

Guideline

















Production Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes
















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Note: The Guideline Production Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes is written in German and translated into English. In case of discrepancies between the translation and the German version, the German original is valid.

1 Fundamentals

Basic information about the QS System such as organisation, conditions of participation, use of the certification mark and the sanction procedure can be found in the document called **Guideline General Regulations**.

1.1 Scope of application

The scope of application comprehends the complete production process, from the cultivation of the crop, over the harvest and post-harvest processes until the preparation and commercialization of the products.

This applies to the following production scopes:

- Fruit and vegetable production
 - fruit production (outdoor/protected)
 - vegetable production (outdoor/protected)
- Potato production

It is not possible to exclude individual process steps or production or storage sites.

If process steps take place outside the company, in the context of a service (e.g. processing, storage), then for goods that are to be marketed as QS goods, the producer must ensure that the location of this service is QS certified (depending on the process steps, at the level of production, wholesale, or logistics). For goods that are not to be marketed as QS goods the producer must take responsibility for them (by means of a contractual agreement/self-monitoring) and the outsourced process (e.g. storage) must be checked as part of the independent inspection.

Producers can be registered for one or more production scopes. When cultivating the same crop in field and in greenhouse (including protected cultivation), registration and certification is always mandatory for both cultivation systems (= both production scopes). All crops, which belong to a registered production scope and are commercialized, must be certified.

Requirements which only apply to certain sectors/production scopes are highlighted with subheadings (e.g. **potato** or **vegetable production**).

Sprouts and germ buds are only within the scope of this guideline if they are produced in substrate or fibres within a greenhouse and as long as the roots and seeds are not intended for consumption.

Registration and participation in the QS scheme

Every producer has to register in the QS scheme via a coordinator and sign a declaration of participation with the coordinator, from the moment of signing, he participates in the QS scheme. The list of approved coordinators is published under www.q-s.de/en/. The coordinator is the contact person in all questions about the QS scheme. He is among others responsible for:

- The registration of the producer in the QS database
- The administration of the master data in the QS database
- The organisation of the audits and
- The participation in monitoring programmes

Control on the company

Each company is controlled regularly. The controls (audits) are implemented by an auditor, who works for an independent certification body.

After registration in the QS scheme an initial audit is implemented and released by the certification body. If the audit was successful, the company is mostly eligible to deliver after a couple of days and is able to market its products in the QS scheme. The eligibility of delivery can be checked under www.q-s.de/softwareplattform/en/.

Depending on the result of the audit (QS status I, II or III) the company will be audited on a risk-based schedule (audit interval):

Stage \ QS-Status	I	II	III
Production fruit, vegetables, potatoes	3 years	2 years	1 year

Between the unannounced regular audits (prior contact of 24 hours to a maximum of 48 hours), unannounced spot audits will take place at 10 % of the producer companies (prior contact of a maximum of 24 hours possible), where some spotaudit-requirements will be checked again.

Furthermore, each company can be controlled additionally, e.g. in a random sample audit.

Certification must be maintained continuously. If it is not to be continued, the company must inform its coordinator at the latest by the end of the certificate validity period. The coordinator must then deregister the company in the QS database.

All details about participation and audits can be found in the **Guideline General Regulations** and in the Guideline Certification, which are published on the QS-Website (www.q-s.de/en/) under the link documents.

1.2 Responsibilities

The producer is responsible for ensuring

- compliance with requirements,
- the complete and correct documentation,
- the self-assessment,
- the adequate and timely implementation of corrective actions
- the correct use of the QS certification mark.

The producer must comply with the requirements of this guideline at all times and must be able to prove the compliance with the requirements at all times. He must ensure that, in addition to the requirements of this guideline and the other applicable QS requirements (e.g. general regulation, guideline for certification, guideline for residue monitoring) the applicable legal provisions are fulfilled both within the country in which the products are produced, as well as the country in which they will be marketed (if known). A food safety culture in accordance with **Reg (EU) 2021/382** that is appropriate for the company is implemented. This means that responsibilities and accountabilities for all processes related to food safety are clearly defined. The essential principles required for that purpose are part of the QS- participation and certification.

1.3 Documentation

Documentation systems, which guarantee that the QS requirements are met, are in place. When regular verifications and relevant revisions are made, the documents are given a current date or a current version number. The documents must guarantee a clear and seamless allocation. Existing systems can be used. Internal controls can be documented both electronic as well as manual records. Digital data must be backed up by security copies.

Documents and records from the self-assessment must be kept for at least three years.

1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures

The risk assessments and operational rules/procedures to be prepared in accordance with this guideline (see references "1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures") as well as specifications must be documented and updated with the relevant changes. They must be revised at least annually to confirm their validity.

Measures for risk minimization must be taken when risks are identified, so that endangering the food safety, environment and health of the people involved is avoided.

2 General requirements

2.1 General scheme requirements

2.1.1 General company data

A current and complete company overview must be compiled containing the following master data:

- Address of the company and all sites including registration number (e.g. QS Identification number, location number (OGK), legal company name)
- Telephone and fax numbers (if applicable), e-mail address
- Legal representative, contact person


Any changes in the above-listed data must be communicated to the coordinator without delay.

A farm map and location plans for all operational rooms, storages, facilities and irrigation systems including water extraction points must be present. The storage capacity for products must be documented. Moreover, a list of current growing crops and surfaces which allows the identification of the areas and the size of the plots and part areas must be available. Nature reserves must be identified in the land-use plan and the total area (in ha or m²) must be documented.

There is an overview of the regular employees and service providers (subcontractors).

The overview or a separate list or an organisational chart contains the job descriptions and company contact details of the employees who perform relevant functions or deputy functions within the meaning of these guidelines.


A current declaration of participation and power of attorney must be present.

 Company and data overview; farm map/locations plan; declaration of participation and power of attorney, overview employees and subcontractors

QS-work aid: General Business Data

2.1.2 Implementation and documentation of self-assessment

Compliance with all applicable requirements must be checked by the manager or a qualified person via a self-assessment. It must include all relevant areas of the farm. This self-assessment must be documented before the initial audit and then regularly at least once a year by means of a checklist (recommendation: supporting document self-assessment checklist QS production). In the case of nonconformities and non-applicable requirements comments must be provided in the checklist. Corrective actions including implementation deadlines must be defined for deviations.

 Documentation self-assessment QS production

2.1.3 **[K.O.] Implementation of initiated measures from self-assessment**

Nonconformities identified during the self-assessment must be corrected as soon as possible.

 Documentation implementation of corrective actions


2.1.4 Incident and crisis management

QS has built up a comprehensive crisis management system which provides active support to the scheme participants in the event of an incident or crisis. The scheme participants must immediately inform QS and – if a legal obligation exists – the appropriate authorities on critical events and public product recalls.

Critical incidents are scheme-relevant events that represent, or could become a danger to humans, ecology, assets or the QS scheme as a whole. These include in particular:

- all scheme-relevant identified nonconformities in the procurement of goods, production or marketing, when these nonconformities might pose a risk to food safety.
- Violations of labour and social conditions.
- all criminal or regulatory investigations, if they are directly or indirectly aimed at ensuring compliance with the requirements within the scope of application
- media research, critical media reports as well as public protests questioning directly or indirectly the food safety.

A paper of incident is available or online on the QS homepage to be able to provide all necessary information in a focused manner in the event of an incident. If the producer does not act as crisis manager on its own, he must name a crisis manager who can also be reached outside regular working hours.

 Paper of incident

QS-work aid: Paper of incident fruit, vegetables, potatoes


2.1.5 Participation "Separated Marketing"

Only the products produced on the producer's own farm may be marketed via the company registered as "Separated Marketing", i.e. no purchased products falling within the QS scope of the production stage may be sold via it.

Both parts of the enterprise must be an organizational unit (same ownership structure, same place of business), but each part of the enterprise must have its own legal name.

The producer has confirmed in writing to the coordinator that the marketing company fulfils the conditions for participation.

⇒ 8.3 Terms and definitions

 Confirmation of participation in "Separated Marketing"

2.2 Company management

2.2.1 Qualification

Participation in at least two further training sessions is obligatory for the manager or permanent employees of the farm. Technical events organised by agriculture chambers, societies and expert groups, market organisations, specialist fairs as well as agricultural institutes and companies are recognised. Besides, expert information (e.g. magazines, newsletter) is continuously acquired in digitally or in paper format.

Additional expert sources are available for the topic of plant protection, e.g. alert systems, plant protection advise.

In the case of complaints in the residue monitoring the consultation obligations according to the Guideline Residue Monitoring must be complied with.

 Evidence of further training courses, acquisition of expert information

2.2.2 [K.O.] Subcontractors

The producer is responsible, that the subcontractor (contractor) complies with the QS requirements in the frame of its assignment. In particular cases, subcontractors must allow inspections by the certification body of the producer. The subcontractor must be committed for both points. Compliance is checked by means of a self-assessment. This can be performed by the subcontractor and, for instance, be provided with the agreement. Alternatively, the producer controls under its own self-assessment, whether the relevant QS requirements are met by the subcontractor.

The subcontractor's self-assessment is not necessary in the cases where the subcontractor is QS production certified or the relevant requirements are comparably and independently controlled at least once a year. The written confirmation of the independent control includes: 1) date of the visit, 2) name of the certification body, 3) name of the auditor, 4) information about the subcontractor and 5) list of the audited requirements.

 Evidence of agreement and self-assessment

2.2.3 Maintenance of facilities, irrigation system and equipments

Machinery, facilities, equipment and irrigation systems with influence on the food safety or the environment (e.g. sprayers, fertiliser spreaders, irrigation systems), must be kept in good condition and receive maintenance at least once a year by qualified persons. The maintenance must be documented stating the date and type of maintenance. The evidence can also be provided by means of the invoices.

