

# Style guide for the QS certification mark



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# CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Ownership and utilisation rights .....	4
3. Authorisation to use the certification mark .....	5
4. The QS certification mark .....	6
5. Type of presentation .....	7
6. Use of the QS certification mark .....	9
6.1 QS certification mark in consumer communication.....	10
6.2 QS certification mark in corporate communication .....	14
7. Point of contact .....	16

## **Our common task: consolidate trust and create transparency.**

The blue QS certification mark is applied to foods which were produced and marketed in compliance with mandatory quality requirements. It symbolises the joint efforts of more than 180,000 economic operators in cross stage quality assurance. It stands for thorough controls, ensured origin and clear marking and labelling: QS. Quality scheme for food.

Together with the scheme participants, we organise a reliably quality assurance along the entire supply chain, from farm to shop.

We ensure transparency by means of binding standards and independent controls of the processes in the participating businesses. In this way, we create a solid basis for trust between customers and suppliers and deepen consumers' trust in safe food.

As a self-regulatory body of the economy, we at QS prepare solutions for the thorough quality assurance of fresh foods throughout the entire sector. In the case of incidents and crises, QS investigates the causes, clarifies them and provides support.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

**As a quality assurance scheme, ‘QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.’ defines and controls stringent production and marketing requirements along the entire supply chain for fresh foods.**

This style guide outlines the rules and guidelines for the use and correct presentation of the QS certification mark on products and in corporate communication. Uniform use of the QS certification mark throughout the entire scheme ensures its recognisability in the market. It enhances the signal effect for food you can trust in the long term.

## Systematic quality assurance

The basis of seamless process and origin assurance in the QS scheme is formed by the regular control of all businesses from farm to shop. The blue QS certification mark, which is applied only if foods are produced in line with these requirements, helps consumers to orientate when shopping meat, cold cuts or ham, fruit, vegetables or potatoes.

## Signal for certified processes

For consumers, the blue QS certification mark has been a clear signal for fresh food from companies with certified processes for more than 20 years. Today, more than 26,000 branches in the food retail sector can offer beef and pork, poultry, cold cuts and ham with the blue QS certification mark along with a large selection of fruit, vegetables and potatoes.

## Quality assurance creates trust

For the more than 180,000 scheme participants, the benefits of QS certification are many and varied, from an increase in a company’s own quality demands through certification to the assured traceability of QS products in the event of complaints. Transparent quality assurance improves the reliability of the supply chain, opens up new sales channels and secures consumer trust.



Only foods whose production and marketing have been thoroughly controlled all the way from farm to shop bear the blue QS certification mark.

## 2. OWNERSHIP AND UTILISATION RIGHTS

**QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH is the owner of the trademarked QS certification mark and the slogan ‘QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.’**



The QS certification mark is a word/figurative mark protected at the German Patent and Trade Mark Office (DPMA) in Munich, at the Office of the European Union for Intellectual

Property (EUIPO) in Alicante and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva for QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH.

### **Right to use the QS certification mark**

The QS certification mark may only be used by QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH scheme participants and their subsidiaries, by authorised certification bodies and coordinators and approved laboratories. They are awarded the right to use the mark individually by means of a scheme contract or framework agreement with QS. Agricultural businesses, livestock transport companies and food retail branches do not make any direct contractual agreements with QS; they participate in the QS scheme via coordinators. The right to use the QS certification mark is awarded to them individually and on request by their coordinator.

The QS certification mark may not be used without the advance written authorisation of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH or a coordinator empowered to award sublicences. Unauthorised depiction of the QS certification mark is prohibited. QS reserves the right to take legal action against anyone who depicts, reproduces or uses the marks of QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH in any other way without express advance authorisation to do so.

### **Use in advertising**

The QS certification mark can be used by those authorised to do so for depiction on products and packaging materials and on delivery notes or accompanying documents. Use without a direct reference to a product is permitted in online communication, as a corporate identity element (letterhead, image brochures etc.) and on advertising materials of all kinds.

