

Annual report 2017

The fascination of quality





“Innovation and tradition do not necessarily have to be antagonistic concepts. After 20 years in the business we continue to see it as our responsibility to honour traditions and at the same time to develop and implement new ideas.” *Ueli Steiner*

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Imprint

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Key numbers 2017

	bio.inspecta AG	bio.inspecta Ltd.	Albinspekt sh.p.k
Employees			
Employees	131	12	8
– therefrom apprentices	3	0	0
Income statement	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Turnover	9'429'602	393'277	191'619
Annual profit	123'157	33'460	32'195
Depreciation	-110'988	3'331	498
Balance sheet	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Balance sheet total	3'119'850	342'951	167'141
Borrowed capital	1'888'503	112'715	31'902
Equity capital	1'231'347	132'653	135'238
Shares	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Nominal capital	969'500	200'000	100
Number of shares	9'695 pcs	25 pcs	2 pcs

**“I feel very blessed to be able
to play a part in the
development of organic
farming in Switzerland and
around the world.”** *Peter Jossen*



Interview with the President

What does it mean to you to preside over the Board of Directors of bio.inspecta in the year of its 20th anniversary?

First and foremost it is an honour, and primarily of course it is a great responsibility towards the 151 people who work for bio.inspecta. I am also very grateful to my predecessors and, in humility, I stand on their shoulders. To name just two examples: There were the former Federal Councillor Otto Stich and my former colleague in the National Council, Ruth Genner. Without their pioneer spirit, their tenacity and persistence, this birthday kid would not have survived beyond adolescence.

From your point of view, has the company changed in recent years?

Naturally, and significantly so. Looking at IT, the courage to invest big has paid off. We are already among the top companies in this regard. Company procedures, for example, have largely been standardised. We have been able to continuously improve working conditions, and not least the salaries. We have significantly broadened our operations at the international level. Continuous growth to almost 10 million Swiss Francs in turnover shows that the company is on a positive course to which many of the former employees have contributed.

In terms of corporate development, what is your personal focus?

My Board of Directors embodies cautiousness, controlled growth, and more in-depth risk analysis and risk mitigation. However, we are aware that staff engagement and motivation are crucial for success. Therefore a key focus is on training and staff development. I am in love with success!

What do you see as being the future opportunities and challenges?

We must learn from past mistakes. Certification and inspection call for very precise professional conduct and are influenced by many external factors. The scope and speed of this business, and especially of the international contracts, can be very taxing. The IT requirements, including those imposed by the Swiss authorities, are challenging. My confidence is built on experience gained in the course of overcoming the latest difficulties – the team is able to learn and work under pressure. We'll manage. Fortune favours those who work hard.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

I'm a part of a meaningful whole. As a former member of the Swiss parliament I feel very blessed to be able to play a part in the development of organic farming in Switzerland and around the world. It makes me happy that I am able to put my experiences, including the not so good experiences, in politics and as an attorney and notary in service of a vital cause. Almost every week I'm happy to see the faces of my cheerful team in Frick and my CEO Ueli Steiner's cleverness, humour and proficiency delight me almost daily.

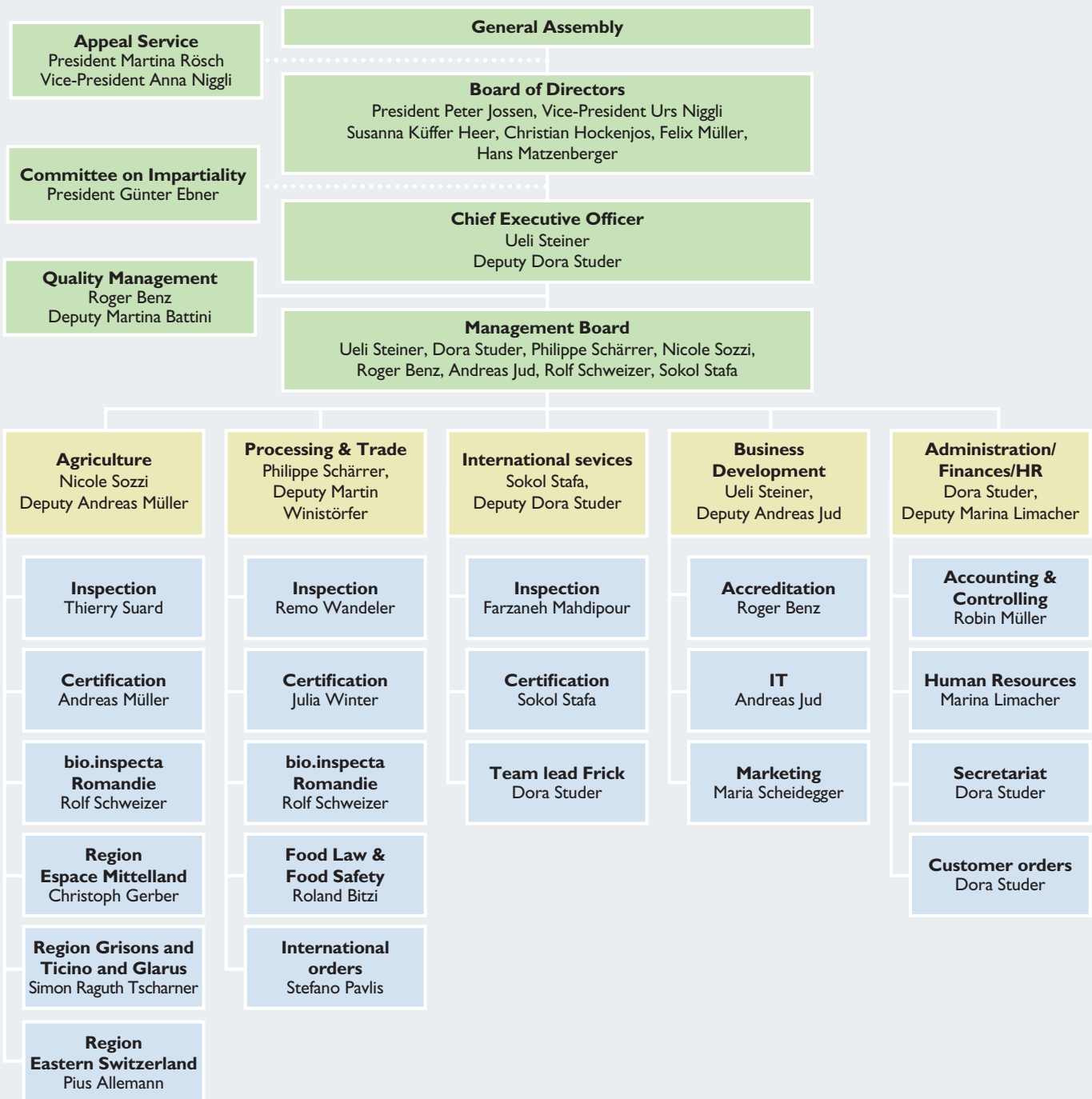
What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

I have three wishes: Firstly, terrific celebrations including many contacts to satisfied clients and interesting partners. Secondly, further consolidation free of any scandals. And thirdly, much "organic diversity" in the Board of Directors, the Management Board, and the workforce as a whole. I wish for our current broad range of life experiences, proficiency, multilingualism and cultural diversity to advance the entire team.



