

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 (hereinafter referred to as the "operating company"). The company QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH (hereinafter referred to as "QS") has been commissioned by the operating company to safeguard the rights and obligations arising from the basic agreement on neutral control activities concluded between the certification body and the operating 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 operating 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

The following requirements and rules are described in this inspection system:

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

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

The companies participating in the Animal Welfare Initiative are active in agriculture (cattle, pigs, poultry) and the meat and pet food sector. For cattle-farming companies participating in the program 2022 - 2024, the inspection system for animal welfare is valid until June 30, 2025 at the latest, with validity from 01.01.2023 in the revision from 01.01.2025 and for the program succession from 2025, the inspection system for animal welfare for cattle farming in 2025 is to be applied.

In this document, the term "meat sector" refers to companies and businesses involved in the production and marketing of meat and meat products in the ITW. These include, among others, slaughtering, cutting, processing, meat wholesale, brokers and distribution companies.

The term "pet food sector" refers to companies and businesses involved in the production and marketing of pet food in the ITW. These include, among others, processing, production, meat wholesale, brokers, storage and transport companies.

2 Requirements for certification bodies

Participating companies are inspected by independent certification bodies that are approved by the operating company and contractually integrated into the operating company's scheme following an appropriate review.

To apply for the approval of an auditor for the Initiative Tierwohl, the certification body uses the application form provided by the operating company (see Annex 6.1).

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

2.1 Approval of certification bodies

Upon written application using the application form for certification bodies (see Annex 6.1), the operating company will check the eligibility of a certification body for initial or re-approval within the Initiative Tierwohl or for an extension of the previous approval to include other scopes. The certification body must have experience in conducting certifications in the agriculture and/or food industry. The inspection is subject to a fee. Details can be found on the application form and in *Annex 2 of the scale of fees for certification bodies*. The certification body submitting the application must pay the inspection fee even if the certification body is not found to be eligible.

Once eligibility has been determined, the certification body concludes a framework agreement with the operating company for independent inspection activities in the Initiative Tierwohl.

2.2 Authorisation requirements and procedures

The following documents must be submitted to verify eligibility:

- Quality management manual (if necessary as a draft) for the implementation of the auditing and certification activities, which takes into account the requirements of the Initiative Tierwohl. This includes at least the following topics:
 - General regulations, e.g. on the legal responsibility, legal independence and economic impartiality of the certification body, protection through appropriate measures (e.g. legal protection and liability insurance)
 - Definitions of the organisation and responsibilities, including the naming of responsible persons (contact persons), implementation of the dual control principle, handling of documents
 - Drafting contracts with customers, including specific content depending on the scope of the Initiative Tierwohl
 - Ensuring impartiality, conducting risk assessments on a regular basis
 - Ensuring the qualifications of the personnel employed (in particular for auditing and certification activities)
 - Regular implementation of self-monitoring measures, including documentation
 - Incident and crisis management
 - complaint management
- Declarations of consent and declarations of commitment to the code of conduct for audit activities in the Initiative Tierwohl by all persons involved in activities related to the inspection system
- Declarations of consent for data protection, for publication of the certification body with contact details on the Initiative Tierwohl website

In the further course of the approval procedure, a fee-based office audit will be carried out to verify that the requirements of the inspection system have been implemented.

The audit can be carried out on-site, remotely or a combination of both and is conducted either by the operating company's personnel or by persons commissioned by the operating company. The costs of the office audit are based on the scale of fees and are invoiced to the applicant certification body after conclusion of the office audit.

2.3 Impartiality and objectivity

The certification body shall guarantee to conduct audits impartially 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 Initiative Tierwohl
- May only use check lists provided by the operating company for the purpose of conducting Initiative Tierwohl audits. The use of different check lists shall be with the proviso that the prior consent of the operating company is obtained.

Upon request, proof is to be provided to the operating 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.

2.4 Organization and responsibilities

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

- Agriculture pig
- Agriculture poultry
- Agriculture cattle
- Meat sector
- Pet food

2.5 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 operating 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 operating company's database.

2.6 Crisis management

The certification body must immediately inform the operating 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 operating 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 operating company (including telephone contact details) who shall also be reachable outside of business hours.

2.7 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.

