



GULFOOD 2018: Mega show to consolidate UAE's lead role in global food agenda

Gulfood
18-22 February 2018

First major global food industry event of the year will showcase thousands of new-to-market suppliers, innovative channels to market and benchmark global commodity prices.

The 2018 edition of Gulfood, the world's largest annual food and beverage trade event and the first major international food industry trade show of the year, will further strengthen the UAE's lead role in setting the global food agenda, according to the exhibition organisers, Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

Citing the long-established reputation of Gulfood as a key driver in fostering innovation across the local, regional and global food and beverage supply chain,



DWTC officials revealed on-site sales generated by 95,000-plus buyers and visitors at Gulfood 2018 - which runs from 18-22 February - will contribute heavily to a global food market expected to generate revenues of USD3.03 trillion by 2020, according to Research and Markets, a Dublin-based market research company.

With the global food market due to register a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5 per cent from 2015 to 2020, the UAE food and beverage market alone is anticipated to reach a valuation of AED82 Billion (USD22 billion) by the end of the decade, according to Euromonitor International.

"In attracting the Middle East's largest trade industry audience, generating huge transactional volumes every year on the show floor, and setting global foodstuff commodity prices, Gulfood is the region's premier food and beverage industry platform – it underlines Dubai's leading role in the global food sector," said Trixie LohMirmand, Senior Vice President, Exhibitions & Events, DWTC.

"With regional investment in food production on the rise, international manufacturers see the Middle East as a luca-

tive market for their products. In this dynamic climate, Gulfood continues to empower the global food and beverage community as an unmatched trading and knowledge platform that offers unrivalled market overviews and insights to industry professionals."

The bright forecast for Gulfood 2018 follows hundreds of major deals struck and initiatives launched at this year's event, including US Beef regaining eligibility to ship beef products to Saudi Arabia, a USD31 million market. US exhibitors at the show reported on-site sales of USD85.5 million with forecasts of a further USD722 million in direct sales as a result of their participation, according to the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS). The FAS also recruited 47 potential food and beverage suppliers - with a network spanning Asia, Africa, South Asia and the Middle East - to service US exporters at Gulfood 2017.

In the UAE, Dubai-based gourmet snacks specialist Hunter Foods signed a lucrative deal with Chinese importers, while the Emirates Authority for Standardisation & Meteorology (ESMA)

hosted the pioneering Global Halal Industry Platform.

Following a successful debut in 2017, Gulfood 2018 will continue its sectorised approach to further increase accessibility and trading potential. Tens of thousands of finished food and beverages will be featured in halls dedicated to eight of the biggest commodity trading sectors: Beverages; Dairy; Fats & Oils; Health, Wellness & Free-From; Pulses, Grains & Cereals; Meat & Poultry; Power Brands and World Food.

With the Pulses, Grains & Cereals and Fats & Oils sectors already close to being sold-out amid unprecedented demand, the Meat & Poultry sector is also tracking strong sales two months before the show.

"For United States red meat exporters, Gulfood has a well-established reputation as the premier marketing event in the Gulf region," said Philip Seng, President & CEO, US Meat Export Federation (USMEF). "Over the years, Gulfood's footprint has expanded considerably and it's now a key venue for exporters looking to grow their business in emerging markets in Africa, Asia and Europe."



New to the 2018 event is the Gulfood Discover Zone, where exhibitors will be able to apply for recently-launched products to be showcased in an exclusive and interactive lounge. The Gulfood Discover Zone will also feature a dedicated area for companies that have never conducted business in the MENA region before and are using Gulfood as a market-entry opportunity. Finalists for the Gulfood Innovation Awards, which also return in 2018, will also be showcased in the Gulfood Discover Zone.

Another new feature is the Gulfood Start-up Competition, which is designed to foster further innovation in the food and beverage supply chain. Open to aspiring food industry professionals or students, the competition will reward sustainable development and socially-impactful ideas that are either disrupting the old ways of doing business, or promoting healthier and environmentally-correct practices.

“Gulfood Start-up promises to be the region’s most influential innovation enabler for the next generation of food industry pioneers,” added LohMirmand. “The competition will connect impassioned food technology entrepreneurs from across the Middle East with the region’s largest food technology and product buyers.”

With more than 5,000-plus exhibitors expected at the 23rd edition of the event,



Gulfood 2018 will feature more than 120 national pavilions including first-time participants from as far afield as Estonia, Serbia and Slovakia. The show will also see hundreds of international heads of state, ministers, government officials and scores of national trade associations eager to ink lucrative bi-lateral trade agreements among tens of thousands of anticipated visitors.

