autumn. The veal come from Marchissy and the beef from various farmers from the region. So, everything is really local. And if there is no beef ready to take from the usual producers, I go to a trader who has some cows. I have already bought once meat from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*.
- Regarding the beef, we only take meat breeds, because we have done performance calculations. The best performance calculation was made on the

Aubrac breed. The problem with certain meat breeds is that, it is difficult to see the covering fat, which is important for the taste side and for conservation, because it will not give the expected aspects.

- We want to favorize local meat production, this is why we collaborate with local farmers, which are generally always the same farmers. We pay them a higher price more than the market, but we have the quality and it is exactly what we are looking for. It is better than publishing lots of advertisements. It is what people retain and bring the word-of-mouth.
- For us it is extremely important that the animal is not stressed before it is slaughtered. Hence, it is why it is usually the farmer who brings the cow to the slaughterhouse, so that the animal is in an environment of confidence and not stressed. It is important because it could alter the quality of the meat.
- In my opinion, the quality of meat has really been improved, also because there is a consciousness of the farmers that the food is very important and that they have to be careful with the animal's fodder.

Differentiation & communication strategy:

- Our strategy is to make our meat go stale for 3 weeks. The consequence is that we lose a lot of weight, but in return, we find quality. Supermarkets do not give the meat time to rest, which makes a great color, but when you cook it it's filled with water.
- We offer gathering services and also personal advices for customers to find places to celebrate their event.
- We diversified our product offering and highly developed the poultry offering.
- We offer a personal service to our customers. We know what they want and like. We know the customers, we have a knowledge and an experience that others do not have, which enables us to have a good customer service and to advise them the best way possible.
- Each kid who comes to our shop receives a small slice of Lyon sausage
- Our role is also to have a good quality/price ratio and we are cheaper than the Coop.
- Regarding the competition, for me being a butcher is a job. You cannot just go out and be a butcher. There are standards to be met. It also requires good inventory management, etc. I know many people who wanted to get into this business because it was lucrative, but it was not their job, and they quickly realize that it does not work. Often there are also unsold products that have to be frozen. For me, frozen meat is not the same as fresh meat. Freezing must be a secondary solution.
- When consumers buy in self-service stores or from farmers, they often do not have the necessary advice on how to cook or preserve meat or how to care for it. Simply because producers or farmers do not have the knowledge. What I am also somewhat critical of producers who sell directly to customers, is that most of the time their products are not made by themselves or only a small part of them. Often the consumer does not know that. However, for me the main competition comes from the supermarkets like Aldi. The farmers only represent a small part.
- I think competition stimulates you and forces you not to rest on what you achieved.
- We have a website and also a page on Facebook.

Consumption, purchasing habits & influences:

- We could really observe that the demand was increasing a lot during the coronavirus; we had to invest in a second refrigerated vehicle. During this time, we offered also home delivery to customers' house and this without any extra charge. We had to implement a whole new structure to take the order, to deliver them and also for customers to pay, because there was no possibility to be in direct contact with them. We produced also high amounts of poultry products.
- We have a loyal and wide range of customer base. We also have Asian and African customers who like to consume pieces of meat that Swiss consumers are not used to such as chicken feet, rooster crests and so on. This is also a market for us because there is demand.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- In my opinion, Switzerland is a small country, so we have a smaller impact on the environment compared to our surface area. Here everything is regulated. The animals have to go out every day, when we have to transport them there is a whole process to respect etc. There are a lot of regulations in Switzerland, so you cannot do what you want. If everyone would do and apply the regulation we have in Switzerland, there would be less impacts on the environment.
- I have never had problems with anti-speciesists.

Appendix 9: Transcript of interview with butcher 2

Interviewee: Benjamin Cuvit – Butcher and co-owner at *Boucherie de la Tour*

Enterprise: *Boucherie de la Tour* in Trélex

Age: 28 years old

Location: Trélex, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Friday July 31th 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewer's home

Duration: 1 hour

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Website: <http://www.boucheriedelatour.ch>

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is a butcher and co-owner of *La Boucherie of La Tour* in Trélex and is working full-time. He is in charge of the butcher's shop and the catering service. He favors local origins for the beef and veal, and Swiss for the pork. The butcher's shop opened in December 2017 and offers variety of products.

About the enterprise:

- Before the butcher shop was built, there was a garage in the place that was owned by my dad. My father was a director at 22 and ran the garage for 37 years. My dad was going to retire soon, and there was also the concern to bring the place up to standard. My dad asked me if I wanted to be a boss someday and it all started from there. The garage was closed, and a butcher shop was built and opened in December 2017.
- We created a limited liability company with my dad, my sister and myself. It is a rather family structure, there are 7 of us working together, my dad mainly takes care of the pies and my sister takes care of the administrative side.
- We have a butcher shop but also a small grocery corner and a tea-room. We also have a catering service.

