



NEWSLETTER FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial	1
Strawberry season 2010	1
Salad	2
Interview	2
Performance monitoring with learning effects	3
Apple harvest 2010	3
Consumer information	4
Scheme participants and markets	4
Short and current	4

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Summer has arrived and the demands for fresh fruit and vegetables are high. Whether it be fresh strawberries or the modern salad variety rocket, QS has got the residue situation under control.

The producers are behaving perfectly: In this issue of the Infobrief, you will find the first details about the residue situation for salads in summer 2010.

An additional topic: The results from the current laboratory performance assessments are here.

Laboratories already recognized by QS have once again been able to stand out above the applicants currently in the recognition procedure.

And: New information available for consumers. In addition to our previous offerings, our new Internet presence, designed especially for consumers, is now online.

These and other topics can be found on the following pages.

Your QS team

STRAWBERRY SEASON 2010 RESIDUE EXAMINATIONS ARE SHOWING A POSITIVE TREND THROUGHOUT



Summertime is a time for berries. At the moment, the strawberry season is still well underway. A multitude of companies from Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Spain

ensure the availability of goods with the QS certification mark from spring right through into summer. Here, maintaining the maximum permitted levels of residues takes top priority.

The current strawberry season has already produced a series of evaluations: Despite less than ideal starting weather, the evaluation of the residue situation is positive throughout.

- There have been no occurrences of exceeded maximum levels.
- Around 10 percent of samples contained no traceable residues.
- The majority of samples were only found to contain two or three substances, whereby 84 percent of the discovered substances resulted in a load of less than 10 percent of the maximum residue levels.

These results confirm the pleasing conclusions we came to last year. In the previous year, the maximum level load was extremely low and only a few samples showed cause for complaint.

! The European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) has also measured fewer residues.

Also, fruit and vegetables from Germany achieve very good results when compared to other European goods. EFSA has come to this conclusion in their first annual report about plant protection product residues in foods. The report can be found under: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsa/efsa_locale-1178620753824_1211902665715.htm

SALAD RESIDUE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL

Popular salad varieties such as rocket, iceberg lettuce and chicory achieve considerable sales during the summer. Just like for strawberries, the producers have got the salad residue situation under control.

A first intermediate evaluation of the analyses from the current season will please the fans of radicchio and other similar vegetables:

- Among the hundreds of samples evaluated, only six were registered with levels in excess of the maximum permitted levels.
- Of these, four were down to excess nitrate values. This can be explained by the bad weather at the start of the season.
- The good news: In the majority of samples, little or no substances could be found.
- Three quarters of the substances found indicate a maximum permitted residue load of less than 10 percent.
- More than a third did not contain any traceable amounts of residue.



INTERVIEW WITH RUDOLF BEHR

Around two-thirds of the fruit and vegetables available in this country are imported – a particular challenge when it comes to comprehensible quality assurance. Rudolf Behr is a scheme participant with farms in Germany and Spain. For him, this situation is part of daily life. In the following interview, he gives an assessment of the current residue situation.



Rudolf Behr, CEO of Behr AG

If you look at the results from the residue monitoring program, there is a very positive trend throughout. The residue situation for fresh fruit and vegetables is better than in the previous year. What do you think is the cause of this pleasing result?

Unlike the commonly accepted opinion, low values in the harvested product are not just to be achieved as a result of using less plant protection product; the opposite is often the case. Low values or even complete freedom from residues can only be achieved if the producer does not permit infestation to occur in the first place. If a producer is able to keep stocks free from pests then, at the end of the growing period, they are able to reduce or even stop using plant protection products since a pest free stock will not be

able to generate a population in the time remaining before harvest. The producers are now fully aware of this fact and thus this is reflected in the positive results QS have found.

Some of your salad varieties are grown in Spain. Are there any special conditions with regard to the residue situation for production abroad?

Basically speaking, the conditions are the same, at least for well-developed Western European areas. The difficulties occur as a result of residues from cultivations grown on the land previously. The very selective authorization of substances for cultivations means that time and time again values are found that are close to the traceability thresholds. Although the cultivation has not been treated with the substance found in the cultivation, this comes as a result of residues from the previous cultivation. However, the uncertainty factor in this measurable threshold range is very high. In light of the known, low findings of the laboratories, the risk lies for the most part in faulty measurements. But as far as a risk to the consumer is concerned, we are light years away from that. Fruit and vegetables are only dangerous when they are not eaten.