Plant protection devices must be tested in accordance with the German **Regulation for Plant Protection Equipment** and out of Germany in accordance with the **Directive 2006/42/EC**. The sticker assigned by an authorized institution must be valid.

Fertiliser spreaders and other application machines for substances that may affect the food safety or the environment must be calibrated annually. Calibration must be performed by a qualified person or a specialised company.

 Evidence of maintenance and calibration of machines, facilities and equipment

2.2.4 [K.O.] Use of facilities, irrigation systems and equipment

The use of machines, facilities, equipment and irrigation systems that have not been or poorly maintained must not pose a risk to food safety or the environment.

2.2.5 [K.O.] Separated storage

The following items must be stored separately (per bullet point):

- fertilisers and fertilising machines, as well as plant adjuvants
- plant protection/post-harvest treatment agents and machines, packaged micronutrient- and liquid leaf fertilisers, as well as plant adjuvants
- seeds and seedlings,
- feed,
- food products,
- medicines,
- highly flammable substances.

Cleaning agents and equipment, lubricants and other similar articles must be stored in designated areas. A direct or indirect contamination of the products must be avoided.

3 Plant production requirements

3.1 Requirements for the location


3.1.1 Risk assessment and risk management for fields/substrata



There must be a risk assessment available for the fields (management units) and the used organic substrata (e.g. in the mushroom or potted herb production). Taking into consideration the endangerment to the food safety, the environment and the health of the involved persons, the risk assessment must cover the following aspects:

- in the case of areas newly used for agricultural production: previous use of the area during the last year (if possible from the last 5 years)
- prior production of genetically modified organisms (where applicable)
- application of sewage sludge (during the last 2 years)
- soil condition (soil analysis)
- erosion
- influence of and on surrounding areas
- environmental influences from the surroundings of the company (e.g. commercial animal husbandry, composting plants, domestic and wild animals, dust formation, floodings)
- residues or contaminated sites (e.g. of plant protection products or heavy metals) in the soil or growing medium
- Use of plant protection products (potential sources of danger e.g. drift, carryovers, equipments, improper use)

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures

 Risk assessment for fields/substrata

3.2 Sustainable tillage and soil conservation


3.2.1 Erosion reduction, soil protection and minimisation of soil borne diseases



Measures to reduce erosion and protect the soil must be implemented depending on the site conditions, for example:

- soil friendly cultivation techniques and equipment,
- mulch sowing procedures,
- minimisation of the periods without vegetation/coverage (e.g. growing catch crops, mulching straw, greening of tramlines in orchards),
- avoidance of tramlines heading downhill,
- avoidance/elimination of soil consistency which prevents infiltration,
- promotion of stable soil aggregates by means of biological activity (e.g. application of organic matter, liming),
- erosion reducing cultivation and meadow design (e.g. through dividing fields, ploughing crossways, hedges, and windbreaks).

If possible, an appropriate crop rotation is introduced for annual crops. If by-products are removed from the field, this must be documented.

-  Records on erosion reduction and soil protection measures for every field, records on crop rotation (e.g. acreage index), if required

3.2.2 Chemical soil decontamination

Also in the case of sterilization of the substrate by an external company outside the location.

The following information must be documented:

- Date of sterilization
- Name and active ingredient used
- **Area of application (pests or pathogens treated)**
- Equipment used (e.g. 1,000 L tank, etc.)
- Procedure used (e.g. soaking, nebulization, etc.)
- Name of the user or external service provider
- Waiting time until sowing or planting

Waiting periods before sowing/planting must be complied with. The use of methyl bromide is prohibited.

Where possible, non-chemical (e.g. thermal) methods should be preferred.


-  Records Sterilisation of substrates and, if applicable, chemical soil disinfection

3.3 Sowing/Planting

3.3.1 Records on sowing and planting

For sowing/planting at least the following information must be documented:

- date of sowing/planting
- crop, variety (if required)
- field, batch number (if required)
- quantity sown/planted

-  Records on sowing and planting for every field


QS-work aid: Field Based Records – Outdoor Vegetables

3.3.2 Plant health, suitability for propagation material

Plant health certificates or accompanying documents must prove that the purchased propagation material is suitable for the intended purpose (e.g. quality certificates, terms of delivery or written quality agreements/confirmations).


The plant protection products applied to young plants (excluding permanent crops) must be declared in the accompanying documents.

With the use of planting and seed material does not infringe any plant variety rights of third parties. The EU plant passport is available for purchased plant species that require a passport.

-  Evidence suitability of propagation material

3.3.3 Control system for in-house plant propagation material

Propagation material from in-house nursery propagation must be regularly monitored for visible signs of pests and disease. In the case of vegetative reproduction, the location of the mother plant is traceable.

-  Documentation control of in-house plant propagation

3.3.4 **[K.O.] Potatoes: Use of certified seed**

A one-time replanting of certified seed is allowed.

During the initial audit, evidence must be presented that all potato varieties have been tested for quarantine pests. In the case of replanted seed, one sample must be taken for every 50 t lot, or at least, one sample for every lot.


The samples must be taken by an independent third party with the presence or consent of the producer. Samples taken by the producer him/herself or his/her employees are not allowed. A record of the samples taken must be elaborated. The tests results must be documented.

After the initial audit, at least 40 % of certificated seeds should be annually used for each variety. If this percentage is not reached for any variety, the replanted lot or variety must be tested for quarantine pests according to the procedure described for the initial audit.

In the case of propagation material of conservation varieties, the scope of the testing must match the scope of testing of the certified seed.

The necessary tests are to be carried out by means of PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) and must include the following quarantine pests:

- Bacterial ring rot
[Harmful organism: *Clavibacter michiganensis* (Smith) Smith et al. ssp. *sepedonicus* (Spieck. et Kotth.) Davis et al.]
- Potato brown rot
[Harmful organism: *Ralstonia solanacearum* (Smith) Yabuuchi et al.]

 Documentation certified seed/tests results of replanted propagation material

3.3.5 **Sprouts and germ buds: Suitability of seeds**

Microbiological harmlessness of the becoming seeds must be documented by means of microbiological testing of the seeds and germinated goods.

The tests must include the following parameters. The specified limits must be complied with.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| • EHEC (VTEC, STEC) | not detectable in 25 g |
| • Salmonella | not detectable in 100 g |
| • E. coli | < 10 ³ CFU/g |
| • Bacillus cereus | < 10 ³ CFU/g |
| • Listeria monocytogenes | < 10 ² CFU/g |

Additionally, testing is recommended for the following parameters:

- Enterobacteria,
- Aerobic mesophilic plate count

The microbiological conformity of the seeds must be conducted and documented according to the **Regulation (EU) No. 209/2013**. This can take place via own testing or supplier certificates. A reference sample of 200 g from each seed lot must be retained. The reference samples must be kept at least until the best before/consumption date of the sprouts and germ buds derived from these seeds has expired.

The frequency of testing for the germinated seeds must be determined according to a risk-based approach for every type of sprout or germ bud. In the course of one month every type of sprout or germ bud should have been included in the testing.

 Evidence of microbiological testing of seeds and of germinated seeds

3.4 Fertilisation

Some requirements in this chapter are due to the German Fertilisation Regulation. Outside of Germany analogous, legal requirements based on

- Council Directive 91/676/EEG of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources
- Directive 2001/81/EG of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2001 on national emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants

must be complied with.

Excluded from requirements 3.4.2 to 3.4.6 are

- Areas that are used for closed or soil-independent cultivation methods,
- Areas in greenhouses or under stationary foil tunnels, as far as a controlled water supply prevents the leaching of nutrients.

3.4.1 Records on fertilisation

There must be complete records of all fertilising measures as well as the application of culture substrate, soil additives and plan additives.

The documentation must be completed two days after the fertilization measure has been carried out the latest.

Records must be made for each plot, each management unit (see 8.3 Terms and definitions) or for combined areas of less than 0.5 ha with strawberries or vegetables up to a size of 2 ha. In case of continuous fertigation, the fertigation plan is considered sufficient. The plan must be confirmed within two days after completion of the measures.

At least the following information must be documented:

- date of application
- field/plot/greenhouse
- trading name, type of fertiliser (e.g. N, P, K)
- quantity of the applied product by weight or volume/ha
- method of application
- name of the applicant

 Records of fertilising measures

QS-work aid: Field Based Records – Outdoor Vegetables

3.4.2 Determination of the nutrient quantities available in the soil

Nitrogen

The amounts of nutrients available in the soil of every plot or management unit at the time of fertilisation must be determined before applying significant amounts of nutrients, at least annually according to the German **Fertilisation Regulation** by means of:

- analysing representative samples or
- taking the results of analysis at similar sites or
- using calculation and estimation methods based on specialized knowledge.

In vegetable crops, which are cultivated after a vegetable pre-culture in the same year, the amount of nitrogen available in the soil must be determined by examining of representative samples.

Phosphate

The amounts of nutrients available in the soil must be determined by the company before applying significant amounts of nutrients. This is based on the analysis of representative soil samples which are taken for every field from one hectare at least every six years.

 Documentation determination

3.4.3 Determination of fertilisation requirements

The fertilisation requirement of all crops must be determined according to the good agricultural practices. The fertilisation requirement for potatoes, strawberries and vegetable crops is determined and documented before applying significant amounts of nitrogen (> 50 kg N/ha/year) or phosphate (> 30 kg P₂O₅ /ha/year) via fertilisers, soil conditioners, growing mediums and plant aids.

For the past fertilisation year the sum of the individual, crop- and field-related fertilization requirements for nitrogen and phosphorus must be calculated by 31. March of the following year in order to determine the total fertilization requirements of the company.