Choice of meat & suppliers:

- At the butcher's shop we sell beef, veal, lamb, poultry, pork and horse. My philosophy is really to favor local origins for the beef and veal, poultry from Geneva, and pork from Switzerland. For the lamb it usually comes from Ireland and horse from Canada, but we do not sell a lot of lamb or horse. Concerning the lamb, we mainly sell rack and fillet of lamb.
- Regarding the beef, I signed a charter with two farmers Valentin Fasel and Mathieu Ruchat both from Arzier-Le Muids. The agreement states that I will take and sell their meat and in exchange they are not allowed to sell their meat in retail. They are allowed to sell their meat in boxes directly to consumers, but not in pieces in a shop for instance. It is some kind of exclusivity agreement.
- I try to take the beef and veal as much as possible from the surrounding area and to favor farmer that I know. Of course, when demand is high, as during the coronavirus pandemic it was complicated to satisfy the demand only with local products, so I had to buy from other parts of Switzerland.
- We do not sell meat with certification labels, first because I do not believe in certification labels such as BIO and second if we take the example of Natura Beef, the animal is too small, and does not have much taste. Moreover, these

certification labels are sold by Coop and Migros we have to find another way to differentiate ourselves.

Differentiation & communication strategy:

- For us, competition means self-service and farm shops that have direct selling. The big problem with self-service is that it is open 7 days a week, it is not the same hours as us. We could not open every day, we are simply not allowed. Moreover, they do not have the same standards to respect, they are not affiliated to any group and they do not have the same charges to pay, because they do not have staff to pay for example. Moreover, traceability is sometimes difficult to prove, because some farmers buy beef in addition to their production, because there is demand. However, it is not always stipulated to the consumer. That kind of structure gives us a lot of competition.
- As said before, it is essential to be able to stand out from the others. That is why we try to make as much as possible ourselves. We make our own sausages, we make cervelas, Italian cheese, ham and grilled bacon to name a few. We do not make dried meat because we are not equipped for it and we leave it to the Valaisans who have the perfect mastery. We also make a lot of grilled meat and sausages, merguez, chipolata, that is where you can make a living, in the sense that you can recycle what has not been sold for example. We are lucky the summer started early this year.
- I think that the most important aspect to be successful in a butcher shop is the welcome and cleanliness. I think a well-decorated shop window is part of a good reception, which is why we have it done by someone. Then I think the best communication strategy is word-of-mouth. We also have a website that acts for me as “virtual shop window” and we have a Facebook page where we communicate much more and directly to consumers. However, we do not take orders on the website or Facebook, we only take them by phone or if customers pass by in the shop. Lastly, accessibility is also essential, having places to park your car is important for customers.
- In my opinion our way of differentiation is through our product offering. Having always more and more transformed and ready to eat products is key. We also offer stale meat, local meat and the traceability is easy. We always mark in the butcher shop where the meat comes from.
- To be honest we do not really check how much the strategy is efficient or not. We just observe that since the opening in 2017, there are always more people communing, so I assume it works. Moreover, we were lucky, because when we opened, we could get most of my father’s customer base back, which was already a huge advantage when opening.

Consumption, purchasing habits & influences:

- Regarding the consumption habits it is quite complicated because we do not have much step back since we opened only 3 years ago. However, we can observe that there are always more customers coming to the shop. But on the other hand, we are obliged to work more and more on the products, to make more prepared products such as lasagna for example and this requires more work than before. However, it is also our way of differentiating ourselves.
- We can clearly observe that poultry is the most consumed meat, especially because it is fast and also a “neutral” meat, meaning every religion can eat it.
- Regarding our customers, we have a huge variety of customers. We have even vegetarians who came to buy meat for their husband for instance.

- We could clearly observe that the demand increased exponentially during the coronavirus crisis and since the borders are open again, people go to France again to make their groceries. On the other hand, there are customers who did not come during the pandemic and start to come again now, either because they did not want to queue or wanted to stay safe at home.

Ferme du Château-Blanc:

- I have already collaborated with La Ferme du Château-Blanc and I was very satisfied with it. I always had top quality and what helps also is that Laura Moser -Weber and Valentin Fasel (because they often work together) know exactly what I want so I am always satisfied. They always make the butcher happy.
- What I also appreciate is that they constantly try to improve the quality of their meat by importing bulls that have good genes. They always strive for excellence whether it is through the forage, animal genetics or the animal's welfare.
- I cannot say if there is an increase of sale because it is meat from *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, but we always sell it because it is a good basic quality.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- It is a bit complicated to compare Switzerland and what happens in South America. I do not have the feeling that there is a huge impact in Switzerland because we always had cows and lamb that also somehow maintain the landscapes. If talking about what happens in America, it is another story. Moreover, when I receive my price list I can see that the beef coming from abroad is as expensive as the one from Switzerland, maybe there are 2-3 francs of difference, but that is it.

Future of meat industry & the farms in Switzerland:

- Regarding the future of the meat industry I think that it will remain stable, because the meat prices over the past years did not really changed much. Not like in the milk industry for instance. There have always been farmers, so I think it will continue and with the increase of customers I see in our shop, I think it is promising.

