

Guaranteeing Quality

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The production of goods and provision of services, coupled with their free movement across borders, are the prerequisites for undisturbed economic growth. To ensure that the goods produced and the services provided meet changing demand criteria, their range should be determined by the consumer society. Under the new theory of crowdsourcing, which means deriving knowledge, ideas and inspiration from the largest possible group of consumers—the “crowd”—it is the consumer society that shapes market needs.

It is very difficult to devise a system that would ensure a close correlation between consumer needs, innovative

research and development, and the production of goods and the provision of services. The three separate groups—consumers, researchers and producers—should work closely with each other.

The final outcome of joint work by the scientific and business communities should be products and services that meet the growing and changing requirements of consumers. What guarantees the quality of the products and services is the conformity assessment system, that is accreditation, testing and certification.

The international accreditation and conformity assessment system provides two main benefits:

1. It guarantees consumers that products and services offered to them are of high quality,
2. It ensures a free movement of goods and services for producers, removing technical barriers in international trade.



NEW ACCREDITATION PROGRAMS

Focus on the Quality of Polish Food

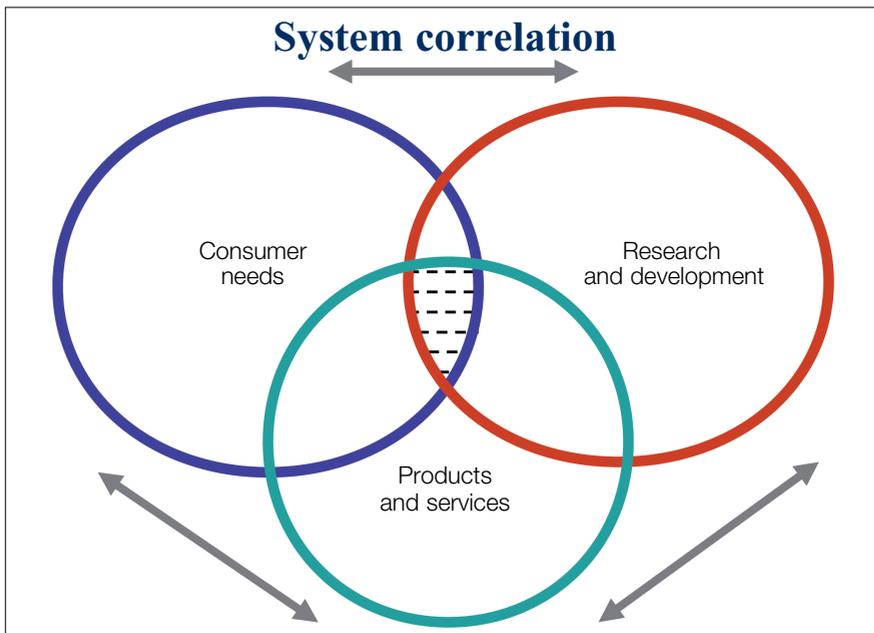


■ “The EU has released two very important, complementary documents in support of quality food production programs,” says **Lucyna Olborska**,

the deputy director of the Polish Centre for Accreditation (PCA). “The first one, Council Regulation (EC) no. 1698/2005 of Sept. 20, 2005, concerns

support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The other document, Commission Regulation (EC) no. 1974/2006, follows up on the aforementioned Council Regulation with practical details regarding provisions contained therein. The documents are evidence that the EU goes to great lengths to promote the principles of the Quality Policy. The policy aims to ensure that food, including pork, beef and poultry meat, produced and delivered to markets in member states, is of the best quality.”

