



Qualitätssicherung. **Vom Landwirt bis zur Ladentheke.**



Crisis management and crisis communication within the QS scheme

Crisis management and crisis communication aim at ensuring food safety across all stages. It must be avoided to affect consumers and further parties along the supply chain.

QS is a quality assurance scheme for meat and meat products as well as for fruit and vegetables. Product and process related crises cannot be excluded, but require well-organized mechanisms in production and marketing. QS is a part of this crisis mechanism.

The scheme helps to avoid crisis due to preventive measures of crisis management and crisis communication.

Crisis management measures tackle crises

Crisis management

Despite comprehensive preventive measures product and process related crises cannot be completely excluded in a scheme with more than 130,000 participants.

QS has set up a comprehensive **crisis management system** to deal with crises:

- Specific **papers of incident and report form** for scheme participants
- Web-based **QS crisis portal**
- permanent **QS crisis committee** including a crisis commissioner and crisis squad
- **24h emergency number**
- daily **evaluation of press** and **NGO newsletters**

Operative crisis management

QS crisis commissioners immediately follow up suspicious cases or information on incidents and crises:

- research, determination of the impact of scheme participants
- immediate conduction of audits by independent certification bodies; immediate banning of scheme participants if necessary (exclusion of eligibility of delivery)



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Communicative crisis management

- if necessary: convocation of interdisciplinary and cross-stage crisis management (crisis squad)
- comprehensive cooperation with scientists/associations/service providers, case-related cooperation with authorities
- sanctions (warning, contractual penalties up to 50,000.00 EUR, exclusion from the QS scheme)

The operative measures of crisis management are accompanied by targeted crisis communication:

- informing the public/media
 - via the website www.q-s.de
 - via press releases (comprehensive QS press distributor trade press/daily press)
 - via QS info letter and QS news letter
- informing the QS crisis committee and other QS bodies
- informing scheme participants
- exchange of information with authorities, scientists, associations, service providers

Preventive measures to avoid crises

Multi-level inspection system

QS defines production and marketing requirements that must be complied with by QS scheme participants along the supply chain. Compliance with the requirements is continuously monitored in a multi-level system:

- exact definition of all requirements and specifications for the documentation
- permanent self-assessment/monitoring of internal processes
- regular neutral audits by independent certification bodies: in 2017, this amounted to approximately 32,500 audits within the supply chain meat and meat products



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Communicative measures

and more than 14,000 audits within the supply chain fruit, vegetables and potatoes

- ongoing "control of neutral control" through random sample audits, audit report control, traceability checks and audits of special purpose in suspicious cases

Communicative measures accompany the scheme-internal prevention. The foresighted treatment of current issues, the appropriate presentation of results and incidents as well as the assumption of opinion leadership contribute to the public discussion with stakeholders and NGOs

With regard to certain topics, QS shows a constant willingness to engage in dialogue with "solution-oriented" NGOs in order to be able to include their concerns in the work of the quality assurance scheme.

QS is supported by an external agency in communicative measures in the field of strategic communication.