 Documentation of fertilizer demand determination, if applicable

3.4.4 Demand-oriented fertilisation

The fertilization must occur demand-oriented according to the specifications listed below and the determination of fertilisation requirements. Within the framework of the planned fertilizer the determined fertilizer requirement must not be exceeded. If subsequent circumstances require a higher fertilizer requirement, it has to be proven by further fertilizer determination including soil sampling. However, a maximum of 10 % of the originally calculated fertilization requirement may be additionally fertilized.

Nitrogen

Organic and organic-mineral fertilizer, including farm manure and mixtures, may only be applied in such a way that, the amount of total nitrogen applied on average of the utilised agricultural area of the farm does not exceed 170 kg of total nitrogen per hectare and per year. In the case of compost, the amount of total nitrogen applied on average of the utilised agricultural area of the farm over a three-year period shall not exceed 510 kg total nitrogen/ha and year.

Soft fruit production

A nitrogen analysis must be carried out when applying more than 80 kg N/ha a year at bushberries. In these cases, the application of fertilisers must be justified by the manager.

Top fruit production

A nitrogen analysis must be carried out when applying more than 60 kg N/ha a year at pomes and more than 80 kg N/ha a year at stone fruits. In these cases, the application of fertilisers must be justified by the manager.

Outdoor vegetable and strawberry production

For the cultivated crops, the nitrogen requirement must be documented. A current nominal value table showing the Nmin has to be presented for vegetable production, containing at least the cultivated crops. The determination of the Nmin reserves in the soil is a prerequisite for using nitrogen fertiliser and has to take place on all fields (or management units) as close as possible to the sowing or planting or before the application of nitrogen fertiliser (fertiliser application in accordance with the Nmin nominal value system that accompanies the culture in question).

Fruit and vegetable production (greenhouse)

The nitrogen fertilisation strategy must be presented (Nmin system taking into account the stronger mineralisation in greenhouse soils, acknowledged composition of nutrient solutions, exchange of nutrient solutions when the sodium content exceeds 5 mmol/l in the run-off water).

 Records for every field on determination of fertilisation requirements/fertilisation

3.4.5 Comparison of fertilizer requirement and nutrient input



For the past year of fertilization, the total sum of the fertilization requirement (nitrogen and phosphorus) and the total nutrient input (nitrogen and phosphorus) must be compared by March 31 of the following year. The nutrient input must not exceed the sum of the fertilization requirement determinations. For this purpose, the total fertilization requirement calculated according to requirement 3.4.3 is used. On the other hand, all nitrogen and phosphorus quantities applied on the farm must be added up. It has to be recognizable from which source (mineral fertilizers, farm manure of animal origin, other organic fertilizers, soil additives, culture substrates, plant additives, plant auxiliary substances, waste) the nutrient originates. For nitrogen, only the nitrogen available to the plants must be used for totals.

Excluded are:

1. areas planted with ornamental plants, nurseries, vines, shrubberies and fruit trees and areas under permanent crops of vines and fruit trees not in production
2. areas used exclusively for grazing, with an annual nitrogen production (nitrogen excretion) from livestock manure of up to 100 kg N/ha without additional N fertilization
3. farms which do not apply more than 50 kg total nitrogen/ha or 30 kg phosphate/ha at any one time per year
4. holdings with less than 15 ha of agricultural area (excluding areas named under 1. and 2.) and growing not more than 2 ha of vegetables, hops, wine or strawberries, and where the nitrogen content of livestock manure does not exceed 750 kg

 Documentation Comparison of fertilizer requirements and nutrient use

3.4.6 Application of fertilisers



According to the German **Fertilisation Regulation** the following must be considered when nitrogen or phosphate containing fertilisers, soil improvers, growing mediums and plant aids are applied:

- Already available amounts of nutrients or amounts of nutrients that will become available are attainable for the plants at the proper time

- No application to flooded, water-soaked, frozen or covered with snow soils. Deviating from this, Calcium fertilizer with a phosphate content below 2 % can be applied on frozen soil, if the requirements of the Fertilisation Regulation are complied.
- No direct input, nor rainwash of nutrients into surface waters (adherence to minimum permissible distances, especially for strongly sloped surfaces)
- Compliance of the retention periods prescribed in the Fertilisation Regulation
 - for fertilizer with a substantial amount of available nitrogen
 1. vegetables, soft fruits and strawberries from 1st of December to 31st of January
 2. potatoes: from the harvest of the last main crop until 31 January
 - for solid manure and compost from 1th of December to 15th January.
 - from 1 December to 15 January for fertilizers with a significant phosphate content

If necessary, federal state specific requirements must be observed.

3.4.7 Risk assessment for organic fertilisers


A risk assessment of organic fertilisers must be performed prior to the application of organic fertilisers. This includes, for example:

- Risk of transmission of plant diseases and introduction of weed seed
- Type and origin of the organic fertiliser
- Method of composting
- Risk of input of heavy metals
- Timing of the application
- Risk of direct contact to edible parts of crops
- Risk of microbiological contamination
- Risk of foreign objects (e.g. plastics, glass) entering the system

The application of the organic fertilizer takes place in consideration of the risk analysis.

The risk assessment is not needed if only fermentation substrate is applied as organic fertiliser in accordance with → 3.4.10 Use of fermentation substrates.

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures

 Risk assessment for organic fertilisers

3.4.8 [K.O.] Application of farm-produced fertiliser from animal origin

The following applies – except for potatoes – when applying not treated animal farm-produced fertiliser:

- Top trees, bushberries: application only after harvest and incorporation previous to bud burst. The incorporation is not needed if in the later course of vegetation a contamination (e.g. by splashing water in case of heavy rain) can be ruled out by a sufficient distance to the fruits of the crop.
- Leaf vegetables: no application after planting
- All other crops: application and incorporation at least 60 days prior to the harvest.

The application of liquid fertilizer of animal origin for strawberries and top dressing in vegetable cultivation is prohibited without exception. In addition, the application of liquid fertilizer of animal origin is only permitted in vegetable cultivation if the period between application and harvest is at least twelve weeks.

 Records on fertilisation measures

3.4.9 [K.O.] Application of sewage sludge

The application of sewage sludge on standing crops is forbidden. According to the German **Sewage Sludge Regulation** it is forbidden to grow vegetables on the fields where the sewage sludge application was applied during the year of the application and in the following year. Sewage sludge must not be applied on potato production fields 12 months before planting the potatoes.

3.4.10 Use of fermentation substrates

If fermentation substrates are applied, the following requirements apply:

- The application after sowing/planting is prohibited.
- In addition, the following restricting periods apply:

Field vegetables and strawberries: Application of fermentation substrates in the year of cultivation and the following year is prohibited.

Potatoes: No fermentation substrates may be applied 12 months prior to cultivation.

- Exceptions for application in the above-mentioned restricting periods before sowing/planting:

The fermentation substrates originate from plants whose input materials can be proven to consist only of manure and plant material according to **Annex 9.1**.

In addition, the following applies to field vegetable and strawberry cultivation: The fermentation substrates are hygienically safe for the production of fresh produce. In this respect, the following limit values per batch are complied with. If the material and origin of the fermentation substrate remains the same, a corresponding test which is not older than max. 2 months before the date of application of the fermentation substrates is available and sufficient.

Parameters:

- Salmonella, not detectable in 50 g of the bulk samples taken

Salmonella testing may be waived, if

- the fermentation substrates originate from a thermophilic biogas plant
- the application takes place at least 3 months before harvest.
- Heavy metal content (milligrams per kilogram dry matter of the material to be applied)
 - Lead 150 mg/kg
 - Cadmium 1,5 mg/kg
 - Chromium 100 mg/kg
 - Copper 100 mg/kg
 - Nickel 50 mg/kg
 - Mercury 1 mg/kg
 - Zinc 400 mg/kg

- Exception to application after sowing/planting for permanent crops

The application after planting/sowing is only possible for permanent crops if the application takes place at least 3 months before harvest and no edible plant parts are present. In addition, the above-mentioned limit values for salmonella and heavy metals must be complied with.

 Input materials used, evidence on safety of fermentation substrates (if applicable)

3.4.11 Storage of inorganic fertilisers

Mineral fertilisers must be stored in dry rooms with an impermeable floor. Bagged fertilisers and additionally covered on a pallet may be briefly stored outside.

The storage must be clean and easy to clean. It must be well ventilated and protected from rainwater and heavy condensation.

The location for the storage must be chosen in a way that the risk of water pollution due to fertilisers be reduced to a minimum. The conditions for the storage of liquid mineral fertiliser are a retaining room without out-flow or a retaining tank. The retaining capacity is 10 % of the total stored volume (for water protection areas 100 %), but at least 100 % of the volume of the largest single container; if the risk of aquatic pollution exists, it must be possible to contain 110 % of the volume of the largest single container.

When storing ammonium nitrate and fertilisers containing ammonium nitrate at least the following requirements must be met:

- Access to the store by unauthorised people is to be prohibited. Appropriate signs are to be displayed in a clearly visible way.

- Smoking, naked flames and lights are not allowed in the place of storage. Appropriate permanent and clearly visible signs are to be displayed.
- Equipment, installations and means of production which give off heat must be set up in such a way and so insulated that no heat, which could lead to decomposition, can be transferred.

3.4.12 Storage of organic fertilisers

The contamination of the environment, especially surface waters must be avoided. Storage places in close proximity to water (25 m) measures must be taken (e.g. concrete foundations and walls, or specially created leakproof containers).

When farmyard manure and compost are stored for a long-term (over three months), the piles must be covered or the leachate must be collected. The storage capacity and locations for liquid and solid manure must be documented.

