



# QS-REPORT Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes 02/2017

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## Coordinated for greater food safety

### Requirements for the recognition of the GLOBALG.A.P. group certification named

Participation in the QS scheme is open to all companies worldwide – regardless of where production is located. To ensure high levels of food safety given the many and varied international flows of goods, it is important to create a consistently high level of quality assurance across national borders. The increased interest in the delivery of QS certified fruit and vegetables has motivated QS to define an appropriate way to recognise GlobalG.A.P. group certification.

participate in GLOBALG.A.P. via group certification. By expanding recognition we are reaching many businesses and taking a major step in terms of cross-border food safety“, Wilfried Kamphausen, responsible at QS for the supply chain Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes, emphasises. As is the case with all recognition procedures, it is a question of being able to guarantee a practically equivalent standard in quality assurance of processes.

## Editorial Dear readers,

the availability of QS certified fruit and vegetables is an important market factor. Since the GLOBALG.A.P. group certification is widespread in countries of origin such as Spain, Italy or overseas and in order to prevent duplicate auditing, QS has named the necessary requirements for its recognition. At the same time, we intensify our on-site support abroad. Read more about it in this report.

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).






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

Fig. 1: Mutual recognition agreements of the QS scheme



Operations holding a GLOBALG.A.P. individual certification can already be granted eligibility to deliver QS goods. Now this will also be possible for producers with a GLOBALG.A.P. group certification, the so-called Option 2. For this, the QS advisory board has compiled the prerequisites and additional conditions. **“Around two thirds of all GLOBALG.A.P. certified producers**

**International quality assurance on a comparable level**

35 percent of more than 13,300 QS producers of fruit, vegetables and potatoes are foreign companies, which directly participate in the QS scheme via QS certification or recognition of another standard, such as GLOBALG.A.P. In order to avoid costs and efforts for

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# Coordinated for greater food safety

duplicate auditing as well as to maintain the internationally high level of quality, QS has cooperation agreements for fruit, vegetables and potatoes with three international standard owners (see page 1, fig. 1). Care is of course taken in all agreements that the principle of cross-stage quality assurance is complied with. Participation in the QS Residue Monitoring Programme is obligatory for all companies.

## A-NET: strengthening joint cooperation

In 2011, the European platform for Fruit, Vegetables and Potatoes (A-NET) was founded at the Fruit Logistica. The aim of the network is to facilitate exchange regarding current issues of food safety, as well as further development of and cooperation between the various standards. Standard owners from Switzerland (SwissGAP), the Netherlands (Productschap), Austria (AMA-Marketing GesmbH), Germany (QS), United Kingdom (Red Tractor) and Belgium (Vegaplan) are currently members of the platform.

## International QS presence

### Information events outside Germany planned

**Southern Europe and the Benelux countries are major exporting countries for fresh fruit and vegetables. More and more companies from Spain, Italy and the Netherlands are choosing to participate in the QS scheme. By doing so, customer relationships can be consolidated, new clients acquired and sales markets therefore secured. Careful integration into the scheme is important here to ensure consistent levels of international quality assurance. QS is currently expanding the support especially for coordinators, auditors and certification bodies abroad.**

To be able to provide fruit and vegetables all year round bearing the QS certification

mark, certified imported goods are increasingly becoming the focus of food retail trade interests. Around 950 Spanish, 350 Italian and 900 Dutch companies are now participating in the QS scheme for Fruit, Vegetables and Potatoes and provide certified goods to the German food retail sector. Due to the high demand for QS certified products, it is necessary to illustrate the services of the QS scheme as well as the possibilities offered via scheme participation for these companies on site. In addition to holding information events, it is planned to place direct contacts in the respective countries to help facilitate the integration.

### Information event in Madrid

In the coming months, information events will be held in Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. Wholesalers, certification bodies, coordinators and logistics companies already participating in the QS scheme and companies wishing to participate are all invited. Interactive workshops will discuss cross-stage quality assurance, implementation of residue monitoring, or use of the QS database. The events will be held in Spanish or English. The prelude to this will be an information event in Madrid on October 17, 2017. In the Netherlands, an event is planned for November 21 and 22, 2017 in Zoetermeer.

**i** Interested parties can register using the following links:  
Spain: <https://www.q-s.de/encuentro-con-qs-en-madrid.html>  
Netherlands: <https://www.q-s.de/meet-qs-in-zoetermeer>

## Reichenau-Gemüse eG

### High-quality, safe vegetables from Lake Constance

**On the island of Reichenau, vegetable growing has roots going back centuries. As the most southerly growing area in Germany, right in the middle of Lake Constance, the island offers optimal conditions for high yield production. True to the motto “Fresh daily from the island of vegetables” Reichenau-Gemüse eG has been delivering safe and sustainably produced vegetables to regional customers for over 50 years.**



The local family farms traditionally form the basis of vegetable cultivation on the island. Domestic producers came together in 1956 to form their own cooperative – Reichenau-Gemüse eG. Meanwhile, 75 companies produce vegetables for food retailers, as well as for farmer’s markets and restaurants in Baden-Wuerttemberg and Bavaria – all spread over a total of 152 hectares in both greenhouses and in open fields. In addition, the company stocks a year-round supply of fruit and vegetables from around the world for its customers.

