



Media Release

Import of Bio Suisse Certified Oats from Ukraine

In December, the first Bio Suisse certified oats were successfully imported from Ukraine. The collaboration between the Swiss importer, the Ukrainian farm and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) was initiated within the framework of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) project *Organic certification and market development in Ukraine*, implemented by FiBL between 2004 and 2011.

(Novograd-Volynsky, Zollbrück, Frick, December 20, 2011) Switzerland's self-sufficiency in organic cereal is — at about 25 percent — very low. Since demand for oats has been high, a major Swiss mill asked FiBL in 2009 to find a good source in Eastern Europe. Within the framework of the project *Organic certification and market development in Ukraine*, FiBL identified potential suppliers and provided technical assistance.

One of the suppliers selected was Galeks Agro, a farm located 300 km Northeast of Kiev with 2'000 hectares of cereal. Together with local agronomists, FiBL reorganized the farm portfolio towards a market-oriented supply chain by recommending oats, spelt, wheat, millet, barley and rye. FiBL arable crop specialist, Martin Lichtenhahn, mentioned that in addition to changing the crop rotation, the farmer received training in quality improvement. Galeks Agro also successfully participated at BioFach in Germany for a third time this year, where FiBL continues to support the search for potential buyers. The internationally accredited local certification body Organic Standard, set up within the framework of the SECO project and in collaboration with the Institute of Market Ecology, certified the farm according to Bio Suisse standards.

Both business partners aim to pursue efforts towards a long-term collaboration. "The import of oats from Ukraine with Bio Suisse certification is only the beginning", said the Swiss buyer. The Swiss buyer went on to say they intend to further support local entrepreneurs such as Galeks Agro in countries where economic development is necessary such as Ukraine and at the same time reduce food miles, which includes avoiding the import of products from places as far away as Canada, Brazil or China. In the future, both partners would also like to generate more added value in Ukraine by processing, for example the skinning of oats. This would not only contribute to the local business development, but also reduce transport volumes by up to 25 percent.

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