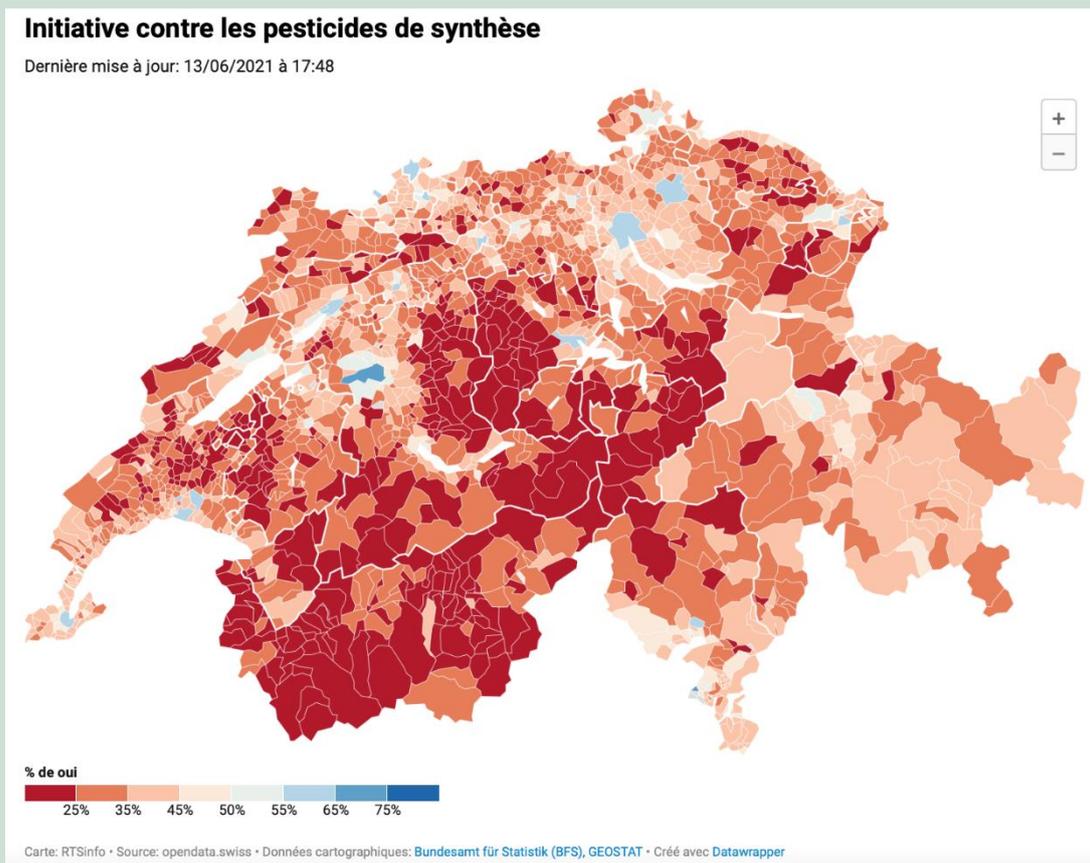




## Pesticide newsletter N°4 - July 2021

### Legislative News



### Switzerland: 39% in favor of banning synthetic pesticides in referendum

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the Swiss were called to vote in a referendum on the initiative "[For a Switzerland free of synthetic pesticides](#)". Submitted in 2018 with more than 120 000 validated signatures, this initiative calls for the phase-out of synthetic pesticides by all users and provides for a 10-year transition period.

The proposal to ban pesticides was rejected by 58% of voters, compared to 39% in favor. Ironically, the only canton that voted in favor of the ban was Basel-City, home to the Swiss pesticide multinational Syngenta. With this result, Switzerland

misses the opportunity to be the European champion of agro-ecology and adopts a conservative vision that is the opposite of what is at stake for tomorrow's food production.

But Switzerland is the world cradle of agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals. The pro-pesticide lobby is particularly active there. Swiss agrochemical companies generate nearly \$50 billion in sales worldwide each year. For them, the stakes of the referendum were enormous. They did not want to lose the Swiss market for their products, but they also feared that a positive result would inspire other countries.

A massive [misinformation campaign](#) led farmers to believe that these measures were a direct threat to their livelihood, even though they provided for a transition period and financial and training assistance to help farmers to adapt.

In the weeks leading up to the referendum, there was a [virulent campaign](#) by pesticide advocates, including [intimidation](#) tactics, death threats against anti-pesticide activists, etc. Faced with multiple pressures against individuals, their families or their farms, many beekeepers, activists and politicians refused to speak out publicly for fear of retaliation. Some supporters of the two referendum proposals to ban pesticides had to be placed under police protection. These abuses have reached such proportions that Fabien Fivaz, member of the Swiss Parliament, is [worried](#) about the health of Swiss democracy. Not content with polluting the environment and affecting human health, pesticides also undermine democracies.

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