Guideline

Wholesale Meat

Version: 01.01.2024

Contents

1 Fundamentals

For fundamentals of the QS scheme such as organisation, conditions of participation, use of the certification mark and sanction procedures see the **Guideline General Regulations.**

1.1 Scope

- Wholesale meat
  - Companies that store the packaged and unpackaged foods in the business premises intended for this purpose (where applicable in compliance with specified temperature requirements). They perform trading activities by selecting the suppliers themselves or on behalf of other parties and by acquiring goods for the purpose of resale. In addition, the following processes are allowed in particular within the scope of their activities: primary packing, vacuum packing, picking (incl. transport packing for final customer products), re-palletising, repacking, freezing and defrosting.
  - Cold and frozen meat **storage**

1.2 Responsibilities

The scheme participant is responsible for ensuring:

- Compliance with requirements
- Complete and correct documentation
- Completion of self-assessments
- Adequate and timely implementation of corrective actions
- Correct use of the QS certification mark and product labelling

Scheme participants must comply at all times with the requirements of the QS scheme and always be in a position to demonstrate compliance with said QS requirements. Scheme participants must ensure compliance not only with the requirements of this guideline and all other applicable QS requirements (e.g. General Regulations, Guideline Certification) but also with the applicable legal provisions both within the country in which the QS products are produced as well as the country in which they will be marketed by the scheme participant.

2 General requirements

2.1 General scheme requirements

2.1.1 General business data

A company overview containing the following master data must be created:

- Company name
- Address of the main company (incl. QS ID) and all its locations (incl. EU approval numbers if available in the case of meat/meat products)
- Type of company and location number
- Current address
- Contact details of legal representatives incl. phone numbers and email addresses
- Details on production scope
- Details on crisis management (name of crisis manager, etc.)

The master data must always kept up to date in the QS database by the scheme participant.

Furthermore, the following information must be included in the company overview:

- Information on existing quality management and audit systems (e.g. ISO 9001, IFS, BRC)
- Information on commissioned laboratories (current address, phone and fax numbers, email address, area of analysis)

Where rooms are shared by several companies, all rooms belonging to the company must be identified in a business plan.

Company overview

2.1.2 Use of the QS certification mark

Scheme participants are entitled to use the QS certification mark once they have been permitted to do so by QS (via QS scheme agreement). The QS certification mark may only be used in accordance with the **Style Guide.**

Scheme participants may only deliver products with the QS certification mark on the label or outer packaging if they themselves and the location of the recipient/reseller eligible todeliver in the QS database. Produce labelled with the QS certification mark must be identified on the delivery notes in line with requirement 3.6.6 [K.O.] Labelling of marketed QS produce.

In justified individual cases, nonconformity may be allowed if it can be expected that the reseller will no longer actively advertise and/or market the products as QS produce in the course of its business transactions and when dealing with its own recipients. In the accompanying documents, the products must not be described as QS produce, or it must be clearly visible from the accompanying documents that the reseller no longer has permission to actively advertise the products as QS produce in the course of its business transactions and in contact with its recipients.

2.1.3 Incident and crisis management

QS has developed a comprehensive crisis management system that actively supports scheme participants in the event of an incident or crisis. The scheme participants must inform QS immediately and – where a legal obligation exists – the competent authorities about critical incidents and public product recalls relevant to the QS scheme.

Critical incidents are scheme-relevant occurrences that pose or could pose a risk to humans, animals, the environment, assets or the QS scheme as a whole.

Scheme participants must inform QS, in particular if:

- Nonconformities occur in goods procurement, production or marketing that might pose a risk to food safety
- Preliminary proceedings are initiated due to violation of regulations to secure food safety
- Investigations are carried out by the media, there are critical reports in the media, or public protests are held on issues of food safety

Each scheme participant must keep an paper of incident at their disposal to enable them to pass on any required information in the appropriate format if an incident occurs. Moreover, all scheme participants must name a crisis manager, who is reachable at all times. The name of the crisis manager must be entered in the QS database.

A procedure must be defined and introduced for conduct in the event of incidents or crises and verified at regular intervals, but at least once a year (approx. every 12 months). It must include the following points:

- Creation of a crisis team
- Emergency call list
- Procedure for product recall and return
- Communication plan
- Customer information

Paper of incident, incident and crisis management procedure

2.1.4 Handling of documents

A procedure for archiving the documentation must be in place and must be applied in the company. All relevant records are to be kept in a detailed and seamless manner.

Documents and records of self-assessments must be retained for a period of at least two years – provided longer retention periods are not stipulated by law.

2.1.5 Company premises and access regulations

All buildings and operating facilities must be protected from unauthorized access and, where possible, be kept closed. Access regulations must be in place. Operating rooms in which food is produced or stored may not be accessible to unauthorised persons.

External visitors may only have access to the operating rooms if accompanied by or in agreement with an authorised person. With the exception of drivers within the scope of loading activities in the designated loading zone, all external visitors must receive instructions prior to entering production areas.

If the business premises are entered by external vehicles, e.g. delivery or disposal vehicles, this must be accounted for in the risk assessment.

Access regulations

2.1.6 Monitoring of test equipment

When calibrating and monitoring the functionality of the instruments and devices used as test equipment (e.g. thermometers), the intervals stipulated by the manufacturers must be complied with. If a manufacturer has not made any stipulations in this regard, the test equipment must be calibrated or checked in line with the perceived estimation of the risk but at least once a year (approx. every 12 months).

The measuring methodology of the various test devices must be taken into consideration. The calibration or check procedure must be described for each test device. The results must be documented (incl. nonconformities, corrective actions) and clearly assigned. The measuring precision, reliability and functionality of operational test equipment must be guaranteed.

If calibration is not possible for some test devices, they must undergo appropriate maintenance and servicing. If required by law, any scales that are in use must be calibrated.

Applicable documents are the German **Actconcerning the placement and provision of measuring instruments on the market, their use and verification, and also on prepackages**.

