

# **Inspection System Animal Welfare**

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# 1 Fundamentals

As part of the animal welfare initiative "Initiative Tierwohl" companies and associations from agriculture, the meat sector and grocery retail have together made it their objective to promote more humane and more sustainable meat production. With the development of a comprehensive programme to promote and record animal welfare at the agricultural production level through to slaughter and the operation of the Animal Welfare Initiative as an industry solution, they have taken a significant step towards greater animal welfare in livestock farming.

This animal welfare initiative is supported and funded by the **Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Tierwohls in der Nutztierhaltung mbH** [Company for the Promotion of Animal Welfare in Livestock Production Ltd.] - hereinafter referred to as the "**sponsoring company**"). The company **QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH** [QS Quality and Safety Ltd.] - hereinafter referred to as "**QS**") has been commissioned by the sponsoring company to safeguard the rights and obligations arising from the basic agreement on neutral control activities concluded between the certification body and the sponsoring company. On the basis of this, QS shall exclusively be responsible for the implementation of the regulations detailed in this document on behalf of the sponsoring company.

Compliance with the requirements defined in the animal welfare initiative is monitored by neutral certification bodies. They carry out independent checks in accordance with the programme manual, in particular the existing inspection system.

## 1.1 Scope

Details of the following requirements and rules are provided in this Inspection System information:

- Requirements for certification bodies
- Requirements for auditors and releasing persons
- Rules for independent monitoring
- Measures under the scheme integrity system (SIKS)

These requirements may be updated at any time at the sole responsibility of the sponsoring company.

The companies participating in the Animal Welfare Initiative are active in agriculture (cattle, pigs, poultry) and the meat sector. In this document, the term "meat sector" refers to companies and businesses involved in the production and marketing of meat and meat products at the ITW. These include companies from the slaughtering, cutting, processing, meat wholesale, brokers and distribution companies.

# 2 Requirements for certification bodies

Scheme participants are monitored by independent certification bodies that have been approved by the sponsoring company subsequent to appropriate checks. On licensing approval the certification body and the sponsoring company sign a basic agreement on neutral control activities as part of the animal welfare initiative **Initiative Tierwohl**.

To apply for the approval of an auditor for the Animal Welfare Initiative, the certification body uses the registration form provided by the supporting organisation (see Annex 6.1).

Compliance with the requirements detailed below are prerequisites for the approval of certification bodies.

## 2.1 Approval of a certification body

### 2.1.1 Accreditation

The certification body must have experience of conducting certifications in the field of agricultural livestock production. They must already be accredited for a scope in the field of agricultural livestock production in accordance with DIN EN

ISO/IEC 17065. Within the framework of the approval process the sponsoring company shall decide whether the evidence of accreditation provided by the certification body can be recognised.

A direct accreditation in accordance with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 for the scope "Animal Welfare" is currently not required. Nevertheless, the certification body undertakes to take the guidelines of the aforementioned standards into consideration within the framework of its activities for the animal welfare initiative ***Initiative Tierwohl***.

### **2.1.2 Independence and objectivity**

The certification body shall guarantee to conduct audits independently and objectively. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, the certification body and the auditors commissioned

- May not conduct audits for any company with which they have a contractual relationship that would be an obstacle to conducting an independent and objective inspection. The conducting of a preliminary audit to check whether the company qualifies for certification may only be conducted once in the period prior to the implementation date stipulated by the operation on the occasion of initial licensing approval.
- May not perform audits for companies for which it is currently providing consultancy, training, supervisory or administrative services or has done so within the past 24 months.
- May not maintain any affiliations under company law or staff interrelationships with standards bodies if it can be assumed that these affiliations and interrelationships jeopardise or may jeopardise the independence of the certifying body along with the objectivity of the certification.
- May not perform any coordinator functions parallel to its work for the animal welfare initiative ***Initiative Tierwohl***.
- May only use check lists provided by the sponsoring company for the purpose of conducting animal welfare audits. The use of different check lists shall be with the proviso that the prior consent of the sponsoring company is obtained.

Upon request, proof is to be provided to the sponsoring company in which manner compliance with the aforementioned guidelines is guaranteed. Disregard of the aforementioned principles may result in extraordinary termination of the basic agreement.

### **2.1.3 Organization and responsibilities**

The certification body shall appoint a senior person and a deputy vis-a-vis the sponsoring company to act as the responsible contact for all activities within the framework of the animal welfare initiative. At the same time the certification body shall apply to the sponsoring company for the authorisation of at least one auditor and one releasing person for one of the following levels of licensing:

- Agriculture pigs
- Agriculture poultry
- Agriculture cattle
- Meat sector

### **2.1.4 The 4-eyes principle and release of audit reports in the database**

The certification body must ensure, that the decision regarding certification and the release of audit reports is reached by at least one qualified person (releasing person) who did not conduct the conformity assessment (4-eyes principle). The approval as a releasing person shall be given by the sponsoring company.

After a certification decision has been made, the audit report is to be released in the database. The certification body shall internally create the technical prerequisites to ensure problem-free data capture in the sponsoring company's database.

