

Media release

Jürn Sanders elected Chairman of FiBL Switzerland's Management Board and Board of Directors

On 20 October 2023, the Foundation Council elected Jürn Sanders as Chairman of the Management Board and Board of Directors of FiBL Switzerland. As primus inter pares he is part of a three-member team together with Beate Huber and Michel Keppler. He previously headed the Department of Food System Sciences at FiBL Switzerland and is the President of FiBL Europe in Brussels.

(Frick, 23.10.2023) As the new Chairman of the Management Board and Board of Directors, Jürn Sanders brings a great deal of agricultural research experience to the post at FiBL Switzerland. Analyses of production economics and political science contexts are his speciality. «In order to master the great ecological challenges of our time, a transformation of agricultural and food systems is needed,» says Jürn Sanders. «Organic agriculture offers great potential in this regard. That's why we aim to further develop the sector together with actors in the value chain and support its further expansion through good research and extension.» The 49-year-old has been working on topics around organic agriculture since completing his studies. He has contributed to more than 200 scientific publications to date. He also teaches at the University of Kassel and is a member of research committees in France and Germany.

No stranger to FiBL Switzerland

The new chairman is well familiar with FiBL Switzerland: From 2001 to 2010, Jürn Sanders already spent nine years there as a research associate. After completing his doctorate he moved to Germany, where he gained management experience as head of the «Environmental and Climate Protection, Sustainability» research group at the Thünen Institute of Farm Economics. Last year the agricultural economist returned to FiBL Switzerland as head of the Department of Food System Sciences. He also assumed the role of President of FiBL Europe, the representative office in Brussels of all national FiBL institutes. He is thus well connected internationally.

When Knut Schmidtke stepped down as Chairman of FiBL's Board of Directors this year, Jürn Sanders and Beate Huber jointly took over the chairmanship. At the same time the position was properly advertised. The application process was administered by an external firm on behalf of the Foundation Council. Jürn Sanders was able to prevail over the competition. As a result, on 20 October 2023 the Foundation Council elected him as Chairman of the Management Board and Board of Directors of FiBL Switzerland. «We have been greatly impressed with Jürn Sanders' competent and dedicated commitment in recent months,» said Bernard Lehmann, President of the

Foundation Council and former Director of the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG. «And he passed the tough assessment as part of the application process with flying colours.»

Tripartite committee has proven its worth

In 2020, a three-member Board of Directors was introduced at FiBL Switzerland. Currently the three members are Jürn Sanders, Beate Huber and Michel Keppler. The Foundation Council is convinced that the three-member directorate model serves FiBL well. It allows the wide range of tasks as part of the workload to be shared between the members.

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This media release online

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About FiBL

The Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL is one of the world's leading research institutions in the field of organic agriculture. FiBL's strengths are interdisciplinary research, joint innovations with farmers and the food industry, and rapid knowledge transfer. The FiBL Group currently includes FiBL Switzerland (founded in 1973), FiBL Germany (2001), FiBL Austria (2004), ÖMKi (Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, 2011), FiBL France (2017) and FiBL Europe (2017), which is jointly supported by the five national institutes. Around 400 employees work at the various locations. www.fibl.org