



Federal Ministry  
of Food, Agriculture and  
Consumer Protection



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*Look out for the Bio-Siegel.*

*Please visit [www.bio-siegel.de](http://www.bio-siegel.de) for information.*

# At a Glance: Information About the Bio-Siegel





## Clarity for Consumers, an Incentive for the Market.

### At a glance

Only a few years ago, a multitude of organic labels made it difficult for consumers to differentiate. To change that, the government created the Bio-Siegel in 2001. Today, thanks to the Bio-Siegel, consumers can recognise organic products at a glance. Products and foodstuffs produced and controlled according to the provisions of the EU Regulation on Organic Farming may be labelled with the Bio-Siegel. The EU Regulation on Organic Farming, valid throughout the EU, guarantees uniform standards for organic farming. Thus, the Bio-Siegel stands for organic production and species-appropriate livestock husbandry.

A growing number of people consciously buy organically farmed produce because they have opted for high-quality products, a healthy diet and the protection of both animals and the environment. The Bio-Siegel helps make consumers' shopping choices easier:

more than 34,000 products from over 1,800 companies already bear the label – and their numbers are rising. Farmers, processors and trade benefit from the Bio-Siegel, and easily so: there is no charge and little bureaucratic effort involved in using the Bio-Siegel.

### The legal viewpoint

The Organic food Labelling Act is the legal basis for the Bio-Siegel. It refers to the requirements stipulated in the EU Regulation on Organic Farming and provides administrative fines and imprisonment of up to one year if the Bio-Siegel is misused. The German Organic food Labelling Act lays down details regarding the design of the Bio-Siegel and its use.

### These are the conditions

The EU-Regulation on Organic Farming stipulates criteria regarding the awarding of the Bio-Siegel. It

- requires that not less than 95% of the ingredients of agricultural origin come from organic farming;
- prohibits the application of genetic engineering;
- forbids many additives;
- sets requirements for use of the "bio" or "eco" label. Only producers, processors and importers who meet these requirements and accept the prescribed controls are entitled to name and sell their products as "bio" or "eco" products. When labelling a product, the name and/or code number of the competent Eco-control agency need to be mentioned. This is the scheme of the code number for a control agency based in Germany:  
**DE-000-Control agency.**  
"DE" stands for Germany while "000" represents the control agency's 3-digit identification number.

## For Your Safety.

### Detailed controls

· To comply with "Bio" rules, organic farms must keep exact lists of all means of production and products. For instance, they need to include exactly what they bought from whom and to whom they sold it. This way, organic products can be retraced all the way back to the producer. Officially authorised private control agencies check the entire company at least once a year. The control agency's work, in turn, is monitored by the government.

· The German Organic Farming Act forms an important legal basis for these controls. If, during inspections, infringements are found, the control agencies need to notify the competent state authorities accordingly. The German Organic Farming Act also embodies the awarding and/or withdrawal of a control agency's authorisations.

· In addition to the "bio controls", organic produce is also subject to controls laid down in the German laws relating to feed and foodstuffs.



## There are Lots of Good Reasons to buy Organic.

### Knowing "how" is what counts

Consumers who decide to buy organic products want healthy and tasty food on their plates. And they want to know how it was produced and distributed. With organics, there can be no doubt: they are the fruits of farming methods which are particularly in touch with nature – they were organically farmed.

### Organic farming

- On principle, does not apply if any synthetic chemical pesticides are used
- Does not apply if synthetic mineral nitrogen fertiliser is used
- Stands for species-appropriate animal husbandry
- Protects soil, water and air
- Helps maintain the variety of species
- Reduces energy consumption and conserves natural resources
- Strives towards life cycle farming with closed-loop nutrient cycles
- Offers safety through guidelines and controls
- Creates transparency in foodstuff production
- Includes no genetic engineering

### Quality has its price

- Organic farmers work in a mostly closed cycle that fosters natural growth processes.
- The animals are fed organic feedstuffs. Feedstuffs are preferably produced by the farmers themselves. Animals are kept in open yards. Plant protection focuses on preventive measures and non-use of quick soluble mineral fertilisers.
- Yet this kind of agriculture requires additional work effort, yields less and leads to lower "performances" in livestock management. Consequently, organic products are slightly more expensive – because quality has its price. A growing number of consumers are saying it's worth it.

For more information on organic farming, please visit [www.oekolandbau.de](http://www.oekolandbau.de)