The availability of fruit and vegetables with the QS test mark is increasing; the mark can be found on more and more products. What is your experience – is the principle working, for you as a producer?

Obviously, even before QS, our company practiced quality assurance. But QS is a comprehensive system that incorporates all sectors, from the field through to the shop, and possibly comes even closer to the product and to important topics than other standards do. This is a major benefit. The important factor is the trust of the customer who wishes to eat their fruit and vegetables without worries. And the QS certification mark on the products makes a considerable contribution towards this aim.

A final assessment: Where are we today, what improvements must be made?

Every country has their own specific problems. Climatic differences often determine the product. That the German production does better in the specific residue discussion part than products with other origins is pleasing and showcases the good work carried out by the German producers. Thus, German fruit and vegetables are to be recommended.

But we also need to work on the product. We are producing food, products that the customer wants to eat and enjoy. More can be done to increase the enjoyment. There is still a lot to learn about cultivation. A solid target and good flying properties are product goals set by the football industry, but sometime I get the impression that those responsible for developing fruit and vegetable cultures are also taking on these aims.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING WITH LEARNING EFFECTS

LABORATORY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS SEPARATE THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

The producers in the QS scheme have the residue situation under control. This is shown by the monitoring results (see pages 1 and 2). In order to ensure the quality of the analyses, QS recognized laboratories must constantly prove their performance capabilities.

In the most recent laboratory performance assessment, 75 laboratories from ten countries took on the task of determining, without errors, the residues of eight substances in a sample of rocket. Of these participants, 49 were QS recognized laboratories and 26 were laboratories in the recognition process.

The results: Overall, a number of laboratories still displayed considerable weaknesses. The results show that the analysis of individual substances was implemented much better than in the previous laboratory assessment test, where these substances were also present. This indicates that the laboratories are constantly working to optimize their competences. Jens Schäfer, who is responsible for laboratories at QS, concludes: „For us, the laboratory performance test is a reliable instrument when it comes to testing the performance capabilities

of the laboratories. For the laboratories, participation is a method of identifying their own weaknesses and eliminating them.“

The QS recognized laboratories were considerably better than the competitors in the recognition procedure. 15 of the 18 laboratories that attained the best results in the test and correctly determined and quantified all substances were already authorized for QS. Overall, two thirds of the recognized laboratories achieved convincing results. On the other hand, only one quarter of the laboratories still in the recognition procedure were able to fulfill the requirements. „All laboratories receive a detailed evaluation of their results. We thus give them the opportunity to work on their performance and to improve further,“ explains Schäfer.

Rocket is, from an analytical point of view, a very demanding subject and poses a greater problem for the participating laboratories. The biggest hurdle: The substance lindane. „In order to map the current situation, a practice-oriented sample design is important.“ explained Jens Schäfer. „Thus, substances that can currently be found in products make up the majority of the test. In addition, we take account

of those that may suddenly and unexpectedly occur, for example, in salad vegetables in the form of legacy substances, like lindane.“

The results at a glance:

- 80% of the already recognized German laboratories completed the assessment with perfect results.
- 15 of the 18 laboratories that attained the best results in the test were already authorized for QS.
- Lindane was the substance that was most frequently missed and thus the main reason for the bad test results.
- Only one quarter of the laboratories still in the recognition procedure were able to fulfill the requirements.
- As a result of repeated unsuccessful participation, a total of 13 laboratories lost their QS recognition.

The list of recognized laboratories can be found on our website at

www.q-s.de/en/certification-bodies-and-laboratories/

APPLE HARVEST FOR 2010 PREPARATIONS HAVE STARTED

At the moment, berries and salad vegetables are very popular. But the scheme participants are already preparing for a good apple harvest. In the following interview, Michael Winstel from WOG Raiffeisen e.G. (BayWa) describes which aspects of this process need particular attention.



Michael Winstel, WOG Raiffeisen e.G. (BayWa)

The foundations for a successful apple harvest in autumn are laid in the summer. In order to keep to the maximum residue levels, the producers must already have the appropriate strategy in place now. How can you help them?

