



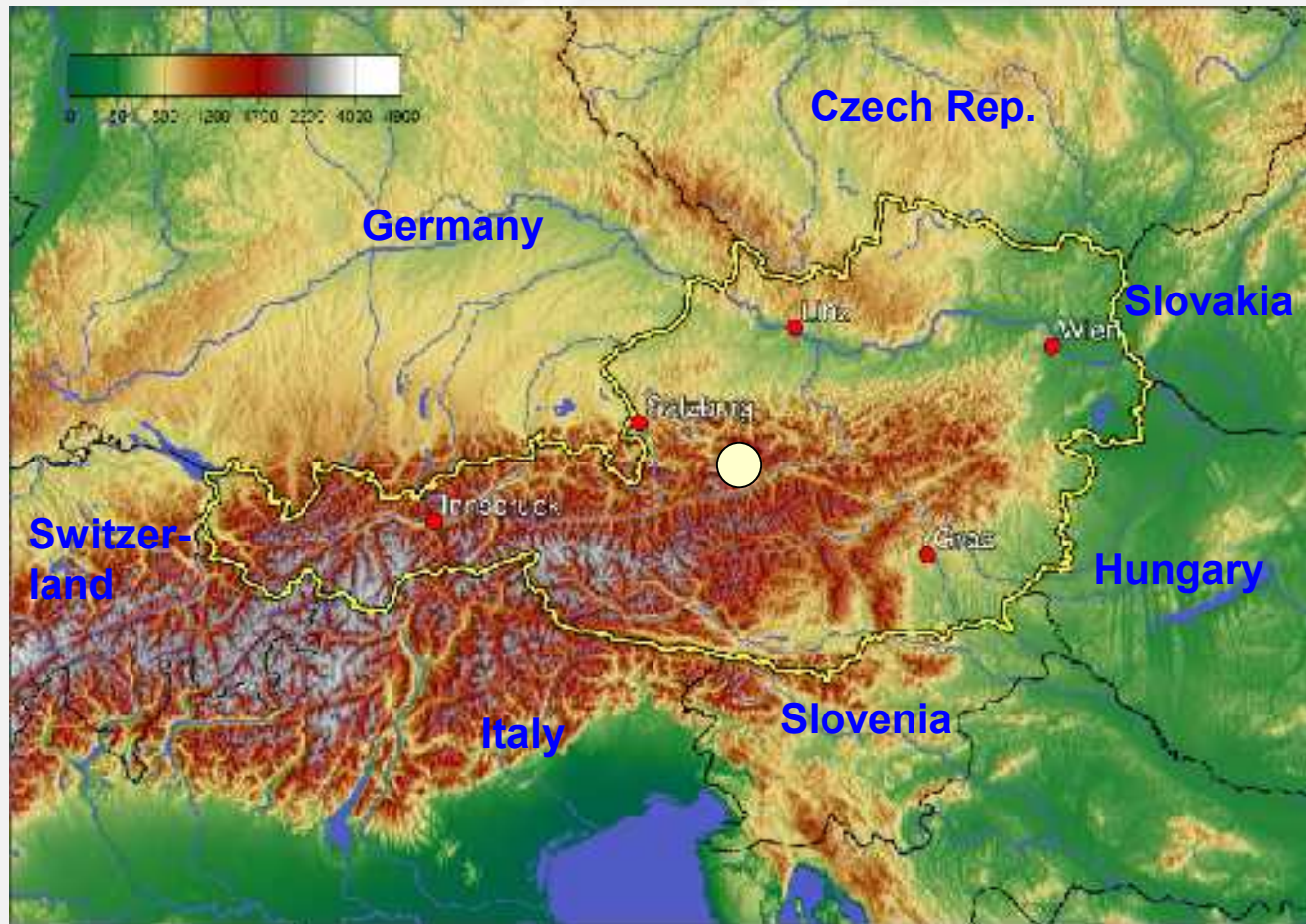
# **Organic Animal Farming Strategies in Alpine Regions**

