



The History of the Coop Group

—

an enterprise on the move

As at: January 2021



Coop can look back on a history spanning over 150 years. What began as a small consumer cooperative is now an international organization active in retail, wholesale and production.

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1840-1889: Background

The spread of industrialization in the mid-19th century brought radical changes in consumer habits. Factory workers dependent on wages lacked the means to be self-sufficient. In many European countries, this situation led to the establishment of "consumer cooperatives" or "cooperative societies", which sold food to their members at reduced prices. Switzerland's cooperative movement is distinctive in that the cooperative societies were not only set up by workers as self-help organizations but also founded by members of the middle or upper classes (philanthropists).

- 1840 ff. Significant grain price inflation and famine lead to the establishment of "fruit associations", the forerunners to consumer cooperatives. The aim is to purchase grains cheaply and thus make bread at low prices. Poor people, needy workers and widows showing proof of eligibility receive discounted bread.
- 1844 On 21 December 1844, 28 founding members – mostly flannel weavers – open a store in Rochdale, Manchester. They set out the basic principles that become the guideline for the consumer cooperative movement worldwide.
- 1846 A fruit association is set up in Basel and then dissolved in 1847 when the supply situation improves.
- 1847 The "General Society of Workers", according to Hans Müller Switzerland's oldest known consumer cooperative, is established in Basel. This is dissolved in 1859.
- 1850 There are already various consumer cooperatives in the larger towns and cities and in the Canton of Zurich. The "Cooperative Society of Utzenstorf-Bätterkinden" has 100 members and sells bread, flour, maize, lard, butter, oil and some spices.
- 1851 The first factory-based consumer cooperative is set up at the Rieter plant in Niedertöss. The "Société de consommation Fontainemelon" is set up as a "Boulangerie par actions" (joint stock bakery) for bakery products. The Zurich consumer cooperative "Konsumverein Zürich" is founded by members of the "Grütli Society", including Karl Bürkli and Johann Jakob Treichler. The oldest genuinely successful consumer cooperative.
- 1852 Rural consumer cooperatives – the "Zürcher Landkonsumvereine" – are set up in Rüslikon, Affoltern, Altstetten, Brüttsellen, Rorbas, Schwamendingen, Wollishofen, Horgen and Thalwil.
- 1853 Thirty-four consumer cooperatives hold their first conference in Zurich. An attempt to establish a loose union is unsuccessful.
- 1864 Textile manufacturer Jean Jenny-Riffel sets up the Schwanden (Canton of Glarus) consumer cooperative. It is the first in Switzerland to operate according to the principles of the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers. Jean Jenny-Riffel had been personally convinced of their benefits while in Rochdale. The articles of association even took over the original English designations.

- 1865 The Allgemeiner Consumverein (ACV), or general consumer association, is established in Basel by socially-minded entrepreneurs.
- Elsewhere, particularly in Berne and Zurich, worker organizations set up special worker consumer cooperatives to provide their members with access to inexpensive food.
- 1869 Olten conference of the Zurich, Basel, Berne, Grenchen, Biel / Bienne and Olten consumer cooperatives. This second attempt to set up a union of Swiss consumer cooperatives also fails.
- 1883 The cooperative is established as a legal form under the first Swiss Code of Obligations, encouraging new cooperatives to set up and making it easier to do so from now on.

1890-1914: Concentration of resources and growing success

- 1890 11 / 12 January: 42 delegates resolve to establish the VSK (federation of Swiss consumer cooperatives) in Olten on the initiative of the "Société coopérative suisse de consommation" in Geneva and the ACV in Basel. The ACV in Basel is appointed as lead section. Twenty-seven consumer cooperatives are represented, with five immediately becoming members. An upcoming referendum on a new customs tariff encourages the cooperatives to set up the umbrella organization.
- 1892 A central unit for product sourcing is set up at Steinentorstrasse 24 in Basel and a first, initially part-time administrator hired. An earlier investigation showed considerable and unjustified differences between the various cooperatives' cost prices for goods of the same quality.
- 1893 The federation of Swiss consumer cooperatives (VSK) is converted into a cooperative.
- 1896 Participation in the Swiss National Exhibition in Geneva. Hans Müller is appointed as the first federation secretary.
- 1897 The federation of Swiss consumer cooperatives publishes the first issue of the "Correspondenzblatt", a publication for the cooperatives that appears every 14 days.
- 1899 Creation of district associations.
- 1900 At the end of the year, the "Correspondenzblatt" is replaced by the "Schweiz. Konsum-Verein", which appears weekly in two languages. In 1901, the Glarus Delegate Assembly decides that each federation member must subscribe for at least as many copies as its most senior authority has members. The aim of this internal publication is to establish close ties between the central purchasing unit and the associations.
- Acquisition of a warehouse in Wülflingen.
- 1902 Publication of the first issue of the "Genossenschaftliche Volksblatt", now the Coop Press. First issue of the French-language Coopération follows in 1904 and its Italian counterpart Cooperazione in 1906.
- Purchase of premises at Thiersteinerallee 14 in Basel.
- After serving as auditor and assistant to the federation secretary, Bernhard Jaeggi is appointed as co-administrator of the VSK head office.
- 1905 Establishment of a chemical laboratory for food analysis.
- 1907 Opening of the newly built Pratteln warehouse, which is equipped with a coffee-roasting plant and a maize and spice mill.
- Establishment of the association of Swiss consumer-cooperative administrators.

