



INFO LETTER MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS



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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

With the revision of the guidelines at the end of 2012, we have refined and streamlined many criteria. We present some important points briefly in this info letter. Quality assurance with QS expands upon legal requirements and refines these in cases where clarity and transparency with regard to food safety are involved. Confidence in safe food cannot be guaranteed by laws. Each individual business partner is responsible. For this reason, QS has now also published compliance guidelines. You can read what it's all about on page 2.

There is also news from "QS-live. Quality assurance initiative".

On page 4, scheme participant Rudolf Platen explains why he is involved in this initiative.

Your QS Team

Bonn, 3 Jan 2013

WHAT'S NEW IN 2013? GUIDELINES STREAMLINED AND REQUIREMENTS REFINED

Provide clarity, refine requirements and streamline guidelines. With the annual revision of the scheme manual, QS has again improved the complete quality assurance system – from farm to shop. All scheme participants can depend on this: comprehensibility and practicability are kept in focus for each amendment.

The changes, which will take effect from the start of 2013, were drawn up by the advisory boards and were made available online for comments before their final publication. They take important market demands and legal changes into account. With the checklists and self-assessment plans, QS supports day-to-day quality assurance in companies.

Feed sector

The labelling rules for feed have been simplified with the revised guidelines for 2013: in the case of bagged/packaged goods, it is no longer mandatory to display the QS certification mark on the bag label, as long as the products are designated as QS goods in the delivery notes.



As of January, suppliers (feed producers and traders) must specify the VVVO number (location number) in the delivery notes when delivering bulk compound feed to agricultural businesses. The VVVO number must be passed on from production all the way to the point of destination (see report on page 2).

Livestock farming

Significant changes are necessary for pig far-

ming due to legal transitional periods. Sows must be kept in groups from 1 January 2013. The stipulations on shed floors and livestock density in old buildings no longer apply.

The criteria for catching poultry by so-called catcher gangs have been refined. In the future, all persons who catch animals must have knowledge of animal-friendly handling of poultry. As of mid-2013, leaders of catcher gangs will be required to present a certificate to this effect.

Slaughtering/deboning

The requirements of EC regulation 1099/2009 (Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing) are now an explicit part of the Guideline Slaughtering/Deboning. Standard work instructions for the activities of animal welfare officers must be in place.

In the revision information in the QS download centre, you can find out what else is new for each specific stage. You will also find the valid guidelines, supporting documents and self-assessment checklists.

AUDITORS EXPERTS BACK IN SCHOOL

To maintain their approval in the QS scheme, auditors must regularly take part in training: with this measure, QS contributes towards uniform assessment standards on site. Each training event is concluded with a written test. From 2013, the intensity of training will be increased.

“Auditors in the QS scheme are qualified experts. The demands placed on them are high. The auditors must incorporate their expertise and experience into assessing the implementation of QS requirements in companies”, says Cathrin Nimmesgern, who organises auditor training at QS.

This is also reflected in the training concept: from 2013, auditors will have to attend a separate training event for each approval stage and pass the test in each case. High test scores are



rewarded: auditors who achieve at least 90% of the maximum points do not need to participate in the training event in the following training year. Previously, it was obligatory to take part in training every year.

In 2012, more than 720 participants attended a total of 30 training events, taking 1,185 tests. Not all of these were successful: 15% of the tests were not passed. In these cases, the auditors concerned had to repeat the test in order to keep their approval.

The dates for the 2013 training events have already been set. You can download the event schedule from the QS homepage.

POULTRY SPOT AUDITS ACCEPTANCE AMONG COMPANY MANAGERS

In 2012, QS auditors conducted more than 1,200 unannounced focus inspections on German poultry farms. These spot audits were commissioned by the German poultry industry, who implemented the extended QS inspection system before the official starting date at the beginning of 2013. From 2013, unannounced audits will be a standard element in the inspection system for the entire supply chain Meat and Meat Products.

For most poultry farmers, unannounced spot audits will not be anything new. Between March and December of 2012, many chicken, turkey and peking duck farms within the QS scheme opened their doors to auditors so that they could take a look behind the scenes.



The focus of the inspections was set on criteria relevant to hygiene, animal health and animal welfare. The inspection of production processes was of key importance. No extensive checks on documentation were carried out.

Ensuring a uniform procedure

It was not possible to carry out all spot audits on the planned dates. In five cases, for example,

the audits were prevented by poultry diseases in the flocks to be checked. However, there was a consistent response to unexpected problems. During service times or where stalls or sheds were empty, the audit was postponed, but the new date was not disclosed to the company. This happened approximately 80 times.

