



QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.

QS-REPORT Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

with the QS-report published twice a year, we offer you an up-to-date insight into the QS scheme's work and inform you about practice-related topics for the fruit and vegetable industry. The topics of this issue are the increasing availability of goods from southern Europe, a mandatory logistics standard, opportunities in regional marketing, changes resulting from the revision, laboratory performance assessments in the QS scheme, and lots more information related to quality assurance in fruit and vegetables.

The editorial team would be pleased to receive questions and suggestions on the QS-report to presse@q-s.de.

We hope you enjoy reading! Your QS team.



Availability of QS goods

On the road to success in Spain

The number of QS-certified companies abroad is growing steadily. Particularly in Spain, more and more companies are showing interest in a QS certification. The latest example is the Unica Group, whose aim is to register all approximately 1,100 of its producers with QS in the near future. This will enable the availability of QS goods for food retail in the Spanish season to be improved further.

„With the expansion of QS certification to all of its companies, the Unica Group is aiming to improve the quality and safety of its products and to offer its customers a better service by meeting the requirements of the market”, explains Miguel Manzano, Quality Manager of the Unica Group.



The Unica Group, founded in 2009 as a second-grade co-operative, is one of the largest co-operatives in the country. It currently comprises seven producer organisations, some of which have already been QS-certified for some time. The individual producer organisations produce goods in Almeria, Granada and Murcia. The Unica Group can therefore offer a wide range of products, made up of fruit and fruit vegetables, such as cucumbers, peppers, courgettes, tomatoes, lettuce, cauliflower and broccoli, as well as sugar melons and watermelons. The goods are produced through conventional, integrated and organic cultivation.

QS expands networks in southern Europe

Since 2013, the number of Spanish producers has increased by 140 percent. Work on site is supported by a total of four Spanish certification bodies, 26 coordinators and five laboratories with QS recognition. QS is responding to the growing demand for trained auditors by continuously expanding its range of training courses in foreign languages. For example, two auditor training courses were conducted in Madrid for the first time at the beginning of 2015.



Miguel Manzano, Quality Manager of the Unica Group

QS Standard Logistics

Important contribution to complete quality assurance

Since 1 January 2015, logistics service providers must be registered in the QS database for the Logistics production scope if they regularly transport fresh fruit and vegetables between QS scheme participants at the wholesale level. 117 logistics service providers have already successfully completed certification, 36 of them from European countries other than Germany.

The quality and safety of fruit and vegetables needs to be ensured not only within the individual stages of the supply chain, but also and in particular, on their transport route. This is a key result of the review of the EHEC events of 2011. In response, QS introduced a (then) voluntary standard for logistics at the beginning of 2013. The focus of this was placed primarily on the complete traceability of products and good hygiene practice during transport.

“With the certificate, freight carriers show their customers that they are checked by

an independent body and that the origin of the products can be traced, even during transport. This increases partners’ trust in the supply chain”, explains Wilfried Kamphausen, who is responsible for the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain at QS. “The QS standard offers the highest possible degree of flexibility. Because of the full recognition of the IFS-Logistics audit, there is no additional workload for companies already in possession of such a certificate”, Kamphausen continues. “At the same time, smaller

freight carriers in particular benefit from the lean and practice-oriented requirements catalogue.”

Freight carriers can register to participate in the QS Logistics standard via the QS database (www.qs-plattform.de).



QS in Dialogue

Looking back on the Fruit Logistica 2015



The Fruit Logistica 2015 confirmed its reputation as the most important industry event for the international fruit trade in Germany. Once again, QS had its own stand which was part of the joint stand of the German Association of Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisations (Bundesvereinigung der Erzeugerorganisationen Obst und Gemüse e.V.). “We are more than satisfied with how this year’s Fruit Logistica went”, sums up Wilfried Kamphausen, who is responsible for the Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes supply chain at QS. Large numbers of industry visitors obtained information at the QS stand on the topic of quality assurance in fresh fruit and vegetables. The QS logistics standard, which has been mandatory since the beginning of 2015, was a popular topic of conversation. In addition to the high visitor levels, numerous conversations with existing and potential scheme participants contributed to the positive outcome of the trade fair. “We were able to enter into an intensive, professional exchange and make important contacts,

especially with industry representatives from southern Europe,” says Kamphausen. In this context, particular importance should be given to the meeting with leading representatives of the Spanish Unica group. Accordingly, the planned full certification of all 1,100 Unica producers is almost complete (see page 1). The Blue Hour also provided time for good discussion. With the slogan “Work together, socialise together”, QS and the BVEO invited co-exhibitors and business partners from the fruit and vegetable industry to a relaxed get-together.

