

Press release from 24 April 2026

Appenzeller® cheese maintains its position in a challenging market environment – stable performance through innovation and domestic sales

Amidst an environment characterised by economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions and intense price pressure, the Appenzeller® cheese consortium has demonstrated resilience in the financial year of 2025. Sales remained stable at the previous year's level. Domestic sales grew slightly, whereas exports declined somewhat. At the same time, the consortium is systematically focusing on innovation, brand strength and a robust sales promotion programme to bolster its sales in the various national markets.

Stability at the previous year's level

With total sales of 8'353 tonnes, Appenzeller® cheese remained virtually unchanged from the previous year (-0.1%). After the sharp ups and downs of recent years, the 2025 financial year is therefore set to be one of consolidation. The domestic market once again performed well, rising by 1.0% from 4'185 tonnes in the previous year to 4'226 tonnes, in spite of challenging overall market conditions. This highlights the Swiss market's importance as a resilient and key pillar for the brand and sales development of Appenzeller® cheese. Fondue sales were the only segment that experienced difficulties in the domestic market, with sales down 10.9% from the previous year, a decline attributable solely to a reduction in the number of promotional offers by our retail partners.

Continued pressure on export markets – targeted diversification becomes increasingly important

The outlook for exports was mixed. Whereas Germany, the most important market for Appenzeller®, enjoyed growth of 0.6% to 3'186 tonnes, and individual countries such as Canada and parts of Europe recorded significant growth, France (-9.9%) and the USA (-19.6%) had a particularly negative impact on export performance. One of the reasons for this is the ongoing economic uncertainty, increasing price sensitivity among consumers, the continued strengthening of the Swiss franc – particularly against the Euro and the US-dollar – as well as trade policy interventions and regulatory barriers that have made exporting significantly more difficult. Overall, exports dropped from 4'173 tonnes to 4'127 tonnes, a decrease of 1.1%. In contrast to this, the export business for Appenzeller® fondue performed favourably, growing by 1.8%. The momentum of the past financial year underscores the strategic importance of broad international distribution and active risk diversification.

Innovation as a driving force for growth

The brand's innovative strength remains a key factor for success. Appenzellerin® Elegant has successfully established itself as a mild, fruity alternative to the tangy Appenzeller®, and it has become the best-selling speciality in the product range, recording annual sales of approximately 440 tonnes just two years after its launch. Initial findings of market research indicate that Appenzellerin® is attracting a new, generally somewhat younger group of consumers. The launch of Appenzellerin® was also a key factor in the positive sales performance on the German market. The planned international expansion of Appenzellerin® into all other international markets starting in 2026 will tap into additional growth potential. Moreover, the consortium plans to launch a longer-aged Appenzellerin® variety on the Swiss market during 2026, which is likely to appeal to both, young and old.

Production on the decline – quality at a consistently high level

Production volumes fell by 6.3% from 8'756 tonnes in the previous year to 8'206 tonnes in the reporting year, with stock levels also decreasing by 1.2%. Nevertheless, product availability was maintained at all times and Appenzeller® cheese distributors were able to fulfil their delivery commitments throughout the year.

The quality of Appenzeller® remains a hugely important distinguishing feature: with a premium product share of 98.58% across the entire cheese-making year, Appenzeller® continued to perform at the very highest level, a fact also confirmed by its success in international competitions. At the internationally renowned World Cheese Awards (WCA) in Bern, an Appenzeller® took third place in the overall rankings, and at the Käsiade in Hopfgarten, Austria, an Appenzeller® even secured first place, bringing the overall victory back to Eastern Switzerland. These numerous awards are a powerful testament to the outstanding quality of Appenzeller® cheese, which stands up to any comparison. They reflect the great dedication and high level of expertise of our cheesemakers, our dairy farmers and our affineurs. The consortium would like to extend its special thanks to all of them.

A brand with powerful appeal and effective communication

The systematically developed always-on marketing strategy continued to ensure high visibility and strong brand loyalty in 2025. With a reach of nearly 100 million contacts in Switzerland – the brand was televised for 27 weeks – a successful digital campaign, a year-round poster campaign, and targeted activations at the point of sale and in retail stores, the brand's presence was further strengthened. The combination of tradition, the distinctive Appenzeller® brand identity and modern presentation particularly contribute to consolidating the brand's emotional distinctiveness in the long term.

The Appenzeller® cheese consortium continues to focus consistently on effective market development both at home and abroad, on the targeted further development of its innovations, as well as on an efficient cost structure. This creates the conditions for remaining successful in the long term within a challenging market environment. Its clear positioning based on quality, origin and craftsmanship continues to be a key factor in its success.

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