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"Alpine Milk: Dairy Farming as a Pre-modern Strategy of Land Use"

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Orland, Barbara. "Alpine Milk: Dairy Farming as a Pre-modern Strategy of Land Use." *Environment and History* 10, no. 3 (Aug., 2004): 327–64. doi:10.3197/0967340041794286 . From an agronomic standpoint, today's Alpine milk production as well as mountain farming in general seems to be inefficient. Due to an European overproduction of food, the massive input of labour by the mountain farmer is no longer profitable. As producers of environment and standard-bearers of landscapes, however, farmers are sorely missed in the Alps today. By the 1980s geographers were pointing out that ecological problems in the Alps can be the result of the under-use of nature. Cultural landscapes, which today are admired according to aesthetic or environmental protection considerations, disappear with the farmers. Against this background, the paper introduces the premodern Alpine dairy farming as a case study which illustrates the changing relations between natural resources, economic interests and cultural values that form the interplay between land use, agricultural production methods and the meaning of food. The story of the Alpine milk illustrates that in premodern times food production reflected much more the connection between local land resources and farmer's skills, tools and practices—a link that has ceased to exist in the mindset of industrialised societies. All rights reserved. © 2004 The White Horse Press

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