A meeting of the European Network for Standards in the Fruit, Vegetables, Po-



tatoes Sector (Europäische Netzwerk für Standards im Bereich Obst, Gemüse und Kartoffeln, A-NET) also took place during the trade fair. During this meeting, standards owners from various countries exchanged information on the latest developments in quality assurance for fruit and vegetables. On the day before the fair started, the leaders of the QS-approved laboratories met for their annual exchange of information. More than 60 participants, over half of whom came from abroad, accepted QS’s invitations to get up to date with their activity in the QS scheme.

Laboratories under examination

Residue monitoring in the QS scheme enters its 10th year

Economic operators and consumers alike need to be able to trust the results of residue monitoring in fruit and vegetables. To ensure that this trust is well-placed, QS is examining the analysis abilities of the QS-approved laboratories for the 10th year. The laboratory performance assessment, carried out twice annually, checks whether the laboratories in the QS scheme demonstrate a consistently high standard when conducting residue analyses.

<<Perspectives >>

Three industry experts report on the further development of the QS laboratory performance assessment and on the added value which results for the economic operators and the participating laboratories

Dr. Gustav Offenbächer

(expert in residue analysis and quality control)



„In cooperation with QS, the design of the laboratory performance assessment is continuously developed further and adapted to current industry issues. Different scenarios and degrees of difficulty present themselves even during planning of the test material from the combination of sample type, substance properties,

and residue content levels. Both new and existing active substances are used. However, the focus is also on those substances which laboratories found problematic to detect in previous tests. This approach checks the individual substance analysis spectrum of the laboratories. Moreover, the laboratories are sensitised to critical issues in analysis. In the future, greater emphasis is to be placed on checking transformation and degradation products of substances, as well as substances for which individual or special methods of detection are required.“

Albrecht Friedle

(CEO, Labor Friedle GmbH)

„As a laboratory that has been involved in the scheme since the very beginning, we have fully participated in all 17 QS performance assessments. In addition to the mandatory participation, voluntary participation was also always a matter of course for us. We are motivated by the objective evidence of our consistent analytical quality over the years, which our customers greatly appreciate. We are very proud of this documentation and will continue this tradition in the future. For us, it is positive that the substances to be detected are current, widely



used and, in some cases, difficult to analyse. The fact that there was a predefined substance spectrum at the start shows the growing demands on laboratories; today, this kind of spectrum no longer exists, which means that the laboratories need to keep themselves up to date with respect to new substances for analysis. The introduction of several test materials with different substances, the varying sample receipt times, and the practice-oriented processing time of only three days represent further intensification of the test design, which raises the standard of the QS performance assessment. This development is clearly confirmed by the result of the latest autumn test, in which only eleven of the 63 participating laboratories had a 100 percent detection rate.“

Rolf Viersbach

(Quality Manager for operative quality assurance of fresh produce, REWE Zentral AG)

„In principle, REWE Zentral AG only works with QS-approved laboratories. Aside from the commercial arguments, we have the aim of working with the best residue laboratories. This is particularly important to us because, in the event of non-compliance with the REWE residue guideline, appropriate measures can be taken against the production companies causing the nonconformity or against suppliers. The high failure rates and deviating individual results in laboratory performance assessments show clear analytic deficits again and again, particularly in laboratories that are not yet approved. However, from my point of view, the current test assessment system is fair. The performance assessments are designed in such a way that laboratories cannot “copy” one another. This certainly separates the wheat from the chaff and gives the institutes with deficits the opportunity to continuously improve.“



Regional Marketing

QS audits on traceability recognised

QS-certified producers have the possibility to participate in the so-called “Regionalfenster” labelling system and thereby deliver to licensees of this system without conducting an additional audit.



The “Regionalfenster” inspection system, which translates literally as “regional window”, has the aim of regularly checking and assuring the product-specific statements on origin by means of a comprehensive inspection and assurance system. The recognition of the QS audit, during which the Regionalfenster provisions are checked at the same time, was agreed recently with Regionalfenster e.V. and avoids double auditing. “With this service, we provide QS-certified producers with new sales opportunities without the additional costs and workload of double auditing”, explains Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff, MD of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH. “The workload for participating in Regionalfenster is reduced to a minimum.”