Peter Jossen,
chairman of the board

Organizational Structure 31.12.2017



Tradition and Innovation

bio.inspecta was established 20 years ago. It took over the inspection activities then being carried out by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL). While the organic farming sector had slowly developed at that time, the fundamental tenets of organic production were already deeply ingrained in the company. Good quality organic inspections could swiftly be offered. However, in the beginning some obstacles had yet to be overcome on the administrative side.

Over the past 20 years, the company has not only developed but also maintained traditions. There has always been a steadfast commitment to offering the best possible service to clients and to actively support them in their market development. Today the company offers a broad range of services to the agricultural sector, with a view to providing comprehensive services to the clients' complete satisfaction. bio.inspecta now also offers a broad range of inspections, certifications and other services to the processing and trading sectors. Both the organic farming sector and bio.inspecta have evolved significantly. While organics is our "first love" and primary commitment, we are also now involved with a number of different other sustainable produc-

"Both the organic farming sector and bio.inspecta have evolved significantly." Ueli Steiner

tion methods and labels. While our most important areas of activity are the agricultural and food sectors, we have expanded our portfolio to include further significant sectors such as cosmetics, aquaculture, textiles, timber, biochar and others.

bio.inspecta now has 151 staff who work in Switzerland as well as internationally in a range of countries. bio.inspecta and its subsidiaries provide comprehensive, integrated and forward-looking services to their valued clients. While we continue to evolve together with our clients, we remain deeply committed to our traditions and roots.

Our business performance continues to be satisfactory in 2017. With a view to further improvements to client services we opened two new offices: We are delighted to now have an office in the Canton of Vaud under the name of bio.inspecta Roman-die in Etagnières. Our second new office is the bio.inspecta Albinspekt office in Tirana, Albania. In our view, both practical orientation and client proximity are crucial to providing the best services. We help agricultural holdings and businesses to develop and strengthen their market position in a sustainable way. On that note, here's to the future!



Ueli Steiner,
CEO bio.inspecta AG

“Tour de Suisse”



Maria Scheidegger,
Head of Marketing

It has become increasingly important for bio.inspecta to be present at a range of different fairs and events. Moreover, we intend to organise a greater number of our own events to provide an information platform and training opportunities for our clients.

Personal contacts and feedback give us the opportunity to better understand our clients' needs. Building upon our good experiences in the current business year we are ramping up our marketing activities in 2018, our anniversary year. Under the “Tour de Suisse” theme we are participating in exhibitions and are organising events and trainings all over Switzerland. We look forward to exciting contacts with clients, partners and other interested people.



agrischa, Chur



agrischa, Chur



agrischa, Chur

“We help agricultural holdings and businesses to develop and strengthen their market position in a sustainable way. With our comprehensive range of services we stand for quality, reliability and customer utility.” *Ueli Steiner*



bio.inspecta Romandie

Interview with Rolf Schweizer, Managing Director of bio.inspecta Romandie.

You have been overseeing the agricultural inspections in the Romandie region since 2012. In your opinion, what are the needs of your clients in the farming sector today?

There has been a surge in interest with regard to conversion to organic farming in the Romandie over the past 3 or 4 years. We are seeing more and more farms which regard organics as one of several positive opportunities for further development. In many cases the farms have not yet delved deep into what it means to farm organically. For example, questions arise as to whether it is possible to convert only parts of a farm. Direct sales to consumers have increased significantly. We are delighted to competently advise our clients with respect to label schemes, product labelling etc.

In this anniversary year, you are now taking another step by taking over the management of bio.inspecta Romandie in Etagnières. Is this an important step for you and for the company?

Yes, this is clearly an important step forward for bio.inspecta. It is vital for bio.inspecta Romandie to “live and breathe” the Romandie touch. It is foreseeable that there will be more competition in the area of organic inspections in the future. We are one of the existing certifying agencies in western Switzerland and therefore a respectable player for existing and future partners in the Romandie. Personally I highly value the opportunity to further deepen and strengthen local client contacts.

What do you hope for bio.inspecta Romandie to achieve in the coming years?

Our objective is to continue to be the No. 1 in the Romandie and to expand our services, for example through regional labels, urban horticulture etc. It would also be very desirable for us to cooperate with the agencies in the region that inspect for compliance with the ÖLN scheme (“Proof of ecological performance”).

What makes you happy in your daily work?

I very much enjoy the cooperation in the team and the contact with our clients.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

The same as I wished my five children when they turned 20: Stay curious, let yourself be inspired, enjoy what you do, never give up anything that is important to you, and keep making beautiful plans for the future – if you do that you’ll be forever young.



Rolf Schweizer,
Managing Director
of bio.inspecta Romandie

Processing and Trade



Philippe Schärler,
Head of the Processing &
Trade Division

Interview with Philippe Schärler, Head of the Processing & Trade Division.

For you customer service always comes first. What kind of qualifications and skills does your workforce currently have?
Our staff have deep expertise across all the different sectors (e.g. foods, feeds, cosmetics, aquaculture etc.). Clients can avail of competent advice on all the different standards and our staff regularly receive further training. At the same time our team covers all the three national languages.

bio.inspecta has continuously adapted and expanded its business segment in recent years in line with client needs. What kind of developments are particularly noteworthy?

In the processing and trade sector we have found that the diversity of standards continues to increase. Moreover, there are standards that are not particularly well-known but that are of great importance to the processing industry, e.g. RSPO or UTZ. We have greatly expanded our inspectanet customer portal in recent years. Nowadays we can process applications for the certification of new products online. This is highly beneficial in terms of processing speed and it also means that the clients always have a good overview of all their orders.

bio.inspecta organises the “Lebensmitteltag” (Food Day) in Lucerne and other important meetings for the food sector. How important do you think these sorts of events are for our clients?

Events such as the “Lebensmitteltag”, which we offer in cooperation with SQS, or the organic processors conference which is held in conjunction with other organic

sector organisations are important for keeping interested clients in touch with current issues. They can get insights into topics that are not normally as accessible. The organic processors conference is strictly targeted at the organic sector while the “Lebensmitteltag” deals with fundamental topics of relevance to the food industry as a whole.

What kind of surprises do you intend to offer to your clients in the coming years?

Generally we intend to further develop the inspectanet for the benefit of our clients. Our aim is to make available via the inspectanet all the documents needed for organic inspections. This will include, for example, inspection reports with electronic approval as well as descriptions of any non-conformances and measures to be taken.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

Our clients are motivated and I am delighted to see that we collaborate in an active and

transparent manner with a view to compliance with provisions and standards.

