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Dr. August Oetker Nahrungsmittel KG
Public Relations
Lutterstraße 14
33617 Bielefeld
Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 521 155 0
Fax: +49 (0) 521 155 2995
E-mail: service@oetker.de
Internet: www.oetker.com / www.oetker.de

Quality policy in practice



Quality is the best recipe

Our slogan "Quality is the best recipe" testifies to the high quality of our branded food products. It reminds each and every one of our employees of the commitment to put this claim into effect in all areas of the business – day in, day out. This dedication to quality has been one of the decisive factors in the success of our company ever since its formation.

It is a basic requirement for the success of the Dr. Oetker brand to view the high quality and safety standards of our products as a matter of course, to be thoroughly familiar with the potential risks involved in the production, transportation and preparation of food, to minimise these risks and take account of environmental compatibility.

The Dr. Oetker brand and our branded goods enjoy a very high degree of trust among consumers and business partners. To ensure that we always live up to the priceless trust placed in the superlative quality and reliability of our international products and services, our quality policy is precisely defined in quality targets throughout our organisation.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "August Oetker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. h. c. August Oetker
Chairman of the Executive Board
Dr. Oetker GmbH

Many products – one success factor

The diverse range of Dr. Oetker baking products encompasses such ingredients as Original Backin baking powder, Vanillin sugar, flavourings and baking mixtures that provide the right enjoyment for every occasion, thanks to many new developments. For dessert – in addition to the classic Original Dr. Oetker Pudding – there are mousses, creams, jellies and fruit puddings to choose from. To tempt the palate, there are Süße Mahlzeiten, offering such delights as creamed noodles, creamed rice and semolina. More and more consumers get the day off to a crisp, crunchy start with Vitalis Müsli. Dr. Oetker pizzas have occupied a firm place in consumers' freezers for more than three decades and are available in an increasing number of varieties. Anyone fancying a warm bite to eat between meals can

reach for Intermezzo, a true Dr. Oetker innovation. Two minutes in the microwave and Pizza Snacks are ready to provide hearty enjoyment. Crème fraîche from Dr. Oetker gives many recipes just the right touch of freshness. Jam-making at home is straightforward with Dr. Oetker preserving products.

Not only the final consumers, but also the restaurant and catering trades appreciate the Dr. Oetker special assortment, which is precisely tailored to the needs of large-scale users.

Dr. Oetker products are available in Germany, in many European countries and in a number of countries outside Europe. The products and their packaging display country-specific features: typical

ingredients are used and, for historical reasons, the brand logo in Italy is Cameo. But wherever they are sold, the same principle applies to all Dr. Oetker products – "Quality is the best recipe."

The quality promise of the brand

Anyone choosing a Dr. Oetker product expects one of high-quality with that "special" taste experience. The recipes and serving suggestions document the competence of the Dr. Oetker brand. The preparation of Dr. Oetker products is simple, and even the less ambitious consumer can rely on them to turn out right every time.