 Documentation storage capacity and locations for organic fertilisers

3.5 Plant protection/Post-harvest treatment

Residue analysis


Note: The producers participate on the QS Residue monitoring according to the Guideline Residue Monitoring – Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes. The implementation is responsibility of the coordinator. The sample can be taken unannounced at any time by an authorised sampler. Access to the fields, storages, points of sales and vehicles must be granted to the sampler during normal business hours.

3.5.1 [K.O.] Records on plant protection and post-harvest measures

It is mandatory to have records of the applied products, including the use of basic substances, plant strengtheners, additives, soil decontaminating and chemical sterilisation of substrates, as well as post-harvest treatments and dressings. The records must also be available for self-multiplication of seeds/seedlings.

At least the following information related to the measures must be promptly documented:

- Date of application
- Field/Batch/Greenhouse or place of post-harvest treatment or place of dressing
- Treated crop or in the case of post-harvest treatment batch or lot number
- Trading name of the product or beneficial organism applied
- Active substance of the product or scientific name of the beneficial organism applied (if applicable, for example, identifiable by means of a list of products)
- Amount of product applied by weight or volume per hectare, for spatial culturing of plants, per hectare and meter of crown height or per 10,000 m² of canopy area (e.g. kg/ha, l/ha, g/ha, kg/m crown height, kg/10,000 m² canopy area)
- Justification (name of the pest, disease or weed controlled)
- Name of the applicant
- Pre-harvest interval in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications
- In the case of post-harvest treatment: type of treatment (e.g. spray, mist)

 Documentation of the measures

QS-work aid: Field Based Record – Outdoor Vegetables

3.5.2 [K.O.] Compliance with the pre-harvest interval

The predetermined pre-harvest interval must be observed. Especially during periods of continuous harvest, the fields with pre-harvest intervals to be respected must be clearly identified for the employees (e.g. site plans with an appropriate reference to the corresponding documentation). In countries where the pre-harvest interval is not a legal requirement, it may fall short in justified cases, as long as it can be proved by means of a residue analysis drawn by a third independent party, that the legal MRLs are complied with.

3.5.3 [K.O.] Use of plant protection, post-harvest treatment and dressing substances

Only plant protection, post-harvest treatment and dressing substances which are legally authorized or permitted for the corresponding crop in the country of cultivation may be used. The official MRLs (**Regulation (EC) No. 396/2005**) must be complied with and the contamination with plant protection active substances which are not approved for the crop must be avoided. If necessary, a (pre-harvest) analysis must confirm the conformity of the product.

The specifications given by the manufacturer and the regulatory authorities must be complied with. These include those rules established in the use instructions regarding the maximum application rates per application or per year. It is possible to make use of the splitting procedure, as long as it adheres to the good agricultural practices and the maximum application rate per year is not exceeded.

The MRLs for the plant protection active substances used in the countries where the products are expected to be marketed (if known), are available (list, internet) and obeyed.

3.5.4 [K.O.] Proof of competence

Anyone who applies or decides on the use of plant protection or post-harvest treatment substances must be competent on this matter. The competence meets the requirements of the **German Regulation for Plant Protection Competence or the Plant Protection Framework Directive 2009/128/EC**.

For post-harvest treatments, which are not regulated under the regulations for plant protection products, the persons technically responsible for the application must be competent according to the application specifications.



Proof of competence

3.5.5 [K.O.] Integrated pest management measures



The principles of good agricultural practices and of integrated pest management set out in the **Plant Protection Act** must be adhered to. All plant protection measures must be carried out for every location, crop and conditions according to the publication "**Principles for the implementation of good phytosanitary practices**" (from the German Ministry of Agriculture - BMEL). The document is available on site or can be accessed online and is known to the employees responsible for plant protection. The application of plant protection products must be limited to what is absolutely necessary. Where applicable, the threshold of damage principle has to be considered (e.g. on the basis of knock-down sampling). The application of beneficial organisms and selective substances is preferred.

At least five integrated pest management measures are implemented based on the "**Principles for the implementation of good phytosanitary practices**" and the company's experience. These can be for example:

- Use of disease-tolerant or resistant varieties
- Promotion of beneficial organisms (hedges, perches, rock piles, nest boxes, etc.)
- Entry/use of beneficial organisms (predatory mites, parasitic wasps, etc.)
- Use of monitoring devices (sticky traps, magnifying glass, pheromone traps, forecast model (e.g. RimPro), scab warning devices, etc.)
- Use of optimized plant protection technology
- Interchange plant protection products to prevent resistance
- Mechanical or thermal weed control, use of mulching (plastic film, straw, bark)
- Use of culture nets or fleece
- Cut out diseased plant parts (fruit tree canker, fire blight pruning, shoots affected by mildew)
- Remove heavily infested host plants from the area
- Assurance of field sanitation (quickest possible and thorough removal of crop residues)
- Assurance of room hygiene (quickest possible and thorough removal of crop residues, materials, etc.; disinfection)
- Vegetation heating
- Use of climate computers
- Rejuvenate strong stocks of several years
- Analysis on soil-borne pathogens (nematodes, Verticillium, etc.) before new planting
- Site-adapted variety selection
- Treatment of partial areas and boundaries
- Interchange of cultivation fields/compliance with required cultivation breaks by means of regular crop rotation
- Use of green manure
- Implementation of measures to minimize erosion (e.g. by cross-plowing, mulching, intercropping, etc.)
- Avoid waterlogged sites
- Optimization of irrigation (e.g. drip irrigation)
- Demand-oriented irrigation in accordance with need (e.g. measurement of soil moisture, climatic water balance)
- Greening of tramlines
- Floor damping
- Treatment of drainage water (slow sand filter, thermal or UV disinfection)

- Use of soil-conserving measures through appropriate soil conservation techniques/equipment

 Proof of integrated pest management measures

3.5.6 Prevention of spray drift


The required distances to adjacent crops must be observed. Besides, optimized plant protection technologies and the weather conditions must be used and taken into consideration.

If there is an increased risk of spray drift from or onto neighbouring areas, measures such as coordination with the neighbour or conducting pre-harvest samples should be considered.

QS-work aid: Drift prevention

3.5.7 Disposal of surplus application mix

Surplus mix must be disposed in accordance with the good phytosanitary practices and the national requirements. Residues due to technical reasons must be deluted tenfold and applied to the last area treated with increased speed and reduced pressure. The waste water from tank washing must be applied to the treated area, and under no circumstances should reach the sewers.

 Disposal of residual quantities

QS-work aid: Field Based Records – Outdoor Vegetables

3.5.8 Information on the approval of plant protection/post-harvest treatment substances

A current list of the crop protection agents and post-harvest treatment agents used in the certified crops is available (e.g. from the plant protection agencies) to check the approval status. Alternatively, the approval status can be accessed on the official websites (e.g. BVL).

 List of plant protection/post-harvest treatment substances

3.5.9 [K.O.] Storage of plant protection products


The entry of chemical plant protection products in the ground water must be avoided.

The storage indications in the package, as well as the current national, regional and local laws and regulations in force (e.g. supplementary requirements in protected areas) must be obeyed. All plant protection products must be stored in the original packaging. In the event of packaging damage, all details from the original packaging must be transferred to the new packaging.

3.5.10 Inventory list/hazardous substances inventory plant protection products

A hazardous substances inventory must be kept.

In addition, the inventory of plant protection products must be documented. The inventory lists must include the quantity (number of containers, bags, bottles or kilograms or litres) and must be updated within a month of any changes. With the exception of shared warehouses, an inventory list is not required if the stock can be calculated by balancing the incoming delivery notes (purchased quantity) and quantities used.

 List of hazardous substances, inventory of plant protection products or incoming delivery notes/quantities used

QS-work aid: Inventory of hazardous materials

3.5.11 Plant protection products storage

The plant protection products storage or the pesticide cabinet is labelled as such.

The storage must be robust, stable and made of flameproof material (i.e. fire-resistant up to 30 minutes). It must be dry, cool and be kept free from frost and protected from extreme temperature fluctuations.

Walk-in storages must have sufficient illumination and ventilation.

3.5.12 [K.O.] Access to the plant protection products storage

Only authorised persons may enter the storage. In addition, the storage must have a solid door and windows, if any, and must be kept locked.

3.5.13 Precautions for spillage/leakage

Containers with absorbent material (sand, chemical binding agents, etc.), floor brush, dustpan and plastic bags must be available in a fixed location and must not be used for any other purpose.

The storage facilities are equipped with shelving made of non-absorbent material (e.g. metal, rigid plastic) or with shelving cover with impermeable liner.

The storage of the containers takes place either in stable shelves made of hardly flammable material with a built-in retaining tank or in a cabinet with a built-in or slide-in retaining tank. The retaining tank must be able to retain at least 10 % of the entire amount of the stored substance, but at least 110 % of the largest single container. In water protection areas it must be possible to collect the entire storage capacity. If the shelf or cabinet have no retaining tank, then the floor of the storage must be covered with a proper paint or coating resistant to acids, caustic substances or organic solvents, and the storage must be provided with a door sill.

Liquid plant protection products stored on shelving without a retaining tank must not be stored above those in granular or powder formulations. Likewise, they must not be stored together in a single retaining tank.

When transporting and storing plant protection products, precautions must be taken to prevent damage to the containers and contamination. The containers must always be kept locked during transport.

3.5.14 [K.O.] Mixing plant protection products

The manufacturers' specifications for the mixing of plant protection products must be observed. Especially the facilities and devices (including measuring equipment) must be suitable for mixing plant protection products. The measuring equipment and devices must be checked at least annually by a responsible person and balances must be calibrated.

 Documentation control of measuring devices


3.5.15 [K.O.] Disposal of empty containers

The manipulation of the plant protection products containers must adhere to the national, regional and municipal laws and regulations in force.

