



# QS-REPORT Meat and Meat Products



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## Phasing out piglet castration without anaesthesia Coordination with neighbouring countries is being pushed along

### Editorial Dear readers,

The Lidl "Animal Farming Compass" polarises. It is to be hoped that this will increase the added value for meat and bring appreciation for agriculture and livestock farming in the desired direction. With its state animal welfare label, the federal government should join the feasible way, which was taken by the economy. For the QS-Report, we talked with Lidl's chief purchaser Jan Bock about the motivation and goals of launching the animal farming compass (p. 2).

The editorial team would be pleased to receive questions and suggestions on the QS-Report to [presse@q-s.de](mailto:presse@q-s.de).



Within the QS scheme, all procedures that avoid the castration of piglets without anaesthesia, which are in line with German animal protection legislation, can be used. This requirement is in force for agriculture from 2019, but for all downstream companies involved in the slaughtering, cutting and processing it also means that they must comply with these stipulations when sourcing animals or goods. Direct QS scheme participants as well as companies supplying pigs or pork into the QS scheme via the recognized standards, must comply with these requirements. QS is coordinating a similar approach with standards organisations from Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands. On the one hand this is to ensure that competitiveness between the countries and standards are not affected. On the other, it is to achieve comparable high standards of animal welfare.

All parties involved agree that the animal welfare criteria in the standards have to be consistently implemented. "We want to achieve that the companies which take advantage of the mutual recognition of standards, will be able to deliver into the respective systems in the future and that planning security will be achieved for all scheme participants", reiterates Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff, Managing Director of QS. The legal requirements for the methods used will also differ in the future

in the countries of origin. However, QS will only accept alternative methods which meet the specification "anaesthesia or pain elimination". "For suppliers to the QS scheme, the principle of equal treatment will apply", explains Nienhoff. "In other words: sow keepers abroad, supplying animals to pig farmers in the QS scheme must meet the requirements of the German Animal Welfare Act from 2019. Furthermore, pork and slaughter pigs from outside Germany may only be marketed in the QS scheme if the piglets which are born after 2019 and are surgically castrated, were treated in accordance with the requirements of the German Animal Welfare Act." Alternative procedures to surgical castration, such as entire male production and entire male production with vaccination (immunocastration), are also permitted in the QS scheme. Abattoirs both in and outside Germany must have implemented a process for the reliable detection of carcasses with boar taint for all non-surgically castrated male animals slaughtered.

#### Fourth method required for small and medium-sized enterprises

Many sides expect there will be a massive structural change amongst producers, because the previously approved procedures are expensive and not very practical. This would have significant impact on the market

# Phasing out piglet castration without anaesthesia

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as a whole, because the sources of supply for industry and commerce would change. In particular, it is to be feared that smaller-scale livestock owners keeping sows would need to cease companies, if analgesia via drug administration by the farmer cannot be facilitated. Agriculture is therefore relying on the so-called fourth method. “None of the three procedures dealt with thus far is suitable for small and medium-sized businesses. According to animal protection legislation, anaesthesia does not necessarily presuppose narcosis or a general anaesthetic, but

pain elimination (analgesia). Even local analgesia may be sufficient and therefore represents an animal welfare-compliant, workable and economically viable method of piglet castration”, stresses **Walter Heidl**, President of the Bavarian Farmers Association (BBV). “Significant structural shifts can only be avoided if, by the end of 2018, we manage to provide a local anesthetic agent for use by the farmer himself. Meanwhile, there is support from science, economy and politics.” Dr. Nienhoff confirms: “From our point of view, this workable implementation of the new

requirements of the German Animal Welfare Act, is imperative for Germany as well.”



## The Lidl “Animal Farming Compass”

### QS talks with Jan Bock, Managing Director of Purchasing for Lidl

Since April, Lidl has been labelling all of its own brand fresh meat (pork, beef, turkey, and chicken) with new labels indicating how the animals are kept and in doing so, is hoping to offer its customers more transparency when making a conscious purchase decisions. We talked to **Jan Bock**, Managing Director of Purchasing for Lidl Germany about the development and intentions behind the “Animal Farming Compass”.



**Mister Bock, where did the motivation to develop the Lidl “Animal Farming Compass” come from?**

**Bock:** “We have been concerned for a long time with the topic of farming type labelling for meat and decided earlier this year to introduce this in the form of the Lidl “Animal Farming Compass”. There has been much public discussion regarding increased animal welfare and responsibility in the supply chain, but nothing has happened. We have acted now and offer our customers greater transparency in making a conscious purchase decision.”

**What does Lidl want to achieve with this new labelling?**

**Bock:** “First of all, we are pleased that we have revived a public discussion, that was urgently needed. In addition to transparency for our customers, in the longer term we want to gradually move our range

of fresh meat to level 2 on the compass (Barn raised plus). We want to make the entire industry move with us and that more farmers are able to switch to a style livestock farming with greater animal welfare. At the same time, we welcome a State animal welfare label if it defines meaningful and enforceable minimum standards.”

