

## Summary of the Bio Suisse Standards

Information note for producers outside of Switzerland (last update 01/2016)

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. A prerequisite for the certification according to Bio Suisse Standards of a farming, processing or trading operation is its existing certification in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 or equivalent legislation.

If the operation is already certified according to Bio Suisse Standards, it must meet any conditions that were imposed when the 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, 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 in a conventional farming operation or a conventional 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 <sub>tot</sub> /ha	kg P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> /ha
Field fodder production and field vegetables	225	80
Field crops (root crops, grains)	180	60
Vine crops, top fruit, soft fruit, etc.	100	30

Other limits apply to specialty crops

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

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

### 4. Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity

The areas to promote biodiversity must constitute at least 7 % of the 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), high-trunk orchard trees and single, native trees suited to the location (each tree counts as 1 are, i.e., 100 m<sup>2</sup>), hedges, copses and riparian trees, ditches, ponds, moorland, ruderal areas, stone mounds, dry-stone walls. unpaved paths (with at least one-third grass cover).

## 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 that organic material is unavailable (exception: grain production, see below).
- Any use of chemically dressed propagating material is prohibited.
- As of 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 must contain no more than 70 % peat.
- For the vegetative reproduction of strawberries, at least the cultivation of young plants must take place under certified organic conditions. Offshoots of conventional mother plants for the cultivation of young plants will be tolerated by 31 December 2017.

## 6. Plant protection products

- Prohibited: synthetic pyrethroids (also 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: 4 kg; for soft fruit: 2 kg; for pome fruit: 1.5 kg.
- The use of copper- and sulphur-based products 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

- The crop rotation must include a minimum of 20 % soil-building crops (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.
- There must be at least a twelve-month break between two main annual crops of the same type (exception: rice).
- Areas that are in danger of erosion may not be tilled unless appropriate preventive measures have been taken.

## 8. Water management in areas with scarce water resources

- Waste water or leachates must not have a negative effect on the ground water or surface water.
- Irrigation water must not have a negative impact on the quality of harvest products.
- Irrigation must not, in the long term, lead to an impairment of soil fertility.
- Operation in regions with scarce water resources have to meet additional requirements, e. g., draw up a regularly updated use plan.

## 9. Green cover in vineyards and orchards

Green cover must be maintained throughout the year in vineyards and orchards. In climates with scarce water resources the green cover may be limited to at least four months of the year. If the naturally occurring vegetation is too sparse, a green manure crop must be sown.

## 10. Clearing and burning

Clearing areas of high conservation value (High Conservation Value Areas) or burning off land (pre- or post-harvest) are prohibited.

## 11. Animal husbandry

For the certification of vegetable products, operations in the European Union have to comply with the animal husbandry regulations laid out in Council Regulation (EC) 834/2007 is mandatory. In all other countries, compliance with at least the Bio Suisse basic animal husbandry standards for operations outside of Europe is required.

For the certification of animal products, the husbandry of the producing operation has to comply with Bio Suisse Standards (with exception of shrimps and bivalve molluscs).

## 12. Parallel production

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

### **13. Social responsibility**

The Bio Suisse social responsibility requirements must be met (see *Bio Suisse Standards*, part V, 1.3).

### **14. Trade and processing**

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

### **15. Prohibition of transport by air**

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

### **16. Declaration**

Bio Suisse certification does not entitle operations to label products with the Bio Suisse “Bud” (Knospe) trademark. Only the Swiss importer who holds a valid licensing contract with Bio Suisse is authorized to do so. Products must be labelled on containers, packages, delivery notes, invoices etc. with the phrase or logo „**BIO**SUISSE ORGANIC“. For products “in conversion” the designation “**BIO**SUISSE ORGANIC in conversion” has to be applied.



**Please note that this summary is not authoritative, but the full version of the Bio Suisse Standards.**