The QS and QS-GAP Production standards provide all requirements for recognition in Regionalfenster for fruit, vegetables and potatoes. Both guidelines already contain all requirements to

guarantee regional assignment of products. One additional requirement was added, compliance with which is mandatory when a QS company registers with Regionalfenster. Registration takes place via a coordinator in the QS database. For this purpose, interested scheme participants need to provide their coordinator with a “Declaration of participation in Regionalfenster for QS-certified companies”.

QS-certified producers have the possibility to participate in the “Regionalfenster” without conducting an additional audit.

Revision 2015

Focus on goods separation and sprout production

With effect from 1 January 2015, the Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes Advisory Board has decided on changes in the QS inspection system.

Assured product identity

One of the most significant changes to take effect concerns the QS and QS-GAP production guidelines. For assured product identity and avoidance of product mix-ups, a new chapter was added on the handling of goods not produced by the company itself. The requirements are relevant for producers who handle products they did not produce themselves (e.g. through purchasing or services for third parties) in their company in addition to the products they produced themselves. Since the beginning of the year, they are obliged to perform more stringent checks on purchased goods: incoming goods inspections must be verifiably documented, include all relevant products and follow a regulated

sequence. In addition, effective immediately, producers need to introduce a returns management system in which all goods returns are recorded and evaluated. Furthermore, a comprehensible system for the batch separation and labelling of QS and non-QS goods must be in place. In this context, the "Goods flow" requirement is also new. This requirement checks whether there is a plausible quantity ratio between purchased and marketed goods.

EU provisions on sprout production completely fulfilled

Another important change concerns the processing guideline. This was supplemented by three new requirements for sprout-producing companies. As a response to the EHEC cases, QS had already included a majority of the European Union provisions for reducing the microbiological risk potential in the cultivation of sprouts and shoots in the guideline in 2013. With the recent changes, the EU provisions valid since March 2013 have now been completely fulfilled: a new K.O. criterion on traceability prescribes that a declaration according to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No. 2011/2013 must be enclosed with every

delivery when seeds are imported into the EU. In addition, as of January 2015, sprout producers in the QS scheme must prove that they are in possession of an official approval according to Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004. Stricter requirements on containers and vessels used to transport sprouts represent further K.O. criteria.

You can view all changes to guidelines in the revision information on the QS website under "Documents and More".



News in brief

New training brochure for food retail employees



In cooperation with Deutscher Fachverlag, QS has published the new edition of the Quality Assurance Training Brochure. For the first time, the completely revised 3rd edition also contains the topic of quality assurance in fruit and vegetables. It is aimed specifically at trainees and employees in food retail and provides practice-relevant technical knowledge on 32 pages. More information on this is available in the media catalogue at www.q-s.de.

Re-aligned consumer communication



As of the beginning of the year, consumer communication from QS is concentrating on the QS-live campaign, which is supported by the EU. The www.qs-live.de platform is now the main starting point in the network for consumer questions on the topic of quality assurance in fresh food products. Further promotions at trade fairs and in food retail are planned.

2015 Monitoring Report published

The German Fruit Trade Association (Deutsche Fruchthandelsverband e.V., DFHV) and

QS published this year's monitoring report at the Fruit Logistica (4 – 6 February 2015). The sixth edition confirms the positive results of the previous years: the rejection rate for plant protection product residues in the total of 17,306 examined fruit and vegetable samples from 73 countries stood at just 0.85 percent. This is evidence of the consistent quality assurance of all involved – from farm to shop. More information on this is provided in the media catalogue on the QS homepage www.q-s.de.



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Imprint

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Residue monitoring in the QS scheme enters its 10th year

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Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.



QS-REPORT Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.

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Insert: Facts, Figures and Data

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Dear Readers,

on the following pages, you will find facts, figures and data on the QS scheme: a concise review of all that we achieved with our scheme participants in 2014. Last year, a focus of the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain was the pilot project on the voluntary QS inspection of working and social conditions (FIAS). After a successful start, this project is now entering its second phase. You can learn more about the current status and important changes for 2015 in this insert.

The editorial team would be pleased to receive questions and suggestions on the QS-report at presse@q-s.de. We hope you enjoy reading! Your QS team.

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Residue monitoring in the QS scheme

12,097 analyses (1,029 more than in 2013) were performed within the scope of QS residue monitoring last year. The scheme participants allowed a total of 146 different fruit and vegetable types from 48 countries to be tested by the QS-approved laboratories. About 68 percent of the samples came from Germany. The proportion of samples that had to be rejected was just over one percent. This shows how well the QS producers work.

