



IMPLEMENTATION OF
BIO SUISSE STANDARDS
AND BASIS FOR
DECISIONS OF THE
BIO SUISSE LABEL
COMMISSION
"IMPORT"

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Foreword

This compilation of regulations on the implementation of Bio Suisse Standards and criteria for decision-making has been produced in accordance with the policy of transparency being pursued by the Bio Suisse Label Commission "Import" concerning Bio Suisse approval of imported organic products.

The topics dealt with are those that constantly raise questions and cause confusion during discussions with Swiss organic farmers and consumers.

Under each heading, first the current legal basis as stipulated in the relevant article in the standards is outlined, followed by a description of how these standards are enforced by the Bio Suisse Label Commission "Import".

This compilation is continuously being updated and published annually by the Bio Suisse Label Commission "Import". It can be obtained from the Bio Suisse Head Office, Margarethenstr. 87, CH-4053 Basel (Tel. ++41 61 385 96 10, Fax ++41 61 385 96 11, e-mail bio@bio-suisse.ch) or can be downloaded at www.bio-suisse.ch.

English translation (The German version is authoritative)

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1 General provisions

1.1 Standards

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended in 1998)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, articles 1.1.3 and 1.1.4.

b) Practical application in approval process

As a matter of principle, the Bio Suisse Standards must also be fully observed in other countries. The Label Commission "Import" can make appropriate interpretations of the relevant Bio Suisse Standards for agricultural production under exceptional soil and climatic conditions and for crops which are not grown in Switzerland.

Amendments of Bio Suisse Standards are announced to the foreign inspection and certification bodies within six months. Holdings outside of Switzerland have to comply with the amendments within two years at the latest after the coming into force of these changes in Switzerland.

1.2 Policy on residues

(adopted by the LCI on 13 September 2005)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 2.1.13, 2.3.4 and 4.2.2. Also see Chapters „Working with water“, „Management of spray drift“, „Cultivation of former GMO plots“ and „Produce flow segregation and traceability of Bio Suisse approved products“ of these Regulations.

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Avoidance of residues

The farm manager must avoid any contamination of his/her products with harmful substances or non-permitted auxiliary inputs. The farm manager must also check all possible pollution sources and must take action to prevent pollution where this is feasible.

2. Occurrence of residues

Where residues do occur, and depending on the degree of contamination and the nature of the residues, approval of the products may be suspended until such time as the pollution source has been identified and the question of fault has been solved. The holding or project concerned must present an action plan which shows how contamination will be prevented in the future. This action plan must be approved by Bio Suisse. Additionally a risk analysis on the avoidance of residues must be submitted to Bio Suisse (Bio Suisse makes the relevant templates available). The ultimate decision on whether the products and/or holding will continue to be approved or not will be made on a case by case basis following an investigation and in consultation with the representatives in charge of quality assurance.

3. Risk areas for residue cases

Bio Suisse determines on an annual basis which areas and which crops are taken to be at risk of containing residues. The inspection bodies and holdings concerned will be informed of this assessment and of the measures which must be taken.

1.3 Clearing of High Conservation Value Areas for agricultural use

(adopted by the LCI in 2001, last amended on 24 August 2006)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards: Preamble (Principles of Organic Agriculture)

b) Practical application in approval process

Bio Suisse prohibits the clearing of High Conservation Value Areas for agricultural use. Such areas include virgin forest sites and primary forests, high-value secondary forests, steppes or savannahs (cf. the following definition). Bio Suisse approval of organic projects on sites that were originally High Conservation Value Areas is thus ruled out. Sites cleared before 1994 are exempt from this prohibition.

Definition of High Conservation Value Areas

High Conservation Value Areas include:

- Areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia).
- Areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level ecosystems, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.
- Areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.
- Areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).
- Areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).
- Areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

1.4 Working with water

(adopted by the LCI on 3 June 2005)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards preamble ("pure water", "responsibility in terms of the natural resource base on which life depends" and "caring for the environment", Art. 2.1.5)

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Quality of groundwater and surface water

The quality of groundwater and surface water must not be seriously impacted upon by agricultural effluents or effluents arising from processing.

2. Use of non-renewable water resources

The use of non-renewable water resources for agricultural production and/or processing is prohibited. Exemptions may only be granted if a plan for water usage is presented which assesses the ecological, social, and economic impacts of the use of the water resources.

3. Irrigation

- Irrigation must not have an adverse effect on soil fertility (e.g. through salination, erosion). Where necessary the sustainability of the management system must be documented (e.g. by way of a monitoring system).
- Where it is suspected that water for irrigation or processing is used in a wasteful manner in an area with scarce water resources, a strategy for the implementation of savings measure must be presented. This must include a description of the local pedo-climatic and hydrological conditions. Where it is suspected that the groundwater level may be under threat, the Label Commission "Import" can refuse an application for Bio Suisse approval.
- Irrigation water must not impair the quality of the harvested products by way of undesirable substances. This is especially the case where irrigation water which has flown through non-organic plots prior to being used on the organic holding (e.g. in paddy fields) or where irrigation water could be polluted with pathogenic bacteria or parasites (e.g. in vegetable crops). In case of doubt the inspection report must be supplemented with water and/or product analyses.

