

EXPORT OF CHEESE

Status: January 2020

Exports to the EU:

The 2004 [bilateral agreement on trade in processed agricultural products](#) 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 obstacles:

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. In other words, this means that it is only necessary to present the usual commercial documentation in order to export to the EU.

All merchandise with tariff code 0406 (cheese and curd) is exempt from customs duties as long as the rules of origin specified in the Free Trade Agreement between Switzerland and the EU are respected (Manufacture in which all materials of chapter 4 used must be wholly obtained). For further information, see the list of valid transformation and processing for [Protocol No. 3 to the Agreement between Switzerland and the EC](#) (available in German, French or Italian).

- Non-tariff obstacles:

Non-tariff (or technical) trade barriers (different product or marketing requirements) are removed by means of a mutual recognition of the equivalence of regulations. Equivalence has also been recognized for health requirements applicable to all foodstuffs of animal origin since the end of 2006. Furthermore, veterinary checks at borders have been removed since the start of 2009. Therefore, Swiss legislation complies with EU legislation and, as a result, **health certificates** are no longer required for EU exports or imports.

Nevertheless, we recommend that you seek information from the purchaser or importer of the country of destination. This will enable you to obtain expert information and avoid any costs or unnecessary waiting times.

Information on customs approaches and import formalities in over 150 countries is also available in our free [customs database](#).

Authorization to export:

In Switzerland, it is the competent [cantonal laboratories and veterinary offices](#) that need to be contacted initially to set in motion the procedure for issuance of the authorization to export. See below the addresses of the competent cantonal laboratories and veterinary offices.

The following veterinary conditions prevail in all cases:

- All enterprises require cantonal authorization for cross-border trade. They must be included in the "lists of authorized Swiss enterprises" (available in German, French or Italian). For any question, contact the competent cantonal authorities. If in doubt, contact the competent authorities in the country of destination.

- In general only the usual commercial documents are required to export to the EU. See the table below for the information that must appear in this documentation:

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

Source: Federal veterinary office

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

Export to non-EU Member States

Companies must be approved for export (if required by the country of destination) and each consignment must also be accompanied by an official export certificate. The [authority](#) designated by the canton is responsible for both. The exporter obtains a valid export certificate, which can be obtained as a Word template from the cantonal food authority or the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), and submits it to the competent cantonal authority for assessment and signature. The exporter must apply to the State Chancellery for any required attestation of the certificate.

It is the exporter's responsibility to learn in advance about the applicable import conditions for animals or animal products in destination or transit countries.

Websites of national animal health authorities around the world:

<http://www.oie.int/en/links/national-authorities/>

Protected designation of origin (PDO / AOP) and protected geographical indication (PGI / IGP)

The PDO and IGP are two official signs of quality reserved for typical products established in a region. They guarantee the authenticity of the products prepared according to traditional skills. After registration at the **Federal Office for Agriculture**, these designations can only be used for products that comply with the provisions of origin, production and quality referred to in a precise specification. Independent certification bodies are responsible for this control.

The protected designation of origin (PDO) provides a guarantee that quality products are produced, processed or prepared in their region of origin such as *Emmental AOP* and *Le Gruyère AOP*.

PDO or IGP products include the name of the region from which they originate in their designation.

It is all the more important that the designation is only used for products that fulfill the following conditions:

- Origin: the products are actually from the region whose name they bear.
- Connection with the local area or *terroir*.
- Connection with traditions.

Source: <http://www.fromagesuisse.ch/bon-a-savoir/aop-et-igp.html>

Useful addresses:

Federal Offices:

Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG): <https://www.blw.admin.ch/blw/en/home.html>

Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office FSVO: <https://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/en/home.html>

Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH): <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/das-bag.html>

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO): <https://www.seco.admin.ch/seco/en/home.html>

Other links:

AOP – IGP <http://www.aop-igp.ch/en-home>

EU (Agriculture and Food) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm

Food law enforcement in Switzerland <https://www.kantonschemiker.ch/>