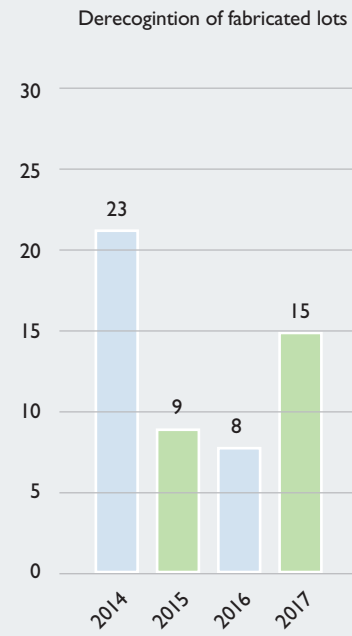
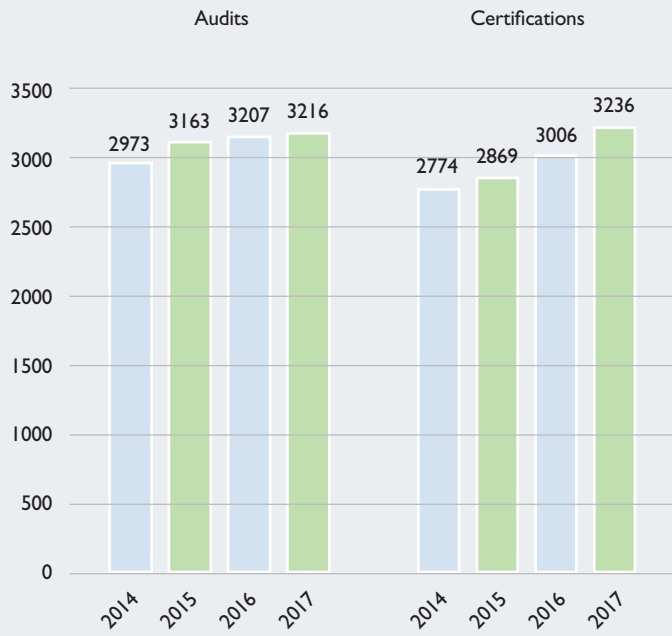
What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

My wish for bio.inspecta is that it continues to develop as positively as it has and that it continues to contribute to the pragmatic implementation of the guidelines and standards.

“Our clients are motivated and I am delighted to see that we collaborate in an active and transparent manner.” Philippe Schärler



Processing and Trade



Agriculture



Nicole Sozzi,
Head of Agriculture
Division

Interview with Nicole Sozzi, Head of the Agriculture Division.

What is your assessment of the development of the organic farming sector over the past 20 years?

Given that I have only been active in the organic farming sector for eight years, I can only give a partial answer to this question. However, I do think that organic farming was still very much in a pioneer phase 20 years ago. The term organic now covers a broadscale sustainable form of production that is well recognised and highly valued by consumers. The reasons for converting to organic farming are different now than they were two decades ago. Nowadays, entry into the organic sector is often based on economic considerations or the aim is simply to meet the demand for domestically produced organic products. Moreover, the current direct payment system provides a significant incentive.

For many companies, “organics” has become a marketing strategy; I very much doubt that was the case 20 years ago. Organic farming research has certainly been strengthened, and I personally hope that research activities will continue to intensify in order to help advance organic farming based on a solid foundation.

What kinds of changes have there been in terms of how organic farms are inspected?

The credibility of organic labels has increased over the past 20 years, but this has also brought with it increased complexity and greater demands on inspections and inspectors. Five A4 pages of checkpoints have evolved into dynamic checklists containing several hundred checkpoints. This has little to do with organic farming per se but is primarily related to the development of the audit system prescribed by the Confederation. As an inspection agency we now have less leeway in terms

of how to conduct an audit. The provisions set out in the standards and regulations prescribe in great detail how an audit is to be conducted correctly.

What kind of changes do you expect in the future?

For us as an inspection and certification agency, it will be an important future challenge to meet the different stakeholders' requirements:

- Producers: Requirements in terms of cost-effective, appreciative inspections which are also of value to the farm manager.
- Confederation and cantons: Requirements of the direct payment programmes and regulations.
- Label awarding bodies: Requirements in terms of credibility in the eyes of consumers.
- Accreditation body: Requirements as part of the international standards ISO 17020 and ISO 17065.

It is a daily challenge to meet all these demands. We are always trying to keep placing the focus on the producers.

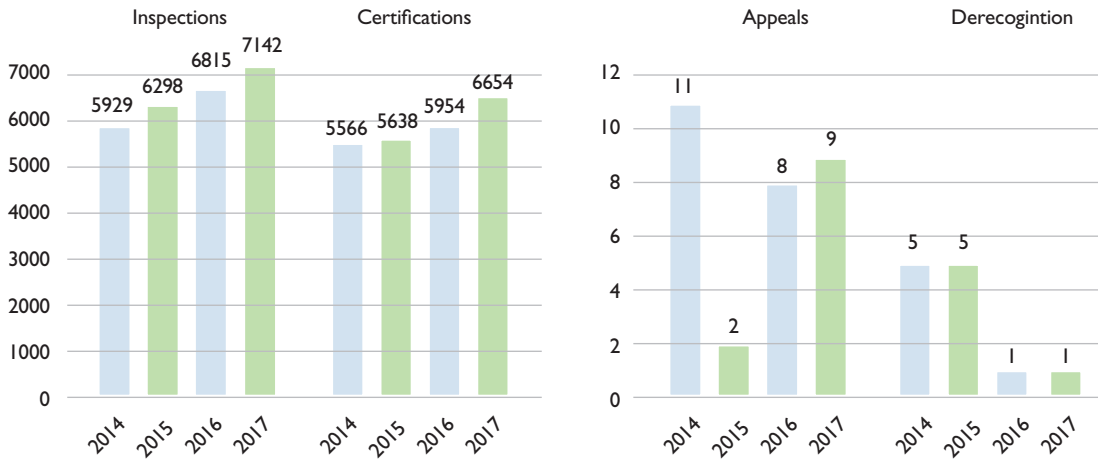
“The credibility of organic labels has increased over the past 20 years, but this has also brought with it increased complexity and greater demands on inspections and inspectors.” Nicole Sozzi

It has always been of great importance to you that the clients are happy with your service. How does your team ensure that this is indeed the case?

As already mentioned, we have a wide range of different

clients. Therefore I always try to assemble our team in such a way that we can have at hand as broad a range of expertise as possible. It is mandatory for our inspectors to have a practical organic farming background. Almost all of our inspectors also manage their own organic farm holding. The team in Frick and Etagnière is comprised of agronomists with university (ETH, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) and polytechnic degrees, master farmers and agricultural tech-

Agriculture



nicians. They all have different backgrounds and bring different kinds of knowledge to the table, and we can all learn from each other. It is very important to us to meet as equals and this is something we also communicate externally to our clients. We take very seriously the concerns of our clients and any criticism they may offer, and we regularly self-reflect with a view to continuous improvement. We try to never stand still but consider ourselves to be in an ongoing process of improvement for the benefit of our clients.

What kind of surprises do you intend to offer to your clients in the coming years?

We don't have any particular surprises planned. I believe that it is our duty to plan the inspections in such a way that they are compliant with the legislation in force and the current standards at all times. Moreover, I see it as our duty to give our clients timely notice of any changes that may impact on the inspection, allowing producers to prepare properly and avoiding situations where they are surprised by a new rule that then prompts a sanction.