2 Crop production

2.1 Fertilizer use

(Adopted by the LCI in 2001, last amended on 18 September 2009)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 2.1.4ff; Annex 1

b) Practical application in approval process:

Permitted products and measures

The list contained in Annex 1 of the Bio Suisse Standards applies. This list differs from the list in Annex II, Part A of the EU Council Regulation EEC No 2092/91 (updated: Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007) in the following points:

Fertilizers not permitted under Bio Suisse Standards: highly concentrated chlorinated potassium fertilizers, peat for soil improvement; chemically-synthesized chelates, e.g. EDTA.

Purchases of livestock manure from non-organically reared animals are acceptable. These manures must be processed by, for example, composting in heaps, slurry aeration. Farmyard manure must not come from intensive husbandry (EU Council Regulation EEC No 2092/91 (updated: Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007). In doubtful cases the Label Commission "Import" can request that the manure be analysed.

c) Fertilizer limits

Maximum input (per ha/year)	N _{tot}	P ₂ O ₅ *
Vegetable crops indoors	330 kg	100 kg
Fodder crops/vegetables outdoors	225 kg	80 kg
Tillage crops (root crops, cereals)	180 kg	60 kg
Strawberries	160 kg	35 kg
Tree and shrub crops except for:	100 kg	30 kg
– Avocado	100 kg	35 kg
– Bananas	170 kg	50 kg
– Tea	150 kg	50 kg
– Dates	160 kg	50 kg
– Citrus fruit	160 kg	30 kg

* on a three-year rolling average

Potassium fertilizer use

If more than 150 kg potassium/ha/year are applied, the need must be established (soil analysis).

Phosphorus fertilizer use

Holdings applying more than the maximum permitted levels phosphorus must, upon request, prove by way of soil analyses that on the plots concerned there is no accumulation or oversupply of phosphorus. If there is a risk of water pollution, the fertilizer limits must be adhered to.

2.2 Crop rotation

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 5 November 2008; Crop rotation rules for sugar cane last amended on 24 August 2006)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.1.11.

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Soil protection

The crop rotation must include a minimum of 20% of crops which protect or improve the soil or which accumulate nutrients. Examples of such crops are:

- Grain legumes or mixtures of grain legumes (e.g. soy beans, peas, field beans, lupines, oats/peas, vetches)
- Green manure (in proportion to the duration of the cropping period)
- Fallow or crop residues with naturally growing green cover (in proportion to the duration of the cropping period)
- Leys or sown legumes (e.g. grass-clover leys, alfalfa).

Outside of the vegetation period, at least 50% of the open tillage area must be sufficiently covered with plants (living or dead). The vegetation period is defined as the main production period for a specific crop in a specific pedo-climatic zone (e.g. in arid or semi-arid regions of the northern hemisphere the vegetation period for durum wheat and vegetables is in winter).

2. Cropping breaks

- Except for rice, there must be at least a twelve months break between two main crops of the same species for annual tillage crops.
- In the temperate climate zone, rice may grown two years in a row (in the rice crop rotation, rice must not be grown more than two out of every three years). In the humid-tropical climate zone deviations from this rule are permitted, provided the provisions under Section 3 are being adhered to.
- The requirements regarding cropping breaks between two main crops in the rotation are not enforced with respect to vegetable and herb production.

3. Derogations

In well-founded cases, a derogation from the above rules may be acceptable. In such cases Bio Suisse examines the current crop rotation as to its sustainability and compliance with Bio Suisse Standards based on the following criteria:

- Balanced humus management
- Prevention of erosion
- Prevention of nutrient losses (leaching or surface run-off)
- Preventive crop protection
- Nutrient supply (accumulation and mobilization)
- Promotion of biodiversity (diversity of crop rotation)

4. Crop rotation rules for sugar cane

Sugar cane production is subject to the following conditions:

- Sugar cane must not be grown for more than 10 years on the same plot.
- Sugar cane may be grown on a maximum of 80% of the area under crop rotation.
- At least 20% of the area must be cultivated with other crops, preferably legumes or mixes containing legumes. These may be grown prior to sugar cane cultivation or sown in between rows following the sugar cane harvest. This percentage is calculated based on the proportional share in the cropping period and the actual area the crops cover.
- Prior to each new sugar cane plantation being established, crops other than sugar cane must be grown on the plot in question for a period of no less than 6 months.

2.3 Reproductive material (seeds and vegetative propagating material) and transplants

(Adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 18 September 2009)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.2.; Bio Suisse instruction on seeds, vegetative propagating material, and transplants.

b) Practical application in approval process

Definition: The terminology used in the Bio Suisse instruction on "source material". The term "reproductive material" covers both seed and vegetative propagating material. Transplants are treated as a separate category.

