

Excerpt from the Bio Suisse Standards

## **Areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity (ADEB)**

Based on part II, section 2.3

Bio Suisse certified producers manage their whole farming operation in a manner that protects the environment and its plants, animals and microorganisms to the greatest extent. They endeavour to maintain as diverse an operation as possible, where there is room for a variety of organisms and habitats both on and beyond areas of production.

The farm operations manager is obliged to maintain, enlarge or create near-natural habitats (areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity, ADEB) and to care for them in a professional manner. ADEB must constitute at least 7% of a farming operation's utilized agricultural area. ADEB are natural landscaping elements that serve to nurture flora and fauna.

### **Landscaping elements that may be counted include:**

- unfertilized, species-rich permanent meadows and pastures
- species-rich strips sown in wildflowers and herbs for at least 18 months of the year (Strips sown in wildflowers and herbs are uncultivated rotational areas where natural or sown species-rich plant communities grow.)
- conservation headlands: unfertilized, species-rich strips at least 3 m in width along the edge of fields, parallel to the furrows
- species-rich strips to promote beneficials
- areas with natural communities of indigenous plants (species-rich ground vegetation in extensively cultivated orchards or vineyards may be counted as such)
- single indigenous trees suited to the location (each tree counts as 1 are) and tree-lined avenues
- hedges, copses and riparian trees
- ditches, pools, ponds and moorland. Ponds that were installed for irrigation purposes may be counted if the banks were planted with indigenous plants.
- ruderal areas and ruins of buildings
- dry stone walls, stone mounds and embankments
- unpaved natural paths with at least 1/3 cover
- species-rich woodland, except for intensively managed plantations with little biodiversity value (e.g., eucalyptus or poplar)

### Requirements regarding the quality of ADEB

The following three points regarding the quality of areas dedicated to the enhancement of biodiversity must be met by all BSO operations:

- Uncultivated, species-rich strips of at least 6 m width must be maintained around natural stretches of surface water (e.g., rivers, streams and lakes).
- The destruction of 'high conservation value areas' is prohibited (as per section 1.5).
- At least 2 of the following quality standards must be met:
  1. On plots of land > 50 ha, the ADEB are located in many places throughout the plot.
  2. On operations with smaller plots of land, the ADEB are located on > 50% of all operational plots.
  3. The ADEB are established or maintained in such a way that they are connected throughout the operational acreage. This means that propagation areas (e.g., forest) and refuge areas (e.g., copses) are connected by corridors (e.g., hedges or uncultivated strips).
  4. The ADEB exceed 20% of the operational acreage.
  5. At least 5 of the landscaping elements listed under part V, section 2.2.3.1 are present on the farming operation.
  6. At least 3 bee colonies are kept on the farming operation throughout the entire vegetation period.
  7. Endangered crop species or varieties (e.g., khorasan wheat, flax, heirloom vegetables, fruit and grapes, landraces, and locally bred and/or propagated varieties) are cultivated on at least 0.5 ha.
  8. The farming operation manages diverse agroforestry systems.
  9. In the cultivation of field crops, the operation largely abstains from using the plough (ploughing is permitted at most 2x within a 5-year crop rotation period).
  10. In the cultivation of permanent crops, the operation largely abstains from tillage (max. 1x annually).
  11. Nesting boxes / nesting opportunities for birds, bats and wild bees are provided on the operation (> 2/ha).
  12. Manure compost is used in order to promote soil organisms.
  13. Other biodiversity enhancement measures not listed above are carried out by the operation.

### Rules for derogations

If the following criteria are met, then the 7% ADEB need not involve the operational acreage of the farming operation nor its usual cultivation area:

- The vicinity of the farming operation is still in its natural state (woodland, desert, steppe directly adjoining at least 30% of the farming operation's perimeter); or
- Dedicating 7% of the UAA to the enhancement of biodiversity would not significantly increase its diversity since the agricultural system and farming structure are already highly diversified (e.g., agroforestry systems); or
- The operational acreage of a producer group collectively applying for certification according to Bio Suisse standards has been consolidated. The 7% ADEB will be calculated on the basis of the total operational acreage farmed by the group.

The quality standards listed under section 2.2.3.2 need not be met by smallholder groups (defined under section 1.1.1.3). This also applies to operations where at least 30% of the farming operation's perimeter directly adjoins land that is still in a natural state.