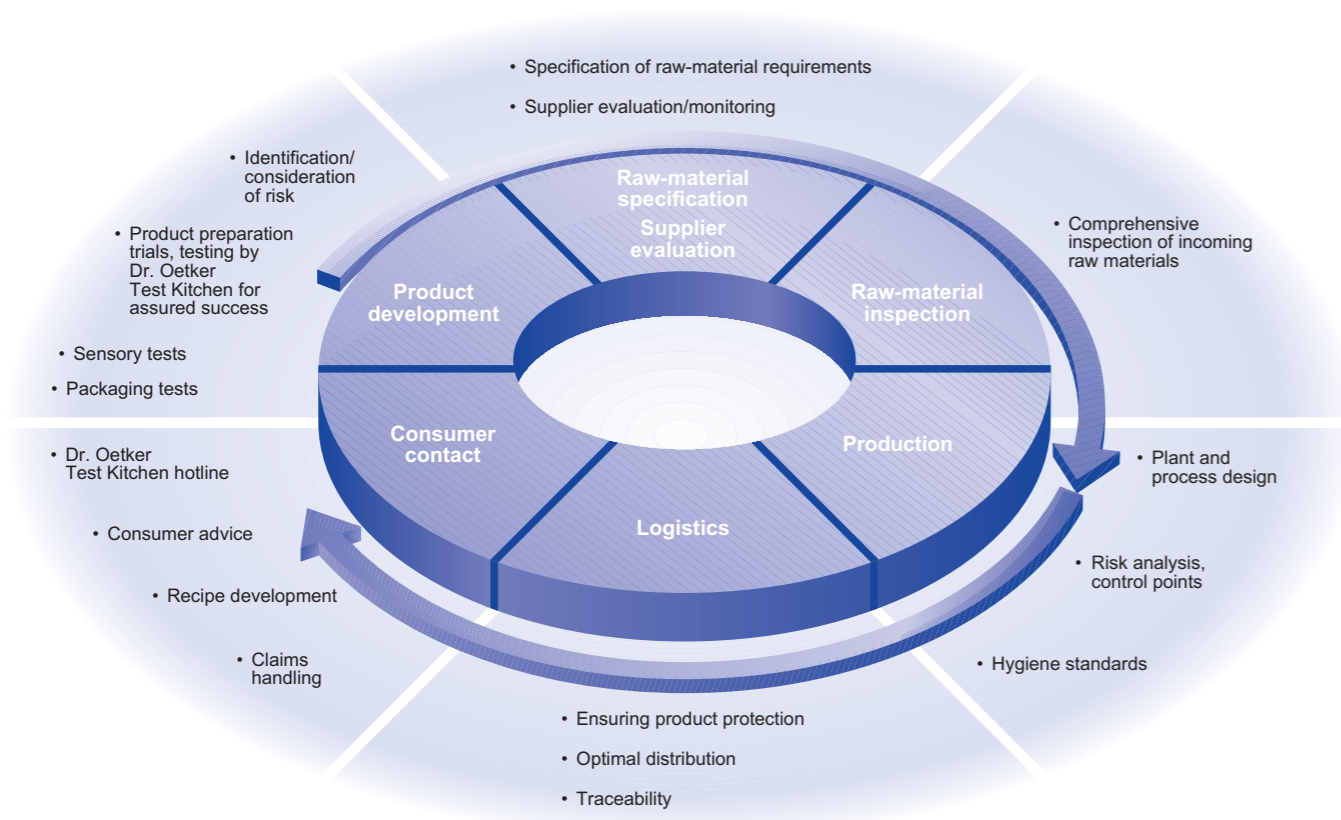
As well as incomparable eating pleasure, Dr. Oetker brand quality also signifies product safety thanks to the careful selection of the raw materials and the fulfilment of stringent quality standards throughout the production process. And the special quality of this brand must be seen, not least, as the aspiration to satisfy consumer needs in the best possible way.



Quality management at every stage

Consideration of safety and quality begins at the very first stage of product and packaging design, playing a crucial role in the choice and inspection of the ingredients. In the production phase, quality assurance means the constant monitoring of standards and strict observance of hygiene regulations. The primary duty during transport is to ensure that the goods come to no harm and their origin always remains clearly identifiable. Contact with consumers is used to examine the extent to which products and preparation instructions satisfy customer aspirations. Both ends of the quality management system are thus interlinked, as the consideration of consumer requirements and suggestions, in turn, feeds back into the development of new products.

Dr. Oetker Quality Assurance – in line with food hygiene legislation – follows the HACCP concept (Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point), which analyses the production process for any potential health hazards. At precisely determined check-points, appropriate control measures guarantee product safety and quality. Every single detail of the prevention-oriented measures for quality assurance is specified, with Dr. Oetker personnel firmly integrated in the quality assurance process. The standards laid down by Quality Assurance are implemented at all Dr. Oetker locations. Outside auditors regularly review the quality management system and certify its effectiveness in accordance with the internationally valid norm. No matter where the pudding powder, baking mix, ready-made dessert or pizza is produced, the Dr. Oetker brand promises supreme product quality and safety in every instance.



