

Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.

Report on 2010 – Outlook for 2011

Ten years of quality assurance



QS. Quality
scheme for food.

Our future lies in networking



Markus Mosa

Chairman of the Shareholders' Meeting, the Curatorship of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH, and Chairman of the Board of Edeka AG

QS brings together quality assurance within the production chain of fresh foodstuffs. The consistent implementation of this task must be measured constantly by us. This becomes particularly apparent in the event of a crisis. In these times whereby information is constantly available via the Internet or via Smartphones, consumer confidence is therefore based on good information. For the foodstuffs industry, this means making production and marketing transparent. In order to meet these demands, this requires a broadly positioned quality assurance which is associated with efficient and rapid traceability. QS is therefore able to offer both the basis and potential for future solutions.

Networking and thinking outside of the box for solutions are both of particular importance in today's world. This is something that consumers are entitled to expect. As a partner for all economic participants, QS is able to offer this not just within the quality assurance process, but also as a platform for the cross stage examination of current issues such as sustainability and animal welfare.

I am therefore looking forward to the continued development of QS as a platform for a connected future within foodstuff production and trade.

Markus Mosa



Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff

Managing Director of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH

QS stands for quality assurance

The overall quality assurance has become a fixture within QS. Even the occurrence of dioxins, which caused quite a stir in January 2011, was unable to throw us off course. On the contrary, the most important function of the networked self-assessments within the QS scheme has proven to be a success. We are committed to the quality and safety of fresh foodstuffs together with all partners.

Thanks to the QS certification mark, our scheme participants document a high degree of responsibility for their work. In shops, it stands for the continuous quality assurance of all parties involved in the production chain. This has applied for almost ten years for the meat and meat products supply chain; it was formed in 2001 as a consequence of the BSE crisis and was extended in 2004 to include fruit, vegetables and potatoes. Today, QS is a community of more than 130,000 scheme participants who continue to campaign for the safeness of their products. As a result, there is also an element of pride with respect to our forthcoming tenth anniversary in October 2011.

Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff

Contents

Our committess	4
Milestones 2010	6
Current topics	8
Supply chain meat and meat products	12
Supply chain fruit, vegetables and potatoes	20
QS in figures	26
The second half of the past ten years: Developments between 2006–2010 in the meat and meat products supply chain	26
Certification bodies, auditors and laboratories	34
Facts and figures from the fruit, vegetables and potatoes supply chain	35
Pivotal issue database	38
International agreements	39
Communication on QS certification mark	40
Dioxin incident in January 2011	42

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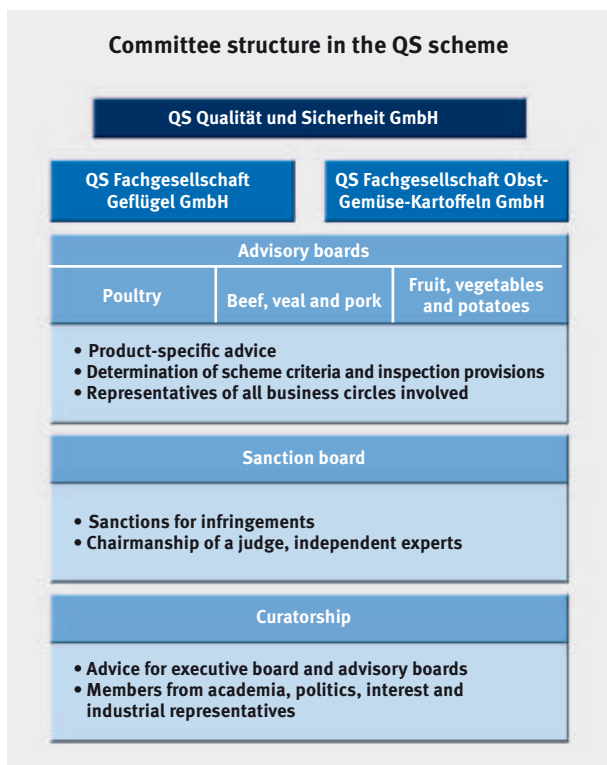
Our committees Borne by the economy and ready to tackle issues

QS is an initiative which was borne by the economy and which works closely with the various economic partners at all levels as well as within all committees. Experts from all stages determine the guidelines for the common quality assurance scheme in the advisory boards.

The advisory boards:

A concentrated level of competency

Three advisory boards provide specific advice and determine the principles for the work to be carried out by the QS scheme for the product groups: beef, veal and pork, poultry, and fruit, vegetables and potatoes. Their members represent the entire chain of the economy in question. The provisions of the QS scheme and the inspection criteria come into existence here for independent inspections.



“We create the basis for trust”

For us, 2010 was a year in which we made considerable advances. It makes me think of the keyword “piglet castration” in which QS played a leading role not only in the coordination of the abandonment but also in the targets leading to this end. It is therefore only logical that the use of painkillers has been a K.O. criterion at QS since January 2011. We have initiated a working group on the issue of sustainability which should support the scheme participants in terms of how this issue which is the subject of discussion could be dealt with across all stages of the supply chain.

The dioxin crisis at the start of the year was of particular significance in terms of trend-setting for 2011. QS and the entire economic chain as well have already drawn a number of decisive conclusions from this incident. As a result, the chain is now protected even more against any weaknesses. But we will not stop here; instead we will continue to further optimise our scheme. Quality assurance with QS cannot offer complete safety as well, but we can nevertheless raise the bar high. As a result, we create the basis for trust that consumers rightly show to the QS certification mark.

Franz-Josef Möllers, Chairman of the Beef, Veal and Pork Advisory Board, and President of Westfälisch-Lippischer Landwirtschaftsverband e.V., Münster



“We continue to be heavily occupied in animal welfare and animal health issues”

2010 was a year of consolidation for the poultry advisory board. This included streamlining and specifying the various guidelines and checklists, and making them more user-friendly. The poultry veterinary drug catalogue was also updated on a number of occasions throughout the year to ensure that it was in line with the latest conditions.

In 2011 one key topic both for the entire meat industry as well as for us will be animal welfare; for example with regard to the further development of threshold values for fattening turkeys. The control of zoonotic diseases and the health of poultry are issues that we will also be occupied in.

It is therefore necessary to bring the decision makers and opinion leaders together regarding all of these issues.

Werner Hilse, Chairman of the Poultry Advisory Board and President of Landvolk Niedersachsen – Landesbauernverband e.V., Hannover



“A proportionate level of international development is a central task for us”

In 2010, we at QS made significant steps forward with respect to the year-round availability of fruit and vegetables. The focus was on continuous but very targeted international growth. In QS Fachgesellschaft Obst, Gemüse, Kartoffeln, 3,887 foreign scheme participants have since been represented in 13 countries (as of March 2011). This internationalisation is also reflected in our advisory board which not only takes this development into account through international members, but also for example through the first meeting in Belgium.

With respect to 2011, we expect a great deal of our work to be focused on product safety. As a result, a newly developed risk index for different origins and products within residue examinations has applied since the start of 2011. Tasks that will continue to be important for 2011 include the examination of residues from plant protection products and analysis by QS approved laboratories which are critically examined by us twice a year by way of laboratory performance assessments; the latter being a task which has also become more complex and important due to internationalisation.

Ulrich Schopohl, Chairman of the Fruit, Vegetables and Potatoes Advisory Board and Strategic Quality Assurance for the REWE Group, Cologne

Milestones 2010

Looking forward to our tenth year

January

- **Revision 2010:** On 1 January 2010, the updated guidelines for the QS scheme manual entered into force
- Represented at the **International Green Week Berlin**. The motto: “Your claim – our mission: Safety for foodstuffs.”

January QS at the International Green Week Berlin.



February Exhibition stand at the Fruit Logistica in Berlin.



February

- On 1 February, the new guideline “**not genetically modified**” was established within the meat and meat products supply chain
- **Fruit Logistica in Berlin:** Exhibition stand and presentation of the first joint analysis of residue data with the German Fruit Trade Association, DFHV (monitoring report 2010)
- 24 February **Meat Congress in Königswinter:** QS presented the scheme and its scheme participants to the industry



April German laboratories to be rated.



March Guidelines for viticulture

March

- **Intervitis**, trade fair for wine between 24 – 28 March in Stuttgart: Presentation of pilot project (Guidelines for viticulture)

April

- **Laboratory performance assessment:** 75 laboratories from ten countries took part
- Annual press conference in Frankfurt/Main: Presentation of 2010 annual report

June

- 9 – 11 June **FEFAC Congress in Hamburg:** QS was present at the FEFAC Congress to which the German Animal Feed Association (dvt) and the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC) invited

July

- Launch of website for consumers:
www.qs-pruefsystem.de

September

- 12– 15 September **At the Intermeat trade fair in Düsseldorf** in dialogue with the scheme participants
- 25 September – 3 October QS was at the **Landwirtschaftlichen Hauptfest (Agricultural Festival) in Stuttgart** and exchanged views with scheme participants from agriculture
- 28 September Kick-off meeting for the QS-coordinated **working group sustainability**

November

- 11 November Together with the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, QS invited to the **Piglet Castration Workshop** in Berlin
- **The fruit, vegetables and potatoes advisory board** held its first meeting at one of our scheme participants in Belgium
- 19 November QS celebrated its 130,000th **scheme participant**
- 25 November Exchange of information in Bonn at the **Coordinator Workshop**

December

- **Sampling training for fruit, vegetables and potatoes** generated a great deal of interest in November and December

January 2011

- **New Chairman of the Shareholders' Meeting:**
On 1 January 2011, Markus Mosa assumed the role of Chairman at QS
- From the start of the year, the **livestock transport companies** became mandatory
- **The discovery of dioxins** in feed required full deployment in crisis management

February 2011

- **Meeting of laboratory heads** was well attended, along with a stand at **Fruit Logistica**

March 2011

- **Consequences:** As stipulated by the advisory boards in the joint meeting, on 1 March QS tightened the various requirements for the feed sector

July Launch of new website for consumers.



December Sampling training for fruit and vegetables.

September Landwirtschaftliches Hauptfest in Stuttgart.



January 2011 Certification for animal transporters became mandatory.

Expert workshop on the renouncing of piglet castration

The renouncing of piglet castration is approaching. According to estimates given by experts, the entire male production offers the best opportunity for a comprehensive and sustainable abandonment of the castration of male piglets without anaesthesia. This is the main conclusion to be drawn by the expert workshop “Renouncing piglet castration – Status and perspectives”, which was hosted by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection and QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH in Berlin on 11 November 2010. Approximately 250 scientists, politicians, veterinarians, representatives of animal welfare and consumer protection bodies as well as representatives from agriculture, the meat sector and food retailers discussed the latest research and the various alternatives to practices that are carried out at present. At the same time,



250 experts participated in the workshop on the renouncing of piglet castration in Berlin (see page 16 for more information).

it became clear that a number of significant advances had been achieved in the past two years in terms of scientific knowledge and practical experience. Furthermore, it was also stressed repeatedly that the coordinating work carried out by QS was of particular benefit to the entire industry.

Working group sustainability has started



The issue of sustainability affects the foodstuffs industry. As a result, the QS working group on sustainability met for the first time in September 2010. Thanks to this, QS is able to bring a number of experts from all scheme participant levels together for discussion. It was clear already at the kick-off meeting that the term “sustainability” encompasses a large range. Although companies within the meat sector have implemented their own sustainability strategies, this lacks a common level of understanding and an industry-wide coordinated approach. The aim of the working group is to identify sustainability indicators that are relevant for all stages of the food supply chain and to assess them with the help of science. A solid and practical cross stage workup is important to the participants. Discussions will be carried out intensively during 2011.

Revision of scheme manual 2011

New guidelines and checklists have applied since 1 January 2011. They are published on the QS company website. The 2010 revision carried out a number of individual updates and amendments. As a result, the scheme manual is designed in an even more user-friendly and streamlined manner. Initially QS pursued a new route with the latest revision and opened up a number of important documents from the scheme manual on the Internet for public comment. By doing so, QS ensures there is transparency between scheme participants and all parties interested in the QS scheme. The comments provide valuable hints regarding the further improvement and practicality of the documents.

New guideline “not genetically modified”

Clarity for all market operators: On 1 February 2010 the new guideline “Additional requirements for renouncing feeds that require labelling and “not genetically modified” product tendering“ was established. From now on, if a QS scheme participant wants its product to be labelled as “not genetically modified”, then the additional requirements of the guidelines must be adhered to. Responsibility for this lies with the various QS scheme participants. It shall remain up to them to decide for their own company as to the use of feeds that do not require labelling. QS does not make any general provision with respect to feeds that require GMO labelling.

Mutual audit recognition: IKKB for potatoes

The fruit, vegetables and potatoes advisory board is looking for a mutual recognition of audits for companies with individual certification at production level for the product area of potatoes. The IKKB standard in particular is becoming more and more important for German companies with industrial potatoes. The mutual recognition of QS and IKKB helps to avoid duplicate audits and additional costs. It follows the November 2007 model for the mutual recognition between QS and IKKB for the product area of fruit and vegetables.



