



INFO LETTER FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND POTATOES



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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

The QS scheme is firmly established in the market for fruit, vegetables and potatoes. More and more companies are putting their faith in the quality assurance scheme with the blue certification mark, not only in Germany, but also increasingly in other countries, particularly Spain – reason enough to find out more about our partners „on the ground“ (see pages 1 and 2). With Iberiana Frucht S.A., we can also introduce a scheme participant who has adopted a role as pioneer for QS in Spain (see page 4).

One of our scheme participants in Germany is Karsten Knodt. He is a QS-live ambassador and runs a vegetable farm in the Lower Rhine region. In our interview with him on page 3, he explains why he decided in favour of QS.

As always, we also provide news and useful information from the QS scheme.

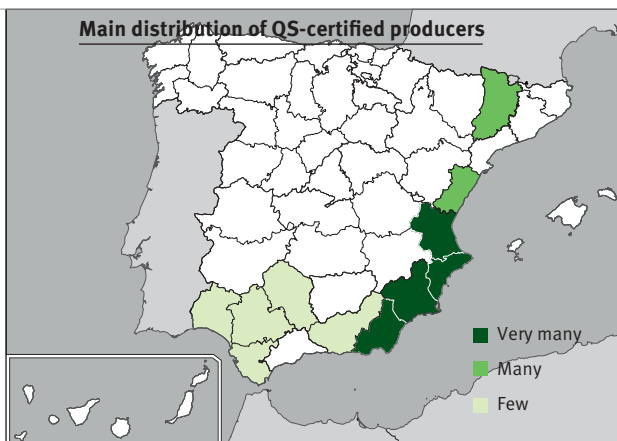
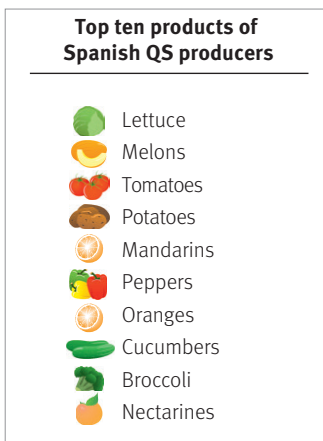
Your QS Team **Bonn, 3 Jan 2013**

WORKSHOP IN VALENCIA SPANISH COMPANIES SHOW GREAT INTEREST

Interest in the QS scheme is unabated on the Spanish procurement market, with more and more companies deciding to participate. For this reason, QS organised an exchange of experiences with Spanish scheme participants. The workshop addressed not only certified companies, but also potential new scheme participants. The focus of the event was set on the mutual exchange of ideas.

A total of 60 participants accepted the invitation and participated enthusiastically. The discussions demonstrated that Spanish companies are actively taking on the challenges. Everyone benefits from this: on the one hand, QS certified companies obtain wider market access and on the other hand, the season-independent supply of QS products to German food retailers is improved.

Many questions which arose during the workshop related to the practical implementation of QS requirements. This provided the opportunity to address the specific features of Spanish production. One focus area was the QS residue monitoring and the sampling associated with this.



The second part of the event was practice-oriented. Tips and tricks for working with the QS database were given by means of examples. In this way, QS employees were able to provide comprehensive assistance to users. The fact that the entire event took place in Spanish was particularly appreciated and meant that language barriers did not stand in the way of communication. Feedback from the participants was positive: “Because of this, many questions from Spanish companies could be answered”.

Due to the positive response, more workshops will follow. Contact with Spain will also be extended because of the steadily increasing number of scheme participants. By now, almost 80 QS-certified fruit and vegetable wholesalers deliver goods to Germany. In 2012 alone, the number of Spanish QS wholesalers more than doubled. This also had a positive impact on service providers: in November 2012, the fifth Spanish certification body achieved the sought-after QS approval.