### Active consumer protection through QS

The Reichenau-Gemüse eG has very high standards with regard to the quality and safety of its produce. Their producers operate according to the requirements of QS, IFS, EU-BIO and Bioland standards, as well as its own “Reichenau quality assurance system”. The producers’ cooperative has been a staunch QS scheme participant since 2011. **“Participation in the QS scheme makes an important contribution to the active consumer protection”,** explains deputy CEO **Christian Müller**. **“Through the implementation of the strict QS requirements at all stages of the supply chain, the final consumer can buy QS certified products with a completely clear conscience.”** Mr. Müller also sees advantages for his own company, **“the steady work developing the specifications for participation in the QS scheme helps**

**us with our internal processes. For example, QS residue monitoring supports the processes of our own residue checks which we carry out in addition.”**

### High standards in terms of sustainability

From production through to the transport to the consumer – sustainability is a top priority at Reichenau-Gemüse. In addition to energy obtained from biogas, eco-electricity is generated using hydro energy, as well as from the company’s own photovoltaic solar plant. A roughly 60 km long irrigation network, supplies all areas with pumped water from Lake Constance. **“Short transport routes and state of the art refrigerated vehicles make an important contribution to climate protection”,** explains Müller.



# Data security and usage

## Scheme participants can depend on data protection policy

Be it audit or monitoring data – quality assurance within the QS scheme relies on detailed information. QS therefore uses state of the art IT technology in the service of its scheme participants for the collection, storage and processing of this data. The security and reliability of this technology is equally as important as the trustworthy handling of the data and information. After all, it all provides information about the product range and the efficiency of the companies concerned.

There are more than 30,000 scheme participants, 96 coordinators, 76 labora-

tories and 22 certification bodies with 216 auditors working together in the QS scheme for Fruit, Vegetables and Potatoes. The daily handling of data requires clear rules for the collection, processing and use of data. QS scheme participants can fully trust the data security within the QS scheme. Taking account of the data protection regulations, QS has derived three principles for the use of the data in the QS scheme.

(1) The data of the scheme participants is only used for quality assurance within the QS scheme. The use of the information for other purposes is out of the question, unless the participant concerned has expressly consented otherwise.

(2) The data will be used by QS. Coordinators, scheme participants, certification bodies, auditors and laboratories may only use the information to the extent required for the performance of their

tasks within the QS scheme. Passing of the information to third parties is not permitted, unless the participant concerned has expressly consented otherwise.

(3) All QS scheme participants have permanent access to all basic, audit and monitoring data that is saved within the QS scheme relating to their company. However, this does not include implicit requirements of data protection which have always been respected as part of the QS scheme but are now consistently being implemented in agreements and contracts and as part of IT technology.

# QS Laboratory Performance Assessment

## Constantly growing challenges create added value

Twice a year, the analytical quality of accredited laboratories is bench-tested by using the QS Laboratory Performance Assessment. In the analysis of residues in fruit and vegetables, the qualification of laboratory staff is particularly crucial, along with the equipment and experience of the laboratory. Since the first competency tests in 2006, the test design has been regularly modified and always presents the laboratories with new challenges. An approach that establishes reliability for all market participants but which also pays off for the laboratories. They receive feedback with important insights for the continuous improvement of their analytical processes.



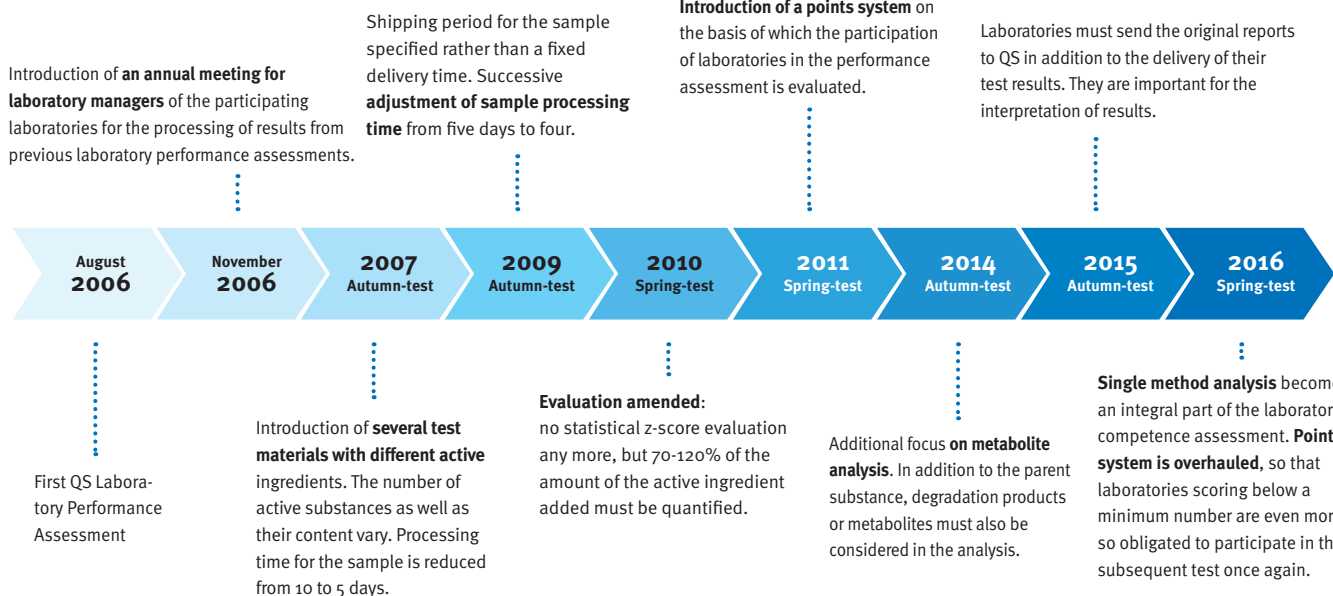
**Dr. Gustav Offenbacher**  
Specialist in residue analysis