Mutual audit recognition with IKKB for potatoes.

Risk index for analysis volumes: A new control plan

A revised control plan has applied since 1 January 2011 for the implementation of residue monitoring for fruit, vegetables and potatoes. In conjunction with the scientific advisory body for the QS residue monitoring and other industry experts, QS has therefore developed an index on the risk-based classification of individual products and origins. The index is calculated based on a number of defined and weighted indicators. Thanks to this revision, the mandatory testing methods were adapted in line with current requirements. Furthermore the number of samples in the upper risk classifications was increased and the product list was adapted based on the product descriptions contained in Regulation (EC) No. 396/2005. The adjustment facilitated the assignment of the statutory maximum residue levels to the products sampled in the residue monitoring.

Laboratory performance assessment 2010: Growth in international interest



QS approved laboratories must demonstrate their effectiveness in a number of performance assessments. The performance assessment of laboratories for residue monitoring is done twice a year. In April 2010, 75 laboratories from ten countries took part. In this test it was necessary to correctly determine defined residue levels of plant protection products in a rocket sample. In autumn 2010, 80 laboratories from twelve countries took part; this shows the growing importance of QS approval in the international laboratory arena as well. Laboratories that have already been approved by QS perform significantly better than laboratories which are within approval procedure. For food retail in Germany, the QS approval of foreign laboratories constitutes significant proof of the reliability of laboratory work carried out in the country of origin of the imported products.

QS for wine: From the vine to the wine rack

In terms of how the QS scheme could also be used for wine production, this was something which was asked by the Deutsche Raiffeisenverband, representatives from winemaking cooperatives and the Geisenheim Research Center in a pilot project. They have worked on a number of quality assurance requirements for the production and processing of wine grape varieties. Winemaking cooperatives from various regions within Germany took part in the practical test. With respect to the inspection audits, the test criteria were tested for their correct selection and comprehensibility. A number of additional audits will follow in 2011. At the same time, a number of requirements for viticulture were also developed and tested. Retail requirements were also recorded for individual trading establishments. They are currently being adapted.

Control of controls: Conclusion from 2010

The QS scheme integrity system ensures the correct functioning of the entire scheme. Firstly, regular audits are accompanied by QS employees. Secondly, QS carries out unannounced random sample audits either by itself or via external special auditors. Thirdly, there are the traceability checks. Tests are therefore carried out randomly as to whether products can be retraced within the specified time and whether the QS origin is comprehensively documented or not. Within the framework of this “control of controls”, QS arranged a total of 827 audits in 2010. Of these, 123 were carried out or accompanied by special auditors. In a further 14 cases, certification bodies were commissioned with the execution of the special audits within the framework of incidents. A total of 57 companies (approx. seven percent) were evaluated with K.O.

Salmonella programme: Inspection of laboratories



In order to maintain a high level, QS regularly examines laboratories with approval for the QS salmonella programme. In recent times, a total of 42 laboratories took part in December 2010, of which 34 were approved by QS. Of all the laboratories, 38 provided the correct test results for the ten samples with different antibody contents. There were only deviations in two of the QS approved laboratories. Both laboratories were instructed to carry out a number of measures for improvement and need to successfully participate in the next round robin test in autumn 2011 in order to retain the QS approval.



Official monitoring and QS

Many farmers in North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony provide access to the audit report in the QS database to their competent regional veterinary authority. The veterinary authority can use this information for the risk classification of the business. The objective here is to carry out official inspections in a targeted manner and use data that is already available. Multiple inspections are reduced accordingly. Agricultural businesses within the QS scheme are regularly inspected by independent certification bodies and must provide evidence that the QS requirements as well as the various statutory requirements have been met. As a result, the official foodstuffs monitoring is able to focus its inspection efforts on scheme participants that do not participate in the QS scheme. QS scheme participants are relieved through this.

Last year, representatives from agriculture and regional veterinary authorities exchanged experiences regarding veterinarians and farmers subject to inspection. All participants agreed to develop this process further as it would benefit both sides; veterinarians could improve the efficiency of their inspections and well positioned QS businesses would be less frequently subject to additional inspections through federal foodstuff inspections.

In the next step the various participants will now be advised as to whether the regional veterinary authorities need to receive all information from the audit report. The parties involved have agreed on a range of requirements that are important for the evaluation of biosafety/hygiene. To what extent this information is suitable for the risk assessment will now be inspected by several regional veterinary authorities together with QS. The results are then evaluated and discussed together.

Published for the second time: Joint monitoring report with the DFHV

Following the first publication in January 2010, the second monitoring report by DFHV (Deutschen Fruchthandelsverband e. V.) and QS was published in January 2011. For the joint evaluation of international residue samples, test results from 11,616 samples from 63 countries were taken into account. Alongside an evaluation of the international flow of goods, individual products were the focus of reporting.

This time experts from DFHV and QS examined a number of kiwi fruits, paprika, apples and cherries with the aim of objectively illustrating the latest residue monitoring situation.



Risk-oriented post-mortem inspection without incisions

The first slaughtering plants in the QS scheme have changed their post-mortem inspection to a visual post-mortem inspection without incisions. This has been possible since 2006 according to EU law. A prerequisite for this is that the slaughtered animals were kept under controlled housing conditions in integrated production systems (Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1244/2007).

The provisions were adopted in 2009 in the QS guidelines for agriculture. The inclusion of requirements in the QS guidelines was done in close consultation with the parties involved. The relevant ministries in Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia were actively involved in discussions and support this approach. As a result, the QS audit of agricultural businesses might be taken into account during risk qualification for the approval for the visual mortem inspection.

In 2011, representatives from regional veterinary authorities and ministries will accompany QS auditors in their inspections in order to experience how QS inspections are carried out in practice. The results will be discussed with all parties involved.



Auditors in training

A total of 42 certification bodies have a QS approval. These bodies send out approximately 400 auditors that carry out inspections on-site to see whether the QS requirements have been met by the scheme participants. The training of auditors is of particular importance for the quality of inspections. For this reason QS organised 30 training sessions in 2010. Following the completion of the respective event, the auditors themselves were subject to an inspection in the form of a test. The majority were able to successfully demonstrate their knowledge, but approximately 12 percent failed.



Quality Assurance. **From farm to shop.**

Monitoring programmes, animal welfare and hygiene issues:

Quality assurance of meat and meat products in touch with the latest trends.

Trustworthy meat, sausage and ham – each scheme participant is responsible for the production.

The QS certification mark stands for a high level of food safety. It indicates to the consumer that meat, sausages and ham come from a chain of approved companies that are aware of their responsibility to consumers. However a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. As a result, QS is obliged, together with the various economic partners, to minimise all foreseeable risks

at all stages of production and marketing. The smallest details might be as important as an overall view of modern risk management. Alongside the statutory requirements that are controlled by the authorities, the QS scheme borne by the economy strengthens the second pillar of controls; in addition to their operational self-assessment, QS scheme participants



Quality Assurance. **From farm to shop.**



Responsible trading.



Skilled processing.



Healthy animals.



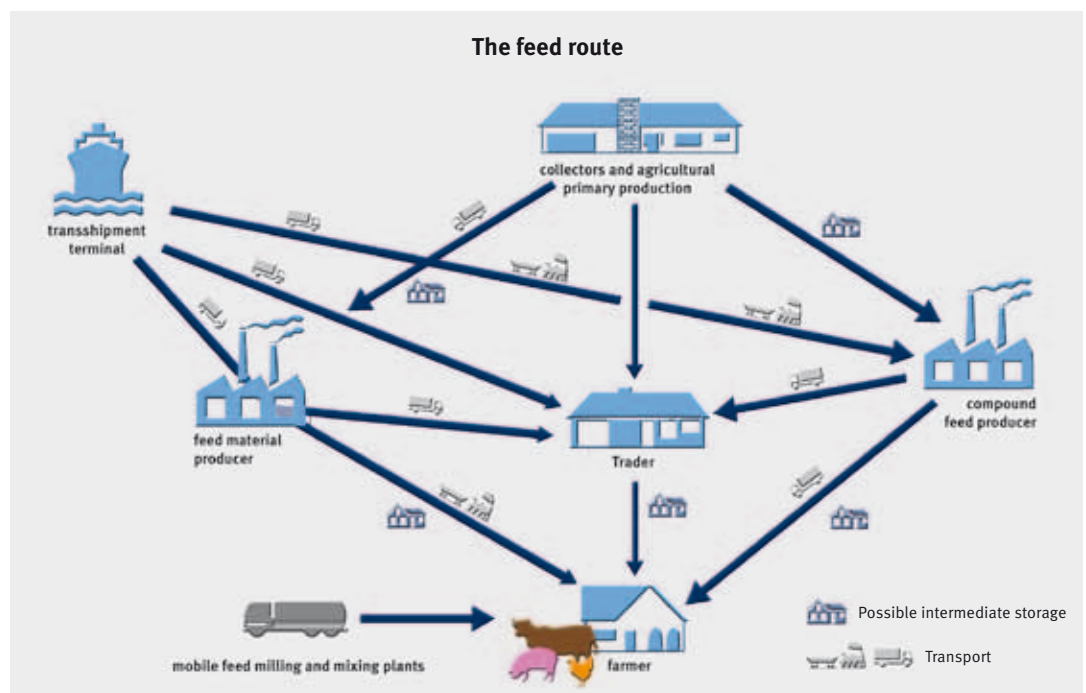
Clean feed.

are inspected by independent certification bodies. In other issues the self-assessment borne by the economy is a precursor for greater hygiene and animal welfare in companies: an example of this is the salmonella program which was introduced in 2004. As a participant in the QS scheme, the deployment of an animal welfare officer in the abattoir is mandatory. Likewise in piglet production, the mandatory use of painkillers during piglet castration goes beyond the statutory requirements. Safe food does however require much more than just compliance with national and international provisions. It is therefore necessary that all economic operators think and trade under their own conviction.

Feed – complex flows of goods

As a global market, the feed sector is characterised by flows of goods that are both international and highly branched. Thanks to the expansion of the QS scope regarding trade, transport, storage and transshipment in 2008, all parties involved in feed production are now integrated into the QS scheme and can be certified either according to QS or to another recognised standard.

The flows of goods in the feed market at a glance.



Which parameters are relevant for which product groups in the QS scheme within the framework of feed monitoring?

Aflatoxin B₁

Milk performance feed, corn products as well as oilseeds and extraction meal

Zearalenone (ZEA) and deoxynivalenol/vomitoxin (DON)

Feed for pigs, especially cereals and cereal products (such as corn and wheat)

Ochratoxin A (OTA)

Malt products

Dioxins and dioxin-like PCB

All QS compound feed and feed material, especially fat and animal products as well as minerals

Salmonella

Compound feed for pigs, fattened poultry and laying hens, but also all feed materials, especially oil extraction meal, fat and animal raw materials

Heavy metals

All QS compound feed and feed material

Animal components

All QS compound feed for ruminants and feed material that is typically contained within

Plant protection product residues

All vegetable raw materials

PAK (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons)

Fats/oils

Since the integration of this production scope three years ago, the number of participants in the QS scheme has grown enormously; as of today there are 692 scheme participants involved in the trade, transport, storage and transshipment of feed (as of 1 March 2011). We currently have a total of 3,175 scheme participants within the feed sector; of those around 700 are compound feed producers both domestically and abroad.

In order to ensure a comprehensive level of feed safety in global goods traffic, QS is looking beyond the borders of Germany and has set up a level of international cooperation thanks to mutual recognition with other standard owners.

Agriculture

Through their QS scheme participation and the associated obligations regarding documentation, self-assessment and independent inspections, approximately 81,000 agricultural businesses are able to demonstrate that they meet their responsibilities for safe food in full.

The businesses take full account of the health and welfare of animals. As a result, zoonotic diseases are reduced and animal diseases are prevented. All farmers within the QS scheme are therefore obliged to sign a veterinary herd management contract for their livestock. Ongoing monitoring ensures that animals are healthy and are able to thrive, whilst at the same time minimises the use of drugs as well as the residual risks for food safety. The salmonella program is of particular importance for pig producers and poultry farmers; this ultimately leads to the reduction of salmonella in fresh meat.

Salmonella program in pig production

Pig producers are tested regularly within the scope of the salmonella program for any potential salmonella strains and are classified accordingly in Category I-III (low to high risk). Around 22,500 businesses are currently categorised. Category III businesses must provide evidence of comprehensive measures for improvement. Since 1 January 2010, Category II businesses are obliged to check and document the hygiene status of their stock by way of a "Checklist for determining salmonella sources in pig herds". The early detection of any risk of salmonella should enable scheme participants to initiate measures in a timely manner in order to further limit any salmonella problems. Thanks to continuous inspections and the proactive actions of scheme participants, this meant that the share of businesses with a high salmonella risk (III) fell from 5.4 percent in 2004 to its current value of 3.0 percent.

