

MAFF

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

27th May 2026

Christian Hofer
Director General
Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG)
Schwarzenburgstrasse 165
3003 Bern
Switzerland

Dear Mr. Hofer,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11th May 2026 setting the terms and conditions for the recognition of equivalence of the respective systems of organic production between Japan and Switzerland and which reads as follows:

“Recognition letter - Comprehensive organic arrangement between Japan and Switzerland

Dear Mr. Kawaminami,

I appreciate that the Government of Japan and the Government of Switzerland have been able to have a fruitful and positive exchange between our offices beginning of 2026 regarding the extension for Japan of the scope of organic ingredient origin to ingredients originating from a third country for which Japan has recognised control bodies as competent to certify operators as complying with the organic production rules of Japan.

Switzerland and Japan have concluded several arrangements in the field of organic products, which have been supplemented over the years. Japan has recognized Switzerland's organic production system in 2003, this unilateral recognition has become a mutual recognition in 2013, and organic livestock and products of animal origin have been added to the scope in 2020. With the extension of the scope of the arrangement to include the expanded geographical origin of ingredients used in organic products processed in Japan, it now seems appropriate to summarise the current status of the equivalence relationship in a new, comprehensive arrangement. Our offices have agreed in principle to this approach.

I am pleased therefore to sign this arrangement letter on behalf of the Swiss Confederation with the terms and conditions as set in Appendix 1 and 2 for a recognition of equivalence of the respective organic production systems, as it has been discussed and agreed by both the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) and the Federal Office for Agriculture of Switzerland (FOAG):

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- (1) With respect to the product categories listed in Appendix 1 and based on the document review of the Swiss Ordinances on Organic Farming, MAFF recognises that the system of organic production in Switzerland is equivalent to the organic certification system under the Act on Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS).
- (2) With respect to the product categories listed in Appendix 2 and based on the document review of the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS), FOAG recognises that the system of organic production of Japan is equivalent to the organic certification system under the Swiss Ordinances on Organic Farming.

If the proposed terms and conditions as set out above are acceptable to MAFF, I have the honour to suggest that this letter, together with MAFF's reply and its Appendices as integral part thereof, shall constitute an agreement between Switzerland and Japan. The arrangement together with its Appendices shall enter into force on the date of receipt of the reply of MAFF by Switzerland, at the earliest on 1st June 2026, and shall replace all previous agreements between the Government of Switzerland and the Government of Japan on the same subject matter.

The successful exchange of letters between the Government of Japan and the Government of Switzerland regarding this organic equivalence arrangement will help to further develop the trade of organic food products between our two countries, for the benefit of our consumers and in the interest of Japanese and Swiss companies engaged in producing and trading organic products and foodstuffs.

Yours sincerely,

Christian Hofer
Director General

Appendix 1: Swiss Organic Products
Appendix 2: Japan Organic Products

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Appendix 1 Swiss Organic Products

Section 1

- A. Without prejudice to other applicable legislative provisions, a Swiss organic product listed in Section 2 may be sold, labeled, and represented as organic in Japan if it is:
- a. Certified as organic under the Swiss Ordinances on Organic Farming; and
 - b. Grown, produced or processed in Switzerland as per the conditions set in Section 2.
- B. A Swiss organic product covered in Paragraph A above and imported into Japan:
- a. Must be accompanied by an export certificate that is stipulated in the Act on Japanese Agricultural Standards (Act No.175 of 1950) art.12 section 1; and
 - b. Must be imported into Japan by a JAS-certified importer.
- C. The Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) will notify the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in a timely manner of any instances of the following:
1. Changes with respect to Swiss competent authority, Swiss accreditation service (SAS) and accredited certification bodies;
 2. Proposed and final regulations and guidelines in Switzerland that may affect this Appendix; and,
 3. Notifications of non-compliances that may affect the organic status of Swiss organic products covered in Paragraph A above.
- D. Following advance notice from MAFF, FOAG will permit MAFF officials to conduct on-site evaluations in Switzerland to verify how the Swiss organic control system, including the monitoring supervisory activities carried out by the competent authorities works and how the certification bodies carry out the requirements of the Swiss organic ordinances. FOAG will cooperate and assist MAFF, to the extent permitted under domestic law, in carrying out these on-site evaluations.
- E. FOAG will provide MAFF with the following documents by 31 March of each calendar year:
1. A report on the monitoring and supervisory activities carried out by its competent authorities, the results obtained, and the corrective measures taken, covering the period from January to December of the previous year; and
 2. A report that contains the types of non-compliances identified by FOAG during any supervision, and steps taken by FOAG to ensure that non-compliances were corrected.
- F. FOAG and MAFF participate in discussions or other means deemed appropriate to resolve any issue raised regarding the application of or the activities covered by this recognition and to ensure the further evolution of the arrangement. The state of the respective laws and regulations shall be reviewed periodically with a view to maintaining equivalence.
- G. MAFF or respectively FOAG may notify, at any time, to the other party its decision to terminate this arrangement, or to suspend the recognition as regards all or some of the relevant organic products listed in Section 2. The termination or suspension shall take effect 90 days after the date of receipt of the notification by the other party.

