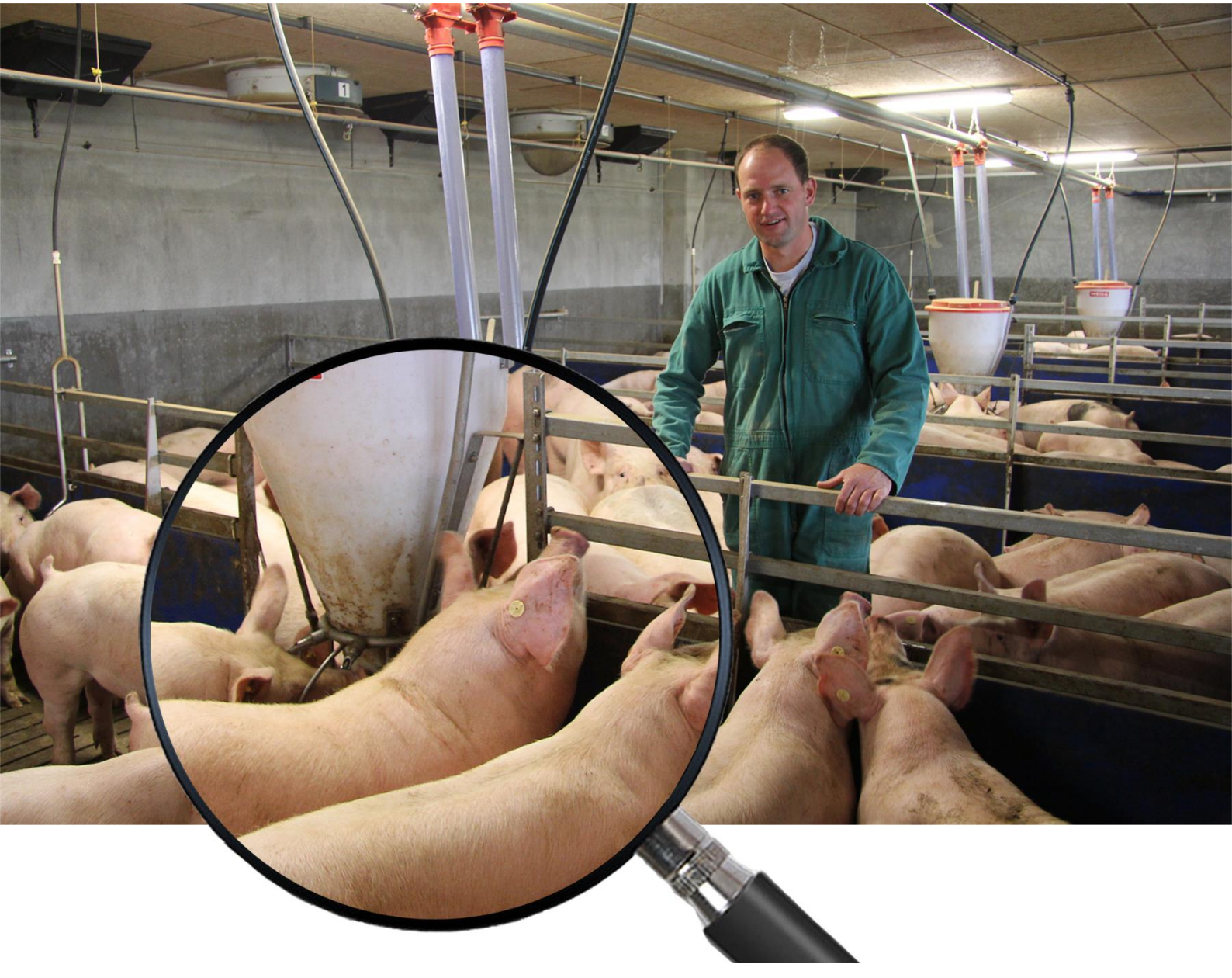
Explanatory notes to the Guideline

Agriculture Pig Farming

As of: 18.06.2026



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In addition to the Guideline Agriculture Pig Farming, the subsequent document contains further explanations on the criteria required in the guideline. These serve as an interpretation aid and are to be understood as related requirements.

Notes (on legal requirements or other framework conditions) and ***Suggestions*** (for process assurance or as management aid) are identified by *italic text*. Notes and suggestions are not QS requirements, are not checked and are not included in the evaluation.

1 Fundamentals

From which point onwards must the QS criteria be complied with?

By signing the declaration of participation and power of attorney, the company commits to comply with all QS requirements. The date of the declaration of participation and power of attorney is therefore the start date for QS.

As of the start of the QS participation, the QS requirements also apply to additional purchases: Feed or piglets must be purchased from a supplier eligible to deliver into the QS scheme. The origin of the livestock or feed purchased before the start date is not included in the evaluation. It is not necessary to clear the sty or feed store first; these feeds can be used up and the pigs can be marketed as QS animals after a successful audit.

What is a company or location?

The entire location is always considered, which is defined by the location number and production scope. The location number is usually the registration number according to the Livestock Transport Regulation (in Germany VVVO number/Balis number/Hi-Tier number). The location number must be 15 characters long and start with the ISO code for the respective country. If the number is not 15 characters long, you can customise the number by adding zeros to the front). The production scope represents the company segment or the specialisation of the company.

All sties, areas and installations belonging to a location number are considered. A drawing of the company and layout plans shows the divisions of the company. In addition, the entire area of the company will be inspected, e.g. when the hygiene on the farm is evaluated.

How are age groups defined for pigs?

The specifications of the **German Ordinance on Animal Welfare** (TSchNutztV) are used as a basis in the QS scheme Accordingly, the following definitions apply:

- Suckling piglets: Piglets from the time of birth until weaning.
- Weaned piglets: Weaned piglets up to the age of ten weeks.
- Breeding weaners: Pigs intended for breeding from the age of ten weeks until they are covered or otherwise used for breeding
- Fattening pigs: Pigs intended for slaughter, from the age of ten weeks until slaughter
- Gilts: Female pigs after covering until before their first litter
- Sows: Female pigs after the first litter
- Boars: Sexually mature male pigs intended for breeding

Which persons are considered ‘unauthorised third parties’?

Unauthorised third parties are always those persons who have no access rights or only access rights for certain tasks or areas. Depending on the requirements, the group of persons can vary greatly here. While, for example, In such cases, access is often prohibited for certain employees, and in any case for technicians, tradesmen or even family members who are not entrusted with the treatment of the animals. Medicines must therefore be stored in such a way that they are not accessible to these persons. When assessing whether certain areas are sufficiently protected against unauthorised access, it is therefore always necessary to consider who belongs to this group.

Who is a supplier?

For the purposes of verifying the eligibility of delivery, all locations, companies and persons who supply a livestock owner with certain goods (e.g. animals, certain feed or feed additives) or services (e.g. livestock transport or the use of mobile feed milling and mixing plants) count as suppliers. Suppliers therefore include, for example, the company of origin of purchased livestock, the feed producer or trader, livestock transport companies, feed transport companies or mobile feed milling and mixing plants. The respective requirements for the procurement of goods or services are regulated in criteria *3.1.3 [K.O.] Origin and marketing; 3.1.5 Livestock transport; 3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement* and *3.3.8 [K.O.] Use of service providers for feed production*.

At which time must the eligibility of delivery of suppliers/transorters etc. be checked?
It is decisive that feed suppliers, livestock owners, livestock transport companies etc. are eligible to deliver at the time of delivery of livestock or feed or at the time of transporting livestock. Therefore, the query of the eligibility of delivery should be checked up-to-date at the time of delivery or on the day of the service. The eligibility of delivery into the QS scheme is checked in the software platform (www.q-s.de/softwareplattform/en/) under the scheme participant search. There, for example, the eligibility of delivery can be checked by entering the location number of the company of origin.

How should delivery authorisation be checked?
Feed and feed additives, animals or services may only be sourced from QS-authorised locations. The decisive factor here is the corresponding delivery authorisation in the QS database at the time of delivery/service provision.
In addition to the query in the scheme participant search (**QS Softwareplatform**), the individual customer and supplier list in the QS database can also be used. There, for example, the delivery authorisation can be queried by entering the location number of the farm of origin. A check of the delivery authorisation is relevant for the following criteria: *3.1.3 [K.O.] Origin and marketing*, *3.1.5 Livestock transport, 3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement*, *3.3.8 [K.O.] Use of service providers for feed production*. A quick guide to checking the delivery authorisation of a location in the QS system can be found here.

2 General requirements

What are critical events in the context of QS incident and crisis management?
Critical events are incidents that pose a threat to humans, animals, the environment, assets, or the QA system as a whole, or that could become a threat to these. These include, among other things, the official closure of the business in the event of an epidemic, residues (e.g., contaminants) in feed, product recalls, unauthorized access by third parties to the business, or negative or sensationalist reports in the media in connection with the business itself.

2.1 General system requirements

2.1.1 General company data

What must a company sketch or plan look like?
A company sketch or plan must be structured in such a way that all buildings including their function as well as all facilities and storage areas for operating resources can be clearly identified.

The company plan can be designed as a map, aerial photograph, sketch or similar, whereby drawings do not have to be true to scale. In principle, any form of documentation is conceivable, provided that a clear assignment is possible (e.g. map with explanations and/or legend).

To be documented are e.g. (non-finalised list):

- Sty buildings or livestock areas (incl. fixed recovery compartments/pens)
- Feed storage facilities (e.g. feed silos, grain storage, storage for mineral feed or roughage)
- Feeding facilities (e.g. feed mixing centre of liquid feeders)
- Litter storage facilities
- Medicine storage facilities
- Cleaning and disinfectant storage facilities
- Carcass storage facilities
- Locations of the company's own livestock transport vehicles
- Hygiene sluices located outside the sty building
- If applicable, stationary emergency generator
- Fixed loading facilities and fixed facilities for cleaning and disinfection of livestock transport vehicles

External buildings, facilities and storage areas for operating resources that are not located on the company grounds but are assigned to the location number must also be considered. This includes, for example, silo bale storage, field storages or external recovery pens. A general list and description/address is sufficient here.

In particular, in the case of companies or facilities which include several location numbers, it must be possible to trace which buildings or parts of buildings belong to which location number.

Which animal numbers are recorded in the QS scheme?
In the QS scheme, different animal numbers are recorded for the stage agriculture:

- Declaration of participation and power of attorney: The maximum number of animal places that can be occupied is recorded in the declaration of participation and power of attorney. If the number of animals for the location changes, this declaration must also be updated.
- Querying the number of animals in audits: The maximum number of animal places that can be occupied can also be recorded in audits. This information is mandatory in the case of a failed or knock-out audit and voluntary in all other audits. The data serve as pure information, e.g. for estimating the size of the farm, for plausibility checks and for comparison with the other recorded animal numbers. An automatic transfer of the reported animal numbers to other places (e.g. monitoring programs) does not take place.
- Salmonella monitoring: In salmonella monitoring for fattening pigs, either the animal places (max. number of occupied animal places) or the annual production must be specified. On the basis of these figures, the sample quantity for the respective company is calculated. The information must be updated if necessary.
- Antibiotics monitoring:
  The average number of occupied animal places per year is recorded for pig housing companies. The animal numbers are entered into the database by the coordinator and are valid for one quarter at a time. If the animal numbers are not actively updated, the deposited number is automatically transferred into the next quarter. The therapy index for pigs is calculated on the basis of the average number of animal places occupied.
- No animal numbers are recorded in the diagnostic data monitoring.

What data do on-farm mixers have to report to the coordinator for criterion *2.1.1 General company data*?

Companies that use agricultural primary products as feed count as on-farm mixers and must participate in feed monitoring. On-farm mixing companies must always report the following up-to-date data to the coordinator for criterion *2.1.1 General company data*: Type of feed used, number of animal places and quantity of feed. The coordinator must be informed immediately of any changes in the type of feed used or the number of animal places or feed quantity. The documentation itself is regulated in criterion *3.3.6 Feed production (on-farm mixer).*

What has to be considered if pigs are fattened on a wage basis?

Example: A piglet producer has his pigs fattened by another livestock owner. The piglet producer is the owner of the animals. The wage fattener is the owner of the animals and keeps them in his sty (owner of the fattening sty).

The location number of the sty in which the animals are currently located is always decisive for indicating the location of the animals.