2.8 Customer satisfaction analysis, management of complaints and objections

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

The certification body has a documented procedure for handling complaints and appeals. If an ITW audit has been evaluated as 'failed', the participating company has the opportunity to file a reasoned complaint or appeal against the certification decision within 10 days after being informed of the failure by the operating company. 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 operating 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 operating company.

2.9 Access authority and right to inspect documents

The operating 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 operating company or the persons/organisations commissioned by the same access to all documents relating to its activities within the framework of the Initiative Tierwohl.

The operating company or persons/organisations commissioned by the same, may verify the work of the certification body for the Initiative Tierwohl 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.

2.10 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 operating company per year

2.11 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 operating company.

Infringements against the basic agreement on neutral control activities as part of the 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 operating company has the right to notify all scheme participants who have concluded contracts with the certification body within the framework of the Initiative Tierwohl of said termination or warning.

3 Requirements for the approval of auditors and releasing persons

Auditors and releasing persons are approved by the operating 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 Initiative Tierwohl, the certification body uses **the application forms** provided by the operating company (Annexes 6.2 and 6.3). Consent for the collection and storage of personal data is required for approval in the Initiative Tierwohl.

3.1 Approval of an auditor

An auditor is a qualified expert for the level at which he is approved. 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 operating company reserves the right to check the suitability of the auditor by means of additional measures.

3.1.1 Qualification

The basis for this is an agricultural or food-related apprenticeship. Supplemented by auditor training, the specialist qualification enables the auditor to properly and uniformly collect and evaluate the implementation of the requirements. The specialist skills include:

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

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

For auditors in agricultural livestock production:

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

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

For auditors in the pet food sector:

- Butcher
- Master Butcher
- Graduate of Agriculture Animal Production (German Diplom/Master/Bachelor)
- Master miller and miller's journeyman (+ special knowledge per scope)
- Agricultural engineer/trained farmer (+special knowledge per scope)

- Veterinarian
- Graduate Food Technology/ Food Chemistry (German Diplom/Master/Bachelor)
- Graduate of Oecotrophology (German Diplom/Master/Bachelor)

In addition to professional qualifications, proof of at least one year's working experience (full-time) in livestock production or meat sector or pet food sector, respectively, 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 operating company in each individual case. The operating 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, 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 operating company is a prerequisite for the registration of the auditor in a training event offered by the operating company (Chapter 3.1.5, only agriculture).

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 operating 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 and in the pet food 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 operating company shall decide with regard to acceptance of the audits submitted.

Bei Antragstellung auf Zulassung als Auditor ist eine branchenspezifische Auditerfahrung nachzuweisen.

3.1.5 Training by the operating company

For an approval in agricultural livestock production, the auditor must attend a training event held by the operating 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 operating company - to provide proof of successful participation in a corresponding stage-specific QS training measure (including test).

For an approval in the meat sector and in the pet food 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 operating 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 operating 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 operating company. For organisational coordination of the witness audit the certification body shall contact the operating company on its own initiative. The operating 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 operating company.

3.2 Maintenance of auditor approval

3.2.1 Proof of minimum number of 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 30th 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 and in the pet food sector, there is no obligation to provide evidence regarding the number of ITW minimum audits. A valid auditor approval in the QS scheme or in a standard recognised by ITW for the corresponding approval level is sufficient in this respect. The number of minimum audits required in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme or the standard recognised by ITW shall be demonstrated by the certification body upon request.

3.2.2 Proof of witness audits

Supervision by the certification body: The qualification of auditors working in agricultural animal production must be verified by the certification body at least every two years by means of supervision during ITW audits **at each stage of approval.** The audit monitoring must be carried out by qualified persons (usually responsible employees of the certification body) who ensure an objective assessment of the audit and **who are approved at the respective level as auditors and/or releasing persons.** The performance of audit monitoring must be documented and the results must be provided to the operating company upon request.

Supervision by the operating company: For auditors working in agricultural animal production, the certification body also ensures that each auditor is supervised by a person appointed by the operating company for each stage of approval. The certification body contacts the operating company at an early stage and unsolicited for organisational coordination.

The frequency of the witness audit is determined on a risk-oriented basis, based on the results of the previous witness audit, and is one, two or four years. Furthermore, additional witness audits can be commissioned by the operating company.

The operating company reserves the right to decide on the suitability of a location or production scope selected by the certification body for the performance of a witness audit.

The costs of conducting witness audits are to be carried by the certification body and will be invoiced to it by the operating company.