Evidence of adjustment and monitoring of measurement devices, documentation of calibration/test

2.1.7 [K.O.] Conducting self-assessments

Compliance with QS requirements must also be checked within the company itself. Self-assessments must be conducted regularly. They must be documented based on a checklist at least once a year (approx. every 12 months). Existing control and documentation systems can be used if they guarantee that the requirements are fulfilled.

Internal controls can be documented via either an automatic registration process (e.g. automatic temperature records) or a manual recording process (e.g. incoming goods inspection).

Completion of self-assessments may also be contracted out to an external company with the appropriate qualification.

Self-assessment records and checklist

2.1.8 Completion of corrective actions in the case of nonconformity

Nonconformities that are detected during a self-assessment must be resolved within the defined time frame. Responsibilities must be established.

2.1.9 Food Safety Culture

An appropriate food safety culture is established by the food business operator in accordance with **Reg (EU) 2021/382**. Responsibilities and accountabilities for all processes related to food safety are clearly defined. The implementation and timeliness of the food safety culture is to be ensured by the food business operator. The essential principles required for that purpose are part of the QS participation and certification.

2.1.10 Commissioning of logistic companies/subcontractors

If the scheme partner in turn commissions service providers for the external storage of QS meat and QS meat products, the goods owner must ensure that the product requirements for the storage of QS meat and meat products at the commissioned company are met by commissioning companies that have a QS delivery authorisation containing the requirements for the storage of meat and meat products.

Commissioned logistics companies that take over transports with QS goods between QS scheme partners of the stages meat wholesale/logistics meat and meat products, slaughtering/separation and/or processing or are commissioned for storage (if applicable incl. packaging, relocation, freezing and thawing) must be registered and authorised in the QS database for the production type logistics meat and meat products, meat wholesale, slaughtering/separation or processing.

The ordering party/shipper (QS scheme partner) is responsible for fulfilling the requirements. He must inform the logistics company if it is a delivery with QS goods.

If logistics companies are commissioned for the transport of QS goods at short notice or on a one-off basis (due to a high seasonal volume, e.g. as part of daily contracts), then it is possible to deviate from this requirement.

In this case, the companies must be obliged to comply with the QS requirements (Guideline Logistics for Meat and Meat Products). The implementation of the requirements by the companies (e.g. freight forwarders) must be ensured on the basis of evidence and randomly checked as part of self-assessment.

For transports commissioned at short notice or on a one-off basis: Evidence of implementation of QS requirements, checklist for self-assessment

2.2 HACCP

2.2.1 [K.O.] HACCP concept

To ensure food safety, the company must develop, apply and maintain a hazard control system that is kept up to date in accordance with HACCP principles **(REG (EC) No. 852/2004).**

Basis and prerequisite for the implementation of a HACCP system are basic hygiene measures, including the codes of practice for good hygiene practice (GHP) and good manufacturing practice (GMP).

When developing the HACCP concept, it is important to ensure that it is understandable by third parties.

The process from goods receipt through to goods dispatch is designed to prevent raw materials, semi-finished products, finished products, packaging materials, machines and any other substances that come into contact with the food from becoming contaminated. Checks are in place to ensure that physical and/or microbiological and/or chemical contamination is minimised through effective measures. The HACCP concept must take into account the goods thawing and temperature regulation processes.

If any HACCP-related changes are made to a product or manufacturing process, or to a production, processing, storage or sales stage, the company must review and, if necessary, modify the HACCP concept.

Self-assessment records, checklists

2.2.2 HACCP team

The highest level of management must nominate a HACCP team to introduce and maintain the HACCP concept. The HACCP team must be documented in a written form. Evidence must be provided of the HACCP team having adequate experience in each area of the company. If required, the HACCP team must be trained. In this case, records of the training must be kept.

If there are multiple HACCP teams, a coordinator must be appointed who is responsible for the HACCP teams working systematically.

2.2.3 Product description

A full description of the product/article group and, if applicable, the purpose must be compiled. The product descriptions must contain all the relevant information needed to estimate the risks and to determine the critical control points. This may include the following aspects, for example:

- Composition of the product/the article group
- Physical and chemical structure
- Antimicrobial/Static treatment
- Packaging
- Shelf life
- Storage conditions
- Distribution methods for the product (recipient, transporter and type of goods being traded, e.g. packaged goods, bulk goods, etc.)

2.2.4 Flow chart

A systematic flow chart must be created containing all the operating processes and product groups.

2.2.5 Hazard analysis

The HACCP concept is based on the determination of hazards that must be avoided, eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

2.2.6 Critical control points (CCP)

Critical control points (CCP) must be determined at the relevant process stage if control is required in order to avoid, eliminate or reduce any hazards to an acceptable level.

2.2.7 Limit values for CCP

If CCPs or CPs have been determined, limit values for the critical control points must be set, which are used to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable values with regard to the avoidance, elimination or reduction of calculated risks.

2.2.8 Monitoring and verification of limit values for CCP

Procedures for monitoring and verifying critical control points must be defined and implemented. These procedures must be applied regularly.

2.2.9 Corrective actions for CCP

If CCPs and/or CPs have been determined, corrective actions must be determined in the event that monitoring shows that a critical control point exceeds the set limit value.

2.2.10 Responsibilities

Responsibilities must be clearly described in an organigram.

2.2.11 Records

Records that are commensurate to the type and size of the company must be kept to provide evidence that the corrective actions listed in the HACCP principles are applied.

2.2.12 HACCP verification

Implementation of the HACCP concept must be checked (verified) at least once a year (approx. every 12 months).