The livestock owner who fattens the animals is responsible for compliance with all QS requirements. For example, if the piglet producer buys feed on his own account, the wage fattener must check whether it is approved QS feed.

If the piglet producer wants his own veterinarian to provide stock care for the animals, the wage fattener must conclude a corresponding stock care contract with the veterinarian (if necessary for a limited period). For all antibiotic deliveries to be recorded, this veterinarian must also be assigned to the wage fattener in the antibiotics database.

What must be considered when the same sty is used alternately by different livestock owners?

Each livestock owner should be registered in the QS database with an own location number. An unoccupied period can be reported for the time in which a livestock owner is not currently fattening his own pigs in this sty. If the livestock owners only fatten one fattening cycle per year, this can be recorded accordingly in the salmonella database.

What is the use of an emergency plan and where must it be kept?

The aim of the emergency plan is to ensure that the animals are cared for if the farm manager or animal caretaker is suddenly unavailable or if important technical equipment for supplying the animals with air, water, or feed is no longer functioning (e.g., in the event of a power failure).

Suggestion: *The emergency plan should be clearly visible (placed) at a central place and at every location.*

Suggestion: *When filling-in the emergency plan, the "Explanations Emergency Plan Livestock Farming" should be taken into account.*

Which contact details must be included in the emergency plan?

The emergency plan must include at least the contact details of a contact person who is familiar with the situation at the company/location and the attending farm veterinarian. If the care of the livestock is dependent on electricity (e.g. ventilation, alarm system, feeding, watering or heating system), the contact details of a

technical emergency service (e.g. electrician) must also be included. If the supply of air/feed/water to the livestock on a company is not dependent on electrically operated systems, this information is not necessary.

Must a printed paper of incident be present in the company?
No. Every animal owner must be able to demonstrate how they will inform QS quickly and comprehensively in the event of an incident or crisis. We recommend using the QS incident report form or the online notification form on the QS website.

3 Pig production requirements

Must the QS requirements also be met in a selection bay (for collecting slaughter pigs for transport)?
Yes, all QS requirements for pig farming must also be met in selection bays. That also means that drinking water must be available to the animals at all times, even if the animals are sobered up before transport.

3.1 Traceability and labelling

3.1.1 Purchasing, incoming goods and services

Must bag tags of feed and feed additives be kept?
Yes, because the batch number, which is needed for the exact allocation of the goods to the producer, is indicated on this. Since the purchase of feed must be documented in order to be able to trace it at any time, all bag tags must be assigned to the delivery notes and kept. This also helps in the event of a complaint and recourse claims. If the batch number is not indicated on the bag tag but on another part of the bag, this part of the bag should be kept in combination with the bag tag to be able to guarantee an allocation to the delivery note.

Instead of keeping the bag tag, other possibilities for documenting the batch number are conceivable, such as digital documentation (e.g. photo of the bag tag/bag part with the batch number), handwritten transfer of the batch number to the associated delivery note, keeping a register with all the necessary information and allocations, etc.

3.1.2 [K.O.] Marking and identification of livestock

How should pigs be marked?
Suggestion: *Pig owners are recommended to use a two-line stamp in accordance with the proposal by the German Federal Market Association from the 23.3.2006: First line: three district letters (two as block), followed by three municipality digits (three-digit), second line: four company digits (four-digit, right-justified).*

3.1.3 [K.O.] Origin and marketing

Is it possible to keep only a part of the animals of a location number under QS conditions?
No, the QS certification applies for the entire location. This is defined by a location number (in Germany VVVO number) in combination with the production scope. All animals from the location must be kept according to the QS requirements and are traded as QS animals. The QS requirements must therefore also be complied with, even if the QS animals are not marketed into the QS scheme (e.g. because they are delivered to a butcher who does not participate in the QS scheme).

How can the livestock owner check whether the animals come from a QS-certified company?
The eligibility of delivery for the QS scheme is checked in the QS database (**QS Softwareplatform**) under the Scheme Participant Search. The eligibility of delivery can be viewed there by specifying the location number of the company of origin. Especially if animals are regularly purchased from the same companies, the use of an individual recipients and supplier list is recommended as an alternative. The livestock owner can create this in the QS database and is then automatically notified by e-mail if the eligibility of delivery of a deposited recipient or supplier changes. Brief instructions to check a location's eligibility of delivery in the QS scheme can be found here.

Must all pigs come from a QS-certified company?
No, this requirement applies to fattening piglets. Breeding pigs, gilts, sows and young boars used for breeding do not have to come from QS companies, even if they are ultimately marketed as fattening pigs.

Can animals intermediately be kept on a non-QS location?
No, it is impossible to keep pigs on a non-QS location intermediately and then take them back. The animals must be kept under QS conditions continuously.

Example sow production: In a production with a division of labour in which the breeding centre, waiting area and farrowing area are divided into different companies, it must be ensured that the animals are kept in a QS company at all times.

Example pig fattening: If pre-fattening and final fattening are divided between different companies, it must be ensured that the animals are always in a QS company.

Under which conditions may pregnant animals be delivered for slaughter?

Note: *Generally, it is forbidden to deliver animals for slaughter, which are in the last third of pregnancy. The prohibition does not apply, when the killing of the animal has been prescribed or ordered in accordance with animal health provisions or is necessary in individual cases in accordance with veterinary indications and there are no overriding reasons for animal welfare to prevent a levy for slaughter. In this case the veterinary has to hand over a confirmation to the livestock owner immediately, from which his conditions including the identified indication result. The certification needs to be kept at least three years by the livestock owner.*

What needs to be considered when marketing boars that have been vaccinated against boar taint?

Note: *The delivery note or the food chain information/standard declaration should clearly state whether the animals have been vaccinated against boar taint ("immunocastrated boars"). It must be ensured that all animals marketed in this way have been vaccinated at least twice (at intervals of at least four weeks) and that the second (or last dose before delivery for slaughter) has been administered no longer than ten and no shorter than four weeks ago (see package insert). This must also be ensured if the delivered animals come from different fattening groups or bays or are of different ages.*

The same general conditions should also be observed if these animals are marked with a special code on the slaughter stamp (e.g. marking with "Y").

What records must be available to prove the origin?

Note: *Records containing the extended food safety information must be available (see **Regulation (EU) No. 1337/2013**). This can be demonstrated by providing food chain information (e.g. a copy of the standard declaration).*

The following rules, among others, apply to the classification of slaughter pigs with regard to origin requirements (based on the group):

- 'Born and reared in Germany': Pigs that were born and reared in Germany.
- *'Reared in Germany':*
  - *Pigs that weigh less than 30 kg on average when brought to Germany, have a live weight of at least 80 kg when slaughtered and are slaughtered at an age of less than six months, or*
  - *Pigs that have been fattened in Germany for more than four months and are older than six months at the time of slaughter.*
  - *This requirement also applies to slaughter pigs from other EU member states: 'reared in several EU member states'.*

3.1.4 [K.O.] Stock records

What information must be recorded in the stock records and how must the information be entered?

All changes in the pig stock must be recorded and documented in the stock records. The QS sample form "Stock book pig farming" can be used for this purpose; it contains the minimum requirements for a stock record. Please note the following information on documentation:

- **In the case of an entry/receipt:** Name and address or registration number of the previous livestock owner (e.g. piglet producer, piglet rearing company; indication of the previous livestock owner also in the case of purchase of pigs via a livestock trader) or birth on the own farm.
- **In the case of a departure:** Name and address or registration number of the transferee or death on the own farm.

To ensure that empty periods for fattening pigs can be recorded to prevent sampling gaps in the Salmonella monitoring, it must be noted in the stock record from when on ("date") piglets are kept as fattening pigs. According to the German Animal Welfare Ordinance, fattening pigs are pigs intended for slaughter from the age of 10 weeks until slaughter. The time of transition from piglet to fattening pig can be recorded as a comment including the transition date in column 7 (remarks) of the sample form.

3.1.5 Livestock transport

How can the livestock owner check whether the livestock transport company is approved for QS?
The eligibility of delivery into the QS scheme is checked in the database (**QS Softwareplatform**) under the scheme participant search. There the eligibility of delivery can be looked up. Alternatively, it is possible to use an individual recipient and supplier list. The livestock owner can create this in the QS database and is then automatically notified by e-mail if the eligibility of delivery of a deposited livestock transporter changes. A quick guide to checking the eligibility of delivery of a location in the QS scheme can be found here.

Who has to check whether a livestock transport company is eligible to deliver?
In general, the person who orders a livestock transport must ensure that the carrier is QS-approved. (If the transport to another company or abattoir is ordered by a livestock trader company, this company must ensure that the carrier is QS approved).

If the livestock transport company, on his part, instructs an external transport service provider, then the livestock transport company must ensure that the subcontractor is eligible to deliver for QS.

When does the livestock owner have to check the eligibility of delivery of a livestock carrier/transport company?
If a livestock owner orders the transport of his QS livestock to another company or to the abattoir, he must check the carrier's eligibility to deliver.

If livestock is delivered to a livestock company, the livestock owner must also check the carrier's eligibility to deliver - regardless of whether he has ordered the transport or not.

If livestock is picked up from the livestock company and the livestock owner has not ordered the carrier himself, he does not have to check the carrier's eligibility to deliver.

If livestock is to be delivered to a non-QS company, the livestock transporter does not need to be QS certified, as the QS chain is interrupted, and the animals lose their QS status.

3.2 Husbandry, care and handling

Which animals can be considered as not transportable?
Animals that are unable to enter the means of transport under their own power due to illness, pathological conditions, physical weakness or injury are considered unfit for transport.

Injured animals and animals with physiological weaknesses or pathological conditions are considered unfit for transport. These include animals that

- are unable to walk, or can only do so with great pain after being unrolled,
- have limb or pelvic fractures,
- show heavy bleeding,
- show a severely disturbed general condition or
- are obviously suffering from prolonged severe pain.

The transport ban applies in particular in the following cases:

- The animals cannot move without pain or assistance.
- The animals have large, deep wounds or severe prolapse of internal organs.
- Pregnant animals in an advanced stage of pregnancy (90% or more) or animals that have given birth less than seven days ago.
- They are newborn mammals and the umbilical wound is not completely healed.
- They are piglets less than three weeks old.

Animals may generally be considered fit to travel if:

- The animals are only slightly injured or ill and the transport would not cause additional suffering.
- The animals are transported under veterinary supervision for the purpose of, or following, medical treatment or diagnosis. However, such transport is only permitted if it does not cause unnecessary suffering to the animals concerned.
- The animals have undergone a veterinary intervention which is usual in farming practice and the wounds must have completely healed.

***Suggestion**: Practical examples for assessing whether a pig may be transported are given in the guideline for assessing the transport and slaughterability of slaughter pigs issued by the Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen.*

Who is in charge to pay attention to the transportability of the animals?
Both the livestock owner and the carrier of the animals are in charge of ensuring that only animals that are fit for transport are loaded.

What is prohibited when handling animals during loading?
It is forbidden to

- beat or kick animals.
- exert pressure on particularly sensitive parts of the body that causes unnecessary pain or suffering.
- hoist animals with mechanical devices attached to their bodies.
- tug or pull animals by the head, ears, legs or tail.
- use pointed driving aids.

3.2.1 [K.O.] Monitoring and care of livestock

Does QS require annual further training?
No. ***Suggestion:*** *Every livestock owner and all employees should get further training regularly.*

What are suitable control criteria for assessing animal health?
Control criteria for assessing animal health include:

- Animal distribution on the usable area
- Feed and water intake
- Animal movement
- Frequency and type of breathing
- Changes to eyes and nostrils
- Changes to skin and hair coat
- Faecal consistency

What are the legal requirements for the operational self-assessment of animal protection?
Note: *In accordance with § 11 section 8* ***Animal Welfare Law****, every livestock owner must assure due to the self-assessment, that § 2 of the* ***Animal Welfare Law*** *will be fulfilled. In particular appropriate animal related properties (animal protection indicators) must be collected and evaluated.*

3.2.2 [K.O.] General farming requirements

Can a free-range company also participate in the QS system?
Yes, within the QS scheme free range and indoor housing systems are applicable.

Are there exact requirements box sties for sows?
For QS there are no exact dimensional specifications. The box sties must be designed in such a way that the animals cannot injure themselves. Sows must be able to lie down unhindered and get up again. Furthermore, they must be able to stretch their head and their limbs in a lateral position.

