

Qualivo veal for the foodservice industry

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Gastro supplier Bianchi has newly added Swiss Qualivo veal to its product range. Its quality has convinced those responsible at Bianchi. This quality is achieved thanks to feeding the calves a special muesli – less CO₂. **More flavour.**

Bianchi, the traditional foodservice supplier with the distinctive red lobster logo, is known for its broad fish and seafood range imported from all over the world. However, Bianchi also offers Swiss meat products: Thurgau apple-fed pork, Appenzell herb lamb, Alpstein chicken, Swiss Wagyu beef and brother rooster meat.

New at Bianchi is veal from the Qualivo programme. Qualivo is a brand of the Swiss feed specialist Hofmann Nutrition AG. This was reason enough for foodaktuell to arrange an on-site visit – together with Hofmann Nutrition CEO Alexander Hofmann – at Bianchi's premises in Zufikon, canton Aargau. What makes Qualivo veal special: it comes from Qualivo-certified farms in Switzerland.

Feed expertise

The muesli feed for Qualivo calves contains corn flakes, corn germ from corn starch production, wheat, rapeseed meal from rapeseed oil production and hazelnut meal from nut processing, herbs, plant extracts, yeast extracts, fats, essential oils, minerals, vitamins and trace elements.

The family-owned company Hofmann Nutrition AG was founded in 1962. It specialises in natural, health-promoting and efficiency-enhancing micronutrients for animal feed. Its specialty feed under the Hokovit brand is exported to 20 countries, from Europe to America and Asia.



Alexander Hofmann, CEO Hofmann Nutrition; Michelle Häggerli, Marketing Director Bianchi; Massimo Trazza, Head of Meat Purchasing Bianchi.

Like all calves, the animals are fed milk during their first months and then hay and Qualivo muesli produced by Hofmann Nutrition in Bützberg (see box). Thanks to the muesli feeding and slightly longer ageing of the meat after slaughter, the veal becomes more aromatic and has a slightly firmer bite than conventional veal. “Balanced feeding also leads to consistently high meat quality,” says Hofmann.

Taste, quality and sustainability

This quality has also convinced Bianchi, as confirmed by Head of Meat Purchasing Massimo Trazza. “Bianchi must be able to stand 100 percent behind its products – our customers trust us.” That is why the meat and the collaboration with Qualivo were thoroughly examined, including several tastings. Taste, quality and animal husbandry correspond to what customers in the higher-end gastronomy sector expect, Trazza is convinced. Restaurateurs can also charge a little more for it, because there is a great story behind it. “Bianchi also lives from good stories.”

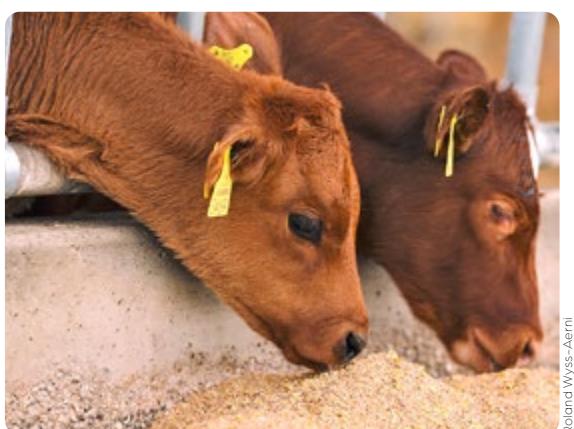
The advantage for Qualivo farmers: Bianchi does not only purchase premium cuts, but takes and processes whole calves. This gives farmers a guaranteed income, as Hofmann explains. Accordingly, Bianchi's online shop offers around 20 different items – from trimmed fillet and loin to flank steak, trimmed cheeks, rump, spare ribs and boiled beef.



Butcher Reto Gehrig cuts a ribeye steak from a calf.

Making better use of the whole animal

Second cuts such as flank steak have more flavour thanks to the muesli feeding and are juicier than usual, Hofmann emphasises. Trazza adds that Bianchi is also developing new products to promote the “nose-to-tail” principle. Twenty years ago, calf sweetbreads were hardly used; today they are just as popular as fillet. Many people are also unfamiliar with calf hanger steak or flat iron from the shoulder. “You don’t always have to process everything into tartare.”



Feeding calves with Qualivo muesli leads to more flavour and lower CO₂ emissions compared with calf fattening based on milk and milk powder.

Bianchi plans to purchase around 1' 000 Qualivo calves next year, about 20 per week. At this volume, around 2' 200' 000 kg of CO₂ emissions would be saved, says Hofmann. According to a study by Swiss Climate, feeding calves with Qualivo muesli causes six times fewer CO₂ emissions per kilogram of meat than conventional feeding. “Less CO₂. More flavour” is therefore the claim for Qualivo veal.

A no-compromise service provider

Bianchi has a long and proud history as a supplier to the hotel and catering industry. In 1881, Giuseppe Bianchi opened his shop in the city of Zurich, selling fruit and canned goods. Fish and seafood were soon added, followed later by meat, game and other specialities. Today, with Dario and Luca Bianchi as managing directors of the fifth generation, Bianchi is “a delicacy scout and logistics company in one,” as the company describes itself.

Bianchi sees itself uncompromisingly as a service provider, as Marketing Director Michelle Häggerli emphasises. “With us, customers can order until 3 a.m. and receive the goods the same day. No minimum order value, no delivery surcharge.” Bianchi delivers throughout Switzerland, including to private customers. 170 trucks are on the road every day. Takeaways and smaller retailers are also among the customers, but most goods go to hotels and restaurants.

Ultra-flexible logistics

“We are not a cheese dealer or a mushroom dealer. But customers can order almost everything from us in one place, in good quality, at a good price,” says Trazza confidently. “And our logistics are ultra-flexible,” adds Michelle Häggerli. At Christmas, the company sometimes runs two tours per day to winter sports resorts. “When Zermatt was snowed in, we rented a helicopter and delivered by air.”

Swiss gastronomy is undergoing change – the number of closures and bankruptcies is higher than before, and staff shortages are severe. Does Bianchi feel the impact? “We certainly haven’t seen any decline in turnover – on the contrary,” says Trazza. Meat sales were even one fifth higher this year. A development to which Qualivo veal could also contribute next year.

Bianchi AG

At its headquarters in Zufikon, canton Aargau, Bianchi AG operates not only chilled and frozen warehouses for goods turned over within two days, but also its own fish processing facility and butcher’s shop in addition to order picking and its vehicle fleet. Here, products are not only cut and vacuum-packed; burger patties and sausages are also produced in a dedicated building. In Basel, Bianchi operates an external frozen warehouse mainly for prawns and chicken breast, while in Saint-Prex in canton Vaud there is a sales office that organises fine distribution of deliveries in French-speaking Switzerland.