



INFO LETTER MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	1
From the Advisory Boards	1
Sanction Board	2
Entire Male Pig Production	2
Salmonella Monitoring	2
QS-live	3
Portrait of Josef Schöberl	3
QR Codes	3
Feed Marking and Labelling	4
Scheme Participants and Markets	4
News in Brief	4

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Economic operators are taking their responsibility for the production and marketing of safe food seriously. To this end, they are introducing concrete improvements under the auspices of the QS scheme among other things.

The industry is not only taking decisive action with antibiotics monitoring and unannounced audits from 2013, progress is also being made with the abolition of piglet castration. New requirements in this area have been included in the Guideline Slaughtering/Deboning (P. 2).

Violations of QS requirements are dealt with in the Sanction Board. Wilbert Knickenberg, who was chairman for many years, has now handed over his office to Kurt Pillmann (P. 2).

There is also news to report from our information campaign "QS-ive" (P. 3).

We wish you lots of fun with your reading,

Your QS Team

FROM THE ADVISORY BOARDS TAKING QUALITY ASSURANCE SERIOUSLY

The QS antibiotics database has been online since April 2012. Now the QS advisory boards have reached an agreement on the further scheduling of the monitoring system. There will also be some new developments in the inspection system within the QS scheme when unannounced audits become obligatory on all stages of the supply chain meat and meat products from 2013.

The poultry sector has made a start by recording the first data on antibiotics prescriptions for poultry production farms. This will be followed by pig production in September 2012. This was decided by the advisory board for beef, veal and pork at its last meeting. In this way, antibiotics applications will also be registered in the **Vet-proof database** in this area in future. The guideline for antibiotics monitoring in pig production is to be revised at short notice by agricultural and scientific experts and veterinarians and will take effect on 1 July 2012.

With the adopted schedule, the representatives of trade and industry in the advisory boards are emphasizing their intention of pushing ahead with the antibiotics monitoring that has already



been introduced. They are not going to wait with the recording of data until a national database has been set up. This will be made possible by the amendment of the German Drug Act announced by the Agriculture Ministers' Conference. A definite time schedule for this has not yet been established.

Unannounced audits from 2013

The second decision of the advisory boards is of fundamental importance too. The Guideline Certification is to be revised on 1 January 2013, thus altering the **QS inspection system**. In future, unannounced audits will be conducted

on all stages of the supply chain meat and meat products. The scheme participants have the choice here of either having regular audits conducted without prior notification or having additional, unannounced spot audits, during which the auditors focus on production processes, conducted between regular audits.

A random sample of all farms is planned for the agriculture stage in which 50 percent of all poultry farms and 20 percent of all pig farms are to be subjected to additional unannounced inspection every year. It has still to be decided how many cattle farms are to undergo unannounced inspection.

SANCTION BOARD WILBERT KNICKENBERG PASSES RESPONSIBILITY TO KURT PILLMANN



After almost nine years, Wilbert Knickenberg has passed the chairmanship of the QS sanction board to Kurt Pillmann (see photo). With Dr. Friedhelm Adam, another agriculture expert has been appointed to the sanction board.

Wilbert Knickenberg took on the chairmanship of the sanction board only two years after the QS scheme was established in 2003. Until handing

it over, he chaired a total of 34 meetings and presided over more than 1,400 sanction cases. Under Knickenberg's chairmanship, the board imposed a total of almost 1,000 fines. 330 cases culminated in a warning and a further 69 cases were dismissed. A case from 2005, where a district court decided in favour of the QS scheme, shows that the decisions reached by the Sanction Board can also stand up in a regular court of law.

QS Managing Director Dr. Herrmann-Josef Nienhoff thanked Wilbert Knickenberg for his commitment over many years and emphasized his style of conducting proceedings, which was always fair and thorough. In March 2012,

the Sanction Board convened for the first time under the new Chairman Kurt Pillmann, who was President of the Regional Court in Bonn until he retired in 2010. Since then, another new addition to the Sanction Board, Dr. Friedhelm Adam of the Chamber of Agriculture of North Rhine-Westphalia, has been fully committed as an assessor. Dr. Adam is head of the Livestock Production division in Münster.

In this way, QS is relying on knowledge and experience to ensure that violations of the requirements of the QS scheme are assessed consistently and correctly in the future too.

ENTIRE MALE PIG PRODUCTION NEW CRITERION IN THE SLAUGHTERING/DEBONING GUIDELINE

In the opinion of most experts, entire male pig production is the best way towards the complete abolition of piglet castration. A new criterion is currently being anchored in the Guideline Slaughtering/Deboning to ensure that it is possible to determine boar odour.

Concrete progress has been made over the last few years in the recognition of boar odour and for this reason, a new criterion for the slaughter of entire male pigs is to be included in the QS Guideline Slaughtering/Deboning in future. After 1 July 2012, companies that slaughter entire males must use suitable methods to guarantee the reliable recognition of carcasses with a conspicuous odour. The following points are among



those to be observed in future:

- The specification of the sensitivity, specificity and reproducibility of the test method must be available in writing.
- Staff members selected for the task of recognizing carcasses with a conspicuous odour must receive sufficient training.