The legislation has been changing in a direction that entails an increasing number of unannounced audits – unfortunately for our clients these do not always come as a pleasant surprise. However, in the eyes of the consumers this will certainly build greater credibility.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

Our multifaceted work: The question of how to implement a particular rule in practice and how to audit for it, the considerations necessary when an organic producer wants to build a new poultry house, the decision as to when it is possible to grant an exemption for

gradual conversion to organic farming, the rules on how exactly a certificate must be set out when a farm takes on new non-organic farmland, the correct procedures for worktime reporting on the part of the inspectors to ensure that we can correctly make out the invoices and that the inspector is correctly remunerated, the most efficient ways to convey our audit results across data interfaces to the cantonal implementing authorities, the question of which label awarding body can access which of the audit results, the question of how to follow correct legal procedures in case of possible disputes with clients, and so forth.

Even after eight years at bio.inspecta I learn something new every day – what more can one ask for?

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

The best birthdays are those you can celebrate with many of your friends. I hope that bio.inspecta will be able to continue to maintain many friendships and partnerships at the various levels of its fields of activity. Moreover I hope that its staff will always interact in a spirit of friendship and respect.

bio.inspecta Turkey



Emel Erkan,
Managing Director
bio.inspecta Ltd., Izmir

For the past seven years bio.inspecta has also conducted organic inspections in Turkey and neighbouring countries. The Turkish subsidiary was newly established and is staffed by local employees in Izmir.

Interview with Emel Erkan, Managing Director bio.inspecta Ltd., Izmir.

You have managed bio.inspecta Turkey for four years already. Could you tell us about some of the challenges you had to overcome in these initial years?

I have learned that our activities are very valuable. By managing bio.inspecta Ltd. I have learned that the conditions and legislation in Turkey are not always easy to deal with. In all the different situations I encounter on a daily basis it is important to me to keep calm.

How important is organic farming in Turkey today and how do you see the sector's future development?

According to the 2016 statistics, approximately 524,000 ha of land were under organic management, excluding "wild collection". Organic agriculture is very important in Turkey and farmers as well as exporters receive significant support from the government. Importers in other countries also prefer organic products from Turkey, such as rose oil, fruit concentrates, nuts (hazelnuts, pine nuts etc.), dried fruit (raisins, figs, apricots, apples etc.) and herbs. There has been a continuous increase in production as well as customer demand and government support.

Swift and competent customer service has always been your first priority. How can you and your team ensure its delivery?

I hold a lot of meetings with my team as well as with the auditors and certifiers. At the same time, I am also very accessible to our clients with whom I confer often, both in person and by telephone, on our services, quality and our staff. In this manner, I can keep a good eye on the entire situation and understand what's going on. While this takes some time, it is very much worth it.

What sort of new services can your clients expect to see bio.inspecta offering in the coming years?

We would like to expand our services to offer to our clients organic inspections to the Korean organic standard (KOR), the Japanese organic standard (JAS), and the Chinese organic standard.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

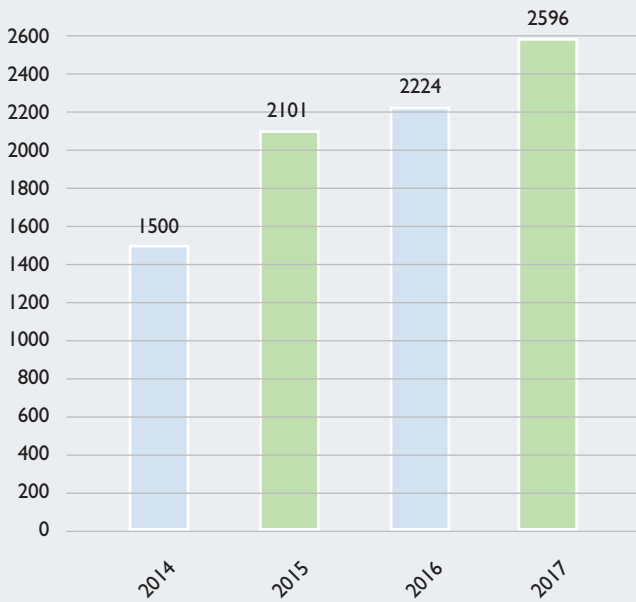
A suitable setting is very important to me. A pleasant working atmosphere both within the team and in our work with clients is very valuable. I very much enjoy my work, deal with a range of different tasks, and I am enthusiastic and motivated.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

Calmness, good fortune and stability.



Audits bio.inspecta Turkey



“There has been a continuous increase in production as well as customer demand and government support.” *Emel Erkan*

bio.inspecta Albania and Kosovo



Sokol Stafa,
Managing Director of
Albinspekt Ltd., Tirana
and Head of International
Services, bio.inspecta AG

In 2017 bio.inspecta acquired a majority stake in Albinspekt Ltd., the leading certification agency in Albania and Kosovo. The future “bio.inspecta Albania» is staffed by local employees.

Interview with Sokol Stafa, Managing Director of Albinspekt Ltd., Tirana.

In recent years, you have built the Albinspekt company from the ground up. From your point of view, why does it make sense to join the bio.inspecta group of companies at this particular time?

Times are changing and the markets are presenting a lot of challenges. It is indispensable for us to be part of the bio.inspecta group of companies.

It allows us to expand our range of services and provides quality assurance. Access to joint IT tools such as Ecert and accreditation allow us to better utilise market opportunities. A local certification agency becomes stronger if it works from inside a group.

What kind of developments did you observe in the region's organic farming sector during the company's establishment phase?

Local certification agencies are main players in the overall development of the organic farming sector. To be part of this development in this sector was at times a reason for our engagement with certification and at the same time it gave us an enormous advantage in the marketplace. During this time, we experienced the develop-

ment of the organic farming sector and also contributed to it. As organic pioneers in the country we have grown in tandem with market demand for organic products. Many farms converted to organic agriculture, the area under organic management has expanded, and product quality has improved.

Your primary focus is on customer service. How do your clients benefit from bio.inspecta's engagement?

Our aim is to offer a diverse range of services from one source in different markets with different labels. We want to be a reliable partner to our clients.

What kind of new services can your clients expect from bio.inspecta in the coming years?

Audits for a range of different organic labels as well as non-organic labels.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

A team that works passionately and with integrity.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

A further successful 100 years! Leadership in quality.



bio.inspecta in other Countries

bio.inspecta is in a position to serve valuable clients and engage in interesting projects in some additional countries. The international organic producers, traders and processors have similar requirements in terms of inspection and certification, while in some cases the farms cover large areas. In 2017 Sokol Stafa assumed responsibility for the International Services Division.

Interview with Sokol Stafa, Head of International Services, bio.inspecta AG.

What is your assessment of the needs of bio.inspecta's additional international clients?

The clients wish to avail of a range of different services from the one source. To be

able to swiftly give answers to questions on existing services is very important. Our aim is to quickly and smoothly respond to client requirements.

Which are the services clients primarily avail of?

