



INFO LETTER FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



10 JAHRE 2004-2014 QS - Qualitätssicherung bei Obst, Gemüse, Kartoffeln

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Initiated at the *Fruit Logistica* ten years ago, the QS quality scheme for fruit, vegetables and potatoes quickly established itself in the market. More than 29,000 participants are participating in the meantime, including 13,000 producers from 17 countries all over the world and 14,710 food retail branches. Products with the blue certification mark stand for independently inspected processes from the producer to the shop counter.

We are using the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the quality scheme to look back in this

info letter on what has been jointly achieved in the last decade. We have summarised the milestones for you in the middle section of this edition. These include the QS residue monitoring and the expansion of international cooperation, as well as the laboratory performance assessment.

In the future too, QS quality assurance for fruit, vegetables and potatoes will stand for clear marking and labelling and a constant improvement process.

We wish you lots of fun with your reading.

Your QS Team

Bonn, 05 Feb. 2014

10 YEARS OF QS FOR FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES INITIATIVE BY THE SECTOR FOR THE SECTOR



Press conference 2004

Active support for safe and high-quality food right from the start: the QS quality scheme for fruit, vegetables and potatoes is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. The official foundation stone for the quality scheme was laid at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin in 2004 (see photo).

Ever since it was founded, the QS scheme has stood for controlled processes and the clear marking and labelling of products with the blue certification mark. A new association was founded in 2004 to ensure the correct and prop-

er organisation of quality assurance for fruit and vegetables. Dr. Hans-Dieter Stallknecht (BOG), Karl Schmitz (BVEO), Dr. Siegfried Scholz (ZVG), Gerhard von Campenhausen and Werner Hilse (both UNIKA) participated as shareholders in the inaugural meeting of *QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln GmbH*.

First scheme participants

The fruit wholesaler "Vereinigte Großmärkte für

Obst + Gemüse Rheinhessen eG" was among the first scheme partners for fruit, vegetables and potatoes to sign the scheme agreement. The first coordinator was "Qualitäts- und Produktionssicherung Nord-West GmbH". The other founding partners were "Centralmarkt Roisdorf/Straelen GmbH", "Erzeugergroßmarkt Langförden-Oldenburg eG", "Gartenbauzentrale e.G." (Papenburg), "Mitteldeutsche Zwiebelkontor GmbH" and "REKA Rheinland".

Vitamin Boost for the European Champions



The German national handball team won the European Championship ten years ago

with the (old) QS certification mark on their shirts! Sponsoring back then was organised by CMA who also ensured a constant supply of fresh fruit and vegetables – a vitamin boost for the European champions, inspected by QS. The handball team went on to become World Champions in 2007.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

WORD OF WELCOME **EVERYONE DELIVERS QUALITY TO EVERYONE ELSE**



Active support for safe fruit, vegetables and potatoes

With the expansion of the QS scheme to include fruit, vegetables and potatoes, the sector took a bold and consistent step in the direction of consumer protection ten years ago. Today, our blue QS certification mark is an important signal for inspected processes – from farm to shop. The development was made with sound judgment and the goal of implementing a consistently high requirements level in the supply chain and across national frontiers. In doing so, we continue to

orientate on the demands of the market. The guidelines have been developed for day-to-day practice and double audits and costs are avoided through the recognition of other standards.

In the future too, we will continue to ensure jointly that the availability of QS goods is assured and that further advances are made with the internationalisation of the scheme. The safety of fruit, vegetables and potatoes will continue to be the focus of our quality assurance efforts.

Ulrich Schopohl, *Chairman of the Advisory Board Fruit, Vegetables and Potatoes and Division Manager of Strategic Quality Assurance with the REWE Group*



MILESTONES **10 YEARS OF PROCESS**

2004



Founding of QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln GmbH

QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln GmbH starts work on 1 July 2004. All scheme agreements in the fruit, vegetables and potatoes sector are signed between the association and each scheme participant. The first shareholders are the *Bundesausschuss Obst und Gemüse* (BOG), *Bundesvereinigung der Erzeugerorganisation Obst und Gemüse e.V.* (BVEO), *Zentralverband Gartenbau e.V.* (ZVG), *Union der deutschen Kartoffelwirtschaft e.V.* (UNIKA) and *QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH*.

CMA also assumes the task of communication for QS labelled fruit, vegetables and potatoes towards consumers and the specialist public. This comprises advertising and public relations work, handball sponsoring, cooperative measures for the food retail sector, appearances at fairs and exhibitions and training in agriculture.

2005



QS Residue Monitoring

With its residue monitoring, QS establishes an effective system for monitoring residue levels in fruit, vegetables and potatoes. Samples are drawn and analysed from the 2005 season. Eleven laboratories have been approved for this purpose and are at the disposal of the scheme participants for the examination of their products.