### **Utilisation fees**

The fees charged to scheme participants, certification bodies and laboratories include the right to use the QS certification mark. A separate licence fee is not charged.



### 3. AUTHORISATION TO USE THE CERTIFICATION MARK

**Advertising material, packaging material, writing paper and similar advertising means bearing the QS certification mark must be approved by QS before going to print.**

With the signing of a scheme contract or framework agreement, scheme participants, certification bodies and laboratories are given this style guide along with individual data for accessing the protected area of the QS website ([www.q-s.de/en](http://www.q-s.de/en)) reserved for users of the certification mark. Printable data can be downloaded there by authorised users who want to display the QS certification mark on products, delivery notes and accompanying documents or without direct reference to a product. Bundled businesses receive the print data and authorisations from their coordinators.

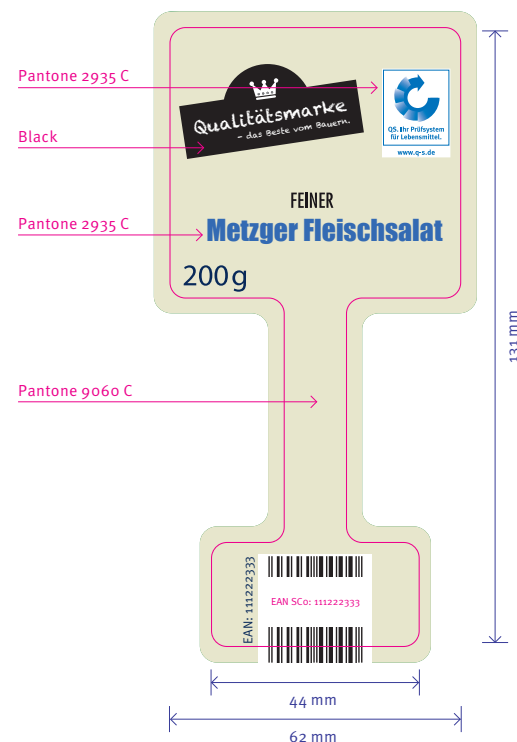
The following applies to all other scheme participants:

#### Release process

Prior to publication, drafts of printed media or screenshots of online communication are sent to QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH for checking and approval, stating your own QS-ID. The incoming requests are processed in the short term and released after examination. If a draft does not comply with the requirements of this style guide or if information is missing, QS will request rectification. Authorised users must keep the release from QS on file. This applies in particular in cases where QS gives special permission, such as for the display of the QS certification mark in black and white. Scheme

participants, certification bodies and laboratories must be able to provide evidence of their right to use the QS certification mark at all times if requested to do so by QS or in the course of QS audits by presenting the appropriate documents (scheme contract or framework agreement, utilisation approval from the coordinator, authorisation or special permission from QS).

#### Sample label



Informative verification documentation with details of sizes facilitates release by QS.

If you have any questions regarding the use of the QS certification mark, please contact [certificationmark@q-s.de](mailto:certificationmark@q-s.de).  
For release requests for the use of the certification mark, please use the online form at [www.q-s.de/approval-request](http://www.q-s.de/approval-request).

## 4. THE QS CERTIFICATION MARK

The QS certification mark on fresh food signals to consumers that the requirements of the QS scheme were complied with on all stages of production and marketing.

The stages in the circle stand for the economic circles involved in the production and marketing of meat and meat products: the feed sector, agriculture, slaughtering/deboning, processing, food retail. With fruit, vegetables and potatoes, they represent production, wholesale and food retail.

The abbreviation 'QS' stands for process Quality and food Safety. The term 'Prüfsystem' (inspection system) underscores the voluntary nature of participation in the scheme as opposed to the official sounding term 'control'.

The blue frame line combines the circular symbol and logo into one unit, the QS certification mark.



The arrow symbolises the alignment to the common goal of consistent quality assurance for safe food all the way from farm to shop.

The circle symbolises the unity and solidarity of the economic circles involved in responsibility for the product.