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Section 2

1. Organic product categories from Switzerland for which Japan recognises equivalence

- ① Organic Products of Plant Origin
- ② Organic Livestock Products
- ③ Organic Processed Foods

2. Origin: products of categories ① and ② that have been grown in Switzerland and products of category ③ processed in Switzerland with organically grown ingredients that have been grown in Switzerland or that have been imported into Switzerland:

- from Japan,
- from a third country for which Switzerland has recognised that the products have been produced and controlled in that third country in accordance with rules equivalent to those laid down in the Swiss legislation; or
- from a third country; products must be certified by an inspection authority or inspection body recognised as equivalent by Switzerland, and this recognition must apply for the product category concerned and the geographical scope.

3. Production standards:

- Ordinance on Organic Farming and the Labelling of Organically Produced Products and Foodstuffs (Organic Farming Ordinance) (SR 910.18) of 22-September 1997.
- EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming (SR 910.181) of 22 September 1997.
- FOAG Ordinance on Organic Farming (SR 910.184) of 11 November 2020.

4. Competent authority: Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG

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Appendix 2 Japan Organic Products

Section 1

- A. Without prejudice to other applicable legislative provisions, a Japanese organic product listed in Section 2 may be sold, labeled, and represented as organic in Switzerland if it is:
1. Certified as organic under the Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for Organic Products of Plant Origin, the Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for Organic Livestock and the Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for Organic Processed Foods; and
 2. Grown, produced or processed in Japan as per the conditions set in Section 2.
- B. A Japanese organic product covered in Paragraph A above and imported into Switzerland:
1. Must be accompanied by an import certificate as stipulated in the annex 9 of the Swiss EAER Ordinance on Organic Farming; and
 2. Must be imported into Switzerland by a Swiss certified importer.
- C. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) will notify the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) in a timely manner of any instances of the following:
1. Changes with respect to the Japanese competent authority, the Japanese accreditation body and accredited certification bodies;
 2. Proposed and final regulations and guidelines in Japan that may affect this Appendix; and
 3. Notifications of non-compliances that may affect the organic status of Japanese organic products covered in Paragraph A above.
- D. Following advance notice from FOAG, MAFF will permit FOAG officials to conduct on-site evaluations in Japan to verify how the Japanese organic control system, including the monitoring supervisory activities carried out by the competent authorities works and how certification bodies carry out the requirements of the Japanese organic standard. MAFF will cooperate and assist FOAG, to the extent permitted under domestic law, in carrying out these on-site evaluations.
- E. MAFF will provide FOAG with the following documents by 31 March of each calendar year:
1. A report on the monitoring and supervisory activities carried out by its competent authorities, the results obtained, and the corrective measures taken, covering the period from January to December of the previous year; and
 2. A report that contains the types of non-compliances identified by MAFF during any supervision, and steps taken by MAFF to ensure that non-compliances were corrected.
- F. FOAG and MAFF participate in discussions or other means deemed appropriate to resolve any issue raised regarding the application of or the activities covered by this recognition and to ensure the further evolution of the arrangement. The state of the respective laws and regulations shall be reviewed periodically with a view to maintaining equivalence.
- G. MAFF or respectively FOAG may notify, at any time, to the other party its decision to terminate this arrangement, or to suspend the recognition as regards all or some of the relevant organic products listed in Section 2. The termination or suspension shall take effect 90 days after the date of receipt of the notification by the other party.

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Section 2

1. Organic product categories from Japan for which Switzerland recognises equivalence

Category of products or products	Code	Limitations
Unprocessed plant products	A	
Live animals or unprocessed animal products	B	
Processed agricultural products for use as food	D	Processed products for use as foods containing algae not included.

2. Origin: products of categories A and B that have been grown in Japan and products of category D processed in Japan with organically grown ingredients that have been grown in Japan or that have been imported into Japan:

- from Switzerland,
- from a third country for which Japan has recognised that the products have been produced and controlled in that third country in accordance with rules equivalent to those laid down in the Japanese legislation; or
- from a third country for which Japan has recognised control bodies as competent to certify operators as complying with the organic production rules of Japan.

3. Production standards: Japanese Agricultural Standard for Organic Products of Plant Origin (Notification No 1605 of the MAFF of October 27, 2005), Japanese Agricultural Standard for Organic Livestock Products (Notification No 1608 of the MAFF of October 27, 2005), Japanese Agricultural Standard for Organic Processed Foods (Notification No 1606 of MOF and MAFF of September 1, 2022), Act on Japanese Agricultural Standards (Act No. 175 of May 11, 1950)

4. Competent authorities: Food Manufacture Affairs Division, New Business and Food Industry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, www.maff.go.jp/jl/jas/index.html and Liquor Tax and Industry Division, National Tax Agency, <https://www.nta.go.jp/english/index.htm> and Food and Agricultural Materials Inspection Center (FAMIC), www.famic.go.jp. ”

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I have the honour to confirm that the above-mentioned proposal is acceptable to Japan and that your letter together with its Appendices and this reply shall constitute an arrangement between Japan and Switzerland, which shall enter into force on the date of receipt by Switzerland of this reply, at the earliest on 1st June 2026.

I am very pleased about the conclusion of this organic equivalence arrangement with Switzerland. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is committed to working with the Federal Office for Agriculture and continuing our cooperation in our joint Organics Working Group.

Yours sincerely,

Ken KAWAMINAMI

Director-General

Food Manufacture Affairs Division

New Business and Food Industry Department, Ministry of Agriculture

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