

Annual Report 2024  
Forschung für Leben



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### Research for Life: Over 35 Years Dedicated to Science Communication and Outreach

For more than three decades, our association, "Research for Life," has tirelessly championed researchers and Switzerland's position as a leading research hub. We foster crucial dialogue between scientists and the interested public.

Over these 35 years, our work has lost none of its significance – quite the opposite. Given current developments, our outreach and educational efforts are more vital than ever.

### National Information Day on Animal Research (#NIDEA) 2024: A Success Story with Growing Support

Since 2023, in collaboration with our partner organizations, the Swiss Association of Veterinarians in Industry and Research (SAVIR) and the Swiss Society for Laboratory Animal Science (SGV), we have organized the National Information Day on Animal Research (NIDEA) in Switzerland. Under the hashtag #NIDEA, we conduct simultaneous stand actions in various Swiss cities, accompanied by a comprehensive social media campaign. During these events, researchers, veterinarians, and animal caretakers distribute flyers and engage directly with interested individuals. Our goal is to communicate openly and transparently about animal research and provide first-hand information based on own experiences at work.



*NIDEA stand at Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich.*

#NIDEA2024 took place on June 15th, with stands in Basel, Bern, Fribourg, and Zurich. We are especially proud that our initiative received official support from the University of Bern this year. The university set up a large stand offering not only in-depth information but also microscopes where passersby could observe fish embryos. Additionally, interested individuals could see and touch mouse cages – complete with bedding, food, and water – and discuss the lives of mice in animal facilities with researchers and animal caretakers. We plan to hold NIDEA again in 2025 and hope that more universities will join us to continue this important educational and outreach activity.

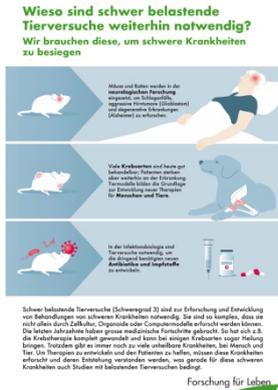
### STAAR: Transparency in Animal Research in Switzerland

In late 2018, FfL, together with the University of Zurich, launched a groundbreaking initiative: an accord on transparency in animal research. This declaration garnered significant interest from Swiss universities, NGOs involved in animal research communication, and many other stakeholders. Swiss universities further developed the initial concept and organized the founding meeting of STAAR (Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research) in 2022. Since 2023, STAAR has regularly published reports on its members' activities. We are proud that our #NIDEA initiative was one of the highlights in the STAAR 2024 report. For more information about STAAR, please visit their website:

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/organisation/gremien/kammer-universitaere-hochschulen/swiss-transparency-agreement-on-animal-research-staar>

## New Flyer: Animal Experiments causing Severe Suffering

To proactively inform the public about a very sensitive topic, we have developed a flyer on animal experiments with high severity degree in collaboration with Animal Research Tomorrow (ART) and graphic designer Tatiana Epli.



This flyer explains in easily understandable language why such research is essential and what far-reaching consequences a potential ban would have. We distribute the flyers at all our events and have already circulated them within our network of partner organizations and companies. The feedback from our partners has been consistently positive, reinforcing the importance of this outreach activity.

The flyer is already available in German, French, and English and can be obtained from the management office. The corresponding FfL and ART websites, where the brochure will also be available, are currently under construction.

For 2025, we are already planning further similar flyers addressing relevant topics such as the importance of basic research and organoids. This will allow us to continuously pursue and deepen our communication and outreach efforts.

## A Fresh Look for Our Communication: New Flyers and Roll-ups!



Our previous communication materials had served us well, but it was time for an update to convey our mission even more clearly. That is why our Managing Director, Iana Buch, teamed up with graphic designer Tatiana Epli to develop a new concept. This new approach strongly emphasizes FfL's core message: we are network of scientists created and dedicated to support scientist. The new materials beautifully reflect this, visually highlighting the connections that unite us all as researchers.

We have also created a new outreach flyer for the general public. It explains in easily understandable language who we are, what our mission is, and what activities we undertake.

These new materials are now available. Please contact the management office to get yours.

## SGV Meeting 2024 in Lausanne

The SGV Meeting 2024 took place at CHUV-Lausanne on November 26 and 27, 2024. FfL and ART were represented with a joint exhibition booth, managed by Iana Buch, the director of both organizations. There was immense interest in the booth: numerous members and partners visited us, picked up information materials, and enthusiastically discussed new initiatives and future projects.