Château-Blanc's concept:

- In my opinion the activities on the farm such as educating city dwellers, making people discover the world on the farm are important aspects that could work.
- Regarding brunches for instance it is as explained before with farmers having self-services, they do not have to follow the same standards and hygienic regulations as we do for instance. When offering a catering service, you need to follow lots of course, it is also an important financial investment and you need to have a patent, which farmers doing brunches do not need. So, I would say if farmers want to implement such activities, they should do it properly, so that there is no disloyal competition.

Appendix 10: Guide for interview with restaurant

Interview – English

About the company (1)

1. Tell me a bit about your company

Differentiation & communication strategy (4)

1. What is your communication/marketing strategy?
2. How do you evaluate whether your strategy is effective or not?
3. How do you differentiate yourself from competition?
4. What is your value proposition?

Choice of suppliers (5)

1. On what criteria do you base your choice of suppliers?
2. Do you always use the same supplier(s)? Why ?
3. Have you noticed a difference in the quality of meat depending on the supplier that is chosen?
4. Do you have exclusive partnerships with certain suppliers/breeders?
5. How would you define quality beef?

Consumption habits of customers (2)

1. Do you see a different eating habit among people with a vegan or vegetarian background?
2. Have you observed a difference in the overall meat consumption of customer?

Impact of meat production on the environment (1)

1. What do you think of the impact that meat production has on the environment?

Future of farms in Switzerland (3)

1. What do you think about the fact that every day in Switzerland, on average 3 farms disappear and with them a know-how?
2. In your opinion, how can the farms differentiate themselves?
3. In your opinion, what are the key ingredients for the success and the sustainability of a business?

Explanation of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s concept and ask for their opinion

Interview – French

A propos de l'entreprise (1)

1. Parlez-moi un peu de votre entreprise

Stratégie de différenciation et de communication (4)

1. Quelle est votre stratégie de communication/marketing ?
2. Comment évaluez-vous si votre stratégie est efficace ou non ?
3. Comment vous différenciez-vous de la concurrence ?
4. Quelle est votre stratégie de différenciation ?

Choix des fournisseurs (5)

1. Sur quels critères basez-vous votre choix de fournisseurs ?
2. Pourquoi ? Prenez vous toujours le (s) même (s) fournisseur(s) ? Pourquoi ?
3. Avez-vous pu remarquer une différence de qualité de la viande selon le fournisseur choisi ?
4. Avez-vous des partenariats d'exclusivité avec certains fournisseurs/éleveurs ? Si oui lesquels ? et pourquoi ceux-ci ?
5. Comment définirez-vous de la viande de qualité ?

Habitude de consommation des clients (2)

1. Voyez-vous une habitude alimentaire différente chez les personnes d'origine végétalienne ou végétalienne ?
2. Avez-vous observé une différence dans la consommation globale de viande du client

Impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement (1)

Que pensez-vous de l'impact que la production de viande a sur l'environnement ?

Futur des exploitations agricoles en Suisse (3)

1. Que pensez-vous du fait que chaque année en Suisse, en moyenne 3 fermes disparaissent et avec elles un savoir-faire ?
2. Selon vous, Comment est-ce que les fermes peuvent se différencier ?
3. Selon vous, quels sont les ingrédients clés à la réussite et au succès d'une entreprise ?

Explication du concept de la Ferme du Château-Blanc et demande d'opinion personnelle

Appendix 11: Transcript of interview with restaurant

Interviewee: Philip Wolfsteiner – Director and owner of the restaurant *Balthasar Grill*

Restaurant: *Balthasar Grill* in Gland

Age: Not mentioned

Location: Gland, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Tuesday July 29th, 2020

Place of the interview: By phone

Duration: 13 minutes

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to transcript

Website: <https://www.balthasar-grill.ch>

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is the boss and owner of the restaurant *Balthasar Grill* in Gland. He opened another restaurant in 2017 also in Gland named *Le Yaca*. The choice was made of the *Balthasar Grill* restaurant, because they are specialized in grilled meat and have a good reputation. Moreover, the restaurant comes out in the top ten restaurants on Tripadvisor in the canton of Vaud and received since 2017 the excellence certification and from this year on the Travelers Choice. In order to get these certificates, restaurants need to receive regularly very good reviews from travelers and restaurant are then ranked among the top 10% of establishments on Tripadvisor.

Differentiation & communication strategy:

- For me it is really important that the quality is there, that is why I prefer to pay more but be sure to have it. Often, I have to pay a little more, but I have the guarantee that the quality is there.
- After for certain menus it is not possible to offer noble pieces, because the consumer is not necessarily ready to pay this amount for a simple meal. For example, we make carpaccio with turkey meat instead of beef. It is very, very good and we can offer the customer a good value for money.
- Our restaurant is specialized in grilling and I think it is very important nowadays to have a restaurant with a specialization. This is what allows you to differentiate yourself from other, it is not to offer the same thing as everyone else. Then there can be a differentiation in look, service or other aspects but you go to the restaurant to eat.
- We are really known for this type of cuisine and people come for it too, especially for our entrecote steaks, which come all from Switzerland.