The QS residue monitoring provides high reliability since **10** years.

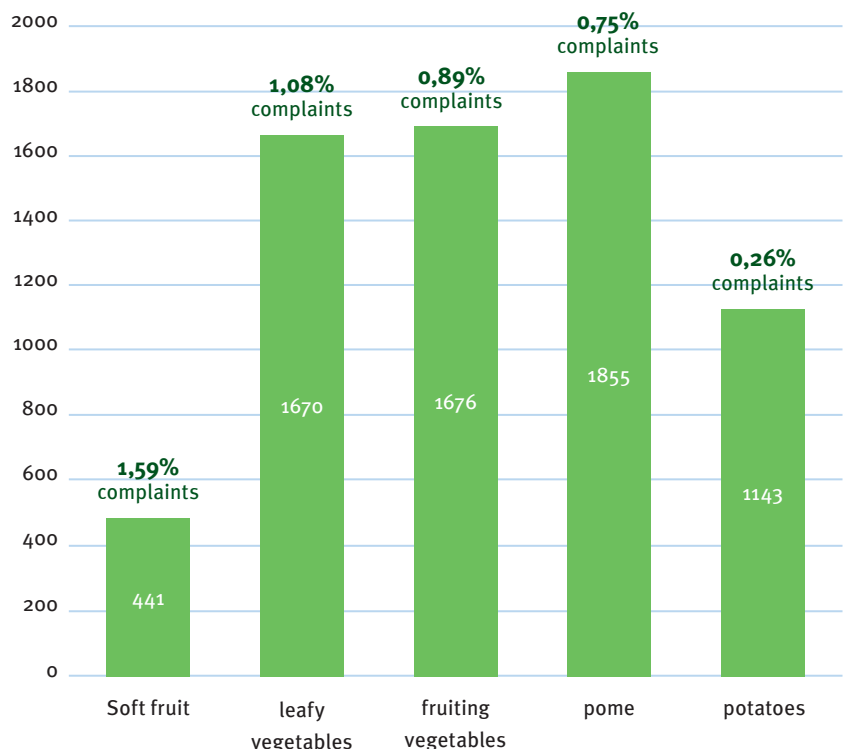
Successful participation in the laboratory performance assessments is mandatory for laboratories applying for recognition in the QS scheme. Laboratories that are already approved must prove their capability at least once a year in the laboratory performance assessment. If they fail repeatedly to pass this test, their QS approval is revoked.

	Number of approved laboratories	Number of laboratories in approval procedure
Residue monitoring	74	47

Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Egypt, Turkey, Greece, France



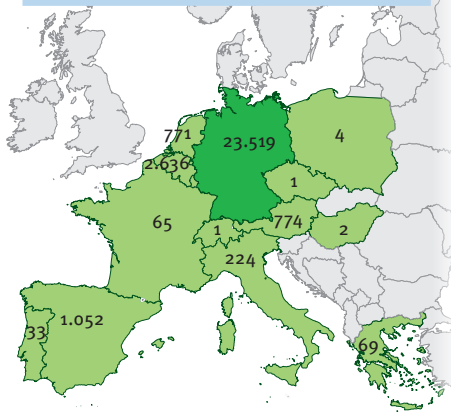
Number of samplings and proportion of complaints of selected product groups



Scheme participant numbers have increased again

14,711

food retail branches can offer fruits and vegetables with the QS certification mark.



With 29,226 (as of 1 January 2015), the number of approved locations in the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain has increased by more than 250 since last year. In the field of logistics, the number of participants has doubled.

38 percent of the 13,634 producers originate in countries other than Germany. QS records the highest increase in Spain, where 133 new scheme participants chose to participate in the QS scheme last year.

Number of scheme participants 2014

Stage	Total 29,226	Germany 23,519	other countries 5,707
Production*	13,634	8,419	5,215
- fruit, vegetables	10,829	5,669	5,160
- potatoes	2,805	2,750	55
Wholesale	783	527	256
Logistics	98	62	36
Food retail	14,711	14,511	200

*Thereof:

Producers certified against QS-GAP: 7,034
 Producers certified against GlobalG.A.P.: 3,191
 Producers certified against Vegaplan: 2,298
 Producers certified against AMAG.A.P.: 130

Number of wholesalers 2014

Total	783
Germany	527
other countries	256
Thereof	
Spain	111
Netherlands	51
Italy	43
Austria	15
Belgium	12
France	10
Greece	5
Morocco	2
Hungary	1
Argentina	1
Portugal	1
Switzerland	1
New Zealand	1
Poland	1
Denmark	1

Independent inspection by trained auditors

Of the total of 381 approved auditors in the QS scheme, 317 have approval for the fruit, vegetables, potatoes sector (multiple approvals are possible). Most approvals for the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain are in place for the production stage. The auditors work on behalf of 31 certification bodies which are approved for the fruit, vegetables, potatoes sector.

