



# INFO LETTER FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



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## EDITORIAL

### Dear Readers,

International cooperation is becoming more and more important and does not stop at cross-border quality assurance. We signed the mutual recognition of AMAG.A.P. and QS-GAP in February at the Fruit Logistica fair, thus further expanding the availability of goods from controlled producers.

International cooperation also requires rules, however, especially for the authorization and utilization of plant protection products. In the

interview on Page 2, Luc Peeters of Copa-Cogeca explains the background of Regulation (EU) 1107/2009 and the consequences it has for plant protection.

With "QS-live. Quality Assurance Initiative" we will be going on the communication offensive for the next three years. The starting signal for our information campaign was given at the Fruit Logistica fair (see Page 3).

We wish you lots of fun with your reading,  
**Your QS Team**

## REVISION OF GUIDELINES ASSURANCE OF MICROBIOLOGICAL QUALITY

**Microbiology will become more of the focus of QS inspections in future. Due in no small part to the EHEC crisis in spring 2011, the advisory board took some far-reaching decisions in order to make treated and processed fruit, vegetable and potatoes even safer.**

One new development is the Guideline Preparation which has been in effect since 01 Feb. 2012 and which applies to all stages. It applies to all processes during which products are minced, cut, peeled and packed, grated, sliced or pureed after harvesting. The guideline's area of application also includes the preparation of microbiologically sensitive products such as sprouts and shoots. The Guideline Preparation focuses mainly on specific hygiene criteria and requirements for the implementation of microbiological monitoring. The basis for the new monitoring programme is formed by the provisions of Reg. (EC) 2073/2005 along with guidance and warning values provided by the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM) and the recommendations of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). A new



requirement for the avoidance of microbiological contamination in sprouts and shoots was also defined in the production and QS-GAP guidelines with effect from 01 Jan. 2012. Accordingly, seeds to be used for the production of sprouts and shoots must be examined in advance in line with microbiological parameters, such as EHEC and salmonella in future. The prescribed limit values may not be exceeded. In addition to this, germinated produce must be examined on a risk basis for every sprout and shoot variety. The guidelines for the production stage have

also been revised in other areas, however, and structured in a more user-friendly way in cooperation with Quality Assurance practitioners and consultants from the production area. Within the scope of benchmarking, the Guideline QS-GAP was aligned with GlobalG.A.P Standard Version 4 and recognized by GlobalG.A.P. One pleasing aspect here is that it was possible to reduce the number of requirements in the new version from 183 to 140 without neglecting any important requirements. The number of K.O. criteria has not been reduced and remains at 46.

The Guideline Production Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes was aligned with QS-GAP. Criteria with the same content are now formulated identically in both guidelines. By making this alignment, food safety requirements that are uniform all the way through are now fulfilled in the same way by all scheme participants irrespective of whether they are QS or QS-GAP certified.

You will find the complete revision information at [www.q-s.de](http://www.q-s.de) in the download centre.

## MONITORING REPORT 2012 FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES ARE SAFE

The sector's quality assurance systems are successfully contributing towards ensuring that plant protection products are used with caution and within the legal limits that have been set. This is shown by the joint evaluation of the residue monitoring programmes of the German fruit trade association Deutscher Fruchthandelsverband e.V. (DFHV) and QS. The results are summarized in the Monitoring Report 2012.

"Fruit and vegetables are safe foods" is the conclusion reached by DFHV and QS after evalua-



tion 13,721 residue samples from 74 countries. The quantity of data permits a good overview of the residue situation with fruit and vegetables and shows that the legally prescribed maximum levels for plant protection products are not reached

by a long way in most cases. Levels are rarely exceeded and sanctions are imposed when they are within the scope of quality assurance. The monitoring report focuses mainly on the results for pip fruit and fruit vegetables. It should be emphasized here that cucumbers, which were wrongly suspected during the EHEC crisis, did particularly well as far as residues were concerned.

The monitoring report is available for downloading at the media centre under [www.q-s.de](http://www.q-s.de).

## INTERVIEW TALKING TO EXPERTS



**The EU Regulation 1107/2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products came into force on 14th June 2011. In the interview, Luc Peeters, chairman of the Copa-Cogeca working group on plant protection, describes the impacts of the regulation.**

**Mr. Peeters, the new EU Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009) regulates the zonal authorization of plant protection products. What does this mean?**

The Regulation 1107/2009 sets up clear principles for the mutual recognition of active substances within the zonal system. This means that, within the same zone North, Centre or South, authorizations granted by one Member State should be accepted by other Member States where agricultural, plant health and environmental conditions are comparable. This will facilitate the availability of plant protection products in the European Union and avoid duplication of work and money at Member State level.