Choice of suppliers & definition of quality beef:

- For the suppliers we have a butcher who is specialized in the field of catering. This butcher looks for the animals at the producers, he is an intermediary between us and the producers. This choice was made because we need constancy and regularity in the supply of meat.
- Moreover, in the restaurant business it is essential to have consistency in quality but also for the rest, especially to be able to always offer the same standing to customers. This is also why we collaborate with this specialized butcher. We have

always been very satisfied. We collaborate mainly with him, but I have also sometimes taken meat from Prélaz in Genolier.

- I think that a quality meat is defined by the resting time it has. A good meat must be stale and give it time. Unfortunately, the big signs kill the animal and the day after it is already on the sales shelves. I think that this kind of practice is damaging to our meat and to the Swiss market.

Consumption habits of customers:

- Concerning the consumption of meat and the future of meat, I think that meat is still relevant and that there will always be a demand, especially in the region.
- As far as the vegetarian and vegan movement is concerned, I think that there is more supply and more specialized restaurants in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and that in the French-speaking part does not have a lot of supply. But as I said before, these are specialized restaurants and that is what makes their difference.
- I would also say that customers' way of going to the restaurant changed a lot these past years. Before it was something special to go to the restaurant. It was an event; you took time to dress up and often stayed the whole evening. Now people come, eat, and leave. It is more a necessity to eat something and often people choose at home what they want and then go to the restaurant. Things are different now.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- As far as the impact of meat production on the environment is concerned, I find it absolutely absurd to take meat that has been raised in one country, killed in another and then imported into Switzerland. I am extremely careful about this and as I said before, the conditions of the farms are very important to me.

Future of farms in Switzerland:

- In my opinion, for a company, a restaurant to be successful, it must be of good quality, a warm welcome and a good price-quality ratio. In the restaurant business, I think it is essential that there is a real consistency in quality and that we can always offer the same standards.

Château-Blanc's concept:

- In terms of your farm project, I think it is more of a local market, attracting private customers, because there is a demand for those kinds of products.
- Unfortunately, in the restaurant business you are really looking for consistency and the ability to have sufficient supply, and often producers have limited quantities. In addition, we need specific cuts of beef.

Appendix 12: Guide for interview with milk producer

Interview – English

About the farm (6)

1. Tell me a little about the history of your company /farm ?
2. When did you take over the business? How did it work out?
3. What were the main difficulties, challenges related to the takeover and how did deal with these?
4. How many people are working on the farm?
5. How would you define a family farm?
6. Do you consider your farm as a family farm?

About the installation of the machinery & animal welfare (7)

1. Can you explain a little bit about the operation and concept of the milking robot?
2. How is the machine disinfected?
3. Which product(s) is/are used?
4. How can you make sure that the animal is healthy if there is not much contact with it anymore?
5. Isn't there a loss of knowledge? Doing with the installation of the milking robot and the loss of contact with the animal?
6. Given that you have to follow the data emitted by the computer etc., does this still represents a time saving or the use of time is simply shifted?
7. In your opinion, what is the added value of having automated milking (other than the fact that it saves on staff and to be able to be more flexible in the organization of activities)?

Future of the milk industry (5)

1. The future of the milk industry being very uncertain in Switzerland and having prices always lower, what were the reasons or the conviction to invest in new equipment? This is a considerable risk.
2. How do you cope with the fact that there is less and less opportunity to sell milk at an affordable price?
3. According to an article read in La Côte, it is stated that milking with a milking robot is forbidden for the production of gruyere. Son't you think that it is a closed market for you and therefore an opportunity that is far away? Why did you make this choice rather than another one?
4. Have you ever thought of diversifying your activity like most farmers/breeders do? If so, how?
5. As more and more farmers producing milk, decide to change the sector of their activity and switch to meat production with suckle cows, have you ever thought about such changes?

Competition (3)

1. How do you cope with the competition?
2. Do you sell your milk directly to the consumer?
3. Have you ever thought about setting up a communication/marketing strategy in order to promote your products and your know-how?

Impact of meat production on the environment (2)

1. What do you think of the impact that meat production has on the environment?
2. Do you think that farmers can implement practices to reduce the impact of meat production on the environment? If yes, which ones?

Future of farms in Switzerland (6)

1. In your opinion, how can the consumer be more aware of the difficulties that the agricultural sector is facing?
2. Do you think that consumers have a role to play in preserving the agricultural sector?
3. What do you think about the fact that every day in Switzerland, on average 3 farms disappear and with them a know-how?
4. In your opinion, how can the farms differentiate themselves?
5. In your opinion, what are the main criteria on which a farm should base itself in order to be profitable and sustainable in the long term?
6. In your opinion, what are the key ingredients for the success and the sustainability of a business?