What are the requirements for the piglet nest?
The piglets' lying area must either be sufficiently littered or heat-insulated and heatable, perforated floor must be covered. There are currently no requirements for the size of the piglet nest in the QS scheme.

May sows which are no longer meant to be used for piglet production be kept in a box sty until slaughter?
No. Sows may be kept in box sties during the period from one week before the farrowing date, during the suckling period and up to four weeks after weaning. At all other times sows must be kept in groups. If a sow is no longer meant to be used for piglet production and therefore no further covering is planned, it must be kept in the group.

May nose cramps, clamps or rings be used?
No, the use is generally to be classified as nonconforming regarding the animal welfare regulations. The use is only permitted in individual cases if the intervention is necessary from a medical point of view (veterinary certificate must be available).

What must be observed with regard to visual contact of individually kept pigs?
Individually kept pigs must be able to make direct visual contact with other pigs at all times. The housing facilities must be constructed in such a way that this is possible for the animals in a normal posture.

Small holes or narrow gaps, e.g. between feeding facilities, are not suitable.

Suggestion: *It should be taken into account that sick or injured animals in particular may be restricted in their movement.*

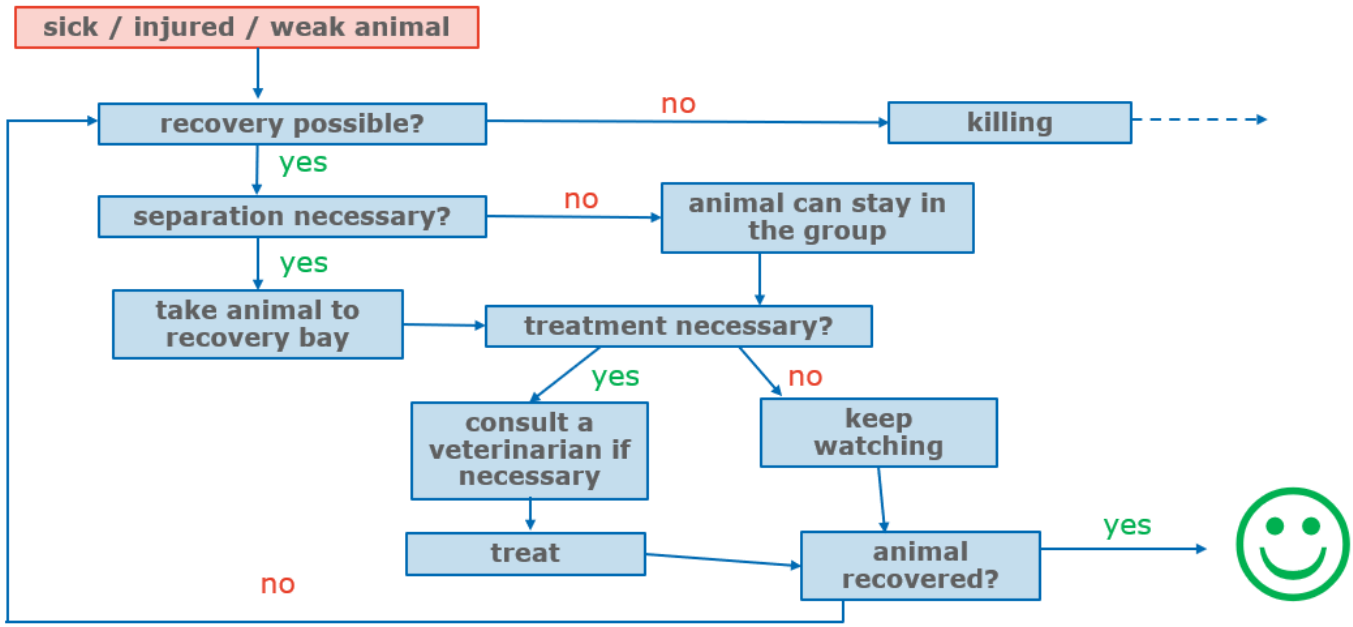
Can the nest-building material also be used as activity material?
In general, it is possible to offer the same material as both activity material and nest-building material in the week before the expected farrowing date, as long as it meets the requirements:

Roughage, such as straw or hay, can be offered as both nesting material and enrichment material.
Jute sacks could also be used if straw or similar materials are not compatible with the state of the art of the existing manure and urine disposal system.
Occupational material made from other materials (such as wood or alfalfa pellets) is conceivable as occupational material, but is not suitable as nesting material.

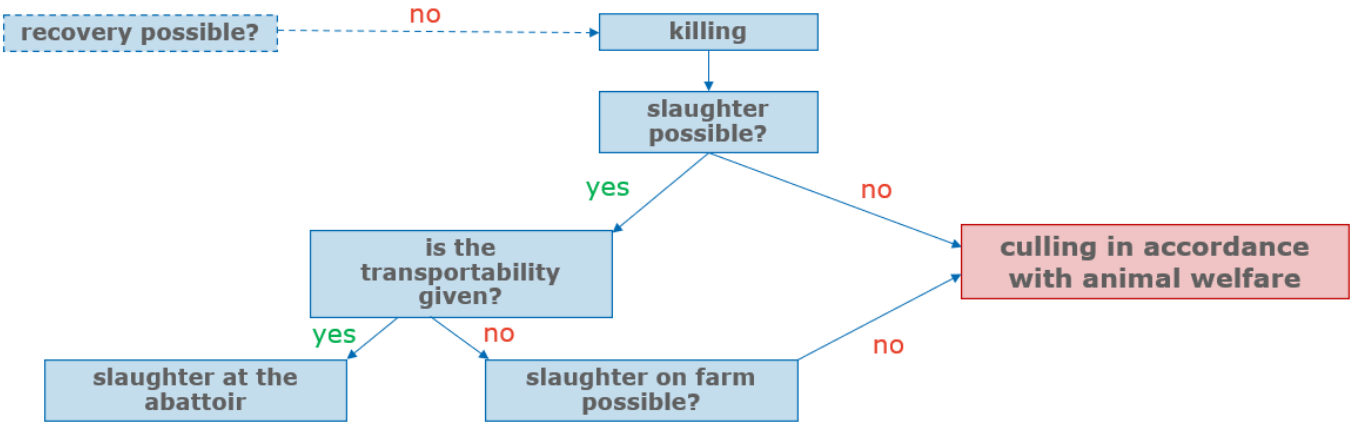
3.2.3 [K.O.] Handling sick and injured animals

Who decides whether an animal should be treated or culled?
In many cases the decision is made by the livestock owner/care personnel himself. If he cannot or does not want to decide for himself, it is in his responsibility to consult a veterinarian in order to clarify the situation together, so that a decision about the culling can be made.

The following illustration can serve as a decision-making aid:



If recovery is not possible, further decisions and options will have to be made regarding the situation:



Do sick and/or injured animals always have to be separated?
It is crucial that the affected animal can drink, eat and recover without being disturbed by other animals. Intensive animal observation - with increased monitoring frequency if necessary - is important in this case. It is also important to consider whether and, if so, when the animal can be re-housed in the group.

Separating sick or injured animals is not always necessary, it depends on the specific situation.

How must the soft floor litter or pad in the recovery bays be created?
The bays for sick and injured animals must be equipped with a soft floor covering (e.g. bedding or soft (= deformable) rubber pad) which must cover the lying area for each pig. However, it must be ensured that all housed animals can lie in this litter or on this pad at the same time. Conveyor belts and pads made of hard plastic or similar do not fulfil the requirement for a soft pad.

The required soft floor covering represents an additional measure for the recovery of the animals and does not have to comply with the perforation degree requirements (if it is laid on the slatted or solid floor).

If firmly fastened rubber surfaces are used in the normal sty for the lying and walking area in non-straw housing in order to increase the comfort of the animals, this is part of the regular sty floor. In addition to other requirements, the perforation degree requirements must also be observed in this case (cf. *3.2.4 Sty floor*).

How big must the soft bedding be in the recovery bay for rearing piglets?
The bays for sick and injured animals must be adequately equipped with dry and soft bedding or underlay, which must cover the lying area per pig. It is essential that all the animals can lie in this bedding or underlay at the same time; an exact size is not specified.

How many animals are allowed to be kept together in a recovery bay?
There is no specific upper limit as to how many animals may be kept together in a recovery bay. However, it is crucial that the recovery bays fulfil their purpose - i.e. enable the animals to recover. For this purpose, the housed animals must be able to recover and must not be troubled or injured by other housed animals. Likewise, access to feed and water must be easy. Animals that have already recovered must be separated, if necessary, in order to offer the animals that are still ill or injured the necessary rest.

Suggestion: *Recovery bays should be occupied by small groups of no more than three to five animals.*

What else should be considered in recovery bays?
In recovery bays, it must be ensured that the animals can easily reach feed and water. For this purpose, both should be offered close to the ground and the water supply from an open area to facilitate accessibility for the animals.

Animals isolated in recovery bays should also be checked several times a day.

What has to be considered when recovery bays are used on an inter-company basis?
Inter-company use of recovery bays is conceivable in principle - e.g. if several location numbers are located on one company site. However, if recovery bays are used across companies, some points must be considered:

The available space in the jointly used recovery bays must be sufficient for the animals of all locations. Irrespective of whether the animals are moved between companies or within a company, it must be possible to trace the gentle movement of the animals to the recovery bay, especially regarding any restrictions on their transportability. The use of "off-site" recovery bays is always inadmissible if animals that are not fit for transport would first have to be loaded for transfer to the recovery bay. In such cases, suitable alternative accommodation must always be provided.

If the animals are moved to another location for recovery, this must be documented accordingly in the stock registers.

How should sick or injured sows be handled in the crate?
In principle, it must be decided on a case-by-case basis whether an animal must be separated into a recovery bay for treatment or recovery. This is initially the responsibility of the livestock owner. If treatment and/or recovery is possible and sensible for animals housed in a crate, the animal can remain in the crate. If this is not the case, the animal must be separated to a recovery bay.

Conversely, it is not permitted to separate a sick or injured animal from the group housing into a crate.

Do livestock owners need a certificate of expertise for culling?
Anyone who carries out culling must have the necessary knowledge and skills. Generally, the livestock owner does not require an official proof of competence.

What are the culling procedures?

There are different procedures for stunning and killing depending on the age of the animals. The permissible methods are regulated by the **Regulation on the protection of animals at the time of killing (EC) No. 1099/2009** in conjunction with the respective national regulations.

Table 1: Selected procedures for stunning and killing animals according to age group

Age group	Stunning	Killing
Suckling Piglets < 5 kg	Strike on the head	Exsanguination
	CO_2 stunning and killing	
Piglet > 5 kg, Fattening pig, Sow, Boar	Bolt shot	Exsanguination or destruction of the brain/spinal cord
	Electrical stunning and killing	

As a general rule, a livestock owner may also instruct a veterinarian to cull an animal.

How must a piglet (< 5 kg) be culled properly?

In the case of suckling piglets (< 5 kg), the head strike (anaesthesia) with subsequent exsanguination (killing) is predominantly used.

A secure fixation of the piglets is necessary for the correct execution. A firm and precise strike to the head (with a hard log or metal tube) must cause serious damage to the brain with loss of consciousness. Bleeding must take place immediately after the strike. The animals must not wake from anaesthesia.

It is not permitted to strike the piglets on the edge of a bay wall, the floor or any other object.

*(**Suggestion:** see **DLG leaflet 430**: Dealing with sick and injured pigs; see Guidelines for the culling of pigs in agricultural businesses of the Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen).*

How must a pig (> 5 kg) be properly culled?

For pigs (> 5 kg) the bolt shot is mainly used for stunning. The correct firing position is of decisive importance. The subsequent killing can take place by bleeding or by destroying the brain or spinal cord.

In the case of killing by exsanguination, it is important to make the right incision in order to safely cut through the large blood vessels. In the case of killing by brain/spinal cord destruction, a metal or plastic rod is inserted into the brain through the bullet hole. There it is moved back and forth a few times to achieve mechanical destruction of the brain stem.

Killing by exsanguination or by brain/spinal cord destruction must be applied as soon as possible after the successful bolt shot, before the pig shows strong cramps.

