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Information regarding the import of agricultural products

First of all you must have the customs tariff number of the product to be imported. Should you not know the number, the relevant [Regional Customs Office](#) will be able to supply it or you can consult the online customs tariffs list at www.tares.ch. If you already know the tariff number, the following information will be of use. PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION SHEET IN FULL!

General import permits (GIPs)

A permit is required to import many agricultural products (these products are listed in [Appendix 1 AIO¹²](#)). Such permits, known as "general import permits" (GIPs), are issued by the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) upon applications from natural and juristic persons as well as companies that are resident or have their head offices on Swiss soil. The corresponding form can be downloaded at www.import.blw.admin.ch. GIPs for single products are issued by Réservesuisse (see overview below).

GIPs are issued without charge, are valid indefinitely and are not transferrable. Applications take around one week to process. A GIP authorises you to import agricultural products and is a necessary prerequisite for being included in various quotas. A GIP does not automatically give you the right to import a product at the lower quota tariff (QT) or duty-free, however; to do this, you must be allocated a quota share or have an agreement for use of a share (see AIO14online section). GIPs are no longer required for certain products (see overview below).

The FOAG may exempt certain imports from compulsory GIPs upon request, e.g. for exhibitions and similar events. Quantities of up to 20 kg may be imported without the need for a GIP under an extra-quota tariff (EQT).

Customs quotas

[Customs quotas](#) are issued for many products and product groups such as meat, sausages, cut flowers, fruit, vegetables, potatoes, sheep, beef cattle, horses and dairy products. An importer who has a quota share may import the corresponding items at the lower quota tariff or duty-free. Any importer who does not have a quota share must pay the extra-quota tariff (EQT), which is considerably higher. Goods may

2 Ordinance on the import of agricultural products (Agricultural import ordinance, AIO), SR 916.01. Exceptions from compulsory GIPs are covered in Section 5, in Appendix 1 or in ordinances that specifically refer to product market regulations.

be imported at the EQT at any time and in unlimited quantities. **Please note, however, that the EQT may be extremely high.**

Some customs quota allocation processes

Auctions

Auctions are announced in advance in the Swiss Official Gazette and on the FOAG's homepage; subscribers receive a newsletter by e-mail (subscriptions can be taken out through www.eVersteigerung.ch under "Newsletter: Announcement of Auction"). Participants may submit a maximum of five different bids before the bidding deadline. At the auction, quota shares are allocated from the highest bidder down. The [results of the auction](#) are subsequently published.

Should you wish to take part in an auction, consult www.eVersteigerung.ch (see eVersteigerung section). You will find live auctions on the same web-page. GIP holders who have bought a quota share at an auction will receive written confirmation and an invoice for the amount bid. **The invoice must be settled before the goods are imported, unless you have a guarantee which exempts you from this obligation.**

Market share ("Comparative figures", "Imports")

For the allocation of the quota share, imports (and in individual cases the purchase of domestic products) for previous years will be determined and allocated in the form of percentage shares. Regulations concerning each product can be found in the product information.

First come, first served

The quota shares are allocated from a date set down in the ordinance according to the order of receipt of applications by the FOAG, i.e. on a first come, first served basis. The allocation procedure will last until all shares have been allocated.

First come, first served at the Swiss border

The quota is opened on a date set down in the ordinance. Goods may be imported as long as the quota has not been exhausted. The determining factor is the time of the customs declaration, which is why the quotas are managed by the customs (balances can be found at www.zoll.ch -> Information for companies -> Banned goods, restrictions and conditions -> Economic and agricultural measures -> Quota balances).

AIO14online

Through www.AEV14online.ch you can transfer your quota shares to other authorised parties for their use. You can also see the daily quota balances and check whether you have received quota shares for your use.

The electronic form for submitting and ordering the necessary certificates and the instructions for use and can be found at www.AEV14online.ch.

eVersteigerung (Internet auctions)

You can use the www.eVersteigerung.ch app to bid at an auction online, as well as for viewing the latest announcements of auctions to come.

The electronic form for submitting and ordering the necessary certificates and the instructions for use and can be found at www.eVersteigerung.ch.

Customs declarations, areas of responsibility, self-checking

For importing agricultural products it is compulsory to make a customs declaration using the internet app [e-dec](#)³. The party obliged to make the declaration must indicate the GIP number of the importer and the recipient or the trader in the declaration. It will be checked electronically whether the GIP number tallies with the name given. When goods within a quota are declared it will also be checked whether the permit holder has a sufficiently large quota share. Customs declarations that do not meet one or more requirements will not be accepted.

The importer is responsible for providing a correct customs declaration as well as for ensuring that the auction price has been paid and that the agricultural product may be imported at the quota tariff.

Charges

A [charge](#) will be levied for each load of goods imported under a GIP⁴. The FOAG normally sends out monthly invoices that include all imports during the previous month.

³ Art. 7 of the Swiss Customs Administration's Customs Ordinance ([SR 631.013](#))

⁴ Art. 50 of the AIO and Appendix 6 of the AIO ([SR 916.01](#))

Overview

Product group	Type of quota allocation	GIP required?	Available at AEV14online
Products made from pomaceous fruit, fruit for making juice and distilling	Auction	Yes	Yes
Meat	Auction	Yes	Yes
Poultry	Auction	Yes	Yes
Meat products and sausages	Auction	Yes	Yes
Chicks and young domestic fowl		Yes	No
Fresh fruit and vegetables	IMP, MS	Yes	Yes, incl. %
Powdered milk, butter	Auction	Yes	Yes
Various dairy products ("yoghurt quota")	FCFS O	Yes	Yes
Other dairy products	None	Yes	No
Fruit-tree saplings	FCFS SB	Yes	No
Seed corn and seeds	None	Yes	No
Cut flowers	IMP, PDP, Auction	Yes	Yes
Bull semen	FCFS O	Yes	Yes
Frozen vegetables	MS	Yes	Yes
Wine (unadulterated red and white wine) grape must, grape juice and fresh wine grapes for pressing	FCFS SB None	Yes + Registration Wine trading control	No No
Beef cattle	Auction	Yes	Yes
Pig, sheep and goat breeds	FCFS O	Yes	Yes
Potato products (semi and fully processed)	Auction	Yes	Yes
Potatoes (seed potatoes; potatoes for consumption, potatoes for processing)	PDP	Upon request	Yes
Raw cereals		Upon request	No
Bread cereals	FCFS SB	réserveuisse	No
Durum wheat	None	réserveuisse	No
Fodder	None	réserveuisse	No
Coffee	None	réserveuisse	No
Rice	None	réserveuisse	No
Cooking oils and fat	None	réserveuisse	No
Sugar	None	réserveuisse	No
Eggs and egg products	FCFS SB	No	No
Equines	FCFS SB	No	No

Key:

FCFS SB	First come, first served at the Swiss border
FCFS O	First come, first served at the permit issuing office (FOAG)
MS	Market shares (imports + domestic purchasing)
PDP	Purchase of domestic products
IMP	Imports

réserve suisse: tel.: 031 328 72 72; e-mail: info@reservesuisse.ch –
www.reservesuisse.ch