



INFO LETTER MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS



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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

We take action and adapt our quality assurance whenever risks change or better knowledge of risks is gained. It is good if we can respond quickly, appropriately and dynamically. Dynamic action of this kind is now possible with the help of ad hoc monitoring plans in the feed sector. In this way, economic operators succeeded in drawing additional consequences from the aflatoxin findings (see Page 2).

But changes sometimes need extra time and provisional regulations too, as the avoiding of

piglet castration without anaesthetics shows (see below). Implementable solutions for day-to-day practice have been developed in the meantime, but they are not yet widely applicable.

There is even more in this info letter, however. You can find out all about how the economic operators are getting to grips with cross-stage quality assurance in this edition too.

Your QS Team **Bonn, 31. July 2013**

AVOIDING PIGLET CASTRATION WITHOUT ANAESTHETICS PHASE-OUT BY 2018 TARGETED

The sector is making good progress towards meeting its self-imposed objective of phasing out piglet castration without anaesthetics by 2018. This is the conclusion of the more than 200 participants in the specialised trade conference “Avoiding piglet castration without anaesthetics” which was organised jointly by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) and QS.

Scientists and practitioners showed recently in Berlin that the sector has made clear progress since the Düsseldorf Declaration of 2008. In presentations and discussion rounds, they gave a comprehensive overview of the latest experiences made in entire male production, the use of anaesthetics in castration and vaccination against boar taint.

Agriculture representatives made it clear that pig farmers are willing to produce entire males but that a lot of preparation is required in advance, because the demands placed on the farming and feeding of the boars are higher than they are with the production of castrated piglets. The castration of piglets under anaesthesia is also a practicable alternative, they stated, but meth-

ods still have to be developed further for wide-scale implementation. They also called on the pharmaceuticals industry to develop products for local anaesthesia, as prescribed by the new animal welfare law.

An alternative to surgery is vaccination against boar taint. As the vaccination has an influence on the animal’s hormone system, however, consumers could reject the method, the participants pointed out.

The marketing side is also contributing to the phase-out of piglet castration without anaesthetics. The detection of meat with boar taint at the abattoir is already in place today, according to industry representatives, and the signals from the retail sector show that there is a future for the meat of entire males. This, however, must not be

allowed to have the result that other alternatives to piglet castration without anaesthetics are neglected. One speaker hit the nail on the head: “There won’t be simply black or white, it will be a mixture of various shades of grey”. The efforts to establish castration with a local anaesthetic by farmers must continue without letting up.

In the concluding podium discussion (see photo), the participants agreed that the path they have set out on is important and correct. Even though some open questions still have to be answered, the representatives of the sector are convinced that with a concerted effort, the abolition deadline will be met.

The presentations delivered at the trade conference can be downloaded from the media centre at the QS website.



L to R: Dr. Heinz Schweer (Vion), Jörg Zuber (Kaufland), Heinrich Dierkes (ISN), Katrin Spemann (QS), Thomas Schröder (DTB), Dr. Wolfgang Lutz (DFV), Waltraud Fesser (Consumer Centre)

FEED SECTOR MORE CONSEQUENCES DRAWN FROM AFLATOXIN FINDINGS



The industry took action quickly: For corn and corn processing products from certain countries, 100% monitoring has to be carried out until further notice. This is stipulated by the ad hoc monitoring plan estab-

lished within the scope of QS Monitoring and valid since 1 July 2013.

With the revision of the Guidelines Feed Sector and Feed Monitoring which has just been completed, the economic operators are drawing additional consequences from the detection of the mycotoxin aflatoxin in feed corn. "In future, the QS scheme will be able to establish ad hoc monitoring plans as soon as potential risks become known. By doing so, we will be able to respond to risks quickly and consistently," is how Katrin Spemann of QS explains the procedure. The currently valid ad hoc monitoring plan is directed towards compound feed producers, feed mate-

rial producers, small-scale feed material producers and feed traders in the QS scheme.