The use of non-organic, dressed reproductive material, as a general rule, entails the refusal of approval for the produce concerned. The use of non-organic undressed reproductive material is only permitted, if it can be proven that organic reproductive material is not available. In countries which operate systems of furnishing evidence in this regard which are similar to those under the EU Organic Regulation or Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance ("database solution"), a declaration of non-availability in the inspection report is sufficient. In all other cases, written confirmation of non-availability furnished by the inspection body must be attached to the inspection report.

The use of cereal seed that is not certified organic is prohibited from 2009 onwards. Upon written application, exemptions to this rule may be granted in the following cases:

- It can be demonstrated that the organic seed intended or ordered for sowing carries seed-borne plant diseases and can not be sown.
- Evidence can be furnished that seed that had been ordered and which the supplier confirmed he would have available, could not be delivered.
- Repeat sowing in cases where crops were destroyed as a result of force majeure (weather, seed predation or grazing predation by wild animals etc.)
- The variety sown is sown as part of a variety trial (< 25% of the total area of cereal crops and < 5 ha).

Vegetable and herb transplants must be from certified organic sources. Substrates for transplants must meet Bio Suisse requirements (no more than 70% peat; no addition of chemically-synthesized trace elements or other additives; only permitted fertilizers may be added).

Onion sets and strawberry transplants must be of certified organic origin.

In banana plantations and in the production of ornamentals, propagating material originating from tissue culture is tolerated.

Precautionary measure re GMO

As soon as GMO crops are commercially grown in the country concerned, the use of certified organic reproductive material becomes mandatory for Bio Suisse approval. Bio Suisse maintains a register of the affected countries and crops.

2.4 Plant protection products and plant treatment products

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 25 August 2008)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.3., Bio Suisse Standards Annex 2

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Permitted agents and measures

The list in Appendix 2 of the Bio Suisse Standards applies. It differs from the list in Annex II, Part B of the EU Council Regulation EEC No 2092/91 (updated: Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007) in the following points:

Plant protection products not permitted under Bio Suisse Standards: synthetic pyrethroids (also in traps), bioherbicides, growth regulators; sulphur-based or copper-based products in the production of cereals, legumes, and oilseeds; ethylene to induce flowering in pineapples.

2. Government-imposed application of chemically-synthesized plant protection products

Where the government imposes the use of chemically-synthesized plant protection products along roadside verges, the regulations on spray drift must be complied with. Where such applications are imposed for use on crops, the approval for the crop in question will be withdrawn.

If the imposed application is carried out by the farm manager, the entire holding will lose its approval.

3. Use of copper

Due to the fact that in organic farming systems in many countries the use of copper-based plant protection products is not limited, for Bio Suisse approval the amount of copper applied per ha and year must be stated in kg of elemental copper. In the first year of approval, the maximum level under Bio Suisse Standards may be exceeded by no more than 20%; for subsequent approval, the Bio Suisse maximum limits, as laid out in Appendix 2 to the Standards, apply. If, in the first year of approval, a crop is grown for which Bio Suisse approval is not being sought, the amount of copper used may exceed the set limit by no more than 100%.

2.5 Management of spray drift

(adopted by the LCI in 1997)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.3.4

b) Practical application in approval process

Any possible drift into areas at risk must be monitored, for example by way of using indicator strips. If the result is positive, the margins or marginal rows must be harvested separately and marketed through non-organic channels. In addition, it is imperative that residue analyses be obtained from the entire crop and the results attached to the inspection report.

Contamination must be prevented by means of landscape management measures.

Where pest control measures are carried out from the air in the vicinity of the organic farm, the substances used must be listed in the inspection report, residue analyses must be carried out and the results attached to the inspection report.

2.6 Burning

(adopted by the LCI on 3 June 2005)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 2.3.5

b) Practical application in approval process

Burning of straw or stubble on the field is prohibited. Pre-harvest burning of sugar cane plots is also prohibited.

2.7 Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity (AEB)

(adopted by the LCI in 2001, last amended on 24 November 2004)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.4.1

b) Practical application in approval process

The following criteria must be met, if the requirement of the 7% AEB having to be part of the holding area or part of the areas regularly managed is to be waived:

1. The holding is embedded in natural habitats (forests, desert, steppe, directly adjacent to the holding along at least 30% of the farm's boundaries.) Or
2. To implement 7% AEB inside the agricultural area would not substantially contribute to the diversification of the agricultural area since the production system is very diverse or the holding structure is diversified (e.g. agroforestry systems and similar systems). Or
3. The agricultural area is situated within the confines of an area of land managed by a cooperative of small farmers or of a project group that has applied for Bio Suisse approval in corpore as an organic project and where the target of 7% AEB is met on the overall agricultural area.

2.8 Ground cover in perennial crops

(adopted by the LCI in 1997)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Articles 2.5.3, 2.5.4 and 2.6.1.

b) Practical application in approval process

Where soil and climatic conditions are markedly different from those in Switzerland (for example in arid areas), the ground cover can be limited to a period of at least four months during the period when most of the rainfall occurs. Where the naturally occurring vegetation is too sparse a green manure crop must be sown.

