

REPORT

—Certification



# Extensive inspections with a system Certification bodies, auditors and laboratories in the QS scheme

**W**ith the QS scheme, strict, stage-specific requirements for reliable quality assurance apply from farm to shop. Independent certification bodies authorised by QS verify with their auditors whether, and to what extent, these requirements are being implemented. In addition, QS-approved laboratories carry out extensive residue analyses within the framework of the monitoring programmes. The results of these audits and analyses of the laboratories are collected and documented in the QS databases, so quality assurance in the QS scheme becomes comprehensible and the trust of all participants in safe food is enhanced.

**CERTIFICATION BODIES AND AUDITORS: QUALIFIED EXPERTS IN ACTION ON SITE**

Certification bodies, along with their employees and auditors, are an important link between QS and the companies participating in the QS

scheme. During the audits, they take a close look at all relevant production and marketing processes and review the corresponding documentation. In their inspections, the auditors obtain a first-hand impression of the respective company and use a checklist to assess a variety of individual criteria. From the evaluation of the individual criteria it is determined whether and how a company passes the audit. Criteria that are particularly relevant for food safety or for the trustworthiness of the QS scheme are defined as so-called knockout (KO) criteria. If an insufficient score is reached in the evaluation of the individual criteria or KO requirement is not fulfilled, the audit is considered as not passed. Corrective actions and deadlines are defined for the non-conformities identified by the independent experts during the audits. The certification bodies must monitor the timely implementation of the corrective actions.

The frequency of the audits is graded in accordance with the risk.

This means: companies that show a good performance during the audit are visited less frequently. The worse the audit result, the more often an auditor comes by.

To ensure a consistent level of inspections, the auditors are regularly trained by their certification bodies and by QS staff. Furthermore, the certification bodies participate in workshops organised by QS, in order to inform themselves about news in the QS scheme and to exchange practical experiences. They also provide important suggestions and hints from real life situations for the further development of the QS scheme.

**LABORATORIES: MAXIMUM LEVELS AND LIMIT VALUES AT A GLANCE**

As part of the residue monitoring, laboratories recognised in the QS scheme regularly analyse sent-in samples for residues or excessive levels of plant protection products. The systematic monitoring of the products allows to identify risks in good time and initiate measures to eliminate them. The requirements defined by QS for the laboratories' competence ensure reliable and comparable results. This also includes the fact that, within the framework of the Laboratory Performance Assessment, which is organised by QS twice a year, the QS-approved laboratories must continuously prove that they are able to provide their services sustainably and at a uniformly high level.

**SCHEME INTEGRITY SYSTEM**

In addition to the continuous monitoring of the laboratories' performance, the work of the certification bodies and auditors is also put on the test bench within the context of the Scheme Integrity System (SIS in German). Thus, for example, some QS scheme audits are accompanied by QS staff or persons appointed by QS, in order to gain an impression of the auditors' work and evaluations.



**RECEIVE THE QS APPROVAL AS CERTIFICATION BODY**

The precondition for admission in the QS scheme is an accreditation by EN 45011 or EN ISO / IEC 17065. If you would like to receive the approval for the QS scheme for your certification body, please contact us. Further information can be found in the Guideline Certification at: [bit.ly/2VYN67v](http://bit.ly/2VYN67v)

Your contact person:  
Marleen Schultheiß  
marleen.schultheiß@q-s.de  
+49 (0) 228 35068-291

**BECOME AN AUDITOR FOR THE QS SCHEME**

The basis for working as a QS auditor is an agricultural or food-related education, as well as the appropriate audit experience. If you would like to be admitted as an auditor in the QS scheme, please contact a QS-approved certification body. You can discuss the further procedure directly with them. A list of all the certification bodies in the QS scheme can be found at the following address: [bit.ly/2FuXjUu](http://bit.ly/2FuXjUu)

Your contact person:  
Marleen Schultheiß  
marleen.schultheiß@q-s.de  
+49 (0) 228 35068-291



**BECOME A QS-APPROVED LABORATORY**

A pre-condition for admission in the QS scheme is EN ISO / IEC 17065 accreditation. If you would like to receive QS approval for your laboratory, please contact:

Claudia Rotter  
claudia.rotter@q-s.de  
+49 (0) 228 35068-292