Self-assessment records, checklists

2.3 Good manufacturing and hygiene practice

2.3.1 Water quality

Drinking water must be provided in suitable quantities and may not pose any risk of contamination. A tapping point plan must be available within the company. Water, irrespective of origin or state, that is used for the manufacture and/or treatment of food as well as the cleaning of objects and facilities that come into contact with food must be sampled in accordance with a risk-based plan (at least once per year) to test for the following microbiological parameters:

- *Escherichia coli (E. coli*) 0/100 ml
- Enterococcus 0/100 ml

The water sample must be taken directly at the tapping point without removing any attached devices and inserts, without prior disinfection and without draining water. Sampling must be carried out by a qualified sampler (this may also be a trained employee).

Only an accredited and officially approved laboratory may be commissioned to analyse the water samples.

Water quality control plan, tapping point plan

2.3.2 Cleaning and disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection plans must be in place and their implementation documented. These plans include:

- Responsibilities
- Products used and their instructions for use
- Areas and facilities (incl. cooling facilitiesand staff rooms) requiring cleaning or disinfection
- Cleaning intervals
- Record obligations
- Hazard symbols (if necessary)

The implementation of cleaning and disinfection plans must be checked annually (approx. every 12 months). The results must be documented.

The cleaning staff is informed of the proper use of the designated cleaning product (per the instructions for use/cleaning plan).

Cleaning and disinfection plan, results of implementation checks, operational disinfectant lists

2.3.3 Pest control

It must be ensured that a high level of cleanliness and hygiene is maintained in all work/storage areas in order to prevent the attraction of pests and vermin. In the operating rooms, precautionary measures must be taken to repel pests that adversely affect food. Appropriate corrective actions for pest control must be introduced.

Within the implementation of pest monitoring and control, the procedure and qualifications of the user must comply with the legal requirements of the respective country as well as the particular product specifications. Monitoring and bait points must be controlled at least once a month by qualified personnel provided no other control intervals were determined based on a risk assessment. In order to guarantee the safety of the food as well as the safety of the employees, suitable pest control methods and pesticides must be used. Pest control procedures must not jeopardise the safety of the produced or stored products.

Permanent baiting (without infestation) using rodenticides (anticoagulants) is only permissible in exceptional cases if it is carried out strategically by a pest controller or professional operative (per the **German Hazardous Substances Ordinance** Annex I Number 3 Paragraph 3.4 (5) and (6)). A professional operative or pest controller must provide evidence of and document the conditions for each exceptional case individually via an annual risk analysis and risk assessment. Compliance with the measures for risk minimisation determined in the analysis must be guaranteed. In this case, only baits permitted for this purpose may be used and the bait points must be controlled at least once per month. Differing legal provisions may apply in other countries and must be complied with accordingly.

The documentation must contain at least the following information:

- Information on products used for pest prevention and control
- Date of treatment and specification of the applied quantities
- Proof that the employees involved in pest control are suitably qualified (the expertise required for the respective activity)
- Control point plans showing the positioning of monitoring and bait stations (including temporary control points)
- Records of pests found (findings)
- Corrective action plans in case of pest infestation

Documentation on pest prevention and control, pest control plan, evidence of qualifications (if applicable), contracts with specialist companies (if applicable)

2.3.4 Foreign substance management

The entrance of foreign substances into food must be avoided. Risk analyses must be performed to identify and assess potential entry sources for foreign substances. Precautionary measures must be taken and procedures established to minimise the risk.

The responsible employees must be aware of and observe the detection limits and conditions of use for devices used. Regular internal controls must be carried out to assess detection success. These must be documented.

Documentation of foreign substance management

2.3.5 [K.O.] Risk of contamination

Food contamination must be avoided. A risk-based management approach must be pursued, whereby a wide variety of contamination sources such as food waste or lubricants must be taken into account. All measures necessary to avoid contamination must be identified and documented.

Documentation of contamination management

2.4 Technical/structural condition

***Note**: The following requirement is described in Chapter 2 (General Requirements) on a superordinate basis. The requirement is evaluated on a more detailed level in the process-specific chapters: incoming goods, storage, cold storage rooms, frozen storage rooms, packaging/redistribution andorder picking, outgoing goods/shipping, and freeze and thawing.*

Operating facilities involved with the handling of food and rooms in which food products are stored, prepared, treated or processed must be clean and well maintained in accordance with **REG (EC) No. 852/2004** Annex II. They must be constructed, designed and built so as to enable sufficient cleaning and/or disinfection, avoid contamination or reduce it to a minimum.

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

- All floor coverings must be kept in proper condition and must be easy to clean and, if required, easy to disinfect.
- Ceilings (or in the case of no ceilings, interior roof) and ceiling structures must be built and processed so that any accumulation of dirt is avoided and that condensate, undesired mould as well as the peeling away of material particles is reduced to an absolute minimum.
- Windows and other openings must be constructed in a manner that avoids the accumulation of dirt. Openings extending outward require insect mesh that can be easily removed for cleaning.
- Doors must be easily cleaned, and if required, disinfected. They must have water-repellent and smooth surfaces.
- Surfaces (including equipment surfaces) on areas in which food materials are handled, and in particular surfaces that come into contact with food, must be kept in an unobjectionable condition and must be easy to clean and to disinfect. They must be made of smooth, abrasion-proof, corrosion-proof, non-toxic material.

Rooms in which foods are prepared, treated or processed must be designed and built in order to ensure proper food hygiene and to avoid contamination between and during work steps. There must be sufficient workspace available to enable hygienically sound work steps.

- The floor coverings must be waterproof, water repellent and abrasion resistant, and consist of non-toxic material. If necessary, the floors must have a suitable drainage system. Wall surfaces must have smooth surfaces up to a height appropriate to the respective work processes.
- If opened windows promote contamination, they must remain closed and sealed during the entire manufacturing process.

Operating rooms and facilities must be subject to maintenance and repair in line with predefined written instructions. A maintenance plan must be created and implemented for all operating rooms, facilities and equipment from which respective maintenance measures can be taken in order to ensure that work can be performed in a hygienic and unobjectionable manner. Maintenance works may not pose any hazards to food safety.