The slogan 'QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.' (QS. Quality scheme for food.) forms the relationship between the certification mark and the QS scheme.



The QS certification mark has been a clear signal for fresh food from companies with certified processes for more than 20 years now.

If the product is produced and marketed according to the requirements of the QS scheme, it may be labelled with the QS certification mark. Thus it becomes apparent, which products have gone through process accuracy and traceability.



## 5. TYPE OF PRESENTATION

The proper use of the QS certification mark must be ensured. Thus, the intended signal effect for food from certified production and marketing is achieved.

### Corporate Colour Blue - primary colour

The QS certification mark is always depicted in blue with a colour gradient. This guarantees a uniform appearance in the market and increases the recognition value of the certification mark.

<b>Pantone</b> 2935 C	<b>CMYK</b> C 100% M 50% Y 0% K 0%
<b>HKS</b> 44	<b>RGB</b> R 0 G 106 B 179

### Standard depiction



QS certification mark with colour gradient



15 mm

Minimum height 15 mm

There are no restrictions regarding the maximum height. When adjusting the size, the extension, compression and distortion of the QS certification mark must be avoided.

### Colour exceptions

In justified exceptional cases, e.g. when the production process does not permit depiction in blue, the QS certification mark may be applied in the black and white version. The prerequisite for this is explicit approval by QS head office.

### Size of depiction

The minimum height of depictions of the QS certification mark is 15 mm. If the size of the product packaging does not permit depiction at the prescribed minimum height (ultra small packaging), deviations from the minimum height can be allowed in exceptional cases. On request, QS head office will check to see whether special permission can be granted.

### Colour gradient

To ensure a uniform appearance throughout the market, the QS certification mark is always depicted with a colour gradient. This applies to the standard version in blue as well as approved use of the black and white version in exceptional circumstances.

### Only allowed with explicit approval by QS



QS certification in b/w with colour gradient



< 15 mm

Depiction smaller than 15 mm



QS certification mark without colour gradient



QS certification mark in b/w without colour gradient

The certification mark may only be depicted without a colour gradient if the production process (screening, thermal transfer printing, embroidery, pad printing) does not permit the depiction of the colour gradient for technical reasons. The written approval of QS has to be obtained in cases of this kind.

## Languages

The QS certification mark is fundamentally depicted with the German slogan 'QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.' Depiction in other languages is permissible if the products, delivery notes and accompanying documentation, online communication, advertising material, packaging material, writing paper or other advertising means that bear the QS certification mark are used primarily in another language area.

The depiction of the certification mark in other languages requires the approval of QS head office.

### German



### English



### Spanish



## Background colour

The circle symbol and slogan 'QS. Ihr Prüfsystem für Lebensmittel.' are fundamentally placed on a white ground colour and separated from the background by a blue frame line. The frame line must be fully closed and visible in front of the surrounding background.



## Obligation for approval of exceptional cases

The right to depict the QS certification mark

- in black and white,
- smaller than the minimum height of 15 mm,
- without a colour gradient and
- in another language

requires the advance authorisation of QS.

Drafts of printed media and screenshots of online communication have to be sent to QS as PDF files or as a link for inspection and release. For release requests for the use of the certification mark, please use the online form at [www.q-s.de/approval-request](http://www.q-s.de/approval-request).

If you have any questions regarding the use of the QS certification mark, please contact [certificationmark@q-s.de](mailto:certificationmark@q-s.de).

The authorisation must be presented on request e.g. in the course of an audit.