The return of plant protection products containers must take place through a qualified waste disposal system. A proof of disposal must be available. The danger for the humans and the environment is minimised by the selected disposal system.

Empty containers may not be re-used in any form. They must be stored in a safe place (e.g. pesticide storage) until disposal **and are inaccessible for third parties**. The selected storage is separate from products and packaging materials, and labelled accordingly.

The disposal of the containers can take place through established take-back systems, like for example in Germany PAMIRA (www.pamira.de), or through plant protection products' manufacturers or distributors.

 Proof of disposal

3.5.16 [K.O.] Rinsing of empty containers

Once emptied, the containers of plant protection products (canisters) are to be thoroughly rinsed either via the use of an integrated pressure rinsing device or manually.


Rinsing of the **containers is carried out according to the following** procedure :

- Containers are rinsed three times with hand.
- Rinsing water must be added to the application mix and the canister must be emptied thoroughly via the syringe filler neck.
- Containers must be kept open (unsealed) and dry until delivery.

3.5.17 Disposal of plant protection products

Plant protection products which are subject to the obligation to dispose of in accordance with the Plant Protection Act (§ 15) or other national laws must be disposed of immediately and professionally via officially authorised disposal systems.

Until disposal, these plant protection products must be stored safely in the pesticide storage.

 **Proof of disposal**

3.6 Irrigation and use of water on pre-harvest activities

The following requirements (Section 3.6) apply for the water used before the harvest, for example, sprinkling/irrigation, fertigation, spraying liquid plant protection products.

3.6.1 [K.O.] Risk assessment on microbiologic quality of the water

Risk assessment

A risk assessment must be carried out with regard to microbiological hazards, in which the following points are considered:

- application method,
- crop,
- water source,
- application timing (growth stage of the crop, time to harvest),
- Possible contamination of water sources, storage, distribution systems
- points of extraction, which could be for example affected by the inflow of effluents from sewage treatment plants.

Water analysis

Based on the risk assessment, water analysis must be carried out by ISO 17025 accredited laboratories. At least one water analysis a year is necessary. Deviations from the minimum number can be made if the calculation of the number of analyses is carried out on the basis of the decision tree of the QS supporting documents "Risk analysis microbiological water quality". Accordingly, for example, an analysis may be omitted if the water is used in cultures that are not suitable for raw consumption (always cooked before consumption, e.g. potatoes) and/or the harvested products do not come into contact with water (e.g. drip irrigation).

Available analyses concerning drinking, bathing or surface water monitoring (e.g. in the frame of water quality monitoring), can be used.

The following limit must be fulfilled: *Escherichia coli* < 1000 CFU/100 ml.

Sampling location and time are also determined on the basis of the risk assessment and the sampling should take place at a representative exit point of the irrigation system.

If the results of the water analysis identify a risk for the food safety, plant parts suitable to be eaten raw should not come into contact with the water. In that case, corrective actions with deadlines must be set and documented.

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures

 Evidence of risk assessment, water quality, results of water monitoring

QS-work aid: Risk analysis of microbiological water quality

3.6.2 Risk assessment chemical and physical water quality

A risk assessment must be carried out with regard to chemical and physical hazards, in which the following points are considered:

- application method
- crop
- water sources
- timing of irrigation (developmental state, time to harvest)
- Possible contamination of water sources, storage, distribution systems
- points of extraction, which could be for example affected by the inflow of effluents from sewage treatment plants

The amount of the necessary water analysis is defined in the risk assessment.

Water analysis must be carried out with the frequency established in the risk assessment by ISO 17025 accredited laboratories. Sampling location and time are also determined on the basis of the risk assessment. The sampling should take place at a representative exit point of the irrigation system. To this end, available analyses already concerning drinking-, bathing- or surface water monitoring (e.g. in the context of water quality monitoring), can be used.

If the results of the water analysis identify a risk for the food safety, the water must not be used. In that case, corrective actions with deadlines must be set and documented.

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessment, operational rules/procedures

 Risk assessment, if applicable water analysis

3.6.3 [K.O.] Untreated and treated sewage

Untreated sewage (unclear) sewage is not used.

Treated, recycled sewage that fulfils the minimum requirements according to Regulation (EU) 2020/741 (Section 2) may be used for agricultural irrigation.

3.7 Water management

3.7.1 [K.O.] Water extraction and discharge

A permit issued by the competent authority for the water extraction and discharge must be submitted, if required by law. Further regulatory requirements (e.g. water extraction quantity or usage rates) are to be recorded using appropriate methods and documented.

 Documentation permit for water extraction (e.g. letter, licence etc.)

3.8 Harvest and transport

3.8.1 Preparation of the harvest

The harvesting conditions (maturity, soil and weather) are assessed before starting the harvest, so that a gentle and damage-free harvest can be done. A visual inspection of the field with regard to contamination risks for the crop by weeds (especially for the harvest with machines) or a high concentration of animals in or near the field (wild, rodents, dog walkers) must be performed. If required, measures for the risk minimisation must be taken, for example:

- instructions for the harvesting workers
- signs
- erect fences or barriers
- removal of weeds before harvest or during packaging
- selection of harvesting equipment

3.8.2 Records on harvest

The date or period of the harvest must be documented for each of the fields. In addition, the harvest quantity must be recorded.


 Records on harvesting dates and quantities for every field

3.9 Storage and handling of products

3.9.1 Product identification in the storage

The origin of every batch of products must be documented and traceable, also for purchased products. The identity of the products (batch number, if applicable) must be noted on the written documents which accompany the batch from the reception until the removal/departure of the storage.

⇒ 3.10.2 Traceability

 Documentation product identification

3.9.2 Quality preservation measures


It must be ensured that no mixture or contamination of the products occurs when these are put in the storage. The stored products must be prepared to be stored in accordance with the length of the storage (e.g. by appropriate drying and ventilation measures) and checked at regular intervals depending on the product in stock and their quality specific indicators. Produce intended for immediate sale are excluded of this rule.

The storage conditions must be optimised, so that no damage occurs to the product. The following information must be documented during the storage checks:

- air humidity (if applicable)
- temperature control (if necessary)

- pest infestation
- contamination of the harvested crops (to be avoided when storing as far as possible)

If irregularities with regard to the given normative values appear, appropriate counter measures must be taken and documented (e.g. drying, ventilation, relocation, pest control or sprout inhibiting).

 Documentation storage checks, records on quality preservation measures (if applicable), temperature control

3.9.3 Control of measuring devices

In the control and revision of the devices and facilities used as measuring equipment (e.g. scales, thermometers) the intervals specified by the manufacturer must be fulfilled.

If there are no manufacturer specifications on this regard, the measuring equipment must be calibrated or checked according to own risk assessments, but at least once a year (around every 12 months).

3.9.4 **[K.O.]** Pest monitoring and pest control

At critical points, especially at the storage and handling of products as well as the storage of packaging material, it must be regularly and systematically checked and documented if there is pest infestation (rodents, insects). In addition to the visual inspection, additional measures such as the setting up of monitoring, bait points or traps must be carried out.

A permanent baiting of rodents, without a specific infestation, with rodenticides is basically not permitted. Rarely, a strategic permanent baiting with rodenticides can be carried out if the implementation takes place via a professional and qualified pest controller who meets the legal requirements of the appropriate country.

In case of pest infestation, a systematic pest control must be implemented and be proven accordingly (e.g. the presence of traps, bait boxes, delivery notes for the purchase of bait, etc.). If a pest monitoring and/or pest control are executed, they, as well as the qualifications of the person in charge, must meet the legal requirements. The application regulations and restrictions of the used agents must be complied with.

When distributing baits and traps for controlling harmful rodents, a trap-/bait plan must be elaborated. Traps and baits are displayed in such way that other animals do not have access to it. The monitoring and bait points/traps shall be checked at least once a month unless other control intervals have been defined based on a risk assessment. Initiated measures must be documented.

Garbage dumps or domestic waste situated in the proximity of the operation must be given special consideration in the pest control.

 Documentation pest monitoring/control, bait plan

QS-work aid: Pest Control

3.9.5 Handling non-compliant products

A regulation for handling non-conform/defective products must be in place and implemented. It must be possible to clearly identify and isolate the affected products (e.g. separate storage location, label) and they must be handled or disposed of accordingly.

A non-compliant product is a product that does not meet food safety, regulatory requirements, certain quality or customer requirements.

 Documentation Regulation

QS-work aid: Handling Non-Compliant Products

3.10 Documentation of means of production, traceability, labelling and use of the QS certification mark

3.10.1 Purchase of means of production and services

Each purchase of means of production and services must be documented. The documentation obligation applies a. o. to the product (seeds and seedlings, as well as young plants) and means of production that come in contact with the product, such as plant protection products, means for pest control, fertilisers, substrates, cleaning agents and disinfectants.

The documentation on means of production can be e.g. the delivery notes and invoices.

 Documentation purchase of means of production

3.10.2 [K.O.] Traceability

An identification and registration system comprehensible for third parties must be implemented. This must ensure a clear identification of the goods and the traceability at all times, in accordance with the **Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002**, as well as the plausibility of the flow of goods and the packaging materials.

The system ensures the traceability of the produced goods, if possible, until the cultivation management unit and the purchased goods (if applicable).

Moreover, it is ensured that information on the traceability is provided to QS within 24 hours after establishing contact with the scheme participant. The internal traceability processes are structured in such a way, that the relevant information can be compiled within four hours.

The following information about customers, suppliers and deliveries are relevant:

- name, address and telephone number
- QS ID or location number
- type and quantity of supplied products
- delivery date
- batch or lot number (if generated during the production process)
- for bulk products the batch/lot number on the packaging


Suppliers list

It is traceable which products/packaging materials were acquired from which supplier. There is a list of all suppliers.

Customers list

It is traceable which products are delivered to which customer. There is a list of all customers (except final consumer).