2.9 Cultivation of former GMO plots

(adopted by the LCI on 15 December 2004)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Preamble: Refraining from the use of genetic engineering

b) Practical application in approval process

A suitable crop rotation must be carried out for a minimum period of two years (corresponding to the conversion period) on any plot which had been used to grow GMO crops prior to coming under organic management. This means that during this period the same crop or a crop that could be cross-pollinated by same must not be grown on the relevant plot. The relevant plot(s) must be specially marked and named on the plot map. The crop rotation and other measures are discussed during the inspection and recorded in the inspection report.

If the same crop is grown on the organic farm, crop analyses may be requested.

In addition, the following measures are recommended:

- Volunteer crops must be controlled
- Where new plots are taken into cultivation or in the case of newly converting farms in areas where GMO cultivation is practiced, evidence of prior management should generally be obtained.
- The Swiss Research Institute of Organic Agriculture has suggested a waiting period of 12 years for organic rapeseed cultivation where GMO rapeseed had been grown previously (as of May 2004)!

2.10 Collection of wild plants

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 7 November 2007)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 2.9ff; Bio Suisse instruction on "Collection of wild plants"

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this documentation wild plants are defined as edible plants and mushrooms and parts thereof which grow naturally in woodlands and on farmland and are not cultivated using agricultural methods. The collection of wild plants is considered as being complementary to agricultural production.

Wild plants subject to cultivation measures are agricultural products and not wild plants within the meaning of these instructions.

2. Conversion period

There is no conversion period for the collection of wild plants.

3. Declaration

Where products are comprised entirely of wild plants this must be declared under the designation. In the case of combinations with cultivated products their collection in the wild must be declared in the list of ingredients (e.g. "certified from collection in the wild").

4. Inspection

A complete description of the collection area (see Point 5), collection activities (Point 6), evidence that the collection is ecologically benign (habitat stability and biodiversity; Point 7), as well as of storing and processing (Point 8) must be presented at the inspection. The documents mentioned in Points 5 to 8 must be included in the inspection report. The "Bio Suisse Checklist for Wildcrafting Projects" will aid this process.

The manager of the collection project must not be the manager of a non-organic agricultural holding at the same time.

Collectors must meet Bio Suisse requirements for the entire quantity collected of any one plant species.

5. Collection area

The following data on the collection area must be known and documented for the inspection:

1. Topographic and pedo-climatic situation in the collection area
2. Property rights and rights to beneficial use in the collection area
3. Sources of emission/contamination in the area in question and its surrounds: What are the sources and to what extent do they impact on the area
4. Size, geographic location and delimitation of the collection area
5. Evidence that no auxiliary inputs prohibited in organic agriculture have been used during the past three years. In normal cases, a plausible declaration is sufficient, together with an inspection of the land by the inspector. In case of doubt, a letter of confirmation from landowner must be submitted, or a residue analysis may be requested.

This information must be documented in plot maps, topographic maps or land registry maps at a scale generally not exceeding 1:50'000. The boundaries of the collection areas, potential sources of emissions as well as the collection and storage sites must be indicated.

6. Collection activity

The following details must be documented and made available for inspection:

1. The course of collection activities from planning, to harvesting, storage, processing and marketing
2. Collection report (collectors, quantity, date)
3. Qualification and instruction of the collectors (knowledge of regulations in force, boundaries of the collection area, collection method, intensity of use, timing of collection etc.).
4. Identity of the main persons responsible for the collection
5. Trivial and botanic name of the wild plants collected

The following additional documents regarding the collection activity must be available:

6. Authorization for collection (if required by law)
7. Lists of collectors (all adult persons engaged in collection must be listed)
8. Sample of a contract between the manager of the collection project and collectors, in which the collector confirms, among other things:
 - Collecting only in the areas defined by the manager of the collection project
 - Complying with the instructions and provisions governing sustainable collection (regulations in force, collection technique, intensity of use, timing of collection etc.)
 - Not collecting from areas at risk of ambient contamination
 - Not collecting or storing the same product at the same time under other criteria
 - Only using residue-free containers that meet food quality standards

The collectors must know about sustainable collection; the person in charge of the collection is held accountable for the collectors' instruction in this regard.

7. Habitat stability and biodiversity

The collection of wild plants must be ecologically benign. This is the case as long as habitat stability and biodiversity are not impacted upon. Each individual case must be assessed as to its potential ecological impact.

To this end the following details must be known and documented for the inspection:

1. Description of the area
2. Which parts of the wild plants are collected (whole plant, leaves, flowers, etc.) and how much of each plant is used (e.g. 1/3 of the root).
3. Intensity of exploitation in the collection area
4. Other collection activities in the same area

The inspector confirms that the activity is ecologically benign. If necessary, an independent expert must be consulted.

8. Processing and storage

The same standards and regulations apply to the processing and storage of wild plants as to agricultural products. The "Bio Suisse Checklist for Processing and Trade" must be completed with respect to processing.

3 Livestock husbandry

3.1 Approval of farms with livestock husbandry and of livestock products

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 7 November 2007)

In order to obtain Bio Suisse approval for plant products, livestock husbandry on the same holding must be in compliance with EU Council Regulation No 2092/91 (updated: Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007) for holdings in the EU, and with at least the IFOAM Basic Standards in all other countries.

