



NEWSLETTER FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

From the February 9th to 11th the event of the year, the Fruit Logistica, will be taking place (see page 4). We will be presenting the new „monitoringreport“ (see page 2) fresh off the press. 2011 started turbulently for QS and our scheme participants. The dioxin crisis came over the meat sector and affected not just scheme participants in the animal feed and abattoir sectors, but it also hit farmers hard. The QS team concentrated hard in the first few weeks of January to master the crisis. And we have drawn consequences from the incident, after all we want to ensure that the QS

scheme continues to improve and does not offer criminal energies any encouragement. The knowledge gained as a result of the previous weeks has convinced us that we have established a scheme with our partners which works well. It works particularly well in crisis situations when it is necessary to trace the flow of goods and to ensure transparency and information through the entire supply chain. We look forward to working with all of our scheme participants in 2011!

Your QS team

CERTIFICATION OF AGENCIES: NOW EVEN SIMPLER AND CLEARER



With the January 1st 2011 revision, QS has simplified the certification for agencies at the wholesale level: The requirements for agencies have been tailored to the specific structure of these companies.

In the sense of QS, agencies are companies which only carry out trading and marketing activities without coming into direct contact with the goods. Thus, as of the start of the year in an audit, agencies do not need to be checked according to the entire guidelines for whole-

salers, instead they are checked according to the requirements relevant to them.

For example, requirements with regard to pest monitoring or warehouse management no longer appear as fixed definition requirements for agencies. For this reason, all of the relevant requirements are clearly marked with an „A“ for agency in the wholesaler guidelines.

This revision not only provides clarity in the evaluation of a company to the certification bodies during the audit. The reduction of the

requirements to be evaluated also means that it is easier to prepare a company for the audit. This assessment was shared by Juan Garcia Unterbusch, CEO of Juan Garcia Lax GmbH from Cologne after his audit.

„With the new certification, the audit procedure was much easier to calculate and now maps the structure of our company more cleanly.“ His agency, which trades in the full range of Spanish fruit and vegetables, was the first to be certified in 2011 according to the standard for wholesales/agencies. „The change from wholesaler to agency in the QS database (software platform) was easy carried out with a phone call to the QS headquarters“ said Garcia Unterbusch whose company has been a scheme participant with QS since 2006.

With immediate effect, agencies that wish to become QS scheme participants can be registered under „Agency“ on registration.

The wholesaler guidelines can be found in the download center for the fruit, vegetables, potatoes product sector on:

www.q-s.de

INTERVIEW WHAT DOES AN AUDITOR DO?

Carsten Everink works for the Agrar-Control GmbH certification body in Krefeld.

The company is approved by QS to carry out independent audits. Everink specializes in QSGAP monitoring. This interview gives a short insight into his work and explains where the Production stage has potential for improvement.

How do companies best prepare for monitoring?

The basis for every company is the annual implementation of their own monitoring. In doing so, the company tests itself to see whether it meets the specified requirements. The simplest way of doing this is to use the QS documents, guidelines and working documents, intensively. With the adherence to QS requirements, the essential legal requirements are also covered. When I carry out a follow up monitoring process, I pay particular attention to the notes made by



Carsten Everink from Agrar-Control GmbH audits QS scheme participants

the monitor of the previous check. I then check these points even more closely in the event of deviations.

Which monitoring aspects are difficult on site for the producers?

One point is definitely the implementation of risk analyses that are required for the various sectors

such as harvest hygiene, safety at work and irrigation. One problem appears to be that the analyses do not make sense to the operator, and thus implementation is often lacking. In an ordinary situation or even in a crisis, the analysis carried out then often does not provide sufficient clearance. Timely documentation is also difficult, for example, the plant protection product used and the start of harvest in the field record system. This information can be used to see whether waiting times have been adhered to.

Is there a requirement for which implementation has improved over the years?

Yes, the requirement that there must be at least one member of staff in each company with first aid training. This necessity also applies to companies managed by a single person. The organization of offers by producer organizations and marketers for their producers have ensured relaxation in follow up certification.

FOR THE SECOND YEAR JOINT MONITORING REPORT WITH DFHV

The second time round makes it tradition: After the first publication in January 2010, the second monitoring report is now available. It is produced in collaboration by DFHV Deutschen Fruchthandelsverband e. V. and QS.

The joint evaluation of international residue samples found great interest amongst the experts in the first issue. The new evaluation results appear just in time for the start of the Fruit Logistica 2011 trade fair.

A total of 11,616 samples from 63 countries contributed to the evaluation. Alongside an evaluation of the international flow of goods, individual products are again the focus of the

reporting. This time, the experts from DFHV and QS shone their spotlight on kiwis, bell peppers, apples and cherries. The interview with Dr. Adrian Engel of the North-Rhine Westphalian chamber of commerce provides an interesting insight into the cherry fruit fly problem. QS also reports on the resonance of sample taking training sessions in 2010. Whereas the DFHV sheds light on the topic of cross-contamination on packing lines and introduces the seminar calendar for 2011.