**What are the criteria behind the different levels?**

**Bock:** “Level 1 is based on the minimum statutory standards, level 4 on the requirements of the EU organic regulations. At level 2, it is the detailed criteria of the IT animal welfare initiative that count, always in conjunction with farm identity, i.e. there is proof that the meat comes from farms that meet these criteria. Level 3 corresponds to the entry level criteria for the German “Initiative Tierwohl” (Animal Welfare Initiative). Levels 2 and 3 offer more space and manipulable material, and at level 3, for example, GMO-free feeding is required.”

**What role does QS play here?**

**Bock:** “For many years QS has been the guideline standard for delivery into our product range and an important platform for further development of the entire value chain. The Initiative Tierwohl (ITW), which originated from QS, represents level 2 and is an important component of our Lidl “Animal Farming Compass” and in the long term we want to establish this as the Lidl minimum standard.”

**Lidl also supports the ITW. How do the requirements of the ITW match up with the levels of the Lidl “Animal Farming Compass”?**

**Bock:** “We are a founding member of the ITW and firmly believe that we can only achieve greater animal welfare and an approach more in tune with animal welfare in a broad sense if as many members of the value chain as possible join us. The criteria of the ITW can be found in level 2 of our compass. Too high entry barriers for farmers and excessive financial demands are not the solution. We must tread the path to greater animal welfare together, there is much to do. The ITW animal welfare initiative is an important partner that will continue to develop with us.”



The levels of the Lidl “Animal Farming Compass” at a glance

■ **Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff:** “The Lidl initiative is a courageous one and well thought-out in its stages of implementation. The approach is only possible, because the ITW currently exists - and thus secure implementation of level 2 - along with the funding, contractual regulation and monitoring. If this kind of farm-type or animal welfare labelling is to work in the long term, we must firstly very quickly agree a coordinated and consistent approach with the entire chain. Otherwise, there is the danger that a labelling patchwork will come about, which irritates consumers and is not feasible for agricultural or the meat industry. And secondly we must agree a suitable way to continue the ITW after 2020. If those in the value chain reach agreement, the consumer then has to open her purse in favour of her ideas on animal welfare. For agriculture it is vital that the necessary planning security is provided and that appropriate prices are paid to cover the increased costs.”

# Recording of diagnostic data

## Data recording and reporting for pigs adapted to practice

In the QS scheme, the recording, documentation and reporting of diagnostic data from abattoirs is an important tool that allows conclusions to be drawn with regard to animal health and animal welfare in pig farms. We started a project two years ago with a small number of abattoirs for the central collection of diagnostic data. The next step saw all abattoirs taking part that participated in the Initiative Tierwohl (Animal Welfare Initiative). Since January 1, 2018, it is mandatory for all QS certified abattoirs.

In February 2018, QS further substantiated the requirements for the recording and reporting of diagnostic data in pig slaughter and structured these in a more practice-oriented manner. Accordingly, abattoirs in Germany, slaughtering fewer than 200 pigs per week, are exempt from mandatory reporting of diagnostic data, they can,

however, continue to report on a voluntary basis. If, however, the slaughter capacity is over 200 animals per week, slaughterhouses are obligated to report diagnostic data for individual animals based to the QS findings database. In cases where fewer than 200 pigs per hour are slaughtered and the diagnostic data is not recorded by the official veterinarians for each individual animal, the data may initially be reported in aggregated form.

Since the beginning of the year, recording of diagnostic data is being implemented gradually by QS certified abattoirs outside Germany. As a first step, the abattoirs must record the findings in their own computer systems and report them back to the livestock owner. The foreign abattoirs send a quarterly overview of the results to the QS head office and an evaluation for all QS certified livestock owners.

■ **Reinhard Schoch**, from the German Association of the Meat Industry (VdF): "The standardisation and improvement of data collection is a prerequisite for the evaluations of said data being both sound and dependable. The central QS diagnostic database offers the unique opportunity to use this data to improve animal health by providing targeted information to livestock farmers and producers."



### Assessment of diagnostic data from poultry slaughter begins

Since July 2017, QS has also been recording diagnostic data for broilers and fattening turkeys. In the course of every batch slaughtered, QS certified poultry abattoirs report data regarding livestock mortality, losses during transport and foot pad lesions to the "QS diagnostic database for poultry". In exactly the same way as in recording of diagnostic data for fattening pigs, the data allows an assessment of the conditions in which the animals are kept. In cooperation with Prof. Dr. Robby Andersson of the University of Osnabrück, the diagnostic data received is assessed and processed ready for future feedback to the poultry farmers.

# Chocolate, ice cream and shortbread in the feeding trough

## How former foodstuff finds its way into the QS scheme

Faulty packaging, colour variations, or unsold seasonal items – not all food produced for human consumption, actually finds its way onto the shop shelf, let alone in the shopping trolley: about one-third of all food produced worldwide is thrown away each year – about 1.3 billion tonnes! What is deemed unfit for human consumption, can be made into valuable and tasty feedstuff for pigs, cattle and poultry. QS has defined specific additional requirements for the processing of former foodstuff into animal feed.

