



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA

Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office BLV
Food and Nutrition

Information sheet 5

Novel Technological Processes

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Article 15 paragraph 1 letter g of the Ordinance on Food and Utility Articles (FUAO, SR 817.02) lists the following category of Novel Foods: *'food resulting from a production process not used for food production within the Union before 15 May 1997, which gives rise to significant changes in the composition or structure of a food, affecting its nutritional value, metabolism or level of undesirable substances.'*

This means that the production process can also play a relevant role in determining the Novel Food status of a foodstuff.

The following three requirements must be met **simultaneously** for a food to be considered novel due to its production process:

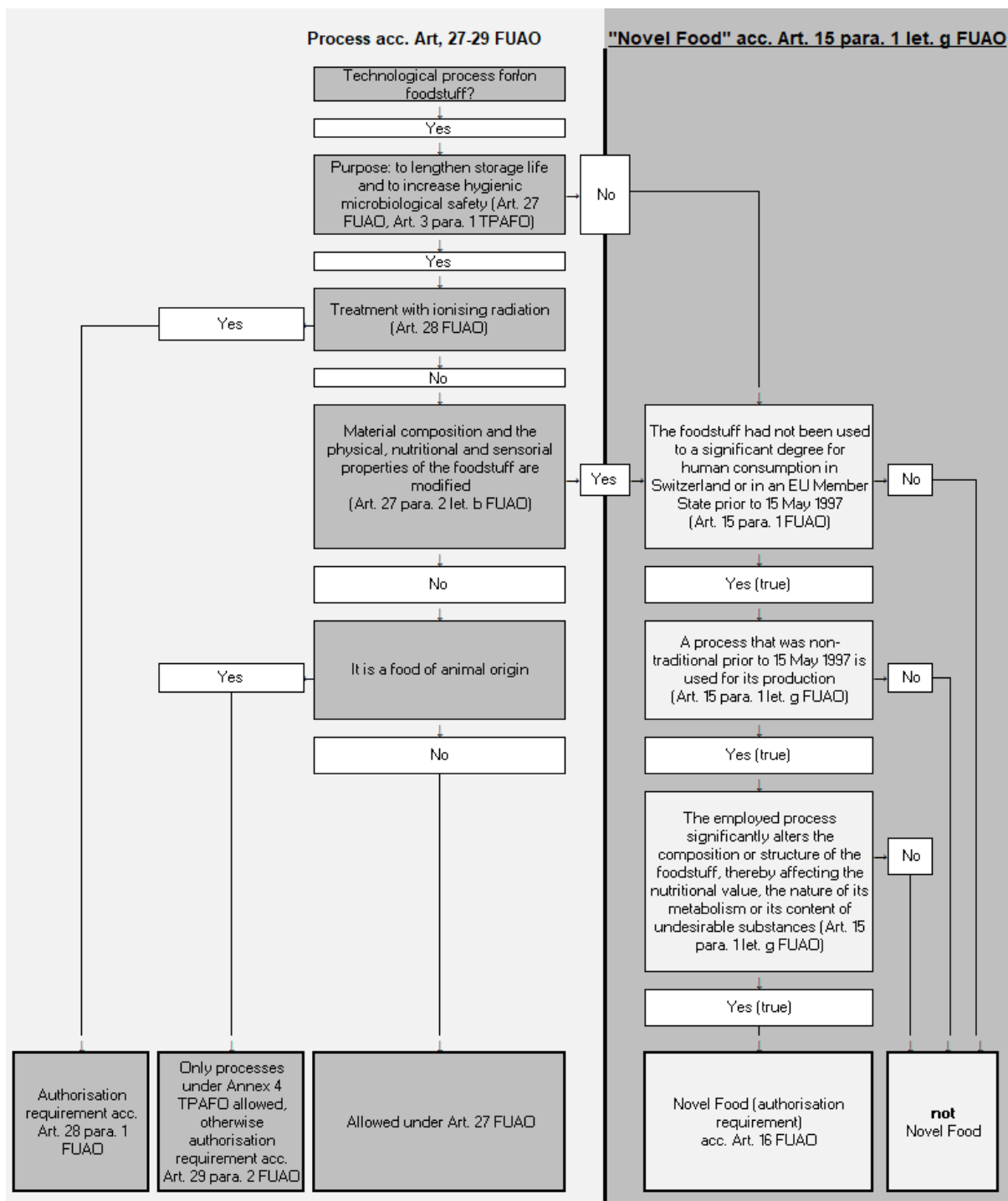
1. The food must not have been used for human consumption to a significant degree in Switzerland or in any EU Member State before 15 May 1997;
2. A process not conventional before 15 May 1997 was used in the production of the food;
3. The manufacturing process causes significant changes to its composition or structure that affect its nutritional value, the way it is metabolised or its content of undesirable substances.