The maintenance plan must include the following elements (if available):

- Operating areas and operating rooms
- Facilities and transport systems (if available)
- Conformity of the materials and lubricants used
- Responsible employees (own employees and external companies)
- Frequency

Fulfilment of these requirements must be verified based on records documenting maintenance works.

Maintenance plan, documentation of maintenance works

2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

***Note**: The following requirement is described in Chapter 2 (General Requirements) on a superordinate basis. The requirement is evaluated on a more detailed level in the process-specific chapters: incoming goods, storage, cold storage rooms, frozen storage rooms, packaging/redistribution andorder picking, outgoing goods/shipping, and freeze and thawing.*

All rooms, operating facilities and machines in which foods are stored, prepared, treated or processed must be in a clean, hygienic and dirt-free condition.

Water retention in clearance rooms and major corrosion on machines and facilities must be avoided. Equipment (knives, saws, etc.) must be functional and hygienically sound.

Transport containers and vehicles must be hygienically sound.

The rooms must be cleaned regularly according to the cleaning plan. This applies especially to floor coverings. The cleaning frequency must be aligned with work patterns/new usage of operating rooms/storage rooms.

2.6 Ground clearance

***Note**: The following requirement is described in Chapter 2 (General Requirements) on a superordinate basis. The requirement is evaluated on a more detailed level in the process-specific chapters: incoming goods, storage, cold storage rooms, frozen storage rooms, packaging/redistribution andorder picking, outgoing goods/shipping,freeze and thawing.*

Products may not come into direct contact with the floor. The goods must be stored and transported in such a way that there is no risk of contamination. A system must be implemented whereby containers containing or intended for food must not be directly on the ground. These containers must always be placed on an appropriate base or support, otherwise there is a potential risk of contamination via a contaminated floor if the containers are restacked.

The following are excluded:

- Automated storage systems that are limited by physical barriers and from which containers are picked mechanically from above. Storage areas are not accessed except for cleaning and maintenance purposes, are in a hygienically sound state and do not pose a risk of contaminating produce.
- Industrial containers (e.g. BIG boxes), that are designed to stand on runners or legs off the floor. If these containers are stacked, contamination of the food must be prevented via company regulations.

2.7 Staff hygiene

2.7.1 General rules of conduct

Documented guidelines must be present concerning staff hygiene, which have been communicated to staff during training sessions. At least the following points must be taken into consideration:

- Hand washing and disinfecting
- Eating, drinking, smoking and chewing gum
- Conduct in the event of skin injuries (cuts, grazes)
- Fingernails, jewellery, piercings and watches
- Hair, beards

Smoking while working and inside work rooms is forbidden and only permitted in the designated places and rooms. Rooms must be fitted with clearly visible signage (no smoking).

Each employee must be provided with a sufficient quantity of appropriate PPE where required.

There must be sufficient hand hygiene stations available. If disinfectants are provided, signage with instructions on how to use the disinfectant must displayed.

Hand hygiene facilities in the production area must at least fulfil the following requirements:

- Running cold and hot water (with touchless handles (sensors/knee switches) in the meat/meat product area)
- Liquid soap from dispensers (not bottles, for example), and disinfectant in the meat/meat product area
- Appropriate options for hand drying (and means to dry hands hygienically in the meat/meat product area)

If the company policy includes a provision for coat hooks to be fitted, they must be properly and sensibly positioned.

Staff hygiene provisions must be observed and applied by all concerned (employees, service providers, etc.). There must be a procedure for regularly checking the consistent implementation of staff hygiene in the company. The results must be evaluated and, if necessary, corrective actions for optimisation initiated. Staff whose activities directly affect product safety must have the necessary experience/training.

Rules of conduct, procedure for implementation and monitoring of staff hygiene

2.7.2 Staff rooms and sanitary facilities

Suitable changing rooms must be provided for employees and external visitors. Outdoor and protective clothing must be kept separate where required. Staff rooms and sanitary facilities must be kept clean and in good order, and only used for their designated purpose.

The rooms must be cleaned regularly. A cleaning must be documented.

Cleaning documentation

2.7.3 Hygiene sluice

All individuals may only enter the production area through an unavoidable hygiene sluice (exceptions are only allowed in the event of an emergency). Shoes and hands must be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly.

2.8 Training of staff

2.8.1 [K.O.] Hygiene training/Protection against Infection Act

Based on **REG (EC) No. 852/2004**, hygiene training courses are to be held in the company every year (approx. every 12 months). Documented training programmes must be defined in line with the product and employee training requirements.

The training plan contains each rule of conduct (⇒ 2.7.1 General Rules of Conduct) in addition to:

- Contents
- Training intervals
- Participants and instructor
- Languages

To the extent required by law, the responsible employees are to be trained in dealing with open food in accordance with the provisions of the **Protection against Infection Act (IfSG)** in Germany, and the training is to be documented. Such training courses are to be staged at least once a year (approx. every 12 months).

Training programme and training proof, instruction/certificate from the health authorities

2.8.2 Information on the QS scheme

All responsible employees must be informed of the basic principles of the QS scheme and the relevant requirements contained in the QS scheme manual that fall within their scope of work. Relevant employees must be informed regarding checks that are carried out on the proper use of the QS certification mark on produce.

3 Process-specific requirements

3.1 Incoming goods

3.1.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

The incoming goods area is to be designed in such a way as to enable access restriction and not allow outside persons to enter the company unrestricted. A separate entrance for staff must be present.

3.1.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

Rooms must be protected from pest infestation with closable gates and doors. Delivered goods must also be inspected for infestation and the appropriate corrective actions must be implemented if necessary.

3.1.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.1.4 Order and organisation

Goods must be received via structured work processes. Spatial arrangements must be clearly highlighted in the work process and any potential risks for food safety must be avoided. The path of the goods must be designed so that no cross-contamination may occur. Goods that require refrigeration must be delivered immediately into the cold storage rooms (if the goods are not being handled straight away), otherwise corrective actions must be taken to guarantee compliance with the cold chain.