Another method is electrical stunning and killing. A current flow through the brain causes a loss of sensation and perception. With correct electrical anaesthesia, the pig collapses and shows a typical cramping after the end of the flow (front legs stretched, hind legs pulled under the stomach) with subsequent paddling leg movements, but no more directed movements or breathing movements. Following, the heart will be flown through until death by replacing the electric pliers.

What other methods do exist for culling pigs?

Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is permitted for stunning and killing pigs of all ages. However, technical equipment for larger pigs is not available on agricultural companies. Equipment is already available on the market for piglets up to pprox. 5 kg. CO_2 is absorbed via the respiratory tract and anaesthetises the piglets after about 10 – 20 seconds (gas mixture with more than 80 % CO_2). After a required minimum stay of 10 minutes, the anaesthetised piglets die as a result of paralysis of the respiratory center. When removing the piglets from the installation, the piglets must be slack and must not show any movement. Breathing movements must also no longer be detectable.

With the use of fully automatic devices, the culling of small, non-viable piglets can be carried out in compliance with animal welfare regulations.

Is it permitted to cull an animal by shooting it with a firearm (bullet shot)?
Under certain conditions, stunning and killing by firearm is possible. This procedure may only be used if a shooting permit has been issued.

A permit must be obtained from the relevant regulatory authority and presented in the audit. The hunting license does not entitle to cull with a firearm.

Whereon must attention be paid after the killing?
After an animal got stunned and killed, care must be taken to ensure that death has occurred safely. If this does not apply and first signs of a recurring perceptive ability (e.g. persistent breathing movements, eye reactions) are observed, both the stunning and the killing must be repeated.

What must be considered if the culling is carried out by a person external to the company?
If the culling of animals is occasionally or principally carried out by a person external to the company (e.g. veterinarian, butcher, competent neighbour, etc.), this must be plausibly comprehensible in the audit. If, for example, the veterinarian is commissioned with the culling of animals in an emergency, this can be proven with invoices or receipts.

3.2.4 Sty floor

Can excrement slots be installed?
Yes. In group housing, however, excrement flaps or slots in the area where the animals are kept must be permanently covered and may only be opened briefly, i.e. during cleaning of the pen for the removal of excrements. In addition, excrement slots may also be located outside the area where the animals are kept, as long as they do not pose a risk of injury to the animals (e.g. directly on the wall of the pen).

In farrowing pens, the excrement flaps or slots must be closed before the expected farrowing date. As long as piglets are in the pen, they may only be opened for cleaning for a short period.

If the excrement flaps or slots are crossed when the animals are moved in or out (e.g. individual housing in the breeding centre, farrowing bay), they must be closed in this time.

3.2.5 Sty climate and noise

Which action should be taken if the ventilation system fails?
The emergency plan, which contains contact details for the technical emergency service, provides assistance.

If the ventilation system is not working, the air supply must be restored as quickly as possible. If the ventilation system fails due to technical defects other than a power failure (e.g., failure of ventilation motors), the animals must be supplied with fresh air as quickly as possible.

For example, the (compartment) windows/gates/doors or ventilation flaps can be opened as a short-term emergency measure. It is important to note whether the number and size of the (compartment) windows/gates/doors ensure a temporary supply of fresh air that is sufficient for the livestock. If the (compartment) windows/gates/doors cannot be opened, other measures must be taken to provide an emergency supply of fresh air.

If a ventilation system can be switched to gravity ventilation by opening certain flaps to ensure that the animals are supplied with air, this can also be used as a substitute device. Emergency ventilation via external fans on the compartment doors is also conceivable. It is always crucial to ensure that the animals are supplied with sufficient fresh air.

Which harmful gas values should be observed for ventilation?
Suggestion: *In areas where animals are kept, the following values of gas [cm^3] per m^3 of air should not be exceeded:*

Gas	Maximum Values
Ammonia	*20 cm³*
Carbon dioxide	*3.000 cm³*
Hydrogen Sulphide	*5 cm³*

Exceeding the limit values can only be tolerated for a short time in justified individual cases for indispensable activities such as draining the manure.

What noise level should be met in the sty?

Suggestion: *Noise level of 85 db(A) should not be exceeded. The noise level refers to technical facilities and equipment. Noise emitted by the animals is not affected by this requirement.*

Suggestion: *If other activity material is used (in addition to the organic and fibre-rich activity material), it should be ensured that it does not cause increased noise pollution (e.g. when using metal objects).*

3.2.6 Lighting

When does the sty need artificial lighting?

As a general rule, all sties (regardless of the size of the window area) must be illuminated with artificial light if daylight is not sufficient to supply and care for the animals. The lighting must then be adapted to the rhythm of the day and be at least 80 lux.

When must an orientation light be available?

As soon as artificial lighting is required during the day, an orientation light must be switched on at night. Conversely, if artificial lighting is not required during the day to care for the animals, orientation lighting is not required at night.

3.2.7 [K.O.] Space allowances

Does a raised level count as unrestricted usable space?

No. However, a raised level can be used as additional space - i.e. in addition to the legally required minimum space.

How is the space calculated?

The calculation is based on the area that can be used by the animals without restrictions, i.e. the area where the pigs can freely move (the inner dimensions of the bay). To calculate the net bay area, the space under troughs, feeders, partition walls, drinking bowls, etc. is not taken into account. This also applies to the area under raised troughs.

Must the space allowance be adjusted to the new group size when animals are taken out of the group?

In principle, the space allowance for the group size of the animals actually kept in the group must always be met. If the group size changes permanently or regularly or in a predictable way, this must be considered, and the space allowance must be adjusted accordingly to the smaller group size. However, if, for example, a single animal from a group of 40 sows is temporarily and unplanned relocated (e.g. to a convalescent bay) and then returns, the space available does not have to be adjusted to the new group size.

The space allowance for mixed sow groups is calculated as an average value: number of old sows x space allowance + number of gilts x space allowance = total space allowance for all animals in the group. The total group size is decisive for the minimum space available per animal.

Can an outdoor area be added to the unreservedly usable floor area?

The prescribed unreservedly usable floor area must be available to the animals at all times. The outdoor area can therefore only be added to the unreservedly usable floor area if it is guaranteed that it is accessible at all times. Of course, the space allowance may be temporarily reduced for the duration of the cleaning.

3.2.8 [K.O.] Alarm system

In which cases must an alarm system be installed?
According to legal regulations and QS guideline, an alarm system must be available if the ventilation is dependent on an electrically operated system. This also applies to sties with free-range area.

Suggestion: *The functionality of the alarm system should be checked at regular intervals and these functional tests should also be documented. In case of doubt, this can be used to prove that the duty of care has been complied with.*

What must be taken into account during the functional test of the alarm system?
During the functional test of the alarm system, it must be noted that the test alarm is triggered by relevant parameters, such as the simulation of an overtemperature or a power failure. The simulation of an under-temperature and the test function of the system are not suitable.

What type of alarm system must be present in a company?
For electrically operated ventilation systems, a functioning alarm device must be present in every company. For this purpose, for example a phone dialer must be present. Which type of device (or which combination of devices) makes sense for a particular company must be decided on a case-by-case basis. It is crucial that a power failure or failure of the ventilation system is noticed immediately in any case (e.g. also during the night hours or in distant sties) by a person who can initiate appropriate measures for remedy.

3.2.9 Emergency power supply

Can companies with solar systems use storage batteries as an emergency power supply?
Solar batteries can be used as an emergency power supply so that the animals are supplied with feed, water and air also in the event of a power failure. It must be ensured that the batteries have sufficient capacity to supply the sties with electricity in the event of a power failure.

How must be acted if the ventilation fails?
Assistance is provided by the emergency plan, in which contact details for the technical emergency service are contained.

If the ventilation stops working, the air supply must be restored as quickly as possible. In the event of a power failure, the emergency power supply must be provided, e.g. by an emergency power generator. If the ventilation has failed due to other technical defects (e.g. failure of ventilation motors), it must be ensured via a replacement device that fresh air reaches the compartments of the sty as quickly as possible.

Suggestion: *The functionality of the emergency power generator should be checked at regular intervals and these functional tests should also be documented. In case of doubt, this can be used to prove that the duty of care has been complied with.*

When do companies not need an emergency power supply?
Companies do not need an emergency power supply if both the feed and water supply of the animals and the ventilation of the sty are guaranteed independently of the electricity (e.g. gravity-ventilated sty or open sty).

It is only possible to do without an emergency power supply in sties where the ventilation is usually operated electrically if sufficient air exchange is ensured, e.g. by fully opening the side walls as a substitute device. Simply opening the windows is not sufficient for this in most cases.

3.2.10 Requirements for the means of transportation

How should the ramps at loading and unloading facilities be designed?
The angle of inclination must not exceed 20° (36.4 %). With platform installations, protective screens must be in place so that the animals cannot flee from the side. If the angle of inclination of the ramps exceeds 10° (17.6%), the loading facility must be equipped with a device such as crossbars to enable the animals to climb up or down without risk or effort.

3.2.11 [K.O.] Activity material

What do "investigable", "movable" and "changeable" mean for activity material?
Activity material for pigs must be, among other things, investigable, moveable and changeable.

"Investigable" means that the pigs can dig in the activity material or at least "lever" it. The requirement is considered fulfilled if the activity material encourages the natural behaviour of digging. This can be ensured by offering material on or close to the floor.

"Movable" means that the pigs can change the location or position of the material.

"Changeable" means that the pigs can change the appearance and structure of the material. For this purpose, the activity material must be able to be taken into the pig's mouth and be easily chewable.

Which materials are suitable activity materials?

The activity material must be organic and rich in fibres. Activity material (if provided in a movable, examinable and changeable form) includes, but is not limited to (incomplete list):

- Roughage, e.g.
  - Straw and hay in long, short, cob and pellet form.
  - Silage (maize silage, grass silage; timothy silage)
  - Dried pulp
  - Lucerne, lucerne pellets, lucerne cobs
  - Pea, sunflower, soy hulls
  - Grape marc, spent grains
  - Grain bran, grain husk bran
  - Grain husks
  - green meal pellets; green meal cobs
  - Straw press moulds, straw/molasses press moulds
  - Miscanthus
  - Employment (roughage) fodder (here: with a crude fibre content of 20 % or more)
- Hemp, sisal and cotton ropes
- Jute bags
- Peat (single feed material)
- Wood shavings
- Paper shavings
- untreated green softwood, fresh twigs or branches

Other materials are also conceivable, as long as they meet the requirements for activity material.

Different materials can be combined.

Materials that are not suitable as activity materials include (incomplete list):

- Wood that cannot be examined and/or chewed within a few days.
- CCM
- Extraction meal
- Cereals, cereal meals
- Semolina bran
- Grain maize
- Natural rubber
- Molasses blocks
- Mineral lickstones
- Plastic toys
- Chains

What must be considered when feed is used as activity material?

If feed is used as activity material, the requirements for the storage of feed on the one hand and the requirements for the procurement of feed on the other hand must be observed.

Background: These products can be used both as "real" feed and as activity material. A change of the type of use is possible at any time.

For storage requirements, see chapter ⇒ *3.3.3 Handling and storage of feed*.

The requirements for feed procurement differ depending on the type of feed, see ⇒ *3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement*.

Primary products, such as hay, straw or pellets, which consist exclusively of hay or straw, can be procured freely; they do not require QS approval and do not have to come from QS suppliers.

If other feeds are involved (e.g. compound feeds such as pellets made of straw and molasses), they must be purchased as QS goods and from QS-approved sources (see also *3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement*: What should the livestock owner pay attention to when purchasing feed?).

Can bite rings, rolls, balls, stars etc. based on wood fibre or similar be used as occupational material?

Activity materials such as bite rings, rolls, balls or stars - often made of wood fibres and molasses - must, like all other materials used as activity materials, meet the appropriate requirements. This means that the bite

products must be "movable", "examinable" and "changeable" (see above). If the products fulfil all the requirements for activity material, they can be used as activity material. If the requirements are not met, for example because the products cannot be burrowed/levered or chewed within a few days, they do not count as activity material.

There is no general approval of certain products.

Can wooden slats be used as activity material?

Wooden slats are usually unsuitable as an activity material. To be used as an activity material, it must firstly be ensured that the wood is harmless to health. This means that it must not be treated or impregnated, must not splinter, etc. Secondly, it must be ensured that the wooden slats can be chewed/consumed within a few days. For example, the wood must not be too thick. The slats must also be offered in such a way that the animals can put them in their mouths and bite on them and at least be able to lever them (they can be examined, moved and changed).

