

The fields

From spring...to autumn

In the 14th century cereal farming played an important role in the economy of Alpine valleys. In the past production would vary due to unpredictable weather, whereas nowadays production depends on both national and international factors.

It is difficult to know exactly which crops were grown in Bagnes because it isn't clear from the botanical classification which species were actually grown in practice. Nevertheless, it is possible to work out where different types of cereals were grown. At the end of the Middle Ages rye was the most widely cultivated cereal in Entremont, however a century later wheat had become more popular. Barley, oats and *méteil* (a mixture of cereals sown and harvested together) were also grown.

In 1948 Verbier, Médières and Sarreyer together accounted for 50% of the valley's cereal-growing areas. From the 1950s onward Sarreyer saw its cereal fields decrease rapidly but the locals still retained their nickname related to cereal farming: they were known as the **Brognons**, "those who cut with the sickle".

Today, the only cultivated cereal fields are rye and wheat maintained by the association **Les Amis du Moulin et du Four à pain de Sarreyer**. Each year the community is invited to prepare, sow, harvest and thresh the crop.

"The image is inspired by a photo of Joseph-Angelin and Louise Masson during the oat harvest in the field at Rossy, near the start of the road to Verbier, 1970s."