In order to obtain Bio Suisse approval for livestock products, livestock husbandry on the holding must be in compliance with Bio Suisse Standards (with the exception of shrimps and mussels; see Chapter 3.2). The inspection must be carried out by an inspection body named by the LCI; normally this is a body accredited in Switzerland to carry out Bio Suisse inspections.

3.2 Aquaculture

(adopted by the LCI in 2003)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Articles 2.5.3, 2.5.4 and 2.6.1.

b) Practical application in approval process

The Bio Suisse Standards refer to the keeping and raising of fish (trout, salmon, carp etc.). Bio Suisse approval for shrimp and mussels may be obtained under the following conditions:

- The standards of Naturland e.V., DE-Gräfeling (Germany)¹ or equivalent standards must be complied with
- The Bio Suisse definition of a holding must be met
- Parallel production of non-organic and organic shrimp/mussels is not permitted
- The conversion period is of 24 months duration. During the first two years of certification, the products may be certified and marketed as "in conversion".
- Producers groups must meet the Bio Suisse requirements for inspections as laid down in these regulations (see page 10).

¹ <http://www.naturland.de/richtlinien1.html>

4 **Conversion to organic agriculture according to Bio Suisse standards**

4.1 **Conversion period**

(adopted by the LCI on 7 November 2007)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 4.1ff

b) Practical application in approval process

Transition from organic to Bio Suisse

The conversion period under approved organic standards can be credited towards the Bio Suisse conversion period (with the exception of retrospective approval of lands).

A holding can be fully approved by Bio Suisse once the entire holding has been converted, even if the holding was partly converted before. Lands which had previously been managed non-organically have a two-year conversion period (rules analogous to conversion of new lands).

Conversion period

As a prerequisite for full Bio Suisse approval the lands must have been managed organically and certified for 24 months and the products must be recognized as fully organic by the inspection body. The commencement date of conversion is taken to be the date of application to the inspection body and the commencement of full compliance with the organic standards.

4.2 **Marketing tropical and subtropical permanent crops as in-conversion products for the first time**

(adopted by the LCI on 7 November 2007)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 4.1ff

b) Practical application in approval process

As a general rule the zero-year rule commonly used in the EU applies (twelve months conversion period until products can first be marketed as in-conversion). In justified circumstances and upon application the "4 plus 4" rule may be applied; this means a minimum conversion period of four months (baseline: date of application) and four months lead-time (confirmation/inspection to ensure that for four months prior to the conversion date no non-permitted auxiliary inputs were used). It must be guaranteed that from the commencement of flowering time until harvest no non-permitted auxiliary inputs were used.

4.3 Whole-farm approach and definition of holding

(adopted by the LCI on 24 August 2004)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 4.1.1, Instruction on "Whole-farm approach"

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Whole-farm approach

In order to obtain Bio Suisse approval for plant products, livestock husbandry on the same holding must be in compliance with EU Council Regulation No 2092/91 (updated: Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007) for holdings in the EU, and with at least the IFOAM Basic Standards in all other countries.

2. Definition of holding

An enterprise or one or more production sites which constitute(s) a comprehensive whole comprised of farmland, buildings, equipment, and a workforce is considered an agricultural holding. The following requirements must be met for Bio Suisse approval:

- The holding must constitute a comprehensive whole comprised of farmland, buildings, equipment, and workforce:
 - The holding must include all the premises that are necessary for farm management.
 - The equipment must at least include all machines and devices that are necessary for the daily work.
 - The holding must have its own workforce, and the bulk of crop cultivation must be carried out by the regular members of staff. The workers must be familiar with the regulations and receive further training and education on organic farming.
- The holding must be autonomous:
 - The farm's produce flow (e.g. agricultural produce, feedstuffs, auxiliary inputs etc.) must be independent of other agricultural holdings.
 - The holding must keep its own accounts.
 - The farm must be headed by an autonomous and proficient farm-manager, who must not have a managerial role in a non-organic holding or a non-organic agricultural production unit.
 - The holding must be distinguishable by its own unmistakable image (name, stationery, labelling and packaging material, business address).
- The holding must have a clearly identifiable centre of operations:
 - The centre of operations is the area where the main premises are situated and where the bulk of farm operations is carried out.
 - It is here that the most important operational decisions are taken (organization of labour and management) and the farm's records and documents are prepared and filed (cropping plans, inspection reports etc.)

In case of farm divisions, the whole-farm approach must be unambiguously defined at the outset of the conversion period by way of a written allocation of premises, equipment and workforce. Subsequent modifications in terms of farmland allocation between the already divided operations are only allowed after a waiting period of 5 years, except in the case where the non-organic farm is converted to organic farming according to Bio Suisse Standards.

Bio Suisse is under no obligation to agree with any official accreditation of the holding by the authorities.