Clients value active communication, swift responses to questions on the certification of audits, the ability to quickly reflect and to make improvements to things that are a bad fit. They also value the opportunity to object to certification decisions and to have those objections assessed by an independent appeals service.

What can your clients expect from us over the coming years?

We would like to serve our clients at a regional level by employing regional staff and utilising their knowledge. We would like to be able to swiftly react to additional service requests at all times. Moreover, we would like to serve small producers for local markets.

What kind of support can bio.inspecta offer with respect to international trade?

We support international trade through swift and competent work. We actively participate in various platforms supporting international trade and ensure direct

contact with international traders.

Which countries are the primary recipients of the exported products?

The products are primarily exported to Germany, France, Italy, and to Switzerland of course.

What impact does the EU TRACES database have?

TRACES is important for transparency and traceability. Moreover, all exports of organic products into EU countries are subject to inspection.

“We would like to serve our clients at a regional level by employing regional staff and utilising their knowledge.” Sokol Stafa

bio.inspecta Administration, Finances and Human Resources



Dora Studer,
Head of Administration,
Finances and Human
Resources

Interview with Dora Studer, Head of Administration, Finances and Human Resources.

At all administrative levels, your team is in constant contact with bio.inspecta's valued clients. How would you describe the team's principal tasks?

In 2017, in our core business, bio.inspecta's back office teams administratively processed a total of 11'400 orders for 9'400 clients in Switzerland (8'900) and abroad (500), for organic operators (8'740) and non-organic operators (660) – including all the tasks from the administration of client master data to processing audited data as recorded to the invoicing of our services. Naturally, it is most important for my team to work efficiently and yet to be precise, and to strictly follow defined workflows. All of us maintain a constant focus on lean and effective workflows, which are strongly supported by our very modern IT environment. We would not be able to offer our rather broad range of services at moderate prices without this technical support. We quickly intervene if one of the many orders gets stuck for whatever reason resulting in deadlines not being met. If something throws a spanner in the works, tailbacks result and bring with them unnecessary peak workloads and disquiet in day-to-day operations. Our entire administrative team knows that money that is lost in a badly managed administration cannot be earned at the frontlines.

“All of us maintain a constant focus on lean and effective workflow.” Dora Studer

How do you ensure the kind of top customer service that is so important to you in your day-to-day work?

Everyone in the administration team must constantly prove their high level of commitment to good service provision. Team members must have an affinity for IT, solid familiarity with the MS Office suite and good foreign-language skills. I myself maintain close contact with my teams. Any uncertainties or problems encountered

are solved immediately where possible. The satisfaction of mastering all the different challenges one encounters in the day-to-day operations can only be maintained if everybody in my team can do their job unhindered.

What kind of impact did the company's growth and international expansion have on you and your division?

We all had to be very flexible, upskill and grow together with our clients. The range of services we offer in relation to organic and sustainability schemes has expanded significantly. The “thirst for data” has grown on the part of the cantonal authorities as well as on the part of the national and international label awarding bodies. To quench this thirst we need to first collect the necessary data in a consistent manner and have at hand a database into which these data can be fed and which can output the data in all sorts of combinations. The decision taken 10 years ago to develop Ecert and the fact that we have solely banked on this software ever since has proven invaluable day after day. The international expansion has clearly brought with it additional requirements for each one of my divisional sections.

Turkish and Albanian annual accounts, social insurance issues related to the employment of foreign staff, dealing with Ukrainian, Russian or Chinese documents etc., these are all now components of our daily work at bio.inspecta. Last but not least our work also calls for intercultural skills: There is a vast difference between familiar communications with a vegetable grower in Berne, a domestic cattle trader, or a French-speaking cheesemaker on the one hand and exchanges with the manager of a 30,000 ha cereal farm in the Ukraine on the other.



You are also the Deputy CEO to Ueli Steiner. Describing this role you have held for the last 10 years, what comes spontaneously to mind?

Ueli Steiner came to bio.inspecta at a time of uncertainty when we had just lost our monopoly position in Bio Suisse certification. He gave bio.inspecta a new structure, brought the entire team behind him and together with us firmly placed the focus on our clients. As a former organic farmer who holds a degree in agronomy and spent journeyman years in the IT sector and in trusteeship, our boss can converse with anyone and knows what he's talking about. To work with him means to be challenged but also to be supported. As his deputy he strongly involves me in the company's management. It has been my great pleasure for the past 10 years to contribute ideas as sort of a "sparring partner" and to be involved in decision-making. With his broad expertise he is a great support to all divisional heads. He is as apt at speaking to our IT manager about our IT infrastructure as he is at comprehending our five companies' balance sheets or at discussing current agricultural policies. Our boss is a dynamic person who is full of ideas and fights for each client. For us this means: Keep at it and try to keep up. In short: To work with our boss is challenging and can be strenuous but it is always exciting.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

I will retire in 3 ½ years. I have been quite conscious of that for some time now and I notice every day and more acutely than in the past how inspiring my work at bio.inspecta is, how much I enjoy working with our team, and how much fulfilment I continue to get from doing meaningful work here. This is greatly influenced by the fact that bio.inspecta's core task is quality assurance in the sustainable use of resources.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

First and foremost my wish for bio.inspecta is that it will always be backed by a team that enthusiastically identifies with the company's tasks. I also hope that new and brilliant ideas will always arise at the right time which will allow bio.inspecta to maintain and expand its market position at the national and international levels.

“The satisfaction of mastering all the different challenges one encounters in the day-to-day operations can only be maintained if everybody in my team can do their job unhindered.” *Dora Studer*

bio.inspecta Quality Management



Roger Benz,
Head of Quality Management

In 2017, Roger Benz assumed responsibility for the Quality Management Division. With rising client numbers and an international focus, assurance of quality in work procedures has never been more important. What is at issue is the ability to offer a range of different high-standard services in the marketplace. In all circumstances, suitable measures must ensure quality work.

Interview with Roger Benz, Head of Quality Management.

The term “quality management” is not an easy one to grasp right away. What does quality management mean in the bio.inspecta context?

Accreditation standards presuppose the presence of a quality management system. The Quality Management Division provides backstopping for external audits and assures timely responses to potential conditions imposed. From the quality management perspective, key issues for bio.inspecta include the monitoring and improvement of processes delivered across all services.

Which tasks are part of your core tasks and which ones do you delegate to your audit team?

Outwardly, the participation in audits by external bodies and the subsequent preparation

of reports is the most important task. Internally the focus is on carrying out internal audits with a view to the continuous improvement of processes. A further focus is on document control of quality-relevant documents. We manage 2700 documents in the SharePoint alone. Other issues we deal with are the assurance of impartiality, complaints management, controlling of pro-

cess metrics, and the assessment of process risks. While Quality Management provides the system specifications, the “audit team”, i.e. primarily the Heads of Divisions, are responsible for their practical implementation.

What is it that your team monitors and audits?