In order to maintain the approval in the meat sector and in the pet food sector, there is no evidence to be provided regarding the monitoring of ITW audits. A valid auditor approval for the corresponding stage in the QS scheme or in a

standard recognised by ITW is sufficient in this respect. The operating company reserves the right to demand evidence of the performance of accompanying audits in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme or the standard recognised by ITW.

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 Initiative Tierwohl provided by the certification body. If an auditor has approval with various certification bodies authorised by the operating 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 Initiative Tierwohl and the normative documents.

3.3 Withdrawal of auditor approval

The operating 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 operating 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 operating 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 Initiative Tierwohl.

3.4 Requirements for releasing persons

Releasing persons decide about the release of audit reports and the respective certification (chapter 2.1.5).

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 operating company may recognize a qualification other than those mentioned above after evaluation.

3.4.2 Experience in audit releases (only for agriculture)

In order to be approved as a releasing person in agricultural livestock production, sufficient experience in implementing certification decisions at companies in agricultural animal production must be demonstrated to the operating company. Therefore, before approval, the release of 20 audit reports (in the last 24 months) at the respective approval level must be demonstrated (QS audits or standards recognised by ITW).

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 operating company is a prerequisite for the registration of the releasing person in a training event offered by the operating company (only for agriculture).

3.4.4 Training by the operating 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 operating 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 operating 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 and in the pet food 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)

Before approval by the operating company, a releasing person in agricultural livestock production must accompany at least one ITW audit at the respective stage of approval, unless they have their own approval as an Initiative Tierwohl auditor at the corresponding stage of approval.

The performance of audit accompaniments must be documented and proof provided to the operating 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 Inspection System - Animal Welfare Effective from: 01.01.2024 Page 13 of 22 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 and in the pet food 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

To maintain approval as a releasing person in agricultural livestock production, at least two ITW audits must be accompanied at the respective stage of approval per calendar year and stage of approval, provided that there is no approval of one's own as an animal welfare auditor at the corresponding stage of approval.

In order to maintain the approval as a releasing person in the meat sector and in the pet food 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 operating company.

4 Rules for the impartial inspection

4.1 Audits

A certification body approved by the operating company and appointed by the coordinator or company in the meat sector or in the pet food sector, respectively, shall monitor implementation of the requirements by means of audits (ITW audits). The coordinator or company in the meat sector or in the pet food 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 operating company's homepage.

The auditing of agricultural farm within the framework of the Initiative Tierwohl shall be on an unannounced basis. In order to ensure that a suitable person is available to provide information during the programme 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 (one 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. (see chapter 5.1.).

Audits of companies in the meat sector and in the pet food sector are usually announced.

The time between two audits (programme and confirmation audit) within a single certification cycle must be at least three months. This does not apply in cases of additional audits according to chapters 4.5 or 4.6 or a final programme audit for the termination of participation (see chapter 4.1.1).

In agricultural livestock production, programme - including confirmation audits from previous programme phases - may be performed at a single site a maximum of three times in succession by the same auditor. This does not apply to additional programme 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 programme audits). This requirement does not apply to auditing in the meat sector and pet food sector.

If an audit is not conducted by its due date or is not entered and released in the operating company's database on time, the company may be blocked for deliveries into the ITW scheme. The operating company shall decide with regard to the course of further action on application by the certification body.

In all audits of the Initiative Tierwohl, checklists provided by the operating company are used. The audit results are documented in an audit report and entered and released by the certification body in the operating company's database.

4.1.1 Auditing of agricultural farms

For participating agricultural companies, the following audits shall be performed after registration or audit permission, respectively:

- One **programme audit** per calendar year
 - If applicable, a concluding programme audit at the end of participation (max. three months before deregistration/exit from the programme)
- One **stock check** per calendar year
 - If the duration of the participation in a calendar year is less than at least six months, no stock check is intended for this calendar year

Programme audit

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

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

To ensure the identity of relevant goods flows, plausibility checks of the quantity reports or animal stock movements are carried out for at least three deliveries per completed quarter since the last programme audit. For this purpose, a plausibility check is carried out in the shed and the reporting forms (sow production and piglet rearing), slaughter invoices (pig and cattle production), slaughter reports (poultry fattening) and supporting documents for animals leaving the farm (turkey rearing) were compared with the exact animal numbers and delivery data from the stock book, delivery notes, sow/fattening planner, stable cards, Hi-Tier database, etc. The result of the plausibility check must be stated in the audit report and has no influence on the audit result.

