



INFO LETTER MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS



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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The use of antibiotics in livestock farming and planned amendments to animal welfare laws are a controversial topic of discussion both within the industry itself and among the general public. Only one thing is for sure here: animal welfare is indivisible. Sustainable concepts can only be implemented if everyone works towards the same goal. You can read below about the stance QS has taken up in the current animal welfare debate.

With antibiotics monitoring in the QS scheme,

the industry has already introduced a joint solution while the political discussions about a national database are still in progress (see Page 3).

On Page 2, we provide you with information on unannounced audits in the QS scheme from 2013. You will also find out there why specialist butcher's businesses rely on QS. A scheme participant gives the reasons in an interview.

We wish you lots of fun with your reading,

Your QS Team **Bonn, 26 Sep. 2012**

LATEST DISCUSSION AN OBJECTIVE VIEW OF THE ANIMAL WELFARE DEBATE

Visitors to this year's German Farmers' Association conference on refinement in Schweeringen discussed issues surrounding modern pig farming in Germany. The agenda included such topics as the revision of the Animal Welfare Law. QS managing director Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff summarized where QS stands in the current livestock farming debate.

"Animal welfare provisions are already firmly anchored in the guidelines and independent inspections of the QS scheme," Nienhoff said in his presentation. This applies to an equal extent to livestock farmers, livestock transporters and abattoirs.

Significance of animal welfare demands

"Farmers in Germany are experts in animal husbandry. This is confirmed by the results of the QS audit," Nienhoff added and made reference to the fundamental principle of the QS scheme which requires that livestock farmers regularly conduct self-assessments and document the findings. Independent certification bodies then check compliance with requirements in the audits they conduct.



The figures prove it

Of the total of 57 QS pig farming requirements, 20 relate to animal health and welfare. The results of the roughly 10,800 inspections conducted among pig farmers in 2011 show a high level of fulfilment. The auditors examined a total of 215,600 animal welfare-related criteria in pig farms (including livestock density and the use of medication) and only seldom recorded severe discrepancies. Sanction procedures only had to be initiated in 48 instances.

Seeking solidarity for the benefit of the animals

At the end of his presentation, Nienhoff said: "Animal welfare is indivisible. That is why, with the support of QS, representatives of the food retail sector, meat industry and agriculture are looking for a way in which the current animal welfare debate can be viewed objectively by all concerned". Commonly declarations of intent can only be implemented in common. The QS advisory boards also gave their backing to the principle that animal welfare within QS can only be advanced jointly.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

UNANNOUNCED AUDITS FROM 2013 SCHEME PARTICIPANTS HAVE THE CHOICE

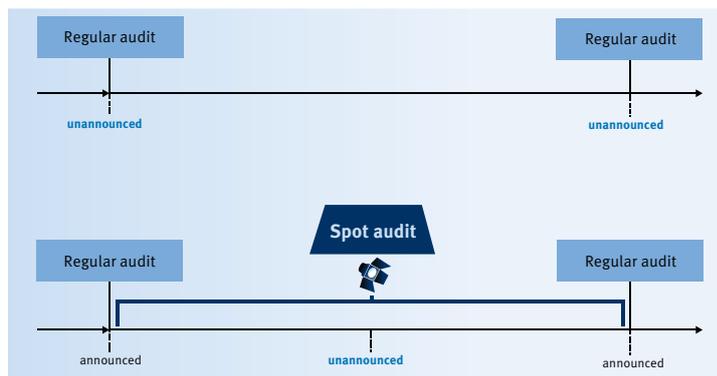
The QS inspection system is to be expanded from 1 January 2013. The auditors will then conduct unannounced checks with all companies in the supply chain Meat and Meat Products – either as an unscheduled regular audit or an additional unannounced spot audit. The scheme participants can decide which version they prefer.

With **unscheduled regular audits**, companies are inspected completely on the basis of the checklists which apply to them. This includes a check of all records and documents. As a contact person has to accompany all unannounced audits, the certification body must notify the business of the pending inspection shortly beforehand. One thing will remain here as it was before: the regular audit will take place on schedule before the certificate expires.

Scheme participants who decide to continue to have regular audits announced in advance have to be checked additionally between two regular audits in an **unannounced spot audit**.

Just like a spotlight, these spot audits focus on the essential requirements, which include the welfare and health of the animals, as well as operational hygiene. The extent of the control is reduced and concentrates on the inspection of farms and livestock sheds.

Records and documents are only scrutinised



in detail if it is suspected that criteria have not been satisfied to a sufficient extent. The certification body can also announce spot audits shortly beforehand. Spot audits only influence the date of the next regular audit in the event of a K.O. evaluation.

A SCHEME PARTICIPANT HENNCHE GMBH



Small butcheries usually market meat and meat products through regionally structured branch networks where the QS certification mark can be

seen more and more often. Companies use it to show their customers that small butcheries also practice quality assurance with a “system”.