- 1909 Creation of a dedicated pension fund (Versicherungsanstalt Schweizerischer Konsumvereine (VASK)), now CPV/CAP Pensionskasse Coop.
- 1910 A dedicated printing works is set up in the VSK's head office building.
- 1912 Decision to build a shoe factory, which will become a VSK department.
Establishment of a VSK banking department.
Purchase of Stadtmühle Zürich (Switzerland's largest mill) by the newly founded MSK (Mills cooperative of Swiss consumer cooperative societies).
- 1914 First collective employment contract between the VSK and the federation of trade and transport workers.
The Chocolate War: attempted boycott by the chocolate cartel.
Agreement with Bell AG on streamlined meat procurement, termed the "Bellallianz". The former federation secretary Hans Müller expresses strong criticism of the VSK ("alliance or misalliance?"). The VSK responds by issuing a publication on Hans Müller entitled "Ein moderner Herostrat" (A latter-day Herostratus).
Introduction of the "Ringfrei" and "CO-OP" brands. The term Co-op is entered in the trademark register. Co-op is an abbreviation of the French word "Coopération" and stands for cooperative, cooperation. Initially, the Coop brand name is purely a product brand name. Only later does it become the umbrella brand for sales outlets, products and services.

1915-1939: Full-scale expansion of the federation

- 1915–1921 Completion of numerous mergers.
- 1916 Establishment of MESK (Milk procurement cooperative of the Swiss consumer cooperatives).
- 1917 Establishment of the mutual insurer "Schweizerische Volksfürsorge" in close cooperation with trade union representatives.

Establishment of a department for trustee activities (control functions, restructurings, mergers, liquidations).
- 1916–1918 The VSK buys eight farms.
- 1918 Establishment of the SGG (Swiss cooperative society for vegetable production).
- 1919 Founding of the furniture cooperative "Genossenschaft für Möbelvermittlung".
- 1921 "Guidelines on the further development of the cooperative movement", a pamphlet written by Jaeggi and Munding expressing opposition to further mergers.
- 1919–1921 Official opening of the cooperative-based housing estate "Siedlungsgenossenschaft Freidorf" during the International Cooperative Alliance Conference in Basel. The event is attended by Swiss President Schulthess; the architect is Hannes Meyer.
- 1922 Establishment of the "Consumer-cooperative women's alliance", which from 1969 onwards is called Coop-Frauenbund.
- 1923 Bernhard Jaeggi sets up the "Genossenschaftliches Seminar" (Cooperative seminar) foundation. This is later renamed the "Coop-Bildungszentrum" and then the "Coop-Tagungszentrum" (Coop Training Centre). Training activities begin in 1926 with a two-week course on the cooperative society at the "Cooperative House" in Freidorf.
- 1927 Establishment of the "Bank für Genossenschaften und Gewerkschaften" (Bank for cooperatives and trade unions) in collaboration with the federation of trade unions. In 1928, this is renamed "Genossenschaftliche Zentralbank" (Central cooperative bank). It takes over responsibility for the business previously handled by the VSK's banking department.

Opening of member holiday homes in Weggis (Canton of Lucerne) and Jongny (Canton of Vaud).
- 1933 The government ban on the establishment of branches by big retailers also restricts the expansion of consumer cooperatives.
- 1934 Bernhard Jaeggi steps down as President and Member of the Administrative Board (Chairman of the Board). Jaeggi had played a key role in shaping the VSK's destiny since 1908. He retains ties with the VSK as a member of the Supervisory Board.

1937

Jaeggi publishes his hypotheses on cooperative-based merchandise sourcing:

1. Small and medium-sized societies should be supplied by large neighbouring cooperatives on the basis of supply agreements aimed at saving on superfluous warehouses and transport costs.
2. Cooperatives should be merged, providing the preconditions are met.
3. The product range should be limited, with preference being given to the CO-OP brand.
4. The product ranges, prices and patronage refund rates should be as uniform as possible in cooperatives operating within a single economic or geographic area.
5. Cooperatives should have an active pricing policy, even if this means reducing patronage refunds.

The revised Swiss law on cooperative societies comes into force. This also requires changes to the VSK and standard articles of association. As a result, the VSK is transformed from a cooperative society into a federation of cooperatives.

Establishment of St. Johann Lagerhaus- und Schiffahrtsgesellschaft (SILAG), mainly by the VSK and MSK (Mills cooperative of Swiss consumer cooperative societies). In the same year, SILAG puts a grain silo, a coal bunker and a warehouse into operation.

1939

Outbreak of the Second World War and wartime economy.

Opening of the Mümliswil children's home foundation by Bernhard and Pauline Jaeggi. The children's home receives hundreds of children a year. In many cases, the consumer cooperatives bear the costs. They wish to do something to help families of loyal cooperative members on modest incomes.

1940-1964: Searching for new approaches

- 1941 Introduction of a standard chart of accounts for consumer cooperatives to enable inter-cooperative comparisons.
- 1941–1943 Numerous activities in the context of the "Wahlen" Plan to achieve self-sufficiency in food. Creation of a "Secretariat for Agricultural Expansion", which embarks on an intensive propaganda campaign among the federation cooperatives and their members, the aim being to prompt them to work in earnest to expand farming.
- The VSK's travelling exhibition "Plant more or starve".
- 1942 Establishment of the Coop Sponsorship programme to support inhabitants of the country's mountain regions.
- 1948 The LVZ (Zurich foodstuffs association) opens the first self-service store at Stauffacherstrasse 20 in Zurich.
- 1950 The number of cooperatives peaks at 572.
- 1954 Formulation of propositions on the construction of regional warehouses. These reflect the requirement for consolidation, but without the need to change the structure of the federation and therefore revise the articles of association. Thirty warehouse and distribution centres are envisaged.
- 1956 Formation of a working group on standardized patronage refund stamps.
- Official opening of the Coop training centre in MuttENZ.
- 1960 The number of sales outlets peaks at 3,320.
- Introduction of the Coop logo.
- 1961 / 1962 Construction of the consumer goods centre in Wangen.
- 1962 The Dahomey / Benin relief organization is set up to support development cooperation projects.