SPAIN CONJOINT AUDITS OF CERTIFICATION BODIES



With the increased numbers of scheme participants, the number of audits in Spain has also risen. This is reason enough for Dr. Alois Fenneker (photo), who manages the certification bodies at QS, to carry out a conjoint audit on two Spanish certification bodies. These audits are carried out regularly on all certification bodies approved by QS.

During the audits, particular attention is paid to whether organisational prerequisites for proper implementation of QS certification requirements are met by the certification body. To this end, specific individual certification processes are checked on a random basis.

Ensuring a uniform procedure

“On-site checks ensure that QS requirements are implemented as uniformly as possible by the approved certification bodies”, explains Fenneker. “Ensuring the correct implementation of the QS-specific inspection system not only in Germany but also in other countries makes a significant contribution towards the reliability of the QS scheme as a whole. By means of

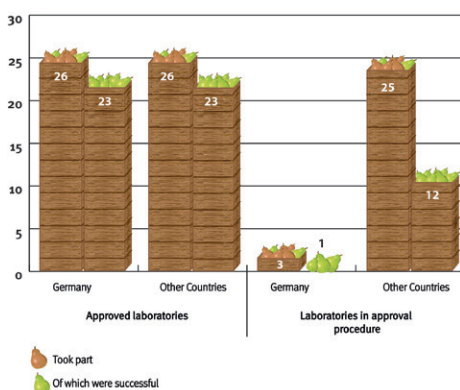
personal on-site inspections, language-related misunderstandings and conflicts can also be cleared up. Ultimately, this benefits all scheme participants.”

The next step will involve offering training specifically for auditors in Spain. With this step, QS is responding to the international connectedness of flows of goods. The aim is for every certified company to meet all requirements for scheme participation – technical, organisational and content-related – whether it produces and markets goods in Spain, Germany or any other country.

ANALYTICS IN TUNE WITH THE TIME LABORATORY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN AUTUMN 2012

Laboratories must always keep up with the latest technology in analytics in order to retain their approval in the QS scheme. The current laboratory performance assessment shows that even laboratories which are already approved cannot rest on their laurels with respect to their performance.

80 laboratories from 13 countries took part in the laboratory performance assessment in the autumn of 2012. 59 of these were adequately prepared for the pear test matrix and completed the assessment successfully. These included 12 laboratories which are currently still in the approval procedure. By officially passing the laboratory performance assessment, they are one step closer to approval by QS. More good news: no laboratory lost its approval. However, 8 laboratories approved in the QS scheme will be subject to a more intensive inspection due to their assessment results and are obliged to take part in the next laboratory performance assessment.



65% of the participants were from foreign countries. Only two of the 12 laboratories in the approval procedure were from Germany. Demand for high-quality residue monitoring is growing in foreign countries due to the increasing number of foreign scheme participants.

Two new substances, chlorantraniliprole and nivaluron, were contained in the pear samples to

be analysed. Identifying these substances was challenging, particularly for laboratories in the approval procedure. Substances such as iprodione and enilconazole, which were present in high concentrations in the test material – as is usual in practice – posed problems in terms of quantification. In these cases, laboratories are faced with the challenge of calibrating their analytical equipment in such a way that it can provide accurate results in the event of both high and low concentrations. For this purpose, common residue levels and limits of quantification must be taken into consideration, for example.

The experience of laboratory staff is another important factor. In seven cases, sample-related interpretation errors led to incorrect results. “In order to avoid interpretation errors, experience in the analysis of fruit and vegetables is extremely important”, says Jens Schaefer, who is responsible for carrying out laboratory performance assessment at QS.

NEW EU REGULATION ON SPROUTS COMPLIED WITH BY QS-APPROVED SPROUT PRODUCERS



In order to improve the safety of sprouts, the EU has drawn up four new regulations. Sprout producers with QS certification already comply with these regulations. This is ensured by the requirements governing staff and plant hygiene, traceability and microbiological monitoring.

