



INFO BROCHURE

Everything
you need to know
as a dairy exhibitor
at the International
Food Contest
2026



MCH MESSECENTER HERNING
October 27-29 2026

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International Food Contest

International Food Contest takes place at MCH Messecenter Herning on October 27. - October 29., 2026 in Hall M.

In 2026, International Food Contest is part of FoodTech 2026.

FOODTECH

International Food Contest is the meeting place of the entire food sector. Food products as well as state-of-the-art machine technology for the food sector are exhibited at the exhibition.

All foods are quality assessed based on trade professional criteria. Judges are from the trade itself, professional users or other specialists.

Benefits from participation are:

- Professional pride through assessment, prizes and celebration of winners.
- Training/dialogue between exhibitors and company staff.
- Inspiration for quality improvement and development.
- Presentation of the multitude of products manufactured in the food sector.
- Increased knowledge of the full product range of the food sector and direct contact with the other professional operators in the sector.

Organisers

The following associations are behind the exhibition:

- Danish Dairy Board / The Dairy Committee
- The Danish Dairy Managers Association
- The Association of Danish Private Dairies
- The Danish Cheese and Butter Association.

Secretariat / contact

The exhibition secretariat consists of:

- International Food Contest
Director Mr Lars Johannes Nielsen
mobile +45 3083 1081
email: ljn@lf.dk
- Product and referee Manager
Mr Birger Holmeå Christiansen
mobile +45 2878 4560
email: birgerhc@gmail.com
- Coordinator
Mr Morten Rosenbak Groth
mobile +45 3123 2456
email: mrg@mejeri.dk

Postal address:

International Food Contest,
c/o Landbrug & Fødevarer F.m.b.A.,
Agro Food Park 26, 8200 Aarhus N.
Homepage: www.foodcontest.eu

Exhibition programme

Opening hours are 9.00 AM - 4 PM on October 27. - October 29., 2026.

Please check programme and event details on www.foodcontest.eu.



Products for the exhibition

Products

Dairies worldwide may enter all types of dairy products from their current production. **This also includes plant-based products.**

Wholesalers may register products, too; however, registration must take place in the name of the producing dairy company, not the name of the wholesaler.

Producers of dairy products based on semi-finished products may enter the finished products in their own name, and wholesalers slicing cheese or packing dairy products may enter products in their own name.

It is the producer's responsibility to ensure that the products have the correct type of designation and are placed in the correct assessment team.

Product registration

In 2026, the registration of products for the International Food Contest will be based on a web solution.

Dairies that have previously participated must use the user ID and password previously used. Previously registered products will be displayed in the portal, when it is reopened in a new exhibition year.

New participating dairies will, by email, receive a user ID and password to access the new web solution where it is possible to register products - both new and old.

In a separate document, there will be a step-by-step guide for registering products in the new solution.

When registering new products, you must as a minimum specify::

- product type
- batch number (remember to distinguish between whole cheeses and non-whole cheeses (sliced and packaged cheeses))
- fat% or f.i.t.
- weight or volume
- flavour (if not neutral)
- and, in the case of cheeses, the degree of ripeness (not applicable to fresh cheeses).

Registration of products can take place from June 7. until September 16, 2026.

After enrolled products are registered **under the dairy's web login**, dairies will receive a final list of this year's enrolled products and a label file with information about these products. **This file must be printed on labels in the format 63.5x38.1mm, 21 labels per A4 page (equivalent to Avery L7160)**. The printer must be set to "Actual size", otherwise the printer will adjust the margins and the printout will no longer fit the label sheets. These labels, labelled "Judge-see" and "Supplement" respectively, **must** be placed on each product when it is sent for judging. At retail packed products minimum 4 peace must be labeled "Judge-see". If both product for judgement at product for supplement is packed in same carton, all products must be labeled. If only supplement products is packed in one carton "Supplement" labeling on the carton is fine.

If there are still changes to the products after registration, please notify ifc@foodcontest.dk as soon as possible. Remember to state the product ID for the products to be corrected/deleted.

Classes

Products for grading and display are divided into classes. Depending on the number of products registered the classes may be adapted in accordance.

If any class becomes so large that grading becomes difficult, the organizers reserve the right to divide the class in question into two or more subcategories. Each subcategory is regarded as a separate class. A min. of 5 products is required to form a separate class. If so, the organizers decide which group the product will be judged in.

The organisers decide which class a product belongs to. There is no possibility for appealing the decision.

For further information about classes, look under the information on the respective product categories.