Refusal may result in sanction procedures

In most cases, the company managers accepted the spot audits. In only two cases, auditors were forced to assign a K.O. assessment because company managers refused to grant them access to the farms. This resulted in these companies losing their eligibility of delivery into the QS scheme. In order to obtain this eligibility once again, they will need to undergo a full regular audit. Cases of this kind will also be dealt with by the sanction board.

QS FEED SEAMLESS ALLOCATION OF ALL VVVO NUMBERS

As of 1 January 2013, deliveries of loose compound feed within the QS scheme need to be clearly assigned to the agricultural business



receiving the delivery. This requirement will improve the traceability of goods within the QS scheme.

As of 2013, feed suppliers are obliged to list the VVVO number (livestock transport regulation number, Viehverkehrs-Verordnungs-Nummer) of the agricultural company being supplied on the bills of delivery or invoice. This means that, in future, producers or traders must allocate the goods to the VVVO number if they know which farm a feed delivery is intended for. This number accompanies the goods all the way to the farm. Many feed producers have already adapted their merchandise management system to this requirement.

Listing of VVVO numbers also in pure delivery trade

This means, however, that compound feed producers must also list the VVVO number in the delivery notes when one or more additional traders are involved in the delivery. It does not matter whether the trader is certified against QS or a recognised standard. From January 2013, compliance with the requirements will be checked in the QS audits of feed producers and traders.

You can find additional information on VVVO numbers in the QS blog. You will also find other entries on current topics in the QS scheme. Use the comment function as well at www.qs-blog.de. We are very interested in receiving your feedback.

QS-LIVE AMBASSADOR AND SCHEME PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW WITH RUDOLF PLATEN

QS-live ambassador Rudolf Platen lives in Toenisvorst in the Lower Rhine region. Two years ago, he expanded his company and built a modern shed with space for 1,500 fattening pigs. In an interview, he explains why he participates in QS and why he got involved as a QS-live ambassador.

Why did you decide to take part in the QS scheme?

As a farmer, I am responsible for the safety of the food I produce – even if this is “food to be” in my case, namely my livestock. For example, I am legally obliged to carry out and document self-assessments. QS provides a self-assessment checklist for this purpose. The fact that these are checked in the QS audit serves as additional motivation for me to prepare them conscientiously.

What does quality assurance mean to you?

To me, quality assurance means following a continuous improvement process. Today, I see myself more as the “caretaker” of my own business. Supply of feed and water, ventilation and heating, lighting – all of this runs completely automatically. This doesn’t just make my work easier, it also ensures that my animals are kept under optimum conditions, 24 hours a day.

But of course none of this can be a substitute for my regular walk around the shed every morning



and evening. As a farmer, you notice as soon as you enter the shed whether everything is OK and the animals are doing well.

Why are you involved in QS-live?

I like the idea of giving consumers a look behind the scenes of food production and agriculture in particular. Nowadays, many people don’t even know where their food comes from anymore or what is involved in modern livestock farming. They don’t realise all the things that we as pig farmers do in order to be able to offer safe and reliable food. I think that the QS-live initiative can contribute towards educating consumers. In addition, I have trust in QS to portray our work in a realistic manner, rather than produce glossy ads.

What is special about your farm? What makes it different?

The special thing about our pig production is the shed with 1,500 fattening places. The building was tailored specifically to the needs of people and animals. The materials used are easy to clean and a foam cleaning system was also installed. This is used to fill the shed area completely with foam before I rinse it with the high pressure cleaner. We attach great importance to cleanliness and hygiene. The highlight is a management system which allows me to control all of these things by computer, email or smartphone.



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CENTRAL ROLE IN THE QS SCHEME CRISIS MANAGEMENT BASED ON COOPERATION

A year without crises, but not a quiet year – that is how the QS crisis managers summed up 2012 in December. In the course of the year, they dealt with a total of 60 incidents from the supply chain Meat and Meat Products. The good news: none of these incidents involved a serious risk to the life or health of people or animals.

“The incident reports of our scheme participants demonstrate the effectiveness of the inspections. In the feed sector, these inspections were intensified after the dioxin finds the previous year”, explains Thomas May, who is responsible for operative crisis management at QS. “But incidents are not only reported by the scheme participants themselves. We also take reports in the media very seriously”, May continues.



Media reports also to be taken seriously (O. Thelen)

Reports on animal cruelty on a turkey farm and violations of animal welfare regulations in a slaughtering plant drew attention in 2012. “You have to deal with media reports objectively and with an open mind. QS crisis management provides important support here to the scheme participants and valuable information to the public”, states Oliver Thelen (see photo),

who is responsible for communication in times of crisis. “If negative reports on scheme participants appear in the media, we follow up on these reports straight away. We commission independent certification bodies to carry out an audit in the company. The results of this special audit provide clarification and exonerate the scheme participant if the accusations were not justified. In this way, QS provides important assistance.”