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# Agricultural Research and Education Centre

*Raumberg-Gumpenstein, Austria*

## *Institute for* **Organic Farming and Farm Animal Biodiversity**





# **Agricultural Research and Education Centre** **Raumberg-Gumpenstein, Austria**

## ***Institute for*** **Organic Farming and Farm Animal Biodiversity**

**Part of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,  
Environment and Water Management**

→ **Agricultural Research and Education Centre**  
**(with 4 Research Institutes)**

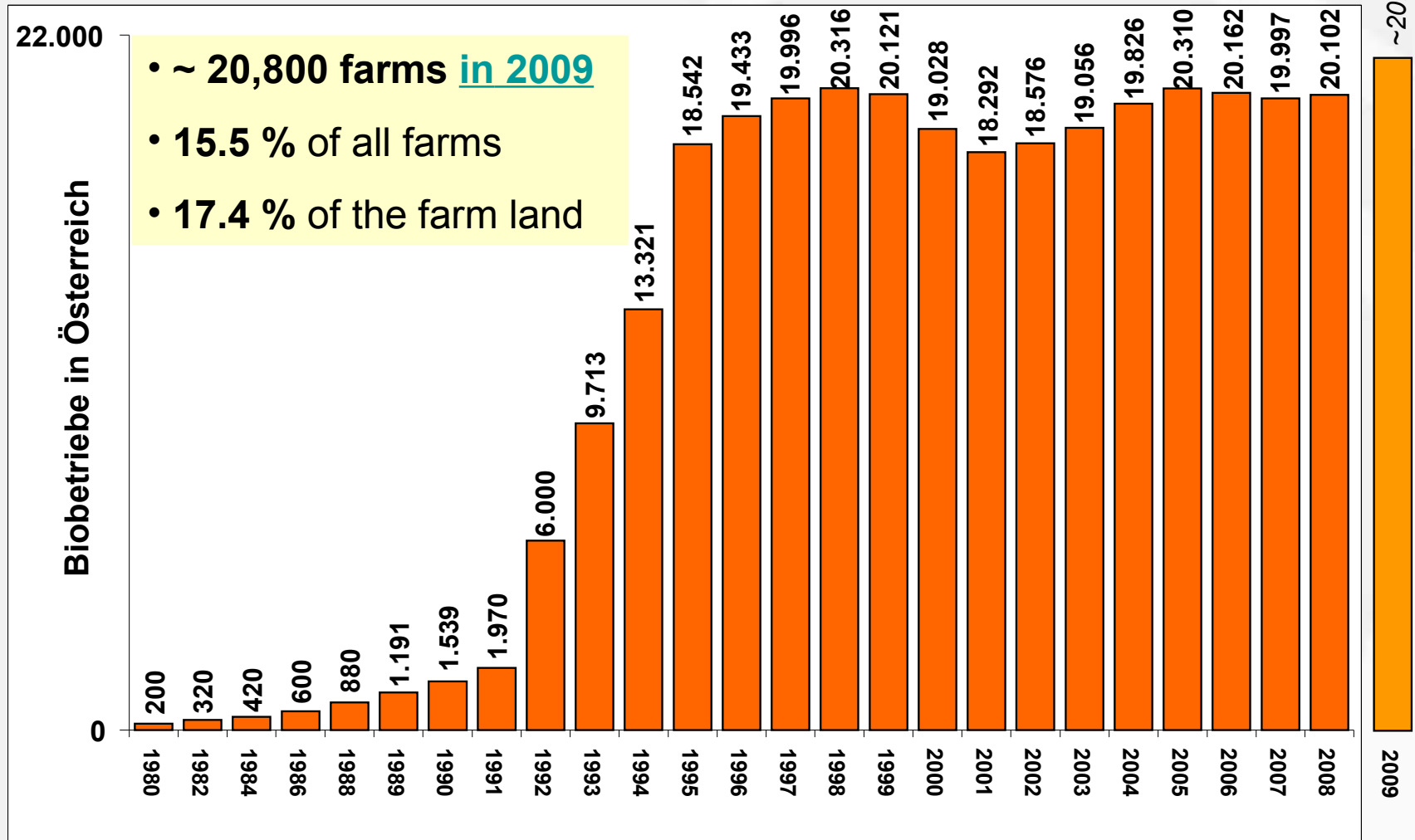
→ **Organic Farming and Farm Animal Biodiversity**