The result: Many interesting facts in a media, the aim of which is to provide objective representation of the residue monitoring situation.



RISK INDEX FOR ANALYSIS VOLUMES NEW MONITORING PLAN IN RESIDUE MONITORING 2011

For the new monitoring plan for 2011, QS has developed a risk index for risk-oriented assessment of the individual products and origins.

This is carried out in conjunction with the scientific committee for residue monitoring and further branch experts. The risk levels 1 to 9 (where 1 is the lowest, 9 the highest risk) continue to determine the number of samples.

In accordance with defined, individually weighted indicators, the index is calculated. The subsequent evaluation of the results of residue monitoring are subject to, alongside the evaluation of the QS database, further addi-

onal expertise, relevant external data sources and other influencing factors such as product-specific quirks and the country of origin of the product.

After the QS advisory board for fruit, vegetables, potatoes has approved the model for calculating the risk index, a annual risk-oriented modification of the monitoring plan can be carried out on the basis of the evaluation results of the QS database.

With the revision of the monitoring plan, the obligatory examination methods per products are also adapted to the current requirements. In addition, the number of samples in the up-

per risk levels (7 to 9) have been increased and the product list adapted in accordance with the product identifications of the 396/2005 directive. With the adaptation, the assignment of the legally specified maximum permitted residue levels to the products tested in residue monitoring has been made easier.

The revised monitoring plan for the implementation of residue monitoring for fruit, vegetables and potatoes came into force on January 1st 2011. It is available as Appendix 1 of the residue monitoring guideline and in the download section under:

www.q-s.de

NITRATES NEW REGULATION FOR MAXIMUM LEVELS IS IN SIGHT

The long announced new regulation of maximum nitrate levels for lettuces and spinach starts to take shape. A first change draft of (EU) directive 1881/2006 is now available.

The intended changes to the maximum permitted levels of nitrate in spinach, lettuce and the new addition rocket, are as follows: For fresh spinach, the maximum level is not seasonally or cultivation dependant and lies at 3,500 mg/kg (previously, 3,000 for winter and 2,500 for summer).

Outdoor grown fresh lettuce has a maximum level of 3,000 mg/kg in summer (previously 2,500) and when grown under glass, it has a maximum of 4,000 mg/kg (previously 3,500) as

well as winter values of 5,000 mg/kg (previously 4,500) for winter-grown greenhouse products. The value for outdoor grown lettuce has remained the same at 4,000 mg/kg. For rocket, a nitrate maximum of 5,000 (summer) to 6,000 (winter) is being discussed. The EFSA (European Food Safety Agency) has declared a need for testing in this sector.

With the revision, the EU commission wishes to adapt the maximums to take good agricultural practice into account, so that in future, no climatic related exceptions will need to be accommodated. The EFSA has checked the nitrate figures and estimated the possible negative influen-

ces on health as being lower than the benefits brought about by eating vegetables containing nitrates. A final evaluation by the EFSA remains to be made for rocket content only. In spring, the draft will be approved in a further session of the „farming contaminations“ administration committee and passed onto the EU commission for ruling. The directive should then come into force on 1st July 2011 without changeover period.

We will keep you informed.

FRESH-CUT: THE QS CERTIFICATION MARK IS AN ALL-ROUND BENEFIT

The demand for ready-to-eat fruit, vegetables and salad mixes is constantly increasing. There are very few other product groups in the food trade with similar levels of increase. Fresh-cut is one of the big current trends.

Already many companies use the QS certification mark for their fresh-cut products and thus document their neutral quality assurance. As of 2010, the guideline for wholesale of fruit, vegetables, potatoes also includes fresh-cut productions. Which criteria and requirements apply here are precisely defined, including a definition of exactly what fresh-cut is. Fresh-cut means „prepared but not processed fruit and vegetable products“. This means products and foods may, according to the definition, be divided, cut, sliced, grated, skinned, milled, cleaned, shelled or otherwise prepared.

In order to fulfill the QS requirements, scheme participants must maintain a comprehensive hygiene concept as well as other directives



with regard to temperature and shelf life. In addition, requirements with regard to training and packaging materials must also be maintained. If all criteria are fulfilled, a fresh-cut product may carry the QS certification mark.

Many fresh-cut providers see a very practical advantage of the QS certification in the strict requirements made with regard to hygiene

and temperature. These quality criteria of the QS checklist effectively prevent a lack of hygiene. Particularly when it comes to the sensitive convenience products sector, the QS certification mark is a visible sign of quality for scheme participants. This proves to the customer that the product is produced and marketed according to clearly defined requirements. At the end of the value added process is a product that the consumer can trust. The QS certification mark shows them that high standards have already been set in the production and preparation. The finished salads or fruit mixes can be found in the fridges of food stores. Once placed into the shopping basket, attention should be paid to ensure that the products are returned to a fridge in accordance with the temperature specifications on the packaging.

