



120 pavilions from five continents participating at **Gulfood 2016**



Gulfood, the world's biggest annual food and hospitality trade platform, has set its own new record by confirming its largest country and pavilion line-up to date for the 2016 event, which runs February 21-25 at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

This 2016 show will feature 117 pavilions – five more than last year – with first-time group participation from Russia, Costa Rica, Belarus, Mauritius and New Zealand, the Oceania nation returning after a six-year break.

“The sheer scale of the pavilions and their extensive membership lives up to our promise of delivering more taste, more trends and more trade,” explained Trixie LohMirmand, Senior Vice President, Exhibitions & Events Management, DWTC. “The range of new products and services on offer is as diverse as the geographic spread of pavilion participants – the perfect

combination to yield fresh business opportunities for professionals operating throughout the entire international food industry and hospitality supply chain.”

Italy will operate the event's largest pavilion with more than 190 companies occupying a 3,956 square metre national pavilion, while a few Italian producers will go-it-alone with specialised stands. At Gulfood 2016, Italy is focussing on ultra-high-end product offerings from fresh fruits and vegetables, to dairy – mainly cheese – pulses, dried and canned foods, dried and frozen foods, grocery products, olive oils and vinegar, juices, sweets and snacks. The Italian pavilion will also host several specialist manufacturers of hospitality equipment and coffee and gelato machinery.

“The UAE is the Italian food industry's fastest growing market,” added LohMirmand. “Italian food product sales to

the Emirates have grown steadily rising 31.1% in 2012, a further 39.5% in 2013 and again by 9% in 2014 to reach €241.3 million. In Q1 of 2015 exports climbed a further 23.6%. Without doubt, the Euro fluctuation against the Dollar and Dirham has significantly assisted Eurozone exports and Italy in particular has reaped the benefits.

“Italian interest in Gulfood's market outreach just keeps on growing. Consumers across the Emirates remain a key focus for Italy, as does the UAE's ability to re-export to a wider region of over two billion customers in Africa and Asia. The UAE in particular remains very attractive because of huge prospective tourism development - including scores of new hotels and hundreds of new restaurants - associated with EXPO Dubai 2020, when the city's total number of restaurant outlets will double to cater to upwards of 20 million visitors.”

Turkey will also be out in force at Gulfood 2016 with 103 exhibitors marketing beverages and beverage equipment, finished food and beverage products, food service hospitality and restaurant and café equipment.

“Over the past few years, Turkey has made significant inroads into the UAE’s food and beverage, hospitality and mass grocery retail sector,” said LohMirmand. “Turkish produce is now familiar on supermarkets shelves, while a plethora of Turkish cuisine and hospitality outlets - adding to the high-profile entrance of the country’s Rixos hotels group to the region - are open and performing. The Turkish chamber of commerce has made no secret of its members’ ambitions to ensure food exports to the UAE climb to US \$250 million this year. Although this represents a 20% jump on 2014 levels, a strong Gulfood push is expected to play a role in meeting those aims.”

The Netherlands is also planning a strong presence at Gulfood 2016 with the Netherlands Council for Trade Promotion’s pavilion – a Gulfood stalwart having exhibited every year since 1995 – housing 54 companies across the dairy, deep-frozen, fresh vegetables, fresh/deep-frozen meat, preserves, traders, oils, sauces, grocery, fine food and drinks sector. The council is looking to grow Dutch food exports to the UAE - currently worth US \$360 million a year.

The UK has its eyes firmly fixed on the Emirates’ surging hospitality sector with Britain’s Catering Equipment Suppliers Association (CESA) packing 24 companies into a 330 square metre pavilion that is 40% larger than its 2015 offering.

“Our exhibitor are predominantly manufacturers and suppliers of light and heavy foodservice equipment and service companies,” said Keith Warren, Director, CESA Ltd. “The UAE is a major purchaser of UK equipment because of its high-quality and pre-and-post sales support – key areas we want to capitalise on.”

With the global food industry eyeing Africa as the next major investment opportunity, Kenya is boosting its Gulfood presence with a pavilion 48% larger than last year that will focus largely on tea and coffee produce, while Egypt is weighing in

with 125 companies covering a multi-commodity profile including freshly frozen fruit and vegetables, confectionery, dairy and dates.

In today’s ultra-competitive global food market, a series of highly focused smaller pavilion promotions are hoping to steal Gulfood limelight from the traditional food industry superpowers. Western Australia’s Department of Agriculture and Food is spearheading 10 companies at the show all intent on regional business matching for new product ranges.

“The UAE was Western Australia’s ninth largest market for food and beverage products last year but UAE statistics do not give the full picture of its significance,” explained the Department’s spokesperson. “The UAE’s status as a strategic trading hub to reach other Gulf, Middle Eastern and African countries make it a truly unique market and we regard the UAE as the regional food hub because it imports over 85% of its total food requirements and re-exports over 60% of all food imports to the wider Middle East region.”

Back for its third Gulfood promotion, the small Eastern European state of Moldova is looking to expand its export reach for a wide range of agricultural and processed food products that currently account for 40% of the country’s GDP.

“We are very enthusiastic about this year’s show where we will have approximately nine companies, producers and traders representing the country under our ‘Taste Makes the Difference’ promotion,” said a Peter White, Market linkage special-

ist (ACED) Moldova. “This is the vehicle of differentiation for our products comparative to other supply countries. Our focus this year will be processed items in addition to a few select fresh commodities. We have learned that this show is very keen on ingredients, processed items and fresh offerings.

“The Gulf has proved to be a very strong market for a number of our products and we’re eager to expand upon this and use Gulfood as the platform to increase the visibility of the agricultural country of Moldova, which is small in size but huge on product taste.”

A 117-strong spread of pavilions is only part of the Gulfood 2016 story; in all, more than 5,000 international companies from 120 countries will take part in the 21st edition of the event.

“It’s no understatement to say that this show really does offer a world of opportunity for the 85,000 plus food and beverage, wholesale, retail, distribution and hospitality professionals we anticipate turning out from five continents,” added LohMirmand. “Gulfood is an industry-wide platform that generates trade and throws up deep insights into industry trends, including supply chain and import trends.”

Gulfood 2016 is a strictly trade-only event for business and trade visitors. The show is open 11am-7pm from February 21-24 and 11am-5pm on February 25. Visitors can pre-register at www.gulfood.com to save AED100 (US\$ 27) on the AED300 (US\$ 81.70) on-site entry fee. ♦

