



Requirements of foodstuff legislation for the importation and placement on the market of insects as foodstuffs

General

Since 1 May 2017 the new Foodstuffs Act allows the following insect species as foodstuffs:

- *Tenebrio molitor* in the larval stage (mealworm)
- *Acheta domestica*, adult form (house cricket)
- *Locusta migratoria*, adult form (migratory locust)

However, various framework conditions are to be observed both for production in Switzerland as well as for importation.

The importation of animal products for which there are no harmonised EU conditions for intra-Community trade requires authorisation by the FSVO according to Art. 7 para. 1 let. c of the Ordinance on the Import, Transit and Export of Animals and Animal Products from EU member states, Iceland and Norway (OITE-EU; SR 916.443.11). Insects destined as foodstuffs are in fact subject to the general requirements of the EU in regard to food safety, although specific provisions that govern intra-community trade do not exist. Consequently, the importation of the cited insects requires authorisation.

Pursuant to Art. 7 para. 2 OITE-EU, the FSVO issues the authorisation provided that:

- a. the infectious disease situation in the area of origin allows it, or that appropriate measures are taken against the introduction of an infectious disease; and
- b. the requirements of this Ordinance are satisfied.

The harmonised EU conditions for intra-Community trade are applicable as the “requirements of this Ordinance”. In addition, the requirements of food security are also applicable. This can be guaranteed by ensuring the food hygiene of the insect production.

The corresponding evidence may be supplied, for example, by proving that the insects have been imported from an establishment that has been approved according to a procedure for the production of insects as foodstuffs equivalent to that described in Art. 21 of the Foodstuffs and Utility Articles Ordinance (FUAO, SR 817.02). If the establishment is not approved as such, then it is sufficient if the establishment is registered for the production of insects as foodstuffs with the competent foodstuff control authority. In both cases the establishment for the production of insects as foodstuffs should come under the authority of the foodstuff control authority. The authorisation may only be granted when the relevant certificate is submitted.

Pursuant to Art. 5 para. 3 OITE-EU for animal products, for which there are no harmonised EU conditions for intra-Community trade, the FSVO can decree import conditions in regard to animal health, animal welfare and food hygiene. They are incorporated as requirements in the authorisation. It should be noted in this connection:

- The insects to be imported for human consumption must come from a breeding colony.
- The substrates on which the insects were bred must meet the same requirements that apply to feed for farm animals (except for fish).
- The insects may be imported whole or in crushed or ground form.
- They may only be imported if they were deep-frozen for an adequate time period and have been subjected to a heat treatment or other suitable process that ensures that vegetative pathogens are killed.
- The commercial documents must include information pursuant to Art. 11 OITE-EU in addition to information pursuant to Article 83 para. 3 FUAO.

For non-compliance of the regulations the FSVO can withdraw the authorisation.

A fee of Fr. 40.-- to Fr. 100.-- will be charged to the authorisation holder in accordance with Art. 18, 1st para, FSVO Fees Ordinance (SR 916.472). The invoiced amount must be paid within 30 days of the legal effect of the ruling.

The responsible person must ensure as part of his/her duties that during all manufacturing, processing and distribution stages, the requirements of food law are complied with. The responsible person must ensure that only those foodstuffs and utility articles that comply with the food legislation are placed on the market (Art. 74 FUAO).

Important instruments of self-control are in particular:

- Ensuring good processing practices (Good Hygiene Practice, Good Manufacturing Practice);
- Use of processes based on the principles of the HACCP concept (Art. 78 and 79 FUAO);
- Traceability;
- Sampling and analysis of foodstuffs and utility articles.

Important

When placing products on the market, the requirements of Annex 1 of the Ordinance on Novel Foods (SR 817.022.2) must be observed:

- When placing insects on the market as foodstuffs, the product description must include the species, including the common and scientific names.
- If insects are only used as an ingredient, this must be mentioned in the product description of the foodstuff.
- Foods that contain insects as an ingredient must be labelled according to Art. 11 of the Ordinance on Information on Foodstuffs (FoodIO, SR 817.022.16). People who are allergic to dust mites, crustaceans or molluscs may have an allergic reaction to the consumption of insects.