1965-1990: Radical restructuring (1)

- 1965 New chart of accounts for all federation members, introduction of budgeting.
First sales plan for the whole of Switzerland.
Launch of TV advertising.
- 1967 Abolition of retail price maintenance, resulting in the abolition of the retail prices prescribed by producers. The pricing policy has to be adapted.
- 1969 First merger plan. Goal: to reduce the number of cooperative societies from 400 to between 30 and 40 by 1975.
Seven-point programme entitled "Coop Group planning and implementation":
 1. Mergers
 2. Efficient network of sales outlets
 3. Centralized management of product ranges
 4. Reduction in the number of warehouses
 5. Investment and financial planning
 6. Personnel and training policy
 7. Reorganization of headquarters and the organizational structure.The VSK becomes Coop Schweiz (Coop Switzerland).
- 1970 Establishment of industrial bakery Panofina AG.
- 1971 Coop Switzerland becomes a member of Intercoop, a purchasing alliance of European consumer cooperatives.
- 1973 Opening of the Kirchberg cheese centre.
- 1974 Patronage refunds (stamps) are fully abolished and therefore net prices introduced.
- 1978 The first corporate profile is drawn up to form the basis of corporate policy.
- 1979 Second merger plan. Goal: 40 regional cooperative societies and 18 distribution centres by 1982 (1979: 67 regional cooperative societies, 1983: 40 regional cooperative societies).
Establishment of the Coop Consumer Service.
- 1980 Acquisition of Radio TV Steiner AG.
- 1981 Acquisition of around 40% of the shares in Popularis Tours AG.
First overall multi-year plan for the Coop Group.
- 1983 Introduction of employee co-determination. Appointment of two staff representatives to Coop Switzerland's Board of Directors.
Development of Coop Service, a repair unit.
- 1984 Establishment of Coop Baucenter AG.

- 1985 Opening of the Coop Flower Centre in Pratteln.
- 1986 Third merger plan. Goal: 18 regional societies with integrated distribution centres.
Construction of a fully automated high-bay warehouse in Wangen.
Coop campaigns successfully against a referendum that opposes the phasing-out of sugar subsidies.
- 1988 Launch of Tell, Coop's own cartel-free brand of beer.
- 1989 Market launch of eco products and, later on, the own-label sustainability brand Coop Oecoplan.
Coop campaigns successfully against a referendum that opposes the phasing-out of subsidies to wine-growers.
- 1990 Coop Switzerland celebrates its centenary.
Opening of the expanded Coop Training Centre in Muttenz.
Sale of majority stake in Popularis Tours AG to Kuoni.
Sale of majority stake in Graphische Betriebe Coop (GBC) to Birkhäuser AG.
Opening of the new building for food quality control in Pratteln.
In order to operate in the Alsace consumer markets, Coop Basel and Coop Alsace establish Alcoba.

1991-2000: Radical restructuring (2)

- 1991 A majority interest is acquired in Konsumverein Zürich, which is then fully taken over by Coop Switzerland in 1995.
- Coop Switzerland joins international purchasing alliance Eurogroup.
- Coop-Mühle Zürich is now trading as Stadtmühle CMZ. Volg acquires a minority interest of 11%.
- Transfer of juice producer Bernische Grossmosterei Worb to Pomdor.
- 1992 Launch of Cooperación / Max Havelaar.
- Interdiscount acquires a minority interest in Radio TV Steiner and takes over its sourcing activities. Interdiscount and Coop Switzerland enter into a cooperation agreement.
- 1993 Launch of the own-label brands Coop Naturaplan and Coop Naturaline; repositioning of the own-label brand Coop Oecoplan.
- Introduction of Coop Market Group Management.
- 1994 Genossenschaftliche Zentralbank AG is renamed Bank Coop.
- Acquisition of an interest in IMPO Import Parfumerie.
- Takeover of the Toptip furniture stores.
- Takeover of the bulk and industrial detergents business of Steinfels, which henceforth operates under the name Steinfels Cleaning Systems. Renamed Steinfels Swiss in 2013.
- Acquisition of an interest in Domaine Guyon (a winery in Burgundy).
- Sale of Bebié AG (management buyout).
- 1995 Extensive rollout of scanner-equipped cash registers; Coop Berne migrates ten stores to the new checkout system. The project will be completed at the beginning of 2000.
- The new banana ripening plant in Kaiseraugst commences operations.
- 1996 Coop Switzerland's Board of Directors decides on a new management structure; the former committee of equals constituting the executive body is to be replaced by an executive board and chief executive officer.
- Coop takes over various warehouse sites from Jelmoli.
- The K3000 supermarkets are integrated into Coop. The discounter Billi continues to be run by KVZ until it is sold in 1998.
- Coop Switzerland acquires the entire domestic operations of the Interdiscount Group and combines the Group with RTV Steiner AG to form Simeco Holding, making Coop the market leader in the Swiss consumer electronics market.

The shoe chain Diana is discontinued, and the shoe business focused on the department store channel.

Coop Winterthur sells the non-food section of its Coop City department store to rival Manor even though Coop Switzerland would like to continue to run the department store itself. This event highlights the problems with Coop's two-tier structure.

1997 The Coop Group Executive Committee is equipped with decision-making powers and replaces the largely consultative Directors' Conference.

New "Regioforte" merger project: the number of cooperative societies is to be reduced to between six and eight.

Coop Switzerland's full-scale reorganization begins: reengineering programmes Elan 1 and 2, new Coop supply chain management and Coop Retail System IT project.