4.4 Approval of farms undergoing gradual conversion

(adopted by the LCI in 1997)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse instructions on "Whole-farm approach", "Gradual conversion" and "Conversion of new lands"

b) Practical application in approval process

As a general rule the whole-farm approach also applies to holdings abroad. A holding outside of Switzerland can therefore be approved by Bio Suisse if:

1. The farm is converted in its entirety at the time of its initial approval. Annual changes in area are dealt with in accordance with the instructions for the conversion of new lands.
2. The farm is not converted in its entirety at the time of its initial approval but the following conditions are met:
 - gradual conversion includes only vineyards, fruit production or ornamental plants and
 - a binding conversion plan is submitted which completes the conversion within a period of no more than 5 years.

4.5 **Parallel production – approval of plots with different conversion status**

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended 2003 and on 10 December 2008)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 4.2.3., Instruction on "Conversion of new lands"

b) Practical application in approval process

1. In cases of parallel production on full-symbol or in-conversion lands of crops that can not be distinguished unambiguously visually* as a result of the conversion of new lands, evidence of separation and traceability must be furnished and confirmed by the inspection body.

In cases where parallel production concerns new lands which only Bio Suisse classifies as in-conversion lands but which are classified as full-symbol lands by the certification body (i.e. in cases of retrospective approval), the inspection body must present documentation with the application for Bio Suisse approval which verifies separation from field to storage to sale. If this documentation is not submitted with the application the entire harvest of the crop concerned will revert to in-conversion status.

2. Production of the same crops or livestock species based on Bio Suisse Standards and other organic standards will be treated as above.
3. Parallel production on farms undergoing gradual conversion (the same crop grown using different production methods on the same farm) is prohibited as a matter of principle.

*** Definition of clearly distinguishable varieties:**

The differentiability of varieties refers to the harvested products. Varieties possessing external characteristics which can visually be clearly determined without having to resort to a specimen sample are taken as being clearly distinguishable. An example of such differentiability would be striped sunflower seeds compared to pure black seeds.

Varieties showing only very small differences in size or colour and which are only visible when the varieties are compared side by side, are not taken to be clearly distinguishable.

The rationale for differentiability is as follows: Given a description of the variety, the recipient of the produce should be able to clearly establish the characteristics of the harvested crop varieties, without direct physical comparison. This is to ensure the physical flow of goods.

In case of doubt, the inspection body must present samples of the varieties to the LCI.

5 Processing and trade

5.1 Produce flow segregation and traceability of Bio Suisse approved products

(adopted by the LCI in 2001, last amended on 3 June 2005)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Art. 7.3.2

b) Practical application in the approval process

1. Principle

Complete traceability of Bio Suisse approved products from the producer or producer group to the consumer must be ensured at all times. The products must therefore be accompanied by a shipping document (delivery note, invoice, processing report etc.) from the harvest through to the delivery to the client. Each operation involved in the chain of production, processing, trade and transport must therefore deal with the accompanying shipping documents in keeping with the requirements outlined below.

Bio Suisse approved products must be labelled in a clearly visible manner and be stored separately in order to minimize the risk of mix ups or inadvertent mixing with non-Bio Suisse approved products.

2. Requirements concerning traceability and shipping documents accompanying the goods

Production: On delivery to the collection point, each packaging unit must be labelled with:

- name and/or producer code,
- status (approved by Bio Suisse/approved by Bio Suisse in-conversion)
- delivery date or date of harvest,
- product name and product quality,
- weight or quantity.

Packaging units are: individual boxes, bags, barrels or other containers. If the individual packaging units are combined in a larger unit (e.g. bound to a pallet, individual bags in a big bag etc.), the bigger container is considered a packaging unit.

Processing, packaging, transport: Every time Bio Suisse approved goods are packaged into a new container (e.g. following sorting and packaging or following processing), the new container must be provided with a new label and a new shipping document. Both the container and the shipping document must indicate the following:

- packaging date or processing date,
- inspection status (approved by Bio Suisse/approved by Bio Suisse in-conversion)
- producer name (or lot number, if products from several producers are mixed),
- product name and product quality.

The processing reports must verify the composition and the origin of the product by means of the lot numbers. Each time the container is changed delivery and acceptance must be recorded. The procedure is the same as that which applies at the receiving office of the collection point. A copy of the shipping document must accompany the goods to the next processing or trading level.

3. Filing and checking of the shipping documents

Filing: On delivery of the goods one copy of the shipping document remains with the supplier, one copy is filed by the recipient, and one copy is used to identify the goods during further transport and processing steps. This procedure is repeated at each change of containers.

Proof of the integrity of the products: The inspection body must be allowed to inspect the documentation on the flow of goods in order to monitor produce flow segregation and traceability. The inspection body must describe and confirm the separation of Bio Suisse-and non-Bio Suisse approved goods.

5.2 Pest control in storage and processing

(adopted by the LCI on 7 November 2007)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards Art. 5.7ff; Instruction on "Pest control in storage and processing"

b) Practical application in approval process

1. Basic principle

- Preventive measures take absolute precedence over any kind of control measure.
- The aim is to refrain from the use of chemically-synthesized pesticides.
- Pest control measures must be documented.
- Holdings with a higher than normal risk of pest infestation require a particularly detailed system of pest control. The following holdings are considered to be high-risk:
 - Holdings on which extensive pest control measures are carried out (fogging and/or fumigation);
 - Holdings which are certified for the storage and/or processing of cereal products or dried products (dried fruit, nuts, spices, herbs, tea, cocoa, coffee, oilseeds; e.g. stores, mills).