Explanation of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s concept and ask for their opinion

Interview – French

A propos de l'exploitation (6)

1. Parlez-moi un peu de l'histoire de votre entreprise / exploitation ?
2. Quand avez-vous repris l'entreprise ? Comment cela s'est déroulé ?
3. Qu'elles ont été les principales difficultés, défis liés à la reprise et comment avez-vous fait face à ceux-ci ?
4. Combien de personnes êtes-vous à travailler sur l'exploitation ?
5. Comment définirez-vous une ferme familiale ?
6. Vous considérez-vous comme une ferme familiale ?

A propos de l'installation de la machine & du bien-être animal (7)

1. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer un peu le fonctionnement et le concept du robot de traite ?
2. Comment est-ce que la machine est désinfectée ?
3. Quel(s) produit(s) est/sont utilisé(s) ?
4. Comment s'assurer de la bonne santé de l'animal s'il n'y a plus beaucoup de contact avec celui-ci ?
5. Est-ce qu'il n'y a pas une perte de savoir-faire avec l'installation du robot de traite et une perte de contact avec l'animal ?
6. Étant donné qu'il faut suivre les données émises par l'ordinateur etc, Est-ce que cela représente quand même un gain de temps ou l'utilisation du temps est simplement déplacé ?
7. Selon vous, qu'elle est la valeur ajoutée d'avoir automatisé la traite (autre que le fait d'économiser sur le personnel et de pouvoir être plus flexible dans l'organisation des activités) ?

Avenir du marché du lait (5)

1. L'avenir du lait étant très incertain en Suisse et ayant des prix toujours plus bas qu'elles ont été les raisons ou la conviction d'investir dans de nouveaux équipements ? C'est un risque considérable
2. Comment faites-vous face au fait qu'il y a de moins en moins de possibilité de vendre le lait à un prix abordable ?
3. Selon un article lu de La Côte, il est stipulé que la traite par robot de traite est interdite pour la production de gruyère, est-ce que ce n'est pas du coup un marché fermé pour vous et donc une opportunité qui est loin ? Pourquoi avoir fait ce choix plutôt qu'un autre ?
4. Avez-vous déjà pensé à vous diversifier comme le font la plupart des agriculteurs/éleveurs ? Si oui comment ?
5. De plus en plus d'agriculteurs produisant du lait, décide de changer le secteur de leur activité et passe à de la production de viande avec des vaches allaitantes, avez-vous déjà songé à de tels changements ?

Concurrence (3)

1. Comment faites-vous face à la concurrence ?
2. Est-ce que vous vendez votre lait directement au consommateur ?
3. Avez-vous déjà pensé à mettre en place une stratégie de communication/marketing afin de promouvoir vos produits et votre savoir-faire ?

Impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement (2)

1. Que pensez-vous de l'impact que la production de viande a sur l'environnement ?
2. Pensez-vous que les éleveurs puissent mettre en place des pratiques visant à réduire l'impact sur l'environnement ? Si oui lesquels ?

Futur des exploitations agricoles en Suisse (6)

1. Selon vous comment peut-on rendre le consommateur plus attentif aux difficultés auxquelles le secteur agricole doit faire face ?
2. Pensez-vous que les consommateurs ont un rôle à jouer dans la préservation du secteur agricole ?
3. Que pensez-vous du fait que chaque année en Suisse, en moyenne 3 fermes disparaissent et avec elles un savoir-faire ?
4. Selon vous, Comment les fermes peuvent-elles se différencier ?
5. Selon vous, quels sont les principaux critères sur lesquels une exploitation agricole doit se baser pour être profitable et durable dans le long-terme ?
6. Selon vous, quels sont les ingrédients clés à la réussite et au succès d'une entreprise ?

Explication du concept de la Ferme du Château-Blanc et demande d'opinion personnelle

Appendix 13: Transcript of interview with milk producer

Interviewee: Didier Humbert – Farmer and milk producer, in Marchissy

Age: 33 years old

Location: Marchissy, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Thursday July 20th 2020

Place of the interview: At the interviewee's home in Marchissy

Duration: 1 hour and 30 minutes including the visit of the farm and the milking robot

Protection of data privacy: Authorization transcript, no recoding because visit of the farm

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is a farmer and milk producer, exclusively producing milk for industrial purposes. He took over his parents' farm in January 2019. The implementation of the milking robot was made in August 2015 and since January 2020, the farm is in organic conversion.

About the enterprise:

- The takeover of the farm went well, there were investments made just before I took over the farm. The buildings were taken over as a donation and I bought back the farm's capital.
- The takeover went very well, I have a good understanding with my parents and my sister did not want to get involved in the farming.
- There was a year of transition where I slowly took over the various administrative activities, the rest I was already doing a lot in collaboration with my dad. My dad still helps a lot on the farm and especially at the stable and he likes it a lot.
- Concerning my mother, I pay her a salary because she takes care of the staff's meals, maintains the house and garden and does the housework. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to do everything.
- At the moment, there are three people working on the farm, my dad, an apprentice and myself.