What's new is that for the first time in the fruit, vegetable and potato sector, the control and certification of operational processes are linked with checks for compliance with maximum residue levels by means of the random sampling of products. The goal the residue monitoring is to document the conformity of the goods and identify the cause of any nonconformity. The appropriate countermeasures are initiated in the event of complaints.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

PRESS REPORTS QUALITY ASSURANCE WITH FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



Everyone delivers quality to everyone else

Controlled production and marketing processes right from the start. Called into being in 2001 for meat and meat products, the industry transferred the concept to fruit, vegetables and potatoes in 2004 and founded QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln GmbH. A lot has happened since then and we have achieved a great deal together over the last ten years. We have set up a consistent and thorough inspection system, trained auditors, established the residue monitoring and built up a comprehensive crisis management system. The scheme also successfully mastered the particularly critical situation during the EHEC

crisis where the industry – with the support of QS – took decisive and consistent action.



Time doesn't stand still though. We also want to make an active contribution in the future to ensure that everyone involved in the QS scheme can rely on everyone else to deliver the same high quality to everyone. Thorough checks, transparency and clear marking and labelling are the prerequisites for this.

Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff,
Managing Director QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH

2006



Implementation of QS-GAP

With the QS-GAP standard, QS introduces a standard for the production of fruit, vegetables and potatoes which combines QS requirements with the GlobalG.A.P. (Previously Europegap) criteria. Both standard owners agree mutual recognition, thus avoiding double auditing.

2011



A far-reaching crisis: EHEC

In spring of 2011, the EHEC outbreak was a dramatic turning point for the

entire supply chain of fruit and vegetables. QS draws the consequences from the EHEC incidents. The Guideline Preparation applies to the manufacture of prepared products, such as fresh-cut salads and sprouts. It contains specific hygiene provisions and the obligation to implement microbiological monitoring.

2006



First laboratory performance assessment

A complete performance assessment for laboratories with approval for the QS scheme is conducted for the first time. It serves to assure the efficiency and analysis quality of the laboratories.

2007/2008



New shareholders level the path to Europe

The group of shareholders gets bigger with *Deutscher Fruchthandelsverband e.V. (DFHV)* joining the *QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln* in 2007. From February 2008, *Verbond van Belgische Tuinbouwveilingen (VBT)* represents the interests of the Belgian fruit and vegetable producers and wholesalers in the QS scheme. The Dutch Produce Association (DPA) speaks on behalf of the Dutch producers and wholesalers from September 2008. The first international recognitions are also established during this period when QS and Vegaplan, the owner of the Belgian quality standard IKKB agree mutual recognition of audits in the field of fruit and vegetable production.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

QS WITH FRUIT, VEGETABLES, POTATOES **FACTS AND FIGURES**

Founded ten years ago at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin, the QS supply chain fruit, vegetables and potatoes today includes almost 29,000 scheme participants. 5,566 of the total of 28,973 scheme participants are from countries outside Germany and this trend looks likely to continue.

A year after the scheme was set up, it already had 2,466 participants. The first foreign scheme agreements were signed in September 2006 with the mutual recognition of QS and Global G.A.P. for fruit and vegetables. The 10,000 mark for German scheme participants was breached in 2007. More than



800 partners from other countries participated in the quality assurance scheme in 2008, a growth rate that remains unchanged to this day. It still remains to be seen when exactly we will be able to celebrate the 30,000th scheme participant!

QS WITH FRUIT, VEGETABLES, POTATOES **FACTS AND FIGURES**

210 auditors from 31 independent certification bodies inspect scheme participants involved in the production of vegetables and potatoes, wholesale or retail. They conducted more than **12,300 audits** in 2013, with encouraging results for the safety of processes and products. Almost all businesses meet the stipulated requirements. 96.4 percent of the audits were passed and the certificate was not awarded in only 3.6 percent of them. The affected companies will have to implement subsequent correction actions.

Where residue monitoring is concerned, **77 approved laboratories** transferred data on **11,000 samples** into the QS database in 2013. **110 coordinators** ensure the smooth participation of producers and logistic service providers in the QS scheme.

MILESTONES **10 YEARS OF PROCESS**

2013



Gapless quality assurance with the QS Logistics standard right from the beginning

QS has provided a standard for the logistics of fresh fruit and vegetables since 1 January 2013. In this way, freight forwarders and transport companies are also given the opportunity to get themselves certified in line with QS requirements. To make participation in the QS scheme as practicable as possible for companies of this kind and to avoid double certification, it is also possible to register with QS with an IFS Logistics certificate.



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2013/2014



Inspection of working and social conditions

A new service available since January 2014 allows scheme participants to have their social management voluntarily assessed in line with uniform principles in an independent inspection. The specific guideline "Voluntary QS Inspection of Working and Social Conditions" contains the basic requirements. By doing so, the advisory board is responding to a new trend in the market where companies are being asked more and more often to provide evidence of good social practices in the supply chain. The "QS Inspection of Working and Social Conditions" can be conducted in combination with a QS or QS-GAP audit.

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IMPRESSUM

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