**Is the regulation applicable in practice?**

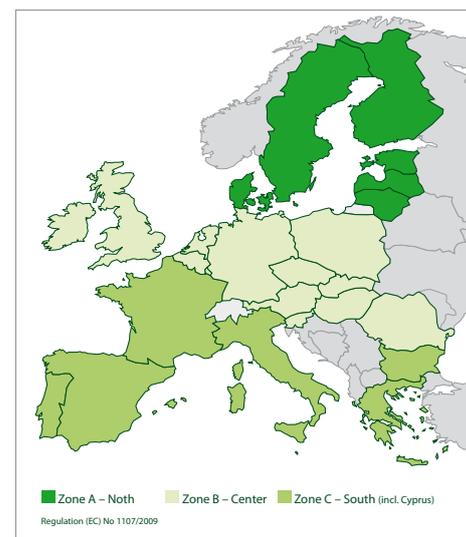
In practice, we see often lack of trust among Member States. Different protocols of assessment, additional data required and other national constraints limit the potentiality of the mutual recognition tool. Increasing the safety

standards for placing plant protection products on the market, additional leads to an increasing the complexity of whole authorization process. The full implementation of Directive 91/414/EEC and Regulation 1107/2009 has led to the loss of many crop protection solutions in the EU. From over 1200 active substances in the beginning of 1990, we have ended up with no more than 300 substances left, and of course, not all of them are used by the agricultural sector. All possibilities within the new EU regulatory framework regarding derogation of use need to be still fully explored. In this regards we think the European Commission plays an important role in facilitating the correct interpretation and adoption of all flexibilities at MS level..

**What are the major challenges for the development and approval of plant protection products?**

New solutions need to be found to avoid resistance building, get access to the right tools for new emerging plant diseases, maintain food production in Europe, improve the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and avoid distortion of competition between Member States, and between European farmers and third countries. We see even bigger problems with regards minor uses and specialty crops, where the increasing lack of plant protection products is compromising the production in Europe of several crops like fruit and vegetables, seeds, flowers and storage of commodities. The Plant Protection Industry has not always interest to invest in a new active substance which will not ensure enough return on the investment.

**Which consequences could be drawn for placing plant protection products?**

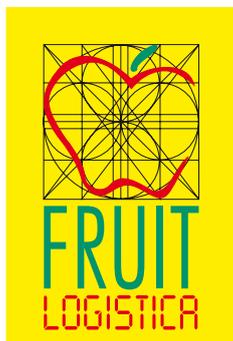


**Approval of plant protection products in Europe: „Zonal Authorization“**

In conclusions, we must accept that the market is looking for zero tolerance, in the interest of product quality. For example, apples with slight skin defects would struggle to find a market and if they did they would obtain a much lower price (for processing). They would not normally be bought by consumers. In other words, the economic threshold for certain products is often zero. The market allows no room for manoeuvre. So we need to make sure that PPPs are used responsibly, as much as needed, as little as possible.

## FOCUS THE FRUIT LOGISTICA ++ FOCUS THE FRUIT LOGISTICA ++

### FRUIT LOGISTICA THREE EVENTFUL DAYS



More than 56,000 trade visitors from 139 countries came to the exhibition halls in Berlin this year to visit the Fruit Logistica fair. QS was represented there with its own stand and made full use of the many opportunities for an international exchange of ideas and opinions.

We have summarized a few of the events and happenings on this page of our Info Letter and in the News in Brief on Page 4. The mutual recognition of AMAG.A.P. and QS-GAP deserves a special mention here, as does the presentation of the interactive internet portal [www.QSlive.de](http://www.QSlive.de) (see below). Parallel to the Fruit Logistica, the Freshconex 2012 trade fair for the fresh convenience sector fruit and vegetables was held for the fifth time. During this fair, QS presented the new Processing guideline to an international audience.



The annual meeting of laboratory directors was also held in Berlin at the invitation of QS.

### INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF AMAG.A.P. AND QS-GAP

The Austrian AMA Marketing GmbH and QS finalized the mutual recognition of the audits AMAG.A.P. and QS-GAP at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin. In a joint position paper, the members of the A-Net are now advocating even closer cooperation.

“The QS Scheme is becoming more and more international and cross-border dialogue more and more important,” emphasizes Wilfried Kamphausen, who is responsible for the supply chain Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes at QS. This dialogue is now bearing fruits in the form of mutual recognition of the audits AMAG.A.P. from Austria and QS from Germany.

Producers with an AMAG.A.P. certificate who want to supply into the QS Scheme must first register in the QS Scheme via a coordinator. They then become eligible to deliver after registration and with participation in QS residue monitoring. A similar mutual recognition exists with Vegaplan from Belgium since last year, thus avoiding double auditing.



From left to right: F. Kröpfl (Kröpfl Obsthandel), Dr. H.-J. Nienhoff (QS), St. Kunze (AMA Marketing), Dr. A. Förschler (QS), W. Kamphausen (QS) and J. Wieser (Köpfl Obsthandel)

To do justice to the increasing internationalization, the European Network for Fruit and Vegetables (A-Net) was founded in 2011. In addition to QS, a further four European standard owners are involved in the network: AMA Marketing (Austria), Red Tractor (UK), Vegaplan (Belgium) and Verein Swiss-GAP (Switzerland). At the third

A-Net meeting which was held during the Fruit Logistica fair, the participants adopted a position paper with the goal of expanding their cooperation and further advancing the mutual recognition of their standards in future.