Introduction of the Coopprofit Card.

1998 "Regioforte" fails in the face of resistance from individual cooperative societies. The Board Committee sets up a working group to conduct a review of Coop's problems and propose possible solutions. The outcome is the "CoopForte" Vision, which entails the merger of all Coop societies and Coop Switzerland into a single cooperative society.

Introduction of Coop Category Management.

Transfer of the Billi discount chain to the retailer Denner.

Sale of the Kirchberg cheese centre to Emmi.

1999 In June, the board chairmen of the Coop societies and the members of the Coop Group Executive Committee vote unanimously in favour of the CoopForte Vision and decide to invite the boards of directors of all Coop societies to an information meeting followed by a separate decision-making procedure. This meeting is held in Montreux and ends on 20 August with a unanimous "yes" from all directors to implement the merger of the 14 cooperative societies and Coop Switzerland into one society, Coop, on 1 January 2001. By early October, the Delegate Assemblies of all Coop societies approve the merger unanimously or by an overwhelming majority.

Sale of Arni AG to Kambly SA.

Merger of Swissmill and Panofina with Coop Switzerland.

2000 Merger of Coop Tele and Freiburger Allgemeine. At organizational level, they are amalgamated with Coop Leben. The three insurance companies begin to operate under the joint name "Coop Versicherung".

Introduction of the new structures under CoopForte. Preparation of a new corporate profile, key sub-strategies and a modern visual identity (including a new logo).

The majority interest in Bank Coop is transferred to Basler Kantonalbank.

Introduction of the Coop Supercard.



The first Coop Vitality shop opens in St. Gallen.

The first Coop Pronto shop (stand-alone) opens in Montreux.

Launch of Coop's first online shopping service: Galerie du Vin.

Sale of the SGG (Swiss cooperative society for vegetable production).

Transfer of the minority interest in Coop Rechtsschutz AG and CAG Anlagefondsleitung AG to Coop Leben.

A collective employment contract valid throughout Switzerland is entered into with the existing national contracting parties.

2001-2010: A single hand at the helm

- 2001
- The CoopForte merger comes into effect on 1 January: 14 Coop societies and Coop Switzerland combine to form the new Coop. The cooperative legal form is retained.
 - Introduction of the new Coop logo.
 - The first Coop Delegate Assembly convenes on 11 January, exactly 111 years to the day after the founding of Coop Switzerland.
 - Coop's entire real estate portfolio and activities are transferred to Coop Immobilien AG (CIAG).
 - Coop's Logistics Strategy 2005 enters into force.
 - Radio TV Steiner is integrated into Interdiscount, and Simeco Management AG, Radio TV Steiner AG, Interdiscount AG and Cinematic AG merge to form Interdiscount AG.
 - Launch of the "Remote Ordering" pilot project in the Greater Zurich Area.
 - SILAG Rhein Terminal AG is integrated into Coop.
 - The first megastore opens in Crissier (Canton of Vaud).
 - Coop acquires a 50% interest in Betty Bossi Verlags AG (from Ringier).
 - Coop's flagship labels Coop Naturaplan, Coop Naturaline, Coop Oecoplan and Cooperación / Max Havelaar post sales of over CHF 1 billion.
- 2002
- All Coop supermarkets receive the new Coop logo in line with the new sales outlet concept.
 - Six new Coop megastores open.
 - Acquisition of the EPA chain of department stores. Commercially successful EPA stores are remodelled in the period to 2004 and then operated as Coop City department stores.
 - Collaboration with Pro Specie Rara begins. Introduction of Pro Specie Rara products to preserve original, all-but-forgotten plant species and breeds of farm animal.
 - Launch of the Lifestyle flagship label for calorie reduced foods.
 - Coop launches a new line of fresh convenience food under the Betty Bossi brand, thereby becoming the market leader in fresh convenience products.
 - The Executive Committee approves a guideline containing minimum requirements for the environmentally, socially and ethically compatible procurement of all products for the Coop Group.
 - During Expo.02, Coop has a presence at the Neuchâtel arteplage with its "Manna" pavilion.
 - Sale of SILAG Rhein Terminal to ULTRA-BRAG.

2003

By purchasing Waro AG on 1 January, Coop acquires attractive, large-scale sites for the expansion of the Coop supermarkets and megastores and the Building & Hobby centres. A total of 26 Coop sales outlets appear on the former Waro sites.

The opening of the Castione (Ticino) distribution centre marks a milestone in the implementation of the logistics strategy; it replaces three old distribution centres in Ticino.

Coop celebrates ten years of Coop Naturaplan with promotions at the sales outlets, publicity campaigns, a symposium with Federal Councillor Mortiz Leuenberger and a party for employees.

Coop sets up the Coop Naturaplan Fund and in the period to 2012 provides CHF 10 million a year for sustainability-centred activities and projects.

The e-commerce business (remote ordering) is extended to the Basel and Berne metropolitan areas; Lausanne and Geneva follow later on. The offering comprises some 3 500 items drawn from all product groups.

The Coop flagship labels reach sales of over CHF 1.3 billion.

2004

With effect from 1 January, all manufacturing and retail companies previously operated as wholly owned subsidiaries are merged into the Coop Cooperative. The former subsidiaries, now divisions, continue to operate independently in the market and are run as profit centres within the corresponding Coop business units.

All purchasing activities in the food and non-food segment are combined in the newly established CCM / Purchasing Business Unit.

The Logistics and IT / Manufacturing Business Units are combined to form the new Logistics / IT / Manufacturing Business Unit.

Coop exercises the call option on the remaining 60% of the EPA shares.

Coop launches a new line of regional organic specialities under the Coop Naturaplan flagship label.