3.1.5 Transport vehicles delivery

Delivery vehicles must be in a hygienically sound and tidy condition and display no signs of previous soiling. Drivers and any accompanying persons must be wearing clean clothes. The goods may not be impaired by the clothing or by the way the goods are handled.

The transported goods must be hygienically sound and display no signs of major soiling.

Temperature checklists, temperature documentation

3.1.6 Incoming goods inspection

Incoming goods inspections must follow a defined and written procedure and must be implemented based on internal specifications. The controls in incoming goods must be documented. They must incorporate all relevant products. If required, the incoming goods inspection must be adjusted to any changes in manufacturing, storage or transport conditions.

Incoming goods inspection

3.1.7 [K.O.] Labelling of purchased QS goods

When QS goods are purchased, they must be clearly identified as such in the accompanying documents (generally delivery notes or delivery notifications via EDI or alternatively weighing slips) and must be identifiable as QS goods upon delivery at goods receipt.

The obligation to label the accompanying documents applies to all QS goods, regardless of whether the QS certification mark is used on the label or the outer packaging (⇒ 2.1.2. Use of the QS certification mark) or not.

The clear assignment between QS goods and corresponding goods documents (delivery notes and other accompanying documents) must be guaranteed at all times. The same applies to the use of goods documents in electronic form.

The procedure for QS labelling must be explained and known to the responsible employees who work with the products, even if no QS goods are handled.

For the labelling of QS goods in the accompanying documents (as an alternative to product-related labelling), overarching rules can be agreed between customers and suppliers or synonyms can be used. The procedure must be documented in the quality management manual or in a work instruction, must be known to the employees concerned and to the supplier/recipient of the goods, and must be traceable in the audit.

Proof of QS produce (e.g. delivery notes, etc.)

3.1.8 [K.O.] Product temperature

In the case of frozen food, the temperature throughout the food must be maintained at minus 18°C or below. During unloading and storage, short-term variations by a maximum of 3°C are permitted (in accordance with **TLMV (German Frozen Food Ordinance)**).

The product temperature of meat and meat products may not exceed the values specified in Table 1. The temperatures of goods that are subject to mandatory cooling regulations must be recorded and documented during the incoming goods inspection. If lower temperatures have been defined in the company and agreed with the supplier, they must be complied with and observed when receiving goods.

Table 1: Temperature requirements, measured as product temperature(1), for food of animal origin requiring cold storage

Products	Maximum Temperature [°C]	Minimal Temperature [°C]
Meat, fresh (except poultry) and meat products	+7	-2
Slaughter by-products (e.g. offal)	+3	-2
Minced meat (self-service packaged)	+2	-2
Meat preparations	+4	-2
Poultry (incl. poultry offal)	+4	-2

(1) The product temperature is the maximum temperature to be adhered to throughout food requiring cold storage.

Poultry meat used in fresh poultry preparations must be stored at a temperature between -2°C and +4°C at all times in accordance with **REG (EU) No 1308/2013.**

Documentation of temperature

3.1.9 [K.O.] Returns management

A system for processing returns must be in place. All returned goods must be recorded and evaluated. Decision processes relevant to the further use of returned goods must be followed. Appropriate corrective actions must be implemented to prevent the recurrence of nonconformities. The separation of QS goods and non-QS goods must be observed.

3.1.10 Complaints management

A system for managing product claims and product complaints must be in place. All claims/complaints must be assessed and, where necessary, appropriate corrective actions taken.

- Claims = made by authorities
- Complaints = made by costumers and consumers

3.2 Storage

3.2.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.2.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

3.2.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.2.4 Stock management

A plausible and comprehensible stock management plan must be in place (e.g. FIFO/FEFO). It must be quick and easy to identify which goods were stored and when. Each product or packaging unit that has been put into storage or temporarily set down must be clearly identifiable. The storage conditions may not have any negative effects on the product properties.

A procedure must also be specified and known to the relevant members of staff that specifies the corrective actions and steps in the event of a facility malfunction. Furthermore, there must be a procedure determined for the handling of blocked products and goods that are non-compliant.

The following information must be documented in a comprehensible manner based on company records:

- Date of delivery
- Warehouse/Box/Crate designation
- Supplier
- Variety
- Quantity

Documentation on storage, storage management process

3.2.5 Best-before date

It must be ensured that the best-before date is observed in all rooms. Regular inspection of the best-before date must be guaranteed for this purpose. Goods with an expired best-before date must be handled according the internal guidelines. A responsible employee must be named for this purpose.

3.3 Cold storage rooms

3.3.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.3.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

Mould formation in cold storage rooms must be avoided. If necessary, steps must be introduced to remove the mould. It should also be ensured that frost formation is kept to a minimum. The cooling systems must be regularly maintained and kept in a hygienically sound condition.

3.3.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.3.4 Stock management

⇒ 3.2.4 Stock management

3.3.5 [K.O.] Temperature recording and monitoring

Temperature recording and monitoring must be managed in such a way that the product temperature requirements (⇒ 3.1.8 Product temperature) are met. The product with the lowest temperature level determines the temperature for the entire storage room.

The temperatures of each cold storage facility must be registered and documented. There must also be a defined, well-versed procedure in place in case of technical faults.

Temperature and climate records, temperature checklist, documentation of corrective actions in case of nonconformity

3.3.6 [K.O.] Best-before date/Use-by date

Compliance with the best-before date or use-by date must be observed in all rooms. Regular inspection of the best-before date/use-by date must be guaranteed for this purpose. Goods with an expired best-before date must be handled according to internal guidelines. Goods with an expired use-by date may not be distributed. A responsible employee must be named for this purpose.