### **Scientific activities – Departments:**

- **Grassland Management and Livestock Research**
- **Preventive Animal Health**
- **Arable Farming and Plant Protection**
- **Biodiversity of Livestock**
- **EU-Obligations**

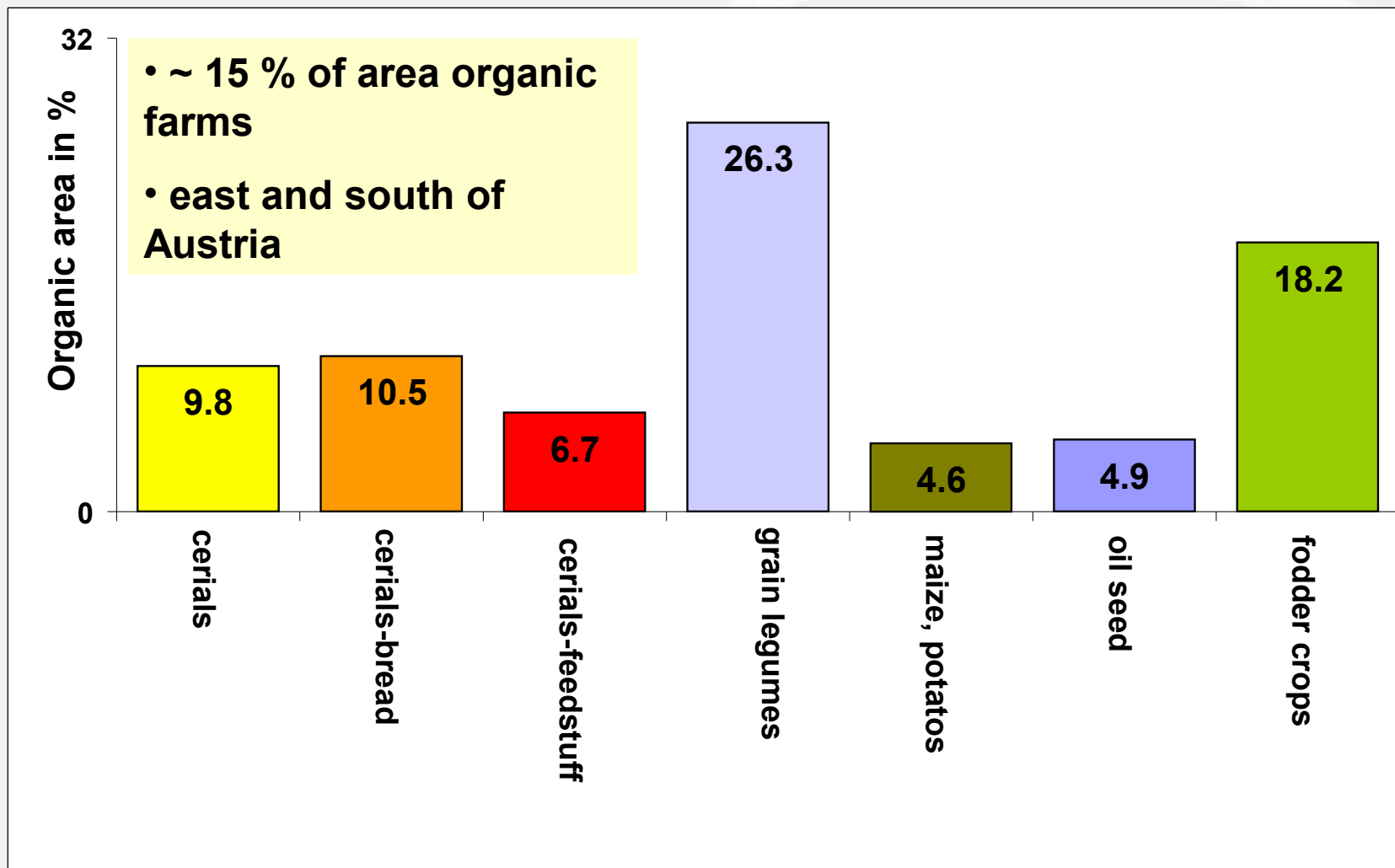
**9 scientists + 4 technicians on 3 organic res. stations**

