

Gulfood 2017 proves a hotbed for global food sector innovation

The 22nd edition of Gulf food 2017 comes to an end with huge success on 2nd March. The Deputy Ruler of Dubai and UAE Minister of Finance, Shaikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, officially inaugurated Gulfood 2017. Being the world's largest annual food & beverage exhibition, it welcomed F&B professionals from all corners of the globe to meet for 5 days of business within this central hub for international trade and commerce. The exhibition welcomed more than 120 countries and enabled more than 5000 providers of raw materials and ingredients to showcase the tastes, trends and innovations that are shaping the future of food and beverage consumption worldwide. Gulfood 2017 attracted a record estimate of 96,000 visitors. Around 400 UAE-based F&B companies attended the 22nd edition of Gulfood - the world's largest food and hospitality show which runs from February 26 to March 2, 2017 at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

Record numbers of these companies introduced new ranges of products that were aligned with the buying requirements of international visitors seeking the latest food concepts. Gulfood 2017 spanned more than 1 million ft² of exhibition space allocated to over 5000 international exhibitors, including more than 1,000 new-to-show food and beverage producers.

Segmented into 8 of the largest commodity trading markets in separate halls, the event hosted Malta, Finland, Slovakia, Somalia and Azerbaijan for the first time, amongst more than 120 represented countries. Commenting on the latest positive market indicators alongside the growth of the event, DWTC SVP Exhibitions and Events Management Trixie



LohMirmand explained; “Recent research is demonstrating that the UAE market remains resilient and there are strong fundamentals for long-term optimism in the F&B sector.

Innovation came at its’ own and the Gulfood exhibitor profile was awash with new and exciting concepts which gradually transformed the end-user experience. This all held out enormous opportunity for operators and suppliers who looked to leverage the concepts and products within their own businesses and geographic footprints.”

The Gulfood innovation Awards

The Gulfood innovation Awards The Gulfood Innovation Awards recognized excellence and creativity within the global food and drink industry. The 18th edition of this prestigious annual event awarded 20 accolades judged by an international panel of independent industry experts. Winners were announced during a glittering gala ceremony that was widely regarded as the ultimate networking opportunity for the industry's elite.

The Emirates Culinary Guild International Salon

The Emirates Culinary Guild International Salon Culinare was the largest single entry chefs’ competition in the world. Structured as a series of practical and display-based culinary challenges or ‘classes’, this globally renowned annual contest gauged the diversity of entrants



cooking skills and pushed the boundaries of modern day food preparation and presentation. Evaluated by a panel of international experts and mandated by the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS), the Salon Culinare provided credible industry recognition to more than a thousand master chefs, pastry chefs, cooks and bakers all battling to receive the coveted titles.

Halal World Food

Halal World Food was a show-within-a-show concept returning for its 4th edition at Gulfood 2017. This major global trading platform generated lucrative investment opportunities for international F&B businesses looking to capitalize on the burgeoning halal sector that wit-

nessed significant growth in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries across the world. Reflecting the UAE's strategic position as an international centre for halal food trading, Halal World Food showcased the full spectrum of halal products including vegan and vegetarian food, meat and poultry, canned goods, energy drinks, gourmet and much more.

World class power brands at Gulfood 2017 Power Brands is one of eight dedicated segments now housed within Gulfood to ensure buyers can navigate the expansive show more effectively. The other sectors are: Beverages, Dairy, Fats and Oils, Health, Wellness and FreeFrom, Pulses, Grains and Cereals, Meat and Poultry, and World Food. The most significant representation of leading food and



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drink brands the MENA region has ever seen will soon be converging in Dubai, as more than 140 major international food and drink producers come together at the new Power Brands segment at Gulfood 2017.

Represented by a contingent of major food industry heavyweights including Unilever, Nestle, Del Monte and IFFCO, the throng of leading food and drink brands were on display at the 22nd edition of the world's largest food and hospitality show. Commenting on the influx of world-class food producers and distributors at the show, James George, Analyst at Euromonitor International, said, "Manufacturers and distributors alike are looking at the Middle East and North Africa as one of the key growth regions. This is mainly fuelled by a handful of markets particularly the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt." With recent Euromonitor data highlighting that the

global packaged food market is expected to reach USD 2.2 trillion by 2020, George revealed that AsiaPacific, and the Middle East and Africa are prevailing as the key growth drivers of packaged food globally. "Through new entrants or brand expansion, many brands will look to capitalize on the growth potential that these regions offer with significant investments across the region. The need for quality products and services will continue to rise as a growing population drive increased demand in the food and drink sector," added George.

Capitalizing on this growth curve, the new Power Brands segment at Gulfood connected regional buyers with international producers and distributors of both high-end and household name food and beverage brands in one place. Del Monte 2017 is a special year for Del Monte as they celebrated their 125th anniversary. They had come a long way, focusing always on quality, product innovation and freshness. During these years, Del Monte kept its promise by serving a meaningful cause, the health of its consumers, and providing nutritious, convenient and affordable fresh products. Heloise Buzet, Head of Marketing MENA, Del Monte (UAE) said "For us, Gulfood and the new Power Brands segment in particular is an amazing opportunity to do business.

As a truly global event, we are able to examine trends while increasing our trade networks to export on an even more significant scale," she added.

Fonterra Fonterra, the world's largest exporter of dairy products, debuted at Gulfood with its eyes firmly set on MENA region growth. "Built on the expertise and heritage of New Zealand dairy farming, Fonterra is behind brands known and loved by millions of people in more than 140 countries," said Santiago Aon, General Manager Fonterra Middle East. "We've supported the growth in dairy consumption across the Middle East and Africa for more than 40 years and we are focused on future investment and growth in this important region. "Gulfood is a great opportunity for us to showcase our high-quality NZMP ingredients and Anchor Food Professionals products. We are keen to engage with customers to better understand and meet their evolving needs," added Aon. Products being featured in the Power Brands segment at Gulfood 2017 included elite brands distributed regionally by La Marquise International, a specialist department of regional sector heavyweight Buhaleeba Group's Foodservice Division, and Spanish food and beverage leader MVF Select. The next event will take place on 18 to 22 February 2018. ◆