Pig keepers under QS

Of the approximately 81,000 QS farmers, more than 46,000 are actively involved in pig farming; approximately 7,700 of them come from the Netherlands. On the basis of scheme recognitions, an additional 7,600 Danish pig farmers (QSG) and 2,200 Belgian businesses (Certus) are eligible to delivery in the QS scheme.

Keyword “Piglet castration”

QS has taken up a coordinating role in the journey towards the complete renouncing of piglet castration; in the piglet castration coordinating platform, experts from business and science, veterinarians and animal welfare campaigners meet together. Solutions regarding the quickest possible renouncing of castration are discussed. QS is also looking for international exchanges for this purpose. Scientists from the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and Germany have sat together around a table on many occasions in order to further promote the initiatives and research work.

Autumn 2010 saw a milestone with the workshop together with the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection in Berlin, which had more than 250 participants. The focus lay on the entire male production as a route for the future which should ensure comprehen-

Livestock transport companies now part of the scheme

Since 1 January 2011, any livestock transport companies that want to transport QS animals must themselves be scheme participants as well. Given that there are 1,574 certified transporters (as of 1 March 2011), this ensures that there is comprehensive market coverage for the supply chain. Scheme participants can now guarantee a continuous chain for the transport of animals as well.

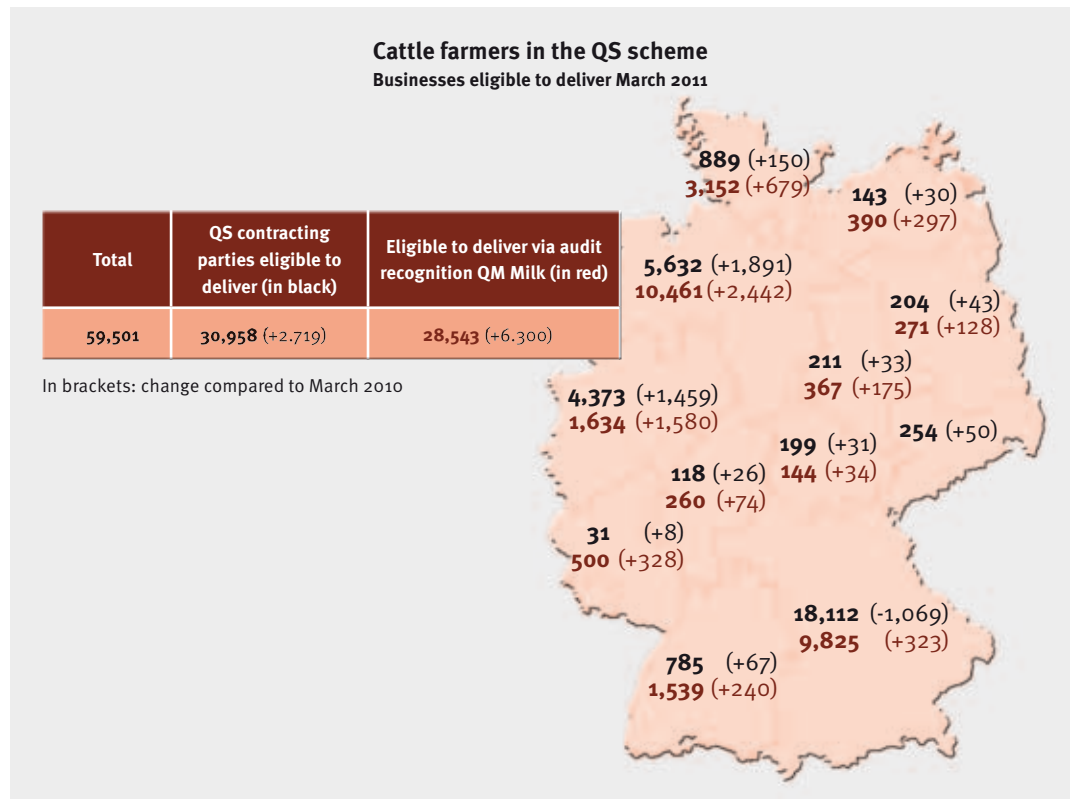
Since the beginning of 2009, livestock transport companies were able to be certified in the QS scheme. Participation was high right from the start, and the new scheme participants were convinced of the good results from the beginning as well; almost all businesses achieved status I during the audit, and there were hardly any complaints.

sive animal welfare, consumer protection and a practical implementation. QS currently stipulates the use of painkillers for piglet castration. Piglet producers in the QS scheme have been practising this additional requirement for better animal welfare for the past two years. Since 1 January 2011, any violation of this provision is now evaluated as a K.O.

Coordinator Workshop 2010

Farmers participate in the QS scheme via coordinators who act as a contracting party for them





and support them in many ways. At the end of 2010, an all-day Coordinator Workshop took place in Bonn with those individuals responsible for this important binding function. This day looked at the special tasks and concerns of coordinators in their mediatory role for agriculture. Experiences were exchanged and suggestions and proposals for improvement were discussed.

The number of cattle farmers in the QS scheme continues to rise steadily.

Demand for beef continues to rise steadily

The high level of demand for beef that bears the QS certification mark is continuing. A large number of companies within food retail are placing their entire trust in meat from the QS supply chain. In the near future there will be only self-service fresh meat with the QS certification mark in the discount sector. This demand is of course having a positive effect on farmers. 2010 was a year in which QS was able to significantly expand the offering; it was possible to obtain 2,718 cattle farmers within a year. For the scheme participants, participation is proving to be beneficial as more and more slaughtering plants are paying premium prices for QS products. As a result, the expenditure required for auditing can be compensated in most businesses with the increased certified price.

In the meantime (as of March 2011), 30,958 cattle farmers are part of the QS scheme. This includes an additional 28,543 dairy farmers who deliver their slaughter cows via the recognition of QM Milk audits in the QS scheme. This number also increased in 2010 by 6,300 businesses.

Poultry farmers under QS

Of the 3,748 poultry producers in the QS scheme, 1,458 are located abroad. The total number of chicken, turkey and duck keepers in the QS scheme has almost doubled within five years. Due to their specific economic and marketing structures, poultry farmers within the QS scheme are organised within the “Fachgesellschaft Geflügel”. In 2010, the poultry advisory board optimised the guidelines and supporting documents which it made more practical. In addition, participation in AIV monitoring (avian flu) was included as a requirement for the slaughter of turkeys.

Slaughtering and deboning

The 432 slaughtering plants in the QS scheme work according to a number of common high quality standards, that continue to be kept well in line with current requirements. Companies involved in meat production now ensure the quality of their food through self-assessments according to the internationally recognised HACCP principles. HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points and is a self-assessment programme with a detailed risk assessment.

A specially trained animal welfare officer is mandatory for QS scheme participation. His duties include being available at all time during the slaughtering process, checking the correct handling of anaesthesia equipment and the work of employees in line with animal welfare requirements.

Comprehensive employee training and independent audits ensure that the increased requirements in the QS scheme are complied with. A

Animal welfare in slaughtering plants

The QS scheme takes animal welfare issues seriously and goes beyond the statutory framework with its own scheme requirements. In addition, QS has intensive exchanges with the various economic stages of agriculture and slaughtering that are involved and does not shy away from dialogue with interest groups such as the German Animal Welfare Federation.

In 2010, the Association of Meat Producers (a QS shareholder) brought back a working group on animal welfare in slaughtering. The aim is to develop guidelines for the protection of animals at the point of death as provided for in Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009. Experts from companies, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) as well as from the QS office are able to provide their know-how. In addition, proposals made by the German Animal Welfare Federation to improve slaughtering processes were also discussed in this working group.

For auditors that check compliance with QS requirements in slaughtering plants, once again participation in the annual auditor training with a focus on animal welfare is mandatory.

live inspection by the veterinarian is done at the time of delivery of all animals. In all businesses, self-assessment programmes cover the entire production chain, right from the delivery and confinement through to the anaesthesia, bleeding and classification, and then on to the deboning and further processing. With respect to the veterinary live or meat inspection, any injuries and illnesses that are relevant in terms of animal welfare are recorded and documented. Each farmer is then informed of the results in the same way as for the salmonella status and any findings from the delivered animals. This information may be included in the herd supervision for the farmer that is developed jointly with the veterinarian.

Processing and food retail

272 scheme participants are associated with processing in the meat and meat products supply chain. An additional 23,448 scheme participants from food retail are the interface to consumers;

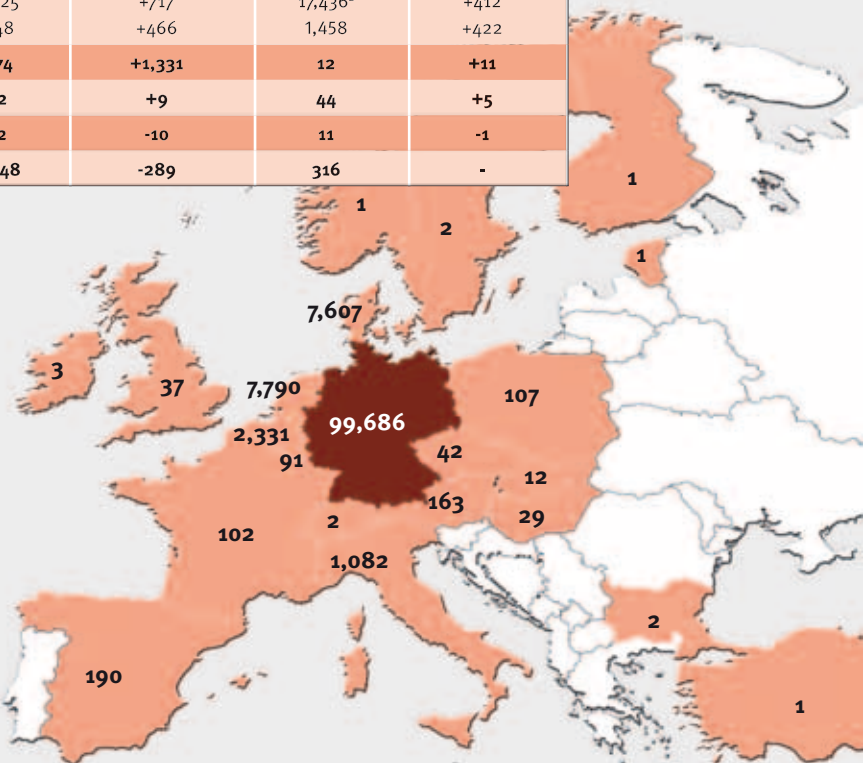
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they transfer foodstuffs from an interdependent chain of responsibility to the customers.

Since 2010, QS has offered its own supporting documents for appropriate labelling that is specific for the ever-popular convenience products. Improvements to the QS scheme in 2010 were related to a number of practical aspects; As a result, the o2 labelling of beef was a test criterion. That means that oxygen pressure-treated meat must be labelled as such.

Meat and meat products supply chain
Current number of scheme participants

Stage	Total	Change as of 01.03.2010	Of which are abroad	Change as of 01.03.2010
	119,432	+5,284	19,746	+918
Feed	3,175	+342	462	+70
- Feed material	1,247	+76	152	+57
- Compound feed	703	+6	263	+3
- Mobile milling/mixing plants	533	+8	7	-
- Retail, transport, storage	692	+252	40	+10
Agriculture	90,531	+3,901	18,901	+833
- Cattle farming ¹	30,958	+2,718	7	+1
- Pig farming	55,825	+717	17,436 ²	+412
- Poultry farming	3,748	+466	1,458	+422
Livestock transport	1,574	+1,331	12	+11
Slaughtering/deboning	432	+9	44	+5
Processing	272	-10	11	-1
Food retail³	23,448	-289	316	-



¹ Additionally eligible to deliver for cows: 28,543 (+6,300) businesses via QM Milk audit

² Thereof eligible to deliver on the basis of system recognitions: 7,567 (-322) QSG businesses (DK) and 2,179 (+221) Certus businesses (B)

³ Includes 140 (+2) meat wholesalers



Quality Assurance. **From farm to shop.**

Availability of goods all year round, low residue contents and continuous scheme optimisation:

Quality assurance of fruit, vegetables and potatoes

From the producer to the wholesaler right through to the shop, fruit, vegetables and potatoes come from good sources.



Since the start of the QS scheme for fresh fruit, vegetables and potatoes in 2004, the scheme has been enhanced in a consistent and internationally targeted manner. Today QS is present with more than 23,000 scheme participants in 15 countries. The focus is on the immediate neighbours; Belgium, Netherlands and Austria. However QS is also steadily acquiring new scheme participants in Southern Europe as well, especially in Spain. In the meantime, 319 producers and 28 wholesalers within the Spanish fruit and vegetable market QS certified. Scheme partici-

pants include wholesalers as well as commercial agencies. They are an important hub for exports to Germany. In order to be able to offer a large selection as well as ensure the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables with the QS certification mark all year round, QS has steadily intensified its international cooperation activities; this is taken into account by the fact that there are more and more scheme participants from abroad as well as the development of international cooperation with other quality assurance schemes worldwide.



Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.



Responsible trading.



Traceability.



Proper cultivation.