In addition to numerous meat processing, slaughtering and deboning businesses, 132 small butcheries have also decided in favour of quality assurance with QS (as of 09/2012). One of them is Henneche Fleisch und Wurstwaren GmbH. The company from the Siegerland region has been participating in the QS scheme since 2011 via the coordinator ORGAINVENT. Ever since, the QS certification mark can be applied to the products at the company's eight branches. In an interview, Managing Director Klaus Bräuer (photo) answered some questions on quality assurance with QS.

Mr. Bräuer, why is quality assurance so important for the success of your company?

The safety of our products is decisive for the trust that our wholesale customers, and therefore ultimate consumers too, place in us. We can react quickly when necessary; the reliable traceability of each batch simplifies the search for sources

of error. If errors can be avoided in this way, it is of course possible for the company to gain a good reputation with the customer, which can ultimately only be to the benefit of the business.

What advantages does participation in the QS scheme offer you?

It's much easier to maintain an overview of the individual process stages. From the acceptance of the goods through deboning, production, packaging, dispatching and sales, all procedures and responsibilities of each individual employee are precisely regulated. The obligation of all staff members to work cleanly and conscientiously encourages them to perform well and this is of course reflected in even better quality.



What do you expect from the display of the QS certification mark at your points of sale?

The QS certification mark is obviously an advertisement for safety in all process stages. We

want to set ourselves apart from other butchery businesses so that we can use our quality advantage for the success of our company. Our goal is to remain in compliance with the latest legal regulations and technical developments at all times, which is also why our staff are given intensive training in these QS-relevant areas.

What differentiates Henneche sales points from others?

Best tradesman's quality from master craftsmen and the trust of our regular customers – these have been a matter of course for Henneche for over 100 years which our customers have grown to appreciate. Obtaining and retaining the QS certification mark is merely the logical consequence of our sales philosophy. QS in small butcheries is still relatively new and we are pleased that we have already taken this step. We have been working closely with ORGAINVENT for many years in the area of beef controls. This gives us an edge with regard to knowledge which means a quality advantage too.

Where do you see the future challenges for quality assurance?

The demands placed on small tradesman's businesses will increase even further in the coming years. Conveying how we work to the ultimate consumer in an even more transparent manner will be a big task. Customers rightly expect regional differences in the products they purchase and this has to be achieved to a high technical standard and with the greatest possible level of safety despite being produced by hand.

ANTIBIOTICS MONITORING IN PIG PRODUCTION **ANOTHER MILESTONE HAS BEEN REACHED**



With antibiotics monitoring in pig fattening, yet another milestone in the bid to record the prescription of antibiotics in livestock farming has been reached. In future, it will be possible to record and evaluate prescriptions of antibiotics in the

production of around 90 percent of German poultry meat and pork in a transparent manner.

QS antibiotics monitoring in the poultry industry has been running since April 2012 and pig producers in the QS scheme are now taking part too. The guideline for pig production has been in force since 1 September 2012. This means that the recording of the prescription of antibiotics has been put in place at the initiative of the industry before the set-up of a national antibiotics database, which is now to be established through an amendment to the German Medicinal Products Act. By calculating the frequency of treatment and comparing the production busi-

nesses with one another, legislators are using exactly the same approach as the industry in QS antibiotics monitoring.

With regard to the latest decision of the federal government, which gives the federal states the opportunity to establish a uniform antibiotics database throughout Germany, QS Managing Director Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff explains: "Everything is open at the moment where the national antibiotics database is concerned. When it becomes apparent that a national database is on its way, we will work with the administration, farmers and veterinarians to look for ways to cooperate, because the double recording of data cannot and must not be allowed here".

EXPERT INTERVIEW **THE STATUS OF ANTIBIOTICS MONITORING AT QS**



Dr. med. vet. Roswitha Merle has been responsible for the methodical and scientific accompaniment of antibiotics monitoring at QS since July 2012. Among other things, she

organises the correct recording of all relevant data in the antibiotics database. She answers questions here on the current status of antibiotics monitoring.

Dr. Merle, antibiotics monitoring has been implemented in poultry production since April 2012 and in pig production since September. How is the data recording coming along?

Poultry veterinarians are already busy entering data into the database and the coordinators are organising the automated recording of data for their poultry farmers. We already transferred all of the master data of the agricultural businesses in advance from the QS database to the antibiotics database so that no additional effort was required here. In the meantime, over 4,000 chicken, duck and turkey producers and around 25,500 pig farmers have been registered in the database. Add to this the almost 500 vets who have registered in the database and are obliged to enter data. Our data stock is growing every day now and the data from more than 5,000 stables and over 9,400 herds have already been recorded. We check the data entries regularly and thoroughly so that we can recognise at an early stage whether there are any errors or gaps in the data transfer. If any

problems crop up, we correct them with the individuals involved, because our ultimate goal is to create a sound data basis.

How is QS antibiotics monitoring to continue?

We are currently working on the completion of the evaluation concept. To this end, we are exchanging ideas and experiences with agricultural

representatives, veterinarians and scientists. The advisory boards still have to decide on the categorisation, which means the subdivision of businesses by their use of antibiotics. In our discussions, we are looking for practicable but meaningful solutions. One

The Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) established for 2011 that roughly 1,734 tonnes of antibiotics were supplied to veterinarians by pharmaceutical companies and wholesalers. How is this number to be regarded?

