

SIAL Middle East 2012 concludes on a positive note

SIAL Middle East 2012 concluded on 28th November 2012 in Abu Dhabi with private label experts debating the risks and rewards for GCC retailers looking to capitalise on growth potential for value and mid-level own range.

Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, Minister of Presidential Affairs and Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA), officially inaugurated the third edition of SIAL Middle East, which opened on 26th November at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), in the presence of His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

HE Rashid Mohamed Al Shariqi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA), said: "SIAL Middle East has accomplished much in its first and second editions. This year, the number of participants increased to include more than 1000 food companies from 52 countries."

Describing SIAL Middle East as a significant regional business event, Al Shariqi added: "The Emirate of Abu Dhabi is offering through the event a

wonderful opportunity for companies to access the dynamic markets across the Middle East and North Africa, besides South and South East Asia. The superior food safety infrastructure that ADFCA put in place as well as the standards and specifications in vogue are comparable to the best anywhere in the world. This has created a congenial atmosphere for investments in the food sector in the emirate."

ADFCA Director General pointed out that SIAL Middle East had provided food suppliers an ideal opportunity to learn from the best international experiences. "Events such as SIAL and their success will go a long way in strengthening the country's efforts towards improving the food security situation in the UAE and guaranteeing that all citizens and residents have access to sufficient and safe food," he concluded.

Running alongside the exhibition, the SIAL Middle East conference opened with

a keynote panel discussion on private label sector growth potential for the GCC region, which currently stands at just 3% compared to over 35% in Europe and 20% in the US.

"Brands are big business for the region, across all market sectors, and with consumers becoming increasingly selective, the growth of private labels in the food industry is a logical next step for local and international retailers - and SIAL Middle East is the ideal platform to translate ideas into action," said Chris Fountain, Managing Director of Turret Media, organisers of SIAL Middle East

Moderated by Koen de Jong, Director, International Private Label Consult, panelists Maurice van Vliet, CEO of Netherlands-based consultancy privatelabeltrader.com, and Victoria Hassani, Managing Director, Global Market Access ME, painted a realistic picture of the challenges and opportunities for local and international Gulf retailers.



SIAL Middle East special programs

"Private label brands have been around since the early 1900s. It's not just a question of producing a quality product; this needs to be supported by sophistication in terms of packaging, and investment in marketing and promotional strategies in order to drive consumer confidence," said Van Vliet.

"If you take Carrefour as an example, to support its private label activity in China, the company partnered with a high profile Chinese basketball player, who'd played in the US' NBA, to headline its marketing activity," he added.

"The consolidation of retail in the region has seen local players such as Lulu and Panda rise to the top to take on international retailers like Spinneys and Carrefour, and it makes good business sense to move forward and develop private label ranges," remarked Hassani.

"With no monolithic consumer base with shared culture and culinary tastes, a major challenge is to position private label as a brand and market it as such, not merely as an adjunct or afterthought. There is also a need for systems and procedures - such as category management and just-in-time controls - to be adopted as growth to date has been organic rather than structured," she added.

We have participated in SIAL Middle East since its inception in 2010 and have been impressed with how much the show has grown year-on-year while still maintaining its quality. Our objective was to promote our new products, create greater product awareness and identify potential new partners. This year we have certainly achieved that." Alaa Kamal, Regional Director – Middle East Midamar.

Visitors to the event are expected to hit the 15,000 mark across all four exhibitions, which - for the first time - include the relocated Rice & Grains showcase, Emirates International Date Festival, and the International Travel Catering Association (ITCA) event.

Exhibitors from Pakistan were: Alizas Food Pvt. Ltd, Hamza Vegetable Oil Refinery & Ghee Mills Pvt. Ltd, Matco Rice Processing Pvt. Ltd., National Grains Pvt. Ltd, Pakistan Rice Complex and Taj Food Pvt. Ltd. ♦

Industry seminars

Including dedicated forums for private label, foodservice and food retail, visitors were given the opportunity to understand and discuss food policy and safety in the region, discover the latest consumer trends from around the world, and learn how to grow their business. Over 40 speakers from the region and beyond including:

- ❖ Koen de Jong, Director, International Private Label Consult.
- ❖ Henk Bruggeman, Director Operations Middle East & China, Hakkasan.
- ❖ Mark Patten, VP – Culinary, Atlantis, The Palm.
- ❖ Scott Price, Executive Chef, Hilton Dubai Creek & Chief Proprieter,
- ❖ Simon Lazarus, Senior Area Director of F&B Middle East & Africa, Hilton Worldwide.
- ❖ Daniel During, Managing Director, Glee Hospitality Solutions.
- ❖ Andy Williams, Regional Director MENA, Kantar Retail.
- ❖ Naresh Manshani, Head of Retail Operations, T. Choithrams & Sons.
- ❖ James Tracey-Inglis, Managing Director, Saatchi and Saatchi X.
- ❖ Xavier Terlet, CEO, XTC World Innovation.

La Cuisine by SIAL

Once again, SIAL Middle East hosted over 600 chefs from hotels and restaurants across the region for three days of intense competition. Organised by the Emirates Culinary Guild in association with the World Association of Chefs Societies, the competition covered 17 disciplines included a three-tier wedding cake, chocolate carving showcase, Australian lamb five-course dinner menu and new Arabian cuisine.

SIAL Innovation Observatory & Award

The presentation of the world's most innovative products is a central part of SIAL events worldwide. Whether for retail, foodservice, or the food industry, SIAL events have a long history of exploring and interpreting the latest consumer trends and visitors were able to discover the latest innovative products in the SIAL Innovation Observatory.

2012 winner: 'Wow Every Now Unboring Fruit' fresh fruit pieces range from Nutrigreen SA of Portugal.

2012 nominations included multiple submissions from the US, Portugal and South Korea, as well as entries from Argentina, Luxembourg, New Zealand and the UAE with products including frozen food items, fruit juices and beverages, baking mixes, cured and prepared meats, desserts and sweets. ♦

