

# Transparency creates trust

The food industry and the meat-processing industry want increasingly detailed information about all levels of pork production. In Denmark, the sector took the right steps at an early stage and established various transparency concepts.

The Danish pork industry has long been active in the many areas needed to offer global trading partners and consumers maximum product quality. It is one of Europe's leaders in the sustainable reduction of antibiotics as well as efficient, interlocking salmonella-fighting measures. Germany's northern neighbor also sets standards for food safety, hygiene and traceability. Over ten years ago, the country had already established the Global Red Meat Standard (GRMS) for slaughtering and meat processing. This transparency process was developed by the Danish Agriculture & Food Council in close cooperation with the country's slaughterhouses and the Danish Meat Research Institute.

The standard is based on the HACCP concept and is recognized by the German QS Qualität und Sicherheit GmbH as well as the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). GMRS transparently and thoroughly documents the quality assurance and control systems that companies use to guarantee flawless quality, hygiene and food safety. All procedures used in slaughtering and meat-processing companies such as boning, cutting and handling of meat products, for example, are considered. They are all carefully documented and independently verified by autonomous control institutions.

## Details for trading partners

The Global Red Meat Standard also defines clear animal welfare requirements. These regulate such areas as transport, care of animals in slaughterhouses and stunning. In addition, there are clear rules regarding the training of personnel. Currently, over 30 companies in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium,



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Danish Agriculture & Food Council FmbA

Great Britain, Poland and Russia have a GMRS certificate. According to the Danish Association of the Agriculture & Food Council, several other companies are also certified. The Global Red Meat Standard is an appropriate instrument for meeting the increasing demands above all from the large supermarket and industrial enterprises. The latter want detailed insights into all stages of the production and processing chain, from primary production to slaughter and processing.

Another important aspect for trading partners in Denmark is the seamless traceability of pork – from the meat counter back to precise information on production. All slaughter-related data, including carcass weight, lean body mass and veterinary findings are linked in the companies with a so-called gambrel number to ensure seamless traceability. After clearance for human consumption, carcasses or meat cuts are also stamped with an authorization number. Using this number, fresh meat and meat products can be traced back to the company that processed them. In addition, there is also data feedback from the slaughterhouses to the agricultural producers, including information on the health status of their animals. This gives farmers the opportunity to adapt their operational management if necessary.

## Website documents animal health

Transparency is also the alpha and omega in primary production. Over 40 years ago, the sector established the so-called SPF system. SPF stands for "Specific Pathogen-Free" and means that the animals are free of a number of infectious diseases such as rhinitis atrophicans, mange mites and swine dysentery. The goal of this program is to minimize infection risks and thus, the effort for veterinary treatment on pig farms. According to the competent SEGES Danish Pig Research Centre in the Danish Agriculture & Food Council, nearly 4,000 pig herds in the country currently fulfill the conditions of the SPF system. Well over 70 percent of the sows and approximately half of the pigs have a SPF status. The participating farmers agree among other things, to comply with detailed epidemic control regulations. SEGES operates a tri-lingual website (German, English and Danish) with information about the health status of Denmark's pigs. Information on a number of infectious diseases is available. In addition, the website provides information on the salmonella status in the respective companies.

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