In collaboration with Hiestand AG, Coop founds the jointly owned subsidiary HiCoPain AG for the production of frozen dough products.

The Argo hosiery factory discontinues operations following an attempt in the previous year to keep the Möhlin site competitive by outsourcing the knitting and sewing operations.

In September, the first Coop Group sustainability report appears, providing a detailed insight into the Company's environmental, economic and social achievements.

In November, Coop sets an example by reducing the price of 50 branded items for everyday use by 10% to 20%.

For the first time, customers are able to top up on prepaid credit for their mobile phone at any Coop sales outlet cash register.

2005

German retail group Rewe and Coop establish Transgourmet Holding AG, a joint venture in catering supplies for Switzerland and France. In the process, the cash & carry business Prodega / Growa Cash+Carry and the wholesale supplies companies Howeg and Bell Gastro Service in Switzerland and Aldis Service Plus in France are integrated into a joint venture. Coop and Rewe each hold a 50% interest in the joint venture.

Retroactively as of 1 January 2005, Transgourmet Holding AG acquires the French wholesale supplies company Prodirest from Carrefour.

Coop becomes the first retailer to enter into a direct collaboration with the global dietary organization Weight Watchers and under the same name offers a range of foods low in fat, sugar and calories.

The first self-scanning pilot project in the Swiss retail market begins at the Coop supermarket in Frenkendorf.

Launch of the Prix Garantie low-price line.

Launch of the Fine Food own-label brand comprising exclusive specialities.

Coop Naturaline celebrates its tenth anniversary and the Coop Laboratory its centenary.

The Coop Cooperative Delegate Assembly resolves to reduce the Board of Directors from 17 most recently (2001: 23) to nine members.

At the end of 2005, "Coop Studio", a weekly feature of Swiss TV for 27 years (called: "Wednesday Studio") is discontinued.

2006

Acquisition of Christ, the Swiss leader in watches and jewellery.

Coop combines its existing online supermarket and online wine shop, thereby creating coop@home, Switzerland's largest online offering.

The international purchasing alliance Coopernic is established together with four partners in the European retail sector.

Launch of the Free from range comprising gluten- and lactose-free products for people with specific food intolerances.

Launch of the Délicorn range of natural products offering a varied alternative to meat.

Launch of the exclusive collaboration with Slow Food Switzerland.

Coop launches the Supercardplus, Switzerland's first credit card with no annual fee.

Coop and WWF Switzerland enter into an innovative and exemplary partnership to promote environmental protection and sustainable consumption.

2007

Together with its partners in the European purchasing alliance Coopernic, Coop acquires 80% of Lithuanian group IKI, which operates over 200 supermarkets in Lithuania and Latvia and is the number three player in the Baltic market.

Launch of the Coop Naturafarm flagship label. This offers meat products and eggs produced under humane conditions, which were previously sold under the Coop Naturaplan label. As a result, Coop Naturaplan is used solely for organic products.

Introduction of the Pro Montagna range of products produced and finished in Swiss mountain regions. A portion of the sales price goes to Coop Aid for Mountain Regions.

Introduction of the own-label brand Jamadu comprising products that offer children a balanced diet appropriate to their age.

Introduction of slow food products. The range comprises traditional, sustainably produced specialities from around the globe.

The Coop food profile on the front of the own brand packaging provides transparency in the form of prominent information on the nutritional content per portion.

Establishment of a CO₂ offset fund, which has up to CHF 2 million a year with which to offset the Coop Group's flights and air freight journeys.

Acquisition of the electrical household appliances and consumer electronics company Dipl. Ing. Fust AG (including Service 7000 AG and netto24 AG) with over 150 sales outlets.

The Coop Group sustainability report appears for the second time since 2004 and is henceforth published each year together with the annual report.

2008

Acquisition of twelve large-scale sales outlets from Carrefour, which withdraws from the Swiss market. Within just a few weeks, the Carrefour sales outlets are converted into Coop megastores, almost doubling the existing network of megastores.

The Coop-owned online shops netto24 and Microspot.ch join forces. Their offering comprises over 65 000 consumer electronics and household items.

The online supermarket coop@home now supplies to the whole of Switzerland, including its most remote valleys. Deliveries are carried out by Swiss Post.

Toomaxx – the purchasing alliance formed by Coop, Rewe Group and Baumax – expands to include the Finnish home improvement company Rautakesko. Toomaxx thus becomes the third-largest buyer of building supplies in Europe.

A pioneer and trendsetter in the field of sustainability, Coop takes a decision unique in the Swiss retail sector to become CO₂-neutral in 15 years. A plan to achieve CO₂-neutral production of all items made from Coop Naturaline organic cotton by the end of 2012 is an integral part of this vision.

The Coop Sustainability Fund, born out of the Coop Naturaplan Fund, now has CHF 12 million a year at its disposal. By 2011, the amount will increase to CHF 15 million a year.

Having substantially reduced prices on a total of 120 Prix Garantie items, from September Coop guarantees rock-bottom prices across the entire Prix Garantie range. This means that all items on this value label will cost as little as, or less than, the lowest-price products offered by the main competitors on the Swiss market.

Bell, the meat processor in which Coop is the majority shareholder, starts to expand abroad by buying companies with sites in Germany, France, Spain, eastern Europe and Belgium.

2009

Coop expands its collaboration with the German Rewe Group in wholesale catering supplies and establishes a joint venture under the name Transgourmet Holding S.E., in which each holds a 50% interest. Transgourmet Holding S.E. based in Neu-Isenburg, Germany, is Europe's second-largest cash & carry and food service company.

Coop cuts prices on brand-name items sharply to match the prices charged by the discounters. Over 600 leading brand-name products become 12% cheaper on average. Coop invests CHF 100 million to do this.