## BioFokus: Now Digital

Prof. Felix Ehrensperger and Dr. Iana Buch served as editors for BioFokus, which is now transitioning to an exclusively electronic format for financial reasons. This move aligns us with the broader trend among scientific magazines.

Our latest publication, Issue #102, released in September 2024 (In German), focuses on "Opportunities & Challenges for Genome Editing in Plant Breeding"

### FfL Matura Thesis Award 2024 for David Rareş Salabaş

The FfL Matura Thesis Award, which includes CHF 500 and a diploma, is traditionally presented after General Assembly. This year, the award went to Mr. David Rareş Salabaş from Kantonsschule Sargans for his



outstanding work titled: "Exploring the impact of drug interventions on aging in *Drosophila melanogaster*."

In his thesis, Mr. Salabaş investigated the effects of various substances on the lifespan and locomotor activity of fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster*). Particularly interesting were his observations of sex-specific effects of one of the substances. These results highlight the importance of considering sex-specific responses when evaluating pharmaceutical interventions in the aging process.

The jury praised the thesis as exceptionally well executed. Mr. Salabaş not only acquired comprehensive knowledge of his research area but also performed excellent laboratory work. The methods and procedures are well documented, the results are presented in detail, and they meet a high scientific standard. The discussion is logical and comprehensible, and the

entire work is written in excellent English. The topic of aging and the discussion on sex-specific responses are highly relevant. Truly a commendable and award-worthy achievement!

### Leadership Transition at FfL: Michael Hottiger Becomes Honorary Member



After eleven years leading Research for Life, Michael Hottiger is stepping down as President. He had announced his resignation last year but remained in office to help facilitate the search for a suitable successor.

Now, Markus Affolter, formerly Vice-President, has taken over the presidency. Michael Hottiger officially resigned at the 2024 General Assembly, but he will continue to support the association as a member of the board.

In recognition of his long-standing and exceptional commitment, the FfL board nominated Michael Hottiger for honorary membership. This proposal was unanimously approved by the FfL general assembly.

### New Faces on the FfL Board

We are delighted to have strengthened our team in 2024 with four dedicated new members!

Earlier this year, we welcomed Aimee Zuniga (University of Basel) and Christoph Schneider (University of Zurich) to the board. Later, Marie Barberon (University of Lausanne) and Christian Münz (University of Zurich) also joined. They all bring fresh ideas and new energy to our work. All new board members were introduced at the 2024 General Assembly.

### Press Releases

- November 12, 2024: "Swiss Researchers Say NO to the 'Yes to a Future Free of Animal Testing' Initiative" («JA zur tierversuchsfreien Zukunft»)

<https://www.presseportal.ch/de/nr/100083661>

### X (formerly Twitter)

Our "Forschung für Leben" Twitter account has been active since May 2016, and we currently have 320 followers.

### **Information for Federal Parliament**

We continue to proactively send information and argumentation in favor of animal research to members of parliament ahead of relevant votes or parliamentary discussions.

### **Mobile Gene Lab**

Due to financial constraints, the Gene Lab remains closed. We are actively seeking alternative funding opportunities.

### **Membership**

In 2024, FfL successfully gained several new members. By the end of the year, "Forschung für Leben" had a total of 362 members.

### **General Assembly**

The General Assembly took place on May 15, 2024, at the University of Zurich. Following the assembly, Prof. Dr. Christoph Schneider from the University of Zurich gave a public lecture titled "Brush Cells - Guardians of the Gut."

### **FfL Committee**

The following individuals served on the committee: Prof. Dr. Michael O. Hottiger (Präsident), Prof. Dr. Markus Affolter (Vize-Präsident), Dr. Lorenz Schmid (Quästor), Prof. Dr. Felix Ehrensperger (Redaktion), Prof. Dr. Gerhard M. Christofori, Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Gruissem, Prof. Dr. Ueli Grossniklaus, Prof. Dr. Thomas Lutz, Prof. Dr. Valerio Mante, Prof. Dr. Manfred Kopf, Prof. Dr. Gregor Rainer, Prof. Dr. Rolf Zeller, Dr. Bettina Balmer, Prof. Dr. Christian Hardke

### **FfL Board**

The Board met on May 15, 2024, as usual prior to the General Assembly. The board consists of 17 individuals from research and politics.