The EU regulations are to come into force on 1 March 2013 and contain the following requirements for sprout seeds and sprouts:

- Stricter hygiene requirements and an approval obligation for companies producing sprouts
- Improved traceability of the flow of goods and supply channels through an EU-wide inspection system
- Stricter import requirements for products from third countries
- Adherence to microbiological criteria for sprouts.

With the Preparation guideline last year, the Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes advisory board has already drawn consequences from the

EHEC cases. This guideline applies to all post-harvesting procedures during which products are prepared, e.g. chopped. It also covers the preparation of microbiologically sensitive products, such as sprouts and seedlings. According to this guideline, sprout producers must meet strict hygiene conditions in addition to stage-specific requirements. Microbiological monitoring of the company’s plants and products is also required. As of 1 January 2013, these requirements will be supplemented by requirements governing the quality of water used for cultivation.

QS-LIVE AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW WITH KARSTEN KNODT



QS-live ambassador Karsten Knodt runs a vegetable farm in Toenisvorst in the Lower Rhine region. Together with his wife, he employs 13 permanent workers and a varying number of harvest workers on the farm. His primary focus is on the cultivation of tomatoes in greenhouses, but he also grows peppers.



When did you become a participant in the QS scheme and why did you decide to take part in it?

I have been a scheme participant since 2004 and I am coordinated via my marketing organisation Landgard. I initially obtained certification according to the QS standard and have been doing an annual QS-GAP audit since 2006. During this audit, both the QS criteria and the requirements of the GlobalG.A.P standard are checked and I can deliver my products into both systems. Nowadays, most trading enterprises demand certification of some kind. I meet a majority of the criteria required by QS on my farm in any case, as they are the basis of good professional practice. In my opinion, certain criteria, such as participation in residue monitoring, should be observed by everyone who works responsibly, and it is the fulfilment of these criteria that confirms the sound quality of my products.

What does quality assurance mean to you?

On my farm, I place emphasis on sustainability and quality, not on fast, short-term success. I firmly believe that this strategy pays off in the long run and that my customers value it. Quality assurance is not something that can be achieved

on Monday and forgotten about for the rest of the week. Quality assurance is worked on constantly, every day. When I walk around my farm and check that everything is clean and tidy, that my employees are working correctly, and so on, that is quality assurance. QS gives me a framework for this. How the picture is painted inside this frame is up to me.

Why are you involved in QS-live?

I believe that we producers and marketers can only build up trust among consumers if we work transparently and manage to convey background information about our production methods. I hope that QS-live contributes towards conveying this information. And I want to be a part of that. I am happy to show that I strive

every day towards supplying my customers with safe and high-quality products.

What makes your farm different?

On our farm, we use practically no chemical plant protection products. This is possible because we constantly monitor our plants and take measures before diseases can spread. To a great extent, we combat plant diseases and pests with their natural enemies. My personal passion is sustainability: the production of my tomatoes is completely carbon neutral.



NEW PAPERS OF INCIDENT OVERVIEW OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE QS SCHEME



Scheme participants now have the option of using a revised notification form when informing QS in the event of an incident. To a greater extent than before, the new notification forms are limited to the information relevant in the case of an incident or crisis. With the change from stage-specific to product-related notification forms, the number

of forms has also been significantly reduced. "Precise information is an important basis for the prompt clarification of critical situations", says Oliver Thelen (photo), QS crisis manager.

In the future, the following notification forms will be available to scheme participants:

- Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes for scheme participants in the fruit and vegetable sector (production, production coordinators, wholesale and food retail)
- Feed for scheme participants in the feed sector
- Livestock (Farming and Transport) for scheme participants in agriculture and livestock transport and for agricultural coordinators

- Meat and Meat Products for scheme participants in the meat industry and in wholesale or food retail.

If the scheme participant does not have any updated notification forms (papers of incident) available during audits after 1 January 2013, this should not be assessed as a nonconformity. In this case, however, auditors are required to inform the scheme participant about the updated paper of incident and the updated notification form.

