



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



**QS. Quality  
Scheme for Food.**

## Press release

### **Vegaplan consolidates cooperation with German Quality Assurance Scheme QS**

Vegaplan.be, owner of the Belgian specifications book ICQM, and the German QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH have ratified their mutual agreement by a renewal of the contract agreement signed in 2007. Since, the audit system of both organizations was considered interchangeable based on mutual recognition. However, there was no interchangeability of the residue monitoring plans. That has changed now.

The QS quality scheme for food defines strict, evolving criteria in all links of the supply chain, from production till distribution. The system is applicable for meat, meat products, fruit, vegetables, potatoes and arable crops. More than 130.000 companies from the sectors feed, agriculture and horticulture, slaughterhouses, wholesale and retail are affiliated. Over 10.000 farmers are certified for the scope potatoes, fruit and vegetables.

The ICQM Standard originates from the request to comply with extralegal requirements from the buyers apart from the legal requirements from the Federal Agency for Safety in the Food Chain. The Standard is applicable for the primary production of potatoes, vegetables, fruit, cereals, fodder crops, tobacco, hops, chicory, seeds, potato-seeds and sugar beet; and direct sales of it to the customer. At this moment 13.079 farmers possess an ICQM certificate of which 8.452 have a certificate for the scope potatoes, fruit and vegetables.

Thanks to the new contract, the residue monitoring systems of the Union of Belgian Auctionmarkets (VBT) and the Belgian organization of potato traders and processors (Belgapom) is considered equivalent to the QS residue monitoring system at farm level. In this way Belgian farmers don't need to perform extra residue analysis at their company in order to be able to export produce to the German QS System. From now on, the requirements for delivery to Germany are a valid ICQM certificate and sampling/residue monitoring at the level of Belgapom/VBT.

Apart from mutual recognition of the residue monitoring system, there is also an extension of the scope of the agreement. Where before only vegetables and fruit for the fresh market could be exported; now also potatoes for consumption are eligible. This makes it easier for Belgian and German growers to export their potatoes, fruit and vegetables to Germany and Belgium respectively. Both quality schemes also cooperate in the European Platform for fruits and vegetables (A-NET) where the first meeting took place in February during the Fruit Logistica 2011. Representatives of various European quality schemes agreed to use this platform for a regular exchange of experiences.

Bonn, 11.04.2011

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*QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH is a scheme owner and responsible for the QS scheme for foodstuffs. The standards defined by QS specify strict, traceable production criteria for all stages of the value-added chain, from the producer to the retailer. The cross-stage monitoring of these criteria, along with the traceability of the agricultural products and the foodstuffs made using these products are characteristic of the system. More than 23,100 companies in the fruit, vegetable, potato sector have decided in favor of participation in the QS scheme for foodstuffs.*

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