

# QS-Report Meat and Meat Products 01/2020



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## Editorial

Dear reader,

Since March, the corona crisis has us firmly in its grip. Its parameters are in a constant state of change and vary from country to country. We provide an infoportal on our website ([www.q-s.de/corona-en](http://www.q-s.de/corona-en)), which is updated daily, in order to ensure a clear and current picture of the latest developments. Our portal provides you with industry-relevant specialist information on coronavirus for your daily work.

Despite the current situation, the current issue of our QS-Report Meat and Meat Products ventures a look into the future: An animal health database is about ready to be launched that strives to link and jointly evaluate data from the monitoring of antibiotics, salmonella and diagnostic data with the audit indices – the first of its kind. The QS Academy (QS-Akademie) went online a few days ago: Our new further training offering and knowledge portal for all aspects of fresh food.

Stay informed and stay healthy!

Your QS Team



## New, company-specific audit indices

### Preventing animal diseases, identifying need for action

QS has been assessing two new audit indices since November 2019: one for biosecurity (BSI) and one for livestock farming (LFI). The indices have been designed specifically for pig farms and give the farmer an indication at a single glance just how well his farm is doing. BSI and LFI can also provide helpful assistance when dealing with the veterinary office as well as with the farm veterinarian when it comes to stock care.

The results of eight (for BSI) and ten (for LFI) test criteria from the audit are applied for the calculation, which results in a characteristic value. Some of the relevant criteria are farm hygiene, carcass storage, pest control, cleaning and disinfection and feed storage. Every pig farmer can view their own values in the QS database. **“Both indices were designed to serve as an early warning system for pig farms. The BSI focuses primarily on animal diseases, while the LFI is concerned with good professional practice in livestock farming”**, explains Thomas May, who is responsible for this matter at QS. The underlying principle is quite simple in both cases: **“All farms not having reached all A evaluations and therefore less than 100 points have a certain need for action in one or the other point.”**

### THE INDICES PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF RISK PREVENTION IN DEALINGS WITH VETERINARY OFFICES

The new EU Control Regulation 2017/625, which was enacted at the end of last year, requires the authorities to carry out risk-based inspections in all operations at an appropriate frequency. These inspections should incorporate all available relevant information for the risk assessment of agricultural businesses. Pig farmers taking part in the QS scheme have the opportunity to submit the audit indices for biosecurity and livestock farming to the veterinary offices. **“Simply put, this means: Whoever is achieving good results in terms of their BSI or LFI can make a good impression on the veterinary office”**, says May. QS has already notified the coordinators and veterinary offices of this. In order to utilize the indices, the livestock owner must expressly agree to the inspection by the veterinary office. The data will not be passed on automatically.

### PLANS FOR AUDIT INDICES FOR CATTLE AND POULTRY ARE CURRENTLY IN THE MAKING

In a next step, the two new audit indices will also be made available to cattle and poultry farmers. And the benefits of the indices will be broadened to an even greater extent: In the future, farmers will have the op-

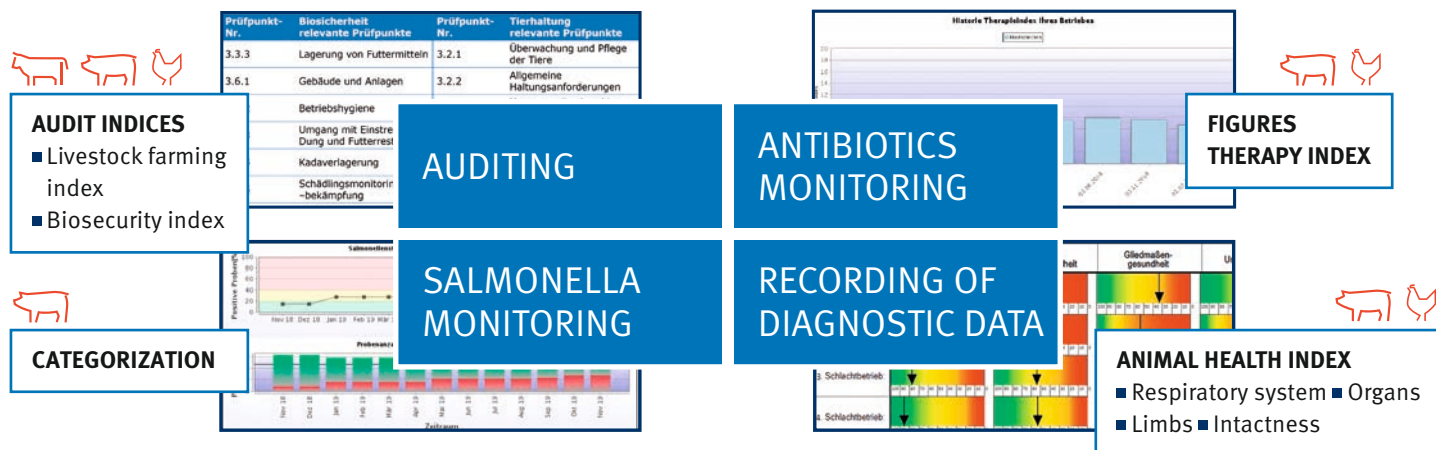
portunity to give their herd veterinarians access to selected indices so that any necessary improvements can be discussed together.