Note: In order to verify the identity and traceability of the products in the QS scheme, cross-audit delivery note checks, so-called cross-checks, are carried out in the QS scheme supply chain fruit, vegetables, potatoes.

 Batch identification, goods receipt documentation (e.g. delivery notes, incoming goods inspection) and outgoing goods documents, traceability system, supplier list, customer list

3.10.3 [K.O.] Labelling of QS produce

Only products registered in the QS database and authorized for delivery as well as purchased QS goods may be marketed as QS goods. Goods marketed as QS goods must be clearly labelled as such in the accompanying documents (usually delivery notes or delivery notifications via EDI, or alternatively weighing notes).

The labelling can either be product-related (e.g. apples, QS apples) or by means of an explanatory note in the accompanying documents (e.g. "all goods are QS goods," "all apples are QS goods"). As an alternative to labelling QS goods in the accompanying documents, producers,

- who are members of a producer organisation with a contractual delivery obligation, or
- who are closely associated with the buyer of the goods in terms of organisation and company law (e.g. producer also operates a wholesale company; same ownership structure)

may agree general terms with the buyer, provided that

- the QS crops entitled to be delivered are marketed to the customer as QS goods without exception, and
- the procedure is documented by the producer and the customer, is known to the employees concerned and can be traced in the audit.

The obligation to label QS goods on accompanying documents also applies if the QS certification mark is not shown on the goods.

⇒ 3.10.5 Use of the QS certification mark

Note: Labelling is the identification of the QS produce on the accompanying documents. Products that have been produced according to the requirements of the QS scheme and on a QS certified farm, but have not been identified as such on the delivery note, lose their status as QS produce and cannot be marketed as QS produce.


 Evidence of QS produce (e.g. delivery notes)

QS-work aid: Explanation: Labelling Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

3.10.4 Labelling of QS produce with an identification number

QS produce must be labelled with the QS location number (OGK-number) or another in the QS-database deposited identification number of the producer (e.g. GLOBALG.A.P.-Number (GGN) or Global Location Number (GLN)) in the delivery notes / accompanying documents or on the label of the goods (or box label). If several locations (OGK numbers) for a producer are stored in the QS database or if purchased goods are marketed, the location number of the location where the goods were produced is to be used. In the event that the producer is only registered with one location (one OGK number), the QS ID can also be used.

In the case of batches which may contain goods from several producers due to mixing as a result of bulk goods storage or technical packaging or treatment processes (e.g. sorting system) and in the case of packed goods which contain goods from several producers, the QS-ID, the GH-number or another in the QS-database deposited identification number (e.g. the GLN, GGN) of the packing location can be used alternatively.

 Evidence Identification number (e.g. delivery note or box label)

QS-work aid: Explanation: Labelling Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

3.10.5 Use of the QS certification mark

Note: Use of the mark is the illustration of the QS test mark on the goods.


Scheme participants on the stage production are entitled to use the QS certification mark once they have been permitted to do so by an explicit agreement with their coordinator. Goods which are labelled with the QS certification mark on the label, packaging or the outer packaging (e.g. pallet note) may only be delivered or marketed to QS scheme participants. Goods marked with the QS certification mark must be marked in the delivery documents in accordance with requirement 3.10.3.

In justified cases it may be deviated from this rule, if it can be expected that the reseller, in the course of his business and in contact with his customer, no longer actively advertise and/or market the products as QS produce. In this case, the produce should not be described as QS in the accompanying papers.

The use of the QS certification mark is only allowed in accordance with the **Style guide**.

The QS certification mark with reference to a product, can be used on products, delivery notes and documents accompanying produce. Its use is also possible on marketing materials, letter paper and similar commercial documentation without direct reference to a product, if it the scheme participant can be recognised as user of the QS certification mark.

⇒ 3.10.3 Labelling of QS produce

 Confirmation of the coordinator (if necessary)

QS-work aid: Explanation: Labelling Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

3.10.6 Product labelling

The **European and national laws and regulations for the labelling** (General Marketing Standard, special marketing standards and UNECE standards, if applicable) must be complied with.

This applies for the labelling of:

- packages (boxes, reusable crates and other shipping units)
- sales packaging
- shipping documents/notes of delivery/label


All self-placed information on the label must be correct (for example QS-ID, GLOBALG.A.P.-number (GGN)).

3.10.7 [K.O.] Inspection of outgoing goods

All information provided on the label, in particular with regard to the certification status (e.g. QS ID) and origin (national or regional), is correct.

3.10.8 Handling of returns

A regulation for processing product returns is in place **unless returns can be ruled out entirely (e.g. due to the marketing channel or the goods marketed)**. This regulation is reviewed annually using an example. All returned goods must be recorded and evaluated. The regulations relevant for the further use of the returned goods must be followed. Appropriate measures must be taken to prevent returns. The separation of QS and non-QS goods must be taken into account.

 Documentation Handling of returns

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessments, operational rules/procedures

3.10.9 Purchase of mushroom substrate

Mushroom substrate with grown mushrooms or mushrooms in the stage of fruiting body formation must be obtained from QS-certified companies in order to be allowed to market the mushrooms as QS goods. Substrate production and inoculation do not require participation in the QS scheme.

3.11 Packaging of harvested products

3.11.1 [K.O.] Storage of packaging material

The storage of packaging material must be appropriate dry and hygienically flawless (e.g. no pest infestation, nor physical and/or chemical damage).

If the products are packed directly in the field, the packaging material must be removed from the field or put into safe interim storage after finishing harvest or when the harvest/packaging activities are interrupted for longer periods of time (e.g. overnight). Rests of packaging material and others, which did not originate from the products, must be removed from the field.

When reusable packaging is used, it must be clean and undergo rinsing, if required.

3.11.2 Conformity of packaging material

There must be a current declaration of conformity for the used packaging material that has direct contact with the food. This material must be harmless to health and hygienically flawless.

A clearance certificate must be on hand for all packaging materials that have direct contact with the food and that do not require a declaration of conformity according to the **Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 of the European Parliament and the Council on October 27th 2004**.

 Declaration of conformity/clearance certificate for packaging material

4 Hygiene requirements

4.1 Hygiene management

The **EU Regulation on Food Hygiene (EU Hygiene Package (EC) No 853/2004)** must be fulfilled by all stages of the production, processing and distribution of foodstuffs, including the transportation, storage and treatment of primary products on the point of production, as well as the proper use of plant protection products and biocides.

4.1.1 Risk assessment on hygiene

The risk assessment covers the entire production environment, including handling of products after harvest (for example: sorting, washing, packaging, storage) and internal transport. The critical points for the food security (e.g. possible contamination) are also included in the risk assessment.

The contamination of the product can take place through:

- harvest workers (e.g. body fluids, contagious diseases)
- means of transportation, which are also used for other purposes (e.g. transport fertilisers)
- dirty harvest machines
- dirty tools for the harvest (e.g. knives, scissors, cutters, etc)
- unprotected storage of products on the field
- uncovered transportation of products
- foreign objects
- contamination (e.g. from unauthorized pesticides, fertilisers and soil or water additives)

- cross-contamination (eg. allergens, plant protection products)
- premeditated threats or manipulations

⇒ 1.4 Risk assessments, operational rules/procedure

 Risk assessment handling of harvested products

4.1.2 **[K.O.] Hygiene checklist/procedure**

Based on the risk assessment, a hygiene checklist for the self-assessment is created, in which all relevant measures to maintain the hygiene in operation are covered, including post-harvest activities and internal transport. The checklist contains the names of those responsible for the implementation of the hygiene measures and measures in the case of irregularities.

The checklist and the operational rules for the hygiene procedure must, if applicable, contain and assure the compliance of the following requirements:

- Harvesting machines and reusable containers are cleaned and maintained at least annually. Harvesting tools are disinfected, if needed. The cleaning and disinfecting are documented.
- Company vehicles used for loading and internal transportation of harvested products, are suitable for that purpose, clean and in good condition, so that the contamination of the product (for example, through earth, dirt, animal manure, spills, exhaust fumes etc.) is avoided.
- Harvest, transport and storage containers are clean or are cleaned before use and only used for harvested products.
- Products packaged directly at the place of harvest must be removed from this place overnight. Packaged products are covered during the removal from the field and during internal transport (for example: with a tarpaulin, or in closed trailers, etc.).
- No risk of contamination may originate from harvest waste (accumulation of crop residues).
- Company vehicles, which are also used for other purposes than transporting products (e.g. fertilizer) must be cleaned before being used. When handling allergens, care must be taken to avoid cross-contamination.


 Hygiene checklist/procedure

QS-work aid: Hygiene Checklist

4.1.3 **[K.O.] Hygiene requirements for the company's premises and facilities**

Based on the risk assessment, hygiene requirements and cleaning plan, which cover at least the following points, must be elaborated and fulfilled:

- Premises and facilities (e.g. as process lines and equipment, floors, storage rooms) must be kept clean and in good condition and pose no risk of contamination or to food safety. The cleaning success is to be monitored by:
 - visual cleaning control (for cleaning/rinsing only), or
 - Microbiological tests on surfaces, provided that it is necessary to disinfect operating facilities
- For agriculture in controlled atmosphere (e.g. hydroponics, aquaponics, vertical farming): a risk-based microbiological monitoring program is in place that covers product handling and production activities.
- Toilets and hand washing facilities must be easily accessible. The toilets in the working area must be kept in a good hygienically condition. Hand washing facilities must be available in close proximity. Toilets must be equipped with toilet paper and flushing water. Hand washbasin must be located in the toilet room. The toilet room should have no direct access to the rooms where food is produced, treated or in circulation. If toilet rooms are opening directly in the produce handling area the toilet room must be provided with a self-closing door.
- Hand washbasins must be equipped with hot and cold water supply. The water has potable water quality. In addition, suitable means for hand cleaning and drying (excluding towels for multiple use) must be available, as well as a cleaning plan and the documentation of the cleaning for the sanitary facilities.
- Containers for food waste and other residues must be conveniently located, easy to clean and also to disinfect, if required.
- Appropriate precautions must be taken for the storage and disposal of food waste and other residues. Waste storage areas must be so arranged and organised that they can be kept clean and free of vermin.


