

Summary of the Bio Suisse Standards

Information note for producers outside of Switzerland (last updated 01/2018)

This summary of the Bio Suisse Standards gives producers in countries outside of Switzerland an overview of the requirements for certification according to Bio Suisse standards. As a prerequisite for certification according to Bio Suisse standards, a farming, processing or trading operation must already be in possession of valid certification in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007 or equivalent legislation.

Operations that are already certified according to Bio Suisse standards must meet any conditions that were imposed when their Bio Suisse certificate was issued.

1. Whole-farm approach

The entire farming operation must be managed according to organic standards. Operations which comprise non-organic livestock or non-organic plots cannot be certified according to Bio Suisse standards. The Bio Suisse definition of a farming operation is binding:

- The farming operation must constitute a comprehensive whole, comprised of farmland, buildings, equipment, a workforce and a centre of operations.
- The farming operation must have an independent, segregated flow of goods and its own clearly recognizable and distinctive image.
- The farm operations manager may not hold a managerial position on a non-organic farming operation or non-organic agricultural production unit.

2. Conversion period

The minimum conversion period is two full calendar years. The conversion period may not be shortened based on previous management.

3. Fertilizer use

The following fertilizer limits per hectare and year must be adhered to:

	kg N _{tot} /ha	kg P ₂ O ₅ /ha
Field fodder crops and field vegetable crops	225	80
Field crops (root crops, grain)	180	60
Viticulture, fruit, berries, etc.	100	30

Other limits apply to special crops.

Prohibited: peat for soil improvement, highly concentrated chlorinated potassium fertilizers (e.g., potassium chloride) and synthetic chelates (e.g., EDTA).

Farming operations must furnish proof of need to obtain permission to use mineral potassium products (more than 150 kg/ha/year) or trace-element fertilizers.

4. Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity

Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity must constitute at least 7% of a farming operation's total utilized agricultural area. Examples of eligible areas: unfertilized, species-rich permanent pastures and meadows, strips sown in wildflowers and herbs (for at least 18 months), conservation headlands, species-rich strips to promote beneficials, individual native trees suited to the location (each tree counts as 1 are), areas with natural communities of plants that are typical to the region, hedges, copses and riparian trees, pools, ponds and moorland, ruderal areas and ruins of buildings, dry stone walls, stone mounds and embankments, unpaved paths (with at least one-third cover) and species-rich woodland.

5. Propagating material (seeds, plant propagating material) and planting stock

- Undressed, non-organic propagating material may only be used if the inspection body has established (in the inspection report or by written confirmation) that no organic material is available (exception: grain production; see below).
- Any use of chemically dressed propagating material is prohibited.
- Since 1 January 2009, only certified organic grain seed is permitted (wheat, spelt, einkorn wheat, emmer wheat, khorasan wheat, durum wheat, barley, oats, rye, triticale, rice and millet).
- The use of hybrid grain seed (exception: maize/corn) is prohibited.
- Certified organic propagating material must be used for crops that are also grown as GMO varieties in the same country.
- Planting stock and plant propagating material grown as annual crops must be certified organic. Substrates may not contain more than 70% peat.
- The vegetative propagation of strawberries must at a minimum involve breeding young plants under certified organic conditions. The use of offshoots from non-organic parent plants to grow organic young plants was tolerated until 31 December 2017.

6. Plant protection products

- Prohibited: synthetic pyrethroids (including in traps) / bioherbicides / growth regulators.
- The use of copper preparations is subject to restrictions (in terms of pure copper per hectare and year): For vegetables, potatoes, wine, hops, and stone fruit the limit is 4 kg; for soft fruit the limit is 2 kg; for pome fruit the limit is 1.5 kg.
- The use of copper-based and sulphur-based preparations in the production of grain, legumes or oilseeds is prohibited.
- The use of ethephon and calcium carbide to induce flowering in pineapples is prohibited.

7. Soil protection

- At least 20% of the crop rotation must protect or improve the soil or accumulate nutrients (e.g., grain legumes, green manure, leys, etc.).
- Outside of the growing season, at least 50% of the arable land must have sufficient plant cover.
- For annual arable and field vegetable crops there must be at least a twelve-month rotation break between two main crops of the same species (exceptions: rice, vegetables and pineapples).
- Areas that are in danger of erosion may not be tilled unless appropriate preventive measures have been taken.

8. Water resources management requirements

- The quality of groundwater and surface water must not be impaired by wastewater or effluents.
- Irrigation water must not impair the quality of harvested products.
- Irrigation use must not impair the fertility of the soil over the long term.
- Farming operations in areas with scarce water resources must meet additional requirements, e.g., follow a water usage plan, use efficient irrigation systems that use water sparingly, and verifiably cooperate with relevant stakeholder groups on water resources management.
- The use of nonrenewable water resources is only permitted if credible documentation can be furnished that the abstraction poses no serious ecological or socio-economic risks.

9. Green cover in permanent crops

Permanent crops must have green cover throughout the year. In areas with scarce water resources, the green cover may be limited to a period of at least four months of the year. Where spontaneous plant cover is too sparse, a green manure crop must be sown.

10. Clearing high conservation value areas

Clearing areas of high conservation value for agricultural use is prohibited.

11. Animal husbandry

To obtain certification for plant products, operations in the EU must comply with the animal husbandry regulations laid out in Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007. In all other countries, operations must meet the Bio Suisse minimum requirements for animal husbandry.

To obtain certification for animal products, animal husbandry on the operation must fully comply with Bio Suisse standards (with the exception of shrimp, mussels and beekeeping).

12. Parallel production

In cases of parallel production on both fully organic and in-conversion land, proof of segregation and traceability from farm to fork must be furnished and confirmed by the inspection body.

13. Social responsibility

Bio Suisse social responsibility requirements must be met (see the Bio Suisse Standards, part V, section 1.3). Farming operations in France, Italy, Morocco, Peru, Portugal and Spain are obliged to furnish proof of external social certification/auditing. Farming operations with less than five employees are exempted.

14. Processing and trade

All storage, processing and trading activities must meet the Bio Suisse standards.

15. Prohibition against air freight

Bio Suisse only recognizes products that are transported by land or by sea.

16. Product declaration

BIOSUISSE ORGANIC products that are destined to be imported to Switzerland must have the phrase 'BIOSUISSE ORGANIC' or the 'BIOSUISSE ORGANIC' logo (see below) on containers, delivery notes, invoices, etc. Containers for export must carry the logo. Templates of the logo in green or black may be downloaded from the Bio Suisse website.

Logo:



The 'Bud' logo and the following terms may not be used outside of Switzerland: 'Bud farm', 'Bio Suisse farm', etc.

Please note that this summary is not authoritative. In case of doubt, refer to the complete version of the Bio Suisse Standards.