Rural History 2013 is the first conference held under the auspices of the European Rural History Organisation (EURHO). It is organised by the Archives of Rural History (ARH) and the Swiss Rural History Society (SRHS). More than 300 rural historians make contributions in 80 panels and three keynote sessions.

The aim of the conference is to provide an overview of the state of the art of rural history today and to strengthen the existing networks and co-operation of rural historians and their institutions. The conference is an excellent occasion for historians to discuss the basic question of what exactly rural history is, how it can be narrated and, crucial for the future development of rural history, how the attractions of rural history in an era of worldwide urbanization can be communicated to a younger generation.

The conference starts on Monday 19 and ends on Thursday 22 August 2013. Program and registration: www.ruralhistory2013.org

supported by:
Keynote Session I
Lost in Translations?

19 August 2013, 1700-1930, University of Bern, UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1

In rural history, as in many other sciences, English becomes more and more the dominant language. The European Rural History Organisation (EURHO), for example, declares in its constitution unreservedly: "The working language of the Organization and of its website and other publications shall be English".

No doubt, the process towards English as the lingua franca facilitates the communication and comprehension among rural historians from a variety of territorial backgrounds and linguistic and cultural orientations. It helps to overcome national science cultures and linguistic barriers which have in the past restrained, if not altogether prevented, the exchange of ideas and debates.

This process of standardisation, however, also creates new problems. It weakens the perception of linguistic differences and meanings – aspects of particular relevance to cultural historians. On a more general level, the application of English as the sole language creates the danger that a discursive variety (today a hallmark of the cultural and social sciences) is diminishing if not disappearing altogether. In other words: A homogenisation of the scientific discourses which have been created within the discipline of rural history in the last two decades could, therefore, destroy the potential of the new rural history once again.

Plenary Lecture
Michael Cronin, Dublin City University: Expanding Worlds? Translation and the Challenge of Microspection

Comments: Claire Strom; Martin Schaffner
Roundtable: Zsuzsanna Varga; Leen van Molle; Martin Schaffner; Claire Strom

Keynote Session II
Rural History in Europe – Rural History in Switzerland

21 August 2013, 1630-1900, University of Bern, UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1

The aim of this Keynote-Session is to reflect on the development of rural history in Europe in the last two decades and to look more closely at one of its specific results: the 12-volume Rural History in Europe series published by Brepols.

Rural History in Europe and Switzerland: Development and Perspectives
Gérard Béaur: Rural history in Europe in the last two decades – an overview and analysis
Sacha Zala: Rural History in Switzerland: from the fringe to the centre?

Rural History in Europe – a 12 volume series published by Brepols
Jürgen Schlumbohm: Twelve workshops, twelve books – achievements, shortcomings and perspectives

Comments: Sandra Swart; Juan Pan-Montojo; Nigel Swain

Gérard Béaur, Prof. EHESS Paris, Chairman of the Management Committee PROGRESSORE
Juan Pan-Montojo, Prof. Universidad Autónoma de Madrid • Jürgen Schlumbohm, Prof. em., Göttingen, Vice-Chairman of the Management Committee PROGRESSORE • Nigel Swain, Prof. University of Liverpool • Sandra Swart, Prof. Stellenbosch University, South Africa
Sacha Zala, Dr., Director Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland (DODIS); President elect of the Swiss Society for History

Keynote Session III
Films - a new Source in Rural History

22 August 2013, 0815-0945, University of Bern, UniS, Schanzeneckstrasse 1

The agricultural sector was one of the pioneers when it came to producing moving pictures in the early 20th century. These films were used by agricultural organisations for educational purposes as well as for advertising products. At a time when films were rare, moving pictures provoked a great interest in the countryside and farm women began to make use of the new technique as early as scientists. That film was an important medium in political propaganda is well known – but what is much less appreciated is that films were widely used by scientists and state institutions to popularize their discoveries and to communicate with the wider public.

The Archives of Rural History (ARH) has unearthed, safeguarded and digitised a substantial number of agricultural films from the time period of the 1920’s to the 1970’s. In this lecture we will present extracts from a variety of films and discuss the potential of this new source for rural (and other) historians.