# Development of organic farming in Austria

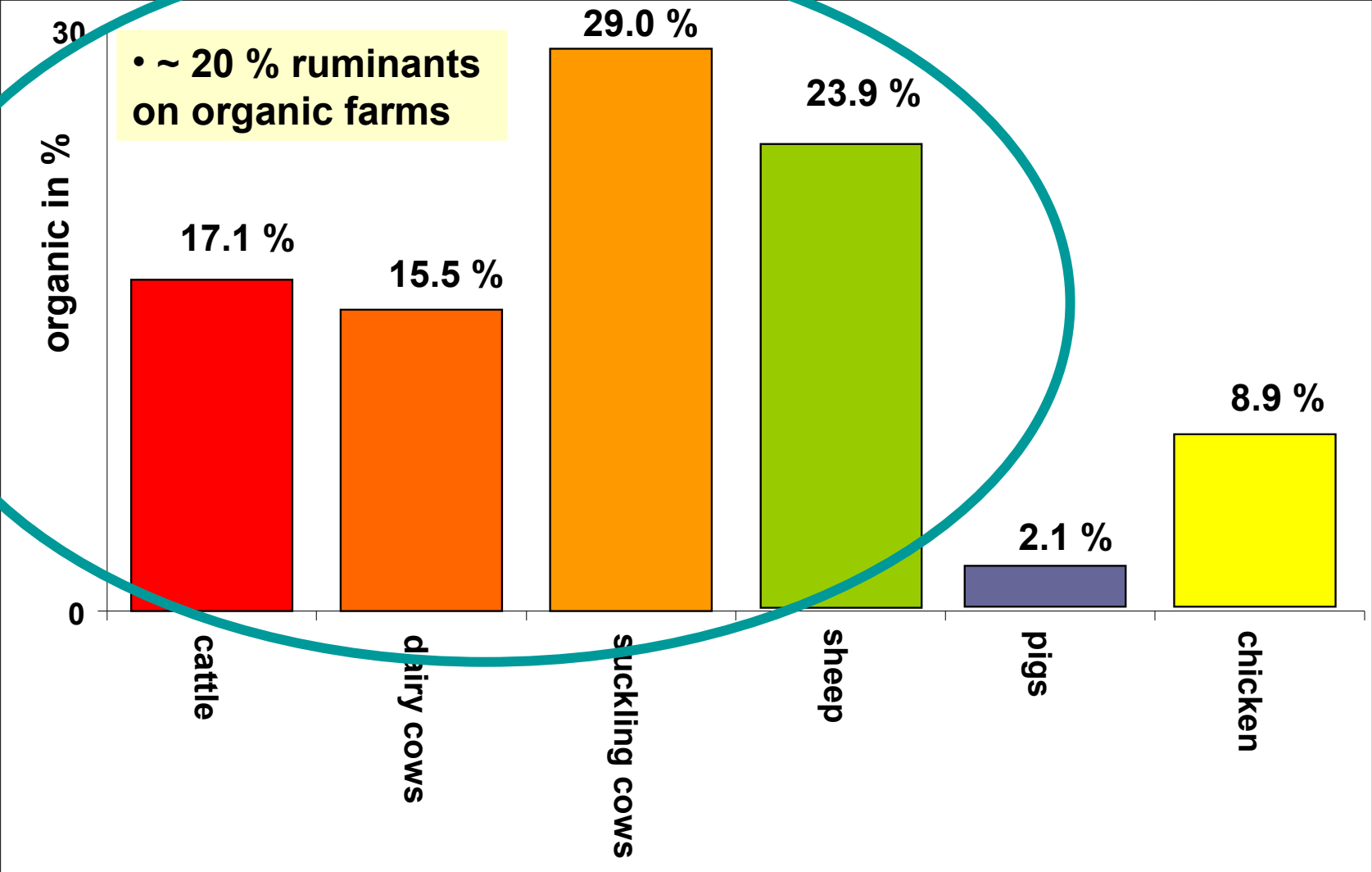


# Proportion of organic field crops in Austria

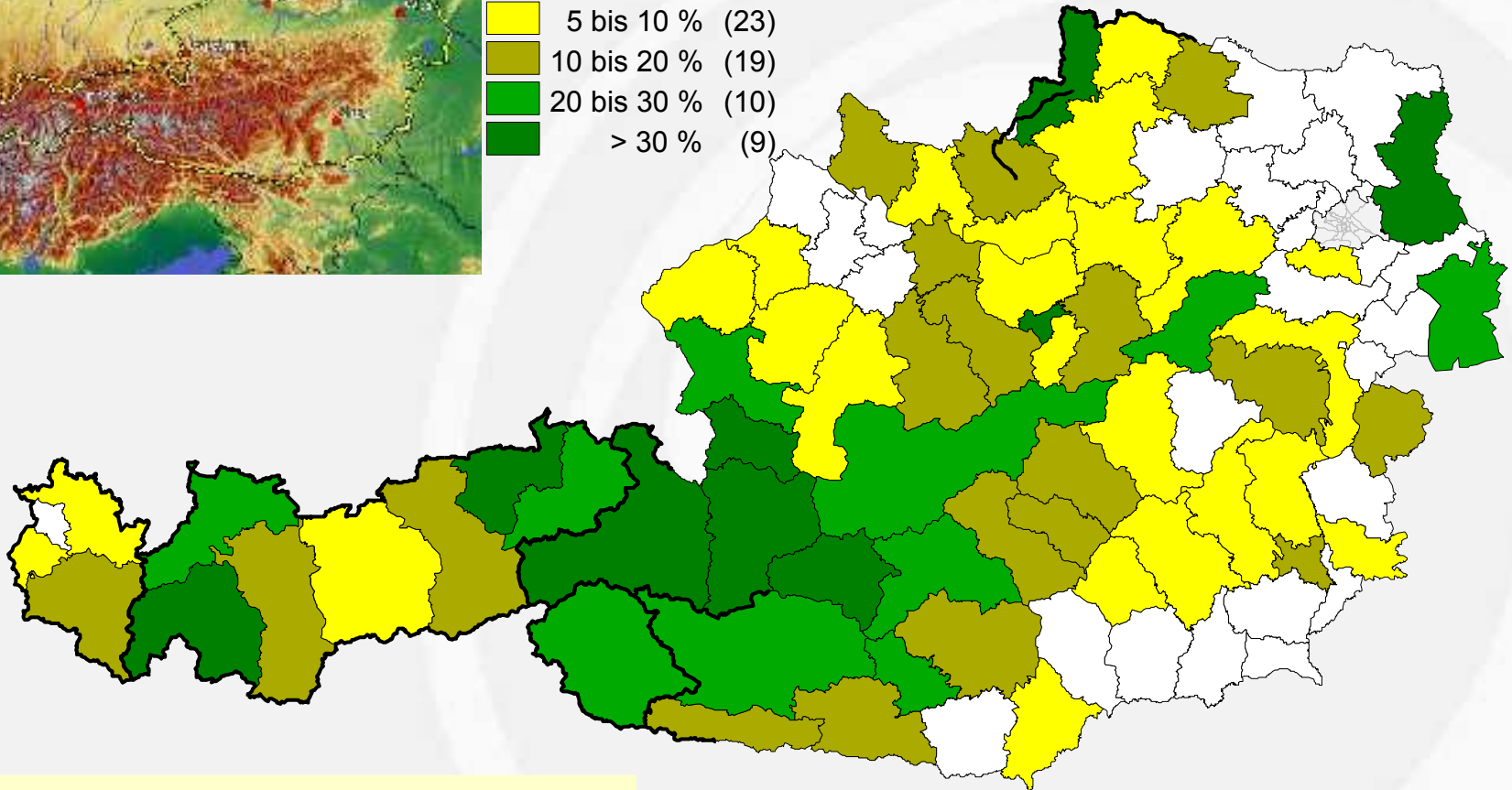
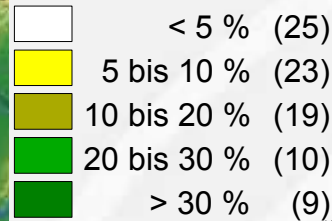
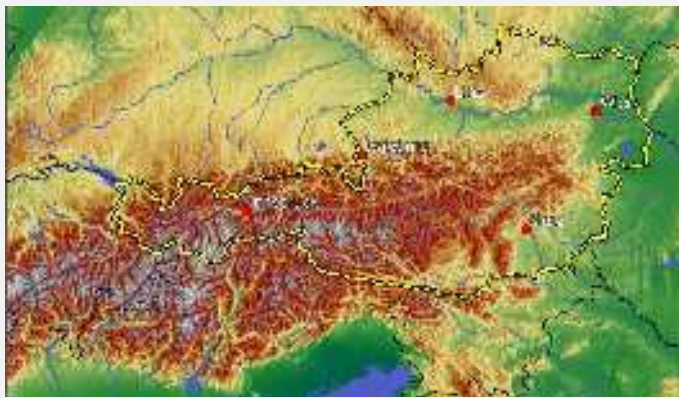
(organic area - depending on each cropping system - in %)