### QS INTRODUCES NEW INTERNET PORTAL QS-LIVE.DE LAUNCHED



With “QS-live. Quality Assurance Initiative”, QS is launching a three-year informa-

tion campaign aimed at establishing the QS certification mark even more as an orientation aid in people’s everyday shopping activities. Sponsored by the EU to the tune of 750,000 euros, the consumer campaign is to highlight all aspects of quality, safety and hygiene.

The objective of the initiative is to familiarize consumers with the QS Scheme and inform

them about the controlled production of meat, fruit and vegetables. In addition to this, awareness for the correct handling of fresh foods is to be intensified. The interactive internet portal “QS-live.de” was presented to the general public for the first time at the Fruit Logistica. It informs consumers about active quality assurance measures in all supply chains.

ALL YEAR ROUND **NEW ZEALAND APPLES WITH A CERTIFICATION MARK**

**From this year, supermarket chain Kaiser's Tengelmann will be marketing fresh apples with the QS certification mark all year round. This is being made possible among other things by apples from New Zealand and a joint project involving Cobana Fruchtring GmbH & Co. KG from Hamburg, Kaiser's Tengelmann and QS.**

"With apples from New Zealand, our customers can now buy QS apples after the season has finished in Germany and Europe. This is another step towards our goal of being able to offer controlled fruit and vegetables all year round," explains Oliver Dobusch, Quality Manager Fruit and Vegetables with Kaiser's Tengelmann. To

close the supply chain, the producers in New Zealand will be registered at QS with a QS recognized GlobalG.A.P. certificate (Option 1). The responsible wholesalers will be certified on-site by means of a QS audit. This also obliges them to have samples examined within the scope of residue monitoring. Thomas Landwehr, Quality Manager at Cobana Fruchtring in Hamburg: "We are pleased that, by including apples from New Zealand, we have been able to extend the period during which QS apples can be offered. Our supplier in New Zealand passed the audit in February with very good 'Status I'. In this way, we have taken another step towards expanding the QS range". This project constitutes another step along the way of being able to offer QS products



in the market all year round. It is one of several that QS has embarked on with partners from the food retail sector and wholesale companies, and it also includes such products as onions and garlic from Argentina and herbs from South Africa.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS **LATEST FIGURES**

The supply chain Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes currently comprises 23,936 scheme participants, which equates to an increase of 862 over the previous year. The majority of new participants are on the production stage (plus 784).

The figure of 4,179 foreign producers is a new record. The QS Scheme is becoming more and more international.

Stage	Total <b>23,936</b>	Of which abroad <b>4,531</b>
<b>Production<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>12,490</b>	<b>4,179</b>
- Fruit, vegetables	9,786	4,167
- Potatoes	2,704	12
<b>Wholesale</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>Food Retail</b>	<b>10,784</b>	<b>200</b>

1 Of which producers with certification QS-GAP: 6,213  
Producers with recognized GlobalG.A.P. certification: 2,805  
Producers with recognized IKKB certification: 2,181

+++ NEWS IN BRIEF ++



**Laboratory Directors' Meeting**

More than 60 executives from Germany and abroad took part in the annual "Laboratory Directors' Meeting on Residue Monitoring" in Berlin. Within the scope of the international exchange of experiences, technical experts reported on their work: Dr. Iris Suckrau from the State Office for Food Safety and Consumer Protection (LAVES) in Lower Saxony talked about quality assurance measures in laboratories, and Ms. Monika Richter of BASF about the analysis of the active fungicide ingredient dithianon.

logical and biochemical issues were dealt with accordingly. Practitioners from the Fresh-Cut area took part in the course, along with scientists and representatives for quality assurance and the development of new products.



**Changes at head office**

Ms. Mareike Kistemaker has been strengthening the QS team for Communication/Public Relations since early January in her function as point of contact for all media representatives.



commenting on current topics and articles under [www.qs-blog.de](http://www.qs-blog.de). With this blog, we are inviting all scheme participants and interested parties to get involved in an objective discussion on safe foods in the internet.



**QS presents new Guideline Processing**

QS presented the new Processing guideline at the 5th European crash course for the quality and safety of fresh-cut products. The course focused mainly on the critical areas of processing, packaging and quality assurance. Microbiological, physio-

**Plant Protection Act**

The law on the reorganization of plant protection (PflSchG) was published in the Federal Gazette and has been in effect since 14 Feb. 2012. With this act, the European plant protection package was converted into national law. For the first time, plant protection law now makes penal provisions in the event of gross violations.

**QS Blog**

QS is expanding its online offer in the area of social media and now offers the option of

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