- Separate logistical processes for the removal of carcasses with conspicuous odours must be on hand and documented.
- The results of every batch tested for boar odour must be reported back to the farmer/supplier.

Auditors who check the above-mentioned points in QS audits should acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to do so by participating in regular further training courses on this subject.

The renunciation of piglet castration was agreed by the central associations of the German agriculture and meat industry, as well as the food retail sector, as far back as autumn 2008 in the "Düsseldorf Declaration". It is taken a step closer to becoming reality through the latest findings.

SALMONELLA MONITORING CHANGE OF CUT-OFF VALUES

Eight years ago, the industry called QS salmonella monitoring into being and with great success too, as the sharp decline in pig production farms with a high risk of introducing salmonella to the food production process proves. The task in hand now is the further development of the monitoring programme.

The number of farms with a high salmonella risk (category III) has dropped from 7 percent to 3 percent in recent years. "This was only possible because pig farmers and veterinarians tackled the problem together. Those responsible will not be resting on their laurels though, because the aim now is to permanently reduce the continuing risk of salmonella in meat," says Thomas May, responsible for Salmonella Monitoring at QS.

In future, the cut-off values for the decision as to when a sample is assessed as positive or negative are to be lowered, so that more farms will be classified into category III (high salmonella risk). These farms must then implement measures to reduce salmonella in coordination with the responsible veterinarian, but because differences can exist among the group of category III farms regarding the extent of the risk of introducing salmonella into the abattoir, these farms must be viewed in different ways.

To this end, agricultural experts, scientists and veterinarians will be involved in intensive consultations until the autumn. There has been much discussion about the lowering of the cut-off value in the past and the final decision of the advisory board is still pending.



Farmers who could be affected by a change to the cut-off value are already being notified of the possible consequences. We would be pleased to answer any questions on this.

FOCUS ON CONSUMER COMMUNICATION ++ FOCUS ON

QS-LIVE CONSUMER COMMUNICATION GATHERING MOMENTUM

Consumer communication at QS is building up a head of steam. The website of the EU-funded campaign “QS-live. Initiative Quality Assurance” has been online since February. As the very latest development, the site has now been switched fully online with lots of information, photo and film material and many interactive elements.

The goal of the campaign is to increase awareness of the QS certification mark among consumers and anchor it as a trustworthy signal for safe food. All QS scheme participants who use the test mark to communicate the quality of their own produce will benefit from this.



With the new website, the initiative is now targeting a much wider public in the internet.

In future, representatives of all production stages will be reporting there on their commitment to ensuring quality and food safety. To this end, Jennifer Bauder (trainee in the food retail sector), Josef Schöberl (cattle farmer from Bavaria), Peter Fehmel (vegetable producer from the Palatinate) and Franz-Josef Seibold (butcher) are permitting an insight into their daily work.

In addition to this, rural woman and nutritionist Lore Mauler is keeping a diary in the internet. In her blog, she gives consumers valuable tips on how to handle fresh foods.

Click into it at www.qs-live.de.

PORTRAIT JOSEF SCHÖBERL SUPPORTS THE QUALITY ASSURANCE INITIATIVE



Representatives of the production stages are giving an insight into their daily commitment to ensuring safe and high-quality food for the campaign “QS-live. Initiative Quality Assurance”. The livestock farming representative is Josef Schröberl, cattle farmer from Bavaria.

For Josef Schröberl, the advantages of participation in the QS scheme are plain to see: secure sales for his calves and old cows and the chance of achieving higher returns in the market. He

regards the expense and effort of scheme participation as appropriate: “QS doesn’t demand anything of me that isn’t part of the production standard anyway,” says the farmer who took over the business from his parents in 1990.

He has already stood in the limelight on quite a few occasions in his attempts to improve the reputation of agriculture by regularly welcoming groups of visitors to his farm. “We don’t have anything to hide; everything is done properly here,” says the graduate farm manager who has been documenting everything that is of importance for his daily work for 25 years.

With his participation in the EU-sponsored **information campaign** “QS-live. Initiative Quality Assurance”, Josef Schöberl is contributing towards ensuring greater awareness of the QS certification

mark among consumers. As he says: “The consumers should know when they see the blue QS symbol that the products have been tested”.

The wellbeing of his 80 Fleckvieh cattle is a matter close to the heart of the cattle farmer, who has invested in modern cowsheds in recent years. He markets male calves through a producers’ cooperative and rears the female calves by himself. The farm consists of 75 hectares of arable land, 25 hectares of grazing land and 20 hectares of forest. 100 percent of the daily green fodder requirements are covered by products from the farm while feed concentrates and mineral feed are purchased on the market.

If you want to find out more about Josef Schöberl and his commitment to safe food, you can get to know him in the internet at www.qs-live.de.

QR-CODES INFORMATION OFFER GOES MOBILE

QS has optimized its web pages for users with mobile phones with internet capability. A leaner design shortens loading times and enables a faster page build-up. In this way, QS has also made it possible to access information in the internet from a mobile phone via QR codes. QR codes are becoming more and more commonplace.

