



# PhD Position - Doctoral Network on Grassland Mixtures

100% / 8046 Zürich (Reckenholz)

## good food, healthy environment

We offer a position for a doctoral student in the Forage Production and Grassland Systems Group of Agroscope as part of the LegumeLegacy international doctoral network. This PhD project aims at developing multi-species grassland mixtures that improve tolerance to disturbance events and nitrogen efficiency in the crop rotation.

LegumeLegacy is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Network (Horizon-MSCA-DN-2021) titled 'LegumeLegacy – Optimising multiple benefits of grass, legume and herb mixtures in crop rotations: modelling mechanisms and legacy effects'.

This project brings together Principal Investigators and collaborators from 14 academic and industry partners from across Europe and one Canadian partner. LegumeLegacy will hire and train 11 Doctoral Researchers and will implement a research programme aimed at improving the sustainability of farm-scale crop rotations. The role of multi-species grassland mixtures within crop rotations will be investigated in a multi-site experiment with a common design for all sites and supplemented by site-specific experimental treatments.

LegumeLegacy is a highly interdisciplinary collaboration bringing together experts in ecology, agronomy, plant breeding, animal nutrition and statistics from multiple partners across Europe and Canada. The Doctoral Researchers will undertake a world-class training programme developed and implemented by the LegumeLegacy collaborating experts and will meet twice per year to participate in joint training events.

## Your tasks

- Conduct a field experiment to (1) assess the competitive interactions within the communities and the trajectories in species relative abundance as well as in community plant traits that may develop over time, (2) assess the effect of an intensive trample event on these trajectories, and (3) assess the effects of species and functional group diversity on the depth of nitrogen inputs to the soil.
- Learn and apply a broad set of methods and technologies and profit from the interdisciplinary interactions within the doctoral network that will include two mobility secondments.
- Maintenance of the field experiment, sample preparation and analyses, data acquisition, statistical analysis and interpretation, publication of results nationally and internationally.

## Your profile

- Master's degree in agronomy, biology or environmental sciences or engineering with excellent grades.
- Solid knowledge of the R programming language is a prerequisite. Experience in the field of grassland management would be beneficial.
- Highly motivated, team-oriented with a strong interest in agro-ecological issues.
- Knowledge of two official Swiss languages. Very good knowledge of written and spoken English.
- The doctoral student is required to undertake physical, transnational mobility (i.e. move from one country to another) to take up this appointment. The student must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Switzerland for more than 12 months in the 3 years prior to their recruitment. Compulsory national service and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not taken into account.

Agroscope is the Swiss federal centre of excellence for research in the agriculture and food sector. Its researchers carry out their work at a number of sites in Switzerland. Headquartered in Bern-Liebelfeld (as of 2025: Posieux FR), Agroscope is attached to the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER.

We offer an intriguing job in a dynamic work environment, as well as thorough training and a modern research infrastructure. Flexible working hours and good social benefits are among the perks of this position.

The Federal Administration is attentive to the different needs and backgrounds of its employees and promotes diversity. Equal treatment is a top priority.

If you are interested in this position and fulfil the requirements, we look forward to receiving your online application including contact information of 2-3 referees on [www.stelle.admin.ch](http://www.stelle.admin.ch), Ref.nr. 4936 (English is not an official Swiss language, please select German, French, or Italian as correspondence language).

Each application should only consist of two documents.

Document 1 should include (single PDF document):

A maximum 1-page cover letter outlining your suitability for the post, with reference to relevant qualifications or experience; Detailed curriculum vitae, including qualifications and experience, publications (if applicable) and the name and email contacts of two academic referees; Transcripts of degrees; A maximum 1-page statement outlining your research project experience to date (this can be related to undergraduate or postgraduate research projects and/or research work experience etc).

Document 2: Please complete the LegumeLegacy eligibility form available <https://legumelegacy.scss.tcd.ie/> and convert to pdf before submission.

Additional information can be obtained from Dr. Olivier Huguenin-Elie. E-mail: [olivier.huguenin@agroscope.admin.ch](mailto:olivier.huguenin@agroscope.admin.ch) (please do not send applications to this email address).

Start: 01.09.2023 or by arrangement. The duration of the contract is three years.