“ The test design for the Laboratory Performance Assessment is being continually developed and adapted to incorporate current industry issues. The permanent modification of the evaluation criteria and test design selectively expose deficiencies in the analytical procedures of the laboratories. This means the laboratories are constantly made aware of critical analytical issues and thus can continuously improve the quality of their analyses. ”



### QS Laboratory Performance Assessment

Progression from 2006 to 2016



# 2018 Revisions

## The most important new features at a glance

### Two guidelines in the future: wholesale and logistics

For more transparency and clarity, the current guideline Wholesale/ Logistics is being split into two separate guidelines – one for wholesale (incl. its own logistics) and one for purely logistics companies. As of 1 January 2018, regularly commissioned logistics companies, which assume transport contracts between QS scheme participants of wholesale and/or preparation/processing, must be approved in the QS database for the production scope of logistics, if QS goods are being carried. Until now, approval was obligatory, regardless of the transport of QS goods. The approval can still be obtained using a QS logistics or an IFS logistics certificate. Furthermore, the scope of the new Logistics Guideline is being expanded. In addition to transport and handling warehousing, long-term storage is added.

### Online trading now included in the guideline Food Retail

The guideline Food Retail Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes is expanded to include a chapter on online trading – thus offering the traders quality assurance on the basis of participation in the QS scheme. With the continuing spread of online trade in fresh food, the need for uniform and high requirements regarding quality assurance thereof increases.

### Guidelines QS-GAP and QS Production amended according to the Fertiliser Ordinance

The amended Fertiliser Ordinance (Düngeverordnung) entered into force on 2 June 2017. The chapter on “Fertilisation” in the guidelines QS GAP and Production Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes have been amended in accordance with the new regulation. The upper limits for different classes of substances and other content have all been amended in line with the revised fertiliser regulation. The supporting documents – to assist in the implementation of the new fertiliser regulation – are also being adapted to correspond with its new content.



**i** Detailed information on all changes contained in the 2018 revision can be found in the **Revision Information** under **Documents** at [www.q-s.de](http://www.q-s.de).

## News in brief

### Tasting promotions with the LandFrauen

 In the past few months consumers in participating REWE stores in Hesse have been able to get a taste of one of our QS live information initiative events. In addition to information about the QS certification mark and the “QS live” campaign, there were some delicious sample dishes prepared using QS products – freshly prepared by the LandFrauen, at the Landesverband Hessen. The strengthening of consumer confidence in the fully quality-assured manufacturing and marketing of QS products was at the forefront of our campaigns. With matching recipe cards for the dishes, there were additional practical tips for visitors – for that successful cooking experience at home.

### The new face of quality assurance

There's a new face among the QS quality ambassadors: Georg-Wilhelm Timm, a potato grower from Uelzen. The 40-year-old grows QS certified potatoes on 150 hectares of land. As part of their daily work, the ambassador together with all QS scheme participants provide for safe food from farm to shop. They provide glimpses behind the scenes of their day-to-day work as part of the series “Faces of Quality Assurance”. The complete portrait of Georg-Wilhelm Timm, as well as all other ambassador portraits can be found on our website under “QS-Qualitätsbotschafter” (only available in German).



### 2017 Hygiene Audits: Focus on hygiene management ahead of the harvest

Between May and August 2017, QS conducted unannounced random sample audits at numerous production operations with a focus on “operational hygiene management during harvesting”. In the randomly selected farms which mainly grow asparagus or strawberries, auditors checked whether hygiene requirements

were implemented correctly and hygiene instructions were followed by staff during harvesting. Two-thirds of the farms were completely without any complaints, but deviations were detected at a number of producers. However, the deviations did not result in a KO being issued at any of the farms. The results show that hygiene is being given high priority. They also show, however, that we can lose sight of details during the busy harvest period. There were deficiencies found, for example, in the equipment of toilets for crop workers and regarding evidence that staff had received hygiene training. In order to sure that the implementation of hygiene requirements is ensured at all times, it is recommended that companies take all necessary steps ahead of the harvest.

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