 Hygienic requirements; cleaning schedule; documentation cleaning

4.1.4 [K.O.] Hygiene instructions

Based on the risk assessment, there are hygiene instructions for workers (including service providers) and visitors in the work areas and visitors, in form of signs (images) and/or in the prevailing language(s) of the workers, and they are located on visible places. The hygiene instructions for harvest workers are displayed in a central location.

The instructions must contain at least:

- personal hygiene (e.g. clean clothes, no jewellery, coverage of wounds etc.),
- hand hygiene (e.g. hand washing before starting work, after each toilet visit, after touching contaminated material, after smoking or eating, after breaks and before returning to work),
- wearing of protective clothing (e.g. headgear), if applicable, including its cleaning and storage,
- product contamination by means of body fluids,
- appropriate behaviour when dealing with products (e.g. no spitting, smoking, eating and drinking during work etc.),
- smoking, eating, chewing gum and drinking are restricted to designated areas,
- prevention of foreign objects and other sources of contamination in the harvested crop,
- **handling of glass and hard plastic fractions**
- notification of any relevant infections or diseases to the responsible employee/manager,
- return to work after illness.


 Hygiene instructions/Documentation hygiene instructions

4.1.5 [K.O.] Hygiene training

All persons who have contact with products, must be trained on the contents of the hygiene instructions, in a way that they understand the contents and in accordance with their functions. These trainings take place at least once a year and when a new employee start work. The trainings must be proven by means of the signature of the trained employees (date, signature).

There is a training plan in accordance with the training needs of the employees. This training plan includes all codes of conduct such as:

- training content (e.g. dangers due to physical, chemical, microbiological contamination of products)
- training intervals
- participants
- speaker
- language

 Hygiene training, training plan

QS-work aid: Proof of training

4.1.6 [K.O.] Requirements for water and ice

A risk assessment must be carried out for process/washing water/ice. On the basis of the risk assessment,


- the water must be regularly replaced and/or treated.
- water with additives (e.g. antimicrobial additives, ozone) must be analytically monitored to ensure compliance with the maximum levels (if legally specified) for the additives.

The final post-harvest washing of the fresh produce must be done with water which satisfies the quality of potable water. The same applies for the water used for post-harvest treatments. Ice used must be elaborated with potable water and handled under the consideration of hygienical conditions.

Proof of potable water quality may be demonstrated via official analyses carried out as part of the potable water monitoring. Alternatively, a sample of post-harvest washing water must be taken at the point of extraction and analysed at least every 12 months. Water analyses are only required if products are handled that are suitable for raw consumption.

Laboratories carrying out the water analyses must be accredited to ISO 17025.

Irregularities identified within the frame of the water analysis must be eliminated before the next use.

 Risk assessment of process/washing water, analyses if necessary; Proof of potable water quality post-harvest washing (final washing), proof ice from potable water

4.1.7 [K.O.] Toilets for harvesters

If the workers have direct contact with the product during harvest, it is necessary that they have access to clean permanent or mobile toilets. These toilets must be easily accessible by foot or by means of transport within a reasonable period of time (guide value 7 minutes from field edge). The number of toilets must comply with the specifications in the table below.

Deviations of the minimum number are allowed if harvesting does not last longer than 90 minutes.


Table 1: Minimum number of toilets for harvesters.

Number of harvesters	Number of toilets
≤ 20	1-2
21 to 40	2-4
41 to 60	4-6
From 60 each additional 30	+1

The toilets must be in a hygienic good condition. Facilities for washing hands with potable water quality must be provided within or near the toilets. It is sufficient if potable water is filled as fresh as possible into clean containers. As an alternative to potable water, clean water of irrigation quality (e.g. well water, not surface water) can also be used. The toilets are equipped with toilet paper and appropriate resources for cleaning and drying hands (excluding reusable towels). If necessary, disinfectant suitable for the food industry are also provided (e.g. if necessary, if no water of sufficient irrigation quality is available for washing hands).

4.1.8 Suitability of means of production

All means of production which come into contact with the product (lubricants, cleaning agents etc.) must be suitable for use in the food sector and comply with customer specifications or their own specifications, but at least with the legal requirements. Appropriate documentation (e.g. label, manufacturers' specifications on properties) must be present. To prevent short-term delivery failures, sufficient stocks of important operating materials are kept and alternative suppliers are known.

 Proof suitability of means of production in the food sector, if applicable specification description

4.1.9 [K.O.] Breakage of lamps

Shatter-proof lamps featuring a protective screen must be installed above all areas where produce and packaging material are handled or stored.

4.1.10 Access of domestic animals

In areas where products are handled or stored, the access of domestic animals must be regulated.

5 Producers handling not self-produced goods

5.1 Handling of not self-produced goods

This chapter is only obligatory for those producers who, along with the self-produced goods, also handle goods in their own establishment that they did not produce by themselves (e.g. through purchasing or the provision of services such as sorting or packaging).

The requirements of this chapter need to be applied and checked if the not self-produced goods:

- are QS-goods or
- belong to the same production scope for which the producer is registered by QS. Concerning the production scope, the cultivation of fruit and vegetables "outdoor" and "protected cultivation" are composed.

Furthermore, the requirements are mandatory for producers who do not have all locations registered for QS.

5.1.1 Incoming goods inspection

Inspections of incoming goods must be carried out according to a regulated process based on internal guidelines. These incoming goods inspections must be recorded. They must comprise all relevant products. Delivered goods must also be checked for pest infestation and if necessary, appropriate measures must be introduced. If necessary, incoming goods inspections must be adapted to suit changes in the production, storage or transport conditions.

All suppliers of QS produce must be easily identifiable as a location eligible for delivery including product and production scope in the QS software platform via the public scheme participant search.

5.1.2 Traceability check

The traceability of all goods must be checked using an example from the production or shipment in accordance with the **Regulation (EU) No. 178/2002**. This also applies to packaging materials. The system is checked at least annually.

 Documentation Testing Traceability

5.1.3 [K.O.] Produce separation


A comprehensible system for the separation of QS and non-QS produce must be in place. A clear labelling and batch separation of QS and non-QS produce must be guaranteed. The procedure for separating the produce must be outlined in a suitable manner. QS produce must be clearly identified within the company. It must be ensured that mixtures of products do not occur.

Parallel to the requirements for the separation and identification of the QS produce, the separation and identification of other specific product categories must be carried out between goods from QS Production locations and produce from locations with QS GAP and/or recognized standards (e.g. GLOBALG.A.P., Vegaplan, AMAG.A.P.) and specific goods labelling (e.g. regional labelling, organic).

5.1.4 [K.O.] Reconciliation of incoming and outgoing goods

A plausible relationship between the volumes of produced and (if applicable) purchased, as well as the sold goods must be available. Losses during the storage or handling must be taken into consideration.

In addition, a detailed mass balance must be prepared at least once a year, using an example that includes all goods produced, purchased and marketed.

 Delivery notes, invoices, sorting receipts, mass balancing

5.1.5 Use of certification mark on purchased products

In addition to the requirements for the use of the certification mark (clause 3.10.5), goods from producers with a GLOBALG.A.P. option 2 certificate or a GLOBALG.A.P. option 1 multisite with QMS certificate can only be labeled with the QS certification mark if the producers are authorized for the use of the certification mark. Producers who are not authorized for the use of the certification mark on goods are marked in the QS database.

6 Waste and environmental management, recycling and re-use

6.1 Waste management, recycling and reuse

6.1.1 Waste products and sources of pollution

Generated waste (e.g. paper, cardboard, plastic, oil) and potential sources of pollution (e.g. fertiliser excess, exhaust gas for heating units, rests of plant protection treatments, tank rinsing, etc.) must be listed.

 List waste and sources of pollution

6.1.2 [K.O.] Storage of waste

Waste must be stored in designated areas and be regularly disposed. These areas are routinely cleaned and disinfected if necessary. Only waste obtained during the daily work can be found outside of designated areas. Waste may not cause a risk of contamination for products.

6.1.3 Waste management

The waste management ensures that the operating waste is reduced to a necessary minimum and avoids contamination of the environment (air, soil, substrate and water). The storage and disposal of waste (pesticides, fertilisers, waste and drainage water, etc.) is taken into account. Additionally, a recycling system must be implemented (separate waste disposal, such as Dual System).

The presence of plastics in the environment and in operating areas is to be avoided. The manufacturer's instructions are to be followed for plastics used in production, and employees are to be instructed accordingly. Ecologically degradable alternatives to plastics are to be considered if possible.



Waste management and recycling plan

7 Working conditions

7.1 Occupational safety and social issues

7.1.1 Worker's instruction and qualification

Workers who operate with dangerous machines or devices must be instructed in their use. These instructions are documented (e.g. via participation certificates or signed attendance lists).

Workers, who handle chemicals, disinfectants, plant protection products and/or other hazardous substances and/or operate with dangerous or complex equipment or devices are qualified accordingly.



Documentation employees instruction, worker's qualification

7.1.2 [K.O.] Protective clothing and equipment, user protection

Faultless protective clothing and equipment are provided to workers, service providers and visitors and are used in accordance with legal requirements, recommendations of professional associations, operational rules and the manufacturer's specifications.