One example of the quality of Dr. Oetker products

What concrete measures are taken at Dr. Oetker to implement the quality claim can be clearly demonstrated by taking the example of a ready-made dessert that is increasingly being enjoyed "between meals": Dr. Oetker Wölkchen. Small white clouds against a blue sky on the lid stand for the superb creaminess and lightness of the pudding

cream, which is available in many delicious varieties and is enjoying rising popularity. With Dr. Oetker Wölkchen as an example, the following pages provide a brief insight into some of the numerous measures taken – from product development to transportation – to ensure the safety and first-class quality of this product.



How quality originates is determined by many

At Dr. Oetker, quality assurance begins right back at the development stage of a new product. Ideas are evolved by identifying gaps in the range of goods, by refining inspiration gained from products in other countries or by exploring the suggestions submitted by Dr. Oetker staff. An interesting idea is transformed into a recipe by a team of experts in various fields who draw on the wide range of information to be found in our databases. If, after the first tasting of the sample, the decision is taken to pursue the idea, a concept is created which specifies every aspect of the demands made on the new product.

The product is expected to meet consumer needs and market conditions and be simple and safe for consumers to prepare. Naturally, it has to comply with food law requirements. The Dr. Oetker Research and Development Department (R&D), incidentally, also contributes to the further development of food law standards.

Since there is, famously, no accounting for taste, not only do Dr. Oetker's R&D experts judge whether the new product has a chance in the marketplace, but so, in sensory tests, do a large number of

consumers. The knowledge gained in the process helps Product Development to choose the optimal raw materials and recipes and supplies additional data through product preparation and shelf-life tests. Furthermore, any potential effects of the packaging are investigated and the profile of the products is measured both against competing offerings and in terms of their staying power. Dr. Oetker's Sensory Analysis Unit in Bielefeld also trains staff from Quality Assurance, because it is here that the constant testing – in particular sensory testing – of raw materials, semi-finished and finished goods takes place.

A group of external testers, comprising almost 3,000 consumers, answer questions on the popularity of various products. It is therefore consumers who keep a check on whether Dr. Oetker products always live up to the challenging quality claim. The testers examine products or elements of the product with all the senses – i.e., the appearance, smell, taste, consistency and handling. The Dr. Oetker Wölkchen was also tested in this way ahead of its launch, and it goes without saying that Dr. Oetker would not have put it on the market if it had not been given an outstanding assessment.



Precise questions to consumers: sensory analysis tests at Dr. Oetker.



Optimal packaging

Product development also includes packaging development. The product has to be reproduced on the packet as closely as possible to the way it is best prepared and served. First and foremost, however, it must be ensured that package labelling contains all the information the consumer needs and takes account of the extensive legislation governing product declaration and consumer information. Product packaging is also developed to provide adequate protection during transport and storage and to meet ecological requirements, especially as regards minimising transport weight and the amount of material to be disposed of. Moreover, right back at the product development stage it has to be guaranteed that there is no interaction between packaging and product.

Consumers have their say

In group discussions, participants consider and weigh up all aspects to decide whether the consumer target groups concerned will actually take to the new product. Market Research runs checks on, among other things, optimal product names as well as acceptance of the concept and the packaging. Once the production facilities have been set up and adjusted, production trials are performed for as long as it takes to meet specification. When R&D and Marketing give the go-ahead, manufacture of the new product begins and the quality representatives in the plants ensure that the stringent quality regulations are observed in every detail – from raw-material inspection to despatch of the finished product.