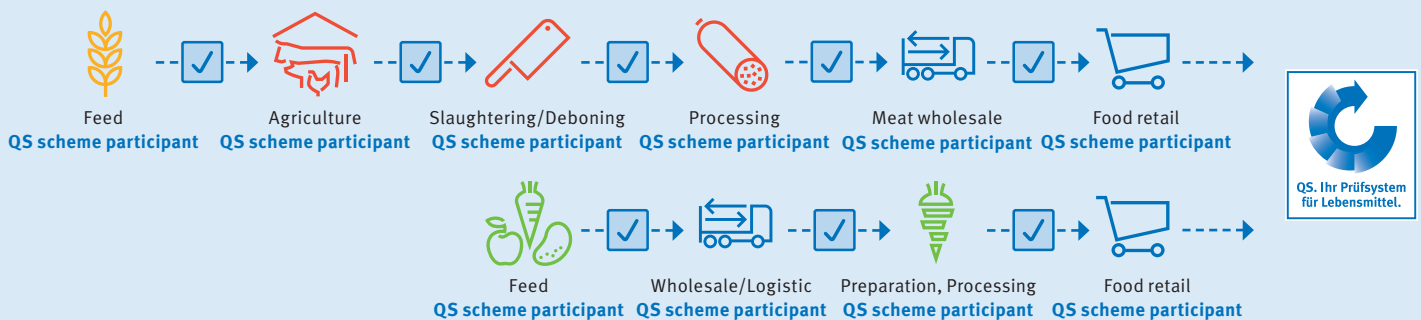




## 6. USE OF THE QS CERTIFICATION MARK

By applying the QS certification mark, producers and marketers confirm that they participate in the QS scheme and that they only produce and market the product in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme.

### Product may be labelled with the QS certification mark



Only foods which have been produced and marketed right from the start by certified businesses in compliance with the QS requirements may bear the certification mark. In addition to this, the scheme participant entitled to use it must be recognisable on each product.

If the QS scheme participant chain from production to marketing is interrupted – e.g. because a business does not participate in the QS scheme, does not have valid certification at the time of delivery or is not eligible to deliver into the QS scheme – the QS certification mark may not be applied to the product.

### Product may not be labelled with the QS certification mark



### Check eligibility of delivery

As a scheme participant's eligibility of delivery can lapse at any time, e.g. if an audit is not passed, the QS scheme participants along the supply chain are obliged to check the status

of their suppliers with every delivery. This way it can be ensured that the integrity of the supply chain is maintained. Information on the eligibility of delivery can be accessed under [www.q-s.de/softwareplattform/en/](http://www.q-s.de/softwareplattform/en/).

## 6.1 QS CERTIFICATION MARK IN CONSUMER COMMUNICATION

**If the QS certification mark is used in the consumer communication, it can be linked with the reference to the QS website. There, consumers will find more information about the scheme and the underlying criteria.**

The QS certification mark has been supplemented by the reference [www.q-s.de](http://www.q-s.de). Compact information on the QS scheme and on the raised criteria can be found here. Every scheme participant entitled to use the QS certification mark may use the supplemented version. On the part of QS, there is no obligation to use the supplemented QS certification mark.

The conventional QS certification mark (without supplement) may continue to be used. The QS certification mark is inseparable from the reference. The minimum height for all illustrations of the QS certification mark with supplement shall be 16.8 mm, the width, which is proportional to the height, shall be 12,95 mm.

The space between the baseline of the last line and the lower frame as well as the space between the corpus size of the URL and the frame are identical.



The URL has the same font size as the lettering within the certification mark.

Therefore, a consistent readability is ensured even for reduced representations of the certification mark.

### Minimum requirements for labelling QS goods

If explicit reference is made to QS on the product, e.g. in the trade name, the QS certification mark must be depicted on the product.



### Depiction on products and in advertisements

If the QS certification mark is depicted on products or their packaging, every misleading of the consumer must be avoided. The certification mark must be depicted in such a way that the performances that are linked to QS are clearly evident. In case of the simultaneous use of the QS certification mark and further statements concerning the product, every mis-

leading must be avoided. In particular, there must never be the impression that the QS certification mark includes further advertising statements regarding the product or its characteristics. In combination with other (trade or campaign) marks the QS certification mark may not be falsified or altered in any way. Furthermore, the certification mark may not be registered as part of an own trade mark.



\* The QS certification mark is not an indication that the product is free of certain ingredients.

