Annex 10.7 Implementation of laboratory audits

General

In accordance with the basic agreement on laboratories activities concluded with QS Fachgesellschaft Obst-Gemüse-Kartoffeln GmbH (QS), QS is entitled to verify the activities of laboratories in the QS residue monitoring. For this purpose, laboratory audits may be conducted on site by QS personnel and/or third parties commissioned by QS to assess laboratory performance and QS-specific requirements. Laboratory audits are generally conducted on site. QS may decide in individual cases to conduct audits entirely or partially in remote.

The laboratory shall provide full cooperation during the audit conducted by QS or by third parties commissioned by QS. This includes, in particular, unrestricted access to all documents relevant to QS residue monitoring and to all related activities, including facilities and technical equipment. Documents relevant to the laboratory audit may be requested by QS prior to the audit. Regardless of this, the necessary documents must be available in the laboratory in German or English at least. Alternatively, the laboratory provides QS with a German or English translation of the documents. The use of digital translation tools is permissible; the laboratory is responsible for verifying the accuracy of the translation.

Procedure

Before the laboratory audit, QS proposes at least two scheduling options (date and time) for conducting the audit. Deviations from these options are only possible in justified individual cases. QS decides on the adequacy of any stated reasons for refusal.

To enable an efficient laboratory audit, QS may request the following documents in advance (non-QS-relevant or personal data may be redacted):

- Nonconformity report and status from the last accreditation audit
- Complaints management system
- Contact overview of personnel involved in activities in the QS scheme
- Overview of subcontracts
- Analysis reports from QS laboratory performance assessments
- Analysis reports from routine testing
- Current spectrum of active substances multi method (Pesticide residues)
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for specific analytical methods requested

Duration

A laboratory audit generally takes at least one working day. If the laboratory does not provide the requested documents in advance, the audit duration will be extended by the time required to review the documents on site. If several monitoring programs are subject to the audit, the duration will be extended accordingly.

Audit report

The results of the laboratory audit are recorded on site and countersigned by the laboratory. A copy of the protocol remains with the laboratory (copy produced on site or digital delivery). If deviations are identified, the laboratory proposes appropriate corrective actions with implementation deadlines. Corrective actions shall be agreed individually for each deviation and be appropriate in terms of both substance and timing. QS decides on the adequacy of the proposed corrective actions.
The corrective actions are recorded with the agreed implementation deadlines in an action plan attached to the audit report. If the action plan cannot be determined during the audit, it must be submitted to QS no later than 14 days after the audit. The laboratory will then receive a final audit report including the agreed upon action plan.

The laboratory must implement corrective actions by the agreed deadlines and submit evidence of implementation to QS without prior request. Failure to implement corrective actions without good reasons may result in the initiation of a sanction procedure or withdrawal of QS approval.