### **2.1.5 Crisis management**

The certification body must immediately inform the sponsoring company with regard to critical events, as well as the competent authorities - if there is a legal obligation to do so. Furthermore, the certification body is obligated to support

the sponsoring company in establishing the facts of the crisis. To this end the certification body must ensure that it gains access to the operation premises and access to all requisite documents belonging to the participating operation.

The certification body has to establish an own documented crisis management, which should be verified regularly (e.g. emergency phone numbers to ensure reachability, flow charts).

The certification body shall nominate a crisis officer vis-a-vis the sponsoring company (including telephone contact details) who shall also be reachable outside of business hours.

#### **2.1.6 Handling of documents**

The certification body is obligated to document the conduct and the results of audits in a detailed and complete manner in order to allow access to these at all times. The records must be kept in accordance with the legal retention periods for the purpose of due diligence and burden of proof.

The records shall be handled in such a manner that the confidentiality of the processes described therein and data protection are guaranteed at all times.

#### **2.1.7 Customer satisfaction analysis, management of complaints and objections**

The certification body must determine the quality of its work by means of customer satisfaction analyses.

In accordance with the complaints procedure required by DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065, the certification body must have a documented procedure to handle complaints and objections. If an animal welfare audit has been assessed with "failed" the participating company can raise a well-founded complaint or a well-founded objection against the certification body with regard to the certification decision within 10 days after being informed by the sponsoring company about the failure. The certification body has to ensure that complaints and objections are finally processed within 30 days after their receipt at the certification body.

The certification body informs the sponsoring company immediately and in written form about the receipt as well as about its final decision if a complaint or objection procedure is raised. In case of a complaint or objection, the certification body must at least be able to provide the documentation of the measures introduced and the evidence of their implementation towards the sponsoring company.

#### **2.1.8 Access authority and right to inspect documents**

The sponsoring company reserves the right to dispatch commissioned persons/organisations to check compliance with the certification requirements and rules. The certification body is obliged to grant the sponsoring company or the persons/organisations commissioned by the same access to all documents relating to its activities within the framework of the animal welfare initiative *Initiative Tierwohl*.

The sponsoring company or persons/organisations commissioned by the same, may verify the work of the certification body for the animal welfare initiative at any time within the scope of additional or witness audits. The certification body must ensure that a witness audit can be conducted in every business/operation to be audited.

## **2.2 Maintenance of certification body approval**

In order to maintain certification body approval status, the following points are to be met:

- Evidence of at least 20 ITW-audits per year and per stage of approval (only for agriculture).
- The certification body must have at least one approved releasing person per stage of approval.
- The certification body shall have at least one approved auditor per stage of approval.
- One official from the certification body shall attend at least one of the information events conducted by the sponsoring company per year.

## 2.3 Withdrawal of certification body approval

Certification body approval shall be withdrawn in cases of improper work, infringements of the programme manual or the requirements of the inspection system or lack of cooperation with the sponsoring company.

Infringements against the basic agreement on neutral control activities as part of the animal welfare initiative **Initiative Tierwohl** shall result in sanctions and the possible exclusion of the certification body. Both in the event of ordinary or extraordinary termination, and in the case of a formal warning, the sponsoring company has the right to notify all scheme participants who have concluded contracts with the certification body within the framework of the animal welfare initiative of said termination or warning.

## 3 Requirements for auditors and releasing persons

Auditors and releasing persons are approved by the sponsoring company after appropriate verification/examination. Auditors check the compliance with animal welfare requirements on site, which means that their work is of especially great importance. Which prerequisites have to be met for approval as an auditor or releasing person is explained in the following chapters.

In order to apply for the approval of an auditor or a certifying person for the Animal Welfare Initiative, the certification body uses the registration forms provided by the sponsoring company (see Annexes 6.2 and 6.3). Consent for the collection and storage of personal data is required for approval in the animal welfare initiative.

### 3.1 Approval of an auditor

An auditor is a qualified expert for the level at which he is approved. In addition, there are additional rules and defined auditing principles to be adhered to in accordance with DIN EN ISO 19011.

The certification bodies are obligated to ensure that auditors have appropriate professional qualifications and that they only deploy auditors in line with their approval, professional qualification and knowledge or skills.

Compliance with the requirements detailed in the following constitutes the prerequisites for approval. The sponsoring company reserves the right to check the suitability of the auditor by means of additional **measures**.