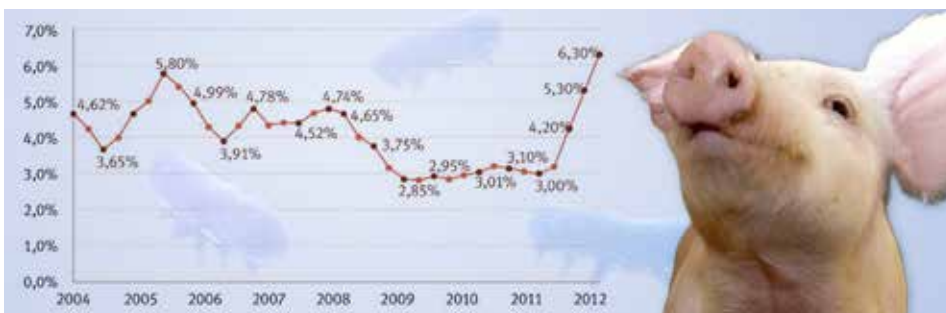
The outline conditions for sampling have also been specified. Feed producers and traders must be able to prove in future that every ocean-going vessel and every variety of raw material (e.g. corn and wheat) has been taken into account in the location-specific sampling plan. Sampling must include all of the hatches and holds of ocean-going vessels.

All of the changes that came into effect on 1 July can be reviewed in the respective revision information at the download centre. The first revision due to findings of aflatoxin was made as long ago as May 2013.

SALMONELLA MONITORING ADDING TO TEN SUCCESSFUL YEARS

With salmonella monitoring within the QS scheme, the economic operators have been contributing to the quality and safety of food for ten years. The risk of salmonella entering the food chain has dropped continuously during this period. Vigilance is still required from all parties involved, however, as the latest developments show.

The number of businesses participating in QS salmonella monitoring has risen sharply since the programme began in 2003. Today, more than 110 slaughtering plants, 400 veterinarians and 27 laboratories who look after more than 25,000 pig production businesses in the QS scheme are helping to reduce the risk of salmonella. Since its introduction, they have drawn roughly 11 million meat juice or blood samples and examined them for salmonella antibodies. By doing so, businesses are identified in which pigs have more frequent contact with salmonella. These businesses must then implement measures to reduce salmonella contamination in



Development of Category III businesses in salmonella monitoring

their herds, thus lowering the risk of introducing salmonella to the food chain. With success, as the numbers show: since the beginning of monitoring, the number of businesses with a high salmonella risk (Category III) has declined continuously to less than 3 percent.

The latest evaluations also show, however, that more businesses have been classified in Category III since the middle of 2012 (see chart). This phenomenon occurs not only in Germany but also in Denmark, the UK and the Netherlands

where representatives of the sector are reporting similar developments. It cannot currently be stated with certainty what is causing this increase in the number of risk businesses.

The economic operators in the QS scheme are emphasising that a reduction of the introduction of salmonella to the food chain is still an essential task of quality assurance – from farm to shop. This is also the reason why the QS Advisory Board will be dealing with the further development of salmonella monitoring in September.

COMPASS FOR ENTIRE MALE PIG PRODUCTION ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The experts all agree that the fattening of entire males is fundamentally an alternative to the castration of piglets without anaesthetics. The start-up must be well prepared, however. The "Compass for entire male production" is intended to help pig farmers who want to fatten entire males. The brochure contains numerous experiences and tips from practitioners for practitioners. It can be ordered from QS.

Since its publication, the "Compass for entire male production" has met with great interest within the sector. To date, QS has sent more than 2,800 copies to interested farmers and or-

ganisations. In addition, the compass has been downloaded from the QS website more than 650 times since May.

"The demand for a publication of this kind remains high," commented Olaf Lück of QS on the numbers. "The response shows that it was right to push ahead with the compass," he continued.

When preparing the compass under the direction of Dr. Karl-Heinz Tölle of ISN-Projekt GmbH, the latest experiences made in entire male production were compiled, classified and assessed. Scientists, test institutions, advisers and agriculture practitioners gave their professional support

to the task with the result that a handy guideline was produced which can be used in all relevant farming businesses.