To terminate a location's participation, a programme audit shall be conducted within three months before or two weeks after the termination of the participation for final verification. It has to be ensured that the final programme audit is conducted while the location is keeping livestock to an extent that the relevant processes can be comprehensively and representatively assessed at the time of the audit (e.g. termination of business or transfer of an enterprise). If the final programme audit is not conducted accordingly, the operating company decides about further measures (e.g. sanction procedure/contractual penalty).

Stock checks

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

4.1.2 Auditing of companies in the meat sector and in the pet food sector

At the participating locations of the companies in the meat industry and in the pet food sector, 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.

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 operating company on request.

If it is possible to carry out a stock check, but the company cannot be expected to do so in a specific case for important reasons, this will be considered a failed attempt. A repeated failure to carry out an inventory check (second failed Inspection System - Animal Welfare Effective from: 01.01.2024 Page 15 of 22 attempt) will result in a blocking of the site in the ITW programme until a successful stock check is carried out (release in the database).

It is not considered a failed attempt if...

- the stable(s) is/are demonstrably not occupied at the time of contact.
- no contact could be established with one of the contact persons stored in the database.

Given an unjustified refusal, the participant has to be informed immediately in writing of the possible consequences of a repeated failed attempt or an unjustified refusal (possible loss of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure/contractual penalty).

Upon request, proof that the appropriate information has been sent must be shown to the operating 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 operating company database. Admission of the location to the animal welfare initiative by the operating company is the prerequisite for conducting an animal welfare audit. The following applies to companies in the meat and pet food sector: If the site to be audited is not yet registered in the animal welfare database, a blank checklist must be used for the initial audit. These are made available for download on the Initiative-Tierwohl homepage.

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 operating company upon request (e.g. qualified language certificates, commissioning of an interpreter, curriculum vitae). The audit report is to be written in German or English.

4.2.1 Audit preparation

The organisational preparation of an audit includes in particular:

- Verification of the location's master data in the operating 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 to a relevant and representative extent 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.

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 operating 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/meat sector or pet food sector 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 (nur Landwirtschaft)	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) for all C- and K.O.- evaluations. The evidence shall be provided to the operating company upon request.

For C evaluations, the implementation of corrective actions must be agreed with deadlines (see chapter 4.3.2) and documented in a comprehensible manner in the report. In livestock farming companies, C evaluations can only be awarded for basic requirements and **certain animal welfare requirements**.

C-evaluations are possible for the following animal welfare requirements:

Pig farming

- Stable climate check
- Drinking water check
- Daylight
- Roughage
- Purchase of ITW piglets
- Marketing to ITW fatteners

Geflügelhaltung

- Origin and marketing: sourcing day-old chicks and rearing turkeys
- Handling of animals during loading: instructions for pre-destocking
- Stable climate check
- Drinking water check

E-evaluations can only be awarded for certain requirements. They must be justified in the audit report in a comprehensible and meaningful way.

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, stable climate/drinking water check data, name of stable climate expert/drinking water sampler). If a nonconformity has been identified, objective evidence must be uploaded with the audit report if objectively possible.

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 (e.g. loss of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure/contractual penalty) 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 shall be **immediately implemented by the participating company** and evidence of them shall be provided to the certification body. The period for implementing the corrective actions shall be as short as possible and, in the case of a programme audit to terminate participation, **shall not be agreed to be longer than the last day of participation.**

The implementation of the corrective actions is checked by the certification body and **the result of the review is entered in the Initiative Tierwohl database without delay. The corresponding entry must be completed no later than two weeks after the remediation period has expired. Otherwise, the respective corrective action will automatically be labelled as 'not corrected'.**

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

If corrective actions have been agreed upon in an audit **for livestock farms**, the location will be blocked for deliveries into the ITW programme by the release of the audit report. The location will get unblocked and regain its eligibility to deliver as soon as the certification body confirms the implementation of the agreed corrective actions in the database of the operating company by entering the status "corrected" in time.

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 operating company accordingly and the granted certification needs to be withdrawn. The operating company is immediately informed regarding this issue by the certification body and decides about further measures (e.g. permanent withdrawal of eligibility to deliver, 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 has been **failed** if at least one requirement has been evaluated as 'K.O.' or if a general K.O. has been issued. It has also failed if a corrective action has been labelled as 'not corrected'.