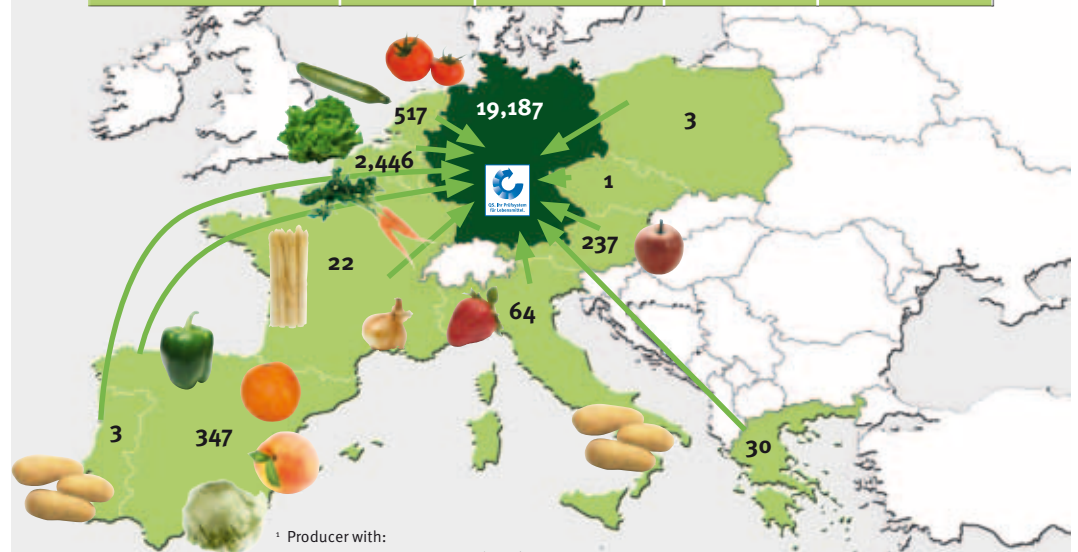
International growth at a high level

The QS Fachgesellschaft Obst, Gemüse, Kartoffeln puts emphasis on sound growth that can only succeed if the QS infrastructure is developed further internationally. This is the only way to ensure that the high QS requirements can be consistently adhered to. There are some positive announcements to be made here regarding the 54 laboratories approved (as of March 2011) and the 35 certification bodies that are currently approved; they are very reliable in their work, as proven by the laboratory performance assessment and other inspections.

In total, 23,074 participants belong to the QS scheme for fruit, vegetables and potatoes, of which 3,887 participants are located abroad. With 11,706 participants (abroad: 3,564), production is the largest group within the scheme. Of these, 6,062 businesses are

Fruit, vegetables and potatoes supply chain
Current number of scheme participants

Total	Stage	Change as of 01.03.2010	of witch are abroad	Change as of 01.03.2010
	23,074	+2,842	3,887	+1,241
Production¹	11,706	+1,424	3,564	+1,003
Fruit and vegetables	9,061	+1,475	3,559	+1,003
Potatoes	2,645	-51	5	-
Wholesale	584	+54	123	+38
Food retail	10,784	+1,364	200	+200



¹ Producer with:
 QS-GAP certification: 6,062 (+200)
 Producer with recognised certification GlobalG.A.P.: 2,691 (+1,060)
 Producer with recognised certification IKKB: 1,761 (+383)

certified in accordance with the requirements of QS-GAP. 2,691 businesses are approved via a GlobalG.A.P. certificate and 1,761 businesses are approved via the Belgian standard IKKB. 1,192 businesses have successfully completed a QS audit. With 10,784 participants, food retail is the second core area of the scheme; 584 participants from wholesale belong to QS, of which 123 are based abroad. In recent times, QS has seen an increase in enquiries particularly from Southern Europe.

Certification for agencies

For the society itself, 2010 was a year in which the inspection system was optimised and expanded in many areas. Thanks to the entry into force of the updated guidelines in January 2011, the working basis for scheme participation was streamlined and made even more practical as a result. As an example, the certification for agencies at the wholesale level has now been simplified. The requirements for agencies were tailored to the special structures of these companies. At QS, agencies are deemed to be companies that only carry out retail or marketing activities without having any direct contact with the goods. In the audit, agencies do not need to be inspected in line with the entire wholesale guideline any longer, but rather they must be inspected in line with the requirements that are directly relevant to them.

Constant exchanges with scheme participants

The experiences and views of scheme participants are indispensable for further development. In order to promote exchanges, a total of five meetings with coordinators, representatives of producer organisations, quality managers and other scheme participants took place in 2010. The great level of interest in the work of QS as well as work with QS was evident at the

Successful training for sampling

In four separate locations, QS, along with support from regional participants, ran a number of training sessions in autumn 2010 regarding sampling for residue monitoring. There was one common objective for all of the meetings; i.e. those individuals who take samples should be clear as to how significant and influential their activities are for ongoing analysis in laboratories. The concepts of being practical and being able to convey exactly what the sampling of fruit and vegetables relates to were both core messages of the training sessions. The four meetings took place in 2010 in Berlin, Mutterstadt, Minden and in the Belgian town of Hoogstraten (written here in Dutch for the first time) and were completely sold out. In the training sessions, QS presented the work in relation to residue monitoring and how to deal with sample results. A laboratory representative provided information on the preparation right up to the analysis of samples. As a result, it was made clear to participants in a practical manner as to what consequences there could be for certain errors in sampling.

meetings which were well attended. The workshops and meetings were very constructive. The feedback will be used for the future development of requirements.

Core competency: Residue monitoring

The QS residue monitoring is an elementary component of the QS scheme for fruit, vegetables and potatoes, and is adapted regularly in line with the latest conditions. A significant change in 2010 was the introduction of a risk index for the risk-oriented sampling. In collaboration with the scientific advisory board for residue monitoring along with other experts, QS revised the risk classification of products, and by doing so also revised the required number of samples in the control plan. During the new evaluation, residue monitoring results, product-specific particularities as well as relevant external data sources were taken into account and the country of origin of the product was also included. The

Quality Assurance. **From farm to shop.**

new evaluation of risk classifications shall be done annually in future. If there are any objections within the QS scheme, then these will be acted upon in a comprehensive manner. When maximum residue levels are exceeded, or there is evidence of materials that are not approved for the culture, the businesses concerned will be blocked immediately. In the event that other scheme participants may also be affected, these participants will be informed at once. If required, adjustments to the control plan in the residue monitoring guideline are possible.

Residue monitoring 2010 in figures

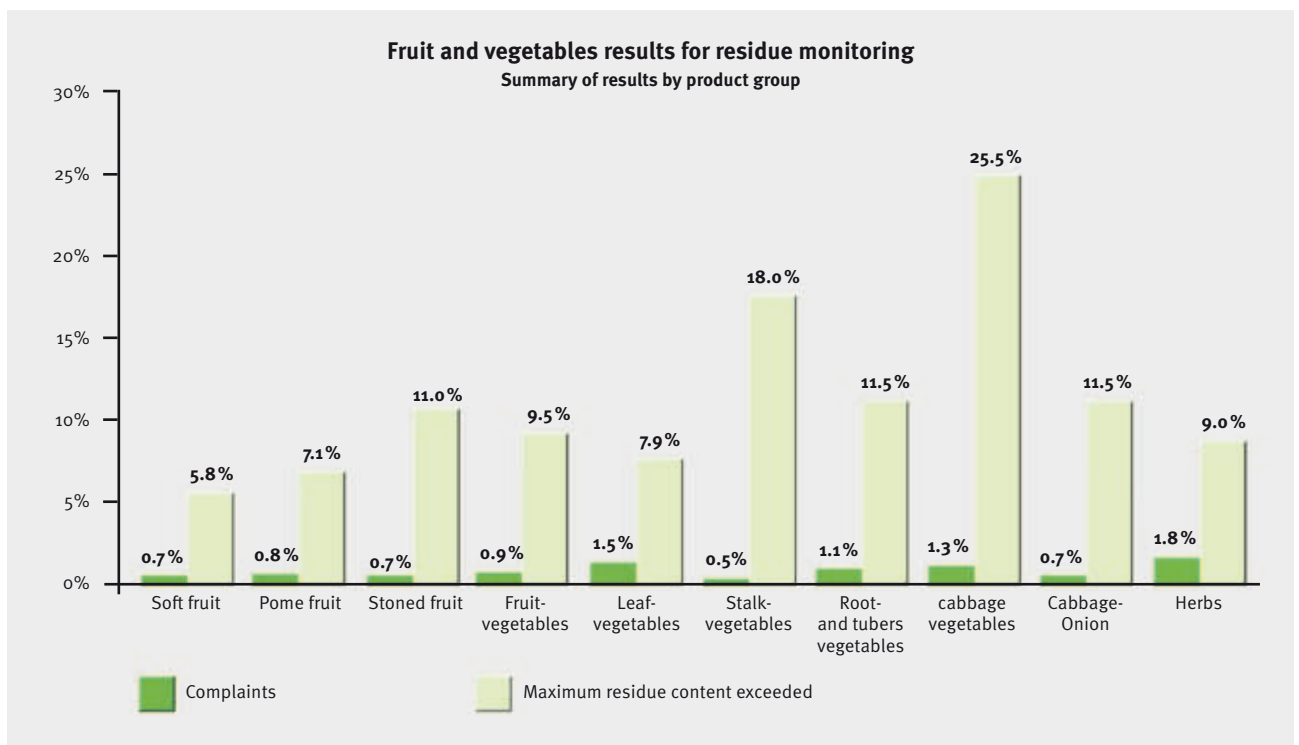
In 2010, scheme participants tested almost 7,000 fruit and vegetable samples for residues of plant protection products and entered the results into the QS database. 72% of samples were taken on the wholesale stage including food retail warehouses, 28% were taken on the production stage.

Overall the samples came from 32 countries of origin; 79% of these from Germany. 19% of samples came from the EU – including 12% from the Netherlands, 2% from Belgium and 2% from Spain. 2% of samples came from third countries.

Overall very pleasing results with a low rate of complaints. Levels are generally well below the maximum residue content .



Only approved laboratories can test QS products.



Residue monitoring for fruits, vegetables and potatoes
Summary of results by product group

Product groups	Number of samples	with residues (%)		Average number of ingredients per sample	Percentage utilisation of maximum residue content per ingredient	Samples with complaints in %
Soft fruit	823	694	(84.3%)	3.0	5.8%	0.7%
Pome fruit	934	798	(85.4%)	2.4	7.1%	0.8%
Stoned fruit	403	236	(58.6%)	1.3	11.0%	0.7%
Fruit vegetables	1,063	449	(42.2%)	0.7	9.5%	0.9%
Leaf vegetables	818	666	(81.4%)	2.0	7.9%	1.5%
Stalk vegetables	210	27	(12.9%)	0.4	18.0%	0.5%
Root and tuber vegetables	654	304	(46.5%)	0.7	11.5%	1.1%
Cabbage vegetables	448	96	(21.4%)	0.3	25.5%	1.3%
Onion vegetables	418	55	(13.2%)	0.2	11.5%	0.7%
Herbs	112	45	(40.2%)	0.8	9.0%	1.8%
Potatoes	598	318	(53.2%)	0.6	6.4%	–
Other	264	105	(39.8%)	0.9	24.6%	1%
Total	6,745	3,793		1.3	8.4%	0.9%

The residue situation for QS products is pleasing overall.

A satisfactory 44% of samples showed no traces of residue. Residues were quantified in 56% of samples. In total, 149 different ingredients were found in more than 100 different fruit and vegetable cultures. The 10 most frequently found ingredients were mainly fungicides. The tests only took account of ingredient levels > 0.01 mg/kg.

32.2% of samples contained more than one ingredient. 1.3 different ingredients were found in each sample on average. The number of ingredients found depended on product and its origin. Overall, the utilisation of maximum residue levels per ingredient was very low: In 83% of samples the maximum residue level was only utilised up to maximum 10%.

0.9% of samples gave rise to complaints (exceedance of maximum residue level, ARfD value exceeded, inadmissible ingredients for the culture). The graph on page 24 provides a summary of complaints and utilisation rates for maxi-

imum residue levels for the individual product groups. Based on the number of samples for each product group, the majority of complaints occurred in relation to herbs (1.8%), followed by leaf vegetables (1.5%) and cabbage vegetables (1.3%). The above table shows the results by product group.

Second half: Developments 2006–2010 in the supply chain meat and meat products

The QS scheme for meat and meat products was established in 2001. This is reason enough to expand the focus for the review of audits. In addition to annual results and year-on-year comparisons we are therefore showing analyses and comparison for the entire

The audit results for meat and meat products at a glance. The classification of companies as Status I to III defines the frequency of audits in a risk-oriented manner: Companies with Status II and III are audited more frequently.