### LINKING DATA PROVIDES COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENT

The audit indices are a further information offering provided by QS for businesses. Data from the monitoring of antibiotics and salmonella as

well as the recording of diagnostic data from the slaughterhouse are also important for the risk assessment of businesses. As part of a joint project, involving institutions such as the University of Veterinary Medicine Hanover, QS examined whether and how different data from different data sources can be used for joint assessment and evaluation. **“The linking of antibiotics and sal-**

**monella monitoring data and diagnostic data monitoring with the audit indices has already been subjected to testing. This process makes it possible to identify those operations which, in comparison with others, exhibit significant differences, for example in terms of the quality of their livestock farming”,** explains May. **“For us, it is important that this information is made available to the livestock owner and, if desired in individual cases, to the herd veterinarian. With additional information such as this, we support livestock owners in the management of their business.”** ■



The linking of antibiotics and salmonella monitoring data and diagnostic data monitoring with the audit indices for a risk-based assessment of farms.

## Deployment of catching crews in the QS scheme

### Biosecurity is a top priority

**Before starting their catching work, each catcher must confirm with a signature that he has been instructed in the handling of slaughter poultry by the team leader or the livestock owner. With its revision, published on 1 January 2020, QS has extended the requirements for catching crews. All catchers are now required to wear clean working clothes and clean shoes or boots, which is to be provided by the company. We spoke to Georg Kirchmaier, head of animal production at Süddeutsche Truthahn AG, and asked him to what extent the new requirements increase biosecurity on farms.**

### JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS THE OBSERVANCE OF BIOSECURITY MEASURES WHEN LOADING BROILERS?

**Georg Kirchmaier:** Observing and complying with biosecurity measures is seen as a very important part of quality assurance and is considered to be a cornerstone in terms of hygiene management. Observation of biosecurity measures plays a major role in preventing the infiltration of undesirable organisms and preserving animal health. This ensures that hygiene standards are upheld during loading at the farm and that animals that remain on the farm are not subjected to increased infection exposure. On the whole, hygiene measures that reduce the risk of the introduction, spread and persistence of disease are given highest priority. The availability of hygiene sluices, the utilization of certified feed, the avail-

ability of salmonella test results when animals are purchased or the control of rodent pests are key factors in disease prevention. These and other measures provide a con-

tribution to minimizing the risk to food safety and ensuring the production of high-quality food. A quality assurance scheme such as QS can provide assistance here.



With its revision, published on 1 January 2020, QS has extended the requirements for catching crews.



### HOW ARE THE NEW REQUIREMENTS REGARDING CLEAN WORKING CLOTHES AND CLEAN FOOTWEAR BEING RECEIVED AND IMPLEMENTED?

**Kirchmaier:** The extended requirements concerning clean working clothes and clean footwear have been well received. The members of the catching crews work very carefully and are applying the new requirements in accordance with the regulations. The “Checklist for the use of persons that are assigned to destocking/changing sheds”, which must be completed for each loading process in order to list the individual members of the catching crew by name and confirm that they have received instruction, among other things, additionally supports the hygiene measures and helps ensure greater acceptance during implementation.