#### 3.1.1 Qualification

The auditor shall demonstrate specialist knowledge and skills in the context of the standards DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 and DIN EN ISO 19011. Fundamentally, the following are required:

- Profound product and process knowledge in agricultural livestock production/farming or meat sector
- In-depth knowledge of agricultural, animal protection and food legislation
- Command of auditing techniques
- Comprehensive knowledge of the programme manual of the Animal Welfare Initiative **Initiative Tierwohl**

Proof of attainment of one of the following professional qualifications is required:

For auditors in agricultural livestock production:

- Trained farmer
- Graduate of Agricultural Sciences (German Diplom/Master/Bachelor)
- Graduate of Agricultural Engineering, certified farmer, agricultural economist
- Master of agriculture
- Veterinarian

In each case with documented knowledge of agricultural

- pig production for approval stage agriculture pig



- poultry production for approval stage agriculture poultry
- cattle production for approval stage agriculture cattle

#### For auditors in meat sector:

- Trained Butcher
- Graduate of Food Technology/ Food Chemistry, Oecotrophology (German Diplom/Master/Bachelor)
- Trained Food Technologist
- Veterinarian

In addition to professional qualifications, proof of at least **one** year's working experience (**full-time**) in livestock production or meat sector is required.

A lack of technical qualification **or** sector-specific professional experience can be replaced by suitable training measures or sector-specific audit experience. This must be agreed with the sponsoring company in each individual case. The sponsoring company reserves the right to check the success of the measures (e.g. by accompanying audits). Costs arising from this are to be borne by the certification body.

### **3.1.2 Auditor course**

New approval as an auditor is only possible if auditor training of at least three days duration can be evidenced. Topics such as the Fundamentals of Quality Management, DIN EN ISO 9001:2008, DIN EN ISO 19011 and DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065, Communication and Auditing Techniques should have covered in the course. It is the responsibility of the certification body to verify applicants' specialist knowledge and skills.

### **3.1.3 Internal training by the certification body**

Prior to approval as auditor evidence of participation in an internal training measure by the certification body must be provided. The contents of the internal training in particular are the regulations contained in the programme manual and in this inspection system. In addition, there shall be an introduction to the database and the compilation of audit reports.

The furnishing of proof of participation in an internal training measure to the sponsoring company is a prerequisite for the registration of the auditor in a training event offered by the sponsoring company.

⇒ Chapter 3.1.5 Training by the sponsoring company

### **3.1.4 Audit experience**

Proof of sector-specific audit experience must be provided when applying for approval as an auditor.

For an approval in agricultural livestock production, the sponsoring company requires proof of at least 20 independently conducted audits at livestock farms for pig or poultry production in the last 24 months (see Annex 6.5).

For an approval in the meat sector, the auditing experience required according to the requirements of the QS scheme must be proven. A valid auditor approval in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by QS is sufficient in this respect.

The sponsoring company shall decide with regard to acceptance of the audits submitted.

### **3.1.5 Training by the sponsoring company**

For an approval in agricultural livestock production, the auditor must attend a training event held by the sponsoring company and pass a test prior to approval. If an auditor fails the test for approval three times in a row, he or she may permanently be ineligible for ITW approval.

Since as part of the animal welfare initiative, audits requirements are also reviewed that are the subject of checks as part of the QS scheme (basic requirements), it is necessary that auditors also receive training with regard to these. If there is no available auditor approval for the corresponding stage of approval within the QS scheme (Agriculture Pig/

Agriculture Poultry/ Agriculture Cattle) it shall also be necessary - in addition to participating in a training measure conducted by the sponsoring company - to provide proof of successful participation in a corresponding stage-specific QS training measure (including test).

For an approval in the meat sector, proof must be provided of the training participation required in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme. A valid auditor approval in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by QS is sufficient in this respect.

### **3.1.6 Witness audit by the sponsoring company (only for agriculture)**

After the requirements listed under 3.1.1 to 3.1.5 have been met and prior to approval can be awarded by the sponsoring company, at least one independent animal welfare audit is to be conducted for an approval in agricultural livestock production. This is accompanied by auditors commissioned by the sponsoring company. For organisational coordination of the witness audit the certification body shall contact the sponsoring company on its own initiative. **The sponsoring company reserves the right to decide on the suitability of a location selected by the certification body for this purpose.** The costs for conducting the witness audit shall be borne by the certification body and these shall be invoiced by the sponsoring company.

## **3.2 Maintenance of auditor approval**

### **3.2.1 Proof of minimum number of audits and witness audits**

In order to maintain approval in agricultural livestock production, proof of 40 animal welfare audits in the last 24 months is required for the respective approval stage (record date is the 30<sup>th</sup> June of every year). This shall not apply if the auditor is approved for less than 24 months according to the record date.

In order to maintain the approval in the meat sector, the minimum number of audits required according to the requirements of the QS scheme must be demonstrated. A valid auditor approval in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect.

### **3.2.2 Proof of witness audits**

The qualification of the auditors in agricultural livestock production must be checked by the certification body at least every two years by means of accompanying ITW audits. The witness audit must be conducted by qualified persons (usually responsible employees of the certification body), who ensure an objective assessment of the audit performance. The implementation of witness audits must be documented and the results must be proven to the sponsoring company upon request.

For the auditors in agricultural livestock production, the certification body shall also ensure that each approved auditor is witnessed by a person/organisation appointed by the sponsoring company at least every two years in accordance with its approval levels. The certification body will contact the sponsoring company without being asked to do so for organisational coordination. **The sponsoring organization reserves the right to decide on the suitability of a location selected by the certification body for this purpose.** The costs of the accompanying audit shall be borne by the certification body and will be invoiced to it by the sponsoring company.