# Proportion of organic farming – animal husbandry

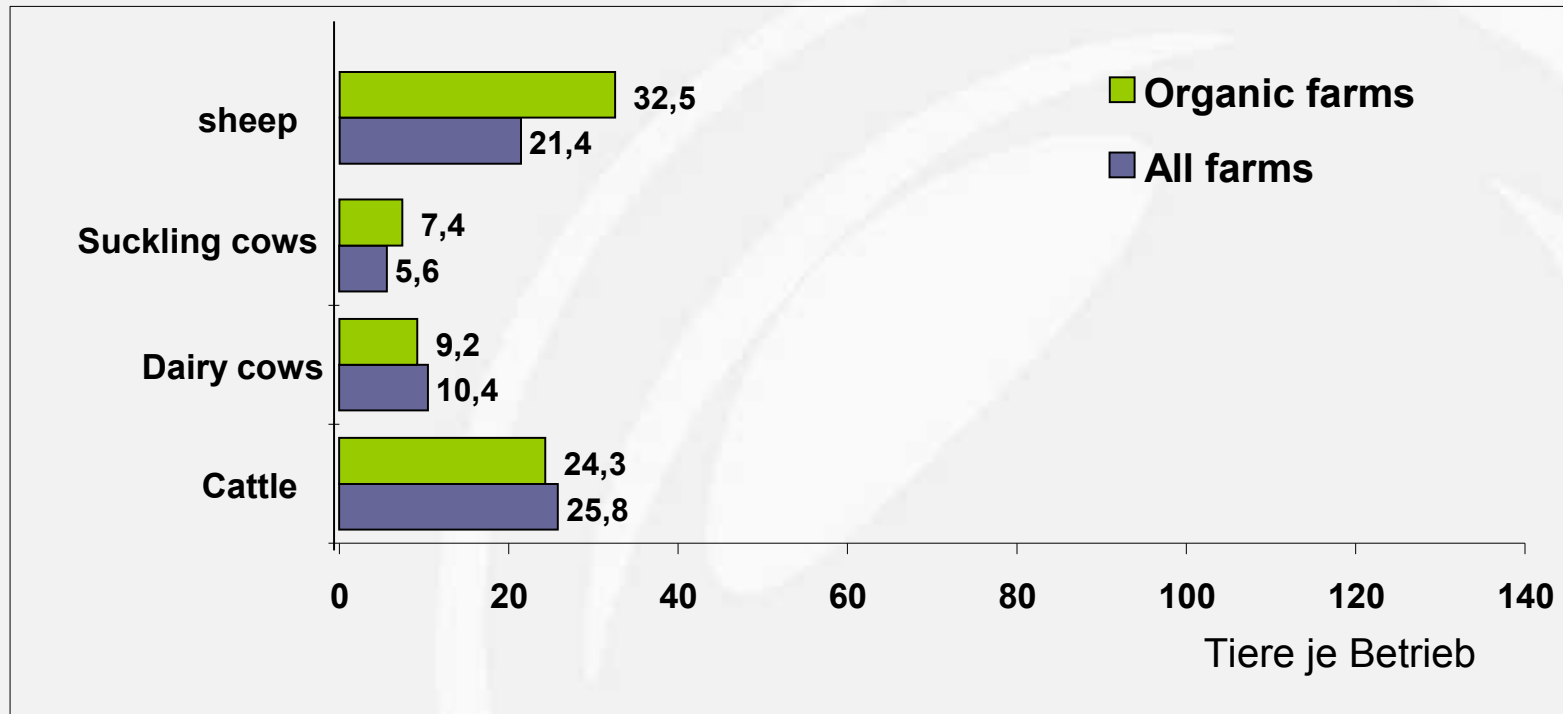


# Percent of organic milk quota in districts



- milk production centered in mountain regions

# Animals per farm



- **Small farms** (~ 10 dairy cows/farm)
- **Low production level** (e.g. ~ 6000 kg milk/dairy cow on organic farms)

# Difficulties in alpine regions



**High cost production / high labor input and low output**

**Harsh climatic conditions and short vegetation period**

**Low