

Summary of the Bio Suisse Standards

Information note for operations outside of Switzerland (version 01/2021)

This summary of the Bio Suisse Standards gives producers in countries outside of Switzerland an overview of the requirements for certification according to the Bio Suisse Standards (= BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification). As a prerequisite for the BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification, a farming, processing or trading operation must already be in possession of valid organic certification according to EU organic regulations or equivalent legislation.

Operations that already hold a BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification must meet any conditions that were imposed when their BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certificate was issued.

1. Whole-farm approach

The entire farming operation must be managed according to organic standards. Operations that comprise non-organic livestock or non-organic plots cannot be granted a BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification. 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

A conversion period according to EU organic regulations or approved organic standards can be credited towards the BIOSUISSE ORGANIC conversion period (with the exception of the retrospective certification of land parcels). Newly acquired land will not be approved until it is covered by a valid EU organic certificate and has been organically cultivated for at least 24 months. 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. 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: unfertilised, species-rich fallow land, permanent pastures and meadows, 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, ditches, 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.

Uncultivated strips of at least 6 m width must be maintained around natural bodies of surface water. At least two further quality measures for the enhancement of biodiversity must be fulfilled.

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

- As a rule, propagating material must be of organic origin.
- Undressed, non-biological propagating material may be used if the inspection body establishes (inspection report or written declaration) that no organic material is available. Organic seed must be used in grain cultivation (wheat, spelt, einkorn, emmer, kamut, durum, barley, oats, rye, triticale, rice and millet) and for crops that are also cultivated in the country as GMOs.
- Any use of chemically dressed propagating material is prohibited.
- The use of hybrid grain seed for field crops (exception: maize/corn and HOLL rapeseed) is prohibited.
- The use of varieties from cell fusion breeding is prohibited. Exceptions: Cauliflower (including Romanesco, coloured cauliflower varieties), broccoli, white cabbage, savoy cabbage and chicory.
- 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 seedlings is permitted if organic offshoots are not available.

6. Plant protection products

- Prohibited: synthetic pyrethroids (including in traps) / bioherbicides / growth regulators.
- The use of copper-based and sulphur-based preparations is prohibited, except in the following crops (maximum permitted application rates of pure copper per treated hectare and year):

- Pome fruit	1,5kg
- Berries	2 kg
- Stone fruit, pineapple, potatoes, ornamental plants, hops	4 kg
- Vegetables and spice plants	4 kg
- Herbs for seed production	4 kg
- Other permanent crops (incl. tropical and subtropical ones)	4 kg
- Viticulture	4 kg, whereby this quantity may be balanced over a 5-year period. However, the maximum application rate of 6 kg per hectare and year may never be exceeded. Quantities exceeding 4 kg per hectare and year must be reported to the BSO certification body.
- 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 water risks that use artificial irrigation must meet additional requirements, e.g. follow a water resources management plan, use efficient irrigation systems that use water sparingly and provide proof of legality.
- The use of non-renewable water resources is only permitted if documentation can be furnished that the abstraction poses no serious ecological or socioeconomic risks.

9. Heating greenhouses

Greenhouses for growing vegetables and for producing potted herbs may only be kept frost-free in winter (max. 5 °C). Greenhouses with particularly good insulation may be heated up to 10 °C.

10. 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.

11. Clearing high conservation value areas

Clearing forests and high conservation value areas for agricultural use is prohibited. No products grown on areas that were cleared after 1994 can receive the BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification.

12. Cultivation of oil palms

Additional requirements must be met for the BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification of palm oil: certification in accordance with the RSPO, diversified cultivation system, return of by-products of palm oil production to the farming operations, purchase of palm fruits from smallholders.

13. Animal husbandry

To obtain the BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certification for plant products, operations in the EU must comply with the animal husbandry regulations laid out according to EU organic regulations. In all other countries, operations must meet the Bio Suisse minimum requirements for animal husbandry.

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

14. Social responsibility

Producers of fresh vegetables, fruit and herbs in France, Italy, Morocco, Peru, Portugal and Spain are obliged to furnish proof of external social certification/auditing. The same applies to producers of bananas (all countries) and hazelnuts (Turkey). Operations with fewer than five employees are exempted.

All operations with over 20 employees that require no external social certification or auditing must fill out a Bio Suisse self-declaration form.

15. Storage and processing

All storage and processing activities must fully meet the Bio Suisse Standards (Part III of the Standards).

16. Trade and declaration

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

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 may be downloaded from the Bio Suisse website.



The Bud trademark is protected by copyright. Neither the trademark nor the Bud designation may be used by BIOSUISSE ORGANIC certified operations.

BIOSUISSE ORGANIC products must always be clearly identifiable in the physical flow of goods and in bookkeeping.

All exports to Switzerland must be registered in the Bio Suisse Supply Chain Monitor (<https://international.biosuisse.ch/en/homepage>).

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