They have a rectangular pattern and are being printed more and more on flyers and posters. QR (quick response) codes encrypt information or links to websites which can be quickly and easily accessed by mobile devices. The prerequisite for this is a functional mobile pho-

ne camera and a small program on the phone (app) which decodes the QR code.

Originally developed for use in logistics, QR codes are also being used for communication nowadays. They supplement the range of available information by referring users to more detailed websites, such as that of QS. In this way, customers in food retail outlets can acquire information while still in the shop on such things as the QS certification mark and the commitment of trade and industry to safe food.

In the meantime there is also information on

quality assurance with meat and vegetables. After accessing the corresponding site via the QR code (see below), users can click on other online offers as required. QS intends to further develop this area of its online communication, thus expanding the service range for its scheme participants.

If you have any questions or suggestions, Mr. Stefan Martin, Head of Sales and Marketing at QS, would be pleased to answer them.



Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

FEED MARKING AND LABELLING OF GOODS SOLD IN SACKS

Whoever trades in feed within the QS scheme must either be a scheme participant or have valid certification of a standard recognized by QS. There is one exception, however: feed dealers who exclusively market sacked or packaged goods do not have to be scheme participants or have certification. QS is pointing this out to its scheme participants.

Feed material and compound feed producers and trader in the QS scheme may also procure

sacked or packaged QS feed which are not certified by QS or other standards recognized by QS (e.g. GMP+). Bulk goods trader must be QS scheme participants, however, or be certified in accordance with a standard recognized by QS. The exception mentioned above also applies to farmers in the QS scheme. Where the procurement of bulk QS feed is concerned, QS continues to recommend that it only be purchased from certified trader (QS or other recognized standards). A list of trader with certification is published in the QS database which can be ac-



cessed via the public search. Information on this is available in the Guideline Feed Sector which you will find in the downloadcenter at the QS corporate website.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS LATEST FIGURES

Overall, the number of scheme participants remains stable. Compared with the same month last year, there has even been a slight increase in the number of scheme participants in most stages. Many companies (+190) have decided to participate in the scheme on the feed stage in particular, in the areas of trade, transport and storage. The same applies to the livestock transport stage (+100).

The structural change in agriculture, which is also clearly expressed in scheme participant numbers, cannot be ignored. While a further 179 poultry farmers have registered for the QS scheme in the last 12 months, 870 pig farmers and 340 cattle farmers left the scheme during the same period.

Stage (as of May 2012)	Total 106,195	Of which abroad 7,590
Feed	3,326	406
- Feed material Produktion ^{1,2}	1,148	89
- Compound feed ³	1,267	265
- Trading, Transport, Storage ⁴	911	52
Agriculture	77,063	6,731
- Cattle farming ⁵	30,530	6
- Pig farming ⁶	42,565	5,224
- Poultry production	3,968	1,501
Livestock transport	1,701	86
Slaughtering/deboning⁷	393	42
Processing	262	9
Food Retail⁸	23,450	316

1. 210 (+210) businesses additionally eligible to deliver on the basis of GMP certification 2. Including 30 (+30) additive and premix producers
3. Including 531 (-6) mobile feed milling and mixing plants 4. 2,465 (+2,465) businesses additionally eligible to deliver on the basis of GMP certification
5. 29,644 (+1,288) businesses additionally eligible to deliver cows via QM Milk Auditing
6. Businesses additionally eligible to deliver on the basis of scheme recognitions: 7,611 (+64) QSG (DK) and 2,152 (-41) Certus (B)
7. Businesses additionally eligible to deliver on the basis of scheme recognitions: 15(-) QSG (DK) and 47 (-4) Certus (B)
8. Including 142 (+2) meat wholesale businesses

+++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++



10 Years with QS: Dr. Iris Rudat-Schwarz and Robert Römer

In April we were able to celebrate the company's tenth anniversary with Dr. Iris Rudat-Schwarz, head of Internal Quality Management at QS, and Mr. Robert Römer, who is responsible for Slaughtering/Deboning and Food Retail. Both of them have accompanied the development of the QS scheme practically from the beginning.

an outlook of the current year. The report focuses mainly on antibiotics monitoring, spot audits and QS-live. The motto of the annual report is "Food you can trust".

Change at Head Office



Ms. Lisa Krämer became a valuable new addition to QS in the Agriculture/Feed area in early April. Ms. Krämer is a competent point of contact for all questions concerning QS feedstuffs.

this committee. Companies can access the database at <http://www.icrt-ident.com>.

SUBSCRIBE NOW:

Regularly updated info letters and newsletters from QS.

<http://www.q-s.de/abo.html>



Annual Report

QS presented the Annual Report 2011/2012 at the annual conference in Frankfurt/Main. The report gives an overview of the occurrences and activities of the past year and provides

ICRT Database Online

The International Committee for Road Transport (ICRT) has put a database with information on materials and cleaning methods for the prevention of undesired contamination of feed during transport onto the internet. QS is a member of

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QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH
Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff (responsible)
Schedestraße 1-3, 53113 Bonn
Phone: +49 (0) 228 35068-0
Fax: +49 (0) 228 35068-10
Email: info@q-s.de
Internet: www.q-s.de
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