

Excerpt from the Bio Suisse Standards

Whole-farm approach and definition of a farming operation

1. Whole-farm approach

In order to obtain certification according to Bio Suisse standards for plant products, animal husbandry on the same farming operation must be in compliance with EU organic regulations for operations in the EU, and at a minimum with the IFOAM Standard in all other countries.

2. Definition of a ‘farming operation’

A farming operation is defined as an enterprise or one or more production sites which constitute a comprehensive whole comprised of farmland, buildings, equipment and a workforce. The following requirements must be met for Bio Suisse certification:

a) The farming operation must constitute a comprehensive whole comprised of farmland, buildings, equipment and a workforce:

- All buildings necessary for the running of the farming operation must be in place.
- The equipment must include at least all machinery and implements necessary for carrying out the daily work. The farming operation must have its own workforce, and most of the work in crop production must be carried out by regular employees.

b) The farming operation must be autonomous:

- The farming operation must have a flow of goods (e.g., agricultural products, feeds, auxiliary inputs, etc.) that is separate from other farming operations.
- The farming operation must keep its own accounts.
- The farm must be headed by an autonomous and proficient farm operations manager who may not hold a managerial position on a non-organic farming operation, a non-organic custom farming operation or a non-organic agricultural production site.
- The farming operation must have its own clearly recognizable and distinctive image (name, stationery, labelling and packaging material, business address).

c) The farming operation may not perform any custom farming activities that involve the use of prohibited auxiliary inputs:

- No machines that have been used to apply prohibited auxiliary inputs may be stationed at the organic farming operation.
- No prohibited auxiliary inputs may be stored at the organic farming operation.

d) The farming operation must have a clearly identifiable centre of operations:

- The centre of operations is the area where the main buildings are situated and where the bulk of the work is carried out.
- The centre of operations is where the most important operational decisions are made (about how the work is organized and the business is run) and where the farm’s records and documents are processed and filed (including cropping plans, inspection reports, etc.)

If a farming operation is split into separately run operations, the whole-farm approach must be unambiguously defined at the outset of the conversion period by way of a written allocation of buildings, equipment and the workforce. Subsequent changes in farmland allocation between the already divided operations are only permitted after a 5-year waiting period unless both operations have converted to organic farming according to the Bio Suisse standards.

Bio Suisse is under no obligation to honour any official recognition of a farming operation.