

EXPORT OF MEAT PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION TO THE EU

BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EU AND SWITZERLAND ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

[The agreement of 21 June 1999 between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products](#) (available in French or German or Italian) facilitates the trade of agricultural products between the EU and Switzerland.

It is characterized by the removal of *tariff and non-tariff* obstacles in certain areas of production:

- **Tariff concessions** (import quotas and removal of customs duties) are agreed mainly in the cheese sector, where restrictions have been lifted completely since 1 June 2007, as well as in the fruit and vegetables, horticulture and wine and meat specialties sectors.
- **Non-tariff** (or technical) **trade barriers**, such as product requirements or provisions regarding approval, which may differ from one country to another, are removed by means of a mutual recognition of the equivalence of regulations. This relates to wine and spirits, organic farming, plant health, animal feed and seeds for example. In the veterinary sector, equivalence has also been recognized for requirements applicable to all foodstuffs of animal origin and animal by-products as well as animal health since the end of 2006. Furthermore, reciprocal veterinary checks at borders have been removed since the start of 2009.

Veterinary checks

The equivalence of provisions relating to meat products between Switzerland and the EU has been recognized since 1 December 2006. This means that Swiss legislation complies with that of the EU from a health and veterinary point of view.

In this context, **veterinary certificates are no longer required to export or import meat products between the EU and Switzerland** (unless expressly indicated in European legislation).

In other words, each authority has jurisdiction over its territory to check the enterprises domiciled there. If a Swiss enterprise complies with the legislation in force in Switzerland, it will be entitled to export its products to the EU without further checks.

Approval

In order to export **products of animal origin and animal-derived products**, Swiss enterprises must first request **approval** from the cantonal food control authority and be registered on the list of [Swiss enterprises authorized](#) (available in French or German or Italian) by the **Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)**.

To obtain **an approval number and appear on the aforesaid list**, the procedure must be initiated with the competent cantonal authority according to the place where the enterprise is established. The commercial document must be dated and signed by the representatives of the exporter. The data on this document must match exactly with the marking on the products

Note, for deliveries to France, an additional certificate is required:

This [certificate](#) which contains specific guarantees relating to BSE must be signed by the person responsible for the enterprise of provenance as from 29 November 2009. It is required for products derived from domestic bovine, ovine and caprine animals – even if they only contain gelatin or fat for example, for details see the “BSE Decree France” below:

[French Decree No. 0277 of 29 November 2009](#)

Commercial document

In general, only the usual commercial documents are required to export in the EU. See the table below for the information that must appear on these [supporting documents](#) (source: FSVO):

Data on the product	Product designation (summary)
	Animal species
	Tariff number
	Number and types of items packaged
	Net weight
	Storage temperature
	Means of transport (registration number), may also be provided by the customs declarant
Origin and provenance of the products	Name, address, authorization number(s) of the enterprise of origin or provenance
	Name and address of exporter (authorization number, if available)
Place of destination of the products	Country of destination
	Name and address of consignee

Source: <https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/fr/home.html>

Tab: "Import and Export"

The commercial document must be dated and signed by the representatives of the exporter. The data on this document must match exactly with the marking appearing on the products.

LABELLING

Regulation (EU) No. [1169/2011](#) of 25 October 2011 regarding consumer information on foodstuffs, **known as INCO regulation**, of which a number of provisions entered into force on 13 December 2014, effected a significant revision of the law on labelling in order to ensure increased consumer protection.

The main innovations introduced on 13 December 2014 relating to meat products are as follows:

- **The indication of origin** is extended to meat from swine, poultry, sheep and goats (beef is already covered by Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 presented below).
- **The indication of the date** of freezing is required for meat and meat preparations.
- **The indication “defrosted”** becomes mandatory when meat products are put on sale after being defrosted.

Furthermore, labelling containing a **nutritional statement** will be mandatory as from 13 December 2016 pursuant to Article 30 of Regulation (EU) No. **1169/2011**. **Nevertheless, the following are not subject to this nutritional labelling, pursuant to Appendix V to the Regulation:**

- Unprocessed products comprising a single ingredient or a single category of ingredients.
- Processed products having been subjected to ripening for any processing, and comprising a single ingredient or a single category of ingredients.

Labelling of beef and beef products

In accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000, which establishes a system of identification and registration of bovine animals and relates to the labelling of beef and beef products, **operators or organizations selling European or imported beef are bound to label the meat at every stage of marketing. When the product is not pre-wrapped, they must provide the relevant information to the consumer, visibly and in writing, at the point of sale.**

Mandatory labelling system:

The labelling comprises the following indications:

- The reference code or number ensuring the link between the meat and the animal (or group of animals) from which the meat was derived;
- “Slaughtered in...” (country where the animal was slaughtered and approval number of the slaughterhouse);
- “Cut in...” (country where the meat was cut and approval number of the cutting plant).

