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The future of agricultural border protection

Comment by Professor Thomas Widmer, 20 July 2017
Summary in English

The objective of the commenting paper by Professor Widmer is twofold: First, it aims at formulating an evaluation of the study « Evaluation of the relevance of border protection for agriculture in Switzerland » by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) from the perspective of evaluation research. Second, it seeks to place the evaluation in the larger context of the Swiss agricultural policy.

After a review of the method of analysis and the principal results of the study, he presents the strengths and weaknesses of the selected method. He highlights that the study does not show the positive effects of the alternative measures that it proposes in the broader context of Switzerland's policy objectives.

In the analysis of those measures in the larger perspective of the Swiss agricultural policy, Professor Widmer finds that there are many factors that influence the success of such measures, for example their acceptability in the population and the reduction of public revenue.

In conclusion, he presents some thoughts with respect to the development of Swiss agricultural policy. According to him, a reform of the system of border protection will eventually be inevitable and there is a need for enhanced transparency to allow for public comprehension of the system.