Steadily increasing need for trained auditors

In 2014, a total of 25 auditor training courses took place, with 515 auditors from Germany and abroad taking part. On average, 87 percent of the auditors successfully passed the training test.

QS is responding to the steadily increasing need for trained auditors with the continued expansion of its range of training courses. Auditor training is also offered in different languages – including courses abroad as of this year. Exclusive news and comprehensive information and material on training is made available to approved auditors and certification bodies in the partner section of the QS website.

In addition to the training courses, numerous workshops and meetings for certification bodies, coordinators and laboratories were organised for the purposes of mutual exchange of experiences and the discussion of topical issues.



The partner section for auditors on the QS website has an average of **540** visitors per month. Altogether around **16,670** visitors use the QS website monthly.

Event	Amount	Participants
Subject-specific trainings	25	515
Initial trainings	4	69
Meeting of the certification bodies	3	62
Workshop for coordinators	1	89
Workshops and meetings for laboratories	3	71

Production fruit, vegetables, potatoes	124 Participants
Wholesale fruit, vegetables, potatoes	35 Participants
Food Retail	64 Participants

Audits confirm: scheme participants work responsibly

Of the 12,567 regular audits conducted by QS-approved auditors in 2014 in the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain, over 97 percent were passed successfully. In comparison to 2013, auditors assigned 37 fewer K.O. evaluations. Possible consequences of discrepancies leading to a K.O. evaluation are warnings, sanctions, bans or even exclusion from the QS scheme.

Regular audits and K.O. evaluations 2014 vs. 2013

Stage	Number of regular audits (thereof K.O./no approval)			
	2014		2013	
Total	12,567	(385)	12,366	(422)
Production (QS)	382	(7)	471	(7)
Fruit and Vegetables	257	(5)	377	(3)
Potatoes	125	(2)	94	(4)
Production (QS-GAP)	7,008	(122)	6,707	(127)
Fruit and Vegetables	4,625	(71)	4,453	(83)
Potatoes	2,383	(51)	2,254	(44)
Wholesale	465	(17)	371	(12)
Food retail	4,712	(239)	4,817	(276)

Frequent C and D evaluations 2014

Stage	Number of regular audits	Amount		Requirements with frequent C and D evaluations
		C	D/K.O.	
Production (QS)				
Fruit and Vegetables	257	45 23 16	2 5 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hygiene (-checklist, -requirements) Basic user protection Provision for spillage/ leakage
Potatoes	125	10 12 12	945 3 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock book/ list of hazardous substances Cleaning plan for equipment Harvesting and transportation processes (K.O.)
Production (QS-GAP)				
Fruit and Vegetables	4,625	90 191 32	347 2 112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee with first aid training Basic user protection (K.O.) Stock book/ list of hazardous substances
Potatoes	2,383	74 21 79	197 89 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First aid kit, first aid training Stock book/ list of hazardous substances Basic user protection (K.O.)

Unannounced random sample audits

During additional random sample audits, QS checks whether the requirements on process and origin assurance are also adhered to in between the regular audits. The companies are selected at random. The results of the 718 audited companies in the fruit, vegetables, potatoes sector show that the companies are working responsibly: in 2014, approximately 98 percent passed the additional inspection successfully.

Stage	Random sample audits (thereof K.O./ no approval)	
	Amount	
Total	718	(12)
Production (QS)	16	(-)
Production (QS-GAP)	653	(9)
Wholesale	24	(-)
Food Retail	25	(3)

Violations are punished accordingly

In the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain, a total of 124 sanction procedures were dealt with in 2014.

In seven cases, the independent sanction board issued a warning. One procedure was discontinued. In the other cases, contractual penalties amounting to a total of 45,100 Euros were imposed.