In order to prevent former foodstuffs (definition see box) from ending up useless in the waste, some food manufacturers pass on sorted products to animal feed companies, who prepare these by unpacking, crushing and drying them. In this manner, former foodstuffs have been making their way for quite some time into the QS scheme in the

form of valuable feedstuff – completely in keeping with a sustainable economy.



### Recycling of foodstuff under controlled conditions

With the inclusion of the "Additional requirement for the acquisition of former foodstuffs from food manufacturers" (Chapter 3.3) in the guideline Feed Sector, QS is underlining its commitment in terms of sustainability, nutrient recycling and waste avoidance. At the same time, however, the need for conscientious and controlled production of animal feeds from former foodstuff is also being highlighted. The

reprocessors of former foodstuffs are now obliged to comply with specific procurement requirements, which have been defined with other international standards organisations and economic operators. These include, among other things, conducting supplier audits, obtaining process diagrams and creating quality questionnaires. It must always be ensured that the products show no signs of corruption or decay, are completely hygienic, contain no packaging materials, and thus pose no health risk for the animals. Only in this way, a safe, high-quality feed can be produced from former foodstuff.

**i** By definition, former foodstuffs are products manufactured in full compliance with EU food legislation for human consumption, but due to deviation in size or colour, packaging errors, production problems or other defects are deemed not fit for this purpose. These include, for example, broken biscuits and faulty pasta and unsold seasonal items, such as chocolate Easter eggs or Christmas products.

# African swine fever

## Marketing of meat from restriction areas possible

Around 90 per cent of pork on offer from German grocery retailers comes from QS certified companies. In the event of an outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) QS will proceed with caution and be able to offer limited support.

**Culling and setting up restricted areas:** if the ASF virus finds its way into a pig farm, all pigs on the farm will be culled as a precaution, on the instructions of the competent authorities, to prevent any further spread. The meat from these animals is not marketed and is properly disposed of. A restricted area and a monitoring area will also be set up around the infected holding. Also, in the event that ASF is established in wild boar, restriction areas will be designated by the competent authorities.

**Suspension of QS audits in restricted areas:** audits of pig farms in the QS scheme and the Initiative Tierwohl located in the affected areas, will be suspended. The delivery eligibility of farms will, however, remain in place. Depending on the further course of the epidemic, QS individually checks the period for which audits are suspended.

**Rapid identification of contact farms or companies:** the QS database can be used to quickly clarify which auditor had been in a specific region and which companies had been audited. This allows rapid identification of contact farms and companies.

**Marketing of meat from restricted areas possible:** the pig stocks from companies in the restricted area which are, however, not affected by ASF will not be culled. A shipment of these pigs is basically still possible, but subject to defined conditions. For example, these include a thorough virological examination by a veterinarian. If the animals are released for slaughter, there are no further restrictions. The meat can be marketed as usual.



### **i** Rapid response in emergency and crisis situations:

Quality assurance offers the best crisis prevention. If, despite the above, other incidents or even crises occur, rapid and targeted action is needed. To this end, QS has introduced its Incident and Crisis Management. As part of this QS actively supports its scheme partners in addressing incidents and crises at an operational and communicative level.

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## News in brief

### Combined checklist for processing meat as well as fruit and vegetables

Since 2017, companies which, in addition to meat and meat products, also process fruit and vegetables and would like to market products produced from both as QS products, must now be certified in accordance with both the guidelines "Processing Meat and Meat Products" and "Handling / Processing Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes." The option to evaluate different production areas using a common combination checklist as part of QS audits has been available to these companies since March 2018. The resulting audit report is valid for meat processing as well as for the handling and processing of fruit and vegetables. Auditing expenses are considerably reduced via the new combined checklist. At the same time, companies can now see at a glance which criteria have to be met in both product areas to maintain QS eligibility to deliver.

### Voluntary participation for warehousing companies

The possibility of voluntary QS participation for warehousing companies has met with great interest: up until mid-March 38 warehousing companies with 99 locations in eight different countries have registered in the QS software platform for the storage of meat and meat products. About 80 percent of the locations are taking part via IFS recognition.

Since January 1, 2017, companies that store QS meat and meat products on behalf of other scheme partners, can participate in the QS scheme on a voluntary basis via the Guideline Storage of Meat and Meat Products. To avoid a double auditing for the storage/warehousing company, the standards IFS Food and IFS Logistics were recognised as equivalent, meaning that inclusion in the QS scheme is also possible on the basis of the aforementioned certification. After the end of the two-year transition period, only those companies with their own certification for the QS scheme can, from January 1, 2019, be contracted for the storage or warehousing of QS meat and meat products. Companies that already store QS products or plan to do this in the future, should make sure they apply for QS certification at the earliest possible opportunity.



### Initiative Tierwohl (ITW): product label available soon for processed poultry meat

In October 2018, the ITW product label, which until now can be used to label fresh, unprocessed poultry meat from ITW farms, will also be rolled out on processed poultry meat - for example breaded or marinated product. In doing so, the poultry industry is once again showing its commitment to offer consumers a wide range of products from companies which participate in the initiative. The funding for the expansion of the programme is secured until the end of 2020.

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