Demanding the most of the raw materials

Quality depends not only on a good recipe – the ingredients, too, play a prominent role. In Germany alone, the entire range of Dr. Oetker products is produced from some 800 different raw materials. R&D organises the quantity of appropriate data with the aid of an international raw-material database. Before the decision is taken in favour of a particular supplier to provide, for instance, the cocoa for Dr. Oetker Wölkchen Schokolade, the company undergoes a supplier audit, which also takes a searching look at its quality and environmental management system.

Whether the supplier can be considered a regular Dr. Oetker partner is decided only after a whole number of deliveries of flawless raw materials.

And “flawless” is not just any raw material, but invariably the one that exactly meets the specifications elaborated by Product Development at Dr. Oetker – nothing is left to chance. Raw-material specifications contain a precise description of the goods, list the food law details, stipulate nutritional values, specify physio-chemical criteria, include allergy facts and put information on the best-before date into concrete terms. Each supplier provides a written guarantee, for which he is liable, that his merchandise complies with the exacting Dr. Oetker raw-material specifications.

Trust is a fine thing – but the inspection of all incoming raw materials is nonetheless a matter of course. At the Dr. Oetker production sites, samples are drawn from every single truckload of product according to precisely defined methods. Only when the “green light” has been given after the initial sensory and physio-chemical check of the consignment – certifying clear conformity with the specification profile – may the raw materials be put in storage.

But the decision on storage still does not mean that the raw materials will go into Wölkchen. The works laboratory in Bielefeld now checks the raw material for harmful micro-organisms. Should they be detected, the raw material is removed from the production process. In addition to this, every batch of cocoa, for example, is subjected to a cooking test in order to check its compliance with the standard.

Central Analysis at Dr. Oetker in Bielefeld also checks whether the raw materials used are free of unauthorised residues. With the aid of gas chromatography, even the minutest traces of pesticides can be detected. Only when all the tests have been completed and the raw materials have given no cause for complaint may they be passed on to production. Then in-process quality assurance guarantees that only safe products meeting the most exacting quality standards leave the plant.



How a Dr. Oetker Wölkchen is created



It's better to check: Wölkchen on the scales.

Every day several hundreds of thousands of dairy products are manufactured with the greatest care at the Dr. Oetker plant in Moers on the Lower Rhine (see photos) – including Dr. Oetker Wölkchen, the example used in this brochure. All Dr. Oetker plants produce to the same high standard.

It all begins with the delivery of the raw milk: following storage in large raw-milk tanks, it is first heated for a short time in special milk pasteurising units. It is also separated into skimmed milk and cream and then combined again. In this way the specific fat content of the products can be accurately determined.



Before production gets under way, all processing units are heated, cleaned with disinfectants and then thoroughly rinsed. The strictest hygiene regulations are in force throughout the production area – overalls and head coverings are just as compulsory as repeated hand-washing. The heating and cooling temperatures of the units are monitored and recorded – any variation is immediately corrected. To make absolutely certain that nothing gets into the products that has no business there, sieves with a mesh of just one-tenth of a millimetre are installed in the production process. Close attention is paid to the impermeability of the units in order to maintain their aseptic status.

According to the precisely defined recipe, which has been tested once more in the lab, cocoa, sugar and starch are added to the milk. Before being processed, the mixture is super-heated to make perfectly certain that any germs are killed off. After that, the mixture reaches the so-called beater, which adds the tiny gas bubbles that give Wölkchen their beautifully light texture. Before filling takes place, the still-empty pots are thoroughly cleaned to make them totally germ-free. Then the moment has come. First, that delicious blob of cream goes into the pots, to be followed by the Wölkchen crème.

Finally, the lids – likewise sterilised beforehand – are sealed, coded and furnished with the best-before date.

