

Certified production as common target Quality assurance across national borders



The QS scheme is an internationally recognised standard owner for the inspection of quality assurance along the complete supply chain of fruit and vegetables: from farm to shop. All parties involved in the QS scheme are strongly committed to produce, process and commercialise food according to clearly defined quality requirements.

16,600 food retail stores offer QS-certified fruit and vegetables. To deliver into the QS scheme, fruit and vegetable producers must be in control of the sustainable soil management, precise use of pesticides and fertilisers, as well as implementation of an active hygiene management; and they must demonstrate their reliability on a regular basis. This also includes the exclusive use of authorised plant protection products and the compliance with the legal maximum residue levels.

In Germany, around 8,000 producers are certified according to the Guidelines QS and QS-GAP. Outside

Germany, QS relies on the cooperation with other national and international standards operating abroad. In an attempt to achieve a consistently high level of food safety at the European level, and to ensure the non-seasonal availability of certified fruit and vegetables, QS has mutual audit recognition agreements with other standard owners such as Vegaplan, AMAG.A.P. and GlobalG.A.P.

This facilitates the movement of goods and saves the producers the costs and efforts of an additional certification. More than 5,500 fruit and vegetable producers in the QS scheme participate via one of the recognised standards.

A LOOK AT RESIDUE LEVELS

All of the producers involved in the QS scheme – including those that are participating through a recognised standard – practice QS residue monitoring, in which independent laboratories that have been approved by QS verify whether or not the currently valid maximum residue levels for plant protection products, as well as guidance values for hazardous substances and nitrate, are being complied with. They are also responsible for checking to see whether the plant protection products applied are authorised for the respective culture. In this way, food safety is ensured from the very beginning.

Country	Involved stages	System/Standard
Belgium	Fruit, Vegetables	
Austria	Fruit, Vegetables	AMAG.A.P.
Transnational	Fruit, Vegetables	

ABOVE—Around 8,000 producers are certified according to Guidelines QS and QS-GAP in Germany
OPPOSITE—More than 5,500 fruit and vegetable producers take part in QS via a recognised standard
LEFT—Scheme participation via recognised standards
RIGHT— Mutual recognition agreements of the QS scheme

RECOGNISED STANDARDS IN DETAIL

GlobalG.A.P.

QS recognises the GlobalG.A.P. Option 1 certificate (individual certification) since 2006. Producers with a valid GlobalG.A.P. certificate can deliver into the QS scheme without an additional audit, if they register themselves through a QS coordinator and so compulsorily participate in the residue monitoring. As of 2018, QS participation is also possible via a GlobalG.A.P. Option 2 certificate (group certification), for those producer groups based and with cultivation areas in the EU, who have had the Option 2 certificate for at least the last two years. These producers also take part automatically in QS residue monitoring. A step-for-step orientation to participate in QS with GlobalG.A.P. Option 2 can be found here: bit.ly/QSGlobalGap2

Vegaplan

Producers with a valid audit of the Belgian standard owner Vegaplan can deliver into the QS scheme, if they prove that they are in possession of a Vegaplan certification. To this end, they are registered in the QS database. The coordination is directly assumed by Vegaplan. Reciprocally, companies with a QS audit are also entitled to deliver into the Vegaplan scheme.

AMAG.A.P.

Likewise, QS and the Austrian scheme AMAG.A.P. mutually recognise their audits for fruits and vegetable producers. Producers with a valid AMAG.A.P. certificate can deliver into the QS scheme, if registered by a coordinator in the QS Scheme. After registration and participating in residue monitoring, they achieve the eligibility of delivery.

Regardless of whether the producers are QS or QS-GAP certified, or participate via a recognised standard, they can be all found in the QS database by means of the so-called OGK-number issued by QS, or by the GGN-number. Thus, the recipients of the products can verify at any time, whether their upstream suppliers are QS participants. That constitutes the basis for an uninterrupted traceability in the QS scheme and is a precondition for the use of the QS mark.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Are you already certified with one of the previously mentioned standards and would like to deliver your goods into the QS scheme? Producers with a valid audit of one of these standards are able to deliver into the QS scheme without an additional audit. To this end, they are registered in the QS database by a so-called coordinator. The coordinator supports and advises the producers. A list of all the coordinators approved by QS can be found here: bit.ly/QScoordinators

If you have any questions about producer participation in the QS scheme, please contact:

Dr Annette Förschler
+49 (0) 228 35068-172
annette.foerschler@q-s.de
Kristina Klinkhammer
+49 (0) 228 35068-175
kristina.klinkhammer@q-s.de

This year, QS also has a contact person directly on site in Spain. Her name is Maribel Chiva Silvestre. "As part of the expansion of the presence of QS in Spain, and the fact that the number of scheme participants in Spain is steadily increasing, my main task will be to provide advice and support," she explains. "Among other things, I assist the coordinators and laboratories as well as existing and potential scheme participants as contact person onsite, in the case of questions. The representation of QS in trade fairs and the organisation of information events are also among my tasks."

Maribel Chiva Silvestre
+34 647 864 438
maribel.chivasilvestre@q-s.de