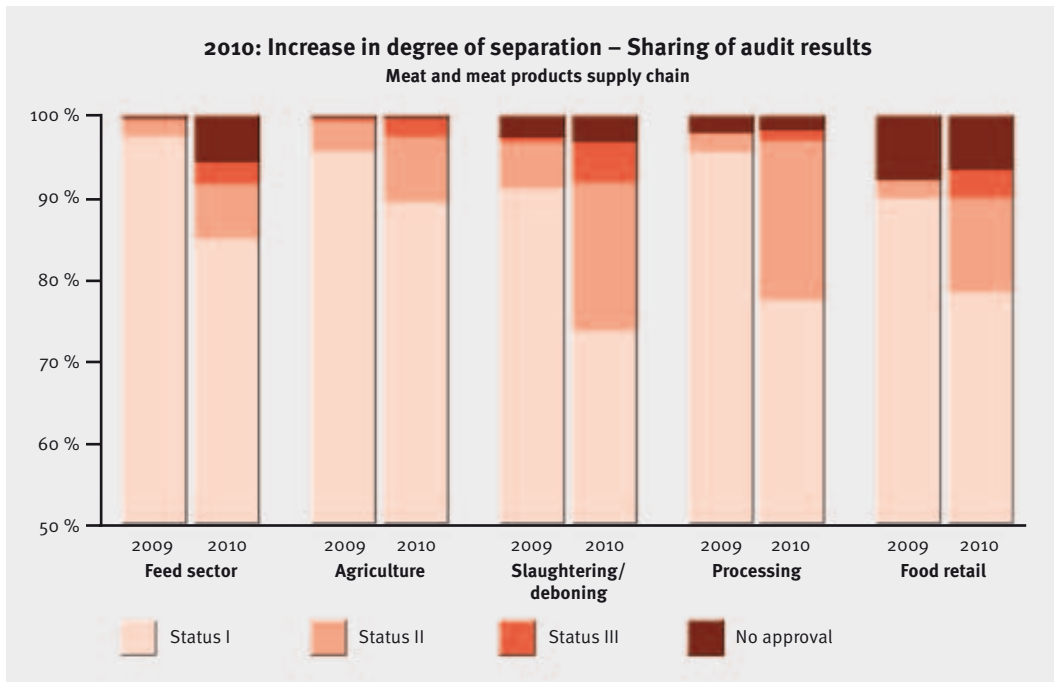
Results of independent audit 2009/2010
Meat and meat products supply chain

Stage	Year	Status I (in %)	Status II (in %)	Status III (in %)	(for now) No approval	Total
Feed sector	2010	84.8	6.6	2.7	5.9	1,464
	2009	97.3	2.1	-	0.6	1,268
Agriculture	2010	89.3	7.9	2.2	0.6	26,714
	2009	95.6	3.7	0.2	0.5	26,133
Livestock transport	2010	97.6	1.6	0.8	-	1,282
	2009	98.8	0.4	-	0.8	243
Slaughtering/deboning	2010	73.6	18.1	4.9	3.4	265
	2009	90.9	5.7	0.6	2.8	176
Processing	2010	77.3	19.5	1.3	1.9	154
	2009	95.4	2.3	-	2.3	175
Food retail	2010	78.3	11.5	3.4	6.8	3,602
	2009	89.7	2.2	0.1	8.0	4,438

supply chain for the 5-year period from 2006 to 2010: the second half of almost 10 years of QS.

The audit results for 2010 reflect a much differentiated picture compared with the previous year, which is mainly due to the increased degree of separation. The continuous expansion and improvement of the scheme is shown in the audit results: the inspection criteria have increased and scheme participants have scored significantly better in many areas than 5 years ago.

Whilst in 2009, around 90% of the audits carried out were awarded Status I, in 2010 this proportion was on average only 80%. The proportion of audits awarded with Status II and III has therefore increased. It is important to note that companies however have become better rather than worse. The evaluation requirements in the audits have become more stringent. The result



The increased degree of separation between the audit classifications reveals a more differentiated picture. In the audits the individual audit criteria are rated from "A" to "D". An "A" is awarded if the criteria are fully satisfied .

of an audit is no longer based exclusively on the total number of points scored, but also takes account of the proportion of requirements rated with C or D. A Status I classification and therefore a longer audit interval can only be achieved, if no criterion has been rated in the audit with D. A total of 2,366 companies were awarded Status II, due to the high proportion of C and D rating, although they achieved more than 90% of the points available and therefore would have achieved Status I. For 397 companies this meant that they were awarded the Status III despite obtaining a point score of more than 90%.

2006 – 2010: Development in audit results

In five years the QS scheme has developed in various aspects. A comparison of the audit results from 2006 and 2010 shows: The requirements for QS scheme participants and the number of criteria that are inspected during the audits have increased.

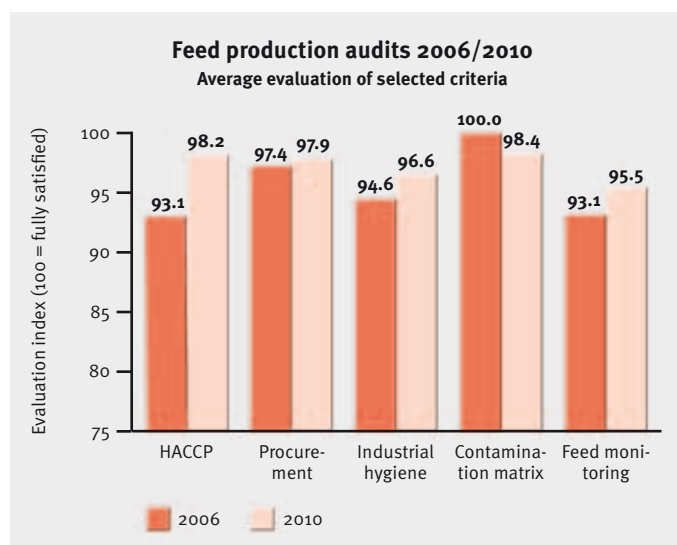
The number of inspection criteria for feed producers has more than doubled in five years.

Scope of audit for feed production
Comparison 2006/2010

Characteristic	2006	2010
HACCP	2 criteria	10 criteria
Procurement	2 criteria	2 criteria
Industrial hygiene	2 criteria	11 criteria
Contamination matrix	1 criterion	2 criteria
Feed monitoring	2 criteria	5 criteria
Total criteria (compound feed producers)	31	85
K.O. criteria	13	28

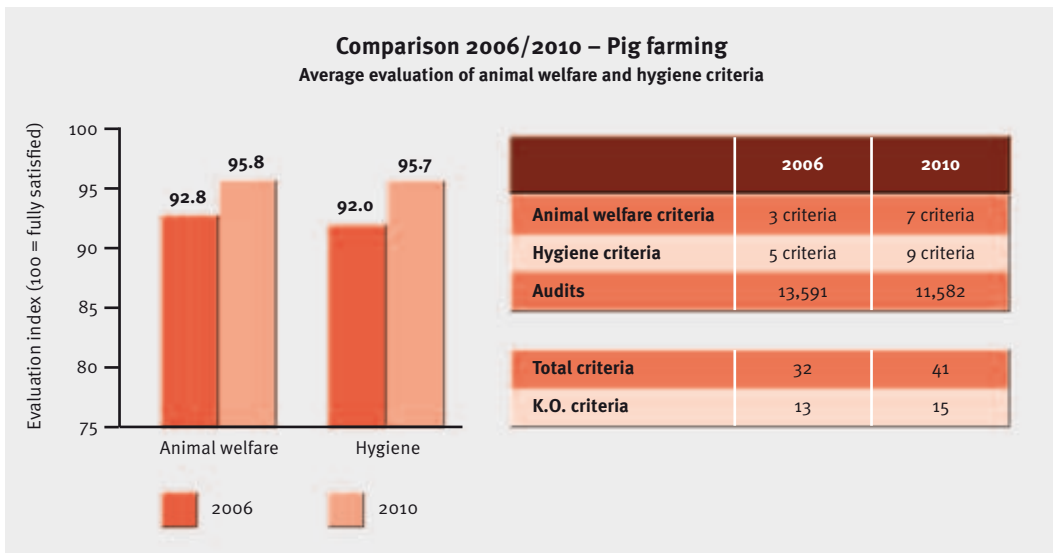
At the same time, the average assessment of requirements and therefore the performance of scheme participants has improved. This is clear from a selection of important inspection criteria for the individual levels of the meat and meat products supply chain.

Regular controls applied: The audit results are improving in various aspects.

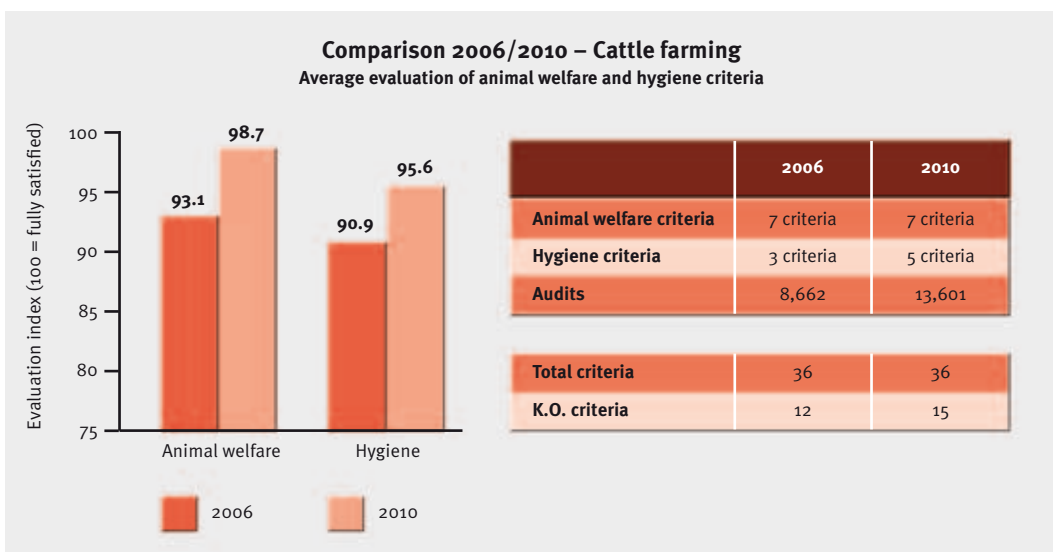


Pig farmers in the QS scheme today perform better in animal welfare and hygiene areas than five years ago, even though the number of inspection criteria has increased considerably.

For cattle farmers the number of inspection criteria has not changed much in the past five years; but pleasingly here the assessment is again significantly better than in 2006.

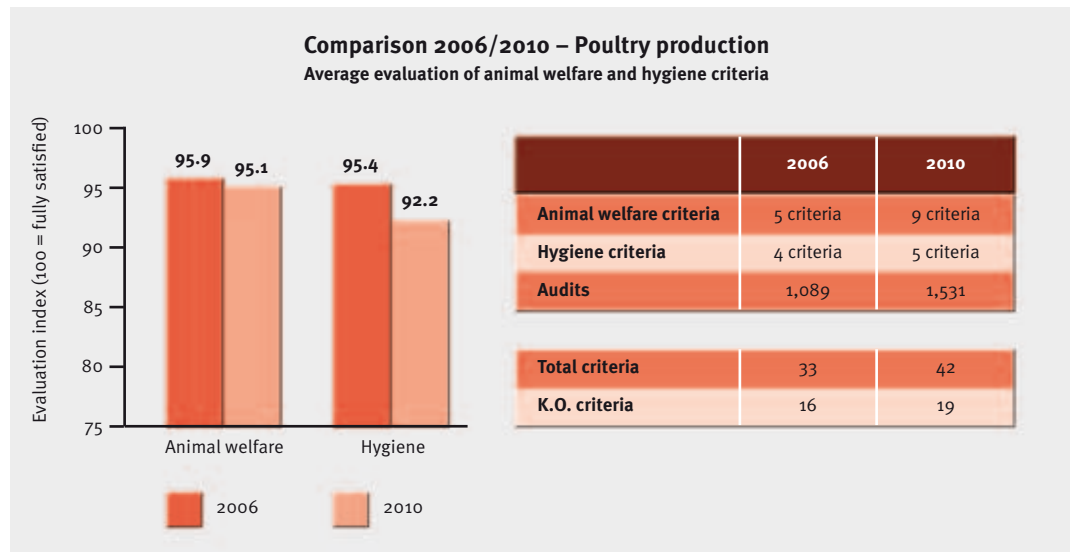


On a positive note, there are more criteria and better results in pig farming.



