

Reduced conversion period according to EEC 2092/91

Applicability

The recognition of the time before conversion to organic agriculture is possible according to the EU Regulation, but not according to the Swiss Organic Ordinance on Organic Farming nor according to the Bio Suisse Standards.

Legal Regulation: EEC 2092/91 Annex IA 1.2 a and b

A. PLANT AND PLANT PRODUCTS

Annex I

- 1.1. The principles laid down in Article 6(1)(a), (b) and (d) and set out in particular in this Annex must normally have been applied on the parcels during a conversion period of at least two years before sowing, or, in the case of grassland, at least two years before its exploitation as feeding stuff from organic farming, or, in the case of perennial crops other than grassland, at least three years before the first harvest of products as referred to in Article 1(1)(a). The conversion period shall commence at the earliest on the date on which the producer notified his activity in accordance with Article 8 and submitted his holding to the inspection system provided for in Article 9.
- 1.2. However, the inspection authority or body may decide, in agreement with the competent authority, to recognise retroactively as being part of the conversion period any previous period in which:
 - a) the land parcels were part of a programme implemented pursuant to Council Regulation (EEC) No 2078/92 of 30 June 1992 on agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of the protection of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside (1) or Chapter VI of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/ 1999 of 17 May 1999 on support for rural development from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and amending and repealing certain Regulations (2), or as part of another official programme, provided that the programmes concerned guarantee that products not listed in parts A and B of Annex II have not been used on those parcels; or
 - b) the parcels were natural or agricultural areas which were not treated with products not listed in parts A and B of Annex II. This period can be taken into consideration retroactively only under the condition that satisfactory proof has been furnished to the inspection authority or body allowing it to satisfy itself that the conditions were met for a period of at least three years.
- 1.3. The inspection authority or body may, with the approval of the competent authority, decide, in certain cases, to extend the conversion period beyond the period laid down in paragraph 1.1 having regard to previous parcel use.

Conditions for reduced conversion period

- The application for the recognition of the time before the conversion has to be handed over to bio.inspecta (or its partner certification bodies) before the signing of the certification contract and before the first inspection.
- In case unused/uncultivated areas are intended for recognition the first inspection has to take place before any cultivation measures have been carried out.
- The assessment of the case will be done in any case on the farm by an inspector of bio.inspecta (or an authorized inspector of the partner certification body).
- The inspector will summarize her/his findings in a special report which gives full evidence of the situation preferably with an additional photo documentation.
- Written confirmation about the area having been managed in compliance with the standards: One by the operator (main manager) and one by a competent third party (person, municipality, expert) which must be independent and have no personal, economic or business relationship with the operation.
- In case of suspicion or uncertainty the inspector will take a soil or leave sample (with prior approval by bio.inspecta). The costs for sampling will be charged to the operator.

The decision about the recognition will be taken by the certification committee of the International Division of bio.inspecta on proposal of the inspector after the first inspection. Even if the prior management is recognized the conversion period usually still lasts 12 months.

Overall these conditions shall contribute to avoid any abuse of the EU Regulation 2092/91 and to guarantee an equal treatment of the operators.

In case of questions you may contact one of the staff members for inspection and certification of the International Division:

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