Fruit, vegetables, potatoes	2014 (previous year)
Total of sanction procedures	124 (105)
Production (QS)*	118 (91)
Fruit and vegetables	108 (84)
Potatoes	27 (18)
Wholesale	6 (13)

Extract K.O. evaluations

- Use of authorized substances/plant production products
- Compliance with maximum residue levels
- Compliance with maximum quantities of expenditure

- Incoming good inspection
- Separation of goods/ traceability

* In 17 of the 188 sanction procedures, producers are affected of both: fruit and vegetables as well as potatoes. These were counted for each production scope.



31 % of consumers know the QS certification mark.



90 % of the consumers who know QS prefer a QS-certified product to a similar product without certification mark.

Working and social criteria

FIAS project well on track

Just over a year after the start of the pilot project on the voluntary QS inspection of working and social conditions (FIAS), the first interim result is wholly positive. Since the beginning of 2014, 2,584 producers and 60 wholesalers in the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain have registered for an inspection of their implementation of working and social conditions for external employees. In the inspections performed, the requirements placed on companies were achieved in almost 90 percent of all cases. The survey of coordinators and certification bodies on the practicability and response from participating companies, which took place at the same time, confirms that FIAS is well received by those involved in the industry.



The initial idea to execute the pilot project came from companies. After repeated requests from the participants for a practice-oriented inspection of company working and social conditions, the QS Social Module was developed.

With this, scheme participants can voluntarily allow their social management to be appraised according to uniform principles in an independent inspection. Companies in food retail who require the social management of their suppliers to be checked welcome the implementation via QS.

Practical implementation

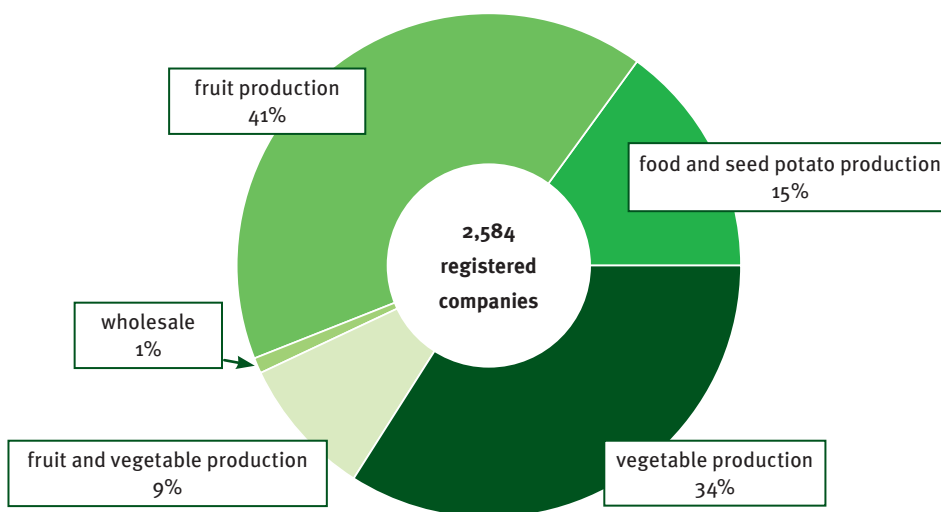
FIAS can be used by all scheme participants involved in production, transport or trading in the fruit, vegetables, potatoes supply chain in the QS scheme, i.e. producers, wholesalers and food retailers. The inspection can only be conducted in combination with a QS or QS-GAP audit, but it is not a mandatory requirement for participating in the QS scheme. The result has no effect on the eligibility of delivery in the QS scheme.

The internal scheme participant search in the QS database shows which companies are participating in FIAS. Furthermore, the participants themselves can take action and communicate the overall result of their inspection individually to other selected scheme participants (e.g. their customers) by granting them read rights. Sensitive company data in the QS database remains protected from unauthorised access.

Continuation of the pilot phase

The FIAS pilot phase will be continued this year. Since 1 January 2015, the contents of the FIAS checklist are identical to the German interpretation guideline of the GlobalG.A.P. social module GRASP (2015 version). Furthermore, some new requirements were added to the FIAS guideline with the 2015 revisions. These are listed in the revision information under "Documents and More" on the QS website. New supporting documents and templates to assist scheme participants in implementing FIAS are also provided here.

FIAS-participating companies by production scope (as of Dec 2014)



Criteria which are checked at FIAS

- Employment contract
- Information of employees
- Working time recording
- Storage possibilities
- Complaints procedure
- Compliance with ILO-core labour standards
- Rooms for break and stand-by
- Changing facilities
- Accommodation of employees

Current numbers of the QS scheme can be found in the internet at www.q-s.de under „Publications“.

Imprint

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