In order to maintain the approval in the meat sector, the number of witness audits required according to the requirements of the QS scheme must be proven. A valid auditor approval in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect.

### **3.2.3 Evidence of internal training by the certification body**

To maintain approval proof is required of annual participation in at least one internal training measure about the animal welfare initiative provided by the certification body. If an auditor has approval with various certification bodies

authorised by the sponsoring company, the certification body shall ensure through suitable proof that the auditor possibly participated in an appropriate training measure at another certification body.

In the annual internal training, the subjects to be covered should - amongst other things - include current topics and relevant innovations regarding the animal welfare initiative and the normative documents.

### **3.3 Withdrawal of auditor approval**

The sponsoring company can withdraw the approval of an auditor, if the requirements for maintenance of auditor approval, described in chapter 3.2, are not fulfilled. Notwithstanding this, the sponsoring company may also temporarily suspend or permanently cancel an auditor's approval for objective reasons.

Furthermore, auditors can be obligated to attend supplementary training measures as soon as there is an indication for insufficient qualifications. In addition, the sponsoring company may determine that further measures have to be implemented (such as witness, parallel or special audits). Any costs that may arise here are to be borne by the certification body.

The rules of sanction procedure and sanction committee procedure are applicable in accordance with the Basic agreement on Neutral Control Activities in the Animal Welfare Initiative "*Initiative Tierwohl*".

### **3.4 Requirements for releasing persons**

Releasing persons decide about the release of audit reports and the respective certification.

⇒ 2.1.4 The 4-eyes principle and release of audit reports in the database

#### **3.4.1 Qualification**

The approval as releasing person requires:

- Proof of successfully completed agricultural or food-related training
- Sound knowledge of quality management, as well as of the relevant standards and legal regulations

In exceptional circumstances, the sponsoring company may recognize a qualification other than those mentioned above after evaluation.

#### **3.4.2 Experience in audit releases (only for agriculture)**

When applying for approval as a releasing person for agricultural livestock production, proof of sector-specific experience in the release of audit reports for livestock farms must be provided. Before approval the release of 20 audit reports (in the last 24 months) must be demonstrated at the respective stage of approval (QS audits or ITW-approved standards).

#### **3.4.3 Internal training by the certification body**

Evidence of participation in an internal training measure by the certification body must be provided prior to approval as releasing person. The contents of the internal training in particular are the regulations contained in the programme manual and in this inspection system. In addition, there shall be an introduction to the database.

The furnishing of proof of participation in an internal training measure to the sponsoring company is a prerequisite for the registration of the releasing person in a training event offered by the sponsoring company (only for agriculture).

#### **3.4.4 Training by the sponsoring company**

In order to be approved as a releasing person in agricultural livestock production, the person must, for each level of approval applied for, participate in a training event on animal welfare initiative conducted by the sponsoring company and pass a test. If the test is not passed three times in a row, a releasing person is permanently ineligible for animal welfare approval.

If the approval as releasing person is applied for by an auditor already approved for the respective scopes, the test for approval is omitted.

If there is no available approval as releasing person for the corresponding stage of approval within the QS scheme (Agriculture Pig/ Poultry/ Cattle) it shall also be necessary - in addition to participating in a training measure conducted by the sponsoring company - to provide proof of successful participation in a corresponding stage-specific QS training measure (including test).

For the approval as a releasing person in the meat sector, the training course participation required in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme must be proven. A valid approval as a releasing person in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect.

### **3.4.5 Witness audits (only for agriculture)**

Prior to approval by the sponsoring company, an approving person in the agricultural livestock production must accompany at least one ITW audit, unless a separate approval as an animal welfare auditor at the corresponding approval level is available.

The performance of witness audits must be documented and proven to the sponsoring company in the approval procedure.

## **3.5 Maintenance of the approval as releasing person**

### **3.5.1 Proof of minimum number of audit releases**

In order to maintain the approval as a releasing person in agricultural livestock production, the release of 40 audits (of which at least 50% ITW audits) in the last 24 months must be proven for the respective approval level (record date is 30 June of each year). This shall not apply if the releasing person is approved for less than 24 months according to the record date.

In order to maintain the approval as a releasing person in the meat sector, the number of released audit reports required according to the requirements of the QS scheme must be proven. A valid approval as a releasing person in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect.

### **3.5.2 Witness audits**

For the maintenance of the approval as a releasing person in agricultural livestock production, at least two ITW audits per calendar year and approval level have to be accompanied, if there is no own approval as an animal welfare auditor in the corresponding approval level.

In order to maintain the approval as a releasing person in the meat sector, the number of witness audits required according to the requirements of the QS scheme must be proven. A valid approval as a releasing person in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect.

The performance of witness audits must be documented and, upon request, proven to the sponsoring company.