Products for the exhibition

Assessment descriptions

When relevant for the grading of the products the dairy may forward a **short** description. This assessment description will be made available to the judges when grading the product in question. Products with no specific description will be assessed on the basis of the judges' professional knowledge and in accordance with trade specifications.

Short description is important for cheese products. That allow the judges to give a correct grading

It is **not** necessary to describe information which is also stated on the product registration form – e.g. that a yoghurt with strawberries shall have a strawberry flavour. All information on the product registration form except the sales name of the product is also made available to the judges when grading the products.

Forwarding of products

In order for the products to participate in assessment or display they must be delivered at:

MCH Messecenter Herning
7, Kaj Zartows Vej, Hall G
DK 7400 Herning
(access: Gate 25 via Gate 20 or 21 from Messevejen)

on Friday October 23, 2026
between 09 PM and 2 AM

NEW! If products will be delayed, Product and referee Manager Mr. Birger Holmeå Christian- sen must be contacted at +45 2878 4560.

Products received later than 2 AM can be rejected by the management if not reported.

Products received later than this will be rejected by the management.

Each product **must** carry the labels received on the basis of the product registration. Also, products for display only must carry a label. All products for assessment **must** carry the label saying

"For grading", and supplementary products **must** carry the "Suppl. product" labels.

Please be careful **not** to cover the date and beware that the labels should be clearly visible from above when a box is opened – see examples below.

Furthermore, a packing list of all the products forwarded **must** be forwarded together with the products (a copy of the registration receipt). This facilitates registration of incoming products and will assure that all products forwarded are assessed.

If a product registered for assessment or display is not forwarded, please **cross it off** the packing list.



All products shall be delivered free to MCH Messecenter Herning (above forwarding address).

The organisers shall charge products not delivered free with freight costs + a service charge of DKK 100.00 per entry.

Products for the exhibition

Entry fee

Entry fee for grading and exhibition of products:
DKK 735.00 + VAT per product.

Entry fee for display (no grading) of products:
DKK 210.00 + VAT per product (powder products/
cheese powder and products for display only).

Products which are not used will not be returned
but will be destroyed.

Invoicing for all registered products will take place
prior to the exhibition based on the number of
products registered.

Miscellaneous

Common force majeure clauses are applicable in
relation to participation in the exhibition.

In case of doubt concerning the interpretation of
the rules and regulations governing the Interna-
tional Food Contest, any decision made by the
organisers is final and cannot be appealed.

All grading results are secret until the exhibition
opening, and information about results will not be
given prior to this time.

Product specific rules

A number of product specific rules applies for
participation in International Food Contest – read
more: cheese, butter & blends, liquid milk prod-
ucts, products manufactured from other milk than
cow's milk, or from mixtures, powder ingredients
& cheese powder as well as plant-based products.



Cheese

The dairies may send various packaging sizes of the same cheese type, and they may also send identical cheese types with and without flavours respectively and in different stages of maturity.

Whole cheeses may not have been examined with a cheese trier in advance.

Cheese classes

10. Plain and sweet fresh cheeses and cream cheeses

20. Spicy fresh cheeses and cream cheeses

30. Processed cheese

40. Other fresh cheese, natural and flavoured

E.g. cottage cheese, quark and smoked curd cheese (unripened cheeses not belonging in classes 10, 20 or 30).

50. Whole white mould cheese and blue/white mould cheese

60. Danablu (PGI) (whole as well as wedges, chunks and slices).

70. White cheese, traditional

80. White cheese, ultra-filtrated

81. Combi white, ultra-filtrated

90. Surface-ripened/smear-ripened whole cheeses Also with herbs and spices.

100. Surface-ripened/smear-ripened chunks and wedges Also with herbs and spices.

110. Whole blue mould cheeses

120. Rindless cheeses

Whole cheese and chunks/wedges and with herbs and spices.

130. Specialty cheeses, whole

140. Specialty cheeses, chunks and wedges

150. Cheddar and Mozzarella

(whole and grated) as well as other grated/cubed cheeses.

160. Mould-ripened cheeses – wedges, hunks and slices Cheeses cut after ripening so that the structure of the cheese is exposed on the cutting surface

170. Sliced yellow cheese

All sliced cheese.

180. Norwegian specialty cheeses

190. Cheeses for display only

Quantities to be submitted

For each entry, a **minimum of 9 kg** shall be submitted unless otherwise agreed with the secretariat.

