

Additional services

Comprehensive quality management

In 2020, implementing the new food legislation remained a quality management priority, with further changes as part of the Confederation's so-called "Stretto" package. The ordinance necessitates changes to the labelling of all products by 2021. As the basis for implementation, the Coop Guideline on Labelling was revised. Among other things, the guideline stipulates how the origin of raw materials and nutritional information are to be disclosed on Coop own-label brands. Coop's disclosures regarding the origin of animal-derived raw materials voluntarily exceed the legal requirements and are transparently shown if they make up at least 10% of the food.

Since 2012, all sales outlets offering counter service have been audited and certified by independent inspection body q.inspecta for compliance with quality requirements. A total of 407 sales outlets were successfully audited in 2020. These audits were in addition to the 1 800 or so internal quality-control audits conducted by Coop.

In its own laboratory, Coop tested around 31 000 random samples from the food and non-food segments for compliance with the requirements. This involved checking more than 915 000 criteria. Owing to the growing supply of fresh products made at the sales outlets, hygiene monitoring is also becoming ever more important in this area.

Even when faced with the difficulties created by Covid, stringent monitoring of key aspects of food and product safety was maintained, demonstrating that we were able to uphold high quality standards at all times.

As part of its risk management in the area of product quality, Coop devoted a great deal of time in 2020 to issues surrounding the safeguarding of the supply chain for critical raw materials. Furthermore, Coop clarified the requirements for critical product groups in the non-food segment and made these available to potential suppliers in automated form. Updated e-learning courses covering sales and purchasing expertise were mandatory for employees throughout Switzerland.

Social commitment

Coop again pursued numerous projects that embodied its social commitment in 2020. Through the Coop Sustainability Fund alone, Coop invested around 16.85 million francs in charitable projects. For information about other projects besides those listed below, visit actions-not-words.ch

Commitment to Bio 2.0: 20 million invested in research projects so far

As early as 1993 Coop began working closely with the Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FiBL). To date, Coop has invested more than 21 million francs in numerous projects run by the FiBL and in organic agriculture. This has enabled research into modern cultivation methods for organic cotton for Naturaline textiles. The cooperation also helps establish substitute products for copper and, by making targeted use of precision farming, ensure the financial viability of small-scale, diverse agriculture. Furthermore, effective organic remedies are being created for citrus greening, a disease which affects oranges, so that customers can enjoy a glass of organic orange juice with their breakfast. With the help of the FiBL, organic cultivation is also enabling Coop to make its coconut and palm oil more sustainable. The partnership has also given rise to various products for the Naturaplan own-label brand, including an award-winning organic Prosecco and Swiss organic honey.

Home delivery service with SRC during Covid

In the spring, during the pandemic, customers aged 65 and over were able to order food and hygiene products by phone or e-mail from Coop City department stores and Coop supermarkets in a number of towns and cities. Volunteer helpers from the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) delivered the orders to their homes the next working day. The free delivery service was offered in Bern, Olten, Zurich and Lausanne.

Coop is enabling the rehabilitation of Alp Kohlschlag

This year, all of the proceeds from Coop's "1 August rolls" campaign are going towards the remodelling and expansion of Alp Kohlschlag in Mels, St. Gallen. Each year, the Alp processes around 125 000 litres of milk and 18 000 kilograms of cheese. Investment in the alpine dairy, the cheese cellar and the residential building is urgently needed in order to safeguard this intensive alpine agriculture in future. Coop is donating 304 657 francs to support the rehabilitation and expansion of the Alp. Coop Aid for Mountain Regions has been dedicated for better living and working conditions for the mountain populace for over 75 years. Every franc donated goes entirely to self-help projects in the Swiss mountain region, as all the administrative costs are borne by Coop.

Successful bioRe school projects.

Since 1995, under the Naturaline own-label brand Coop has been producing textiles from organic cotton which are made for the range fairly, using environmentally-friendly methods and according to bioRe's social and environmental standard. For the right to an education and as part of the holistic Naturaline approach, since 2011 Coop has been supporting three successful school projects in the central Indian region Madhya Pradesh. These directly benefit the producers of organic cotton for Naturaline textiles and the region's farming communities. At present, more than 1 200 children of farming families and disadvantaged children are taught in 18 village schools up to 5th grade. In 2014, a secondary school was set up on the bioRe School Campus to provide follow-on education. 600 students currently attend lessons there. The campus is also home to a state-recognized vocational training centre at which young people have the opportunity to learn a locally relevant vocation such as mechanic, fashion designer, or organic farmer.