In light of the aim to become "CO₂-neutral by 2023", air-freighted imports of fruit and vegetables are reduced to an absolute minimum. Environmentally-dubious green asparagus flown in from overseas is no longer sold.

At the Coop Delegate Assembly in Lugano, Anton Felder, Chairman of the Board of Directors, concludes his career at Coop after more than 32 years. He is succeeded by Irene Kaufmann.

Coop-Personalversicherung CPV/CAP celebrates its centenary. It was born out of the Versicherungsanstalt Schweizer Konsumvereine, one of the first private disability insurance providers for employees in Switzerland.

Coop Building & Hobby raises the bar in energy conservation and now sells turnkey houses built to Minergie P standard.

Opening of Tropenhaus Frutigen. This destination offers relaxation, knowledge transfer and enjoyment under one roof.

2010

Acquisition of 100% of the share capital of Railcare AG. Through unaccompanied combined transport (UCT), the transport company offers a flexible and environmentally friendly method of transporting goods.

Acquisition of The Body Shop Switzerland AG, which continues to operate as an independent company with 37 stores across Switzerland.

Launch of the own-brand label Primagusto offering great tasting fresh fruit and vegetables.



Coop addresses the specific shopping needs of families with children by establishing the Hello Family Club.

Opening of Tropenhaus Wolhusen.

Prices are cut on around 500 own-brand items.

Under the new Logistics and Bakeries Strategy 2015+, Coop invests in Switzerland as a business location. The implementation of the strategy also leads to a reduction in annual CO₂ emissions of over 10 000 tonnes.

The Coop Group's total sales top CHF 20 billion for the first time.

From 2011: Active in retail, wholesale and production

2011

Acquisition of 100% of Transgourmet Holding S.E., Europe's second-largest cash & carry and food service company. In future, Coop will therefore focus on two strategic business areas: retail and wholesale / production.

Rewe-Foodservice, a Transgourmet Group company, acquires Vreriksen Foodservice GmbH & Co. KG, one of the largest specialists in catering supplies in Germany.

Acquisition of Pearlwater Mineralquellen AG in Valais. This makes Coop independent in terms of mineral water purchasing.

Bell, Switzerland's largest meat processor, and Hilcona combine their complementary activities in the fresh convenience food segment within Hilcona AG. Bell AG takes a 49% stake in Hilcona and will acquire a further 2% of the capital in 2015.

The Coop Group celebrates the tenth anniversary of CoopForte, which entailed the merger of 14 regional societies and Coop Switzerland into a single cooperative society.

On 1 September, Hansueli Loosli, the long-serving Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Coop Group, becomes Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Coop Group. He is succeeded as Chairman of the Executive Committee by Joos Sutter, who has been a Coop Group Executive Committee member since 2010.

When, following tough negotiations, large multinationals refuse to pass on their massive currency gains, Coop takes a unique step in its history by removing the first brand-name items from the range. The delistings have an effect and Coop passes on the resulting price cuts to its customers in full.

Prices are cut on 4 500 own-label and brand-name items.

The independent rating agency Oekom Research singles out Coop as the world's most sustainable retailer.

Lebensmittel Zeitung awards Coop the "Goldener Zuckerhut", the European food industry's leading award.

In 2011, sales from Coop's own-label sustainability brands and quality labels exceed the 2 billion-mark for the first time.

2012

Hilcona, in which Bell AG holds a 49% interest, acquires Gastro Star AG, thereby strengthening its market position as an end-to-end provider of fresh convenience food.

Transgourmet France, a Transgourmet Group company, acquires Eurocash based in Schiltigheim, Alsace. Eurocash has a wide range of products for caterers / restaurants, bakeries and patisseries.

The Coop Vitality pharmacies introduce the first medicines from the new own-label line.

Coop re-emphasizes its commitment to Switzerland as a business location: by 2016, it will build a new production and logistics site in Pratteln (Canton of Basel-Landschaft) over an area of 80 000 m². This will accommodate the manufacturing companies Chocolats Halba, Sunray and Cave as well as logistics.

Coop's sustainable energy and CO₂ management garners two awards – the EHI Energy Management Award and the Swiss Solar Prize 2012.

Acquisition of 100% of Betty Bossi AG; expansion of fresh convenience food.

2013

The merger of Prodega / Growa and Howeg, a Transgourmet Group company, gives the Swiss catering and restaurant industry the first provider to combine cash & carry and wholesale supplies.

Coop Naturaplan turns 20. Coop celebrates the birthday of Switzerland's leading organic brand with numerous anniversary activities.

The Coop Delegate Assembly makes two important decisions: the administration of the Nordwestschweiz and Zentralschweiz-Zürich sales regions will be amalgamated with effect from 1 January 2014 and move to Schafisheim (Canton of Aargau) at the end of 2016. Coop also reorganizes the Retail, Wholesale and Production Business Areas under the mantle of the Coop Group Cooperative.

The foundation stone of the extension to the Coop Distribution Centre at Schafisheim, Canton of Aargau, is laid. Switzerland's most extensive private-sector building site will eventually accommodate a large logistics building and the country's biggest bakery.

Launch of the own-label sustainability brand Ünique; fruit and vegetables that look different from the norm gain a place on supermarket shelves.

Through CityCargo Genève, a unique freight transport project, Coop now delivers its goods to the centre of Geneva by rail, saving 1,128 tonnes of CO₂ a year.

Launch of Karma, the own-label brand offering fresh vegetarian convenience products based on recipes from around the globe.

Coop subsidiary Bell AG has a new manufacturing facility for charcuterie specialities at the Cheseaux site.

2014

The Coop Cooperative celebrates its 150 anniversary. In the same year, the Coop brand turns 100.

