

Press release

Switzerland's first fully organic cocoa-processing plant

Organic, "Made in Switzerland" cocoa mass, cocoa butter and cocoa powder

Winterthur, June 2022 – Switzerland's first 100% organic cocoa-processing plant has completed its test phase and as of May 2022 is producing organic and fair trade certified semi-finished cocoa products in Beringen near Schaffhausen. PRONATEC Swiss Cocoa Production is an entirely organic production plant and will process around 15,000 tonnes of organic cocoa beans a year, sourced from smallholder cooperatives. It is the first production plant in Switzerland to make all three semi-finished products: cocoa mass, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. This increases the proportion of home-produced added value in Swiss chocolate products.

"More and more consumers are not only looking for sustainable products but wanting to know exactly where the ingredients come from. This production plant is our response to that trend," says David Yersin, CEO and Swiss organic and fair trade pioneer.

Full traceability, transparent production

Having its own cocoa-processing plant means that, from procuring the beans from small-scale farmers, through fermentation and export to processing and sale of the finished product, all stages of the value-added chain are now in PRONATEC's hands. Thanks to its unique direct-sourcing system, every product can be traced back to the cocoa-growing smallholder. Furthermore, all the semi-finished cocoa products are processed in strictly separated batches: each consignment of beans is handled separately, with no mixing up with preceding or subsequent production runs. This enables the plant to meet the strict criteria for organic and fair trade certification.

The trend for stricter quality labels

"Demand from the market is confirming the trend towards stricter labels such as Bio Suisse and Demeter. Our products help to meet that need," says David Yersin. PRONATEC Swiss Cocoa Production specialises in meeting the most exacting organic and fair trade certification standards and delivers to customers in the food and chocolate industries around the world. Its cocoa butter is also very much in demand from manufacturers of natural cosmetics. The plant, which has its own laboratory, is in the process of FSSC 22000 certification and guarantees the highest food safety and quality standards. In addition to its own beans, PRONATEC also processes its customers' beans under contract (tolling).

Making Swiss chocolate even more Swiss

For Swiss chocolate-makers and producers of typical Swiss foods such as bakery and dairy products, the new cocoa production plant offers an opportunity to increase the proportion of Swiss added value in their products. "By offering high-quality, home-produced organic and fair trade products, we hope that we can open up new opportunities for the Swiss chocolate industry to meet its customers' needs even better and position themselves on the world market as 'Made in Switzerland'," says David Yersin.

More information can be found at: www.pronatec.com/cocoa-processing



CEO David Yersin and Plant Manager Yannick Rihs carry out sensory testing on freshly roasted cocoa nibs from Switzerland's first purely organic cocoa processing plant. (Photo: © PRONATEC AG)



In the butter press, the freshly processed organic cocoa mass is carefully pressed to separate the liquid cocoa butter from the solid press cake from which cocoa powder is made. (Photo: © PRONATEC AG)

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About David Yersin

David Yersin was born in 1962 and joined his father's company in 1989. He developed PRONATEC from a two-man company into an SME with around 85 employees altogether (Winterthur and Beringen). He has always remained true to his vision of using organic, fair trade ingredients and maintaining long-lasting partnerships with producers, suppliers, customers and employees. In spring 2022, PRONATEC Swiss Cocoa Production went into operation – Switzerland's first organic cocoa processing plant for producing cocoa mass, cocoa butter and cocoa powder. As an engineer, David is very excited about the highly complex plant and full of enthusiasm.

About PRONATEC

PRONATEC has been a pioneer in the global organic and fair trade movement and supplies its international customers in the food and cosmetics industries with premium-quality, certified ingredients. These include safe, traceable cocoa products, sugar, vanilla and spices that all meet the highest standards. This owner-run Swiss family company maintains long-standing partnerships with cooperatives in the countries of origin and makes a tangible contribution to improving the lives of smallholders and their families. Now, as of 2022, the company is processing organic cocoa beans into cocoa mass, cocoa butter and cocoa powder at its own Swiss cocoa-processing plant, PRONATEC Swiss Cocoa Production. From procuring the beans from small-scale farmers, through fermentation and export to processing and sale of the finished product, all stages of the process are in PRONATEC's own hands. Since it was first founded in 1976, PRONATEC has grown along with its customers and smallholders and in 2021 its turnover reached CHF 78 million. Now, in 2022, the company employs around 60 people at its headquarters in Winterthur and about 25 at the production site in Beringen near Schaffhausen.

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