3.3.7 Species-specific product separation

Species-specific product separation must be ensured to prevent any negative reciprocal effects. Companies that, due to a lack of space, separate species based on time schedules must ensure interim cleaning procedures. From the deboning stage onward, the following sequence must be observed to reduce salmonella: first cattle, then pork, then poultry.

3.4 Frozen storage rooms

3.4.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.4.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

Frozen storage rooms must be in a clean and hygienically sound condition. There is no contamination. Mould accumulation in frozen storage rooms must be prevented and, if necessary, steps to remove mould must be implemented. It must also be ensured that frosting is kept to a minimum. A documented cleaning plan must be in place for the cooling systems. Proof of cleaning must be documented.

3.4.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.4.4 Stock management

⇒ 3.2.4 Stock management

3.4.5 [K.O.] Temperature recording and monitoring

Temperature recording and monitoring must be managed in such a way that the product temperature requirements (⇒ 3.1.8 Product temperature) are met.

The temperatures of each cold storage facility must be registered and documented. There must also be a defined procedure in place, with which the responsible employees are familiar in case of technical faults.

Self-assessment records, checklists, documentation of measures in the event of nonconformity, documentation of temperature

3.4.6 [K.O.] Best-before date

It must be ensured that the best-before date is observed in all rooms. Regular inspection of the best-before date must be guaranteed for this purpose. Goods with an expired best-before date must be handled according the internal guidelines. A responsible employee must be named for this purpose.

3.5 Packaging/redistribution

3.5.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.5.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

3.5.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.5.4 Packaging material

Only packaging material from which the outer packaging has already been removed may be used in the production rooms. Packaging damage is to be avoided and prevented, particularly in the case of packaging materials such as plastics (HACCP).

3.5.5 [K.O.] Declaration of conformity/Declaration of no objection

Packaging material that comes into direct contact with food must be harmless and hygienically sound. The certificate of compliance must be guaranteed to be up to date. All packaging materials in use that do not have a declaration of conformity according to **REG (EU) No. 10/2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food** must have a declaration of no objection (Sample form Declaration of conformity with the food laws for food packaging).

Packaging materials and packaging resources must be suitable for the intended purpose and conform with the current legal provisions. The packaging company must hold copies of the certificates of compliance for the packaging material in use.

Reference to further documents:

- Sample form Declaration of conformity with the food laws for food packaging

Declaration of conformity/declaration of no objection, packaging material

3.5.6 Storage of packaged goods

Packaged goods that have been prepared for transport must be stored in a manner that preserves their quality through:

- Appropriate hygiene conditions
- Protection from physical and chemical hazards (appropriate temperature, no permanent exposure to light, etc.)

3.5.7 Storage/transport containers for products

Storage/transport containers for products used internally within companies may only be used for storing or transporting the goods. The containers must be suitable for their intended purpose, be harmless, clean and hygienically sound, and they must guarantee the prevention of contamination.

3.5.8 [K.O.] Temperature recording and monitoring

Temperature guidelines must be available for all packaged or labelled products requiring cool storage (for meat, see Table 1), which are also included as a notice on the final consumer packaging. The cold chain must be monitored and documented within the company's sphere of influence. If temperature limits are exceeded, the respective corrective actions must be defined and known to the respective members of staff.

Documentation of temperature

3.5.9 [K.O.] Product labelling meat/meat products

All beef products must be labelled in accordance with **REG (EC) No. 1760/2000** and observance of **REG (EU) No. 1308/2013**, Annex 7. Pig and poultry products must comply with the provisions of **REG (EU) No. 1337/2013** . Compliance with these regulations can be verified by the traceability and labelling system for meat from ORGAINVENT.

The following information must be listed on the product packaging of food intended for final consumers:

- Designation of the food
- List of ingredients (QUID if necessary)
- Reference to allergenic substances (also applies to bulk goods in line with **LMIV**)
- Total net quantity of the food
- Best-before date/use-by date
- If necessary, special instructions for storage and/or use
- Name and address of the food company
- Nutrition declaration (does not apply to primary products and foods according to Annex V of the **REG (EC) No. 1169/2011)**
- EU licence/registration number
- Date of freezing
- Indication of origin, if legally required

3.6 Order picking, outgoing goods/shipping

3.6.1 Technical/Structural Condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.6.2 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, plant and equipment hygiene

3.6.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.6.4 Order and organisation

In the area of order picking, shipping and purchase acceptance, clearly defined procedures and processes must be defined so that at least the following points and their adherence are taken into consideration:

- Temperature
- Labelling (labels, packing notes, QS certification mark)
- Best-before date/use-by date/storage instructions
- Damages/soiling

3.6.5 [K.O.] Inspection of outgoing goods

A structured and comprehensible inspection of outgoing goods must be implemented within the company. The manner in which nonconformities are handled must be specified. The responsible employees must be trained in dealing with non-conforming products. Before loading, the accompanying documents must be checked, the load must be reconciled (goods and packaging) as well as an inspection of the correct product labelling must be conducted. Specifications must be complied with.

Outgoing goods checklist/delivery note

3.6.6 [K.O.] Labelling of marketed QS goods

Goods can only be marketed/delivered as QS goods if a corresponding QS eligibility for delivery exists for the company's own location and the goods were purchased as QS goods. Upon delivery, QS goods must be clearly labelled as such in the accompanying documents (generally delivery notes or delivery notifications via EDI, or alternatively weighing slips) so that they can be identified as QS goods by the recipient at goods receipt.

The obligation to label the accompanying documents applies to all QS goods, regardless of whether the QS certification mark is used on the label or the outer packaging (⇒ 2.1.2. Use of the QS certification mark) or not.

The clear assignment between QS goods and corresponding goods documents (delivery notes and other accompanying documents) must be guaranteed at all times. The same applies to the use of goods documents in electronic form.

The procedure for QS labelling must be explained and known to the responsible employees who work with the products, even if no QS goods are handled.

