



Imports of organic products - Guidance

1 Introduction

All products to be labelled as „organic products“ or with analogous definitions must meet the minimum requirements laid down in the Swiss Federal Ordinance on Organic Farming and the Labelling of Organically Produced Products and Foodstuffs (abbrev.: Organic Farming Ordinance)¹.

Organic Farming Ordinance, Article 2 (5): The labelling shall only be used if compliance with the requirements for production, preparation, import, export, storage and marketing of the products has been certified.

The legal basis for the import of such products is the most recent version of the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance, in particular Articles 22 to 24a and 26.

The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) Ordinance on Organic Farming (abbrev. EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming)² specifies in more detail the requirements of the Organic Farming Ordinance.

- The EAER recognizes the production rules and inspection systems that exist in a number of countries as being equivalent to those operating in Switzerland. These countries, the specifications and the respective products are listed in Annex 4 (list of countries) of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming.
- The Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG recognizes certification bodies and inspection authorities of countries not included in the list of countries, if the certification bodies and inspection authorities can prove that the products in question meet the conditions laid down in Article 22 of the Organic Farming Ordinance. The FOAG keeps a list of recognized certification bodies and inspection authorities and updates it every year³. The list is published and can be found on the FOAG website under organic farming.

2 Step by step guide

Step 1 Registration and inspection of the importer in Switzerland

Importers in Switzerland must be registered with an approved Swiss certification/inspection body (up-to-date list: Homepage/Themen/Biolandbau) and undergo an inspection procedure in order to demon-

¹ Ordinance on Organic Farming and the Labelling of Organically Produced Products and Foodstuffs (SR 910.18) of 22 September 1997

² Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) Ordinance on Organic Farming (SR 910.181) of 22. September 1997

³ Organic Farming Ordinance, Article 23a

strate their compliance with the conditions laid down in the Swiss Organic Farming Ordinance and the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming.

Please contact the certification/inspection body for further information.

Step 2 Import of products (A) from a country listed in the list of countries or (B) the producers, processors and exporters of which have been certified by a recognized certification body according to the list.

A List of countries: import of products from a country recognized by Switzerland for the export of organic produce (Annex 4 of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming, SR 910.181)

Switzerland recognizes the production rules and inspection systems that exist in a number of countries as being equivalent to those operating in Switzerland. These countries, the specifications, respective products and certification/inspection bodies issuing the certificates of inspection are listed in Annex 4 of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming.

However, each consignment of imported products must be accompanied by a certificate of inspection in accordance with Article 24a of the Organic Farming Ordinance. See Step 3. No certificate of inspection is required for consignments from EU Member States, provided the imported products have been cleared in a Member State of the EU.

Note: The marketing of organically produced wine is not automatically covered by product categories A (unprocessed plant products) and C (processed agricultural products for use as food). For more information please see below under point B.

B List of certification bodies: import of products, the producers, processors and exporters of which have been certified by a recognized certification body according to the list.

Switzerland recognizes certification bodies and inspection authorities of countries not included in the list of countries, if the certification bodies and inspection authorities can prove that the products in question meet the conditions laid down in Article 22 of the Organic Farming Ordinance. The whole production chain (producers, processors, exporters) has to be certified by recognized certification bodies or inspection authorities. The list of recognized certification bodies and inspection authorities is published on the FOAG website under organic farming.

Each consignment of imported products must be accompanied by a certificate of inspection in accordance with Article 24a of the Organic Farming Ordinance (see step 3). No certificate of inspection is required for consignments from EU Member States, provided the imported products have been cleared in a Member State of the EU.

Marketing of organic wine:

Since 1 January 2013, the production of organic wine has been regulated by the Organic Farming Ordinance. Therefore, with effect from that date, the provisions laid down in the Organic Farming Ordinance, Chapter 4 ("Imported Products") apply for the marketing of imported organic wine.

Stocks of wines produced and labelled before 31 December 2012 in accordance with the Organic Farming Ordinance may continue to be brought on the market until stocks are exhausted.

List of countries (A) and list of recognized certification bodies and inspection authorities (B): please note that the marketing of organically produced wine is not automatically covered by product categories A (unprocessed plant products) and C (processed agricultural products for use as food).

Wine may be imported from individual countries on the list of countries (Art. 23, SR 910.18, and Annex 4 of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming, SR 910.181) provided it is not excluded as a product category.

The same applies to wine imports in accordance with the list of recognized certification bodies and inspection authorities (Art. 23a, SR 910.18).

Import and marketing of products produced under the terms of conversion to organic farming

List of countries (A) and list of recognized certification bodies (B):

Products from conversion to organic farming may only continue to be imported from individual countries on the list of countries (Art. 23, SR 910.18, and Annex 4 of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming, SR 910.181) if the conditions listed there are met.

No imports of conversion products are possible in accordance with the list of recognized certification bodies and inspection authorities (Art. 23a, SR 910.18).

Step 3 Certificate of inspection for the import of organic products

Each consignment must be accompanied by a certificate of inspection.

Exception: no certificate of inspection is required for consignments from EU Member States, provided the imported products have been cleared in a Member State of the EU.

The certificate of inspection must be drawn up by the inspection body or authority in the country of origin (i.e. country of dispatch, country of export):

- In the case of imports from countries included in the list of countries: by the certification body or inspection authority responsible for the country, included in the list of countries.
- In the case of imports of products, the producers, processors and exporters of which have been certified by a recognized certification body or inspection authority according to the list: the certification body or inspection authority responsible according to the list.

See also Article 24a of the Organic Farming Ordinance and Chapter 2a of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming.

In the case of fresh products, a single certificate of inspection may be issued for all consignments in a calendar week (group certificate), based on the delivery notes. The group certificate must be with the importer within 14 days of the last consignment of the relevant calendar week⁴.

The certificate of inspection must accompany the goods. Guidance on how to complete the certificate can be found on the FOAG website under organic farming.

⁴ Art. 16a (4) of the EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming (SR 910.181)

3 Common labelling provisions, Organic Farming Ordinance, article 21c

In order to guarantee a simplified flow of organic products between the EU and Switzerland, the same requirements as in the EU apply for the indication of the code numbers of the certification bodies on organic products.

Links:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/legislation_en

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/eu-policy/logo_en

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/files/eu-policy/logo/FAQ_logo_en.pdf