The specifications given by the manufacturer and the competent authorities for the protection of the user and third parties, must be observed during the handling and storing of plant protection products. The user must wear protective equipment in accordance with the requirements and instructions for use of the plant protection product. This protective equipment must always be in good state of repair and stored separately from plant protection products, in a well-ventilated place. The class of respirator filter to be used is subject to the instructions of use and manufacturer's specifications of the plant protection product. If the instructions for use of existing plant protection products stipulate the use of respiratory protection filters or masks, these must be available **for each user**. The service life depends on the external application conditions.

New filters may be stored in its original packaging up to the specified storage date, used respiratory filters must be replaced at least once a year. Protective clothing must be cleaned after use in accordance with an operational cleaning plan. The cleaning plan must be adapted to the type of use and the degree of dirt. The cleaning must be done separately from personal clothing. Protective clothing which is not in good condition is properly disposed.

The recommendations for the use of protective clothing and equipment must be available.



Cleaning plan protective clothing; Recommendation use of protective clothing/equipment

7.1.3 First aid facilities

Complete and operational first aid kits are in the proximity of the working areas and are accessible. The furnishing depends on the type and size of the operation.

In addition to a first aid kit, an eyewash facility and clean water **(in a container or running water, e.g. washing hands)** must be available near the work area on the plant protection products storage and mixing areas.


7.1.4 Accident and emergency plan

A written emergency plan exists containing the following information:

- rules of conduct in the case of accidents and emergencies

- safety precautions (e.g. location of fire extinguishers, emergency exits, emergency stop switch for electricity, gas and water connections)
- nearest telephone
- address of the company
- most important telephone numbers in the event of accidents and emergencies (police, fire brigade, ambulance)

The emergency plan is freely accessible, and is available in the predominant language(s) of the workforce and/or in form of pictographs. Moreover, it must be located within 10 m of plant protection products' storages and mixing areas. If required, safety precautions for hazardous materials exist (e.g. websites, telephone numbers, information sheets).

 Accident and emergency plan

7.1.5 Workers trained on first aid

In the presence of two workers, at least one person with a first aid training (within the last 5 years) is present whenever agricultural/horticultural activities (production and handling) are being carried out. For a guideline with regard to the amount of first aid trained workers in proportion to the total amount of workers, the recommendations of the trade associations apply. In the case of inexistent national legislation on this regard, at least one person with a first aid training must always be present.

 Proof first aid training

I. Regionalfenster

Only applicable for scheme participants in Germany.


Regionalfenster is a national program for the labelling of regional food in Germany. More information about Regionalfenster Service GmbH can be found on www.regionalfenster.de.


8 Definitions

8.1 Explanation of symbols

This symbol marks K.O. criteria **[K.O.]**

References to other applicable documents are marked in **bold**.

 This sign means: A written confirmation must be provided. In addition to this sign, documents are also provided that can be used as proof. All (including digital) control and documentation systems that prove that the requirements are fulfilled can be used.

 This symbol means: requirement that can be assigned to one or more of the three pillars of sustainability (economy, ecology, social).

This symbol marks references to other chapters of the guideline: ⇒

Note (on statutory requirements or other framework conditions) are indicated by italics. Notes are not QS requirements, are not checked and are not included in the valuation.

Areas marked in **yellow** indicate changes compared to the previous version of this guideline.

8.2 Abbreviations

CFU	Colony-forming units
K.O.	knock out
mmol/l	Millimol per Litre, measure of concentration
N	Nitrogen
Nmin	mineral nitrogen

OGK-Nr.	Identification number/Location number for QS scheme participants in the scope fruit, vegetables and potatoes
P	Phosphorous
P2O5	Phosphate, Phosphorous pentoxid
RIMpro	scab-warning program

8.3 Terms and definitions

- **Cross-Checks**
Cross-stage and cross-audit delivery note controls against which requirements for traceability and identity of goods are verified. Basic information and details on how to carry out the cross-checks can be found in the document "Cross-Checks fruit, vegetables, potatoes".
- **Greenhouse**
An accessible, stationary, self-contained production site for cultivated plants with a transparent outer shell. (For definition and further explanations see [Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety \(BVL\)](#)).
- **Separated marketing**
This productions scope offers a participation possibility to producers who own a legally independent commercialization company. The coordinator can register this company as an additional location in the database. The condition is that only the products produced in the own producer's premises can be commercialized as "separated marketing", in other words, no products are bought from third parties. Moreover, both parts of the company should act as one organizational unit (same owner, same establishment), in which the respective business units operate as legally separated.
- **Management unit (according to Fertilisation Regulation)**
Two or more plots, which have comparable site conditions, are managed uniformly and with the same plant species or with plant species with comparable nutrient requirements or to cultivation provided are.
- **Labelling**
Labelling is the identification of QS produce on documents accompanying the goods (e.g. delivery note)
- **Location**
A location can consist of one or more fields/greenhouses. It is managed by the same (legal) person and the same infrastructure is used. This means that all requirements of the QS Guideline Production can be tested altogether, and no field/greenhouse-specific distinctions have to be made (e.g., regarding PPP storage, machinery, hygiene training of employees). Each location is given a location number. Several locations with the same product must be certified by the same certification body.
- **Microgreens**
Microgreens are products that are obtained by germinating seeds and allowing them to develop in soil or a substrate, and then harvesting them after the first set of leaves has formed. They are harvested and consumed without the roots, above the layer of soil or substrate.
- **Nature reserves**
Nature reserves are legally designated areas in which special protection of nature and landscape in their entirety or in individual parts is required in accordance with § 23 of the Federal Nature Conservation Act.
- **Packaging material**
Sales packaging (for sale in food retail) that has direct contact with the food.
- **Preparation**
Preparation comprises all activities in which the product is shredded, peeled, grated, sliced, pureed or strained after the harvest. Preparation does not cover activities in which the product is exclusively podded, hulled or cleaned (e.g.: the removal of roots and leaves, the removal of the heart in the case of cauliflower and cabbage, the removal of the root section in the case of kohlrabi, the shortening of leaves in the case of leek).

- Producer

In terms of QS, a producer is an individual or a company (legal entity), that owns or leases land. The producer is responsible for the production of the certified products and for the products sold by this agricultural/horticultural business. Each producer receives a QS ID and may only register once. A producer must have at least one location and can also register several locations. If a producer has several sites with the same product, these must be certified by the same certification body.

- QS produce

Goods that have been produced and/or marketed in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme in a QS/QS-GAP certified company and are labelled accordingly in the accompanying document.

- Product group

A product group is a group of products that have similarities in how they are grown, harvested and their food safety hazards (e.g. microbiological contamination).

- Product handling

Product handling includes all post-harvest processes involving product contact (e.g. washing, sorting, processing, packaging, storing, chemical treatment).

- Risk assessment

is a systematic process to evaluate risk in a more comprehensive manner, to make complex interconnections transparent and to deal with uncertainties. It can be subdivided into three parts:

- Identifying the risks – those risks which my business is facing
- Risk evaluation - which risks occur with which likelihood – risk assessment in the purest sense of the term
- Risk management – identifying causes and planning measures

- Sprouts

Product obtained by the germination of seeds and their development in water or other medium, and harvested before the formation of full foliage leaves, to be consumed as food with the seed.

- Storage of products

Storage is the term used to describe the whereabouts of products in the company that are not marketed immediately after harvesting/receiving. Storage does not include handling, transshipment and picking, as well as the short-term provision of goods for picking.

- Subcontractor

Organisation/single person that is commissioned by the producer for agricultural activities on the location, which are subject to the QS-requirements (e.g. contractors).

- Use of QS certification mark

Use of QS Certification Mark is the depiction of the QS Certification mark on the product.

You can find a list of general terms and definitions in the **Guideline General Requirements**.

9 Annex

9.1 Possible input substances for biogas plants

The Annex 9.1 is published as separated document named 9.1/11.1 Possible input substances for biogas plants.

Revision Information Version 01.01.2026

Criterion	Changes	Date of change
1.1 Scope of application	Clarification: For goods that are to be marketed as QS goods, service providers outside the company must be eligible for delivery into the QS system. Moreover, the certification must be maintained on a permanent basis.	01.01.2026
3.2.2 Chemical soil decontamination	Editorial adjustments: "Where possible, non-chemical (e.g. thermal) methods should be preferred" instead of "Thermal methods are to be preferred.", and documentation of "area of application" instead of "The application of chemical soil decontamination must be justified."	01.01.2026
3.4.7 Risk assessment for organic fertilisers	Clarification: The risk assessment is not needed if only fermentation substrate is applied as organic fertiliser in accordance with → 3.4.10 <i>Use of fermentation substrates</i>	01.01.2026
3.4.8 [K.O.] Application of farm-produced fertiliser from animal origin	Clarification: regarding the application in potatoes and strawberries	01.01.2026
3.5.15 [K.O.] Disposal of empty containers	Clarification: Empty containers are stored "inaccessible for third parties" (instead of in a "lockable place").	01.01.2026
3.5.16 [K.O.] Rinsing of empty containers	Clarification: No written instructions on the procedure for rinsing need to be available.	01.01.2026
3.10.7 [K.O.] Inspection of out-going goods	Removal of the first paragraph, as it is already covered by 3.10.3 and 3.10.6.	01.01.2026
3.10.8 Handling of returns	Clarification: If returns can be ruled out entirely (e.g. due to the marketing channel or the goods marketed), no regulation for processing returns needs to be in place.	01.01.2026
4.1.10 Handling of glass and hard plastic	Migration: Requirement 4.1.10 included in requirement 4.1.4	01.01.2026
7.1.2 [K.O.] Protective clothing and equipment, user protection	Duplication removed: "Also other protective equipment must be used according to the manufacturer's specifications."	01.01.2026

Guideline
Production Fruit, Vegetables, Potatoes

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