Foods that do not fall under the Novel Food Provisions are those that have been treated with processes to lengthen the storage life and to increase hygienic microbiological safety ([Art. 27 FUAO](#) (in French), and [Section 2 of the Ordinance on Technical Procedures and Technical Auxiliaries for the Treatment of Foodstuffs, TPAFO, SR 817. 022. 42](#)) (in French). Only in the case when foodstuffs treated in this manner also result in significant modifications to their material composition and to their physical, nutritional or sensorial properties, is there also the requirement to examine the status as a Novel Food pursuant to [Article 15 FUAO](#) (in French).

In turn, the treatment of foodstuffs with ionising radiation always requires an authorisation in accordance with [Art. 28 para. 1 FUAO](#) (in French).

Decision Tree

The following decision tree can help to determine whether a food is a novel food or not based on its production process:



The classification test as a Novel Food, together with health protection, have always had to be carried out and documented in the scope of the obligation of self-regulation.

Classification examples

Non-exhaustive examples of **non-novelty** are:

- Vegan alternatives to cheese, produced by fermenting non-novel vegetal foodstuffs with (non-novel) lactic acid bacteria typically used prior to 15 May 1997, and under the typical conditions used at that time (the technical designation of such products is determined in accordance with the [information sheet 2020/3](#)) (in French))
- Surface treatment of nuts with UV light in order to achieve hygienisation. If this treatment does not significantly modify the composition of the foodstuff in regard to its nutritional value, its metabolism or to the content of undesirable substances (process in accordance with [Art. 27 FUAO](#)) (in French)
- Foods that have been hygienised with an HPP-process (high pressure processing). If this treatment does not significantly modify the composition of the foodstuff in regard to its nutritional value, its metabolism or to the content of undesirable substances (process in accordance with [Art. 27 FUAO](#)) (in French)
- If a foodstuff produced by a “novel” process, i.e. by a process that was not traditionally used prior to 15 May 1997, and which does not significantly modify the composition or structure of the foodstuff which would influence the nutritional value and its metabolism.
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Non-exhaustive examples of **novelty** are:

- “UV-treated” foodstuffs with the objective of a targeted enrichment of vitamin D
- Foodstuffs that have been produced with a “novel” process, i.e. by a process that was not traditionally used prior to 15 May 1997. If this process significantly modifies the composition or structure of the foodstuff in regard to its nutritional value and its metabolism, and had not been used to a significant degree for human consumption (foodstuff) in Switzerland or in an EU Member State prior to 15 May 1997.

Labelling

Foods that have been treated with a process to lengthen the storage life and to increase hygienic microbiological safety shall be labelled in accordance with Annex 2 part A letters 1 and 3 of the [FDHA Ordinance of 16 December 2016 in regard to the information on foodstuffs \(FoodIO; SR 817.022.16\)](#) (in French).

Labelling of foodstuffs that are produced with “novel” processes and which are subject to authorisation as a Novel Food, will be defined in the scope of the authorisation procedure.