



Federal Ministry  
of Food  
and Agriculture

# The German organic label Bio-Siegel

Information regarding  
its commercial use



[oekolandbau.de](http://oekolandbau.de)

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## Dear Entrepreneurs,

Agriculture plays a crucial role in our society. It provides the day-to-day supply of food and drink – and it also has a substantial impact on our environment, on biodiversity, our climate,



and our natural resources. Organic farming does particularly valuable work in this respect as it is highly sustainable and works in harmony with nature and the environment. It is central to an ecologically and socially responsible future of agriculture. The new federal government would therefore like to increase the share of organic farming in total agriculture until 2030 to 30 percent – together with you.

An important partner along this path: the German organic production logo Bio-Siegel. More than 80 percent of consumers are familiar with this label. More than one in three consumers buys organic food frequently or more often, many of them look out for the hexagon when buying food – and their number is rising. This shows: If you switch to organic farming, or if you mark your organic products with the Bio-Siegel, this has many advantages – not only economically but also for our environment.

This guide covers everything you need to know of the Bio-Siegel, and on how to obtain additional information. Join in – become one of more than 6,000 companies that use the Bio-Siegel – because everyone should see that with your work you commit to more sustainability.

Best regards

**Cem Özdemir**

*Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture*

# If it says organic, it is organic – visible at a glance

*Given that building a brand awareness and a product image for everyday goods such as foodstuffs is a difficult task, food marketing is of vital importance.*





Whether you are a newcomer to the organic food industry or an established food producer and marketer, the Bio-Siegel gives you an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage over your co-competitors and to increase consumer interest in your organic products.

The brand-protected German Bio-Siegel is a clear and unambiguous label that makes organic food visible at a glance. It creates transparency and provides consumers with a simple and reliable decision-making aid. The Bio-Siegel sends the clear message that labelled products meet the quality criteria for organic farming specified by European Union (EU) legislation.

Interested parties may use the Bio-Siegel free of charge and with no bureaucratic effort involved.

Since its introduction by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) in September 2001 as a voluntary label for organic food, the Bio-Siegel has become one of the best known and most widely used labels in food labelling in Germany.



**64 percent always or usually  
look for the Bio-Siegel when  
shopping**

According to a representative survey in connection with the Food and Nutrition Report 2021<sup>1</sup> 64 percent of respondents always or usually look for the Bio-Siegel when shopping. In general, consumers in Germany increasingly opt for organic products. This trend is confirmed by the annual Eco Barometer<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> see: → [www.bmel.de/DE/themen/ernaehrung/ernaehrungsreport2021.html](http://www.bmel.de/DE/themen/ernaehrung/ernaehrungsreport2021.html)

<sup>2</sup> see: → [www.bmel.de/Oeko-Barometer-2021](http://www.bmel.de/Oeko-Barometer-2021)

# What are the legal bases?

Using the Bio-Siegel is subject to the German Eco- Labelling Act (Öko-Kennzeichengesetz) and the Eco- Labelling Ordinance (Öko-Kennzeichenverordnung). Regarding the criteria for Bio-Siegel use, the German Eco- labelling Act refers to the requirements of EU legislation on organic farming.

Details on current legislation are available here:

→ [www.oekolandbau.de/bio-siegel/info-fuer-unternehmen/kontrollen/gesetzliche-grundlagen](http://www.oekolandbau.de/bio-siegel/info-fuer-unternehmen/kontrollen/gesetzliche-grundlagen)

Food which bears the Bio-Siegel must have been produced, manufactured and packaged according to these requirements and must have undergone a control procedure by an approved eco-inspection body. If these requirements are not met or if the Bio-Siegel is misused, penalties or fines may be imposed under the German Eco- labelling Act.

Details on the layout and use of the Bio-Siegel are laid down in the German Eco- Labelling Ordinance which provides that every organic food item must be registered before the Bio-Siegel is first used.

## Which products may bear the label?

The Bio-Siegel may be used to label unprocessed agricultural products and processed agricultural products intended for human consumption or for use as animal feed falling within the scope of EU legislation on organic farming. Vegetative propagation material and seeds for cultivation as well as aquaculture products (e.g. pond-farmed fish or algae) may also be labelled with the Bio-Siegel.

In principle, all ingredients of agricultural origin in an organic product must come from organic farming. Strictly regulated exceptions are possible for up to 5% of these ingredients.

Products derived from the hunting and fishing of wild animals do not count as organic and may thus not bear the Bio-Siegel. Neither may medicinal products, cosmetics and textiles.