### HOW DOES THE QS SUPPORTING DOCUMENT, THE “CHECKLIST FOR THE USE OF PERSONS THAT ARE ASSIGNED TO DESTOCKING/CHANGING SHEDS”, HELP TO IMPROVE HYGIENE MEASURES?

**Kirchmaier:** With its additional inquiry into hygiene measures and aspects, the supporting document supports, establishes and enhances the awareness of bio-

security and hygiene when loading animals. The checklist contains all the information concerning the loading process. In addition to naming the operation at which the loading takes place, the catching crew as well as the number of people involved is listed. By providing his signature, the team leader must confirm that he has a proof of competence in handling poultry. On top of this, all those involved must certify that they have been instructed in handling slaughter poultry by the team leader or the livestock owner. Hygiene during loading is also taken into account. In addition, information on the type of work clothing used is requested separately, so that information is available for each loading process, even retrospectively, making it possible to draw conclusions about hygiene during loading. This

helps to achieve a more conscious implementation and application by the catching crews.

### AS A MARKETING ORGANISATION, ARE YOU ALREADY ABLE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT ANY IMPROVEMENTS IN TERMS OF HYGIENE?

**Kirchmaier:** The health status among farms is continuing to remain at a high level. One of the ways we can see this is that we are currently still slaughtering only a small proportion of salmonella-positive flocks. All in all, we confirm that hygiene awareness has improved and we are pleased with the commitment of the loading companies to maintaining the health status on the farms at a high level and implementing the QS requirements. ■

## The time has finally come: The QS Academy

### The knowledge portal for all aspects of fresh food

The necessity for further education and training within the value chain is high because of the industry's ever-changing challenges. QS has been active in the industry for more than 15 years with auditor training, information events and a larger number of practice-based workshops. And now, we are offering our experience and expertise from a single source: The QS Academy (QS-Akademie) – the new knowledge portal for all aspects of fresh food – will be launched in the next few days. We spoke with Sabrina Melis, responsible for the QS Academy at QS, about what topics will be offered, who will they be offered to and in what form.

### WHY DOES QS, AS A KEY PLAYER IN FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS, ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF FURTHER EDUCATION?

**Sabrina Melis:** We communicate daily with our scheme participants across all industries on topics related to food quality assurance. We know what current topics and challenges are causing problems. And we want to use this knowledge for our current offering. The training courses and events that we have been offering our partners for many years now are very popular and consistently fully booked. QS has been offering qualified training courses (such as training for auditors) for quite some time now, we have the knowledge, know the experts and are well networked within the industry. We are putting this network to good use and, with the Academy, we are now making it available to the industry even more comprehensively. We are convinced: “Knowledge ensures quality.”



**QS  
AKADEMIE**  
WISSEN SICHERT QUALITÄT

Do you have any suggestions as to which topics we should include in our Academy program? Then please contact us at [akademie@q-s.de](mailto:akademie@q-s.de).

### WHAT CAN THE INDUSTRY EXPECT FROM THE QS ACADEMY?

**Melis:** We are initially concentrating on the core QS topics of “quality” and “safety”. These are fields in which we see ourselves as a 360-degree knowledge portal for all aspects of fresh food for the entire value chain. This involves practical training courses on current and industry-relevant topics. This includes topics such as animal welfare, feed safety, biosecurity, microbiology, pest control and monitoring as well as the proper labelling of goods. Depending on the topic, we offer the courses as workshops, on-site seminars or webinars. E-learning modules are currently also in the making. On 16 June 2020, for example, we are organizing a webinar on the subject of slaughter diagnostic data. At the end of September, we are

planning a QS seminar for slaughter, cutting and processing operations. **All of our current offers can be found in our webshop at [www.q-s-akademie.de](http://www.q-s-akademie.de) (so far only available in German). Come and take a look every now and then: We are constantly expanding our range of services.**

### WHO IS THE OFFER SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT?

**Melis:** We address each of our scheme participants at every stage of the value chain – from livestock owner to slaughter and deboning to food retail. We provide training offers for those responsible for quality management in the companies, samplers and specialist consultants as well as for auditors, laboratory staff and specialist retailers in the food retailing industry – basically for everyone who

is involved in quality assurance in the broadest sense. In addition, our programme is aimed at certification bodies/ auditors and laboratories, and the entire fruit and vegetable branch will find appropriate topics here as well.

