



### 1. Physical assessment of batches in the incoming goods department

The natural corks are usually delivered via truck in bales of 10,000 corks. The bales are labeled with an abbreviation for the supplier and the quality of the cork inside.

A batch involves the delivery of a cork quality from a supplier and may vary between only a few corks and more than 250,000.

Depending on the batch size, between five and 10 bales are opened and 200 corks are taken from these bales for an incoming goods inspection.

The following is checked at receipt:

- Dimensions (length, diameter)
- Optics and sorting  
The test is based on 200 corks, which are compared to defined optical references to determine what proportion of the corks correspond to the requested quality and which do not. Likewise, damaged corks are being evaluated according to detailed descriptions of defects and sorted out.
- Humidity
- Weight and density

### 2. Sensory evaluation of production units after washing

Korkindustrie Trier is the only cork finisher in Germany able to process unwashed raw materials.

For the wash, batches are divided into production units that can include up to 60,000 natural corks, depending on their dimensions.

The washing process guarantees a gentle cleaning that is optimally adapted to the corks, as well as a perfect mixing of the naturally very inhomogeneous material

This thorough mixing of the natural corks also gives Korkindustrie Trier a decisive advantage over other cork processing companies in the further quality assessment of a delivery.

The random sample for analytical and sensory control is taken from a mixed and homogenized lot, which is the only way to achieve the necessary statistical surety.

The sample of at least 200 corks per production unit are subjected to the following tests:

- Analysis (GC / MS) to detect possible cork contamination by 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA), tribromoanisole (TBA) and tetrachloroanisole (TeCA)
- Sensory tests

The results of the analysis and sensory tests determine the classification into the sensory classes TOP and PLUS (see appendix: Sensory qualities).



### 3. Final test of the orders after coating and marking

Korkindustrie Trier uses different techniques for the design of cork surfaces, including printing, burning and lasing. The use of a laser also allows for quick, high-quality execution of very small orders.

Smaller orders can be combined into a single production unit, while larger orders can consist of multiple production units.

Coating is executed using various treatment agents in specific treatment lines.

The following checks are made on a sample from the total production after coating and marking are carried out:

- Dust content
- Adhesion of the treatment agent
- Check for residues of oxidants
- Corking properties
- Tightness
- Fit in the bottleneck

### 4. Traceability

Since each cork stamp contains the order number, the traceability of the natural corks to their country of origin is possible throughout all processing steps .