On 1 January 2014, Rewe-Foodservice and Fegro / Selgros Cash+Carry join forces to become a joint company operating under the Transgourmet Central and Eastern Europe umbrella brand. The previous sales brand Rewe-Foodservice will now operate under the Transgourmet label. As of 1 April 2014, Transgourmet Group company Howeg also operates in the Swiss market under the Transgourmet name.

Acquisition of Nettoshop AG, Switzerland's leading online provider of electrical household appliances.

Together with European retailers Colruyt (Belgium), Conad (Italy) and Rewe Group (Germany), the Coop Group sets up the new strategic alliance Core based in Brussels. Core has the legal form of a Belgian cooperative.

Acquisition of Marché Restaurants Schweiz AG, Switzerland's leading transport catering company with 28 catering / restaurant operations.

Funding for the Coop Sustainability Fund increases to CHF 16.5 million a year. The Fund now supports projects that benefit the community and employees as well.

2015

Acquisition of 100% of Eurogroup Far East Ltd. Eurogroup Far East offers great potential for the purchase of high-quality ranges at attractive prices for all formats in the Coop Group.

Transgourmet acquires the majority of Sump & Stammer International Food Supply. The Hamburg-based company specializes in supplying cruise ships and international hotel chains.

Launch of the "Actions not words" initiative providing transparent and comprehensive information about Coop's sustainability-related activities.

Coop cuts the price of over 14 000 products in response to the Swiss National Bank's decision to abolish the minimum exchange rate of CHF 1.20 to the euro. At the same time, it calls on its suppliers to pass on the currency gains in full. When foreign magazine publishers fail to heed this call, Coop delists their magazines. This measure soon proves effective.

Bell exercises the call option on a further 2% of Hilcona and, with a 51% interest, becomes the majority shareholder.

Coop is entering into an official partnership with the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) for the period 2015–2018.

Transgourmet takes over 100% of the shares in EGV Unna AG, one of the leading specialists for supplies to wholesalers in Germany.

Coop and the partners in the former Core purchasing alliance (Colruyt, Belgium; Conad, Italy) join the Alidis purchasing alliance whose members are Edeka (Germany), Groupement des Mousquetaires (France) and Eroski (Spain). Alidis is thus the largest international alliance in Europe.

Launch of the new "Coop to go" in-store concept for out-of-home dining.

Coop and Swisscom, together with Siroop.ch, are establishing the first completely open online marketplace in Switzerland, selling products of local, regional and national merchants in one place.

Transgourmet takes over 100% of the shares in Frischeparadies-Gruppe, Germany's leading provider of high-quality foods and delicatessen articles in the delivery and cash & carry segment. The acquisition of the shares will go ahead subject to approval by the competition authorities.

2016

Transgourmet takes over the whole of Austrian-based C+C Pfeiffer. The company is the leader in the Austrian wholesale catering supplies segment. With the takeover, Transgourmet is setting up a fourth national company – Transgourmet Österreich.

Bell takes over the Austrian poultry specialist Hubers as well as Eisberg, based in Dänikon, which specializes in convenience salads.

Majority stake of 51% at the Update Fitness group. The fitness services provider is the market leader in eastern Switzerland.

Coop and Swisscom conclude the regional test phase of Siroop.ch, which has been running since November 2015, and launch the online marketplace throughout German-speaking Switzerland.

By establishing the new “IT / Production / Services” business unit these three areas gain a seat on the Executive Committee and take on an even greater strategic importance.

The new, ultra-modern Coop logistics centre in Schafisheim commences operations. It comprises the biggest bakery and confectionery unit in Switzerland, a new national distribution centre for frozen products and a regional distribution centre. Coop is setting new standards in terms of logistics and sustainability with this pioneering construction project.

Betty Bossi and Marché Restaurants Schweiz AG launch "Zopf & Zöpfli", a new take-away concept with different types of freshly baked plaited bread.

Bell Switzerland takes over the Valais-based charcuterie specialist Cher-Mignon SA as well as Geiser AG, a supplier to Swiss caterers.

Opening of Switzerland's first public hydrogen filling station.

The first two Coop supermarkets based on the new 2025+ store concept open for business.

Transgourmet Switzerland expands its wine expertise by taking over Casa del Vino SA and Weinkeller Riegger AG.

2017

The completion of Coop's production centre – Salina Raurica in Pratteln – sees the conclusion of the logistics and bakery strategy (LoBOS).

Acquisition of the Swiss Aperto Group, which has a strong position in convenience outlets at railway stations.

Launch of Fooby, a completely new culinary platform, offering customers inspiration for cooking, dining and enjoyment on all channels.

Bell AG becomes Bell Food Group AG, which now comprises Bell, Hilcona and Eisberg.

The Pro Montagna own-label sustainability brand for authentic products from Swiss mountain regions celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Transgourmet Central and Eastern Europe acquires 70% of the shares in Team Beverage AG, one of the leading distribution, purchasing, marketing and service platforms for the beverage industry in Germany.

Opening of the first "Karma" shop. The completely new store concept offers the widest range of purely vegetarian and vegan products in Switzerland.

Following an international review of around 100 categories, the Coop Group beats off competition from 147 retailers from all over the world to be named "the world's most sustainable retailer".

Coop is the first retailer in Switzerland to offer insect-based food.

Transgourmet Central and Eastern Europe acquires Russian company Global Foods – one of the leading service providers in the field of wholesale catering supplies in Russia.

The completion of Coop's production centre – Salina Raurica in Pratteln – sees the conclusion of the logistics and bakery strategy (LoBOS). The production centre houses the production facilities for Chocolats Halba / Sunray, Cave's wine bottling plant and the most modern privately-owned quality assurance laboratory in Switzerland.