### WHAT DISTINGUISHES THE QS ACADEMY FROM OTHER TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMMES?

**Melis:** We always have the entire value chain in mind in our daily work and are in constant exchange with our partners. This enables us to swiftly respond to the training needs of the industry. As a result, our offerings are particularly characterized by their efficiency and practice orientation.

### WHAT HAS CHANGED FOR THE START OF THE QS ACADEMY IN TIMES OF CORONA?

**Melis:** We will certainly have to continue to keep an eye on whether planned on-site events can take place. But webinars for us have played a major role in the programme planning from the very beginning. Especially now, in the face of the corona crisis, we can make optimal use of the tried and tested online formats. ■



Sabrina Melis,  
responsible at QS for the QS Academy.

## News in brief

### DRAFT AMENDMENT TO THE MEDICINAL PRODUCTS ACT STIPULATES MANDATORY ZERO REPORTING AND SPECIFICATION OF TREATMENT DATES

The draft primarily involves amendments of a technical-administrative nature with regard to the recording of antibiotics levies in livestock farming, such as mandatory zero reporting and the specification of treatment dates. This data will be recorded in the QS scheme. An important point is that this data can be transferred by QS to the Veterinary Medicines Database (HIT-TAM) following authorisation by the livestock owner, in order to avoid additional work for livestock owners and veterinarians. Moreover, in future, when making use of combination preparations – as already commonly practised in the QS scheme – the existing active ingredients should not be counted twice in the calculation of the frequency of therapy. Livestock owners should also be able to submit their livestock owner declaration (which is a confirmation that they have not deviated from the veterinarian's treatment instructions) electronically. ■

### SALMONELLA RISK IN QS PIG FARMS HAS FALLEN

The risk of salmonella in pig farms taking part in the QS scheme has been further reduced as a result of the greatest possible extent of transparency within the supply chain as well as extensive hygiene measures. This has been confirmed by the current figures from QS Salmonella Monitoring: While at the end of 2019, the number of pig farms with an increased risk of salmonella contami-

nation (category III) was still 3.3 percent, only 2.7 percent of farms had a high salmonella risk at the beginning of 2020. The proportion of positive samples tested for antibodies fell from 13.8 to 12.7 percent. ■

### ANIMAL WELFARE INNOVATION AWARD: ITW SUPPORTS THE PILOT PROJECT "KLUGER STALL"

Optimal barn climate has a positive effect on animal health and thus also on the economic results of businesses. As part of the Animal Welfare Innovation Award, the Initiative Tierwohl (ITW) has been supporting a two-year pilot project aimed at acquiring practical experience in climate management since the summer of 2019. Gê Backus, last year's winner in the category "Project promotion in practice – science", and his company Connecting Agri & Food have come up with a technical solution for this, which uses sensors to record measured data on temperature, ammonia content, humidity and carbon dioxide content in the barn air every 10 minutes. The data is recorded in a central database and made available to the livestock owner in a pre-processed format. Livestock owners can use the transmitted values to better record changes in their barn climate control system and to detect and avoid errors in climate control at an early stage. In addition, comparisons can also be made with other farms taking part in this project. This gives pig farmers better opportunities to evaluate "their own" barn climate. ■

### QS WORKING GROUP: TRACEABILITY AND FOREIGN OBJECT DETECTION IN THE PRODUCTION CHAIN

A QS working group is currently working specifically on the topic of foreign objects in meat and meat products. Despite the fact that the detection possibilities have improved considerably in recent years due to new techniques, there still is no way of ensuring that all foreign objects can be found in production by means of X-ray or metal detection. Therefore, the fundamental objective is to achieve a sustainable reduction of contamination at all levels – from farm to shop. This is definitely not a new problem and can only be minimized if all parties involved work together to reduce possible sources of contamination. ■

### TRACEABILITY TESTS PROVIDE CRISIS SECURITY

In 2019, QS tested the traceability for the meat sector, including mixed minced meat, self-service packaging. Mixed mincemeat in particular is a product that goes back to a wide range of suppliers and therefore poses particular challenges in terms of traceability. The test revealed that all businesses involved in the manufacturing process had implemented the requirements of the basic data protection regulation (REGULATION (EU) 2016/679) and were able to submit the required documents within the specified period. ■

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