For grading

A minimum of 2 cheeses shall be submitted for grading: 1 unit for the first grading and 1 unit for the International Dairy Contest finals if required. For large cheeses, the same cheese may be used for both gradings. However, for small cheeses and package cheese (wedges, hunks and slices) a minimum of 8 units labelled "For grading" shall be submitted.

Cheeses shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation (incl. date stamp). All cheeses in retail packaging must have date stamps. For whole cheeses a date code referring to the production day is sufficient. Products without date stamp will not be assessed.



Butter & blends

Butter & blends classes

310. Butter

Salted and unsalted butter in all packaging sizes, including spiced butter

320. Spreadables and blends

Products where some of the milk fat has been replaced by other fat

330. Butter and blends for display only

Quantities to be submitted

For each entry, a **minimum quantity of 4 kg** of butter or blend shall be submitted of each product to be graded. Cartons with retail packages shall be full.

For grading

A minimum of 4 packages shall be submitted for grading.

Packages shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation (incl. date stamp). Products without date stamp will not be assessed.



Liquid milk products

Liquid milk product classes

510. Skimmed milk, semi-skimmed milk and whole milk

511. Cream, min. 8% fat

512. Unfermented long-life products incl. lactose-free and vitamin fortified products

520. Fermented drinking and spoon able products <3.0% fat (minus yoghurt)

521. Fermented drinking and spoon able products ≥3.0% fat (minus yoghurt)

522. Skyr

530. Yoghurt made from skimmed milk or semi-skimmed milk <3% fat

540. Yoghurt made from whole milk ≥3% fat

560. Milk desserts, soft-ice mix and ice-cream

561. Unfermented milk drinks, flavoured milk and chocolate milk

570. Sauces, soups etc.

590. Liquid milk products for display only

Quantities for submission

	Packaging size	No. of units
Class 510: Skim, semi-skim and whole milk Class 511: Cream, min. 8% fat Class 512: Unfermented long-life products incl. lactose-free and vitamin fortified products	1/1 litre carton/cup 1/2 litre carton/cup 1/4 or 1/5 litre or less carton/cup	6 pcs. 12 pcs. 12 pcs.
Class 520: Fermented drinking and spoon able products <3.0% fat (minus yoghurt) Class 521: Fermented drinking and spoon able products ≥3.0% fat (minus yoghurt) Class 522: Skyr Class 530: Yoghurt <3% fat Class 540: Yoghurt ≥3,0% fat	1/1 litre carton/cup 1/2 litre carton/cup Portion sizes/carton	12 pcs. 12 pcs. 20 pcs.
Class 560: Milk desserts, soft-ice mix and ice-cream Class 561: Unfermented milk drinks, flavoured milk and chocolate milk	1/1 litre 1/2 litre Portion sizes For ice-cream: A quantity corresponding to:	36 pcs. 72 pcs. 120 pcs. 25 litres
Class 570: Sauces, soups etc.	1/1 litre 1/2 litre 1/4 litre	12 pcs. 16 pcs. 24 pcs.
Class 590: Liquid milk products for display only	Quantities of products for display only are identical to quantities required for products to be graded.	

For grading

At least 2 units shall be forwarded for grading: 1 unit for the first grading and 1 unit for the International Dairy Contest finals if required.

Packages shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation. Products without date stamp will not be assessed.

A minimum of 4 units of small packaging sizes (<½ litre) shall be submitted for grading.

Products manufactured from other milk than cow's milk, or from mixtures

Classes

610. Products manufactured from other milk types than cow's milk, or from mixtures

This class comprises all product types: cheese, butter & spreads and liquid milk products.

The products are graded in accordance with the criteria used for the product type in question.

Quantities to be submitted

Quantities to be submitted of products for display only are identical to quantities required for products to be graded. (see under the relevant categories: cheese, butter & blends, liquid milk products).

Packages shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation (incl. date stamp). Products without date stamp will not be assessed.

Powder ingredients / cheese powder

Classes

710. Powder ingredients / cheese powder

Powder ingredients / cheese powder will not be graded, but participate as display products.

Submission of products

All entries shall carry a label on the outer packaging saying "IFC / International Food Contest – Powder ingredients / cheese powder".

Packages shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation (incl. date stamp).

Plant-based products

(does not participate in the International Dairy Contest)

Classes

810. Plant-based products

The class comprises 100 % plant-based products.

For grading

At **least 1 unit** shall be forwarded for grading.