Shifting Saudi food buying patterns spurs confidence of Kingdom’s food exporters

A major shift in the food buying preferences of Saudi consumers is unlocking huge two-way trade opportunities in the Kingdom, according to a recent survey by

leading research provider, Nielsen.

With Saudi’s domestic food producers receiving a confidence boost for their dairy, snacks, ice-cream, mineral water, tea and coffee production, a host of international suppliers are also reaping rewards from increasing demand for globally-branded baby food, energy drinks and canned foods in the Gulf’s largest market.

As global brands maintain their traditional dominance in the preserved food categories, the survey highlights how Saudi consumers increasingly prefer locally produced dairy and fresh food products.

The survey comes as Saudi and international food producers prepare for a major two-pronged trade push at Gulfood 2018, the world’s largest annual food and beverage trade event and the year’s first major international food industry trade show, which runs at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) from 18-22 February.

Saudi Arabian producers, buoyed by proven success as the Kingdom’s favourite dairy and fresh food choices, are readying for a major export push at the show, while sector-specific international brands are looking to cement their segmented leadership among Saudi consumers.

“Though Saudi producers have made considerable inroads locally and regionally - where they’ve invested in diversified products, quality and brand equity - the Kingdom remains the land of opportunity





for suppliers across the entire food production eco-system," said Trixie LohMirmand, Senior Vice President, Exhibitions & Events, DWTC, which organises the mega show.

"Local production is already on the rise and there's been a significant uptick in demand for raw ingredients; the direction outlined in the National Transformation Programme 2020 will create expansion and partnership opportunities for overseas suppliers to further consolidate their positions in the most populous country in the region."

With Saudi's population forecast to rise almost 2% to just under 35 million by 2020, according to the United Nations, the renewed focus on domestic production is designed to start off-setting the fact the Kingdom remains the GCC's largest importer of food. Further demand is expected to emanate from the planned NEOM mega city, which has food as a key focus. The first phase of the project is due to be delivered in just seven years' time.

And yet, with the total number of food retail outlets in the country projected by Dublin's Research and Markets to grow by 4.9% annually by the end of the decade, some 87 Saudi Arabian food producers representing diverse sectors, including Arrow Juice, Siafa Dates, Americana, Al Seedawi and Mahmood Saeed Beverage, will push their quality and competitiveness at Gulfood 2018 – a figure LohMirmand

believes will continue to rise.

"This year's Saudi participation includes some of the biggest names in the Kingdom and the region including AIMarai, Al Rabie, Al-Watania and SunBulah, as well as many innovative new market entries. The evolving nature of the country's food sector suggests this level of representation will continue to grow. Most of these brands are already familiar names on supermarket shelves throughout the GCC and certain parts of the Middle East, through Gulfood, however, their geographic reach could expand much further."

Saudi producers are among more than 5,000 exhibitors signed up for Gulfood 2018, which will feature eight tailored product segments to aid accessibility and give buyers more time to transact business. The segments include Beverages; Dairy; Fats & Oils; Health, Wellness & Free-From; Pulses, Grains & Cereals; Meat & Poultry; Power Brands and World Food.

The all-new Gulfood Discover Zone, where new-to-market products will be

showcased in an exclusive and interactive lounge, also joins the 2018 fray. The Zone is aimed at companies making their MENA region debuts by leveraging Gulfood to deliver market-entry opportunities. Finalists for the annual Gulfood Innovation Awards will also be featured in the Zone.

Gulfood 2018 will feature 120 country pavilions including new entrants Estonia, Nigeria, ProColumbia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Tajikistan. The show will also receive a host of powerful national delegations including heads of state, ministers, government officials and trade associations eager to ink lucrative bi-lateral trade agreements.

Gulfood 2018 will also co-host Halal World Food, the world's largest annual Halal food sourcing trade show; the annual Emirates Culinary Guild International Salon Culinare; the world's largest single-entry chef competition; the Speciality Coffee Association endorsed World Cevze/Ibrik Championships and the Gulfood Innovation Awards, which recognise best-in-class excellence and innovation across the region's F&B industry.

Gulfood 2018 is a trade event open strictly to business and trade visitors. The show is open 11am-7pm from February 18 - 21 and 11am-5pm on February 22. Visitors can pre-register for AED250 (USD68) at www.gulfood.com to save AED150 (USD40) on the on-site entry fee of AED400 (USD108). ♦