Coop launches a new specialist format "Sapori d'Italia" for authentic Italian products, some of which are prepared fresh in store.

Coop opens its first megastore based on the new 2025+ store design concept in Seewen.

Transgourmet Switzerland announces the acquisition of wine retailer Zanini SA and wine producer Vinattieri Ticinesi SA, which will merge into the newly founded Zanini Vinattieri SA on 5 January 2018.

2018

The Bell Food Group acquires the companies Hügli Holding AG and Sylvain & Co., thus continuing the expansion of its Convenience segment. This division now contributes around 25% to Bell Food Group's sales.

The Bell Food Group takes up a stake in the Dutch start-up company Mosa Meat, a world leader in the development of beef from cell cultures.

The Transgourmet Group continues to expand its fresh produce expertise. Transgourmet Central and Eastern Europe acquires Bochum-based Niggemann Food Frischemarkt GmbH. Transgourmet Switzerland expands its seafood competence, acquiring Polar Comestibles, based in Reinach, Basel-Landschaft, and Braschler's Comestibles Import AG, based in Zurich.

Having introduced the Sapori d'Italia store format, Coop starts selling products under this brand name in its stores.

Coop assumes full control of Siroop and acquires the 50% share package from Swisscom. Microspot and Siroop are merged to form a single brand in order to benefit from joint know-how and the companies' respective market positions.

By opening a fully automated online logistics centre in Jegenstorf, Coop expands Microspot to become a central non-food platform for online trade and also strengthens Interdiscount in terms of delivery speed.

Coop introduces a new lifestyle furnishing format under the name Livique, based on the Toptip format. Lumimart undergoes a comprehensive re-branding.

2019

Coop opens the first FOOBY store in the former Kursaal Théâtre in Lausanne. As with the eponymous culinary platform, the focus here is on culinary craft, regional produce and sustainability.

Together with five major partners, Coop establishes the “Day of good deeds”. In this way, Coop aims to motivate people to do as many good deeds as possible, thus generating positive momentum throughout Switzerland.

Transgourmet Österreich takes over Gastro Profi GmbH and thus expands its offering in the field of ethnogastronomy.

Transgourmet takes over Emmi Frisch-Service AG. The company supplies around 600 companies in the food service, hospital and care home, convenience store and wholesaler segments.

On 28 March 2019, the Coop Delegate Assembly appoints former Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard to the Coop Board of Directors.

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Coop's four Saponi d'Italia stores are well received. In 2019, Coop brings more than 100 authentic Italian specialities and new products from Saponi d'Italia into its supermarkets.

Microspot.ch advances from a domestic and consumer electronics provider to become a comprehensive non-food online shopping centre. The range is greatly expanded and delivery services and customer service are improved. In 2019, Microspot.ch also introduces the marketplace function, enabling third-party retailers to sell their products under their own name and at their own expense.

In Austria, Bell Food Group commissions the most modern convenience factory in Europe, further expanding its market position in this area.

On 12 September, Fust opens its new logistics centre in Oberbüren. The floorspace of the previous warehouse is doubled, and logistics are highly automated. This central site supplies all 156 stores and 12 home delivery depots.

The Coop Megastore in Volkiland reopens. As part of the complete renovation of the shopping centre, the store is extended to 5 450 m² and modernized in accordance with the latest store design.

Coop City St. Annahof is reopened. The well-known Coop department store in Zurich has a fresh new look following a successful renovation.

2020

On 17 March, the Federal Council ordered all non-food formats and restaurants to close, and restricted ranges in supermarkets, in response to the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19). Over 1 000 sales outlets have to close. Coop deploys a task force to develop appropriate protective measures to ensure the safest possible environment for staff and customers. Coop maintains an uninterrupted supply to the population.

Together with volunteers from the Swiss Red Cross (SRC), Coop sets up a free home delivery service in April for people aged 65 and over who belong to a risk group in the pandemic.

Coop launches the omnichannel platform coop.ch. The new website merges the existing websites of Coop@home, Coop.ch and Mondovino. The new platform is named best online shop 2020 in the Digital Commerce Awards.

Coop continues to expand its range of vegetarian and vegan articles and has been offering over 1 200 products certified with the V-Label from Swissveg since July. This includes around 1 000 vegan products. The popular own-label brand Karma, which now comprises more than 300 products, is a key component of the varied range of vegetarian items.

In 2020, there are over 1 000 products in Coop's Prix Garantie range for the first time. Prix Garantie is a range of good quality, low-price products. By expanding this range, Coop is taking even greater account of the needs of all customer groups, in particular families.

In September, Coop launches the "Coopzeitung Weekend". The new "Coopzeitung Weekend" member press is published every Friday, in the Bundmitte section of "20 Minuten", and covers exciting lifestyle and trend topics for the young and young at heart.

Transgourmet introduces its new organic full-range brand Natura in four national companies. Natura is Transgourmet's specific and comprehensive response to the organic trend, helping it to successfully differentiate itself in the wholesale market.

From 19 October 2020, face masks must be worn in all sales outlets throughout Switzerland, including all Coop Group stores, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coop puts an innovative, fully automated packaging plant into operation, improving the efficiency and sustainability of package shipments for Interdiscount and Microspot.ch from the Jegenstorf logistics centre. The new system, which is able to prepare a customized shipping parcel for any product, will remove the need for fillers in future.

In the field of sustainability, Coop posts a new sales record, exceeding the 5-billion mark for the first time, with Coop therefore retaining its undisputed number one position in the field of sustainability.

Coop restructures its vocational training: in 2020, training in Coop supermarkets is split into a one-year foundation apprenticeship and a one or two-year advanced phase.

Sources

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