A **minimum of 4 units** of small packaging sizes (<½ litre) shall be submitted for grading.

Packages shall be clearly labelled in accordance with current legislation. Products without date stamp will not be assessed.

Quantities to be submitted

Packaging size	No. of units
1/1 litre carton/cup	9 pcs.
1/2litre carton/cup	9 pcs.
1/4 or 1/5 litre or less carton/cup	18 pcs.

Grading

Time and method

Product assessment takes place on Monday October 26, 2026.

An electronic assessment system will be used. This means that:

- Each judge must bring a laptop or a tablet
- The pc/tablet should be fully charged in advance, but a charger should be brought to be on the safe side.
- The pc/tablet must have internet connection (wifi).

The best product in each class of dairy products automatically participates in the International Dairy Contest finals. Finals assessments take place on Tuesday 27 October 2026 at 9 AM in Hall M at the class winners table. The final assessment is open for audience to follow. At the final assessment the judges can use all numbers from 10 to 15, and odd numbers from 9 and below.

Grading rules

The judges will use a marking scale with marks from 1 – 15, i.e. only uneven numbers are used. Products are graded in accordance with the assessment descriptions supplied by the dairies. If no descriptions are available, common product standards will be used.

Whenever possible, products will be presented to the judges in neutral packaging so that no identification is possible.

If a mark is 11 points or below, a remark must be supplied as to the reason for this mark. The applicable marks will be shown on the electronic assessment form.

Grading of liquid milk products

Grading takes place in two sessions. During the first session, all judges agree on a single mark for the following properties:

- Packaging
- Product appearance and consistency.

The joint mark is entered in the assessment system on the chief judge's login.

During the second session, each judge passes a mark and remarks, if any, on the property:

- Product odour & taste.

For the latter session, the products have been poured into neutral packaging.

The following guidelines apply to products with two chambers or in two or more tiers:

Two-chamber products:

- Appearance: normal assessment.
- Consistency: the milk part of the products is assessed as normal.
- Odour & taste: prior to the assessment of Odour & taste the crew member mixes the contents of the two chambers, and assessment is made of this mixture so that all judges taste identical mixtures.

Two-tier products:

- Appearance: normal assessment.
- Consistency: the product is poured onto a flat plate, and a single mark is passed on the consistency of sauce and milk part.
- Odour & taste: the judge passes a mark on the main impression from his own mixture.

Grading of butter & blends

Each judge passes his mark on the following:

- Packaging
- Appearance
- Consistency
- Odour & taste.

The result for each individual product is the average of all judges' marks.



Grading

Grading of cheese

Judges give only property marks, however joint marking for some properties in certain classes. The primary mark is calculated according to a weighting of the individual property marks.

The evaluation is carried out in two stages. In the first stage, the entire judging team jointly assigns points for each of the characteristics:

- Exterior including the appearance of the packaging
- The appearance of the product.

This joint rating is noted by the team leader on his login.

In the second stage, the judges individually assign a rating and any comments on the characteristics:

- Consistency
- Smell & taste.

Grading of plant-based products

Grading of plant-based products, follows the rules for grading of the corresponding dairy product.

Marking scale

Point scale for property marks:

15 points	Very good
13 points	Good
11 points	Minor imperfection (a remark must be given)
9 points	Major imperfection
7 points	Obvious flaw which may harm the reputation of the product
5 points	Serious flaw which may harm the reputation of the product
3 points	Very serious flaws
1 point	Unacceptable defects.



Prizes

Rules for awarding prizes

Class winner

If several products in a class in any of the 3 product categories are on par, the following calculation will apply:

All calculations are done to so many decimals that a difference is evident, if possible.

If two or more primary marks are still on par, the following calculation is used:

- **Cheese:** If two or more cheeses are on par as far as primary mark is concerned, the winning product is the one with the highest characteristics mark, in the following prioritized order: odour & taste; consistency; structure; colour; and exterior.
- **Butter & blends:** If two or more entries have the same absolute highest primary mark, Taste & odour are prioritized followed by Consistency and Appearance.
- **Liquid milk products:** As far as liquid milk products are concerned the order is Taste & odour, followed by the appearance of the products, its consistency as well as packaging appearance (joint grading mark).
- **Plant-based drinks:** This category follows the same rules as liquid milk products (see previous).

If in the end two or more products are still on par, the finals chief judge will decide on the winning product in collaboration with his fellow judges.

