



Guide to Certification– Bio Suisse Certification

Do I need to be licensed?

If you are processing or marketing an organic food or drink product intended to be marketed as organic in Switzerland, Bio Suisse regulations require you and your whole supply chain to be licensed to the Bio-Suisse standards.

The term 'processing' includes; manufacturing, packing or re-packing, storing, importing, wholesaling/trading, labelling organic products. Operations such as warehousing, storage and distribution will also need to be licensed if handling organic products.

Description of the Scheme & Bio-Suisse

Bio Suisse is the leading organic organisation in Switzerland and the holder of the registered trademark 'Bud' logo.

- representing the interests of Swiss organic farmers
- developing new markets and coordinating the market for the Swiss organic farming sector marketing and communications
- information and public relations work
- revising Bio Suisse standards and improving quality assurance

Please note: Bio Suisse is a nongovernmental organisation.

Organic agriculture is regulated by the Swiss Ordinance on Organic Farming (SR 910.18). There are reciprocal agreements in place with the EU and other countries.

This scheme concerns the approval of ingredients for use in organic food products under Bio Suisse certification. Please note that it is not certification to Bio Suisse standards and does not permit operators to use the Bio Suisse logo on their products. Ingredients for use by Bio Suisse operators must be certified organic to the requirements of the relevant UK regulation. Assessment of inputs is based on the Bio Suisse standards and checklists. Once we have completed the Bio Suisse checklist at inspection all information related to your application is forwarded to International Certification Bio Suisse AG.

Bio-Suisse certification can cover the following organic operations;

- organic farming
- processing
- trade
- wild collection
- beekeeping
- mushroom cultivation
- aquaculture

Bio-Suisse Import Policy (things to know):

Bio Suisse only permits imported products to bear the 'Bud' logo if they meet strict requirements. *As a matter of principle, products may only be imported if they cannot be produced by Swiss organic farms at all, or not in sufficient quantity.*

Priority is given to imports from the closest regions or countries of production. Processing is carried out in Switzerland whenever feasible. No imports of fresh produce from overseas are permitted (except for products that cannot be produced in European countries for climatic reasons).

Air freight is prohibited. There is rigorous traceability control (traceability back to the producer is checked for every imported product). Bio Suisse standards must be complied with.

- To obtain Bio Suisse certification, products must additionally meet Bio Suisse standards. Bio Suisse inspections are carried out on site by accredited and authorised inspection bodies. Soil Association Certification are currently the only authorised inspection body in the UK.
- As a rule, an application for certification of an operation outside of Switzerland must be made formally by an importer in Switzerland in the first instance – Please ensure you have arranged this with a customer in Switzerland and that they first make contact with Bio-Suisse to begin the process.
- Bio Suisse certification does not include the right to use the protected 'Bud' logo on products. That right is exclusively reserved for Bio Suisse licensees who import products.
- Inspections and applications for renewal of Bio Suisse certification must be made annually.

Links to further information and documents can be on the [Bio Suisse website](#).

Bio Suisse Certification process:

Application

An application form will need to be completed, you must already be certified to the UK regulations. A Bio Suisse licence is then set up and an invoice will be raised (see [SACL Food Businesses fee sheet](#) and/ or [SACL Farming & Growing fee sheet](#) for more details). Your Certification Officer will then review your Bio Suisse product specifications, labels and supplier information.

Inspection

We will try to carry out the Bio Suisse inspection at the same time as your annual inspection but if this isn't possible, we will have to charge for an additional inspection fee. At the inspection, Bio Suisse checklists and other forms will be completed. These will then be returned to your certification officer who may request additional information from you.

Certification

Once all documents have been received your certification officer will send these to our contacts at Bio Suisse, who will then review and make the certification decision as well as issuing the certification documents for your Bio-Suisse license, if successful.

Renewal

Annual renewals will take place and will be carried out at your annual inspection and sent for review a couple of months prior to the expiry of the Bio Suisse certificate.

Please submit your completed Bio-Suisse application form to cert@soilassociation.org, your designated Certification Officer or call 0117 914 24106 for further guidance.