



Information note for producers, processors and traders outside of Switzerland

## Portrait: Bio Suisse and its import policy

### Who/what is Bio Suisse?

- Bio Suisse, a private-sector organization, is the federation of Swiss organic farmers
- This umbrella organization counts 34 organic farmers' associations among its members, as well as the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL.
- Common and uniform standards for agriculture and processing.
- Common brand, the "Bud" (German: *Knospe*).
- About 770 processing and trade companies have a licence contract with Bio Suisse to use the label

### Bio Suisse ...

- Represents the interests of Swiss organic farmers
- Gives Swiss organic farmers access to markets and coordinates marketing
- Markets the brand "Bud" (TV spots, billboards, trade fairs)
- Informs and communicates
- Refines standards and fosters quality assurance

### Import policy

Bio Suisse ties its award of the Bud label to imported products to strict requirements – in terms of market policy, technical aspects and environmental conditions:

- As a matter of principle, only such products may be imported that cannot be produced by Swiss organic farms at all, or not in sufficient quantity
- Priority is given to imports from the nearest production regions or countries
- Processing is carried out in Switzerland whenever this is possible and reasonable.
- No import of fresh produce from overseas (except for products that cannot be produced in European countries for climatic reasons)
- No air freight
- Rigorous control of the flow of goods – traceability back to the producer of the raw material is checked for every import
- Bio Suisse standards must be complied with

### Bio Suisse's roots

Shortly after Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1924) founded biodynamic agriculture, farms in Switzerland took up his methods. In the 1940s, Dr. Hans Müller developed the organic-biological method, and firmly established the concept of sustainable organic agriculture with closed cycles in crop production. In 1974, far-sighted researchers formed the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), with the mission of underpinning scientifically the observations made by the organic farming pioneers.

The modern era of organic agriculture began in 1981 with the founding of the Association of the Swiss Organic Agriculture Organisations (Bio Suisse). The first common standards on organic farming methods were adopted in 1981. The common logo, the "Bud" (German: *Knospe*) label, was created at the same time.

The Swiss organic market and Bio Suisse have experienced vigorous growth over recent years. Today about 11% of all Swiss farms and about 90% of all Swiss organic farms are certified to Bio Suisse standards. Representative surveys show: 60 – 70% of the Swiss are already aware of the Bud label.