## **4 Rules for independent inspection**

### **4.1 Audits**

A certification body approved by the sponsoring company and appointed by the coordinator or company in the meat sector shall monitor implementation of the requirements by means of audits (ITW audits). The coordinator or company in the meat sector and certification body shall conclude a written agreement in this regard. The certification body is

recommended to publish the costs of audits. A list of certification bodies with animal welfare initiative approval is published on the sponsoring company's homepage.

The auditing of agricultural farm within the framework of the animal welfare initiative **Initiative Tierwohl** shall be on an unannounced basis. In order to ensure that a suitable person is available to provide information during the programme and the confirmation audit (see chapter 4.1.1) it will be possible, to inform the business operation ahead of time. At the very earliest, the notification may be made 24 hours beforehand (1 working day; a Saturday counts as a working day, unless the company has agreed otherwise in writing during operating hours). The relevant coordinator may only be informed simultaneously of the pending, unannounced audit. Combined audits involving other standards are possible provided that all parts of the combined audit are conducted on an unannounced basis.

Stock checks are conducted completely unannounced (see chapter 5.1).

Audits of companies in the meat sector are usually announced.

The time between two audits (programme and confirmation audit) within a single certification cycle must be at least three months.

Program and confirmation audits in agricultural livestock production may be performed at a single site a maximum of three times in succession by the same auditor. **This does not apply to additional confirmation audits according to chapter 4.5.** The count of the consecutive number of audits shall not be interrupted by other audits being conducted (incl. **additional confirmation audits**). This requirement does not apply to auditing in the meat sector.

If programme and confirmation audits in agricultural livestock production are conducted on the same day during a transition between different programme phases, the number of audits already conducted shall only increase by one audit.

If an audit is not conducted by its due date or is not entered and released in the sponsoring company's database on time, the operation's payment entitlement shall be suspended. The sponsoring company shall decide with regard to the course of further action on application by the certification body.

Check lists prescribed by the sponsoring company shall be used in all animal welfare audits. The audit results shall be documented in an audit report and entered and released in the sponsoring company's database by the certification body.

#### 4.1.1 Auditing of agricultural farms

During the certification period the following audits shall be performed:

- One **programme audit** after registration or audit approval
- Two **confirmation** audits, in the form
  - a concluding confirmation audit at the end of the certificate term ( $\leq$  three months before certificate expiry)
  - a further confirmation audit in the middle of the certification period (within the period of half the certificate period +/- three months) if the certification period is at least 18 months.
- **Stock checks:**
  - **Poultry and Pig:** one stock check per 12 months of certificate period if the remaining certificate period is at least six months (see chapter 5.1)
  - **Cattle:** one stock check during the certificate period, if the remaining certificate period is at least six months (see chapter 5.1).

In addition, in the period from 1 April to 31 March of the following year, additional inventory checks are to be

carried out on 3% of the farms approved by the ITW. The certification bodies select the farms on a risk-oriented basis.

### **Programme audit**

As part of a programme audit it is verified whether an operation meets the technical, organisational and content-related requirements for participation. It serves as a basis for certification.

The certification body shall document in the audit report to what extent the initiative criteria are being implemented.

### **Confirmation audit**

The implementation of the documented and certified requirements is checked in the middle of the certificate period in an unannounced confirmation audit, provided that the certificate period is at least 18 months. The period to be used for the confirmation audit is three months before or after the middle of the certificate's validity period.

Within the last two months prior to the end of certificate validity the ultimate confirmation audit is conducted for final verification of the payment entitlement. In this case, the confirmation audit may be conducted at the same time or within a maximum of one day of a repeated programme audit to obtain follow-on certification.

If the certification period is valid for less than 18 months, only a final confirmation audit will take place.

Should a location's participation end before the expiry of the certificate validity, a confirmation audit shall be conducted within three months before or two weeks after the termination, to finally verify the entitlement to payments.

It has to be ensured that the final confirmation audit is conducted while the location is keeping livestock (e.g. termination of business or transfer of an enterprise). If the final confirmation audit is not conducted accordingly, the sponsoring company decides about further measures. The last coordinator allocated to the location shall ensure that this confirmation audit is conducted. The criteria determined by the livestock producer and monitored by the certification body shall be implemented until the confirmation audit has finally been conducted.

### **Stock checks**

Stock checks are part of the Scheme Integrity System of the Animal Welfare Initiative and are further explained in chapter 5.1.

#### **4.1.2 Auditing of companies in the meat sector**

At the participating locations of the companies in the meat industry, an ITW audit takes place per year of participation, regardless of whether the same goods with the Animal Welfare Initiative seal are produced, traded or stored. This serves to verify the flow of goods relevant to ensuring their identity. The audit is usually announced in advance.

The decision on the audit result (see chapter 4.3.3) will be made at the latest four weeks after the audit has been conducted. Within this period, the audit must be entered and released by the certification body in the database of the sponsoring company. Otherwise the sponsoring company decides on the further procedure.

#### **4.1.3 Procedure on participant rejection of an unannounced audit**

If a participant refuses the conduct of an audit, the certification body decides whether the refusal is justified. The decision has to be documented and explained to the sponsoring company on request.

