Score with quality
In the year 1885 in Berlin, the engineer and author Max Eyth founded the DLG (Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft – German Agricultural Society) – a society that was to be committed equally to progress and individual entrepreneurial responsibility. It was to be free in thought and action and fascinated by the opportunities presented by new engineering and methods as well as interesting markets. Over the past 129 years these visions have become reality. DLG’s independence in its expert and testing work, its trade fairs and conferences, is the guarantee behind this success story. Without political affiliation, economically independent and oriented to rational dialogue, DLG has succeeded in promoting agriculture and the food industry and generating impulses for progress. DLG’s hallmark is its objective round-table discussion format where practitioners and scientists on an equal footing jointly develop solutions for the key issues in agriculture and the food industry. This is a recipe for success that is unique in farming and the food sector and from which not least the various food industries profit in the form of conferences, training packages and the international DLG Quality Tests.

Free and independent

DLG is an expert organisation open for all – it is politically and economically independent.

Committed to progress

The founding principle and the self-conception of DLG are to promote scientific and technical progress. With its projects and activities, DLG sets standards and provides impulses for progress.

Areas of work:

- Finding solutions for the future
- Providing an overview of the market
- Testing products and issuing awards
- Transferring knowledge

International orientation

DLG thinks and acts internationally. It maintains a global exchange of knowledge with leading international practitioners and other expert organizations.

Today globalization requires international award-labelling systems with high informative power and credibility. The DLG Test Center Food is an internationally leading, independent expert organization for quality assessment of and quality awards for foods. Since 1885 foods that satisfy the DLG test criteria are awarded a Gold, Silver or Bronze medal. DLG medals are ambassadors for good taste and high quality foods. DLG promotes the diversity of taste, taking country-specific preferences into account and aims to make quality transparent. For quality knows no boundaries.
DLG is one of the key organizations when it comes to assessing the quality of foods and stands for experience, expertise and credibility. The DLG Test Center Food has been organizing quality tests regularly since 1885. This makes it the oldest test institution in Europe. Every year the DLG Test Center Food evaluates around 30,000 food products from home and abroad.

With its international tests, DLG leads quality assessment in Europe. Invitations to quality tests for the following product groups are issued regularly:

**Foods (of animal and plant origin):**
- Bread, fine bakery products, cereal foods and confectionary
- Convenience foods (animal and plant products in the form of ready dishes, frozen foods and delicatessen)
- Meat products (hams and sausage products)
- Milk and dairy products including ice cream
- Beverages (with and without alcohol)
- Wines/semi-sparkling wines/sparkling wines
- Edible oils

**Test venues**

So far DLG tests have been conducted predominantly in Germany. Since the year 2000 increasing numbers of tests have been carried out in other countries too:

- 2000 in Austria for cheese made from sheep and goat milk
- 2008 in Austria for cheese made from sheep and goat milk
- 2012 in Japan for ham and sausage, convenience products
- 2013 in Austria for cheese and fresh cheese
- 2014 in Japan for ham and sausage, convenience products and bakery products

**The goals of the DLG Test Center**
- Promote the product quality of foods
- Make high quality levels visible for trade and consumers by labelling them with DLG awards
- Promote scientific and technical progress
DLG promotes the product quality of foods on the basis of neutral and binding quality standards. Its quality concept is based on the latest scientific findings and recognized methods it has developed in-house. DLG is accredited in accordance with DIN EN 45011. The DLG network of experts stands for sector-specific and methodological expertise in quality assessment and evaluation. DLG is certified in accordance with DIN EN ISO 17042 for this too.

The products registered for tests are sorted on the basis of sector-specific criteria and organized in product groups. A number of sensory experts who satisfy the sector-specific prerequisites for assessing foods are allocated to the product groups and form a tester (assessor) group. Generally, the tester groups are made up of a practitioner from the craft trade and the industry, a representative of academia or the food surveillance sector or the trade. In addition, a guest tester can be allocated to a tester group. The tests are carried out in the form of group testing or individual testing depending on the product specifics. The products are assessed in accordance with the DLG 5-point scheme®. The tests begin with a preliminary meeting with the testers or test group leaders headed by the DLG Test Officer. At this meeting the sector-specific innovations and special features of the product groups are discussed. After this an alignment test is conducted to ensure uniform sensory assessment of the product groups. Using selected samples, the assessment standard is coordinated with the testers. After each test a final meeting is held to summarize the sector-specific and organizational course of the test and make any suggestions for improvement.

The DLG 5-point-scheme®

“DLG award-winner” means that a food is a high-quality product. Strict standards are taken as a basis and are consistently developed further. DLG issues an award for products that meet the high DLG quality requirements. In the sensory expert analysis, special attention is paid to the impartiality and independence of the quality assessment. The comprehensive examinations are supplemented by further product-specific quality parameters such as laboratory analyses, tests of preparation, or inspections of packaging and labelling.

DLG describes and assesses foods in four quality dimensions:

- technologically sound and perfectly crafted food production (enjoyment value),
- product safety and dietary quality,
- truthful labelling and transparency of information for consumers,
- defined quality criteria throughout the production process.