"Blühende Schulen" flower planting project for schools

With the "Blühende Schulen" school project, in partnership with Bio Suisse Coop raised awareness of treating nature with care while also promoting biodiversity. One approach involved planting flowers in school gardens, creating new sources of food for bees and other insects. To this end, in the last five years schools have been given 5 400 free planting kits containing organic herb seedlings and seeds for native wild flowers. The project has raised awareness in 5 905 school classes and among 84 000 school pupils, teachers, and helpers.

Full plates thanks to Tischlein deck dich and Schweizer Tafel

Since 2005, Coop has donated a considerable amount of date-expired food, which is still in perfect condition but can no longer be sold, to the Schweizer Tafel (Swiss Table) and Tischlein deck dich (Table Be Set) social organizations. They distribute the food to social institutions or directly to needy people in Switzerland. By doing this, Coop fills more than 12.6 million plates of people in poverty (as of 2020). Coop supports this commitment with donations of food and also financial contributions: each year, around 2 510 tonnes of food and 300 000 francs are donated to the two organizations. In logistics, Coop provided space in its warehouses free of charge, making a significant contribution towards reducing food waste.

Support for people in poverty with the "2xChristmas" campaign

Once again this year, Coop supported the "2xChristmas" campaign run by the Swiss Red Cross for people in poverty in Switzerland. Coop sold around 8 000 donated parcels containing products worth 160 000 francs. Via Coop.ch, 1 059 parcels were sold, containing products worth 82 970 francs. In addition, Coop supported the campaign by donating products worth around 402 000 francs (retail value).

Coop supports Swiss Red Cross and helps people in need

The SRC is supporting people who have fallen on hard times due to the Covid pandemic. This includes handing out Coop gift cards worth two million francs. Coop is additionally donated Coop gift cards worth CHF 150 000. Furthermore, Coop encouraged readers of the Coop member press to use donation coupons to donate money or Superpoints. In total, 2 617 coupons were redeemed over five weeks, equating to a donation of CHF 74 450. Between April and June, Coop Supercard holders donated Superpoints worth CHF 98 500.

Communication and advertising

Customer Service replies to over 800 000 enquiries

Customer Service dealt with over 800 000 customer enquiries in 2020. As well as general questions about Coop, the Coop Member Press and Supercard, the majority of our customers' questions were about Covid-related matters, such as restrictions on the range, which also affected our "Herb Garden Adventure" marketing campaign. However, sustainability-related topics, in particular reducing plastic, remain very important to our customers. Our marketing campaigns, advertising campaigns and collection promotions continue to attract a lot of interest. We are receiving a growing number of enquiries about digital services (promotions, coupons). Pricing and range selection are still two of our customers' main concerns.

National information platform during Covid for all employees

In March, the employee information portal [Coop.ch/gemeinsam](https://coop.ch/gemeinsam) was created, on which Coop has brought together all the important information about the Covid situation. The platform ensured that the information reached all employees in the sales outlets, logistics, production, administration and staff on short-time working at home. In addition, Coop published pictures, videos, stories and statements from its sales regions and formats on the site. During lockdown, the Coop Member Press also produced a daily video format for employees. The “Coopzeitung bi de Lüt” format took the daily pulse of the Coop Group and visited different people within the company. The editors asked how people were finding the Covid situation and how they were coping with the major challenges.

Families benefit from loyalty programmes

Coop continued to reward its customers' loyalty in 2020, with a total of four collection promotions. Once again, the focus was on families with children, who enjoyed free products. The “Herb Garden Adventure” and “Wilderness Adventure” promotions, in partnership with the WWF, turned the spotlight on sustainability issues. The Hello Summer promotion with products related to water was a hit with customers. During the Christmas build-up, for the first time Coop took an integrated approach with Coop's Christmas communication team, telling the story of “Nevi the snow monster” in its “Let it snow” campaign. All four promotions proved extremely popular, generating substantial additional sales.

Supercard remains very popular

The Supercard remains the most-used and most popular loyalty programme in Switzerland. Coop is continuously refining the Supercard as a service brand, offering its customers more and more new services relating to the Supercard, including digital ones, which offer added value for customers.