Given an unjustified refusal, the participant has to be informed immediately in writing of the possible consequences of an unjustified refusal (possible loss of payment entitlement, repayment of animal welfare payments, contractual penalty).

Upon request, proof that the appropriate information has been sent must be shown to the sponsoring company.

In case of an unjustified refusal the certification body must save the audit on the animal welfare database together with a General-K.O. comment.

## 4.2 Conducting of audits

The content basis for an audit is formed by the rules and requirements, which are defined in the programme manual as amended and selected specifically for each location. This inspection system in conjunction with the appropriate check lists is to be taken into account in particular. The check lists for conducting animal welfare audits can be downloaded from the sponsoring company database. Admission of the location to the animal welfare initiative by the sponsoring company is the prerequisite for conducting an animal welfare audit.

Audits should be conducted in the national language of the company to be audited. If it is not possible to carry out the audit in the national language, the certification body and the company to be audited shall reach a clear written agreement on the language in which the audit and the certification process are to be carried out. The certification body shall ensure that the auditor to be engaged has sufficient knowledge of the agreed audit language. If necessary, an independent interpreter shall be involved. If necessary, the documents to be audited shall be translated independently, ideally already in the run-up to the audit. The language skills of the auditor or, if applicable, interpreter are to be proven to the sponsoring company upon request (e.g. qualified language certificates, commissioning of an interpreter, curriculum vitae).

### 4.2.1 Audit preparation

The organisational preparation of an audit includes in particular:

- Verification of the location's master data in the sponsoring company database (to match in audit).
- Knowledge of the company-specific requirements selected and results of previous audits if required.
- Review of the check lists and other forms for accuracy and completeness and checking the functionality of inspection equipment.

### 4.2.2 On-site audits

For conducting an on-site audit, it has to be ensured that livestock is being kept at the respective location at the time of the audit or that the relevant processes can be comprehensively evaluated at the time of the audit (audits of companies in the meat sector)

An on-site audit includes the following sub-sections:

- Introductory discussion in which the procedure, categorisation of evaluations and the audit schedule are explained.
- Recording and assessment of the implementation of the selected criteria in operational practice.
- Document checking
- Identification of errors and deviations
- Documentation of evaluations and deviations in the audit report.
- If necessary, agreements on corrective actions
- Concluding meeting in which the evaluations and the preliminary result are discussed with the contact in the operation.

Single documents, which cannot be presented during the document checking, can be submitted by the livestock producer/site manager immediately after the audit (max. three days) towards the auditor or certification body, without a devaluation in the audit report. Condition for this procedure is, that the livestock producer/site manager can plausibly explain towards the auditor, that the respective documents are existing and only currently not available (e.g. documents cannot be found). It is not possible to hand in later documents for such criteria, which are determined as K.O. criteria within the QS scheme as well as for documents for the calculation of the space allowance in poultry farming.

## 4.3 Audit report

The audit report contains information on the operation, the audited scope as well as evaluations of the inspected requirements and the preliminary audit result. It must be prepared by the auditor or an employee of the certification body. The audit report is to be signed by the contact person from the audited operation upon conclusion of the audit. A copy of the signed audit report shall remain within the audited operation. In the case of digitally prepared and signed reports, an electronic copy must be sent immediately to the audited operation.

Should amendments be necessary following checking of the report by the certification body, the certification body shall inform the operation of this immediately and in writing.

Prior to entering the audit report at the latest, the certification body /the auditor shall check in the sponsoring company database whether the operation's master data required for the audit report have been entered correctly. If the master data are correct, the audit report shall be entered into the database and released. Otherwise, the certification body shall contact the responsible coordinator/slaughterhouse (marketing company) for further clarification.

### 4.3.1 Evaluations

The evaluation of the individual requirements is based on the degree of fulfilment.

Tab. 1: Evaluation based on the degree of compliance

Evaluation	Degree of fulfilment
A	The requirement is fully met (without deviation)
C	The requirement is partially met (minor deviation)
K.O.	The requirement is not fulfilled (serious deviation)
E (only for agriculture)	The requirement is not applicable

Detailed descriptions of the facts are to be noted in the audit report and substantiated with suitable evidence (e.g. photos, copies) regarding all requirements that have not been awarded an "A" rating or for which corrective actions need to be implemented. The evidence shall be provided to the sponsoring company upon request.

For all requirements marked with an asterisk (\*), the evidence and/or test items used to control compliance shall be stated independently of the assessment (e.g. measured values, calculation results, random samples).

For C-evaluations, the implementation of corrective actions must be agreed with deadlines (see chapter 4.3.2). In animal husbandry establishments C-evaluations can only be awarded for basic criteria.

Should the audit be abandoned or refused by the operation, a general K.O. shall be issued. The location has to be informed immediately in writing about the possible consequences of unjustified abandonment or refusal by handing over an explanatory written notice. Basically, an audit is not to be terminated prematurely by the auditor (e.g. in case of an early K.O. evaluation during the audit).

### 4.3.2 Corrective actions

For C-evaluations, the definition of corrective actions is required. For this purpose, the audited company proposes appropriate corrective actions to the auditor, including appropriate deadlines. All corrective actions have to be **implemented by the participating company without delay** and to be proven towards the certification body.