In 2017, as part of our Operation Cockpit we defined key process metrics for the divisions and monitored these as per the specifications. The results are channelled into the equally new Balanced Score Card (BSC) which systematically integrates the CEO’s objectives. The Management Board defines measures where individual targets are not being met. Ecert is also an important tool for monitoring specified targets and actual performance, as it contains a wealth of useful data and analysis options.

What sort of influence do you exert on the international subsidiaries?

Our subsidiaries are subject to the same accreditation which means that any problems at their end can put at risk our overall accreditation. In 2017, our division has commenced the quality management process in Turkey by conducting the first local internal systems audit. The results have shown that collaboration in the individual sectors is vitally important

for location development. We have been holding regular QM meetings since this audit in order to exchange information, discuss any problems and clarify process specifications.

“Outwardly, the participation in audits by external bodies and the subsequent preparation of reports is the most important task.” Roger Benz



How do you collaborate with the various accreditation bodies? What exactly does that cooperation look like?

We collaborate with three accreditation bodies. Most of our services are accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Service SAS. In each case a particular standard is the basis for accreditation and must be implemented. bio.inspecta is ISO 17020 accredited as an inspection body and ISO 17065 accredited as a certifying body. Moreover, there is the scope of accreditation which includes legal provisions (e.g. the Swiss Ordinance on Organic Farming) or recognised private label standards such as Bio Suisse. SAS annually audits for compliance with the specifications and compiles a report including conditions and corrective measures required to address any non-conformances. Audits are also carried out to check for compliance where the scope of accreditation has been expanded. Additionally, we collaborate with the ASI accreditation body for MSC and ASC accreditation, as well as with IOAS for Natrue.

What challenges you personally?

The topics that are dealt with at bio.inspecta are very diverse and therefore there are vast differences between the various tasks to be performed.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

Given the developments in the business environment in which bio.inspecta operates, even after 20 years the company is still strongly evolving. Being able to contribute to the company's development in different directions is something I enjoy very much.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

I would like to congratulate the company on how it has developed over the past 20 years. For the future, I hope that bio.inspecta will enjoy a secure environment for its further development. I also hope that the company's most important capital, i.e. its employees, will enjoy the best of health and a high level of motivation allowing them to continue to be a part of bio.inspecta.

“Given the developments in the business environment in which bio.inspecta operates, even after 20 years the company is still strongly evolving.”

Roger Benz

bio.inspecta IT Services



Andreas Jud,
Head of IT

Andreas Jud and his team ensure that both clients and employees can deliver top performance every day. IT requirements have grown and hardware, online portals, systems and servers must be available at all times and as free from malfunction as possible.

Interview with Andreas Jud, Head of IT.

From your point of view, what is the importance of IT at bio.inspecta?

Information technology is very important for bio.inspecta – I’m constantly reminded of that. In the past, we generated several packing cases worth of paperwork per season. Every inspector was sent the paperwork for inspections by postal mail. I don’t think it would be possible nowadays to organise purely paper-based inspections. Today we manage the entire inspection in an electronic file. The inspector can now download the file for preparing the audit from the Internet. When the audit is finished, the inspector can simply transfer the file back to bio.inspecta. The audit can now pass through all the internal processes up to and including certification within a matter of days thanks to information technology. Of course this is only one example.

Which tasks are part of your core tasks and which ones are carried out by your team?

I’m in charge of managing the team and ensuring that all the IT operations run smoothly. Updates to new Windows operating systems or Office applications for example require a lot of clarification and tests. It is not a given that following an update everything runs as

before. For example, certain programme functions we employ may simply vanish all of a sudden. I always try to minimise risks by taking appropriate measures. Last year, for example, we outsourced Frick’s entire infrastructure to an external data centre. One of the reasons for this was to increase availability for external access, since more than half of the sessions accessing our infrastructure come from external sources. Familiar examples include our inspectanet for our clients and partners or access from Turkey by bio.inspecta Ltd. or from Albania and Kosovo by Albinspekt.

My team consists of two supporters/engineers, one developer and one project manager. My supporters/engineers are primarily in charge of safeguarding operations and further development of our systems environment. They are the direct contacts for the entire infrastructure. They deal with approximately 2’000 support queries every year. They are also in charge

of installing new systems and systems migration. Our application developer looks after the inspectanet and the interfaces to cantons and external partners. Our project manager implements internal and

external projects in collaboration with the divisions and external partners. As a long-serving employee she is also the primary contact for Ecert, our core application.

What is your assessment of the current challenges in the area of data security and how do you respond to these challenges?

For me data security is a very broad concept. Where it concerns the availability of data we use a data backup strategy: All the data held in Zurich are backed up to Frick on a daily basis and are periodically outsourced to an external medium. Things get a whole lot more

“In the past, we generated several packing cases worth of paperwork per season. Today we manage the entire inspection in an electronic file.” Andreas Jud



complicated where it comes to safeguarding data from third-party access. Anyone who is following this issue in the media knows how very important and difficult an issue this is. We have done a lot on this front. Details would go beyond the scope of this activity report but let me assure you that this is a high priority issue in our daily work. I continuously engage in creating risk awareness among staff at information events and sometimes even over lunch.

What are particular challenges for you?

bio.inspecta offers inspection and certification for a long list of different label schemes. Many of them are similar but there are also a lot of differences between them. These differences give rise to differences in processes and working methods. It is not always easy to implement certain standards that suit all the schemes, for example on the hardware front.

What makes you happy in your daily work?

bio.inspecta is home to many different cultures and people. They are like a big family to me and I highly value the exchanges with my colleagues. Our office environment is very modern and it allows for the real-

isation of innovative ideas. There is also room in the Management Board for the constructive discussion of proposals. I greatly enjoy contributing to the company's achievements.

What is your birthday wish for bio.inspecta?

My wishes for bio.inspecta are of course the same as those for any human: Good fortune and good health. If bio.inspecta enjoys both it will continue to successfully compete in the marketplace.

Numbers

1'715 (ca. 8 per day)
Tickets 2017
(1'927 in 2016)

1'376'703
Files in Ecert
(= 504 GB data)
10.02.2018 / 10:58

43'363
Documents edited on
drive O in 2017

88'314
Phone calls 2017 –
335 per day

“bio.inspecta is home to many different cultures and people. They are like a big family to me and I highly value the exchanges with my colleagues.” *Andreas Jud*

The boards and internal employees 2017

Board of Directors

Jossen Peter, chairman of the board
Niggli Urs, Vice-President
Hockenjos Christian
Küffer Heer Susanna
Matzenberger Hans
Müller Felix

Chief Executive Officer

Steiner Ueli
Studer Dora, Deputy

Quality Management

Benz Roger, head
Niederberger Benno

Administration

Studer Dora, head
Limacher Marina
Akbatı Gizem
Kessler Sereina
Lukic Smilja
Müller Robin
Schmid Regula
Schwab Milena, apprentices

Business Development

Steiner Ueli, head
Benz Roger
Glauser Patrizia
Heim Flavio
Jud Andreas
Meier Daniel
Meier Stefan
Reber Michael
Scheidegger-Zaccardo Maria

Agriculture

Sozzi Nicole, head
Müller Andreas
Allemann Pius
Battini Martina
Bedford Kim
Bögli Sandra

