



Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Organic Equivalence between the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

1. The Working Group deals with all questions in relation to the Arrangement, in particular its duties are:
 1. To review changing legislation and rulemaking with a view to maintain equivalency.
 2. To establish and agree upon the peer review criteria, their cycle and frequency, and the reporting mechanism.
 3. To cooperate on development of communications for the respective organic sectors impacted by the Arrangement that are consistent between each side.
 4. To identify potential synergies in the supervision and control system by fostering technical cooperation between the competent authorities.
 5. To examine the further development of the Arrangement.
2. The Working Group intends to meet at least once a year or as agreed to be appropriate by both sides. It meets more frequently if necessary to address and resolve implementation and other issues related to the Switzerland-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement.
3. Venues for face to face meetings will alternate between both sides. Meetings may also take place via teleconference or videoconference when appropriate. The host of the meeting shall act as Chair and is responsible for providing adequate administrative support and for preparing draft joint minutes and decision records to be reviewed and accepted between the parties after each Working Group meeting.
4. Each side is responsible for the expenses of its own officials regarding attendance and arrangements of Working Group meetings.
5. Both sides are to agree on the dates, venues procedures and agendas for meetings of the Working Group. These arrangements should be confirmed at least 10 days prior to each meeting.
6. Members of the Working Group include: from Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA); from Switzerland, Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG)
7. Other relevant trade and regulatory officials from each side may attend Working Group meetings as appropriate in view of the agenda and issues to be discussed.
8. Both sides will communicate with each other on a regular basis at the technical level to ensure that both programs are aware of changes in program criteria, staffing and other relevant operational changes.
9. The Working Group may establish technical task forces on an ad-hoc basis as mutually agreed by each side. Members of a technical task force are to be technical experts from the relevant regulatory agencies or services of each side. The Working Group provides direction for each group and establishes time frames for completion of work. A written report from each technical task force may be provided for, which is to be submitted to the Working Group for its consideration. Each side is responsible for the expenses of its members of a technical task force.

10. In most cases, both sides are to identify issues for discussion by the Working Group by providing information in writing to each other and by placing the issue on the agenda of a next meeting of the Group. Either side may identify an issue regarding the organics-related activities of the other Party. The side identifying the issue is responsible for presenting initial information describing the issue to the Group at least 30 days prior to the Working Group meeting.
11. In cases where a specific issue requires attention before a meeting of the Working Group can be scheduled, both sides may agree on a process to address the issue including, but not limited to:
 1. consideration of the issue at the next meeting of the Working Group;
 2. encourage technical discussions between counterpart agencies/services; and
 3. teleconference or videoconference of counterpart agencies/services.
12. The Working Group intends to work for mutually satisfactory resolution of issues.
13. This Working Group arrangement does not intend to create either rights or obligations under international law.