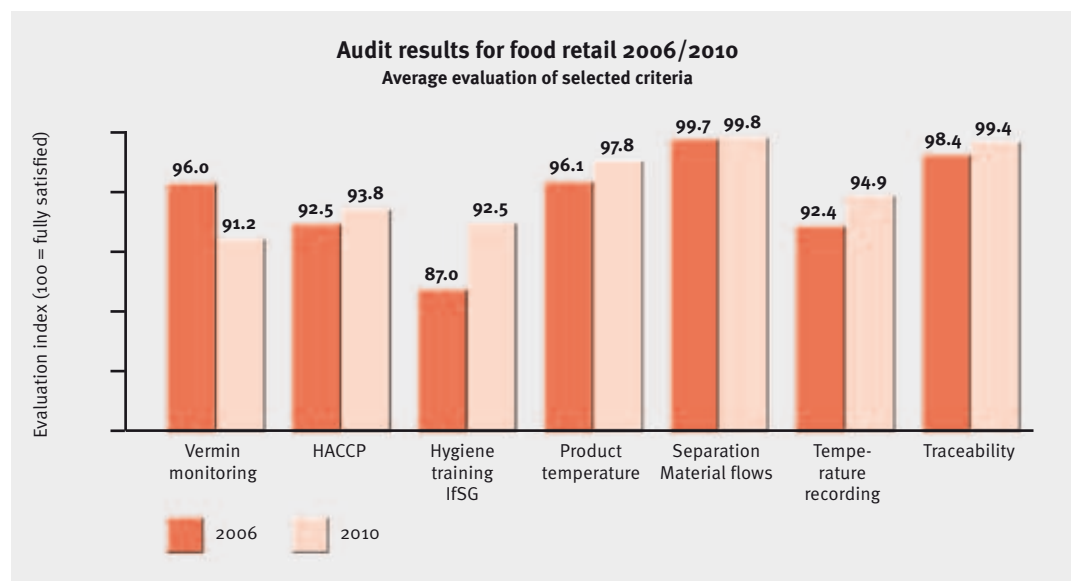
Cattle farming saw significant improvements in audit results within a period of five years.

In poultry production the rise in the number of criteria compared with 2006 has resulted in a more critical assessment.

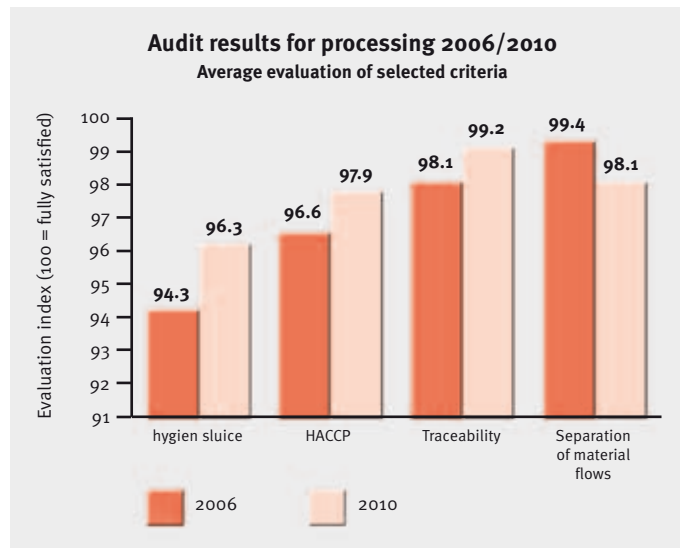


Poultry producers recorded significant growth in the previous year. This is one reason why companies have been awarded lower scores in hygiene and animal welfare than five years ago. Participants that have recently joined the QS scheme still need to familiarise themselves with the requirements.

Food retail operates a very high level of quality assurance. The most significant improvement was in the assessment of hygiene training.

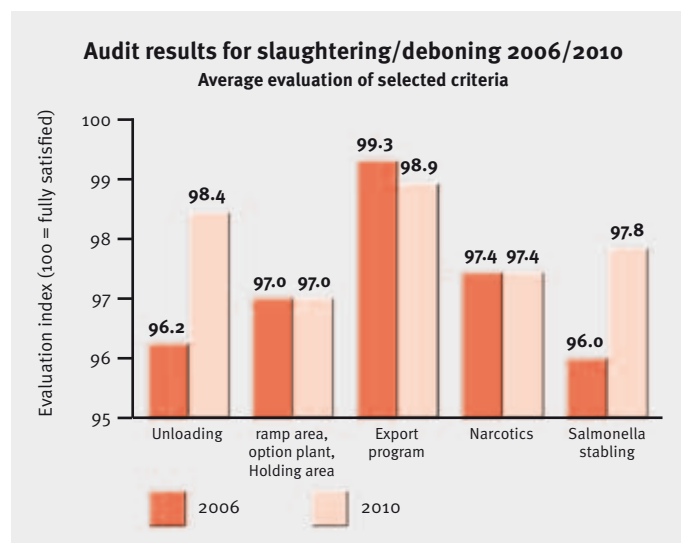


Quality Assurance. From farm to shop.



Improvements were also seen in processing in many areas of the audit after five years.

Nevertheless, scheme participants at all stages operate at a good, because overall very high level. However, the audit analyses and in particular the long-term comparison show that not all parts of the supply chain following the same positive trends: Also weaknesses can be identified and offer the opportunity to continuously improve quality assurance “From farm to the shop”.

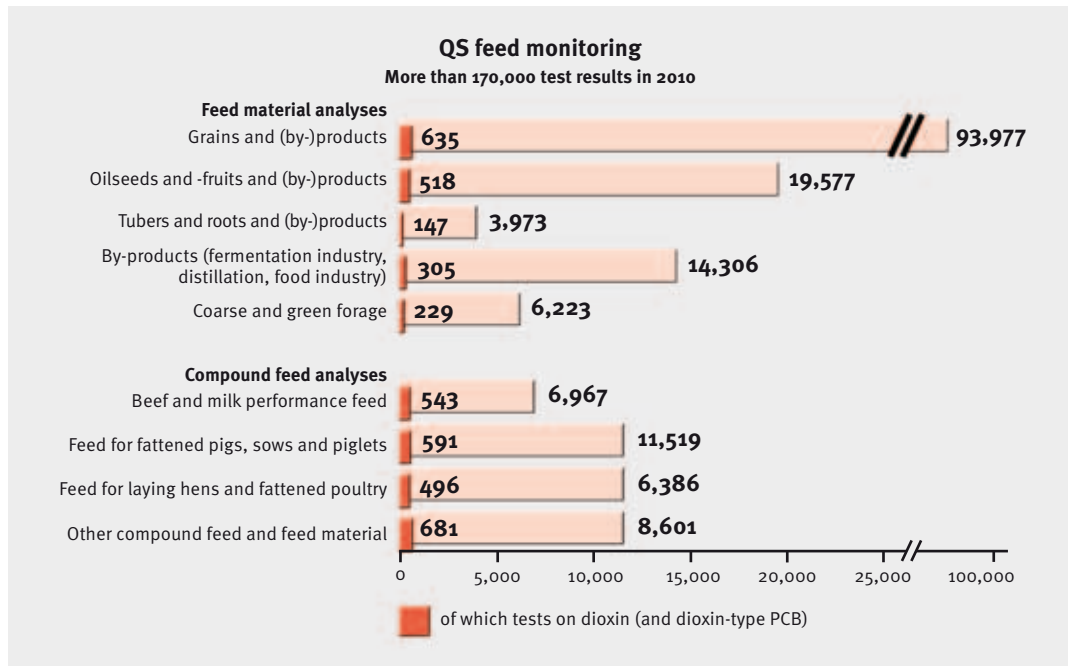


With regards to unloading the animals and salmonella program, the most significant improvements in the audit assessment were recorded in slaughtering and deboning.

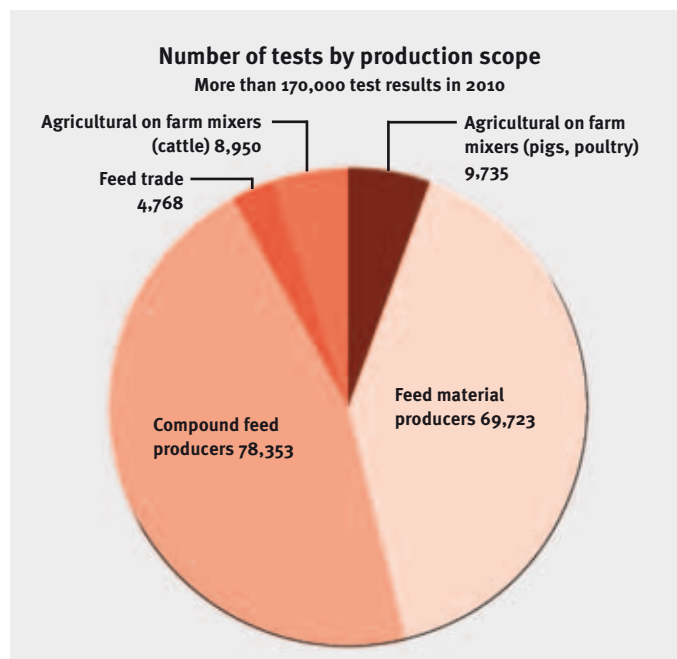
Feed monitoring

The majority of the analyses in QS feed monitoring are carried out on behalf of compound feed and single feed producers. Approx. 11% of tests are performed for agricultural on farm-mixers.

From 2010 there are more than 170,000 test results from feed monitoring - including a total of 4,000 tests for dioxins.

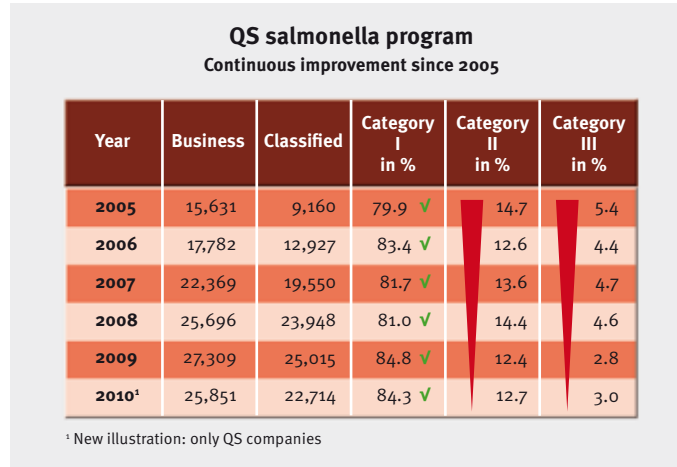


The tests for dioxin are shown separately in red to highlight the efforts of self-assessment against the current backdrop of the dioxin incident in January 2011.



Salmonella program

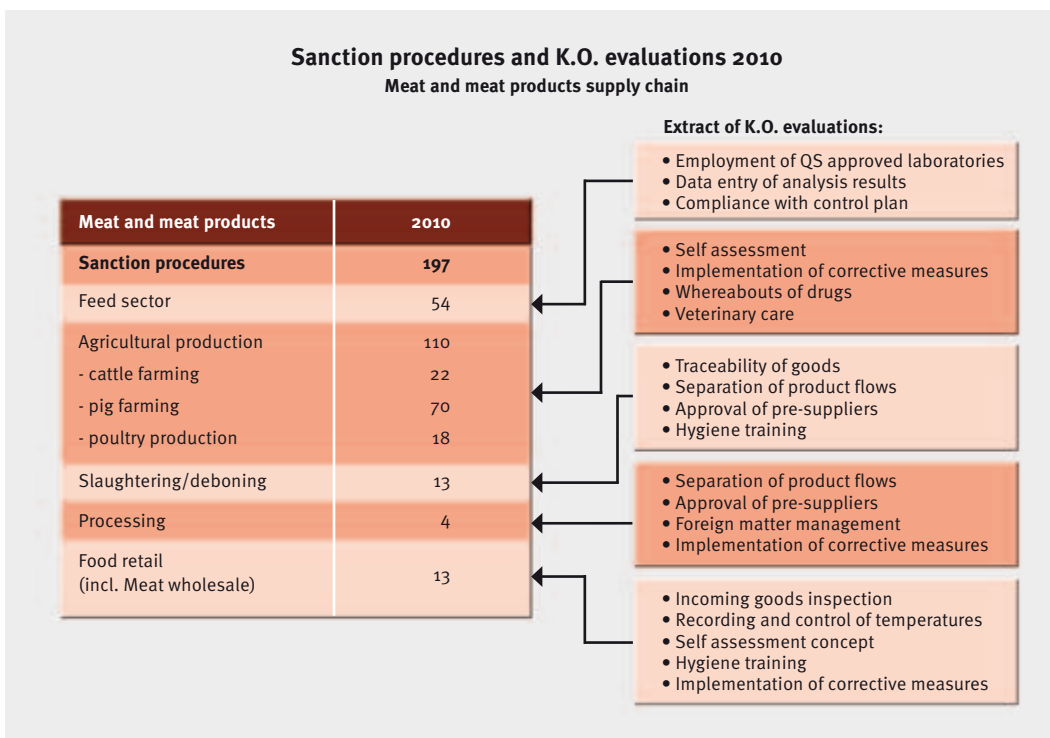
The number of classified business has risen by more than 60% in the last five years. At the same time, the proportion of business with an elevated or high salmonella risk has continuously fallen.



The infection risk of salmonella dropped significantly.

Sanction procedures for meat and meat products

Last year a total of 197 sanction procedures were initiated in the meat and meat products supply chain. In the feed sector, the implementation of QS feed monitoring created problems. Potential for improvements across all stages was exploited in relation to the implementation self-assessments and the separation of product flows.



In 2010 there were 197 sanction procedures for meat and meat products.

Certification bodies, auditors and laboratories

427 approved auditors were onsite for the QS scheme in 2010.