DLG’s quality concept is based on a dynamic understanding of the qualitative assessment of foods. It is consistently developed further in agreement with the latest scientific findings, the state of the art and specific requirements of the food market. The DLG 5-point scheme® supports an objective assessment of the sector-specific freedom from faults of a food product in accordance with technological possibilities, the prevailing public understanding and good manufacturing practice.
Qualified DLG testers

DLG has an extensive network of proven experts from home and abroad. This expert network is the guarantor for DLG’s sectoral and methodological expertise in quality assessment and evaluation. All of the some 3000 proven experts with a high level of technical expertise and deep-reaching knowledge of the products work on an honorary basis. They work as specialists e.g. in product development and quality assurance, in the food industry, in craft trades, in the field of official food surveillance, in laboratories, test institutes or research.

The testers work on an honorary basis and must furnish evidence of their sensory qualification before being accepted into the DLG tester pool. Evidence of qualification may be the accredited DLG Sensory Tester Certificate or the DLG Tester Pass Plus. The requirements connected with the testing and evaluation are described by the DLG Certification Unit. This is accredited in accordance with the international norms DIN EN 45011 and DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024. The sensory experts from the test pool are invited to the DLG Quality Tests and assigned on a product group-specific basis. Through the sectoral diversity of the experts, a high-quality product-specific assessment is guaranteed for the respective sensory quality test. In addition to the proven sectoral qualification, training of the sensory perception and application of the DLG 5-point scheme® is necessary. These prerequisites are examined in a qualification test. Only in this way can optimal assessment of the products with consideration given to sensory properties and product-specific technologies be assured. The experts regularly attend DLG sensory training sessions subsequently too.

DLG Method and DIN Standard

DLG has defined its own test method: “Descriptive test with integrated assessment”. It relates with this to the international norms DIN 10964 (Simple descriptive test), DIN 10975 (Expert opinion) and DIN 10969 (Descriptive testing with subsequent quality evaluation).

The DLG 5-point scheme® is a descriptive sensory analysis with scales on the basis of assessment by experts. It focuses on the visual (appearance/exter-
rior), haptic (consistence/texture), olfactory (odour) and gustative (taste) criteria. The optimal quality standard in these criteria is defined by the DLG Expert Commission for each product. The optimal quality standard corresponds to the top score of 5.0 points. A product wins a Gold Medal if it is free of faults in the sensory test and satisfies all further quality parameters. The foods are tested and assessed on the basis of product-specific test schedules.

The product properties ascertained in the evaluation tables are assessed on the basis of the DLG 5-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Quality description</th>
<th>General properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Quality expectations reached in full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Slight deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Perceptible deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Less satisfactory</td>
<td>Clear deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not satisfactory</td>
<td>Strong deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td>Not evaluable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology of DLG Quality Tests

Test method and schedule

1. Definition and monitoring of the test criteria and test method
   on the basis of the latest scientific standards by a Commission of Experts

2. Invitation to the DLG Tests
   Voluntary participation for all food producers
   Food-law specifications are the prerequisite for admission to the tests

3. Admission monitoring for the tests
   Products satisfy the food-law conditions

4. Call-up of test samples
   Foods examined in the DLG Tests originate from ongoing production

5. Laboratory analyses*
   Depending on the product sector – microbiological, chemical
   and physical laboratory analyses

6. Inspection of labelling and packaging*
   By experts who are not involved in the sensory tests

7. Sensory testing*
   By experts in accordance with scientific standard (DLG 5-point scheme)

8. Evaluation of the test results (points 5 to 7)
   Award of quality label or failure

9. Monitoring
   In the event of complaints and cases of abuse

* defined on a product-specific basis
Advertising with the DLG awards achieved

Advertising is admissible with

- the test findings, the award certificate,
- the DLG award symbols: illustrations of the DLG Medals in Bronze, Silver and Gold,
- textual references to the award (e.g. in press texts or advertisements), in as far as these describe the scope of the award objectively and correctly.

The DLG award won may be used for a period of 24 months after the date of the test findings.

As of 2014 there will be a special award for companies who have been participating in the tests for many years: the DLG Award for Many Years of Product Quality:

**DLG Award for Many Years of Product Quality**

The “DLG Award for Many Years of Product Quality” is an award for product quality that has been tested over many years at the DLG Quality Tests and is awarded annually by DLG to producers.

As a prerequisite for this award, the company must have participated for five years in succession and achieved at least three awards per award year. If this is the case, as of the fifth successful year of participation the company will be presented with the “DLG Award for Many Years of Product Quality” for the first time. Provided that the conditions for award are still satisfied, the company will receive the award continuously for the second time, third time, etc. If a producer does not participate one year or does not achieve the necessary number of awards, it loses its claim to this producer award (for example no award in 2014 -> loss of the award as of 1.1.2015). The company can begin to build up a new entitlement in the following years, for which earlier awards do not count.

If a test is only held every two years, regular participation is counted as annual participation.

Use the advantages…

... in quality assurance/product development

- Test results with independent expert judgement
- Tips for optimizing quality
- Cross-company quality comparisons in the sector

Communication services

- DLG Certificates and DLG Medals
- Press releases
- Publication of award-winner details