grassland yields and no (or low amount) cropping**

**Sensitive ecosystems with high biodiversity**

**Small farms and enlargement limited**

**Many “part-time farmers”**

**Little infrastructure – expensive to maintain**

**Land abandonment – land use changes**

**Low population density – remote areas, small markets**

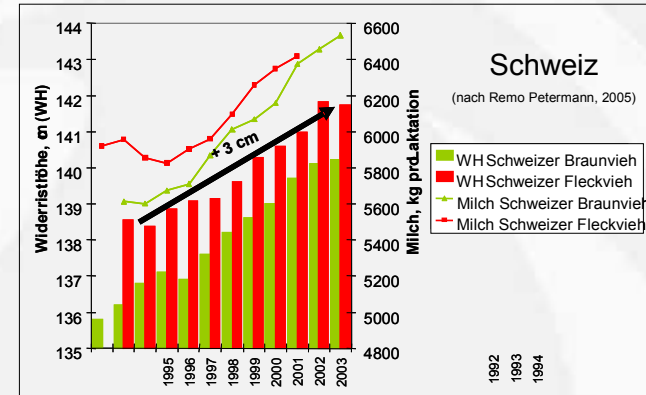
# On example - animal breeding – dairy cows

- Size and weight of dairy cows increases in EU
- Milk yield per year and cow increases

