

# GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

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CONTRACTING PARTIES  
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Working Party on Accession of Switzerland

## SWISS AGRICULTURAL IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

### Note by the Swiss Delegation

Article 31bis of the Federal Constitution of Switzerland which was introduced by constitutional amendment in 1947 grants the Federal Government amongst other things the following power:

"When the public interest justifies it the Confederation has the power to make provisions . . .

- a) to preserve important economic classes or professions whose survival is threatened, and to encourage independent producers in such economic classes or professions;
- b) to preserve a strong peasantry, to encourage agriculture and to strengthen the position of rural property-owners."

This amendment was introduced because the farm population had steadily decreased since the beginning of the century from 35 to 16 per cent of the total working population. The farm revenue had decreased even more sharply to 9 per cent of the national revenue.

This tendency is all the more alarming as Switzerland's agricultural production can only supply under normal conditions about 40 per cent of the national consumption of foodstuffs. A further decline, besides having social repercussions, would constitute in times of international stress a serious threat to the maintenance of the permanent neutrality of Switzerland.

The federal law of 3 October 1951, concerning the development of agriculture and the maintenance of peasantry (agricultural law), which was submitted to the referendum and accepted by popular plebiscite has the purpose of conserving a sound farming population and ensuring a minimum of national supply by maintaining a normal agricultural production. This law, by emphasizing at the same time that consumer interests must be safeguarded does not aim at an artificial expansion of agricultural production. Thus as a fundamental rule the protective measures are only applied to the extent necessary to ensure a normal marketing of the national production at prices covering

production costs. It is the duty of the Swiss authorities to see to it that the national demand for foodstuffs is always fully covered which necessitates a liberal import policy. Switzerland with a per capita import of 41 dollars per year is probably percentwise the largest importer of agricultural commodities.

Article 23 of the agricultural law authorises the Swiss Government to enact quantitative import restrictions whenever the marketing of the national production at prices covering normal production costs is threatened. These restrictions must however take account of the interests of all economic groups and may as a rule only be applied to identical foreign products. Thus the Swiss agricultural import restrictions cover at present only those products which are grown in Switzerland. The conditions for the application of import restrictions are defined in the decree of 21 December 1953 concerning the economic provisions of the agricultural law. The prescriptions about the application of import restrictions in specific fields such as wine, feeding stuffs, meat and so on, are contained in a number of decrees partly enacted by Parliament and partly by the federal Council. The importation of cereals and the utilisation of potatoes and fruits without distillation, are governed by separate federal laws based on specific constitutional mandates (Articles 23bis and 32bis of the Federal Constitution).

The complete list of agricultural products which are at the present time subject to import restrictions under the OEEC rules is annexed.

ANNEX

List of non-liberalized Swiss imports as of  
24 September 1956

(SITC = Standard International Trade Classification)

Swiss Tariff No.	SITC	
23a <sup>1</sup> 23a <sup>2</sup>	051-04; 06	Fresh pears and apples
24a <sup>1</sup>		
ex 23b ex 24b	051-06	Other fresh fruits, except peaches
24a <sup>2</sup>	051-06	Fresh apricots, other than in bulk or in bags
40a	054-09	Fresh cabbages, fresh yellow carrots, fresh edible onions
40b <sup>1</sup>	054-09	Fresh tomatoes
40b <sup>2</sup>	054-09	Other fresh vegetables
45	054-01	Potatoes, except seed potatoes
76a	011-01	Fresh veal
76b	011-03	Fresh pork
76c	011-02;09	Other fresh meat
77a	012-01	Preserved ham; salted, smoked
77b	012-02;03	Other preserved meat: salted, smoked, dried
77c	011-01;02;03;09	Preserved meat: frozen
78	013-02	Preserved meat: other
80a	013-01	Salami, salamini, mortadella, zamponi and sotichini
80b	013-01	Other pork butcher's goods
95	091-02	Lard
ex101b	053-04	Fruit pectine
116	112-02	Fruit wines (cider and perry)
117a <sup>1</sup> , 117b <sup>1</sup>	112-01	Natural wine: red, in casks
117a <sup>2</sup> , 117b <sup>2</sup>	112-01	Natural wine: white, in casks
122/123	111-01	Non-alcoholic wines
124	111-01	Wine must, concentrated
132a	001-09	Horses, for slaughter
132b, 132c	921-01	Other horses, and foals
134	921-01	Mules
135	921-01	Asses
136a	001-01	Oxen, with milk teeth, for slaughter
136b	921-09	Oxen, with milk teeth, for farming
136c	001-01	Oxen, without milk teeth
137a	921-09	Bulls, for breeding
137b, 137c	001-01	Bulls, for slaughter

<u>Swiss Tariff No.</u>	<u>SITC</u>	
138a	001-01	Cows, for slaughter
138b	921-09	Cows, for farming
139a	001-01	Heifers, for slaughter
139b	921-09	Heifers, for farming
140	001-01	Calves, weighing up to 60 kg inclusive
141	001-01	Fattened calves, weighing over 60 kg
142a, 142b	921-09	Other young cattle
143, 144a, 144b	001-03-921-09	Swine
145	001-02	Sheep
146	001-09	Goats
207	292-07	Fresh cut flowers, etc.
ex208b, ex209	292-06	Fruit plants and seedlings, vine stocks for grafting and small onions for planting
ex210	292-04;06	
ex220		
1072a	599-04	Casein
ex1078 ex1080a	599-03	Potatoe flour and potatoe starch