How much activity material must be offered?

Activity material must be offered in an animal-to-material ratio of 12:1 (this also includes suckling piglets). Individual objects can be credited for up to 12 animals each. In the case of racks, troughs or automats, 12 animals can be counted for each exercise place (= approx. one pig's width). The front sides of racks or troughs that are accessible without restrictions can be considered when calculating the number of places. Different materials (e.g. feeder with straw pellets and hemp ropes) can be combined to meet the animal-material ratio.

If straw or similar materials are given daily, ensure that there is sufficient remaining material immediately before the next offering. Alternatively, permanent access to objects such as cotton ropes or jute sacks can be combined with daily offerings of fresh straw or roughage on the floor, in troughs or drinking troughs.

The following tables show the maximum number of animals per exercise facility for the respective weight range.

Piglets up to 15 kg

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
	a) Racks, troughs, wall stand, closed side walls	b) Racks, troughs, wall stands, open side walls	c) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, closed side walls	d) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, open side walls	e) Round container, free-standing, hanging or bottom feeding
Up to 20 cm	12	48	24	84	84
> 20 to 30 cm	24	60	48	96	108
> 30 to 40 cm	36	60	72	120	144
> 40 to 50 cm	36	72	72	132	168
> 50 to 60 cm	48	84	96	156	192
> 60 to 70 cm	60	96	120	180	228
> 70 to 80 cm	72	96	144	192	252

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
> 80 to 90 cm	72	108	144	216	288
> 90 to 100 cm	84	120	168	228	312

Piglets until end of rearing (approx. 25 kg)

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
	a) Racks, troughs, wall stand, closed side walls	b) Racks, troughs, wall stands, open side walls	c) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, closed side walls	d) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, open side walls	e) Round container, free-standing, hanging or bottom feeding
Up to 20 cm	12	36	24	72	72
> 20 to 30 cm	12	48	24	84	96
> 30 to 40 cm	24	60	48	96	120
> 40 to 50 cm	24	60	48	108	144
> 50 to 60 cm	36	72	72	120	156
> 60 to 70 cm	36	72	72	132	180
> 70 to 80 cm	48	84	96	144	204
> 80 to 90 cm	60	84	120	156	228
> 90 to 100 cm	60	96	120	180	240

Pigs up to 60 kg

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
	a) Racks, troughs, wall stand, closed side walls	b) Racks, troughs, wall stands, open side walls	c) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, closed side walls	d) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, open side walls	e) Round container, free-standing, hanging or bottom feeding
Up to 20 cm	12	36	24	48	60
> 20 to 30 cm	12	36	24	60	72
> 30 to 40 cm	12	36	24	72	96
> 40 to 50 cm	12	48	24	72	108
> 50 to 60 cm	24	48	48	84	120
> 60 to 70 cm	24	60	48	96	132
> 70 to 80 cm	24	60	48	108	144
> 80 to 90 cm	36	60	72	108	156
> 90 to 100 cm	36	72	72	120	180

Pigs from 60 kg - 120 kg

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
	a) Racks, troughs, wall stand, closed side walls	b) Racks, troughs, wall stands, open side walls	c) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, closed side walls	d) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, open side walls	e) Round container, free-standing, hanging or bottom feeding
Up to 20 cm	12	36	24	48	60
> 20 to 30 cm	12	36	24	48	72

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
> 30 to 40 cm	12	36	24	60	84
> 40 to 50 cm	12	48	24	72	96
> 50 to 60 cm	12	48	24	72	108
> 60 to 70 cm	24	48	48	84	120
> 70 to 80 cm	24	48	48	84	132
> 80 to 90 cm	24	60	48	96	144
> 90 to 100 cm	36	60	72	108	156

Pigs from 120 kg

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
	a) Racks, troughs, wall stand, closed side walls	b) Racks, troughs, wall stands, open side walls	c) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, closed side walls	d) Racks, troughs, free-standing or hanging, open side walls	e) Round container, free-standing, hanging or bottom feeding
Up to 20 cm	12	24	24	36	60
> 20 to 30 cm	12	36	24	48	72
> 30 to 40 cm	12	36	24	48	84
> 40 to 50 cm	12	36	24	60	84
> 50 to 60 cm	12	36	24	60	96
> 60 to 70 cm	12	48	24	72	108
> 70 to 80 cm	24	48	48	72	120

Width or diameter	Maximum number of animals per activity material facility (rack, trough, etc.)				
> 80 to 90 cm	24	48	48	84	120
> 90 to 100 cm	24	48	48	84	132

Can sty equipment be regarded as activity material?
No, sty equipment that actually serves a different purpose cannot be regarded as activity material.

Example: Liquid feeders are used for feed intake, not for activity. It is conceivable that the company might set up another automatic feeder and offers only activity materials here.

How often should activity material be replaced?
Activity material must be replaced whenever it is worn out by the use of the animals and thus no longer serves the purpose of enrichment. In addition, it should be ensured that between two changes of section (e.g. between two fattening cycles in the case of in-out routines) the activity material is cleaned and disinfected in the same way as the rest of the bays in order to interrupt infection chains. If activity material is used that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (for example wood), the material should be replaced and renewed at each section change.

3.2.12 [K.O.] Piglet castration

What must be considered for castration?
Note: *The castration of piglets is only permitted under effective pain elimination.*

The necessity of anaesthesia or effective pain elimination is explicitly pointed out.

3.3 Feed and feeding

Which agricultural livestock owner must register with the responsible regional authorities?
Note: *In accordance with the Feed Hygiene Regulation agricultural companies that keep livestock must be registered with the responsible regional authorities. Livestock owners who use purchased, ready-to-use animal feed only are not obliged to register.*

How is feed labelled?
Feed from QS-certified manufacturers or traders, must be clearly labelled as QS products (exception: primary agricultural products, e.g. grain). In the case of bulk deliveries, every article must be labelled as QS product on the delivery documents and bagged/packaged goods must be labelled on the bag tag or on the accompanying documents (e.g. delivery note).

If refined or distilled fatty acids, vegetable glycerine or mixed fats and oils are purchased for animal feeding, it must be clearly marked as suitable for feeding purposes.

Must the labelling of feed be checked by the livestock owner?
No. However, it should be noted that feed which is labelled as "non-QS product" or "not for feed use" may not be fed to QS animals.

Suggestion: *Feeds must be labelled clearly and article based.*

3.3.1 [K.O.] Feed supply

What animal:feeding place ratio must be observed for sensor-controlled feeding systems/phase feeding?
Sensor-controlled feeding systems can be credited with a maximum animal:feeding place ratio of 4:1, provided that the animals have continuous access to feed (ad libitum).
If there is no feed in the troughs between the individual phases for a longer period of time, this is considered rationed feeding and the animal:feeding place ratio of 1:1 applies or the feeding phases must be adjusted accordingly so that the animals can eat at any time.

Can roughage feeding places be taken into account when calculating the animal:feeding place ratio?
Yes, if both the feed and the roughage can be consumed ad libitum. The animal:feeding place ratio for the roughage feeding place can be calculated at a maximum of 4:1.

3.3.3 Handling and storage of feed

Must the access area of driving storage silos be closed after each feed pickup?
Basically, feed storage facilities - including driving storage silos - must be protected from contamination (e.g. by pests, rodents, birds, wild boars, other wild and domestic animals). If possible, the cutting area should also be closed after each feed pickup. If the cutting area remains open (e.g. during the day), it should nevertheless be protected as far as possible against contamination.

3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement

What should the livestock owner pay attention to when purchasing feed?
Each livestock owner may only accept feed for his animals that comes from a producer or trader eligible to deliver into the QS scheme. He is obliged to order and purchase feed certified according to QS or a recognised standard. In the audit, it is checked whether the feed purchased was certified accordingly.

If the feed (loose or packaged) is sold directly by the producer, the livestock owner must check that the producer is eligible to deliver into the QS scheme.

If loose feed is purchased from a trader, the livestock owner must check that the trader is eligible to deliver into the QS scheme. For his part, the trader is responsible for ensuring that the feed comes from a producer eligible to deliver into the QS scheme.

If packaged feed is purchased via a trader, the livestock owner must check the QS eligibility of delivery of the trader or the producer respectively; if the trader is listed in the database as eligible to deliver, there is no need to check the producer. If the trader is not eligible to deliver, the producer of the packaged feed must be listed in the QS database as eligible to deliver.

Note: *Livestock owners may only obtain and use feed, that come from companies which are registered and approved in accordance with* ***VO 183/2005****.*

Where can be checked whether the companies (producers, traders, transport companies) are eligible to deliver?
All suppliers can be checked in the database at the **QS database** (scheme participant search).

For direct purchase from the producer, the following applies: In addition to the company name, the production scope for which the company is eligible to deliver, is also listed.

- When purchasing feed materials, the producer must have an eligibility to deliver for this (production scope: "feed material production").
- When compound feed is purchased (declared as single feed, supplementary feed, milk replacer or mineral feed), the producer must have an eligibility to deliver for this (production scope: "compound feed production").
- When purchasing premixes, the producer must have an eligibility to deliver for this (production scope: "premix production").
- When purchasing additives, the producer must have an eligibility to deliver for this (production scope: "Feed additive production").

The company, production scope and declaration of the feed (on the delivery note or on the bag trailer) must be the same.

For the purchase from the trader applies:

- When purchasing bulk goods from a trader, the trader must have an eligibility to deliver for this (production type: "Trade").

Who must ensure that a feed transport company is eligible to deliver?
The person who orders the transport. If the livestock owner instructs the carrier to transport **unpackaged** feed, he must ensure that he uses a feed carrier eligible to deliver. If **packaged** feedstuffs are transported, the carrier does not have to have QS approval.

(If a feedstuff is delivered by a carrier on the order of the manufacturer or trader, the supplier (i.e. manufacturer or trader) must ensure that the carrier is eligible to deliver).

If the carrier, on his part, instructs an external transport service provider, then the carrier must ensure that the subcontractor is eligible to deliver for QS.

When does the livestock owner have to check the eligibility of delivery of a feed carrier?
Whenever the livestock owner orders the transport of **unpackaged** feed, he must check whether the carrier is QS-approved.

If the transport of feedstuffs is organised by the manufacturer or trader, the livestock owner does **not** have to check whether the transporter is a QS approved. The livestock owner only checks the eligibility of the manufacturer or trader to deliver (see "What must be taken into account when purchasing feedstuffs?")

Is a QS approval required for feed transport within the own company?
No.

What can the labelling of feed certified according to QS or a recognised standard look like?
Labelling must be carried out on an article-related basis. In the case of bagged goods, each bag must be labelled accordingly; in the case of bulk goods, the labelling is carried out on an article-related basis in the accompanying documents. The following options are available for labelling:

- Printing of the QS certification mark on the bag or article-related on the accompanying documents or
- The terms "QS feed" or "QS goods" are printed on the bag or article-related on the accompanying documents or
- General indication on the accompanying documents that the company only sells QS feed.

Feed certified according to a QS-recognised standard must also be clearly labelled as certified goods.

The following standards are recognised by QS:

- GMP+ International (GMP+ FSA)
- Ovocom (FCA)
- Agricultural Industries Confederation (UFAS, FEMAS, TASCC)
- AMA (pastus+)
- EFISC-GTP
- Fami-QS
- Oqualim (RCNA International)

Do silage additives must be purchased from QS-approved producers?
Yes, because silage additives are feed additives and must therefore be purchased from producers who are QS-approved. These must also be additives that are certified according to QS or a recognised standard.

What are agricultural primary products?
For the purposes of QS, agricultural primary products are all unprocessed crops (e.g. cereals, rape, grass) produced on an agricultural company which have undergone no more than simple external processing.

In the case of field crops, simple external processing is understood to mean the various degrees of grinding (e.g. whole grains, crushed, ground or milled), as well as cleaning, ensiling (e.g. corn silage), indirect drying and pressing (e.g. hay bales, lucerne press cylinders, straw pellets).

There are no purchase requirements for agricultural primary products - they can therefore be freely purchased from agricultural producers, the agricultural trade or from other sources without the producer or trader needing QS certification. Companies that use agricultural primary products as feed count as on-farm mixers and must participate in feed monitoring.