Therefore, the deadline for the implementation of the corrective actions has to be kept as short as possible. The implementation of corrective actions has to be checked by the certification body.

The determination of corrective actions comprises the following steps:

- Determination of causes
- Rectification of causes
- Suitable measures to prevent a recurrence of the problems (preventive measures)
- Documentation of the implemented measures

In the action plan, the evaluations are documented with the corresponding corrective measures including deadlines.

Audit reports containing corrective actions have to be entered and released in the database **within two working days**.

### **Blocking of locations/suspension from animal welfare payment**

If corrective actions have been agreed upon in an audit **for livestock farms**, the location will be blocked by the release of the audit report. Furthermore, the payment entitlement is withdrawn. The location will get unblocked and regain its payment entitlement as soon as the certification body confirms the implementation of the agreed corrective actions in the database of the sponsoring company by entering the status "corrected".

If the implementation of corrective actions is not conducted appropriately and on time, it also has to be administrated due to the certification body in the database of the sponsoring company accordingly and the granted certification needs to be withdrawn. The sponsoring company is immediately informed regarding this issue by the certification body and decides about further measures (e.g. permanent withdrawal of payment entitlement, repayment of animal welfare payments, implementation of a contractual penalty).

The 4-eyes principle has to be applied when modifying the status of corrective actions by the certification body.

#### **4.3.3 Audit result**

The preliminary audit result is to be given immediately to the contact person at the participating operation by handing over a copy of the audit report.

The audit has been **passed** if there is no K.O. assessment (incl. general KO).

The audit has been **passed with reservation** if no requirement was rated "K.O." (incl. general KO) and a C rating was assigned in at least one requirement and a corrective action was agreed. As soon as all corrective actions of an audit report in the database of the Animal Welfare Initiative have been marked as "corrected", the status of the audit report changes into "passed". If instead a corrective action has been marked as "not corrected", the audit will be "failed".

The audit is **failed** if at least for one requirement a "K.O."-evaluation (incl. general KO). has been assigned.

Audits, which are failed or passed with reservation have to be entered and released by the certification body in the database of the sponsoring company **within two working days**. The sponsoring company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken, in case of a failed audit (e.g. permanent withdrawal of payment entitlement, repayment of animal welfare payments, implementation of a contractual penalty).

Participants who fail to implement the requirements documented and certified in the programme audit are obligated to return the certificate to the certification body immediately.

The sponsoring company and the body responsible for standards for certified quality assurance (QS scheme) shall exchange information relevant to achieving the objectives of this initiative. This applies in particular with regard to information concerning animal welfare violations established in relation to participating livestock producers. Accordingly,

certification bodies are required to consider whether deviations identified in the audit may have an impact on certification issued by them under a different programme/standard. The results of the inspection must be documented and presented to the sponsoring company upon request. By participating in the Animal Welfare Initiative, participants expressly agree to these regulations.

## **4.4 Granting, maintenance and withdrawal of certification (only for agriculture)**

### **4.4.1 Certification process**

The certification body is responsible for the granting, maintenance and withdrawal of certification.

Decisions regarding certification shall be made at the latest four weeks after the audit has been conducted. Within this time limit the certification body shall have entered and released the audit in the sponsoring company database. Otherwise the audit shall lapse. The sponsoring company shall decide with regard to any further action.

### **4.4.2 Issue of certificates and confirmations**

On the basis of a successful certification process, the certification body may issue a certificate for the companies of agricultural livestock production. The audit date, certification decision date and the expiry of certificate validity shall be noted on all certificates. When issuing certificates, the certification body shall generally ensure that the information contained in the certificate agrees with the data stored in the sponsoring company database. Design and content of the certificate must comply with the specifications of the sample certificates (see Annex 6.4).

For participating companies in the meat sector, the certification body can issue a confirmation based on a passed audit. The design and content of the confirmation must comply with the specifications of the sample confirmation (see Annex 6.4).

Certificates and confirmations do not allow a conclusion about payment entitlements (animal welfare subsidy) or the approval of an operation for the animal welfare initiative. Considering the payment entitlements and the approval of an operation, only the information within the database of the sponsoring company is binding.

### **4.4.3 Validity of certification**

The validity of certification of the companies of agricultural livestock production commences on the date of the certification decision. The beginning of the validity of certification in the animal welfare initiative is determined by the date when the programme audit was released in the database of the sponsoring company. The duration of the certification (certification period) is calculated on the basis of the date of release of the programme audit plus a time interval of three years, but exists for companies in agricultural pig and poultry production until 30 June 2024 at the latest and for companies in agricultural cattle production until 30 June 2025 at the latest.

In case of a repeated programme audit to obtain follow-up certification the new certification period is calculated from the end of the previous certification provided the repeated programme audit is conducted two months prior to the expiry of the present certification at the earliest.

The participation of companies in the meat sector begins with the signing of a contract with the sponsoring company and is not restricted to the duration of a program.

