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German-Ukrainian Entrepreneurs Forum 2026 to strengthen agricultural and food sectors in both countries

DLG connecting agricultural and food industry entrepreneurs from Ukraine and Germany – exchange event within the framework of the German-Ukrainian Agri-Policy Dialogue (APD UA) – Dairy industry, decentralised energy supply and financing concepts at the heart of cooperation

Under the guiding theme “Partnership for a Resilient Agricultural Sector”, the German-Ukrainian Agricultural Entrepreneurs Forum took place on 19 May at DLG (German Agricultural Society) Headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. The event brought together Ukrainian and German entrepreneurs, association representatives, international financing experts, and policymakers for exchange. The forum was organised by DLG in cooperation with the industry association Ukrainian Agri Council within the framework of APD UA. The aim of the forum was to initiate and strengthen business partnerships across the entire agri-food value chain and to overcome potential reservations regarding Ukraine’s accession to the EU in both countries through direct interaction and knowledge exchange.

“In Ukraine, there is a highly efficient agricultural sector, despite war and ongoing threats. Ukraine can become a powerhouse of agriculture within the EU,” emphasised DLG President Hubertus Paetow in his opening remarks. EU integration of Ukraine is without alternative and must be accelerated, he added. The German-Ukrainian Entrepreneurs Forum 2026 was organised for the first time by DLG within the APD UA framework, with the support of the Ukrainian Agri Council. DLG contributed its international networking expertise and in-depth knowledge of the agri-food sector to bring industry representatives from both countries together on equal footing.

The APD UA has been supporting Ukraine in the modernisation of its agricultural sector since 2006 and is accompanying the country in its preparations for EU accession. Commissioned and funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Regional Identity (BMLEH), the APD UA has been implemented in its new project phase since the beginning of 2026 by a

consortium that includes DLG Markets GmbH, an organiser of international trade fairs, events and cooperation projects.

Dr Olga Trofimtseva, Head of the APD UA and former Minister of Agriculture of Ukraine, emphasised the practical dimension of this cooperation at the opening of the German-Ukrainian Entrepreneur Forum 2026: “We are providing very concrete, hands-on support to the Ukrainian agricultural sector in its preparations for EU accession. Ukraine’s agriculture and food industry is a prime example of a resilient and flexible sector capable of effective crisis management: we continue to pursue innovative agriculture – despite the ongoing brutal war.”

Sharing knowledge, reducing barriers – acting together in the EU market

The main objective of the forum was to promote concrete investments and business cooperation between the two countries. Another key focus was to raise awareness of each country’s strengths through knowledge exchange.

Ukraine contributed examples of resilience, crisis management, and decentralised innovation — expertise that can also benefit the German agri-food industry. Germany, in turn, contributed its strengths in processing, agricultural finance, and experience with EU regulatory frameworks. Participants agreed on one key point: direct exchange between industry stakeholders from both countries, investors, and key institutions forms an essential basis for advancing the integration of Ukraine’s agri-food sector into the EU in a practical and mutually beneficial way.

Dairy sector, renewable energy and financing: practical examples

The forum highlighted, through practical business examples, how Ukraine demonstrates strong innovative capacity under challenging conditions and where mutual learning opportunities exist for both markets.

Three sectors were in focus:

Dairy sector

Andriy Dykun, President of the Ukrainian Agri Council, pointed out that 10 of Ukraine’s 24 regions are directly affected by the ongoing Russian war of aggression since February 2022, regions accounting for 42 percent of the country’s milk production.

Despite damages exceeding USD 8.7 billion, Ukraine remains a net exporter of dairy products. Kees Huizinga, CEO of Kischenzi Dairy Farm, presented his company, which has continued to

develop into a modern training centre for the Ukrainian dairy sector even during wartime, training more than 1,000 specialists.

Renewable energy

Oleksandr Chumak from Michurina+ demonstrated how his 3,300-hectare farm achieved full energy self-sufficiency through a smart microgrid, combining 410 kWp photovoltaic capacity with battery storage.

The system was initially a response to power outages caused by the war, but has since reduced energy costs by a factor of five. Georgii Geletukha, Bioenergy Association of Ukraine (UABIO) added that Ukraine has the highest biomethane potential of all European countries (up to 21.8 billion cubic metres per year). In 2025, Ukrainian biomethane was exported to Germany for the first time.

Financing

Dr. Holger Kray from the World Bank presented the ARISE programme, which has supported more than 13,300 agricultural enterprises worldwide with concessional loans, covering 12.8 million hectares of farmland and mobilising USD 4 billion in private capital.

Caspar von Alvensleben from Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank, Germany's development agency for agribusiness and rural areas, introduced the German development bank model as a potential blueprint for establishing similar financing structures in Ukraine.

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About DLG

With more than 30,000 members, DLG is a politically independent and non-profit organisation. DLG draws on an international network of some 3,000 food and agricultural experts. DLG operates with subsidiaries in 10 countries and also organizes over 30 regional agricultural and livestock exhibitions worldwide. DLG's leading international exhibitions, EuroTier for livestock farming and Agritechnica for agricultural machinery, which are held every two years in Hanover, Germany, provide international impetus for the local trade fairs. Headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, DLG conducts practical trials and tests to keep its members informed of the latest developments. DLG's sites include DLG's International Crop Production Centre, a 600-hectare test site in Bernburg-Strenzfeld, Germany and the DLG Test Centre, Europe's largest

agricultural machinery test centre for Technology and Farm Inputs, located in Gross-Umstadt, Germany. DLG bridges the gap between theory and practice, as evidenced by more than 40 working groups of farmers, academics, agricultural equipment companies and organisations that continually compare advances in knowledge in specific areas such as irrigation and precision farming.

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