The "Compass for entire male production" can be downloaded online in PDF format at http://www.q-s.de/mc_kompass_jungebermast.html. Printed copies can be ordered there via a contact form (**German version only**).



QS-LIVE AMBASSADOR AND SCHEME PARTICIPANT BUTCHER FRANZ SEIBOLD

In the last few editions of the info letter, we have been introducing scheme participants and QS-live ambassadors from the Agriculture stage. This time, butcher Franz Seibold answers some questions. The 31-year-old feels very strongly about achieving the highest possible quality of meat and meat products and he and his colleagues do all they can to ensure this every day. But meat plays a part in his leisure activities too, because Franz Seibold is also an enthusiastic master of the barbecue.

What's so special about your profession?

Butchery is not just a profession for me, it's a calling. I grew up on a farm where pigs are fattened and cold cuts and sausage meat are cooked, so I learned all about animals and meat from an early age. When my brother took over the farm, I decided to train to be a butcher. Further advancement was always important to me, so after I gained my master tradesman's certificate, I broadened my horizons and went to work in the USA for six months. After that I trained for a further two years to become a butchery technician. Today I'm head of the cold cut meat and sausage department of a company near Heilbronn with responsibility for many different products.

What does quality assurance mean to you?

Quality comes first with me and the consumers should notice it. My colleagues and I do our

best to achieve this every single day. At work, I am constantly asking myself if everything is okay. To answer this question, we have built up a comprehensive self-assessment system at the plant. I continuously monitor key parameters and measure values so that we can respond immediately if necessary. Only in this way can we ensure that the customer gets safe products in top quality. With the QS certificate, we provide reliable proof that our processes are checked independently. The QS certification mark indicates to the consumer that the food comes from a reliable source.

What do you expect from the QS-live information campaign? Why are you joining in?

I'm convinced of QS and am participating in QS-live to produce more clarity for the consumers on the one hand while placing more emphasis on the benefits for the entire food chain and network idea of the QS scheme on the other. If everyone along the chain joins in, everyone benefits, because consumers and companies know that they can rely on safe foods – from farm to shop.



One last question: summertime is barbecue time, so what do you put on the grill?

My favourite is rib of beef. A nice piece 4-5 cm thick is enough for 2. After slaughtering, the ox is kept in the fridge room for a week before the sirloin is removed and kept refrigerated for another week. The chops are then cleanly removed with the rib. I grill them medium-rare to make them soft and tender.



QS-live
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ANTIBIOTICS MONITORING QS ENABLES FARM COMPARISONS



QS antibiotics monitoring has taken the next step: participants are now given a value – the therapy index – with which they can compare their use of antibiotics with others and evaluate the results. In this way, farms with an above average therapy index are provided with an initial tool for optimising their

in-house animal health management system together with the responsible veterinarian.

Since data recording began, veterinarians have entered more than 58,000 treatment records into the QS antibiotics database with more being added every day. From these data, QS calculates the therapy index for each individual business along with the average antibiotics utilisation rate of all businesses.

The therapy index is a yardstick for the intensity of antibiotics utilisation. It is a purely statistical value which shows the average number of days each animal was treated with an active antibiotic substance. It serves as an orientation aid for the classification of individual and comparison of all businesses.

Chicken producers are the first to benefit from the evaluations, which have just been sent to

them. With the amendment of the German Medicines Act which the Federal Council adopted at the beginning of July, the basis has now been formed for the set-up of a national antibiotics database.

To ensure that antibiotics use can continue to be evaluated from a statistical point of view, economic operators are sticking with QS antibiotics monitoring, but double reporting of data is to be avoided. Prior to its adoption, the industry discussed the possibility of an exchange of data which has now been given express consideration in the amendment of the Medicines Act.

QS is currently continuing to evaluate the available data and will be notifying pig, turkey and duck producers of their therapy index in the autumn.

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

TOGETHER FOR SAFE FOODS **COMPETENT ANSWERS TO CONSUMER QUESTIONS**

Consumers can purchase meat and meat products with the QS certification mark in more than 23,000 branches of the food retail sector. To ensure that consumers' questions on quality assurance and the QS certification mark can be answered with competence, QS is supporting scheme participants in a variety of ways.