Installation of the machinery & animal's welfare:

- The choice was made to invest in a milking robot because the farm was no longer up to standards and in my dad's opinion it was also the opportunity to give a suitable future work environment for me.
- The machine is fully automatized: the cows come in and then they receive a small reward in the form of an energy supplement and another protein feed and are milked at the same time.
- We decided to continue with the milk cows because it was really a passion and we have been producing milk for generations. The fact that we implemented the milking robot allowed us to be more flexible in our activities, we no longer need to be 2 people milking from 5:00 to 8:00 and 16:00 to 18:00. We no longer have to be back to milk the cows and can organize our time differently. There is the same number of working hours as before, but it is a little less strenuous and now we mostly do surveillance.

- However, if we want it to work efficiently, we have to go to the barn and observe the cows, but also so that they do not go wild, we need human contact, that is undeniable.
- Regarding the Cheese production, the gruyere institution decided that it was not possible to use milk from a milking robot to produce their cheese, so it is not for all the cheese production. Using your milk for cheese production is however complicated because often the milk used has to come from the region of production, as for instance for the Tilsit or the Emmental cheese. Moreover, there are also lots of ethical issues. The solution would be if we had a cheese that is created in the canton of Vaud.

Future of milk industry & competition:

- It is quite complicated to sell milk directly because it has to be consumed quickly, otherwise we would have to invest to be able to pasteurize it. In addition, people consume less milk than they used to, and the craze for dairy products has dropped quite a bit. It is the same thing with yoghurt making: you need the knowledge and the time. We sell some milk directly to our neighbors, but that's it. Moreover, we are not particularly well situated, a little bit out of the center of the village.
- We have decided to continue with milk production, on one hand because we have been doing it for generations and it is a heritage to be kept. On the other hand, because we are sure that at the end of the month we have a paycheck, and therefore cash to pay the bills, which is not necessarily the case for the meat producers.
- We also have a few cows for meat production, but this is only for family and friends.
- Unfortunately, the price of milk is only going down and this, dramatically in the past years. We cannot do anything because we are dependent on Coop and Migros.
- One of the main reasons for our conversion to BIO is that there will be a certain security of the certification label, a bit like in the meat industry with the different certification labels such as Natura Beef or SwissPrimBeef. We did the conversion to BIO because we were already close to this mode of production and the region where we live, has very little disease. BIO was a solution that allowed the valorization of milk and enabled us to continue to produce milk.
- Concerning the competition, we are dependent on Coop and Migros, so it is complicated for us to put pressure on the prices, because if we do so, they will not take our milk anymore. We thought that with the coronavirus situation the milk price might go up again, but nothing changed because Coop and Migros maintain the prices low. We bring our milk to the *laiteries réunies* which collects our milk and then sell it to Coop and Migros. We need this institution, otherwise we would not be able to sell our milk. The *laiteries réunies* of Geneva are supported financially by the state, because there are only 5 milk producers left. It is different for the canton of Vaud, we are over 4000 milk producers.
- I would say that the competition is among the regions in Switzerland, because each region has often its specific cheese.
- I have seen that Manor now sells fair milk at a price that enable milk producers to be paid at their fair value. I think that such action can be great for the milk industry and makes consumer aware.
- We have sometimes classes that come to visit our farm, but there is not much demand for it and it is only from time to time.

Impact of meat production on the environment:

- I think it is complicated to compare Switzerland and the rest of the world because we are far from the intensive farming that can be found in America. Moreover, in Switzerland we have herds that are adapted to our lands and it has been proven during the coronavirus that cows pollute way less than what was said before and that it is certainly not the primary source of pollution.
- I also think that efforts can be made from farmer, that they stop buying fodder from France for instance which it will reduce the transports. For our conversion to organic we must adapt our herd to our surface and all the fodder must come from Switzerland.

Future of meat industry & the farms in Switzerland:

- I think that key elements for farmers to survive are:
 - first you need to have someone who takes over the farm. I think also that it is complicated when you are single to manage everything on the farm and to survive. In my opinion, the family aspect disappears when you have no family.
 - second, the farm's size also impacts the sustainability of a business, I think that smaller farms will have more difficulties to survive or you have to work besides.
 - third, the location of your farm. For instance, farms that are in the mountains will have more financial support from the state.
 - fourth, you need to be flexible and to adapt easily with an agricultural policy changing every 4 years. You need to be ready to adapt and to have the courage to change everything if needed. You need also to accept that the confederation decides for you. In my opinion, the agricultural policies push us to become companies in the sector, whereas this is not the essence of our trades
 - Lastly, I think it is essential to talk more and directly to consumers, to help them understand why we do things this way or why during the summer we will harvest until very late in the night and on week-ends, or why for instance cows may moo. Try to explain them our profession and try to anticipate problems or misunderstandings. It is not always easy, but I think it is also part of our responsibility.