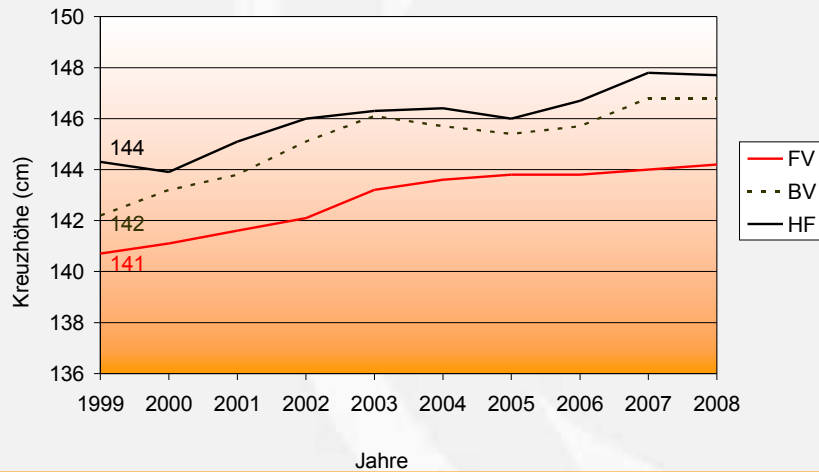


*More and more problems for organic farms, especially in Alpine Regions (energy supply, grazing, concentrate input, health, longevity, efficiency...)*

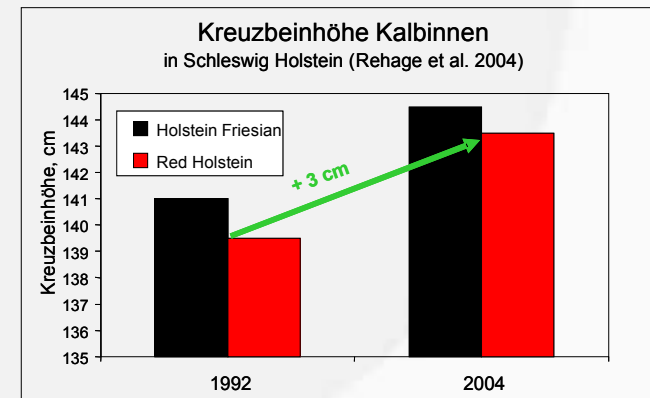
## Switzerland (+ ~ 3 cm/10 years)



## Austria (+ ~ 3 cm/10 years)



## Germany (+ ~ 3 cm/10 years)



# Advantages (pros) agriculture in alpine regions



**High consumer (and taxpayer) acceptance (subsidies)**

**“Regionality” and organic farming as marketing benefit**

**Different sources of income on farms (tourism, forestry)**

**Agriculture - key for a multifunctional landscape and basis for a sustainable land use (tourism ...)**

**Organic farming widespread – synergies**

# Challenges for agriculture in alpine regions



**Development of innovative strategies to create robust and viable (organic) farms**

**Safeguarding agricultural production**

**Avoidance of intensification (→ expansion of organic farming)**

**Building up of regional partnerships**

**Conservation of sensitive ecosystems**

**Dissemination of organic farming principles and knowledge adapted to the region**

**Improvement in profitability (→ farm management, markets...)**

**Opening up markets/sales**

**Guarantee for a reliable source of income → prevention of migration**



# European Organic Network – possible targets:



- Based on the **principles of organic farming**
- Bring together **different generations of scientists** working in the field of organic farming and food systems of both **small and large research centres all over Europe** (*“open organic networks”*)
- Build up **sustainable research networks**
- Promote the building up of work groups **addressing questions of regions in less favoured areas**
- Prepare **rural areas for global challenges** (Climate change, energy, conservation of landscape...)
- **Enhance the dissemination** of research results and improve the coordination of the EU research agenda

# Farm of tomorrow in Alpine Region?

- Important for efficient land utilisation and regional food supply
- High proportion of organic farms (and “organic regions”)
- Small farms and a lot of “part time” farmers
- Different income sources (farm, tourism , ... subsidies)
- Diversification between agricultural strategies
- Increasing demand on regional concepts, partnerships and knowledge

Thank you for  
the attention!