Comprehensive advice is very important. We make use of the experiences gained as a result

of our residue monitoring over the last ten years. Usually, the producers have the situation under control as a result. In the last few years, it has not just been legally specified maximum levels that had to be taken into account but also the customer requirements, which the legal requirements considerably undercut. Added to this are the modified waiting times for the use of certain plant protection products, which have been established in order to ensure that a certain level of substances (multiple residues) is not exceeded. These „new“ waiting periods means that the consultation services have not even been recommending certain plant protection products or have been establishing plant protection strategies designed to keep the maximum residue load of the individual substances as low as possible.

Apples are one of those products that are unproblematic when it comes to the residue situation. How do you assess the current production conditions, can we expect a similar pleasing result as we had last year.

In the wet spring period, a multitude of plant protection measures had to be carried out, but these should not be problematic when it comes to residues. But there are still a number of weeks

to go and the weather may mean that one or two pests that may still come and require the use of local additional plant protection measures – but this should also not cause problems. The aim, in production, as far as the producer and the consultants are concerned, is to further minimize the number of substances and maximum residue level load.

The storage facilities as well as the sorting and packaging plants must be prepared for the new season. Where do you place the emphasis in light of the short preparation time?

Alongside the harvest estimation and volume planning for the coming season, technical maintenance and cleaning of the machinery and the storage facilities play a major role. The storage facilities are cleaned, checked to ensure they are water-proof, and existing measuring equipment is tested and re-calibrated. The same applies to the packaging lines. General cleaning, technical maintenance along with checking, adjusting and calibrating of all existing quality relevant measuring equipment are the most important preparations for the coming apple season.

CONSUMER COMMUNICATION **NEW INTERNET PAGE AT WWW.QS-PRÜFSYSTEM.DE**

Do you like home-cooking, light cuisine or specialty cooking? Are you an ambitious hobby cook or an absolute beginner? What rules need to be observed to ensure safe storage and preparation of fresh foods? And what does the QS test mark tell me?

From July 15th onwards, consumers will find the answers to these and other questions at www.qs-prüfsystem.de.

Interested cooks can find out more about food safety and the quality assurance of meat and meat products as well as for fruit and vegetables. The website also contains service offers regarding the use of products at home. But there will also be recipes on offer as well. The clear structure and the appealing design makes the website very user-friendly and gives you a good overview. Why not click your way over to the website and take a look yourself?



SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS **THE CURRENT SCHEME PARTICIPANT FIGURES**

Half-time 2010: On July 1st, the QS scheme had 126,874 participants in the fruit, vegetables and potatoes as well as meat and meat products chains – a new high.

20,633 scheme participants ensure the unlimited availability of fruit, vegetables and potatoes all year round. Among these, 2,682 partner companies from the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Italy and Spain.

Stage	Total	of which from abroad
Producer	10,670	2,589
- Fruit, vegetables	7,977	2,584
- Potatoes	2,693	5
Wholesale	543	93
Food retail	9,420	-

++ SHORT AND CURRENT ++ SHORT AND CURRENT ++ SHORT AND CURRENT ++ SHORT AND CURRENT ++

Article in the Süddeutsche Zeitung: About the debate surrounding food safety in Germany

Under the title „Mit Kontrollen gegen Gammelfleisch“ (monitoring to prevent spoiled meat being sold) Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff commented in the Süddeutsche Zeitung on food safety in Germany. The article sees Nienhoff speaking out in favor of a non-prejudiced discussion of the subject. The complete article can be found in the media center on our website at www.q-s.de/en/mediacenter/

Intensive dialog at the working meetings of the certification bodies

The consistent and reliable implementation of specifications is assigned central significance

in the QS scheme. The intensive exchanges with the certification bodies and auditors plays a central role in this process. The 42 participants used the meeting to discuss experiences when it comes to check lists and guidelines and to bring themselves up to date with regard to the latest topics.

Reducing the maximum residue levels for eleven plant protection product substances

As a result of new information that has come to light regarding the toxicity, the consumer exposition and the expected residues of pesticides, the Europe-wide maximum residue levels have been reduced in June for eleven substances. The EU directive 1097/2009 came into force on June 7th. It contains changes with regard to the

maximum residue levels for the following eleven substances in or on certain products: dimethoate, ethephon, fenamiphos, fenarimol, methamidophos, methomyl, omethoate, oxydemeton-methyl, procymidon, thiodicarb and vinclozolin.

The currently valid maximum residues levels can be found in the EU directive 1097/2009 or on the EU pesticide database page www.ec.europa.eu/sanco_pesticides/public/index.cfm.

IMPRINT

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