Audits, which are failed or passed with reservation have to be entered and released by the certification body in the database of the operating company **within two working days**. The operating company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken, in case of a failed audit (e.g. withdrawal of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure/contractual penalty).

The operating 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 operating 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 operating company database. Otherwise the audit shall lapse. The operating 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 operating 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 and in the pet food 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 operating company is binding.

4.4.3 Validity of certification

The beginning of the validity of certification of a location of agricultural livestock production companies in the Initiative Tierwohl is determined by the date when the underlying programme audit was released in the database of the operating company. The certification (certificate) is valid until 31 December of the following year and is extended for another year after a successfully completed programme audit. This does not apply in cases of additional audits according to chapter 4.5 or a final programme audit to terminate participation (see chapter 4.1.1).

The start of the confirmation period for a meat or pet food business location is determined by the date on which the underlying ITW audit is released in the operating organisation's database. The confirmation (approval) is valid until the last day of the subsequent twelve-month cycle of the location's participation (contract or registration date; the information on the audit period in the database is decisive) and is extended for a further twelve months after a renewed, successfully completed ITW audit. This does not apply in cases of additional audits according to chapter 4.5 and 4.6.

4.4.4 Withdrawal of certification

Withdrawal of the certificate is the responsibility of the relevant certification body. It must be carried out in the event of

- Serious violations of the programme manual
- Exclusion of the company/operation
- Termination of the agreement between the certification body and the operating company
- Termination of the agreement between the coordinator and the operating 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 operating company will inform each other about exclusion, termination of agreement with a company or withdrawal of a certificate.

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 programme audit (agriculture) or an additional ITW-Audit (meat sector and pet food 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 and in the pet food 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 operating company database, whether it is possible to maintain the certification (agriculture) or the audit result (meat sector and pet food sector) solely on the basis of a document check or whether this requires an additional programme audit (agriculture) or an additional ITW audit (meat sector and pet food sector). The decision regarding said check is to be documented in the operating company database. In the case of a change of certification body with an audit with the result "passed with reservations", it must be ensured that the implementation of Inspection Systemall possibly still open corrective actions is monitored by the new certification body or that the change of

certification body is only carried out after the complete implementation of all corrective actions.

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 eligibility to deliver into ITW scheme may be blocked.

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 operating 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 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 operating company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure/contractual penalty).

5.2 Audits of special purpose

In suspicious cases or in case of imminent danger the operating 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 operating company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure 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 operating company shall decide whether further measures are to be taken (e.g. withdrawal of eligibility to deliver, sanction procedure/contractual penalty).

5.4 Office audits

Certification bodies are audited on the basis of office audits (subject to a fee) to ensure the correct and uniform implementation of the ITW inspection system. Office audits can be carried out on-site at the premises of the certification body, remotely or in a combination of both.

The operating company conducts office audits with its own personnel or with externally contracted assessors at the certification bodies. An office audit is required for the initial approval, re-approval and for an extension of the ITW approval of a certification body.

The certification body is obliged to provide ITW or a person/organisation commissioned by ITW with comprehensive information and to allow inspection of all documents relating to its activities for the ITW scheme.

The office audit checks whether the requirements set out in the programme manual and the inspection system are being correctly and uniformly implemented by the certification bodies. If an office audit is not passed, the operating company decides on further measures (e.g. implementation of a sanction procedure).

5.5 Accompaniment of audits (witnessing of audits)

Audits conducted on behalf of the Initiative Tierwohl may be accompanied/witnessed by the operating 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 operating 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 Application form for Certification Bodies**
- 6.2 Application form for releasing person**
- 6.3 Application form for auditors**
- 6.4 Sample Certificate and Confirmation**
- 6.5 Form Proof of minimum number of audits**
- 6.6 Evidence/Objects of inspection for specific criteria**
- 6.7 Self-assessment checklist for certification bodies**

Note: For reasons of better readability and easier comprehensibility, Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Tierwohls in der Nutztierhaltung mbH uses the generic masculine form in the present text, which is common in the German language. We hereby explicitly address all gender identities without distinction.

Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Tierwohls in der Nutztierhaltung mbH

Geschäftsführer: Dr. A. Hinrichs, R. Römer
Schwertberger Str. 14
53177 Bonn
Tel +49 228 35068-0
Fax +49 228 35068-10
info@initiative-tierwohl.de