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## **Inhouse Farming Feed & Food Show 2026: Good Ideas Alone Are Not Enough: What Food Start-ups Need to Succeed in the Market**

**Global B2B meeting place for future food systems – Retail & Innovation Day, Friday, 13 November 2026, 10:00 a.m., DLG Expert Stage in Hall 25 – Part of EuroTier 2026, leading exhibition for livestock technologies**

A convincing idea, successful initial trials and promising market potential are usually only the beginning of the journey for many food start-ups. The real challenge often begins when a prototype must be transformed into a reliable commercial product with consistent quality, secure processes, suitable partners and a price that the market is willing to accept.

The Inhouse Farming Feed & Food Show 2026 (IHF), organized by the DLG (German Agricultural Society), addresses precisely these questions. Held at EuroTier, the leading exhibition for livestock technologies 10-13 November, the leading B2B event for future agrifood systems, connects feed and food innovations in self-contained systems with practical agricultural applications, new technologies and business opportunities. On Friday, 13 November 2026, the Retail & Innovation Day will take place on the DLG Expert Stage "Inhouse Farming - Feed & Food" in hall 25, offering insights into the future of food production and the market trends shaping tomorrow's food industry. By bringing together feed and food innovations with practical agricultural applications, the Inhouse Farming Feed & Food Show complements EuroTier with new perspectives and business opportunities across the entire agrifood value chain.

### **Inhouse Farming - Feed & Food**

"There is a whole range of challenges facing start-ups," says Simone Poppe, DLG Vice President and Managing Director of NewFood Consulting GmbH in Oldenburg, Germany.

Poppe advises companies, start-ups and institutions operating in the rapidly evolving new-food sector.

According to Poppe, some of the most important issues include scaling, regulatory approval, food safety, raw material sourcing and pricing. Equally important is the transition from a founding team into a management structure capable of running a commercially successful business.

### **Scaling: Turning a Prototype into a Commercial Product**

Many food innovations originate in kitchens, laboratories or pilot facilities. The real test begins when production moves to an industrial scale". Not everything that works in the laboratory works in a large-scale production facility," says Poppe.

In larger facilities, products are pumped, heated, preserved and packaged differently. A product that initially has a desirable texture may become soft or unstable during industrial processing. Ingredients that are designed to gel during cooking may begin to gel during packaging. Scaling therefore involves much more than increasing output volumes. Start-ups must simultaneously adapt formulations, production processes, quality assurance systems and organizational structures. They must decide whether to manufacture themselves or cooperate with production partners, determine what intellectual property to protect and build a business that can operate reliably over the long term.

### **ValueGrain: Connecting Breweries and Food Manufacturers**

The challenges of commercialization are clearly illustrated by the company ValueGrain. The start-up has developed a concept for using spent grain from breweries as an ingredient for human nutrition. Co-founder Tim Gräsing drew inspiration from years of experience in the brewing industry, where innovation often focuses on the brewing process itself while valuable by-products receive less attention.

ValueGrain connects breweries producing spent grain with food manufacturers that can use the ingredient in products such as baked goods, meat alternatives and other food applications. "The biggest challenge is that we have to connect very different industries and constantly act as the bridge between them," says Gräsing. "That was very important to us from the beginning," says Gräsing.

His most important lesson so far? "Persistence."

### **Food Legislation and Food Safety Must Be Considered Early**

Beyond scaling, food start-ups must also address legal and regulatory questions as early as possible.

Poppe distinguishes between approval requirements for entirely new products, such as those falling under Novel Food regulations, and the broader area of food safety, which applies to every food product.

Many young companies underestimate the complexity involved. Food safety considerations begin with correctly labeling allergens during product tastings and extend to packaging declarations, product descriptions and health claims.

Can a product be advertised as "high protein"? Under which product category does it fall? Questions such as these are crucial for a successful market launch.

For ValueGrain, the situation is comparatively favorable. Since spent grain is derived from barley malt and undergoes mechanical processing, Novel Food approval is not required. Nevertheless, food safety remains a significant challenge. Untreated spent grain is microbiologically unstable and must be stabilized, packaged and stored in ways that ensure safe use.

### **Sustainability Alone Does Not Sell Products**

Many food start-ups aim to improve resource efficiency, utilize side streams more effectively or replace animal-based ingredients.

"Today, it is no longer enough to simply say: We are sustainable," says Poppe.

According to Poppe, price and taste remain the decisive factors for consumers. Gräsing agrees. ValueGrain began with the goal of creating value from side streams and contributing to circular food systems. In discussions with food manufacturers, however, it quickly became clear that functionality is equally important. Products need to fit existing formulations and deliver benefits such as fibre content, protein enrichment, clean-label properties, freshness preservation or natural colouring.

These requirements make marketing increasingly important. Food innovations must be clearly communicated, properly positioned and easy for consumers to find. According to Poppe, alternative products do not necessarily perform best in separate category sections. A plant-based minced-meat product, for example, should be placed where consumers would normally look for minced meat.

## **What Retailers Expect**

Market success ultimately depends on whether a product works for retailers.

Retailers are open to innovative food products, both at head-office level and among store operators. However, new products must fit reliably into existing processes. Quality assurance, legal compliance, supply reliability and sufficient production volumes are essential.

Pricing must also align with market demand and allow consumers to recognize the added value of the product.

Packaging and logistics are equally important. Products must be suitable for transport, storage and point-of-sale presentation.

For market entry, Poppe recommends a phased approach. Instead of targeting major retail chains immediately, many start-ups can benefit from entering through food-service channels or institutional catering markets, where products can be tested on a smaller scale before broader commercialization.

## **Success Depends on Combining Multiple Factors**

What ultimately transforms a promising food idea into a successful commercial product?

Visitors to the Inhouse Farming Feed & Food Show 2026 in Hanover will have the opportunity to explore this question in depth.

The answer lies in the combination of technology, food expertise, financing, partnerships, raw material security, regulatory clarity, marketing and market access.

Ultimately, consumers make the final decision at the point of sale. Breaking through the market requires more than innovation alone. Success depends on having a product that is safe, scalable, affordable, understandable and supported by strong partners along the way.

**Further information:** <https://www.inhouse-farming.com/de/feed-food-show-at-eurotier/programm/retail-innovation-day>

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DLG. Progress and sustainability in the agriculture and food industry

The DLG (German Agricultural Society), founded in 1885 by Max Eyth, stands for productivity and sustainability in innovation-driven improvements in agriculture and the food chain. The aim of the DLG is to promote progress through the transfer of knowledge - especially with regard to technology and quality control. Non-profit, politically independent and with an international network, the DLG has more than 30,000 members worldwide.

As one of the leading organizations in its sector, the DLG not only organizes trade fairs and events in the fields of agriculture and food technology but also tests food, agricultural technology and equipment. With its competence centers for agriculture and food, its demonstration farm where practical trials take place along with its numerous publications, the DLG continually promotes independent knowledge transfer. In addition, the DLG works on numerous national and international committees of experts to develop solutions for the challenges facing agriculture and the food industry.

[www.dlg.org](http://www.dlg.org)