If primary products are processed more than simply externally, they lose the status of "primary product". This is the case, for example, if feeds are mixed or if rapeseed is pressed and separated into rapeseed cake and rapeseed oil.

What must be considered when purchasing and using feed containing soy, soy products and compound feed containing soy or soy products?
Since 1 January 2024, only QS-Soy^{plus}-compliant soy has been used in feed in the QS scheme. If QS livestock owners purchase soy beans or soy bean products or compound feed containing soy beans (products), the following points must be observed:

- Purchase of **QS-certified feed**: In this case, no additional requirements for the purchase of feed must be observed. **All requirements are fulfilled with the purchase of QS feed**. In addition to labelling as QS product, the feed is labelled with the claim QS-Soy^{plus} or in accordance with the regulations of a recognised standard for the guideline QS-Soy^{plus}.
- Purchase of soy beans (= primary agricultural product): If soy beans are purchased as a primary agricultural product by QS livestock owners or grown by them and used in their own feed, there are currently no requirements for the certification of more sustainable cultivation: they can be purchased freely - just like other primary products.

- When purchasing **feed via a QS-recognised standard**, livestock owners may only purchase goods that are QS-Soy^{plus}-compliant. When ordering, they must therefore state that the feed is being ordered for a QS company and that it may only contain compliant soy.

Note: *The feed that falls within the scope of the guidelines is specified in Appendix 4.1 Soybeans/soybean products within the scope of QS Soy^{plus} to the guideline QS Soy^{plus}.*

How can livestock owners check whether feed containing soy is QS-Soy^{plus}-compliant and whether the feed companies are eligible to deliver?

- All feed companies that comply with the requirements for the purchase of more sustainable soy are labelled accordingly in the **public scheme participant search**.
- For **QS feed**, labelling - in addition to the labelling as QS goods - is carried out via the **QS-Soy^{plus}** claim or in accordance with the regulations of a recognised standard for the **QS-Soy^{plus}** guideline.
- If a feed company is certified according to a recognised standard (see Annex 4.3 to the guideline QS Soy-^{Plus}), the regulations of the respective recognised standard apply to the labelling. Most recognised schemes, such as GMP+ Int. use positive labelling: the goods are therefore clearly labelled. However, some recognised schemes, such as EFISC-GTP, use negative labelling (labelling that the soy contained is not sustainably certified). In this case, care must therefore be taken to ensure that no labelling is present.

Are feed companies allowed to sell QS feed containing soy (products) as "not QS-Soy^{plus} compliant"?

No. Since 1 January 2024, QS feed companies must implement the guideline QS-Soy^{plus} or a recognised standard for the guideline QS-Soy^{plus} for all feed containing soy. This means that it is not permitted at the feed sector stage to market soy (products) as QS products that do not meet the requirements of the guideline. It would then no longer be QS products. This applies to new goods as well as to remaining stocks from 2023 and contracts that have already been concluded. The delivery date is decisive: goods purchased after the beginning of 2024 must be QS products as always and also QS-Soy^{plus}-compliant if they contain soy.

May food be fed to livestock?

Yes, food or former food may be used in livestock feeding. However, different requirements apply to the supplying company and the livestock owner, depending on whether it is clearly recognisable to the supplying company that the food can be used as animal feed or if it is not identifiable.

In the case of a clear intended purpose as animal feed, the supplying company as feed producer must be approved to supply QS.

If the purpose is unclear - i.e. if it is not clear at the time of purchase whether the livestock owner is using the food as such, converting it into feed or is using it in any other way (e.g. edible oil, carrots, etc. from the supermarket) - the supplying company is not required to obtain certification. The livestock owner must then, however, comply with the provisions of the **Feed Hygiene Regulation (EC) 183/2005** Annex II. This includes the implementation of a HACCP concept, essentially an incoming goods inspection, the creation of reserve samples and corresponding documentation. In addition, the livestock owner must participate in feed monitoring. The livestock owner does not need a QS certification for feed production if no feed is sold to third parties outside the company.

Some former foodstuffs must be processed before being used as livestock feed. If this is done by the supplying company or by a specialised processing company, a QS certification as a feed producer is required and marketing is carried out as feed. If a livestock owner processes the food himself for feeding in his own company, he does not need a feed producing certification. Here too, however, he must comply with Annex II of the **Feed Hygiene Regulation (EC) 183/2005**, participate in feed monitoring and may not sell feed to third parties outside the company.

What must the livestock owner consider when feeding stale bread to his animals?

If a livestock owner purchases stale bread or bakery produce from a baking company (e.g. a bakery), the baking company is regarded as a feed producer and must therefore have an eligibility to deliver into the QS scheme.

Whether the supplier is eligible to deliver into the QS scheme or not can be seen in the public search of the QS database at **QS Softwareplatform** (under scheme participant research).

Are there exceptions for feeding stale bread or bakery products?

In rare cases, stale bread or bakery produce are purchased for which the intended purpose as feed is not recognisable (i.e. if the supplying bakery cannot identifiable the intended purpose as feed). In this case, a QS certification of the bakery is not necessary.

Example of unclear purpose: If the livestock owner uses the material in the biogas plant, it is conceivable that the bakery does not know whether the material is used as energy or feed. In this case, the livestock owner

must comply with the provisions of the **Feed Hygiene Regulation (EC) 183/2005**, Annex II. In the implementation of a HACCP concept, this essentially includes an incoming goods inspection, the creation of retained samples and the corresponding documentation. The company must inform its coordinator about the use of stale bread and bakery produce and participate in feed monitoring. A QS certification of the livestock company for feed production is not necessary, provided that no feed is sold to third parties outside the company (see definition of on-farm mixer).

There are also individual cases in which the livestock owner himself prepares stale bread or other bakery produce (see QS-list) for his own use (e.g. removing packaging) and then feeds them to his own animals. Here no QS certification is necessary for the bakery that supplies the product (definition: preparation means a processing process by which a feed is produced from a substance that is not suitable as animal feed). In these cases, the livestock owner is a on-farm mixer and must be officially registered as a conditioner ("recycling company") and comply with the regulations of the **Feed Hygiene Regulation (EC) 183/2005**, Annex II (see previous paragraph). The company must inform its coordinator about the use of stale bread and bakery produce and participate in feed monitoring. QS certification as a feed producer is not necessary.

3.3.5 Assignment of compound feed deliveries (bulk) to location numbers

Why are location numbers recorded?
By recording the deliveries to the location numbers, feed deliveries within the QS scheme can be clearly allocated to the respective livestock location.

When ordering bulk compound feed, the livestock owner must state the location number (e.g. VVVO number). When the goods are delivered, the specified location number must be checked (delivery note). If no or a wrong number is indicated, the livestock owner must inform the supplier to correct the location number, because the livestock owner is responsible for the indication and correctness as well as for the update with changes. In the audit the livestock owner must prove that this correction has been notified to the supplier.

Does this also apply to (single) feed material?
No, these requirements are mandatory for compound feeds.

Suggestion: *It is recommended that the location number be assigned to feed material, feed purchased or collected by cash sale and packaged or bagged goods.*

What must be written on the delivery notes of bulk compound feed produced in a cooperation?
In the case of bulk compound feed produced in cooperations (e.g. total mixed ration), the location number of the company supplied must be documented on the delivery note, too.

The following exception applies: If the cooperations do not write out delivery notes (e.g. cooperation of several companies of one livestock owner), no location numbers must be shown.

3.3.6 Feed production (on-farm mixer)

What is an on-farm mixer?
On-farm mixers in the sense of QS are agricultural companies that

- grow their own primary agricultural products for their own use or buy them from other farmers or via trade and/or
- procure QS-compliant feed (components) and
- produce feed or farm mixtures (self-mixed feed) from these themselves or in cooperation with other livestock owners and use them for their own livestock.

When purchasing feed components, on-farm mixers must observe the requirements of criterion *3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement*. The feed (components) may be subjected to simple external processing, processed into feed materials, and mixed.

The self-produced feed may only be used within the own company or within a cooperation for the production of feed. No feed may be sold to third parties (QS scheme participants) outside the own company or the cooperation.

The responsibility for ensuring that the components used meet the legal and QS requirements, as well as the responsibility for the production of the feed, lies with the producing agricultural company. Companies that only purchase ready-mixed feed within a co-operative and do not use any primary products are not counted as on-farm mixers, but they do take part in feed monitoring.

Do all companies that use agricultural primary products have to participate in the feed monitoring as on-farm mixers?
Yes. In principle, all companies that use agricultural primary products as feed count as on-farm mixers. This also applies to companies that exclusively use agricultural primary products that are purchased **as QS goods** from QS-approved producers or traders. Consequently, they must also participate in the feed monitoring.

Is it allowed to blend feed?
This is not permitted if a maximum content of undesirable substances has been exceeded. This is because it is prohibited to place a feed containing a level of an undesirable substance that exceeds the maximum level laid down in Annex I to **Directive 2002/32/EC** on the market, to feed it or to mix it with the same or another feed for dilution purposes (prohibition of blending).

It is permitted to subject such feed to appropriate treatment to reduce or remove (cleaning) or inactivate (de-contamination) the undesirable substance. The feed may only be used if the content of this substance after treatment does not exceed the maximum level laid down in Annex I to **Directive 2002/32/EC**.

Must the use of silage additives (such as lactic acid bacteria) be documented according to HACCP standards?
No. The documentation is mandatory for almost all feed additives but does not include the use of specially designated silage additives.

How must the use of feed additives be documented?
The use of feed additives must be documented in accordance with HACCP principles. This applies, for example, to the use of preservatives (including propionic acid for the storage of moist grain), amino acids, vitamins and trace elements (see **Feed Hygiene Regulations** (Art. 5 of **Regulation (EC) 183/2005**), supporting documents for the use of acids, leaflets for the use of feed additives in the agricultural business of the ZDL (acids as preservatives; urea and its derivatives; amino acids)).

3.3.7 Feed production in cooperation

When is a cooperation for feed production possible?
Cooperations for feed production can be concluded between livestock owners in the QS scheme. The cooperations can be concluded between several livestock owners as well as between several locations of one livestock owner.

Within the cooperations, feed may be subjected to simple external processing, processed into feed materials and mixed (see on-farm mixers).

What do livestock owners have to consider when they cooperate to produce feed together?
All companies participating in the cooperation must participate in QS feed monitoring.

What documentation requirements do cooperations for feed production have to observe?
Within cooperations for feed production, the supply routes of the feed must be traceable. In the producing company, the name and address of the companies supplied as well as the type and quantity of feed delivered must be documented. In addition, delivery notes must be issued for the companies supplied. Collective documentation or collective delivery notes, e.g. weekly summarised delivery notes for daily feed deliveries, are also possible. The supplied companies must be able to provide evidence of these delivery notes in the audit.

Two cases are excluded from this documentation for the traceability of the delivery routes:

1. A livestock owner has several locations (location numbers) for which he produces or purchases feed in a cooperation for feed production.

2. Several location numbers at the same location (company grounds) form a cooperation.
   Example: Companies of mother (GbR), father and son GbR located at the same site.

In these cases, the documentation for the traceability of the supply chains in the producing company as well as the delivery notes can be dispensed with. The contract for feed production in cooperation must be available in any case.

How does the loss of the eligibility to deliver of a QS livestock owner affect the cooperation for feed production?
A temporary loss of the eligibility to deliver (= blocking of delivery) has no effect on the cooperation for feed production. However, if a livestock owner is no longer a QS scheme partner, participation in the cooperation is no longer possible.

3.3.8 [K.O.] Use of service providers for feed production

Where can be checked which service providers are eligible to deliver?
The service providers which are eligible to deliver into the QS scheme can be checked in the QS software platform at **QS Softwareplatform** (under scheme participant research).

Must retained samples of produced feed be taken by the service provider?

There is no obligation.

Suggestion: *It is recommended to take a retained sample of all feed produced by a service provider and to keep it at least until the product is fed.*

When do service providers not need to be QS approved?
Service providers for the production of feed do not require QS eligibility of delivery if they only carry out simple external processing.

The following also applies to mobile feed milling and mixing plants: If feeds are only milled and not mixed, no QS eligibility of delivery of the plant is required. If feed mixing equipment (e.g. for mixing, mincing or distributing raw feed) is used, no QS eligibility of delivery of the feed mixer is required either.