Certification bodies and auditors in the QS scheme 2010

Double entries possible	Number of approved certification bodies ¹	Number of approved auditors ¹
	42	427
Meat and meat products supply chain	36	345
Feed sector		90
Feed material production		23
Cattle farming		173
Pig farming		169
Poultry farming		63
Slaughtering/deboning		74
Processing		80
Food retail (meat)		102
Coordinators		51
Fruit, vegetables and potatoes supply chain	35	223
Production		131
QS-GAP		110
Wholesale		81
Food retail		64

Last year a total of 42 QS approved certification bodies and 427 auditors were responsible for carrying out independent audits.

Laboratories require QS approval to carry out tests within the framework of the QS monitoring programs. There are currently 144 laboratories from 11 countries approved in the QS scheme and a further 68 are within approval procedure.

Due to the growing internationalization of QS, the number of foreign laboratories is also increasing.

Approved laboratories

144 laboratories from 11 countries approved in the QS scheme

	Number of approved laboratories	Number of laboratories in approval procedure
	144	68
Residue monitoring	54	48
Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Egypt, Turkey		
Feed monitoring	57	20
Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Italy, France		
Salmonella program	33	-
Germany, Netherlands, Poland		

Facts and figures from the supply chain fruit, vegetables and potatoes

In 2020 8,646 audits were carried out in the supply chain for fruit, vegetables and potatoes. The majority of audits at the Production stage (5,911) are QS GAP audits. As here only the status “passed” or “failed” is awarded, it is hardly possible to see any tightening of evaluation requirements in this stage. For the stages wholesale and food retail however it is clear that fewer businesses were awarded Status I and more were awarded Status II or Status III.

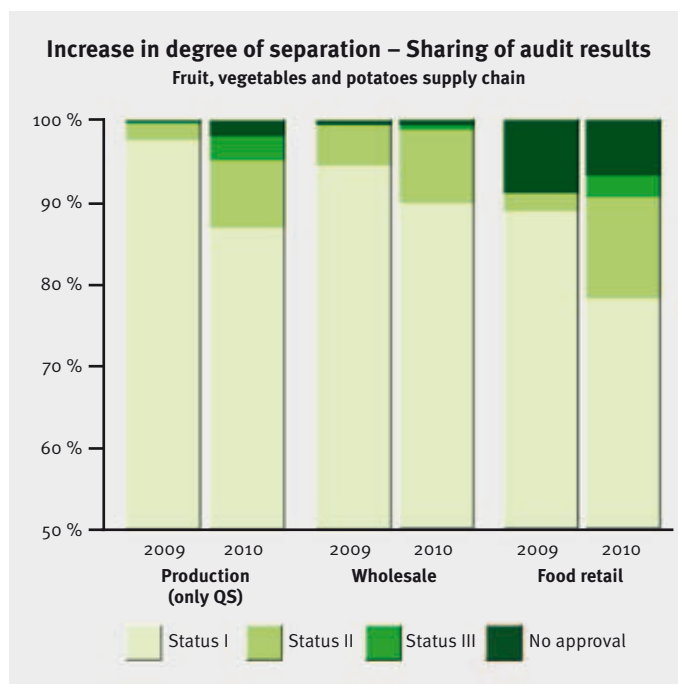
Results of independent inspection 2009/2010
Fruit, vegetables and potatoes supply chain

Stage	Year	Status I (in %)	Status II (in %)	Status III (in %)	(initially) no approval	Total
Production	2010	98.3	0.5	0.2	1.0	6,254
	2009	99.1	0.16	0.01	0.73	6,304
Wholesale	2010	88.6	9.8	0.6	1.0	316
	2009	93.8	5.4	-	0.8	240
Food retail	2010	75.8	13.6	2.9	7.7	2,074
	2009	87.5	2.4	0.1	10.0	2,949

The audit results of the supply chain at a glance. The classification of companies as Status I to III defines the frequency of audits in a risk-oriented manner: companies with Status II and III are audited more frequently.

Due to a high proportion of C and D assessments, 292 businesses achieved only Status II, although they scored more than 90% of available points and therefore would have been awarded Status I in the previous year. A further 23 businesses were awarded only Status III despite a point score of 80–90% (Status II) due to too many C and D ratings.

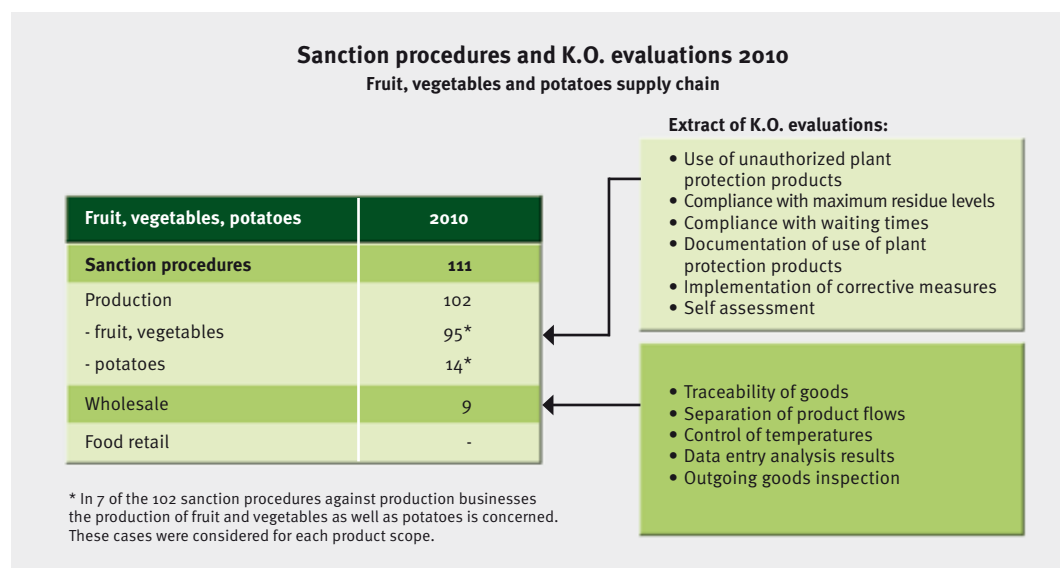
The increased degree of separation between the audit classifications reveals a more differentiated picture. In the audits the individual audit criteria are rated from "A" to "D". An "A" is awarded if the criteria are fully satisfied.



Sanction procedures for fruit, vegetables and potatoes

In 2010 111 sanction proceedings were initiated in the supply chain for fruit, vegetables and potatoes. A majority of sanction procedures concerned the application of plant protection products not approved for the respective culture. At wholesale level, particularly traceability and the separation of goods flows turned out to be problematic.

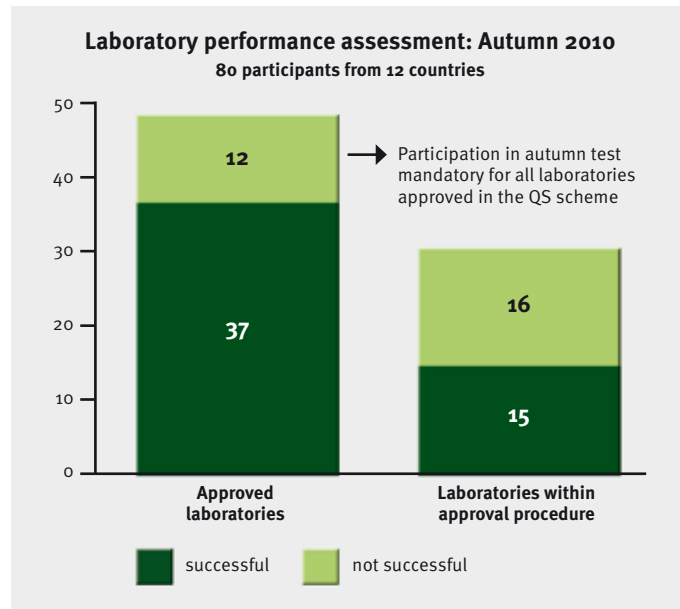
111 sanction procedures were necessary in 2010 in the fruit, vegetables and potatoes supply chain.



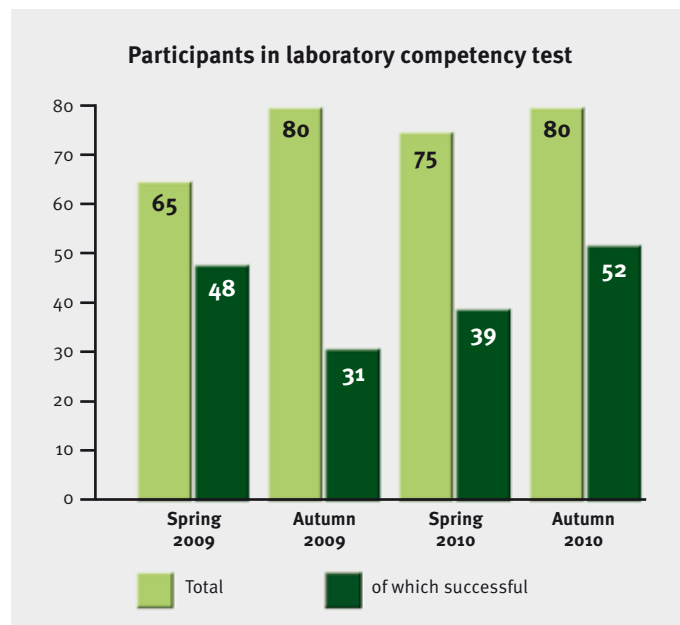
Residue monitoring:

Laboratory performance assessment

To ensure the quality of analyses in QS residue monitoring, QS approved laboratories must regularly demonstrate their effectiveness in a number of performance assessments. Successful completion is a prerequisite for retaining QS approval. This autumn a total of 80 laboratories took part in these performance assessments, of which 31 were within approval procedure. Just less than 50% of these were successful, whereas QS approved laboratories recorded a success rate of more than 75%. This demonstrates the high level of effectiveness.



By comparison, approved laboratories perform better in the assessment than laboratories endeavouring to obtain approval.



A high bar: In many of the tests, less than half of laboratories were successful.

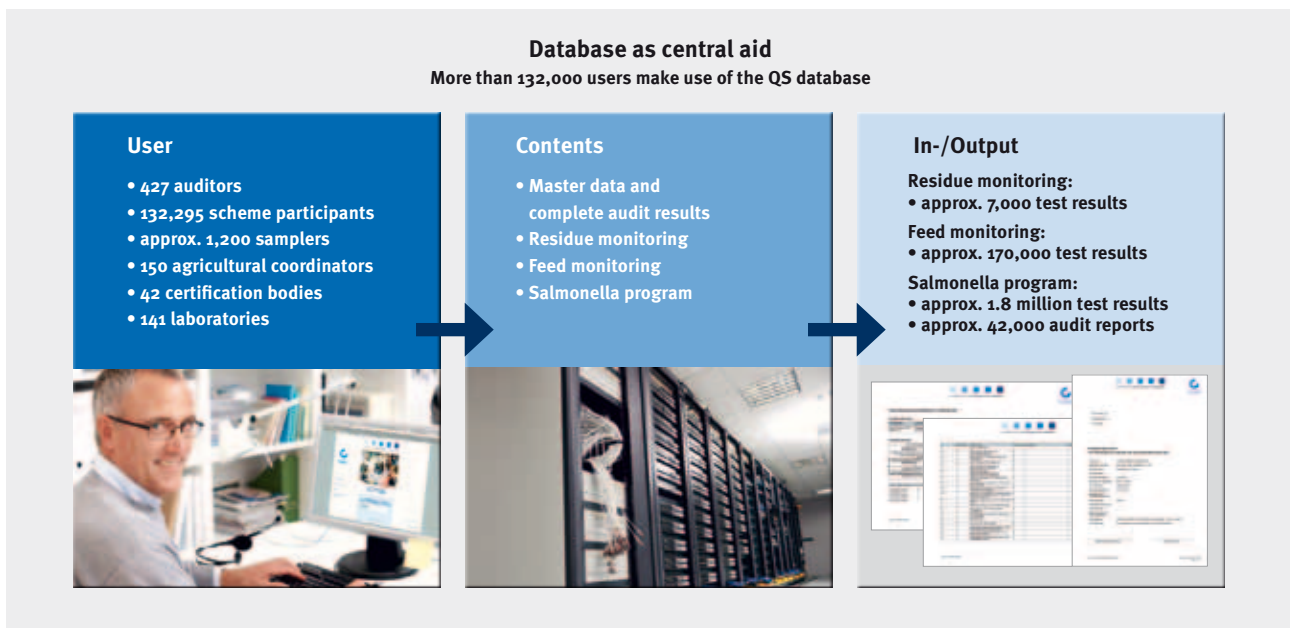
Pivotal issue database

The comprehensive management of the QS scheme can only run smoothly with the support of a competent and service-optimised database. It enables the handling of more than 130,000 scheme participant data records as well as database-supported queries and searches. A team of agricultural and IT experts is responsible for monitoring this database at QS, which contains all audit results, business master data and test results of the monitoring programs.