Crisis management is a firmly established and proven part of the QS scheme. The QS crisis management department can be reached 24 hours a day. If necessary, external specialists are also consulted. The cooperation of all companies involved is a basic requirement for a good working relationship with mutual trust. This begins with notification when an incident occurs.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

COMPLIANCE PERSONAL CONDUCT CRITICAL FOR TRUST

The conduct of employees and management is decisive for trust in the performance and effectiveness of quality assurance in the QS scheme. For this reason, QS has provided a clear framework for collaboration in the QS scheme in the form of a code of conduct.

The code of conduct was presented at the meeting of the certification bodies at the end of November. "The employees and managers in the QS scheme should know what is acceptable – and what is not. We need to avoid situations which could cast doubt on our personal integrity or on the credibility of the QS scheme as a whole", explains Oliver Thelen, who had a key role

in drawing up the code of conduct. Employees of the QS head office, certification bodies, auditors, laboratories and other service providers involved in implementing the scheme are to expressly commit themselves to a code of conduct with a declaration of consent.

With regard to content, the code of conduct is based on the principles of dealing fairly with one another. Discriminatory or abusive behaviour is to be ruled out, conflicts of interest are to be disclosed and cooperation in the QS scheme is to be based on the principles of honesty and decency. The code of conduct will be introduced throughout the scheme in the coming months.



The code is published on the QS website at www.q-s.de. In his role as compliance officer, Mr. Thelen will be pleased to answer your questions at any time.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS THE LATEST FIGURES

This year too, Belgian pork from the Certus scheme can be delivered into the QS scheme and labelled with the QS certification mark. The mutual recognition between QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH and Belpork vzw as standard owner of the Belgian Certus test mark has been extended until 31 December 2013. This means that the 2,120 Certus companies retain their eligibility of delivery. As of 1 January 2013, sow meat from the Certus system is also QS-recognised.

The demand for QS beef remains at a high level. The number of companies marketing cows in the QS scheme via their QM milk recognition is increasing. In December, approximately 32,200 companies were eligible to deliver; this represents an increase of about 9% compared to the previous year.

Scheme participants in the supply chain Meat and Meat Products	Total	Of which outside Germany
Feed	105,671	7,705
- Feed material production ^{1,2}	3,567	454
- Compound feed production ³	1,164	109
- Trading, transport, storage ⁴	1,327	276
- Trading, transport, storage ⁴	1,076	69
Agriculture	76,153	6,761
- Cattle farming ⁵	30,431	1
- Pig farming ⁶	41,634	5,241
- Poultry farming	4,088	1,519
Livestock Transport	1,735	118
Slaughtering/Deboning⁷	432	45
Processing	269	11
Food Retail⁸	23,450	316

1 Further 271 businesses eligible to deliver due to GMP certification 2 Including 50 additive and premix producers
 3 Including 530 mobile feed milling and mixing plants 4 Further 3,363 businesses eligible to deliver due to GMP certification
 5 Further 31,176 businesses eligible to deliver slaughter cows due to QM-milk auditing
 6 Further 7300 QSG businesses (DK) and 2,120 Certus businesses (B) with eligibility of delivery due to bilateral agreements
 7 Further 14 QSG businesses (DK) and 43 Certus businesses (B) with eligibility of delivery due to bilateral agreements
 8 Including 142 meat wholesale companies

As of: 1 Dec 2012

+++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++



10 years at QS

QS Managing Director Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff has been serving QS for ten years. He took up his post on 2 November 2002. Under his management, the QS scheme has developed into a well-established part of the food industry. This should not serve as a reason to lie back and relax, but as a source of motivation, Nienhoff advised his colleagues.

Changes to the Coordinator guideline

Changes will come into effect from 2013 for the coordinators of fruit, vegetable and potato growers. One of the most important chan-

ges relates to the obligation to carry out self-assessments. The guideline and the revision information can be downloaded from the QS download centre.

Revised papers of incident

Scheme participants now have the option of using a revised notification form when informing QS in the event of an incident. To a greater extent than before, the new notification forms are limited to the information relevant in the case of an incident or crisis. With the change from stage-specific to product-related notification forms, the number of forms has also been significantly reduced. You can find the papers of incident with the notification forms on the QS homepage at: www.q-s.de/notification_in_case_of_incident.html

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