The QS certification mark must be used on product packaging in such a way that consumers are not misled in any way regarding the performances involved.

**Information on QS certification in online communication**

The QS certification mark can also be used in the internet or in e-mail communication under consideration of the same rules as those that apply in print communication.

**Use at fresh meat counters**

When the QS certification mark is used in or at the fresh meat service counter as well as for bulk lots in the fruit and vegetables department, the unambiguous assignment to the relevant product must be assured.

The customer must be able to identify, which assortments or products are produced and marketed in line with the requirements of the QS scheme and therefore bear the QS certification mark.

**Advertising materials – flyers, customer leaflets and image brochures**

The QS certification mark can also be used in printed/online customer communication media. It must be clear which assortments and/or products are produced and marketed in line with the requirements of the QS scheme and which are not.

When stocking the fresh meat service counter it must be assured, that QS goods are clearly separated from non-QS goods.

When the QS certification mark is used in advertising flyers particular attention must be paid to the correct allocation to the illustrated product in order to avoid misleading the consumer.

Roastbeef	17,99 €
je 1 Kg .....	
Lamm-Keule	9,99 €
je 1 Kg .....	
Dorsch	12,99 €
je 1 Kg .....	

The consumer must be able to clearly recognise which products bear the QS certification mark and which do not.



## Use of the certification mark for composite products

Composite products are foods containing more than one ingredient, such as mixed salads and convenience products.

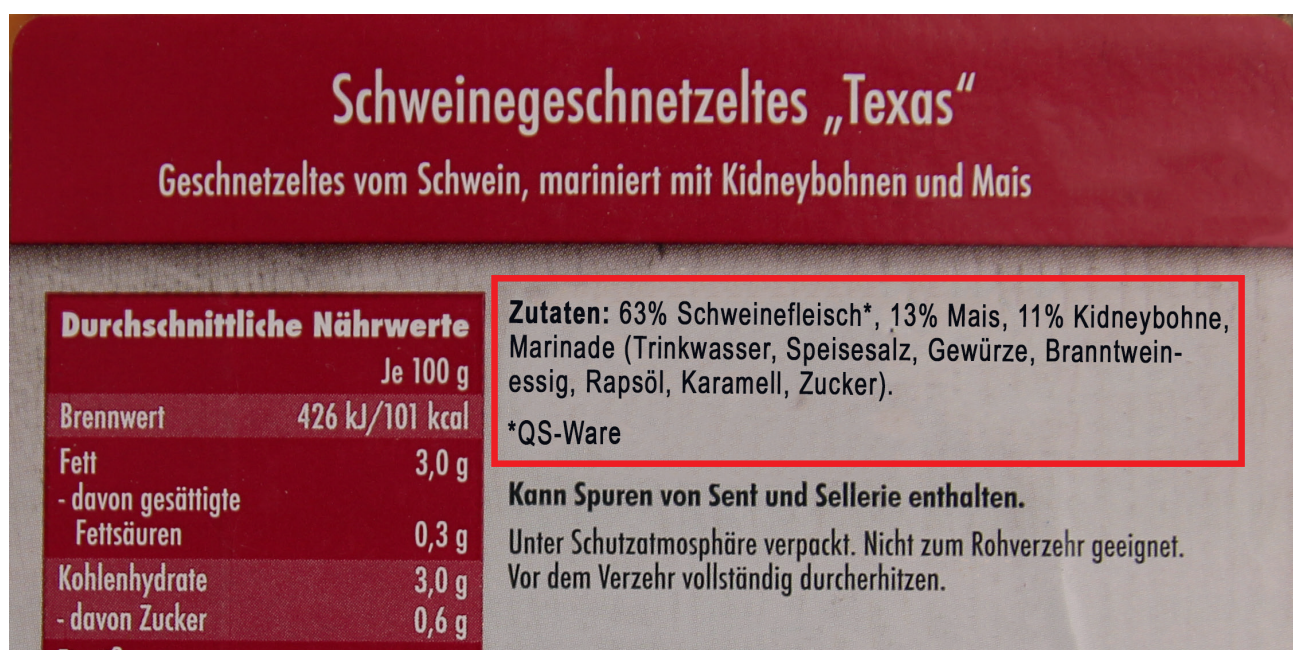
The right to use the QS certification mark on composite products that mainly (50 %) contain QS goods of ingredients produced and marketed in accordance with the requirements of the QS system, is generally feasible if the following requirements are fulfilled:

- The meat/meat products contained in the composite product, that fall within the scope of the QS scheme, are completely (100 %) QS goods.
- The chunky products from fruit, vegetables and/or potatoes contained in the composite product, that fall within the scope of the QS scheme, are QS goods and each represent at least a considerable amount (10 % according to QUID) of the total quantity of the composite product.

If one of the above mentioned conditions is not fulfilled, the use of the QS certification mark on composite products requires the approval of QS. The online form is available for this purpose.

So final consumers can identify which ingredients of composite products are QS goods, these ingredients must be clearly labelled with a footnote in the list of ingredients. Excluded from this requirement are products which, apart from ingredients such as salt, water, spices and/or additives, consist of 100 % QS goods.

### Product example where label release and footnote identification are required:



**Schweinegeschnetzeltes „Texas“**  
Geschnetzeltes vom Schwein, mariniert mit Kidneybohnen und Mais

Durchschnittliche Nährwerte	
Je 100 g	
Brennwert	426 kJ/101 kcal
Fett	3,0 g
- davon gesättigte Fettsäuren	0,3 g
Kohlenhydrate	3,0 g
- davon Zucker	0,6 g
Eiweiß	15,0 g

**Zutaten:** 63% Schweinefleisch\*, 13% Mais, 11% Kidneybohne, Marinade (Trinkwasser, Speisesalz, Gewürze, Branntweinessig, Rapsöl, Karamell, Zucker).

\*QS-Ware

**Kann Spuren von Senf und Sellerie enthalten.**  
Unter Schutzatmosphäre verpackt. Nicht zum Rohverzehr geeignet.  
Vor dem Verzehr vollständig durcherhitzen.

## 6.2 QS CERTIFICATION MARK IN CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

**Authorised users can also use the QS certification mark for advertising purposes.**

Companies which participate in the QS scheme can use the QS certification mark to communicate and advertise their certification, the availability of foods with the QS certification mark or their commitment to safe food and support for the QS scheme. In advertising communication too, use of the QS certification mark is only possible as defined by this style guide. If a company is not eligible to deliver into the QS scheme – even if only temporarily – the mark may not be used.

### **Accompanying documents, delivery notes and other business papers**

The QS certification mark can be included in business documents to indicate QS certification. The area for which the company has QS certification must be indicated clearly. The mandatory labelling of goods from the QS scheme for traceability purposes on accompanying papers and delivery notes can be done in text form (suffix ,QS') or by using the QS certification mark.

## Arrangement livestock transport companies

The transport companies approved for livestock transport in the QS scheme (livestock transport companies) may use the QS certification mark, though not on transport vehicles.



### Use of the QS certification mark by livestock transport companies

The QS certification mark can be depicted on

- transport documents,
- writing paper and
- similar business communication materials.

Every depiction of the certification mark must be marked with the suffix **'Approved Animal Transport Company.'**

### Example



Reference:  
Deutscher Vieh- und  
Fleischhandelsbund  
e.V., Bonn

The participation in the QS scheme can be communicated with suitable lettering on the livestock transport vehicles as well.

### Formulation examples:

- Livestock transport company approved in the QS scheme
- Livestock transport in accordance with the requirements of the QS scheme

Furthermore, a combination of lettering and a symbol is possible (see illustrated example).

The use of the QS certification mark (with and without supplement) on transport vehicles is not permitted.



## 7. POINT OF CONTACT

**We are pleased that you use the QS certification mark on products, delivery notes and in your advertising. Do you have any questions?**



**Sonja Pfeifer**

Scheme contracts,  
use of certification mark

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