In 2010 several service improvements were announced. These included many ideas and suggestions from users. For example, test logs and audit reports are now more clearly structured. This was achieved by adapting to the new design. Furthermore, extensive internal scheme optimisations were carried out, which users will particularly notice in one area: the scheme is streamline and now much quicker.

The feedback from coordinators and certification body users has been extremely positive. More clearly structured reports were particularly welcomed by the auditors.

The database capacity required is shown by the access volume: In addition to scheme participants, more than 400 auditors and over 40 certification bodies use the database on a daily basis, around 1,200 samplers access the database along with 150 coordinators and more than 140 laboratories. These impressive dimensions are also demonstrated in the input: In 2010 around 42,000 audit reports were imported along with a bundle of analysis data: 7,000 from residue monitoring, 170,000 from feed monitoring and 1.8 million analysis results from salmonella program. Combined this data forms is a crucial element for managing QS scheme and therefore the basis for the overall quality assurance at all stages of production and marketing.



International agreements

Scheme participants in the QS scheme operate on international markets. As a result, they have to deal with a wide range of regulations and standards. Cross-border trade relies on transparent and above all traceable quality processes at all stages of the food supply chain. To ensure that market operators can rely on similar quality levels, QS works closely with other European standard owners in order to harmonise scheme requirements. To date QS has signed bilateral agreements with a total of 12 standard owners from Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Austria. These agreements reduce the costs of duplicate audits for market operators. Currently there are more than 19,000 foreign scheme participants in the QS scheme. In addition to quality aspects and food safety, other issues are also dealt with.

GFSI

QS is a member of the Technical Committee of the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). This initiative assesses and compares international quality standards with regards to food safety criteria. The aim is to increase the worldwide acceptance of these criteria.

IFSA

As a partner of the International Feed Safety Alliance (IFSA), QS is also active in the feed sector at European level and contributes to international standards.

ICRT

Since 2009 QS has been a member of the International Committee Road Transport (ICRT). Its objective is to make international feed transport more straightforward and more secure.

Especially when dealing with current issues such as animal welfare, cross-border exchanges are more important than ever.

International availability of goods
Bilateral agreements with 12 standard owners

Stage	Contracting party	Scheme/Standard	Number of locations eligible for delivery in QS scheme
Feed			
Belgium	Ovocom Bemefa v.z.w.	Ovocom – GMP	80 feed companies
Netherlands	GMP+ International	FSA GMP+B1	299 feed companies
Austria	Agrarmarkt Austria GmbH (AMA)	Pastus+	14 feed companies
United Kingdom	Agricultural Industries Confederation Ltd. (AIC)	UFAS/ FEMAS	15 feed companies
France	Qualimat Transport	Qualimat Transport	8 feed transporters
Piglets, hogs and pork			
Belgium	Belpork v.z.w.	Certus	2,179 agricultural businesses 57 slaughterhouses and meat processors
	Codiplan v.z.w.	Codiplan Plus	123 pig keepers
Denmark	Danish Agriculture and Food Council (DAFC)	QSG	7,567 agricultural businesses 15 slaughterhouses and meat processors
Netherlands	Centrum voor Bedrijfsdiensten CBD	IKB Varken	726 pig keepers 16 slaughterhouses and meat processors
	De Groene Belangenbehartiger B.V.	IKB Nederland Varkens	6,936 pig keepers
Fruit, vegetables and potatoes			
Belgium	Vegaplan.be	IKKB	1,761 producers
Transnational	FoodPLUS GmbH	GlobalG.A.P.	2,691 producers

Communication on QS certification mark:

Understand quality to achieve quality

Today food safety is taken for granted by customers in Germany. They expect reliability – whether in the supermarket or in the counter. Consistent quality assurance from the farmer to the shop, as is common practice at QS, makes an important contribution here. The main focus of our communication efforts is to create transparency in quality assurance throughout all stages of production and marketing and to permanently increase trust in the responsibility chain.

Communication with scheme participants

Communication with our scheme participants is based on regular publications such as newsletters and info bulletins. Circulars ensure a flow of information on current issues within the chain. In times of crisis, the cross-sector communication of QS is key: This is true for communication with scheme participants and other economic operators as well as for reporting technical issues to journalists, opinion leaders and consumers.

Consumer contacts and marketing

More and more customers are looking for the QS certification mark when buying meat, sausage, fruit and vegetables. To promote the perception of the certification mark as a buying aid, QS created its information platform www.qs-pruefsystem.de in 2010. QS is designing new methods of actively attracting customers and consumers in cooperation with the countrywomen's association, other food-related interest groups and particularly companies in food retail.



The Info Bulletin offers regular updates for both supply chains.



Notices in trade media provide information on quality assurance with QS.



The company website and consumer portal provide specialist information and background information.

Communication service for food retail

As a link between the QS supply chain and an interface to customers, food retail plays an extremely important role in consumer contact. In 2010, QS again expanded its existing range of services for marketing relating to the QS certification mark. The “ToolBox” comprises aids for employee training, tailor-made information brochures and flyers. We develop specific measures and individual concepts together with our partners in food retail.

Public relations

Continuous PR work, in-depth technical bulletins, active publicity and extensive marketing are the main cornerstones of QS communication. Current information on the QS scheme and sector-related issues are communicated actively through press releases. All available press releases and many other materials can be accessed via the website www.q-s.de. In addition to this, QS also attended various trade fairs and industry events in 2010, e.g. Grünen Woche, Fruit Logistica or Intermeat.



Food retail promotes products with the QS certification mark in its flyers for customers.



Thanks to marketing and communication activities, consumer awareness of the QS certification mark is increasing.

The range of services for the QS scheme: „Markenlehrbrief“



This also helps to improve the technical expertise of employees in retail with targeted training. This in turn improves advisory skills and promotes active customer dialogue at the POS. Particularly for trainees in the trade, the “Markenlehrbrief” has recently been introduced to provide brief information on the QS certification mark.



Due to presence at trade fairs, QS is regularly in direct contact with scheme participants and the trade world.

Interview on the occurrence of dioxins

“QS functioned correctly during the crisis”

*Original text: LAND & Forst, No. 15, 14 April 2011
Ralf Stephan, Chief Editor*

Occurrence of dioxins For QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH the discovery of dioxins in feed at the start of the year was a massive test. LAND & Forst asked the Managing Director of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH, Dr. Hermann-Josef Nienhoff, what conclusions have been drawn from the crisis.

Can QS draw a line under the recent occurrence of dioxin residues in feed?

Nienhoff: The active crisis management work that we were intensively involved in for around four weeks at the start of the year is now complete. As a result, we have not reached closure. Now the task is to carefully work through the events. At the end of January, the QS advisory board decided on additional requirements for the feed sector. These predominantly came into effect on 1 March 2011. For example, the complete separation of product flows for feed and non-feed material and the exclusion of recycling fat. In my opinion, the most important consequence is the obligation for batch-based release sampling for mixtures of fats and oils. This will take effect on 1 July 2011. In May the advisory boards will decide on further measures. These will concern feed monitoring, traceability, auditing and better coordination between the economy and official monitoring. Work also involved the QS sanction board initiating sanction proceedings against five compound feed producers and imposing hard, but necessary sanctions.

Looking back, what really happened that could have jeopardised consumers?

Nienhoff: Assessing health risks from food is the responsibility of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment. The institute has assessed numerous samples of meat, eggs, milk products and feed. The assessment published at the end of January stated that there was no hazard to consumer health, even if eggs or pork with the highest measured dioxin values were consumed over a long period of time. As a quality assurance scheme for meat, sausage, fruit and vegetables our core tasks are to prevent hazards and to protect the food chain and consumers from harm. According to our findings, products in food retail with the QS certification mark did not at any time pose a hazard to consumers, as the dioxins did not exceed the limit values.

Did QS prove its worth during the crisis?

Nienhoff: Clearly, yes. This contamination in feed was discovered during the self-assessments of a QS scheme participant, not during official controls. This shows that quality assurance is effective. Our data from feed monitoring quickly contributed to assessing the risk and containing the occurrence. Without the traceability in the QS scheme, the authorities would have undoubtedly had to block significantly more agricultural businesses as a precaution. The blocks would have been in place for much longer. An important part of QS crisis management is that the scheme participants are continuously informed of the latest developments. Particularly for retail there was a high level of uncertainty for a short period. Lower Saxon pork was temporarily proposed for delisting. Together with companies in the meat sector we were able to avoid this. Furthermore, we were available to the media at numerous press conferences to provide technical information.

Nevertheless, a series of changes have since been implemented. Were you really adequately prepared?

Nienhoff: Our crisis management worked. And feed monitoring paid off. But no system is so good that it cannot be improved. The occurrence highlighted possible entry routes for pollutants into the food chain, which had previously not been given sufficient attention. This is why we revised our guidelines for the feed sector. The events also showed that the quality of audits can be further improved.

What would you do differently, if it was 23 December 2010 and you were notified of dioxins having been found?

Nienhoff: The exceedance of limit values reported by the company Wulfa Mast concerned two samples of feed for laying hens, a total of 200 tonnes. The delivery was stopped and the authorities were informed. As egg production is not part of the QS scheme, the next steps initially appeared to be a case for the KAT system. It was only after Christmas that Harles & Jentzsch GmbH, which Wulfa Mast supplied, reported a limit excess in its feed fat. We then blocked Harles & Jentzsch on 4 January 2011 for the QS scheme and initiated a special audit on the following day. In future, we will be sure to treat each incident reported as if it were key to the QS scheme, even though it may not initially appear to be the case.

How was the adulteration of a QS-approved company (Harles & Jentzsch) able to slip through the net?

Nienhoff: Harles & Jentzsch has been part of the QS scheme since 2003. During this time, the company has been audited five times without any findings. It was seen by us and its trading partners as a proper company. However, a transport provider of Harles & Jentzsch, Lübbe Transport & Logistik GmbH in Bösel, illegally mixed contaminated fatty acids with the feed fat. This company was not registered under feed laws and was not QS certified. Lübbe held a certificate from GMP+, a standard that is recognised by QS. In our opinion, the auditors should have noted the illegal mixing plant at Lübbe's premises. We will therefore tighten our requirements for the approval of auditors and certification bodies. We must not forget one thing: This incident was caused by intentional criminal activity. There can be no 100% protection from these types of practices.

What is your view on the cooperation with Lower Saxon bodies? In our opinion, the competent state authorities respond very differently and are less coordinated.

Nienhoff: Based on our cooperation with the state authorities, districts and municipalities, there is undoubtedly a need for improvement. But this is true not only for Lower Saxony. The dioxin incident would have been easier to contain and manage in the first few days of the event, if all of the parties involved had acted in line with uniform standards and had coordinated efforts. Clearly defined communication and decision-making abilities and closer integration between public and private control systems are the main lessons to be learnt from this incident.

QS celebrates its 10th anniversary in the autumn of this year and is now considered a staple in the meat sector. Are you not the prime candidate to take over the reins in the much discussed industry communication?

Nienhoff: The idea appears obvious at first glance. At QS all of the economic partners in the meat value chain continue to sit around the same table. That would initially be a good basis for discussions. If you look more closely, the tasks of quality assurance and industry communication do not fit exactly. An organisation cannot implement independent and objective quality assurance in the chain and at the same time carry out active PR work for the same industry. This would call into question our biggest asset, our credibility.

What important progress in guaranteeing quality and safety in the food chain do you attribute to QS?

Nienhoff: Since QS was founded 10 years ago, we have become a cross-stage quality assurance scheme with more than 132,000 participants in Germany and abroad. This trust has paid off. Our salmonella program has undoubtedly played an important part in this significant reduction in salmonella contamination in German pig farming. The number of salmonella outbreaks reported to the Robert Koch Institut has halved since 2006. In the fruit, vegetables and potatoes sector, QS residue monitoring contributes to ensuring compliance with limit values. In my opinion one of the most important achievements of QS is hidden: That is the number of incident reports that we can prevent due to the traceability and data in the scheme, before they turn into a media trigger. In January and February this year alone, we were able to work through 16 reports so that they had no detrimental effect.

Where will or where should QS be in five years?

Nienhoff: In five years the blue QS certification mark will be more than just an indication of reliability that helps consumers to make their buying decisions. To achieve this, we will have to work on the stability, credibility and reliability of quality assurance by participants in the QS scheme following our motto "Food from good hands". In addition, we want to strengthen our PR work. We still do not have sufficient presence in consumers decision in public awareness, but specifically in the agricultural press. With regards to market penetration, QS has made considerable progress on this front. In the beef sector, however, there is still unused potential and there is a high level of interest amongst processing companies in achieving a higher QS presence. Another plan for the next five years will be to become more globalised.





Quality Assurance. **From farm to the shop.**

QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH

Schedestr. 1-3

53113 Bonn

Telephone: +49 (0) 228 35068 - 0

Fax: + 49 (0) 228 35068 - 10

E-Mail: info@q-s.de

Internet: www.q-s.de



**QS. Quality
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