2. Requirements for a pest control system in high-risk holdings

Integrated system / Monitoring	<p>High-risk holdings require a detailed pest control system. This requirement can be met in a number of ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The holding is BRC or IFS certified or 2. an integrated pest control system has been installed at the holding by a professional firm or 3. the holding has its own pest control system (incl. prevention (cleaning), monitoring, defined procedures in case of an incidence, responsibilities clearly allocated) <p>Depending on the structure of the holding, the pest control system can be simple in individual cases. If extensive control measures are carried out on premises and appliances where Bio Suisse approved products are also stored or processed, an internal system does not suffice.</p>
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3. Requirements regarding the use of pesticides²

Bait / traps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ For local control of rodents, traps and stationary bait stations with rodenticides are permitted. ■ Local control of insects using insect traps (including UV insect traps and pheromone traps) as well as stationary bait traps are permitted. ■ Bio Suisse-approved products must not under any circumstances come into contact with the pesticides.
Direct application on Bio Suisse-approved products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Physical/mechanical measures such as re-storage, cleaning, airing, sieving, removal (including by suction) of contaminated storage areas, bouncing, and use of pin mills; ■ Thermal processes (e.g. deep-freezing of produce, heat treatments of premises and appliances); ■ Fumigation with inert gases such as CO₂, N₂, incl. CO₂ pressure treatments; ■ Diatomaceous earth (silicon dioxide); ■ Use of beneficials. <p>Note: The use of pyrethrum, including natural pyrethrum, is not permitted!</p>

² Producers are only permitted to use the following processes: Thermal and mechanical processes, diatomaceous earth, fumigation with inert gases.

<p>Local application of spray products/Treatment of hiding places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Local control with spray products is permitted (e.g. local, sporadic treatment of infestation centres, local control of ants). ■ These control measures are carried out using non-volatile water-based products (not containing organic solvents). In descending order of priority: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural pyrethrum without or with addition of piperonyl butoxide (synergist) 2. Deltamethrin, permethrin, cypermethrin or chlorpyrifos in the form of microcapsules (not to be used at temperatures > 30°C) ■ Bio Suisse-approved products may be stored/processed in the same room. Bio Suisse-approved products must not come into contact with these pesticides.
<p>Fogging of premises and/or appliances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Permitted products in descending order of priority: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural pyrethrum without or with addition of piperonyl butoxide (synergist) 2. Dichlorvos ■ All Bio Suisse-approved products must be removed from the premises and appliances to be fogged. The only exceptions are raw materials or semi-finished products in gastight packaging (e.g. gastight metal barrels). ■ Strict attention must be paid to ensuring that the fogging products do not reach and contaminate Bio Suisse-approved products. Premises and appliances to be fogged must be appropriately sealed. ■ Subsequent to fogging the premises and appliances must be sufficiently aired prior to re-storing or processing the products. Waiting period: 24 hours. ■ The holding must ensure that the organic raw materials and products do not become contaminated when they are re-stored (no residues on products): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sufficient cleaning of premises and appliances 2. the first production batch following fogging may not be marketed as Bio Suisse-approved.
<p>Fumigation of premises and/or appliances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Permitted products: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Phosphorus hydride 2. Sulphuryl fluoride ■ All Bio Suisse-approved raw materials, semi-finished products and finished products must be removed from the premises and appliances to be fumigated. ■ Gases must not be able to reach and contaminate Bio Suisse-approved products through leaking storage silos or through pipes. If need be, the products must be removed from neighbouring rooms (storage silo compartments etc.) or the rooms/compartments to be fumigated must be sealed off gastight. ■ Subsequent to fumigation the premises/appliances must be sufficiently aired and a waiting period of 24 hours must be observed prior to processing or re-storing Bio Suisse-approved products. ■ The holding must ensure that the organic raw materials and products do not become contaminated when they are re-stored (no residues on products). The first production batch following fumigation may not be marketed as Bio Suisse-approved.

6 Labelling, marketing

6.1 Declaration of conformity with Bio Suisse standards

(included in 2004, last amended by the LCI on 25 August 2005)

a) Basis

Bio Suisse Standards, Sections 1.3 and 7.5

b) Practical application in approval process

Bio Suisse-approved operations outside of Switzerland may present themselves in advertising, on websites etc. with the "approved by Bio Suisse" add-on to their logo (see below).

This add-on may only be used if the operation is provided with a valid written approval by Bio Suisse. The written approval determines approval status at any given time.

The following and similar terms must not be used: "Bud farm/business" (Knospe-Betrieb), "Bio Suisse farm/business" (Bio Suisse-Betrieb) etc.

Products from Bio Suisse-approved operations must be labelled on containers, packages, delivery notes, invoices etc. with the phrase "approved by Bio Suisse" or the logo below. Containers for export must carry the logo.