In addition to the papers of incident, you will find the contact persons and a 24-hour emergency number on the QS homepage www.q-s.de/notification_in_case_of_incident.html.

QS PIONEER IN SPAIN **IBERIANA FRUCHT S.A.**



Iberiana S.A., based in Valencia, Spain, can look back on almost twenty years of experience in fruit and vegetables. It is a service company of MARKANT AG and places emphasis on comprehensive quality assurance and the complete traceability of goods “from cultivation to point of sale” as Iberiana managing director Enrique Clavel (photo) asserts proudly.

The company has been a QS scheme participant since 2008, making it one of the pioneers on the Spanish procurement market with regard to quality assurance. Iberiana Frucht was founded

in 1994 with the aim of supplying Markant members with high quality citrus fruits. According to Iberiana, this philosophy of quality is still followed today and is what made the company succeed.

Thanks to its steady growth, the company expanded beyond Spanish borders some time ago. Today, the focus is on cultivation areas in Italy, the Netherlands and Morocco, among other places. Tomatoes, grapes, lettuce and peppers play an important part in the product range. However, trade is still concentrated primarily on oranges, lemons, mandarins and grapefruits. These are the company’s flagship products.

Quality assurance defines all processes

“The QS quality scheme offers the best guarantees for safe, high-quality food. Our internal quality system also covers the entire process chain – just like QS”, reports Iberiana Managing Director Clavel, who is happy to rely on QS and

the blue certification mark. “We have built up a close-knit network of consulting services and product inspections. This begins with the producer and includes all packing stations”, the Iberiana managing director explains, adding that Iberiana customers value this.

Agricultural engineers who are present in the cultivation areas and carry out quality inspections on location make up part of the company-wide quality assurance system. In addition, all Iberiana products are analysed for residues in accredited, QS-approved laboratories. “Our end-to-end Iberiana inspection system focuses on continuous improvement and places particular value on food safety and product quality”, explains Clavel.

In summer 2012, Iberiana passed its latest QS audit with no problems and received the certificate. Enrique Clavel is certain that more Spanish companies will choose the QS route in the future.

SCHEME PARTICIPANTS AND MARKETS **THE LATEST FIGURES**

As of the end of 2012, 24,698 companies are registered in the supply chain Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes; at the beginning of the year, this figure was 23,715. In 2012, the number of foreign producers alone rose by over 1,000. This is the decisive factor for the positive development of the scheme participant numbers in the area of fruit, vegetables and potatoes.

Scheme participants in the chain Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes	Total	Of which outside Germany
Production¹	24,698	5,363
- Fruit, vegetables	13,185	4,937
- Potatoes	10,567	4,899
	2,618	38
Wholesale	729	226
Food Retail	10,784	200

¹ Of which:
Producers with QS-GAP certification: 6,503; producers with recognised GlobalG.A.P. certification: 3,221
Producers with recognised IKKB certification: 2,267; producers with recognised AMAG.A.P. certification: 124

As of: 1 Dec. 2012

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



10 years at QS

QS Managing Director Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff has been serving QS for ten years. He took up his post on 2 November 2002. Under his management, the QS scheme has developed into a well-established part of the food industry. This should not serve as a reason to lie back and relax, but as a source of motivation, Nienhoff advised his colleagues.

Fruit Logistica 2013

From 6 to 8 February 2013, you can visit QS at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin. You will find our stand in **Hall 20/A-02**. We are looking forward to your visit and to interesting discussions. Last year,

56,000 trade visitors from almost 140 countries visited the trade fair.

Changes to the Coordinator guideline

Changes will come into effect from 2013 for the coordinators of fruit, vegetable and potato farming companies. One of the most important changes relates to the obligation to carry out self-assessments. The guideline and the revision information can be downloaded from the QS download centre.

Compliance within the QS scheme

QS has now formally defined basic principles and rules for the conduct of employees and managers in the QS scheme in a code of conduct. By signing this, all those involved commit

to dealing fairly with one another. You can read the code on the QS website.

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