Colakoglu Nesem
Ferrari Adele
Gerber Christoph
Kappeler Joëlle
Mösch Daniela
Niederberger Benno
Niggli Claudia
Pfäffli Oswald
Raguth Simon
Renner Heike
Rohner Rosmarie
Rumpe Frank
Schaad Julia
Schweizer Rolf
Senn Julia, apprentice
Suard Thierry
Wassmuss Krebs Helga
Widmer Roland
Wyss Stefan
Zdralek Ulrike
Ziegler Rahel

Processing & Trade

Scharrer Philippe, head
Winistörfer Martin
Berz Brigitte
Bitzi Roland
Böttcher Normen
Frey Nicole
Gassmann Albert
Gerber Pascal
Hagg Sabine
Hartmann Friedrich
Imfeld Noemi
Jenni Marianne
Klose Juliana
Leu Sara
Marti-Moser Alexandra
Meier Tobias
Meile Fritz
Mini Raffaella
Pavlis Stefano
Peschke Jasmin
Riedo Sophie
Schauwecker Christof

Sieber Marc
Steiner Fabienne
Wandeler Remo
Weiss Franziska
Winter Julia
Wismer Josef
Wydler Pablo
Ziadeh Julia, apprentices

Appeal Service

Rösch Martina, President
Niggli Anna, Vice-President
Gerber Paul
Häseli Andi
Katzenmeier Sabine
Klug Arter Marianne
Tschannen Willy

Regional managers

Schweizer Rolf, bio.inspecta-Romandie
Gerber Christoph, Region Espace Mittelland
Raguth Simon, Region Grisons and Ticino and Glarus
Allemann Pius, Region Eastern Switzerland

Team bio.inspecta Ltd.

Erkan Emel, director
Altaş Aydın
Bababalım Feray
Bafikir Nina
Çaylar Salih
Çil Burçin
Feyzioğlu Özge
Göksu Gökhan
Işıldak Faruk
Işıldak Meltem
Karduz Yeşim
Türkmen Meltem
Türköz Sevgi

External inspectors and certifiers 2017

Agriculture

Abächerli Fredy, Titterten BL
 Aebi Bruno, Sumiswald BE
 Bapst Brunner Ursula, Vuorz GR
 Bettex Damien, Champthouroz VD
 Bonfadelli Thomas, Ennetmoos
 NW
 Bonvin Sylvie, Rueyres-les-Prés FR
 Brändle Josef, Wildhaus SG
 Buob Esther, Marbach SG
 Burkhalter Martin, Souboz BE
 Cadonau Andreas, Vuorz GR
 Demarmels Baltermia, Pignia GR
 Dohrmann Susanne, Neftenbach
 ZH
 Fallet Johannes, Müstair GR
 Forrer Ruedi, Wildhaus SG
 Gerber Beat, Zollbrück BE
 Germann Marc, Lucerne LU
 Gregori Claudio, Bergün GR
 Hänni Hans-Joachim, Biel BE
 Hartmann Erwin, Ascharina GR
 Héritier Jean-Luc, Savièse VS
 Jung Adrian, Lenggenwil SG
 Küng Martin, Putz GR
 Läser Mélanie, Meinier GE
 Liechti Simon, Arni BE
 Meister David, Kefikon TG
 Misteli Michael, Ursenbach BE
 Müller Roland, Geschinen VS
 Müller Ueli, Magden AG
 Naldoni Michele, Biel BE
 Nicolay Peter, Bergün GR
 Niemetz Kathrin, Mümliswil SO
 Obrist Jürg, Zurich ZH
 Perret Maxime, Prangins VD
 Raselli Annina, Poschiavo Gr
 Roffler Reto, Pany GR
 Rossé Alain, Montavon JU
 Scherrer Daniel, Bütschwil SG
 Schneider Martina, Toffen BE

Schraner Simone, Steffisburg BE
 Schüle Aureus, Ried-Mörel VS
 Stampanoni Elia, Bigorio TI
 Stein Susanne, Heinrichswil SO
 Steiner Jon Peider, Lavin GR
 Strauss Jürg, Rickenbach ZH
 Strub Thomas, Hauenstein-Ifenthal
 SO
 Thévoz Sylain, Payerne Caserne
 VD
 Thom Jon-Paul, Ardez GR
 Thöny Hans, Seewis-Dorf GR
 Trepp-Brägger Georg, Medels GR
 Vetsch Christian, Sevelen SG
 Wicki Stephan, Winikon LU
 Wirthner Karolin, Blitzingen VS

Processing & Trade

Borges Heike, Boxberg GER
 Caloz Geneviève, Bern BE
 Doswald Roman, Schöftland AG
 Eichelberger Ernst, Zollikofen BE
 Feiler Sandra, Zollikofen BE
 Gämperli Anna Katharina, Flawil
 SG
 Glauser Housi, Lausanne VD
 Hyldgaard Jorgen, Assens DK
 Hurni Beat, Zollikofen BE
 Kriegl Carina, Enzersfeld AT
 Küffer Marc, Lausanne VD
 Manschein Martin, Enzersfeld AT
 Peter Marcel, Bischofszell TG
 Troxler Armin, Lausanne VD
 Tscherrig Roman, Lausanne VD
 Wasem Christian, Bern BE
 Widmer Martin, Bern BE
 Wyss Stefan, Bern BE

International orders

Alonso Nuria, Vigo ES
 Borges Heike, Boxberg GER
 López-Jamar del Castillo Juan,
 Madrid ES
 Mahdipour Farzaneh, Tehran IRN
 Pinto Escoval Alfredo, Rhein-
 breitbach GER
 Theodoros Samaras,
 Kalamata GRC
 Schwegler Michael, Stau-
 fen i. Br. GER
 Seitz Philipp, Bonn GER

Income statement 2017

Income	2017	2016	Difference +/-
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Revenues from agriculture department	5'084'193.12	4'723'478.96	360'714.16
Revenues from processing and trade department	3'908'875.35	3'827'578.11	81'297.24
Revenues from Online-Services/IT	158'072.40	179'778.58	-21'706.18
Other operating income	307'154.47	299'579.43	7'575.04
Change in inventory of non-invoiced services	1'900.00	11'750.00	-9'850.00
Bad debt loss	-30'593.19	-60'233.44	29'640.25
Total income	9'429'602.15	8'981'931.64	447'670.51
Expenses	2017	2016	Difference +/-
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Personnel expenses	-6'582'123.50	-6'273'590.05	-308'533.45
Other personnel expenses	-669'266.90	-618'570.55	-50'696.35
Outside services	-652'754.34	-687'527.50	34'773.16
Facility expenses	-152'086.50	-146'735.00	-5'351.50
Maintenance/Repairs of mob. Equipment	-4'137.50	-3'541.20	-596.30
Mobility / Vehicle expenses	-27'884.80	-25'983.95	-1'900.85
Insurances, charges and fees	-103'249.45	-77'647.35	-25'602.10
Administration and IT expenses	-474'796.97	-546'466.52	71'669.55
Advertising expenses	-162'770.35	-178'133.73	15'363.38
Translation expenses	-62'983.50	-56'258.80	-6'724.70
Other business expenses	-17'984.01	-45'391.45	27'407.44
Depreciation	-110'987.97	-259'989.75	149'001.78
Total expenses	-9'021'025.79	-8'919'835.85	-101'189.94
Financial result	2017	2016	Difference +/-
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Financial income	44'865.79	0.23	44'865.56
Financial expenses	-9'504.39	-21'268.86	11'764.47
Total financial result	35'361.40	-21'268.63	56'630.03
Extraordinary result	2017	2016	Difference +/-
	Fr.	Fr.	Fr.
Extraordinary and one-time income	0.00	0.00	0.00
Extraordinary and one-time expenses	-300'000.00	0.00	-300'000.00
Total Extraordinary result	-300'000.00	0.00	-300'000.00
Direct taxes	-20'780.60	-6'020.10	14'760.50
Annual profit	123'157.16	34'807.06	88'350.10