In addition, from 1st January 2002, operators also have to indicate:

- The country of birth;
- The country of fattening/rearing and
- The country of slaughtering of the animals.
- When the beef comes from an animal born, reared and slaughtered in the same country, this information may be grouped under the indication “Origin” followed by the name of the country concerned.
- By way of derogation, imported meat for which not all the mandatory information is available is labelled with the indication “Origin: non-EC” followed by the name of the third country of slaughtering.

- The labelling of **minced meat** must indicate:
- the reference code or number ensuring the link between the meat and the animal (or group of animals) from which the meat was derived;
- the indication "Prepared" (followed by the name of the country where the meat was prepared) and "Origin" when the state or states concerned are not the same as the state of preparation;
- the country of slaughtering.
- Operators may supplement this information with the information on the place of slaughtering (slaughterhouse), place of cutting (plant and country), date of mincing, country of birth and country or countries of rearing.

Voluntary labelling system

The operators or organizations marketing beef may include data on the labelling in addition to the mandatory information. To this end, they shall send the specifications to the competent authority of the Member State where the meat is produced or marketed for approval. The specifications shall include:

- The information to be indicated on the label;
- The measures to be taken in order to ensure the accuracy of the information;
- The controls applicable to all stages of production and sale, including those to be carried out by independent bodies recognized by the competent authority;
- The penalties to be applied to members that fail to comply with the specifications in the case of organizations.

Specifications that do not ensure the link between the identification of the product and the bovine animal, as well as those which provide for labels containing misleading or insufficiently clear information, shall be rejected.

With regard to the voluntary labelling of imported beef, the specifications must first obtain approval from the competent authority of the third country of production. Next, this country shall notify the Commission of the identity of the competent authority responsible for approval, the criteria and procedures used to examine the specifications and the list of operators concerned thereby. However, approval will only be valid in the Community when the criteria applied by the third country have been deemed equivalent to those of the Community Regulation.

Regulation 1337/2013, applicable as at 1 April 2015, requires the labelling of meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry with the country where the animal was reared and slaughtered

Implementing Regulation No. 1337/2013 was adopted on 13 December 2013. It relates to the methods of application of Regulation No. 1169/2011 with regard to **the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance of fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry.**

As from 1 April 2015, the indications of "**Reared in [name of country where the animal was reared]**" and "**Slaughtered in [name of country where the animal was slaughtered]**" will have to appear on the labels of these meats presented to the consumer, the notion accepted by the regulation for the country of rearing taking account of the age and weight of the animals at slaughter.

The place of birth is not mandatory, unlike for beef.

Therefore, the place of rearing may be indicated after 6 months of residence for sheep and goats, after 4 months for swine and 1 month for poultry:

For sheep and goats	Aged 6 months or more	Last country in which the animal was reared for a period of at least 6 months in succession
	Aged less than 6 months	Country in which the whole rearing period took place
For swine	Aged 6 months or more	Last country in which the animal was reared for a period of at least 4 months in succession
	Aged less than 6 months, with a live weight of 80 kg or more	Country in which the animal was reared after reaching a live weight of 30 kg
	Aged less than 6 months with a live weight of less than 80 kg	Country in which the whole rearing period took place
For poultry	Aged 1 month or more	Last country in which the animal was reared for a period of at least 1 month without a break
	Aged less than 1 month	Country in which the whole rearing period took place
For all these species	Meat from third countries and for which the information is not available	Derogation provided: indication of “outside EU” for country of rearing and indication of country of slaughtering
	Minced meat and trimmings	Derogations provided for animals reared and slaughtered in different countries

Farmers proving to the competent authorities that the meat comes **from animals born, reared and slaughtered in a single Member State or third country** may use the indication **“Origin”**.

LINKS

Swiss law

<http://www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/81.html#817> (available in French, German and Italian)

For any question on Swiss law, please contact the enforcement bodies of the canton where your enterprise is located directly.

<http://www.kantonschemiker.ch/>

Federal offices

Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO

<http://www.blv.admin.ch/>

Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG)

<http://www.blw.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en>

Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)

<http://www.bag.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en>

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

<https://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/en/home.html>

European law

EU: Food Safety portal

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/food_safety.html?root_default=SUM_1_CODED=30

EU (Agriculture and food)

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/agriculture.html?root_default=SUM_1_CODED=03

Useful addresses for exporters

<https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/fr/home/import-und-export/export.html>

Switzerland Proviande: www.viandesuisse.ch

For further information

Switzerland Global Enterprise

47, av. d'Ouchy, CP 315

1001 Lausanne

Tel. +41 21 545 94 94

info.lausanne@s-ge.com

exporthelp@s-ge.com

Information sheet drafted by:

Emmanuelle Piaget, lawyer

External consultant

Law Box Sarl, 1800 Vevey