Château-Blanc's concept

- I think to have a boutique where the consumer can find fresh products and be in direct contact with the producer is great. Selling directly can be beneficial for customers who might not have a freezer at home. Moreover, this concept offers a wide range of products to the consumer.

Appendix 14: Guide for interviews with retired farmer

Interview – English

About the farm (5)

1. Tell me a little about the history of your company /farm ?
2. When did you give up the business? How did it work out?
3. What were the main difficulties, challenges related to the giving and how did deal with these?
4. How many people were working on the farm?
5. How would you define a family farm?
6. Do you consider your business as a family farm?

Competition & communication strategy (4)

1. How did you cope with the competition?
2. Have you ever thought about setting up a communication/marketing strategy in order to promote your products and your know-how?
3. What was your communication/marketing strategy?
4. How did you evaluate whether your strategy is effective or not?

Future of meat consumption (3)

1. What is your opinion on the future of meat consumption?
2. What is your opinion on the future of the meat industry?
3. In your opinion, what is the future of the business *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*?

Impact of meat production on the environment (2)

1. What do you think of the impact that meat production has on the environment?
2. Do you think that farmers can implement practices to reduce the impact of meat production on the environment? If yes, which ones?

Future of farms in Switzerland (6)

1. In your opinion, how can the consumer be more aware of the difficulties that the agricultural sector is facing?
2. Do you think that consumers have a role to play in preserving the agricultural sector?
3. What do you think about the fact that every day in Switzerland, on average 3 farms disappear and with them a know-how?
4. In your opinion, how can the farms differentiate themselves?
5. In your opinion, what are the main criteria on which a farm should base itself in order to be profitable and sustainable in the long term?
6. In your opinion, what are the key ingredients for the success and the sustainability of a business?

Interview – French

A propos de l'exploitation (6)

1. Parlez-moi un peu de l'histoire de votre entreprise / exploitation ?
2. Quand avez-vous remis l'entreprise ? Comment cela s'est déroulé ?
3. Qu'elles ont été les principales difficultés, défis liés à la remise et comment avez-vous fait face à ceux-ci ?
4. Combien de personnes travaillaient sur l'exploitation ?
5. Comment définirez-vous une ferme familiale ?
6. Considérez-vous votre entreprise comme une exploitation agricole familiale ?

Concurrence et stratégie de communication (4)

1. Comment avez-vous fait face à la concurrence ?
2. Avez-vous déjà pensé à mettre en place une stratégie de communication/marketing afin de promouvoir vos produits et votre savoir-faire ?
3. Quelle a été votre stratégie de communication/marketing ?
4. Comment avez-vous évalué si votre stratégie est efficace ou non ?

L'avenir de la consommation de viande (3)

1. Quelle est votre opinion sur l'avenir de la consommation de viande ?
2. Quelle est votre opinion sur l'avenir de l'industrie de la viande ?
3. Selon vous, quel est l'avenir de l'entreprise du Château-Blanc une fois repris ?

Impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement (2)

1. Que pensez-vous de l'impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement ?
2. Pensez-vous que les agriculteurs peuvent mettre en œuvre des pratiques visant à réduire l'impact de la production de viande sur l'environnement ? Si oui, lesquelles ?

Futur des exploitations agricoles en Suisse (6)

1. Selon vous comment peut-on rendre le consommateur plus attentif aux difficultés auxquelles le secteur agricole doit faire face ?
2. Pensez-vous que les consommateurs ont un rôle à jouer dans la préservation du secteur agricole ?
3. Que pensez-vous du fait que chaque année en Suisse, en moyenne 3 fermes disparaissent et avec elles un savoir-faire ?
4. Selon vous, Comment les fermes peuvent-elles se différencier ?
5. Selon vous, quels sont les principaux critères sur lesquels une exploitation agricole doit se baser pour être profitable et durable dans le long-terme ?
6. Selon vous, quels sont les ingrédients clés à la réussite et au succès d'une entreprise ?

Appendix 15: Transcript of interview with retired farmer

Interviewee: Hans Weber Junior – Retired farmer and market gardener, in Gingins

Enterprise: *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*, in Gingins

Age: 66 years old

Location: Gingins, District of Nyon, Canton of Vaud

Date: Over various dates

Place of the interview: At the interviewee's home

Duration: Not possible to clearly define

Protection of data privacy: Authorization to record and transcript

Introduction for the reader:

The interviewee is a retired farmer and market gardener. Nevertheless, he still works a lot on the farm. He is the owner of *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*. He took over the farm from his father in 1984 and gave the farm over to his daughter in 2017. The interviewee helped a lot the researcher for the writing about *La Ferme du Château-Blanc*'s history and the presentation of the case study in general. There were several meetings made between Mr. Hans Weber Junior and the researcher in order to complete or understand information about the farm. That is why there is no possibility to clearly state the dates and the duration of these meetings. However, there was an interview made to gain insights and have Mr. Weber's point of view regarding subject that were also presented to the other interviewees.