### **4.4.4 Withdrawal of certification**

Certification shall be withdrawn given:

- Serious violations of the programme manual.
- Exclusion of the company/operation.
- Termination of the agreement between the certification body and the sponsoring company.

- Termination of the agreement between the coordinator and the sponsoring company.
- Termination of the declaration of participation and authority between the coordinator and the participating operation.
- Change of certification body by participating operation or coordinator.

The certification body and the sponsoring company shall inform each other with regard to exclusion, termination or certification withdrawal.

#### **4.5 Conduction of additional audits**

Given changes of ownership, structure or staff within the responsible management of the operation or given other changes relevant to certification, the certification body decides about the conduct of an additional confirmation audit (agriculture) or an additional ITW-Audit (meat sector) for the purpose of maintaining certification.

Livestock producers are obligated to inform immediately the certification body responsible for the operation as well as the responsible coordinator with regard to any significant operational changes that may jeopardise the maintenance of certification. If requisite information is not passed on by the livestock producer, entitlement to payments may be forfeited by the livestock producer.

The regulations apply analogously to companies in the meat sector. If necessary, information is not passed on by the company, a contractual penalty may be initiated.

#### **4.6 Change of certification body**

In the event of a change of certification body by the coordinator, the outgoing certification body is obligated to pass on directly to the newly selected certification body all existing documents required for the transfer of certifications. The newly selected certification body is obligated to check, within a period of two weeks of the coordinator having chosen the new certification body in the sponsoring company database, whether it is possible to maintain the certification (agriculture) or the audit result (meat sector) solely on the basis of a document check or whether this requires an additional confirmation audit (agriculture) or an additional ITW audit (meat sector). The decision regarding said check is to be documented in the sponsoring company database. Should the certification body decide to assume the certification solely on the basis of a document check, a renewed confirmation audit is to be performed within two weeks of this decision and entered and released in the database. If the confirmation audit is not conducted by this due date the operation's payment entitlement shall be suspended.

### **5 Measures under the scheme integrity system**

In order to check the functionality of all measures in the programme manual and the inspection system, audit measures shall be initiated by the sponsoring company for the purpose of checking the audit quality of certification bodies, as well as criteria compliance on the part of participating companies/farms. These control measures serve to check the status quo whilst at the same time aiding continuous development and optimisation of processes within the animal welfare initiative **Initiative Tierwohl**. Amongst others, the following measures (integrity checks) shall be carried out.

#### **5.1 Stock checks (only for agriculture)**

In addition to the programme and confirmation audits, completely unannounced stock checks are conducted on farms. In the stock checks, animal-related requirements in particular are checked. The auditor can also thoroughly check other criteria if any abnormalities are detected.

Stock checks should be conducted with a timely distance of at least three months regarding to programme and confirmation audits.

If a stock check is evaluated as “failed”, the sponsoring company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of payment entitlements, imposition of a contractual penalty).

## 5.2 Audits of special purpose

In suspicious cases or in case of imminent danger the sponsoring company shall immediately commission audits of special purpose in the participating farms. Generally, these audits are conducted on a completely unannounced basis.

If an audit of special purpose is failed, the sponsoring company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of payment entitlements, imposition of a contractual penalty).

## 5.3 Parallel audits

Parallel audits serve to check the audit results established in the previous audit. They are generally conducted a maximum of four weeks after the previous audit.

They are conducted unannounced. In order to ensure that a suitable person is available to provide information during the audit the business can be informed 24 hours ahead of the planned audit time with regard to the conducting of a random sample audit. Other than in the case of a “failed” result, they have no bearing on certification term or the payment entitlement on the part of the participating operation. If as part of a parallel audit a criterion is evaluated as “not fulfilled”, the sponsoring company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of payment entitlements, imposition of a contractual penalty).

## 5.4 Office audits

The sponsoring company shall conduct office audits using its own staff or externally commissioned assessors within the certification bodies.

Within the framework of the office audit checks shall be conducted as to whether the specifications contained in the programme manual and/or in the inspection system are being correctly and uniformly implemented by the certification bodies.

## 5.5 Accompaniment of audits (witnessing of audits)

Audits conducted on behalf of the animal welfare initiative *Initiative Tierwohl* may be accompanied/witnessed by the sponsoring company or by persons authorised by the same. The certification body as well as the accompanied auditor will receive a written report on the results of the accompanying audit afterwards.

## 5.6 Monitoring of audit reports

Audit reports submitted by the certification bodies shall be checked for completeness and correctness by the sponsoring company. The aim of this is to prevent incorrect and implausible input of data and to harmonise the implementation of the requirements by certification bodies and auditors.

The certification body shall be obliged to make every effort to promptly resolve any existing ambiguities and if required correct the audit report.

## **6 Annexes**

- 6.1 Registration sheet for certification bodies**
- 6.2 Registration sheet for releasing persons (audit reviewers)**
- 6.3 Registration sheet for auditors**
- 6.4 Sample certificate and confirmation**
- 6.5 Proof of minimum number of audits - Form**

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