Food, feed and agricultural products coming from a business which is in the process of converting to organic farming may not bear the Bio-Siegel either.







**The Bio-Siegel may be used to label, for example, food, animal feed as well as seeds.**

## May imported goods bear the Bio-Siegel?

Yes, all organic foods from other EU member states produced, manufactured and inspected in accordance with EU legislation on organic farming and organic foods imported from non-EU countries in accordance with applicable import regulations may bear the Bio-Siegel.



# May the Bio-Siegel be used alongside the EU organic logo?

Yes, any organic food may bear the German Bio-Siegel in addition to the EU organic logo. The labelling with the EU organic logo always includes the code number of the inspection body and the ingredients' designation of origin.



DE-ÖKO-XXX  
EU Agriculture

Labelling  
example



**Imported goods may also bear the Bio-Siegel, if they meet all respective requirements.**



## Steps towards the use of the Bio-Siegel

Once the certification process by an approved eco-inspection body is completed and an eco-certificate has been submitted, a business may label any organic food product with the Bio-Siegel according to the provisions of the German Eco-labelling Ordinance.

Products, which bear the Bio-Siegel are subject to notification and must be registered with the Bio-Siegel Information Service of the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) before being placed on the market. In that process, the design of the complete label with the Bio-Siegel must also be submitted.

## Possible ways of notifying Bio-Siegel use

### **Online:**

Online notification is the easiest and fastest option to notify use. It is possible via the website → <https://www.oekolandbau.de/en/bio-siegel/> ↘ Bio-Siegel database.

### **In Writing:**

Bio-Siegel use can be notified in writing using the form “Notification of products bearing the Bio-Siegel label”, available on the website → <https://www.oekolandbau.de/en/bio-siegel/> ↘ Information for companies ↘ Label use ↘ Notification of use or via the BLE (contact details see page 19). After receipt of the complete documents, the Bio-Siegel Information Service transfers the registered products to the Bio-Siegel database and sends out the access data.

Users can independently update their data in the database and can add or delete products.

Once the BLE has checked the notification, and regardless of whether products were notified online or in writing, Bio-Siegel users will receive an e-mail or a letter to inform them that the notified products may now bear the Bio-Siegel.





# ORGANIC GRANOLA

**Width:**

minimum 10 mm  
maximum 33 mm

**60%:**

Lettering "Bio" in the Bio-Siegel maximum 60 % of the font size of the product name.

60%-rule



## Guidelines for graphic design

Print the Bio-Siegel in four colours with a white background and white outline of the same width as its green frame. The frame, the letter “i” and the curved line should be printed in green; the letters “B”, “i” (with dot) and “O” as well as “nach EG-Öko-Verordnung” are to be printed in black. In exceptional cases, the Bio-Siegel may be adapted to the colours of the product label.

The minimum width of the Bio-Siegel is ten mm, while its maximum width is 33 mm. Its size is determined by the font size used for the product name (illustrated on page 14).

All guidelines for the Bio-Siegel graphic design as well as artwork and print templates are available on the internet at → <https://www.oekolandbau.de/en/bio-siegel/> ∨ Information for companies ∨ Label use ∨ Labelling rules.



## May the Bio-Siegel be used for advertising?

Yes, the Bio-Siegel may be used for advertising e.g. on price displays for organic products, on ceiling banners or on countertop displays. Care must be taken to ensure that the organic label is not used in a misleading way. It may only refer to products that are certified according to EU legislation on organic farming.



Using the Bio-Siegel for promotional purposes is not subject to notification and the maximum size of the organic label specified in the Organic Label Ordinance may be exceeded.

**Using the Bio-Siegel for promotional purposes is not subject to notification.**







# What happens if the Bio-Siegel is used unlawfully?

Food items that bear the Bio-Siegel unlawfully may be withdrawn from the market. In addition, the Eco-Labeling Act provides for a fine of up to 30,000 euros in the event of an administrative offence.

The Bio-Siegel is protected under trademark law at the German Patent and Trademark Office. The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), as the trademark owner, will pursue any resulting private claims for injunctive relief or damages.

## Sources of information on the Internet

- [www.bmel.de](http://www.bmel.de)
- [www.oekolandbau.de](http://www.oekolandbau.de)
- [www.bio-siegel.de](http://www.bio-siegel.de)

## Help and advice:

Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE),  
Bio-Siegel Information Service,  
Unit 522 – Approval, Reports Organic Farming  
Deichmanns Aue 29, 53168 Bonn  
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