For the labelling of QS goods in the accompanying documents (as an alternative to product-related labelling), overarching rules can be agreed between customers and suppliers or synonyms can be used. The procedure must be documented in the quality management manual or in a work instruction, must be known to the employees concerned and to the supplier/recipient of the goods, and must be traceable in the audit.

Incoming and outgoing goods documents

Marketing of loose goods

If loose, unpackaged QS produce and loose, unpackaged non-QS produce are transported together in one transport container (e.g. sausage for the service counter), labelling the container with the QS certification mark is not permitted. Labelling the individual products is recommended (e.g. using a sleeve). In this case, QS labelling is only allowed on the valid delivery note. It is important that the recipient is informed which articles from the order fulfil the QS requirements and can therefore be marketed as QS produce. For this purpose, a list must be kept for the staff in the food retail store, indicating which products are QS produce and which not. This approach is only permissible if a decision can be made that is comprehensible to third parties (e.g. clear separation of QS produce and non-QS produce).

Scheme participants may only label QS produce as such in the accompanying documents if the reseller is also a QS scheme participant. If at a business customer level, QS produce is marketed to non-QS scheme participants, these goods may not be identified as such in the accompanying documents, unless it is to be expected that the reseller will no longer actively advertise the goods as QS produce in the course of its business transactions and when dealing with its recipients (e.g. via a general notice on the accompanying documents).

Incoming and outgoing goods documents

3.6.7 [K.O.] Product temperature

The legally required product temperatures must be adhered to (for meat, see Table 1) and may only be exceeded for a short period if this is required for reasons of practicality (e.g. during loading and unloading, during transport into the plant).

If lower temperatures have been defined within the business (internal requirements) and agreed with the client (e.g. according to specifications), these must be fulfilled.

Temperatures must be monitored and documented.

Temperature documentation, outgoing goods checklist

3.7 Other Business Premises

3.7.1 Packaging material storage

Packaging material must be stored in its own area that is separate from other goods. The room must be clean and organised, and cleaned in accordance with the cleaning and disinfection plan. When storing packaging material and any packaging resources, the risk of contamination must be considered.

3.7.2 Storage of cleaning agents and disinfectants

Rooms or facilities in which cleaning products, disinfectants and cleaning equipment are stored must be kept clean and tidy. They must ensure hygienic storage of the equipment and, if necessary, a clear separation of

clean/unclean equipment. The equipment must be regularly maintained and cared for. A procedure for cleaning and, if necessary, disinfecting the rooms and cleaning equipment must be available and familiar to staff.

Current safety data sheets and usage instructions must be available for the cleaning products and disinfectants. Usage instructions must be known to the responsible members of staff and must be stored on site. Cleaning/disinfection products and equipment must be clearly labelled and stored separately from food in accordance with the specific requirements.

For environmentally hazardous substances, additional precautions (e.g. protective trays) must be met in accordance with the relevant safety data sheets and usage instructions.

Safety data sheets, usage instructions

3.7.3 Waste disposal logistics

Food waste and other waste products

- must be removed from locations in which food is handled as quickly as possible in order to prevent an accumulation of waste
- must also be stored in closed containers. These containers must be suitable for proper maintenance, easily cleanable and, if necessary, easy to disinfect. If there is a risk of confusion between waste containers and food containers, or for any another necessity, the containers must be labelled.

Suitable precautions must be taken for the storage and disposal of food waste and other waste products. Waste collection rooms must be designed and managed in a way that they can be kept clean and free from animals (dogs, cats, birds) and pests. The rooms must be cleaned regularly. This must be documented. Waste must be stored in an area where it is protected against unauthorised access.

3.7.4 Sink area

The sink area must be in a clean and hygienically sound condition. The dishwasher must be cleaned and descaled per the cleaning and disinfection plan. The dosage of the cleaning product and the temperature of the dishwasher must be inspected on a regular basis. Towels and cloths must be used and stored in a manner that prevents cross-contamination.

3.8 Transport/Logistics

3.8.1 Product-compliant transport

Goods must be transported as per product requirements. Goods are to be transported in consideration of the type of goods, transport distance and outdoor temperatures. Loose goods are to be transported in such a way that no contamination may occur. A clear separation of QS products and non-QS-products must be guaranteed at all times.

Proof of product-compliant transport

3.8.2 Transport hygiene

The vehicles must be in a hygienically sound and tidy condition and display no signs of previous soiling. Cargo holds and loading surfaces may only be used if they are clean and free from any contamination. Before loading and after unloading, the loading area must be checked for dirt. If necessary, the loading area needs to be cleaned.

Accordingly, the driver and any accompanying persons must be wearing clean clothes. The goods must not be negatively affected in any way, including by clothing or the way in which they are handled. The goods to be transported must be load-ed in a hygienically sound manner and condition.

The transported goods must be hygienically sound and display no signs of major soiling.

Temperature documentation

3.8.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.8.4 [K.O.] Temperature control

For vehicles in the company's own fleet, the temperature inside cargo holds must be set in accordance with the goods to be transported. It must be checked and documented before the start of the journey. If necessary, the temperature recorders on the vehicle must be checked and read. Temperature checks be-fore the journey may

be omitted if temperatures are recorded continuously during transport. The tempera-ture of the goods must comply with and be documented in accordance with the legal requirements of REG (EC) No. 853/2004 or the specifications.

For goods that require cold storage, the temperature for the entire journey must be maintained and con-tinuously documented in accordance with the applicable guidelines and specifications.

Temperature records, transport vehicle checklist

3.9 Freezing and thawing

3.9.1 Technical/structural condition

⇒ 2.4 Technical/structural condition

3.9.2 Room, equipment and plant hygiene

⇒ 2.5 Room, equipment and plant hygiene

3.9.3 Ground clearance

⇒ 2.6 Ground clearance

3.9.4 Process control

The process control must be suitable for freezing or thawing the products without affecting quality and/or product safety. It is a process, which is considered by chapter 2.2 HACCP and whose parameters (e.g. time, temperature) are continuously registered and recorded. While goods are thawing, contamination with thawing water must be avoided.

