

IMPORT LICENCES, PERMITS AND QUOTAS

While Switzerland's customs tariffs are quite low, the importation of nearly all agricultural products is subject to regulations to protect farmers from low-priced imports. This is also to maintain a certain degree of self-sufficiency in food production. Quotas exist mostly for meat, animals for slaughter, grains and food-grains, potatoes, and bulk wine. Licenses are granted within the quota limits. Other agricultural products are subject to supplementary import charges. The charges are revised in response to world market prices and the health of Swiss agriculture. Products affected include milk and dairy products, grape juice, cut flowers, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Import licences are generally issued only to companies domiciled in Swiss customs territory. Import permits are required for certain textile items and for some products which are not subject to quotas, but which are covered by hygiene and plant health regulations, quarantine, veterinary rules and protection of the species as outlined in the Washington Convention. Imports of foodstuffs and beverages must meet federal regulations which are enforced by the Federal Office for Public Health (Bundesamt für Gesundheitswesen), Bollwerk 27, CH-3001 Berne, and the Federal Veterinary Office (Bundesamt für Veterinärwesen), Schwarzenburgstrasse 161, CH-3097 Liebefeld-Berne. Written enquiries concerning import requirements for specific products may be addressed to the organizations mentioned above (preferably in French or German).

CREDIT

Exporters looking to obtain information about credit status should contact the head office or a regional office of the Export Development Corporation.

PACKAGING AND LABELLING

Fresh fish and fillets must be shipped in clean containers having as stable a shape as possible. Packaging material can be re-used for the shipment of fish only after careful cleaning. Fish in defective packages must be transferred, at customs, to suitable packages. Fish must not come into direct contact with wood; wood-boxes must be lined with parchment paper, plastic sheets or plastic insulating foam. Meat must be transported under refrigeration. For fresh meat, a constant temperature of +2°C maximum must be maintained, or the merchandise packed in sufficient ice.

For frozen and deep-frozen meat and meat preparations, the temperature must not exceed -10°C (taken inside the merchandise or pile of merchandise). Meat preparations, with the exception of canned or long-life products, must be transported packaged and under refrigeration. The utmost care must be taken in the transportation of live animals. They must be packaged in the prescribed manner and must be protected against injury.