International Dairy Contest

The product with the highest marks within each of the 3 product categories **Cheese, Butter & blends and Liquid milk products** is found by adding the results obtained in the finals to the difference between the class winner result and the class average calculated from the ordinary assessment rounds.

In case of two or more products having the same finals result, the winner is found in the same way as for class winners (see above).

Publication of winners of the International Dairy Contest

Winners of International Dairy Contest 2026 are revealed in connection with the official opening of the exhibition on Tuesday October 27 2026

If possible, a representative of the dairy winning the International Dairy Contest should be present at the exhibition opening. Supplementary quantities of the winning products may also be required.

Contact person for class winners

The secretariat would like to have contact information of the person to be informed of a winning position on Monday October 26, as all class winners have the possibility of becoming International Dairy Contest winners, too. Please state mobile phone number and email address – also for an alternative contact person.

The contact form can be found within the dairies web login.



Prizes to be won

The winner of each class within the categories **Cheese, Butter & blends and Liquid milk** products automatically participates in the International Dairy Contest.

The Danish Dairy Board Award is conferred on the product from each category (cheese, butter & blends and liquid milk) winning the International Dairy Contest.

Class winners

Class winners are calculated according to the same rules as those applying to the International Dairy Contest.

Only products having reached gold-medal level may be awarded a prize

Products receiving prizes are included in the list showing the best max. 10% of the class, i.e. products having won a gold medal.

The winner of each class receives a company sponsored prize.

A list of all prizes will be published showing award winners as well as prize sponsors.

Medals

Products receiving medals will be marked on the presentation tables, but actual medals will not be issued.

Medal winners receive a diploma instead. The diplomas will be forwarded by post after the exhibition.

- Gold medals: Max. 10% of each class will be awarded gold medals. If a class has 77 products a max. of 7 gold medals is awarded to this class. However, classes with ≤ 9 products will receive one gold medal. When finding the best 10%, the calculation is made to 2 digits. If 2 or more product primary marks are on a par the winner is found according to the same rules as those described for class winners.
- Silver and bronze medals: The highest placed products up to 20% of each class which were not awarded a gold medal are awarded silver medals, and the rest up to min. 33% of each class is awarded a bronze medal. When finding the winners of silver and bronze medals, decimals are taken into account, and only on the primary mark.

Using prizes/medals for marketing purposes

Winners of prizes and medals may use these on the sales packaging of the product. Prizes and medals are date stamped and may of course only be used for the product having won the prize/medal, not for the entire product line of the company.

Print files will be available under each dairy's web login after the exhibition.



Gourmet Awards – taste the best from Denmark!

The prestigious **Gourmet Award 2026** was awarded on April 14th at Magasinet Lækkerier in Copenhagen. Later Winners tasting was held in connection with Lækkerier award at Hotel og Restaurantskolen in Copenhagen.

This year's judging panel consisted of educator and cookbook author **Helle Brønnum Carlsen**, wine and food critic and owner of Feinschmeckeren.dk **Rasmus Palsgaard**, and Michelin chef **Brian Mark**. The judges assessed the gastronomic and taste quality of the submitted products.

This year, the categories have been adjusted. Among other things, a category for goat and sheep milk products has been added, and the categories for human consumption and ice cream have been combined. A total of 55 products participated in the competition

Forwarding of products for exhibition:

Delivering to:

MCH Messecenter Herning

Kaj Zartows Vej 7, Hal G, DK 7400 Herning

(access: Gate 25 via Gate 20 or 21 from Messevejen).

Clearly marked: **Gourmet Award**

**On Friday October 23, 2026
between 09 AM and 2 PM**

Contact regarding **Gourmet Award**

Questions regarding Gourmet Award can be directed to responsible person for Gourmet Award:

Pia Damgaard Beck, mobil +45 23 48 63 73, e-mail: pdb@mejeri.dk.



QUICK REFERENCES

Programme / events

Check www.foodcontest.eu

Information about FoodTech: www.foodtech.dk

Important dates

- Deadline for registration September 16, 2026
- Registered products must arrive at October 23, 2026
- Grading of dairy products October 26, 2026
- International Food Contest takes place October 27-29, 2026



In Danish / dansk udgave

En dansk udgave af denne brochure kan downloades fra www.foodcontest.dk

Secretariat:

26, Agro Food Park, DK – 8200 Aarhus N.
Phone: +45 30 83 10 81

IFC Director:

Mr Lars Johannes Nielsen, ljn@lf.dk

MEJERIFORENINGEN
Danish Dairy Board

INTERNATIONAL
FOOD
CONTEST