Food retailers are particularly interested in joint campaigns with QS-live ambassador Lore Mauler. The LandFrau visits food retail branches so that consumers can ask the qualified housekeeper for advice in person. In doing so, they also find out what the economic operators in the QS scheme do to ensure that meat and meat products are always fresh and safe. On top of

this, they can put their knowledge of food to the test in the QS-live quality manager game.

This summer, the QS-live ambassador has already made appearances at a REWE market near Mannheim and a Kaiser's Tengelmann branch in Düsseldorf. She will be at Kaufland in Hamburg on 25 and 26 July 2013 and at EDEKA in Minden on 1 and 2 August, where she will be talking to customers at the E-Center Porta Westfalica. You can find out more about the supermarket campaigns in the QS-live blog at <http://www.qs-live.de/blog>.

The sales personnel are also important points of contact in the food retail sector. To ensure that they can also provide competent answers to consumers' questions, QS is preparing learning

and training material in collaboration with its scheme participants. The Grips & Co brand trainer for quality assurance in foods has also been updated and republished. The brochure was produced jointly with *RUNDSCHAU für den Lebensmitteleinzelhandel* and can be obtained free of charge by apprentices and vocational school students in the trade from August. It provides the latest market figures and trends, specialised information on the quality assurance of meat, fruit and vegetables and many practical tips for daily commitment to safe food.



SCHEME PARTNERS AND MARKETS **THE LATEST FIGURES**

Partners for foods from reliable sources: QS counted 104,556 scheme participants in the supply chain Meat and Meat products up to the cut-off date 1 July 2013. Even though the number of QS scheme participants is declining, especially among pig farmers, due to the continuing structural change, numbers increases in the feed sector, where participant numbers have increased by 245 to a total of 3,657 in the last twelve months. After the findings of aflatoxin, this is a clear signal for more safety at the beginning of the chain.

Scheme Participants in the Supply Chain Meat and Meat Products	Total ⁹	Of which abroad
Feed	3,657	494
- Feed material production ^{1,2}	1,166	126
- Compound feed production ³	1,347	291
- Trade, transport, storage ⁴	1,144	77
Agriculture	74,930	6,655
- Cattle farming ⁵	30,380	1
- Pig farming ⁶	40,432	5,169
- Poultry production	4,118	1,485
Livestock Transport	1,747	136
Slaughtering/ Deboning⁷	443	55
Processing⁹	326	13
Food Retail⁸	23,453	316

1 Further 300 businesses eligible to deliver due to GMP certification 2 Including 60 additive and premix production
3 Including 520 mobile feed milling and mixing plants 4 Further 3,622 businesses eligible to deliver due to GMP certification
5 Further 34,067 businesses eligible to deliver slaughter cows due to QM-milk auditing
6 Further 7328 QSG businesses (DK) and 2,161 Certus businesses (B) with eligibility of delivery due to bilateral agreements
7 Further 14 QSG businesses (DK) and 43 Certus businesses (B) with eligibility of delivery due to bilateral agreements
8 Including 145 meat wholesale companies 9 Including 66 butchery businesses

As of: 1 July 2013

+++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++ NEWS IN BRIEF +++ NEWS IN BRIEF ++

Working for cross-stage quality assurance

These colleagues have been giving their support to the scheme participants for over ten years now: Grit Ettenhofer, who is responsible for scheme contracts, Thomas May, responsible among other things for operative crisis management and salmonella and antibiotics monitoring, and Dr. Ragnhild Weber-Jonkheer, whose tasks include ensuring that the QS database

runs smoothly. All three of them celebrated their tenth anniversary with QS in the space of the last few months.

Unannounced audits since July 2013



The change in the inspection system is now becoming distinctly noticeable for farming businesses and companies in the supply chain Meat and Meat Products. Since July 2013, the auditors only announce their visit a few hours before the inspection. The scheme participants had a choice here between additional announced spot audits and unannounced regular audits.

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