WORKING DOCUMENT USE OF THE MARK: NOW ALSO FOR CONVENIENCE PRODUCTS

How do I label the goods from my certified company on the delivery note? Am I using the QS certification mark correctly? These scheme participant questions are answered by QS in the working document for producers, wholesaler and food retail industry „QS certification mark, identification and use of mark“.

In addition to the specifications from the QS style guide and the contents of the guidelines, the working documents offers concrete example of the correct procedure and shows how to avoid errors. The working document now offers assistance

in the use of the mark for convenience products that are not completely (100%) of fresh fruit and salad/vegetable mixes. Convenience products that contain additional components (e.g. croutons and dressing) may also carry the QS certification mark. The ingredients must be labeled on the product in such a way that the consumer can see clearly which components are from QS certified companies.

You can read more in the working document which can be found in the download center under www.q-s.de.



POTATOES **MAINTAINING QUALITY IN STORAGE**

When it comes to the storage of potatoes there is a lot to remember: It is implemented in various stages and requires, depending on the harvesting conditions and the variety of potato, using tiny temperature modifications in the individual stages of storage.

2010 was, in terms of weather conditions, not an easy year for potatoes. The sustained high temperatures left visible marks on the stores. And the harvest, which was constantly interrupted by reoccurring rains, was also problematic and led to, in parts, a high propensity to rot in the batches.

In the middle and late storage phase, it will now depend on the development of qualities in storage. „First we use misting to control the

germination of the potatoes. We also need to pay attention to silver scurf attacks which are also a result of weather conditions last fall,“ according to Torsten Renken from Lünekartoffel Vertrieb GmbH & Co. KG. „In addition, the stocks must constantly be checked for pressure points. Affected batches should then be removed from the main storage facility. Perfect or less prone batches should be kept in storage for as long as possible. The trick is to wait and see how the qualities develop in storage,“ says Renken. The next stage is the initial germination of early potatoes. If you want to be first on the market, you need to start now.



Quality control at the Adersleben warehouse of Lünekartoffel-Vertriebs GmbH, head of the company Dr. Hans-Joachim Soltner (right) and staff.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS **THE CURRENT FIGURES**

In excess of 1,100 scheme participants joined the food retail stage in the new year. This was as a result of the new scheme participant Edeka Minden-Hanover with its large network of subsidiaries. And in the wholesale sector, the number of scheme participants is constantly rising. Here, many new scheme participants aboard are currently joining.

Stage	Total 22,841	of which from abroad 3,636
Producer	11,686	3,523
- Fruit, vegetables	9,024	3,518
- Potatoes	2,662	5
Wholesale	571	113
Food retail	10,584	-

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Ethephon in Spanish bell peppers

Reacting quickly to current occurrences in the market is a core function of residue monitoring. How this works in practice was demonstrated by an incident that took place in the middle of January 2011. At this time, Ethephon was detected at rates above the legal maximum in Spanish bell peppers. Ethephon is a growth regulator used to quickly color vegetables but which has been banned for use on bell peppers in Spain since summer of 2010. QS immediately informed scheme participants and instantly increased the number of samples taken from Spanish bell peppers in the monitoring plan (raising from risk level 1 to 7). In addition, Ethephon examinations by means of individual methods were made mandatory in the winter season. In this way, QS makes a considerable contribution to preventive consumer protection.

QS at the Fruit Logistica 2011

The Fruit Logistica in Berlin is one of the most important fairs in the international fruit trade. Along with the „Bundesvereinigung der Erzeugerorganisationen Obst und Gemüse e. V.“ (State association of fruit and vegetable producers)

QS will be on hand between **February 9th and the 11th 2011 with their own trade fair stand in Hall 20, C – 03**. Trade visitors will be able to find out detailed information about the QS scheme for fruit, vegetables and potatoes throughout the entire fair. Current topics include the availability of goods and fresh-cut products. At the trade fair on 11th February, a QS laboratory head meeting will take place during which the results of the laboratory performance assessments in 2010 will be discussed. For the first time, Dr. Gustav Offenbächer will be reporting as laboratory expert on the developments in individual substance analysis.

Potatoes: New nematode directive

In Germany, the legal foundations have been laid for more intensive combating of potato nematodes. The German Federal Council voted in January 2011 in favor of the directive on combating potato warts and potato cyst nematodes. This implements an EU directive which adapts the methods of combat used against nematodes and warts to recent scientific knowledge. In order to prevent the risk of the organisms being carried over, in future, official examination of the

fields intended for potato cultivation is mandatory prior to planting.

Flordimex 420 – permit for tomatoes on hold

On 28.01.2011, the BVL (Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit) ordered the holding of the permit for the Flordimex 420 plant protection product (containing Ethephon) which is used to accelerate the ripening of tomatoes in greenhouses. The measure is carried out at the request of the permit owner CBW Chemie GmbH, since individual instances have been found with residues close to the maximum levels permitted.

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