Krzysztof Woźniak, head of the Department for the Accreditation of Certification and Inspection Bodies, Polish Centre for Accreditation, adds that following a motion from the Union of Producers and Employers of the Meat Industry and the Polish Association of Beef Cattle Producers, the Polish Centre for Accreditation has initiated the appointment of two technical, expert committees on the



Quality Assurance for Food Products (QAFP) and the Quality Meat Program (QMP). All parties concerned were represented in the committees, including cattle, pig and poultry breeders, consumer organizations and officials from the Polish Centre for Accreditation and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. After many hours of talks, two documents were released:

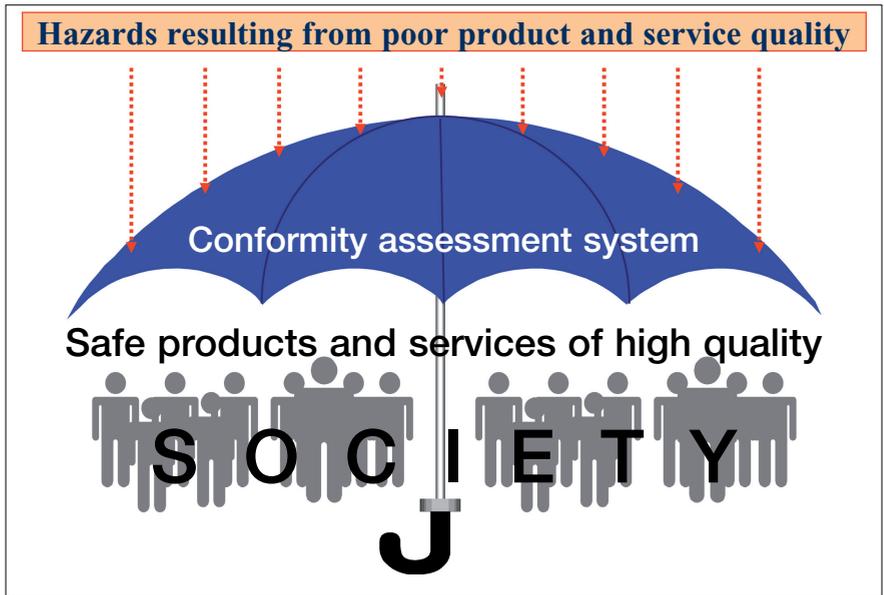
1) Program for the accreditation of QAFP-certifying bodies in conformity with the PN-EN 45011 standard.

2) Program for the accreditation of QMP certifying bodies in conformity with the PN-EN 45011 standard.

Provisions contained in the documents include detailed requirements which QAFP and QMP certifying bodies need to meet to be regarded as trustworthy and competent.

Producers who take part in the national food quality systems are presented with tangible financial benefits. Participants in the QMP system are for five years entitled to annual subsidies of 2,386 PLN, according to a brochure which the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development published recently. The prerequisite is a valid conformity certificate to confirm that food is produced in conformity with QMP specifications and standards. The certificate has to be issued by an authorized certification body, that is, one accredited by the Polish Centre for Accreditation. As far as the QAFP system is concerned, it is yet to be entered in the 2007-2013 Rural Development Program.

Producer groups, in turn, are entitled to refunds from the Agricultural



Market Agency (ARR) for the money spent on promotional and information campaigns in the press, the radio, television and other mass media, promotion at points of sale, advertising stands and materials, attending trade fairs and exhibitions and organizing training and conferences. The refunds total up to 70 percent of the costs for producer groups.

The QMP and QAFP labels given to food from producers certified by certification bodies accredited by the Polish Centre for Accreditation assure consumers that their money has been spent on products of the finest quality and thanks to international agreements signed by the Polish Centre for Accreditation, producers of such food can be sure that almost all markets stand open before them.

PCA—ESSENTIAL FACTS

The Polish Centre for Accreditation is the national accreditation body authorized to accredit certification and inspection bodies, testing and calibration laboratories and other entities conducting conformity assessments and verifications on the basis of the Act of Parliament of Aug. 30, 2002, on the conformity assessment system (Official Journal of 2010, No. 138, item 935 with changes, and of 2011, No. 102, item 586).

According to Regulation (EC) No. 765/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of July 9, 2008, setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No. 339/93, the Polish Centre for Accreditation has been appointed as the only national accreditation body in the light of the above Regulation.

The Polish Centre for Accreditation was established on Jan. 1, 2001.

The Polish Centre for Accreditation takes part in the work of international organizations in the field of accreditation. The PCA is a member of the:

- ✓ IAF (International Accreditation Forum, Inc.)
- ✓ ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation)
- ✓ EA (European co-operation for Accreditation)

(more information at: www.pca.gov.pl)

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