New staff magazine to mark anniversary

The Coop Group's staff magazine is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a relaunch: as well as the layout, the concept has also had a complete overhaul. The old name “Coop Forte magazine” has been shortened to “Forte”. “Forte” now has a more modern appeal, with more images and more diverse content. Strategic topics also feature more heavily and there is a greater focus on the regional sections. Furthermore, its handy format and modern editorial design are designed to appeal more to younger employees.

Social media adds more channels and keeps people informed during Covid

The Covid pandemic also had a big impact on social media. In spring, for instance, the social media team responded swiftly to what was going on in the Coop supermarkets and actively informed social media users about rules, changes, and safety concepts, as well as responding to customer questions and feedback. The merger of [Coop.ch](https://coop.ch) and coop@home also presents new opportunities for e-commerce on the social channels. In addition, the channels were expanded: Hello Family is now on Instagram too and, in January, Coop became one of the first Swiss companies to have a TikTok presence, enabling it to respond even more specifically to the various target groups.

20 years

“Forte” staff magazine

Coop and 20 Minuten jointly launch “Coopzeitung Weekend”

The Coop Member Press which, with around 3.2 million readers (WEMF Mach-Basic 2020-2) is the biggest weekly newspaper, and 20 Minuten which, with over 1.8 million readers (WEMF Mach-Basic 2020-2) is the most widely-read daily newspaper, are launching a magazine to get the weekend off to a perfect start: “Coopzeitung Weekend”. The newspaper is published once a week, on Friday, as a 16-page paper within a paper, in the centrefold of 20 Minuten. “Coopzeitung Weekend” delivers lifestyle and trend topics to the young and young-at-heart. With content such as creative recipes, lifestyle and sustainability tips, ideas, competitions and puzzles and a layout based on the Coop Member Press, the newspaper is geared primarily towards a young target group. The articles are written by the new Weekend editorial team, comprised of journalists from the German, Italian and French language editions of the Coop Member Press. Ad sales are also handled by Coop.

Coop Member Press publishes special pages on Covid

During lockdown, the three Coop Member Press publications published lots of special pages of useful information from Coop on the subject of Covid, as well as tips, puzzles, games, and special articles for anyone who had to stay home and was in need of some distraction.

Cooking fun for children during Covid

In March, during lockdown, Coop launched “Little Fooby”, a recipe platform for parents to cook and bake with their kids. What is unique about Little Fooby is that the recipes show which cooking steps can be carried out by the children themselves and the tasks for which they need their parents’ help. After just a short time, Little Fooby has become very popular with parents of young children.

Coop Mobile Plus: the new, unlimited subscription

In September, Coop launched “Coop Mobile Plus”, a new and attractive mobile subscription, which offers customers unlimited phone calls, messaging and browsing in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. To mark the launch of “Coop Mobile Plus”, when a new subscription was taken out, Coop gifted six months of charges and offers attractive discounts on all smartphones at Interdiscount and Fust. In December, Coop introduced a particularly attractive flat-rate package for employees of the Coop Group. Since 2019, Coop Mobile has been using the Swisscom network, which is regarded as the best in Switzerland.

Sponsorship in the great outdoors

The sponsorship sector was particularly badly hit by the Covid rules in 2020. As Coop sponsorship commitments such as the Coop Gemeindeduell events and the Coop Open Air Cinemas took place outdoors, they went ahead successfully with the appropriate safety measures in place. Unfortunately, many of Coop’s sponsorship projects had to be cancelled or postponed to 2021 because of the strict regulations imposed by the Confederation.

Media Unit: Covid pandemic dominated

As one of Switzerland’s most relevant media offices, Coop’s Media Unit further intensified dialogue with journalists in 2020. Consequently, heavy media coverage of Coop news continued in the year under review. The appointment of Joos Sutter as the new Chairman of Coop’s Board of Directors and the announcement of the new Chairman of the Executive Committee attracted particularly great interest in the media. Journalists also reported widely on the launch of the new omnichannel platform Coop.ch. Sustainability-wise, communication priorities were reducing plastics, the circular economy, and hydrogen. The number one topic in media work as, of course, the Covid pandemic, attracting a record of 250 media enquiries a week. During the year under review, Coop’s Media Unit issued 30 media releases, placed close to 50 new and proactive topics, gave and attended around 100 interviews and responded to 2 769 media enquiries – a new record, and an increase of over 1 100 enquiries compared with the previous year.