What must livestock owners consider who produce feed together?
If livestock owners deploy their own mobile feed milling and mixing plants individually or jointly, no QS approval of the equipment is required, as long as it can be guaranteed that no feed is being produced for third parties. A written agreement is required therefore.

3.4 Drinking water

3.4.1 [K.O.] Water supply

Is a liquid supply exclusively throughout the automatic pulp feeder ("feed soup") sufficient?
No. It must always be ensured that every animal has access to water in sufficient quantity and quality. This means drinking water. Of course, pigs can also take up some liquid through pulp or liquid feeding ("feed soup").

However, this liquid supply via the feed alone is not sufficient. Animals must always have free access to water.

What must be observed when using additives in drinking water?
Only products that are approved for this use may be used as additives in drinking water. Drinking water additives must also be microbiologically harmless and must not have a negative effect on the microbiological condition of the drinking water. The requirements for the quality of drinking water ("clean, clear and without extraneous odor") must not be impaired by the additives.

Must products which are added to the drinking water be QS-approved?
Yes, all additives that are added to the drinking water in the occupied sty and are thus consumed by the animals while drinking must be approved as animal feed or animal feed additive. These products must also be QS-approved and purchased from a QS-approved producer or trader. (Exception: When biocides are used for drinking water, no QS approval is required).

In the case of products that are used in an unoccupied sty and therefore cannot be consumed by the animals, approval as animal feed and QS approval are not required. This can be the case, for example, with the use of cleaning agents or biocides for disinfection when cleaning the drinking facilities between two fattening cycles. The agents must be used in accordance with the producer's instructions. If necessary, the pipes must be rinsed before animals are re-housed so that the drinking water is not contaminated.

Is a drinking water check required for QS?
No, a drinking water check is not mandatory.

Suggestion: *It is recommended to analyse samples of the drinking water regularly (e.g. annually). These should always consider microbiological parameters (bioburden at 20 °C, bioburden at 36 °C, E. coli count). If the water for the drinkers is supplied from own sources and not from the public drinking water supply, chemical-physical parameters should also be examined (pH value, electrical conductivity, iron, nitrate and sulphate content).*
If the orientation values (see BMEL orientation framework or Animal Welfare Initiative criteria catalogue) are exceeded or undercut, measures should be taken to improve the values.

Must the animal/drinking place ratio also be complied with in the farrowing compartment if the piglets remain there for a while after weaning?
Yes, it must be ensured that all pigs have access to water in sufficient quantity (ad libitum) and quality at all times (from birth onwards). When pigs are kept in groups (except suckling pigs), a drinking place must be provided for a maximum of twelve pigs in each group, separated from the feeding place.

If the piglets remain in the farrowing pen after weaning, the animal/drinking place ratio of 12:1 must also be complied with there.

What has to be considered if a drinking trough is offered above a sensor feeding station?
If drinkers are available at feeding stations, they can only be taken into account if another drinker is spatially separated from the feeding station and thus water can be taken in independently of the feed. It is not decisive whether the additional drinker is an open drinker (e.g. for crate structuring) or an additional drinker required by law (for compliance with the animal:drinker ratio). However, if there is a drinker above the trough, it can be used as the sole drinker for up to twelve animals, provided that the feeding system is **rationed** feeding with a **1:1 animal feeding space ratio.** In this case, another drinker spatially separated from the trough is not necessary.
If **ad libitum** feeding is used at the sensor trough, drinkers above the trough must be supplemented with another drinker spatially separated from the trough.

How many drinking places are offered by open drinkers?
Normally, an open drinker offers one drinking place. If the drinkers are larger and several animals can drink from them at the same time, they can be counted as multiple drinking places. The width of the drinking place is based on the width of the feeding place. What is always important is how many animals can drink from a drinker at the same time without hindrance. So, for example, if two pigs can drink at a drinker at the same time, the drinker can be counted as two drinking places.

Depending on the size of the animals, the number of drinkers that can be counted can be reduced during rearing or fattening. Similarly, the maximum number of drinking places per drinker can be reduced by access restrictions at the drinker itself. The number of drinking places is reduced, for example, if

- drinker/drinking trough is located close to a wall or in a corner and is therefore not accessible from all sides.
- the surrounding channel of a free-standing round drinker is so narrow that the pigs cannot drink at the same time while standing next to each other in a 'star shape', but only while standing at an angle.
- drinking place dividers, basin depth or lever mechanisms that restrict water intake.
- the water supply (independent of the supply control, e.g. via Aqualevel or a mechanism that is activated by the pigs) is insufficient for all animals to be able to drink continuously at the same time.

3.5 Animal health/medication

3.5.1 Care contract with farm veterinarian

Must the veterinarian use the QS sample form?
No, the sample form serves as a working aid. It contains all the relevant points that must be contractually regulated in the QS scheme for the care of livestock. The veterinarian can also use his own documents. The following points must be formulated in each stock care contract:

- Definition of the veterinary stock care
- Maintain/restore health of individual animals, animal groups and herds
- Curative and preventive services as well as monitoring and screening measures
- Preparation of an animal health and hygiene management plan in case of jointly identified need for action
- Development of an action plan in case of need

At least the following points must be clearly regulated:

- Transparency with regard to the scope of application, i.e. animal population and location number (even if there are several registration numbers according to the VVVO and/or production orientations, it must be clear which livestocks are managed)
- Frequency of visits for regular and plannable care outside acute cases of illness
- Documentation of stock visits (incl. results) and veterinary treatments, storage of documents (veterinary examination results and documents) by the company

Must the stock care contract be updated annually?
No, the stock care contract only needs to be adjusted if there is a change. Either a new contract can be signed, or the old contract can be updated with annexes.

3.5.2 [K.O.] Implementation of the stock care

What is the aim of stock care?

Note: *The aim of stock care is to maintain and, if necessary, improve the health status of the animals using a holistic approach. Regular and predictable veterinary care is crucial for animal welfare in order to maintain or restore the health of the individual animal, groups of animals and the entire stock.*

How often must the supervising veterinarian visit a stock during one (two or three) fattening period per year?

If there is only one fattening period per year, the routine stock visit must also be carried out only once a year. If several periods are carried out per year, the number of visits depends on the number of periods. Thus, at least two visits per year must be carried out for two periods and at least three visits per year for three periods. Each period must be inspected at least once by the veterinarian in charge. If a fattening period falls in two calendar years, it must be inspected only in one of the two years.

3.5.3 [K.O.] Procurement and application of medicines and vaccines

Must the procurement and application of medicines and vaccines be documented in a stock book?

No, the documentation does not necessarily require a stock book. Provided that all required information is contained, and the documentation cannot be subsequently changed, other forms of documentation are also conceivable (e.g. by combined receipts or electronically).

Suggestion: *In order to obtain a clearer overview, it is recommended that livestock owners keep a stock book.*

Note: *Telephone/verbal instructions from the veterinarian should be documented by the pet owner.*

How should multi-day medicinal product applications be documented?

Even with multi-day applications of medicinal products, the documentation must always be carried out immediately after each application.

For multi-day applications in which the same application (animals/animal group, operator, administered quantity) is carried out daily and on each day of the treatment period, the first day of treatment must be documented on the first day of treatment so that the administered quantity, operator and treated animals/animal groups are clear. The next documentation is then required on the last day of treatment at the latest. In this case, documentation with 'from... to...' is also possible. If the treatment differs from day to day or if treatments are not carried out daily, but only every two days, for example, the documentation must be carried out individually for each application, immediately after the application (daily). This also applies if applications are carried out by several people (operators) during the treatment period.

What must be considered when administering medicines orally?

Suggestion: *For the oral administration of medicines via feed and water, see Guideline of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) "Oral application of veterinary medicinal products in the livestock sector via feed or water".*

If the procedure is the same, does a new application plan always have to be drawn up when new quantities of the same vaccine are delivered?

No. As long as the same vaccine is obtained and there is no change in the vaccination procedure, the application plan can continue to exist even when new quantities of vaccine are given, unless it is terminated by a time limit imposed by the veterinarian.

3.5.4 [K.O.] Storage of medicines and vaccines

Can medicines and vaccines be stored in the domestic refrigerator?

Medicines and vaccines must be stored out of reach of unauthorised persons, especially children. If it is ensured that no children and unauthorised persons can access the medicines and vaccines, storage in the kitchen refrigerator is also conceivable (e.g. in a separate box). Protection against unauthorised access is also provided, for example by a locked box in the refrigerator.

Suggestion: *Medicines should always be stored separately from feedstuffs.*

What needs to be considered when a joint storage of medicines is used for several locations or different animal species?

If a medicine storage is used for more than one location (several location numbers) or for different animal species, the stored medicines must be clearly assigned to the respective location or animal species for which they were prescribed. This can be done, for example, by marking or separate storage for each location or animal species.

3.6 Hygiene

3.6.1 Buildings and equipment

What are buildings and facilities?
This includes the entire company area, all technical facilities, company buildings and also the carcass storage. These must be clean and kept in proper condition. If necessary, appropriate cleaning measures must be taken.

What should plant growth look like in the immediate environment of the sty?
Suggestion: *In order to keep vermin away from the sty, shrubs, ground cover plants or bushes should not be planted directly adjacent to the sty. The plants should be pruned back regularly. Grass growth should also be kept short.*

What does proper condition mean for the outdoor facilities of the company?
All buildings and facilities must be clean and kept in a proper condition. This also applies to the outdoor facilities of a company. No materials or objects that are no longer needed (e.g. rubbish and scrap, building materials, silage foil, non-functional machines, old pallets, tyres, green waste and similar) may be stored there permanently, so that no shelter is provided for rodents.

Note: *Materials (such as building materials) that are currently required may be stored on the company for the duration of the conversion.*

3.6.2 Hygiene on the farm

How many signs indicating the livestock must be placed?
Sties must be identified by a sign "Livestock - Access prohibited for unauthorised persons" or similar. These signs should effectively prevent unauthorised persons from entering the sties at any time and indicate that it is forbidden to enter the sties. To ensure this, the signs must be placed at least at all sty entrances or, in the case of enclosed companies, optionally at the entrances to the company. Anyone wishing to enter the sty must be informed by means of a sign that unauthorised entry is prohibited.

What has to be considered by the livestock owner when third parties enter the sty?
Sties and other housing facilities may only be entered in agreement with the livestock owner. The livestock owner must ensure that third parties only enter the sties with one-time clothing or the owner's own protective clothing and that they take off their protective clothing after leaving the sties.

What should be considered when accessing the sty?
In all companies, the access of persons to the sty area should only be possible via a changing room close to the sty; this restriction is obligatory for Appendix 3 companies (with more than 700 fattening and/or rearing places, breeding companies with more than 150 sow places and combined companies with more than 100 sow places).

The sty area may only be entered with company-owned protective clothing/working clothes or one-way clothing, which must be taken off again before leaving.

What is meant by rest periods?
Rest periods are the times during which no work takes place in the sty or within a farm enclosure - i.e. no employees are working there. Rest periods can therefore extend beyond the statutory night-time rest period in Germany.

Does a disinfection mat or tub provide adequate equipment for cleaning and disinfecting shoes at sty entries and exits?
No. A mat or tub for disinfecting shoes can - if the disinfectant is renewed or replaced often enough - only serve to disinfect the shoes but does not replace cleaning. In general, all companies that keep pigs must have facilities for cleaning **and** disinfecting footwear at the entrances to the sties.

Depending on the conditions on site, this can also be done with simple equipment, e.g. a tub with clean water and a root brush, a water hose, a spray shower or similar (= cleaning possibility) and another tub with disinfectant or a backpack sprayer (= disinfection possibility).

Please note: If shoes are changed at the entrance to the sty and the shoes/boots do not leave the sty building, there must still be at least one suitable cleaning and one disinfection facility for footwear per sty.

Must all pig sties be regularly cleaned and disinfected?
All pig sties must be cleaned and disinfected between removal of the animals and restocking. Appropriate means must be kept on the company and stored properly. In case of continuous occupancy, the sties must be kept clean as far as possible. If individual sty compartments become free, these must also be cleaned and disinfected before restocking. Temporary vacancy of the sties cannot replace proper disinfection.

How can the cleaning and disinfection measures be simplified?

Suggestion: *Cleaning plans and/or procedural instructions and/or records of cleaning and disinfection measures should be conducted.*

Who is responsible for the cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles and equipment used by other companies?