4 Traceability and origin of goods

4.1 Methods and control of traceability

4.1.1 [K.O.] Methods of traceability

Evidence of a transparent commodity flow must be provided. System participants must set up traceability systems and procedures in accordance with **REG (EC) No 178/2002**. The batch sizes produced by each supplier must be defined to ensure traceability. It must be ensured that an article or article group can be traced back to the daily production or shift as a minimum.

A labelling and registration system must be in operation that is understandable to third parties. The labelling and registration system must ensure that goods can be clearly identified and that the commodity flows and packaging materials are traceable and comprehensible at all times.

It must be ensured that traceability data is submitted to QS within 24 hours after contacting the scheme participant.

Internal traceability processes must be structured during an audit in such a way that the respective information can be compiled within four hours.

The following information on customers, suppliers and deliveries is relevant:

- Name, address and telephone number of the food business operator from whom the food was dispatched and, if necessary, of the consignor (owner) and further recipients
- QS ID and location number (provided these identification numbers are assigned as part of the QS scheme)
- Type and quantity of the delivered products
- Dispatch date, delivery date
- Batch number (if generated during the production process)
- For bulk goods, the batch/lot number on the outer packaging

When forming beef batches and as part of the labelling and registration system, the requirements of **REG (EC) No. 1825/2000**, Article 4 are binding. For pork and poultry meat, Articles 4 and 5.3 of **REG (EU) No. 1337/2013** must be complied with. Furthermore, national regulations must also be compiled with.

Supplier and customer list

It must be possible to trace which products/packaging materials were procured from which supplier. A list of all the suppliers must be available.

It must be possible to trace which products are delivered to which customer. A list of all the customers must be available.

- Batch labelling, traceability system, batch formation, incoming goods documents (e.g. delivery notes, incoming goods inspection) and outgoing goods documents, supplier list, customer list

4.1.2 [K.O.] Separation and identification of QS goods/non-QS goods

Companies must have a comprehensible system in place for separating QS goods from non-QS goods. It must be guaranteed that QS goods and non-QS goods are clearly labelled and separated into batches. If no QS goods exists within the company (e.g. during initial audit), the goods separation procedure must be demonstrated in a suitable manner.

QS goods must be clearly identifiable within the company at all times. It must be ensured that there is no possibility of confusion.

4.1.3 [K.O.] Traceability check

The traceability of all goods is to be checked using an example from production or outgoing goods in accordance with **REG (EC) No. 178/2002**. This also applies to spices and – in accordance with **REG (EC) 1935/2004** (on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food), – to packaging.

The system must be tested at least once a year (approx. every 12 months). All relevant commodity flows must be taken into account. The test must be documented and the findings presented in a comprehensible manner.

Products that are known to contain QS produce but are not labelled as QS produce must also be taken into account for the traceability test.

- Traceability system test

4.1.4 [K.O.] Reconciliation of incoming goods with outgoing goods

There must be a plausible relation between the quantity of the purchased goods and the quantity of stored and delivered goods.

- Incoming goods documents (e.g. delivery notes, incoming goods inspection) and outgoing goods documentsas well as quantity of goods in cold/frozen storage rooms

4.1.5 [K.O.] Check on QS eligibility of delivery

Delivering companies

All companies delivering QS goods must be clearly identified in the QS database as a location with eligibility of delivery at the time of handing over the goods. This also applies to agencies and to companies that handle and/or store products but do not own the goods.

Receiving companies

All companies receiving QS produce must be clearly identified in the QS database as a location with eligibility of delivery at the time of the goods being handed over.

- Process for checking QS eligibility of delivery

5 Definitions

5.1 Explanation of symbols

K.O. criteria are marked with **[K.O.]**

References to related documents are highlighted in **bold text.**

- This symbol means: A written confirmation must be provided. Next to this symbol, there is also a list of documents that can be used as proof. All control and documentation systems (including digital) that prove the requirements are met, can be used.

References to other sections of the guideline are indicated by ⇒.

Notes are identified by ***Note*** *in italics.*

5.2 Abbreviations

CP	Control Point
CCP	Critical Control Point
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
FEFO	First Expired – First Out
FIFO	First In – First Out
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
K.O.	Knock out
BBE	Best Before End (date)
QUID	Quantitative Ingredient Declaration

5.3 Terms and definitions

- Service provider

  In the QS sense, service providers are companies that carry out activities within the realms of wholesale, such as storage, sorting and packaging, without becoming the owner of the goods.

- HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point)

  A system that identifies, evaluates and monitors hazards that are significant in terms of food safety.

- HACCP concept

  Documentation in compliance with HACCP principles to ensure the monitoring of hazards relevant to food safety.

- Labelling

  Labelling is the method of identifying QS produce on accompanying documentation. Goods that have been produced on a QS-certified farm in accordance with the QS scheme requirements, but are not labelled as such on the delivery note, lose their status as QS produce and may not be marketed as QS produce.

- QS produce

  Goods that are produced and/or marketed by a QS-certified company in accordance with the QS scheme requirements.

- Use of QS certification mark

  Use of QS certification mark describes how the QS certification mark is represented on goods.

A list of general terms and definitions can be found in the **Guideline General Regulations**.

Revision Information Version 01.01.2024

Criterion	Changes	Date of change
2.1.10 Commissioning of logistics companies/ Subcontractors	**Renaming:** Prior *commissioning of service providers* **Clarification:** If logistics companies are commissioned at short notice for the transport of QS goods on the spot market within the framework of individual daily contracts (e.g. in the case of high seasonal volumes), this requirement can be deviated from. In this case, companies must comply with QA requirements.	01.01.2024
3.6.6 [K.O.] Labelling of marketed QS goods	**Clarification**: Editorial adjustments	01.01.2024

Guideline
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