Balance sheet 31.12.2017

Assets	2017	2016
Current assets	Fr.	Fr.
Cash and cash equivalents	217'720.01	307'737.38
<i>Accounts receivables</i>		
Trade accounts receivables	2'182'360.85	2'032'539.70
Receivables a. shareholders	21'129.75	89'093.40
Receivables a. participations	80'138.90	28'808.75
Valuation adjustment for doubtful depts	-215'500.00	-203'000.00
Other current receivables	1'388.35	1'000.00
Non-invoiced services	13'650.00	11'750.00
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	104'799.60	80'079.55
	2'405'687.46	2'348'008.78
Non-current assets		
Rent deposit	6'702.32	0.00
Loan daughter bio.inspecta Ltd.	13'292.00	13'292.00
Share certificates	4'800.00	4'400.00
Participations	533'783.73	211'783.72
Value adjustment of shareholdings	-106'915.02	-96'915.02
Property, plant and equipment	236'000.00	255'700.00
Intangible assets	26'500.00	26'500.00
	714'163.03	414'760.70
Total assets	3'119'850.49	2'762'769.48
Liabilities and Shareholders' equity	2017	2016
Liabilities	Fr.	Fr.
<i>Short-term liabilities</i>		
Trade accounts payable	257'548.80	268'055.75
Liabilities a. shareholders	19'169.70	16'683.80
Liabilities a. participations	9'926.60	98'539.00
Other short-term liabilities	317'696.00	293'388.80
Prepayments	155'206.07	175'305.97
Current account q.inspecta GmbH	6'478.50	6'048.10
Current account Stiftung Abendrot (BVG)	574'848.50	254'625.85
Funds for needy Swiss farmers	5'184.25	8'571.10
Accrued expenses and deferred income	527'444.95	455'516.15
<i>Long-term liabilities</i>		
Provisions	15'000.00	20'000.00
	1'888'503.37	1'596'734.52
Shareholders' equity		
Share capital	969'500.00	969'500.00
Own shares	-55'765.00	-52'645.00
Legal retained earnings	130'500.00	127'000.00
Voluntary retained earnings	55'000.00	55'000.00
Brought forward from previous year	8'954.96	32'372.90
Annual profit	123'157.16	34'807.06
Available earnings	132'112.12	67'179.96
	1'231'347.12	1'166'034.96
Total liabilities	3'119'850.49	2'762'769.48

Notes to the financial statement 2017

These financial statements were prepared according to the provisions of the Swiss Law on Accounting and Financial Reporting (32nd title of the Swiss Code of Obligations, articles 957 – 962).

Financial reporting under the Code of Obligations requires certain estimates and assumptions to be made by management. These are made continuously and are based on past experiences and other factors (e.g. anticipations of future results, which seem appropriate under the circumstances). The results subsequently achieved may deviate from these estimates.

	2017	2016
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	61.0	60.3
Liabilities due to pension fund	574'848.50	264'378.65
Own shares	55'765.00	52'645.00
Status as at 31.12.2017	415 shares at Fr. 115.00	
Status as at 31.12.2016	67 shares at Fr. 120.00	
Purchase 2017	26 shares at Fr. 120.00	
Sale 2017	0 shares at Fr. 120.00	
In % of share capital	5.75%	5.43%
Release of hidden reserves	0	0
Participation bio.inspecta Ltd., Izmir, Turkey	96'915.02	96'915.02
Purpose: Inspection and certification body for products and services		
Nominal capital: TRY 200'000.00		
Participation quote: 80 %		
Value adjustment of participation bio.inspecta Ltd.	-96'915.02	-96'915.02
Participation q.inspecta GmbH, Frick	20'000.00	20'000.00
Purpose: Inspection and certification body for products and services		
Nominal capital: Fr. 20'000.00		
Participation quote: 100 %		
Participation Albinspekt Sh.p.k., Tirana	322'000.00	0
Purpose: Inspection and certification body for products and services		
Nominal capital: ALL 100.00		
Participation quote: 80%		
Participation EASY-CERT group AG, Frick	94'867.70	94'867.70
Purpose: Hold and manage of participations in companies in Switzerland and abroad		
Nominal capital: Fr. 126'000.00		
Participation quote: 50 %		
Value adjustment of participation EASY-CERT group	-10'000.00	0
Participation Austria Bio Garantie, AT-Enzersfeld	Pro memoria	Pro memoria
Purpose: Inspection and certification body for organic products and services	1.00	1.00
Nominal capital: € 72'672.85		
Participation quote: 11 %		
Rent and lease liabilities	1'094'720.00	1'024'280.00
Extraordinary and one-time expenses		
Increase of employer contribution reserve	300'000.00	0

Proposal for the appropriation of available earnings

Brought forward from previous year	8'954.96
Annual profit 2017	123'157.16
Available earnings 31.12.2017	132'112.12
<i>Proposed allocation of income</i>	
Payment of dividend	–
Allocation to legal retained earnings	6'200.00
Allocation to voluntary retained earnings	93'800.00
Brought forward for next year	32'112.12

Report of the statutory auditors

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Partnersgesellschaft

G+S Treuhand AG 
 Bern

 Mitglied von EXPERTsuisse

Member of
 mint.alliance

Report of the statutory auditors on the limited statutory examination to the general meeting of

bio.inspecta AG, Frick

As statutory auditors, we have examined the financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes) of bio.inspecta AG for the year ended December 31, 2017.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the board of directors. Our responsibility is to perform a limited statutory examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss Standard on the Limited Statutory Examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of company personnel and analytical procedures as well as detailed tests of company documents as considered necessary in the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal violations, are not within the scope of this examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements and the proposed appropriation of available earnings do not comply with Swiss law and the company's articles of incorporation.

Berne, May 8, 2018 pe/kz
 101000RB_eR_2017_e

Dr. Röthlisberger AG



René Peterhans
 Audit Expert
 (Auditor in Charge)



Fabio Krieger
 Audit Expert

- Financial statements (balance sheet, income statement and notes)
 Balance sheet CHF 3'119'850.49 / Annual profit CHF 123'157.16
- Proposed appropriation of available earnings



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