Where the final packaging of a product is already done outside of Switzerland and where the Bud label is placed on the packaging, this must be carried out by a Bio Suisse licensee. In case of doubt, Bio Suisse reserves the right to demand the relevant contract documentation in writing.

All products approved by Bio Suisse as "in conversion" must be labelled clearly as "in conversion products".

The following and similar declarations must not be used: "Bio Suisse", "Bud" (Knospe), "Full Bud" (Vollknospe), "Bud in conversion" (Umstellungs-Knospe), "Bud-approved" (Knospe-anerkannt), "Bud-compliant" (Knospe-konform), etc.

Logo:

approved by BIO SUISSE

7 Inspection and approval

7.1 Documents to be submitted for Bio Suisse approval

(adopted by the LCI in 2002, last amended on 7 November 2007)

For the assessment of compliance with Bio Suisse Standards, at least the following documents must be submitted to Bio Suisse:

1. Individual holdings

- Bio Suisse Checklist for Individual Producers (signed by the farm manager and the inspector, confirmed by the certification body)
- Inspection report (first-time applicants: also a report for the previous year)
- Certificate/certification decision/Bio Suisse notification of approval conditions
- Annual production programme/schedule of areas
- Field maps³ (for first-time applicants)

2. Wildcrafting projects

- Bio Suisse Checklist "Collection in the Wild" (signed by the project manager and the inspector, confirmed by the inspection body)
- Inspection report (first-time applicants: also a report for the previous year)
- Certificate/certification decision/Bio Suisse notification of approval conditions
- Maps of collection areas
- List of collectors
- Sample of a contract between the manager of the collection project and collectors

3. Producer groups

- Bio Suisse Checklist for Groups (signed by the person responsible for the group and by the in-spector, confirmed by the inspection body)
- Inspection report (first-time applicants: also a report for the previous year)
- Certificate/certification decision/Bio Suisse notification of approval conditions
- Field maps¹ (for first-time applicants)

4. Smallholder cooperatives

- Inspection report (first-time applicants: also a report for the previous year). The individual points of the Bio Suisse Checklist for Groups must be addressed in summary form in the inspection report or in an additional Bio Suisse report.
- Certificate/certification decision/Bio Suisse notification of approval conditions
- List of members (Approved Farmers List)

5. Processing and trade operations

- Bio Suisse Checklist "Processing and Trade" (signed by the person responsible in the enterprise and by the inspector, confirmed by the certification body)
- Inspection report
- Certificate/certification decision/Bio Suisse notification of approval conditions
- Samples of dispatch notes, invoices and container labels

Bio Suisse may request more information and documents at any time.

³ A suitable map must give an overview of the structural layout of the entire holding. All plots must be numbered in accordance with the accompanying schedule of areas. The areas dedicated to the promotion of biodiversity must be indicated on the field maps. In cases where there is a risk of spray drift, the adjacent areas of neighbouring farms, including the crops being grown on them, and the nature of the boundaries (hedges, paths, roads watercourses etc) must be marked.

7.2 Approval of producer groups with internal control systems (ICS)

(adopted by the LCI in 1997, last amended on 7 November 2007)

a) Based on criteria by

IFOAM (Internal Control Systems for Group Certification⁴), EU (Guidance document for the evaluation of the equivalence of organic producer group certification schemes applied in developing countries⁵)

b) Practical application in approval process

Where a producer group of small farmers has a well functioning internal control system (ICS), less than 100% of the holdings need to be inspected annually if the following conditions are met:

1. All holdings proposed for Bio Suisse approval must meet the Bio Suisse Standards; in particular, they must have been converted in their entirety (whole-farm approach).
2. The producer group is inspected and certified in accordance with the EU specifications set out in the "Guidance document for the evaluation of the equivalence of organic producer group certification schemes applied in developing countries".
3. Member holdings which according to the criteria set out in the EU "Guidance document" can not be considered for internal control must be inspected externally every year.

Documentation

The following documents must be submitted for Bio Suisse approval:

1. Calculation basis for qualification of the group for an ICS (holding sizes, turnover) and list of the group members who, based on their turnover or holding size, must be inspected externally
2. Certificate/decision on certification/notification of conditions
3. Inspection report (first-time applicants: also a report for the previous year) containing all the following points:
 - Description of the entire producer group
 - Report on the evaluation of the ICS including risk assessment
 - Results of the latest inspections including those of the holdings which could not be inspected as part of the ICS
 - The individual items in the Bio Suisse Checklist for Groups must be addressed in summary in the inspection report or a Bio Suisse additional report must be prepared.
4. List of members of the producer group (Approved Farmers List AFL) by the certification body identifying the holdings proposed for Bio Suisse approval.

8 Social requirements

Regulations on the implementation of Bio Suisse Standards for operations outside of Switzerland will be elaborated in 2010.

⁴ http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/standards/ics.html

⁵ <http://www.bio-suisse.ch/de/dokumentation/import/richtlinienweisungen.php>

Vereinigung Schweizer Biolandbau-Organisationen
Association suisse des organisations d'agriculture biologique
Associazione svizzera delle organizzazioni per l'agricoltura biologica
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