About the farm

- As explained during our previous meetings we mainly sold our products through direct selling. We produced over 70 varieties of vegetables. We also had fruits at the beginning, but we decided to focus mainly on vegetables. Moreover, we also developed the meat market and produced beef and pork, which we also directly sold to customers.
- We went to the market twice a week, Wednesday and Saturday in Nyon and a third time on our farm in our store. Customers could come and find a large variety of products, such as vegetables, fruits, syrup, jam and honey to name a few. On Fridays there was also a cheese maker with his van on the farm. We collaborated also with a baker and a florist and this to offer a large range of products to the customers. There was always a lot of people coming to the farm on Fridays' afternoon and often we did not know who's turn it was, we had therefore to find a solution and implemented a system where customers had to take a number before entering the shop. We noticed that it was very convenient both for us and for customers who had time to look at the products.
- I would say that the handing over of the farm to my daughter went well
- Regarding the number of employees, it depended on the season, but we were 7 including the butcher, the shepherd and the other employees working on the farm. Then there was a team with always 9 sellers on the markets in town or on the farm.
- I would say that our farm and business could be considered as a family farm. First because we were my wife and I working together and both involved in the farm's organization. Moreover, there was always an atmosphere of family spirit with our employees, while respecting the distances. We always included our employees and even the customers in our way of doing things and in a family way, even the name of our company was the Weber family.

Competition & communication strategy

- Regarding the competitions I would say that we always tried to seek for new varieties and products to offer to customers, but also to have a wide range of products to offer. Above all, the most important was to offer a quality service, whether it was through products or through the service we offered to customers. Quality was always our target. In addition, it was also important as said before that customers could be integrated in our family spirit and way of doing.
- We also took a lot of courses to gain new knowledge and be up-dated in what we offered. There was also the aim to become always better and master our offerings.
- We did not really implement a marketing or communication strategy, because there was no necessity for it. Our reputation was already well established. People and customer knew us. Therefore, no strategy was implemented. However, we always communicated about the products origin with colors, yellow for own production, green for local/Swiss production and white for products that came from abroad, such as lemons or bananas.

Future of meat consumption

- I think that meat consumption will split in two in the future. There will be those who want not eat it at all, and the others who really want to eat it. It will be a little bit in both extremes. I think that the further we go, the more there will be a search for quality on the part of meat consumers.
- Regarding the meat industry, I think it is made and managed above all to generate profit, and for this reason they do not hesitate to deceive the consumer. For example, by often having two meat origins on the packaging, one Swiss and the other one from unknown sources. Or if we take the various scandals that happen all the time there are many things that are done that we do not know and sometimes some that we do know, but where we do nothing, because the people on the other side or behind these institutions or businesses are too big and powerful.

Impact of meat production on the environment

- It depends on how you define environmental impact. If it is the negative impact with gas emissions it is undeniable that there is a negative impact, but if you consider all the pasture areas for instance, Switzerland would be a forest if the cows were not there to take care of them. We would not be able to clean all these surfaces by hand and there would be other impacts that would not necessarily be better, such as the use of machines to clean everything. Unfortunately, a lot of emphasis is now being placed on the environmental impacts of animals and agriculture, perhaps to divert attention away from a larger problem that does not come from this sector.
- I think that there may be practices such as feeding cows that can be implemented by farmers. For example, not buying fodder from abroad, thus limiting transportation. Or, as is being done at the moment to produce fodder with flax, which limits gases, but these are only test phases for the moment and then we still have to be able to produce flax.

Future of farms in Switzerland

- The reality is sad. Especially every time a farm disappears, or a baker or butcher closes down, all the know-how is lost forever.
- Unfortunately, at the moment, there is a real effort and constancy to dismantle agriculture, whether it be by promoting the use of pesticides or by saying that biodiversity is lacking. All this information that is circulating at the moment makes us believe that there is a lack of everything and it puts the farmer forward as a detractor of nature, whereas we could simply show all the things farmers do and the challenges they face to keep what already exists. Moreover, in Switzerland we really have a healthy nature, we are careful, and we take care of it.
- I think farmers have a part to play and need to communicate this reality, but how can we bring it to people if the media doesn't play the game and make the connection between us and consumers? If they do not act as a spokesperson, it's complicated.
- I think that in the long-term farm diversification is not a solution. There will always be a need for viable farming without direct sales, and we should be able to make money from our core business without having to diversify. Unfortunately, the agricultural policy now tends to drive small farms out of business in favor of larger ones, and the only solution for small farms is to diversify, through direct sales or whatever other solutions are available to replace the loss of income.
- In my opinion, for a company to be successful you must first of all love your profession and be open to change. It is also very important that you are honest and transparent towards your clients and others and finally question yourself and not think that you know everything.

Château-Blanc's concept

- I think that *La Ferme du Château-Blanc* has a future outside the purely agricultural sector, especially because the farm is small. I think that the farm, because of its geographical location and the environment in which it is located, is conducive to developing something good. Above all, we are in a region where people have money, which also favors development outside the purely agricultural sector.