To ensure that everything goes together optimally and one Wölkchen is identical to the other, not only are automatic weight checks carried out, but also manual ones: the weight must be within the guidelines – after all, the one Wölkchen pot should contain exactly the same delicious enjoyment as all the rest. Now the Wölkchen are stacked on pallets and automatically conveyed to a cooling tunnel, where they are chilled to below 4 degrees Celsius. Following this, they wait in the cold store for despatch to the trade.

Each individual production step can later be precisely reconstructed to the minute, and even traced back over years. A special data-processing system guarantees batch-related documentation of all production unit protocols and the appropriate laboratory data. In the unlikely event that a Wölkchen should ever give cause for complaint, the individual production operations and measurement data can be precisely reconstructed and causes narrowed down, thanks to the process data information system.



Quality assurance in the production labs

As is the case at the product development stage and for raw-materials inspection, the application of the HACCP concept also ensures the perfect quality of the goods during the production of all Dr. Oetker products. Of the numerous preventive measures and controls, only a few can be shown here – again taking the example of Dr. Oetker Wölkchen.

The entire manufacturing process is accompanied by numerous tests, inspections and measurements – the labs work continuously and to the highest standard, which is checked time and again in international laboratory tests.

Even the truck that delivers the raw milk automatically collects single samples from each individual dairy company it calls at and brings along a joint sample of its tankload. To guarantee the neutrality of relations with the raw-milk suppliers, the single samples are examined by external laboratories. The joint sample is put through an initial test for residues of antibiotics by the truck driver himself. In the production lab the joint sample is first examined for its pH value, which indicates the acid

content of the milk and must stay within a specified norm range. Then the samples go through an analysis device which, among other things, checks the fat and protein content.

In addition to the corresponding official tests, Dr. Oetker now examines the raw milk for antibiotics. Since only residue-free milk may go into processing, the tests have an extremely high degree of accuracy. In a quantity of approximately 200,000 litres of raw milk, it would be picked up even if only a single one of the cows involved had been treated with antibiotics.

All the lab's analysis data is linked automatically to Process Engineering through a special EDP system. Labels for sample and batch designation are created automatically to minimise sources of error. If lab data should ever happen to be outside the tolerance values, this would result in the automatic removal of the production batch concerned. This EDP-controlled automation gives any potential wrong decisions no chance and contributes towards further risk minimisation.



Strict marking: daily tasting at the Dr. Oetker plant.



Precisely measured: even the finished products are checked again.

Before the mixture prepared in the production area goes on to further processing, each batch undergoes a cooking test in the lab. Only when this has been successfully completed is the mixture released for further processing.

Even the finished Wölkchen are tested, and not only as regards fat and protein content and numerous other parameters, but also in respect of their colour, which can be determined with the aid of specified values and compared very precisely with the norm.

Additionally, plant employees with sensory analysis training, plus a control tester, taste the finished products daily. In this process numerous aspects relating to taste, colour and smell, for example, are judged according to precise criteria. This step, too, helps to ensure that the quality of all

Wölkchen is consistent. Incidentally, reserve samples that have passed their best-before date are also always tasted. Even these Wölkchen must, of course, still be of perfect quality.

Moreover, a number of Wölkchen from each batch are kept back and – like other freshness products from Dr. Oetker – subjected to a “severity test”: they have to be stored at higher temperatures for a specified period, yet the following microbiological examination must reveal no indication of the formation of bacteria.

Only when these and other checks have certified perfect Dr. Oetker quality can the finished Wölkchen be despatched to the trade – quality always has priority.

Heavy demands on logistics

When the Wölkchen have been completed, the quality assurance concept is nowhere near over. Now the challenge is to get the goods out to the trade in the most organised way, while ensuring that the outstanding quality of not a single Wölkchen is lost.

Logistics also gears the quality assurance measures for all products to the HACCP concept, which means repeatedly examining relevant values – especially the temperature of chilled products – at numerous checkpoints.