Note: *In the case of transport vehicles or equipment used in other companies, these must be cleaned and, if necessary, disinfected in the supplying company.*

What hygiene requirements must be observed for the delivery and loading of animals?

When delivering and loading livestock, it must be ensured that drivers who are not employed by the company only have as little access as possible to the company premises, sties and loading ramps (black-and-white principle) and that it is ensured that unauthorised personnel do not access the driver's cab or cargo area of the vehicle.

What must the fixed area for loading the animals look like?

The facilities for loading the pigs, over which the loading and unloading takes place, must be fixed so that proper cleaning and disinfection are possible. In addition, there must be a fixed area for cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles, covering the standing area of the transport vehicles (usually at least the area the size of a truck). The fixed area can be located both directly at the loading point or at another place directly on the company site.

It does not have to be a dedicated washing area for transport vehicles - pragmatic solutions, such as existing and suitable fixed areas or a washing area set up for the cleaning of the crop protection sprayer, can also be used.

These constructional requirements must be met regardless of whether or not the livestock owner carries out livestock transport with his own vehicles and also regardless of whether or not vehicles are regularly cleaned at that location. The fixed areas for cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles serve to set up a washing area, especially in the event of an epidemic.

Are swallows allowed to nest in the sty?

Basically, swallows may be in sties. Nests must not be removed. However, precautions must be taken to avoid contamination of troughs/drinkers and feed/water with faeces (e.g. placing boards under the nests).

Where can I find more information about biosecurity in sty?

Note: *You can find more information about biosecurity in pig-rearing companies in the guideline 'Biosecurity in Pig-rearing Companies According to the EU Animal Health Act' and the risk traffic light for animal diseases.*

How should dust bags be handled?

Note: *Dust bags used when filling feed silos, BigPacks, and other containers/packaging used for feed delivery should remain on the farm for biosafety reasons and must be disposed of if necessary.*

At what size must the special hygiene requirements for mixed farms be complied with?

Mixed farms must comply with the special hygiene requirements as soon as they have more than 100 sow places. Seven fattening places count as one sow place.

If a farm has, for example, 31 sow places and 490 fattening places (equivalent to 70 sow places), it must comply with the special hygiene requirements.

When do multiple location numbers count as a single epidemiological unit and must comply with special hygiene requirements?

Within the meaning of the SchHaltHygV, a farm counts as one epidemiological unit. As a rule, such an epidemiological unit is assigned a VVVO number. If several VVVO numbers are located on the same premises or very close to each other, it is sometimes not possible to separate them in epidemiological terms, so that several VVVO numbers can be considered as "one farm." If one or more of the following points apply to such closely located VVVO numbers, it can generally be assumed that they constitute a single unit for the purposes of epidemic control:

- Shared carcass storage
- Shared loading ramp
- Shared feed storage
- Shared hygiene sluice
- Identical persons responsible for animal care

If there is no clear separation of all relevant functional areas between the locations (e.g., by means of fencing without crossing paths), the farmstead is to be regarded as one farm. In this case, the animal numbers at the locations are added together and the total number of animals is decisive in determining whether the farm must comply with the special hygiene requirements, even if the individual locations alone fall below the stock limit. The decisive factor for the assessment is always the respective situation on site.

Do all feed stores on Annex 3 farms (with more than 700 fattening and/or rearing places, breeding farms with more than 150 sow places, and mixed farms with more than 100 sow places) have to be fenced off?
In general, Annex 3 establishments must either be fenced in or have other access restrictions in place. This does not mean that fencing around feed silos is necessary in all cases for unfenced stables.

If the feed silos are designed in such a way that no feed material can escape to the outside and, for example, no wild boar can reach the feed, the silo does not need to be fenced off separately (e.g., access restriction: filling nozzles and other critical components are mounted high enough to prevent contact with wild boars).

How should farm enclosures be designed?
Farm enclosures must be complete and only accessible by lockable gates. The gate must be locked during "quiet times." An enclosure must therefore constitute a barrier (e.g., wall, fence). The use of red and white barrier tape is not sufficient, as it does not constitute an obstacle for humans and wild animals such as wild boars or foxes.

3.6.3 Handling litter and activity material

Can wood chips, sawdust and peat be used as bedding and natural activity material?
Wood chips and sawdust can be used if they are made from low-dust heart wood that has not been chemically treated. This does not apply to the use of wood chips and sawdust for short periods when shifting livestock from one sty to another and during transport.

Suggestion: *If peat is used, it should be thermally treated or indicated specifically for the intended purpose, to prevent undesired pathogens like African swine fever; garden peat (e.g. from the construction market) should not be used.*

Can fermentation substrate be used as litter?
In principle, it is possible to use fermentation substrate as litter. However, the dried fermentation substrate must be suitable for animals, hygienic, clean, and visibly free of fungal infestation.

3.6.4 Carcass storage and pick-up

What must be considered when storing carcasses?
Carcasses must be protected against access by unauthorised persons. If the carcasses are stored in a container that is protected against the leakage of liquids, it can also be placed on an unpaved surface, such as gravel. It must be ensured that all liquids, both from the carcasses and those resulting from cleaning and disinfection, are properly disposed of; in particular, drainage into unpaved surfaces is not permitted.

Suggestion: *Stand times should be kept as short as possible. In addition, the transfer point for disposal vehicles should be fixed and easy to clean and disinfect.*

Note: *Transport of carcasses on public roads is only permitted to the special carcass disposal company responsible.*

When must the carcass storage be protected against unauthorised access?
When carcasses are stored, the carcass storage must be protected against unauthorised access at all times. Immediately before the carcasses are collected, the carcass storage may be accessible for a short time so that the rendering plant can collect the carcasses.

How should carcass storage be evaluated in terms of protection against third parties if the company premises are completely fenced off? Does carcass storage still have to be completed?
No. The fencing serves to protect against disease, and unauthorised persons are therefore prevented from entering the company premises. Carcass storage within fenced company premises is therefore adequately protected.

3.6.5 Pest monitoring and control

What is the purpose of the monitoring?
The monitoring serves as a regular and systematic control of whether the company has a pest infestation, particularly by rodents and insects (both crawling and flying). Checks can be carried out by means of placing adhesive traps, bait boxes and similar devices in critical areas of the company.

How must pest monitoring and control be documented?
It is recommended to draw up a bait location plan in which all bait locations are listed. Pest monitoring should and any necessary control measures must be documented for each of these bait locations. For this purpose, the sample form "*Pest Monitoring and Control Protocol (QS agriculture livestock farming)*", which is published on the QS website, can be used.

What information must be documented as part of pest monitoring and control?
The following information should be documented as part of pest monitoring and as part of pest control:

- Date of the control
- Controlled bait site
- Pest being observed or controlled
- Monitoring measure (e.g. non-toxic baits)
- Control measure (e.g. poisoned bait, beating trap, electric insect killer, sticky fly trap,…)
- Documentation of infestation: Observations/findings from the inspection of the respective bait site.

In addition, the following information is useful:

- Consumption (quantity)
- User (name)
- Signature of the user

For the documentation of pest monitoring and control, the combined *Pest Monitoring and Control Protocol (QS agriculture livestock farming)* can be used. In the documentation it must be clear for each entry, if it is a pest control (in the QS sample form, this distinction can be made in column 5, e.g. with the entry of "M" for Monitoring or "C" for Control/Combat for each line).

The observations/findings from the monitoring should and for the pest control must the documentation record the individual bait sites. Column 4 of the sample form can be used for this purpose, in which the respective observations/findings from the monitoring of the bait sites can be entered, e.g. "feeding traces", "no change of the bait".

Can the pest monitoring and the pest control be documented together?
Yes, a joint document for pest monitoring and control is possible. It is decisive that all information on pest control is documented. Monitoring does not need to be documented, but documentation is recommended.

What must be considered when documenting pest control of crawling and flying insects in the sties?
If control measures are carried out, e.g. if granules are used in bowls or surfaces are sprayed with biocides, the application must be documented, stating the relevant information (see explanation on information for pest monitoring and control). The (continuous) use of adhesive traps or electric insect traps must be described in a comprehensible manner and the traps must be checked regularly and renewed if necessary.

At what frequency must pest monitoring be carried out?
There is no minimum frequency requirement for pest monitoring. The aim of pest monitoring is to ensure that a pest infestation is detected as quickly as possible. In this way, control measures can be taken promptly if necessary and an expansion of the infestation can be prevented. The aim is to effectively prevent or contain a pest infestation on a company.

Pest monitoring must be carried out continuously for this purpose. How often the inspection for pest infestation must take place depends on the individual situation on the company. The inspection interval of the bait points can be determined on a risk-oriented basis but must ensure that pest infestations on the company are detected promptly and reliably.

3.6.6 Risk assessment for biosafety

How long ago can participation in the risk traffic light system or risk assessment using an officially recognized concept have taken place?
All animal owners must either have their location analyzed for the risk of disease introduction using the risk traffic light system or be able to provide evidence of a risk assessment using an officially recognised biosecurity concept (e.g. Baden-Württemberg, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Lower Saxony). Evidence provided before January 1, 2025, cannot be taken into account.

For pig owners whose locations are within a restricted zone (Zone 1 or Zone 2 in accordance with current animal health legislation) due to the ASF outbreak, a certificate or an inspection report from the competent veterinary authority may alternatively receive recognition as proof.

This is subject to the condition that the certificate or visit report clearly indicates that an evaluation of the company's biosecurity measures has been carried out.

3.7 Monitoring programmes

Who must participate in the Feed monitoring?
In principle, every company that uses primary products as feed, mixes feed itself or obtains ready-mixed feed from a cooperation, is subjected to monitoring.

Livestock owners, who only use purchased QS complete feeds do not have to participate in the QS feed monitoring. With companies which are certified for QS crop farming, grassland use or forage production, the self-produced feed quantity is not taken into consideration for the calculation of the control plan. Samples for feed monitoring can still be taken in this kind of companies. Likewise, in the case of companies that only purchase ready-mixed feed from a cooperation, the amount of feed purchased is only taken into account in the calculation of the control plan at the manufacturing company. However, samples for feed monitoring can still be taken at these supplied companies.

Does the monitoring also relate to feedstuffs?
Yes, if a livestock owner procures feed from the food retail sector (e.g. edible oil) and uses it in animal feed, this feed is to be evaluated as self-produced feeds and integrated accordingly into the monitoring. If stale bread or bakery produce are procured, the regulation in Chapter *3.3.4 [K.O.] Feed procurement* applies.

3.7.1 Salmonella monitoring

Who is responsible for the salmonella monitoring?
The livestock owner is responsible for taking part in the salmonella programme and for the complete and uniform sampling of the fattening pigs in particular. In abattoirs, samples are taken from the meat juices or blood. If necessary, additional blood samples can be taken on the agricultural company.

How is the category documented?
The category can be documented in several ways: via the information letter of the coordinator, via salmonella database (access data by the coordinator on demand) or over other databases, which provide the data equally.

Which regulations apply to locations abroad?
The implementation of the QS salmonella monitoring does not apply for companies abroad that participate in another QS approved salmonella monitoring.

3.8 Transport of own livestock

What does "loading" include in relation to livestock transport?
Loading always includes both uploading and unloading the animals during transport.

3.8.2 [K.O.] Available space during livestock transport

What must be taken into account when transporting livestock in transport boxes and what must be documented during in-company transport?
If livestock is transported in transport boxes (usually only for in-company transport), this counts as livestock transport. In the transport boxes, the space available for the livestock transport must be maintained. For this purpose, the size of the boxes or the maximum possible number of animals must be documented (e.g. in the company data or on the transport box). This serves primarily for self-control.

An in-company transport of animals also counts as livestock transport. The maximum possible number of animals (if necessary, graded according to animal age or weight) must be noted for the available space (e.g. in the company data or on the vehicle). The individual transport processes within the company do not have to be recorded.

3.8.3 [K.O.] Time intervals for feeding and watering as well as duration of transportation and resting times (for livestock transport over 50 km)

May piglets with less than 10 kg LW be transported?
Yes, provided that the piglets are older than 3 weeks, they may be transported up to 8 hours. If the animals are to be transported for longer than 8 h, this is only permitted if the piglets are accompanied by their mother sows and the further requirements for long transports are met. A long transport unaccompanied by the mother sows is only permitted for piglets with at least 10 kg LW.

Explanatory notes
Agriculture Pig Farming

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