The BVL number relates to all antibiotics purchased by vets in Germany, so it should be seen very much as a lump sum. We go a big step further with QS antibiotics monitoring because we don't focus on the total amount of antibiotics but rather on how many and how frequently antibiotics are used at a specific farm so that we can identify businesses that use antibiotics particularly often. We then have to take a closer look at these businesses and decide along with the vet and the farmer how the use of antibiotics can be reduced.

of the benchmarks we use is the frequency of treatment. This value is also to be used for evaluation in the amendment to the Medicinal Products Act. It shows how frequently the animals in a herd were treated with antibiotics on average in the course of their lives. We also emphasise, however, that sick animals have to be treated and antibiotics are a part of this, but their use as a preventive measure and performance enhancer has been prohibited for years.

You will find more information on antibiotics monitoring on our homepage: www.q-s.de.

The adjacent QR code will take you there directly.



LEARNING WITH QS GRIPS&CO WITH A NEW SALES TRAINER



Personnel in the food retail sector are of vital importance in the QS scheme. They not only implement quality assurance measures by themselves, they also advise their customers on how to handle foods properly. QS is making all efforts to support them as well as possible in the build-up and expansion of their specialized skills.

The **Quality Assurance Sales Trainer**, which QS prepared in cooperation with RUNDSCHAU

for the food retail sector is aimed specifically at trainees in the food retail sector. The brochure, which was published as part of the Grips&Co brand trainer series, deals with the latest market trends and gives tips and tricks for the successful sale of meat and meat products. It also explains how quality assurance works in the feed sector and agriculture, as well as the meat processing industry, and what the consumer should look out for at home when preparing meat and meat products.

QS is also committed as a sponsor of the Grips&Co trainee competition. The final round of the competition on 24 September was won by Patrick Müller (24) of the Wasgau trading chain.



He will now become a QS-live quality ambassador for one year in order to gain first-hand experience of how safe foods are produced nowadays. He will be reporting in detail on his impressions and experiences on www.qs-live.de.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS THE LATEST FIGURES

The production and marketing of meat and meat products in Germany is comprehensively integrated into the QS scheme. This is shown by the latest scheme participant figures: currently, around 106,000 businesses participate directly in the scheme or are eligible to deliver on the basis of a recognized certificate.

Increases are achieved above all through new recognitions and/or the expansion of mutual recognitions that already exist. In June 2011, mutual recognition between QS and the Belgian GMP+ Standard was expanded to include the trading, transport, storage and trans-shipment of feedstuffs. One year on and 3,151 companies are already using their eligibility to deliver into the QS scheme.

The number of dairy cattle farms which have their QM milk audit recognized to enable them to deliver cows into the QS scheme rose continuously to around 30,600.

Stage	Total 105,949	Of which abroad 7,569
Feed	3,478	429
Feed material production ^{1,2}	1,155	92
Compound feed production ³	1,304	273
Trading, transport, storage ⁴	1,019	64
Agriculture	76,631	6,658
Cattle farming ⁵	30,555	10
Pig farming ⁶	42,023	5,125
Poultry farming	4,053	1,523
Livestock Transport	1,725	111
Slaughtering/Deboning⁷	401	45
Processing	264	10
Food Retail⁸	23,450	316

¹ Additional delivery eligibility on the basis of GMP certification: 250 businesses

² Includes 39 additive and premix producers

³ Includes 530 mobile feed milling and mixing plants

⁴ Additional delivery eligibility on the basis of GMP certification: 3,151 businesses

⁵ Additional delivery eligibility for cows: 30,559 businesses via QM milk auditing

⁶ Additional delivery eligibility on the basis of scheme recognition: 7362 businesses QSG (DK) and 2,155 businesses Certus (B)

⁷ Additional delivery eligibility on the basis of scheme recognition: 15 businesses QSG (DK) and 46 businesses Certus (B)

⁸ Includes 142 meat wholesale businesses

As of: 01 Sep. 2012

+++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++

Revision 2013: scheme participants lending a hand

From 16 November, your opinion on the revision of the QS guidelines is requested. As in past years, QS will be publishing the guidelines, which take effect on 01 January 2013, in advance in the internet. Scheme participants and certification bodies have the opportunity to send suggestions and change requests directly to QS until 30 November 2012 using a contact form.

Suggestions are also welcome outside the commenting phase. You can make contact per e-mail, fax or in the internet at:

http://www.q-s.de/revision_en.html



QS in Facebook

You can visit QS on Facebook and find out lots of interesting and worth knowing facts about the QS scheme. Food safety – that's what I like!

No Reduction of the Cut-Off Value for Salmonella for the time being

At its latest meeting, the Advisory Board Beef, Veal and Pork decided against a reduction of the cut-off value in QS Salmonella Monitoring on 1 January 2013. We reported on the discussions in the last info letter. Head office has now been asked to check whether there are any alternatives to the current categorisation of businesses into risk classes.

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IMPRESSUM

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