Each pallet-load is assigned an EAN 128 label containing codes that are distinctive and unambiguous worldwide. The number of the despatch unit, the EAN code and the product quantity, the best-before date and the production batch are among the details on the label. Electronic logging records which goods were delivered to which consignee at which time. The system also ensures that the production batches can be traced back at all times. If, despite the seamless Dr. Oetker quality management system, a consignment should happen to be the subject of a complaint, this coding makes it possible to determine where and when the Dr. Oetker product batch concerned was produced and with which raw materials.

From the production area the pallets are moved into the high-bay warehouse along transport bridges. Even if there are summer temperatures outside, in these store rooms cool autumn reigns, with self-closing doors, among other devices, reducing any unwanted rise in temperature. The Wölkchen are stored here at below 4 degrees Celsius. The pallet coding also controls storage, which follows the “first in, first out” principle.

Before the pallets of finished pudding reach the refrigerated trucks through the loading gates, the vehicles are pre-cooled and their hygiene status checked. Up to 99,000 Wölkchen fit into a single truck.

Dr. Oetker Logistics keeps claims statistics and uses them to check how satisfied consignees are with logistics performance. Because the better the cooperation with trading partners works, the sooner Wölkchen reaches the consumers.



The Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen



Always ready to listen: the Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen hotline.

For more than a hundred years the Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen has vouched for the reliability of Dr. Oetker products and recipes, which it tests in numerous trials in conditions typical of a normal household.

On the basis of the trial results, the Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen formulates recipes and the instructions on the packet, which are always professionally sound, straightforward, clear and comprehensible. Even after the products have been delivered to the trade, Dr. Oetker takes its responsibility for the superlative product quality very seriously – because it is the consumers' judgement that ultimately matters.

The Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen stands ready to help all consumers with advice and practical support. Whether via the hotline, by E-mail or post, the Test Kitchen answers questions about ingredients and contents as well as preparation and recipes, supplies competent answers from seasoned experts, reveals tips and tricks, and also listens to ideas and suggestions.

Should, despite the quality guarantee, any Dr. Oetker product ever give rise to complaint, it goes without saying that claims are dealt with. The specialist departments at Dr. Oetker then join forces to track down the cause, to ensure that any error is not repeated.

Incidentally, a large number of consumers call the Dr. Oetker Test Kitchen simply to say how good a product tasted and how satisfied they are with Dr. Oetker products.



Nothing is left to chance: seasoned experts work in the Dr. Oetker Versuchsküche.

Heightened consumer awareness

The quality standards outlined here, using the example of Dr. Oetker Wölkchen, which follow the risk-prevention principle, apply analogously to all products and are implemented in the 22 Dr. Oetker plants inside and outside Germany.

Not only are the (often different) food law requirements adhered to, but local consumer needs are also taken into account – after all, Dr. Oetker operates in 35 national markets.

Thus consumers in, say, Turkey prefer a chocolate pudding with a lot of sugar and a big piece of butter. The Belgians love soft sweets with as little starch as possible. And in Slovakia chocolate desserts are spurned if they don't contain any biscuit crumbs. Quality is, when all's said and done, also a question of taste.

Consumers, though, apply several criteria in deciding what quality means to them and, especially in the light of critical media reports, increasingly appreciate the value of safe and high-quality food. They judge the pleasure quality by the taste, the appearance, the aroma and the "feel" of a product, and balance them with their individual preferences. The health value, naturalness, origin and processing are further dimensions in the consumers' quality assessment.

The Dr. Oetker brand stands for first-class quality in all these areas. A large number of consumers trust this brand and help to make Dr. Oetker the market leader in the majority of its product lines.

Going forward, the national and international success of Dr. Oetker products will prove:

Quality is the best recipe.

Quality is the best recipe

Kvalitet er den bedste opskrift

Kvalita je nejlepší recept

Qualität ist das beste Rezept

A Qualidade é a melhor Receita

Calitatea este cea mai bună rețetă

A minőség a legjobb recept

Kwaliteit is het beste recept

