

Overwhelming success for inaugural Gulfood Manufacturing

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Gulfood Manufacturing is the largest dedicated food processing trade event in the Middle East, Africa and South East Asia (MEASA) and features a compelling three-day programme of sector-specific exhibitions, ministerial summits and market-shaping conferences covering the spectrum of the global food production industry.

Split into three segment-specific sectors - Food Logistics Middle East, ProPack Middle East and Ingredients Middle East - the first edition of Gulfood Manufacturing attracted more than 1,100 international machinery, equipment, product and service suppliers from 52 countries to the DWTC fairground.

Gulfood Manufacturing was conceived to enable large multinational food producers to explore MEASA expansion avenues and empower regional food manufacturers by providing a one-stop-shop to source the latest ingredients, processing machinery, packaging equipment and logistics, warehousing and cold chain solutions to replace and upgrade production line equipment and enable faster, cheaper and cost-effective production of safer and more reliable products.

With 24 official country pavilions spread across the show-floor, Gulfood Manufacturing also rolled out the global food industry's largest-ever *Hosted Buyer Programme*, a mammoth initiative designed to highlight the region's rapidly expanding F&B manufacturing and production infrastructure to influential buyers from countries including Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Iran and Nigeria amongst others.

Gulfood Manufacturing also hosted the two-day *Food & Beverage Industrial Investment Summit* – a strategic investment event bringing together overseas investors and multinational corporations to explore economic, market and manufacturing opportunities across MEASA. The Summit aims to give attendees and delegates a better understanding of the financial, legal, logistics, cold chain and technology benefits of locating or expanding existing operations in the region.

A specialist two-day Bakery Innovations Summit was also run during the show, as well as *the Food Factory of the Future* – a unique showcase of cutting-edge food manufacturing technologies presented by Germany's United Food Technology (UFT).

Here, a selection of exhibitors and showcased products:

Live baking demonstration

Mecatherm Group - the French manufacturer of ovens, machines and automatic production lines for industrial bakeries - hosted a live demonstration of its innovative bakery equipment at the show. Among the products showcased were the Combi Bloc Oven and the Double Action Oven. The Combi Bloc for newcomers to the industrial bakery world is flexible and can produce tinned bread loaves as well crusty baguettes. Mecatherm's Double Action Oven is also very flexible and can bake white bread loaves as well as pastries and crusty breads.

Mecatherm Group opened an office in Dubai in October 2013, dedicated to the Middle Eastern, African and Indian markets. Countries in which Mecatherm has recently installed its equipment include Algeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, India, Lebanon, Oman, Tunisia, Mauritius, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea.

Malt, mint, fruit flavours + colours

WILD's wide-ranging portfolio for the trade fair included trail-blazing concepts for malt beverages, functional still drinks and energy drinks as well as mint flavours for the food and beverage industry. New flavours and fruit granulate for confectionery products rounded out the company's product showcase. Malt beverages are one of today's key trends, and in the Middle East they are associated with naturalness and a healthy diet. WILD's malt and energy concepts use purely natural components and compelling flavours to satisfy this demand and offer multiple options - everything from fresh to fruity. WILD [see the inside front cover] also presented innovative ideas which feature a fusion of malt and energy drinks, both of which are market drivers in this successful segment. Building on its broad product palette of mint oils and natural mint ingredients, WILD showcased beverage products that feature sophisticated combinations of mint, fruits and malt, plus creative mint variations for the popular chewing-gum segment, and fruit and mint blends for hard caramels.

In the food sector, WILD put the spotlight on fruit-flavoured milk cream fillings for chocolates which can contain not only flavours but also fruit powder or granulate. This makes it possible for fruit to be declared on the label. WILD's granulates offer a new way to incorporate fruit, not only as flavour but in the product's appearance as well. Thanks to new extraction technologies, WILD has succeeded in using colouring foodstuffs to create particularly brilliant colours. This meets growing consumer demand for clean-label products.

Those who want alternatives to carmine will find what they are looking for in WILD's natural blends, which are based on different raw materials such as purple carrot, elderberry and black currant and allow manufacturers to replace carmine products.

Tumbler-based defrosting

Having pioneered the technique of rapidly defrosting frozen meat in a vacuumised tumbler using steam, GEA continues to expand the applications base for its ColdSteam T system, which shortens defrosting time by up to 75%, the company says. First introduced for defrosting whole muscle pieces, the system has now proven itself in the field with delicate meat cuts.

Vacuum defrosting not only reduces the time it takes to defrost frozen meat but also increases the potential yield by eliminating the drip loss of conventional tempering cabinet defrosting. Food safety is increased since there is minimal human contact with the meat, reducing the risk of bacterial contamination.

ColdSteam uses the fact that the boiling point of water drops in a vacuum. In a 95% vacuum, its boiling point drops to 33°C, so steam injected into a vacuumised chamber will neither scald or damage the meat, nor cause denaturation of the proteins. The 'cold' steam condenses on the frozen meat and efficiently releases its thermal energy to defrost it - in contrast to microwave defrosting technology that seeks the warmest and most liquid part, which easily leads to scalded surfaces and denaturation of the proteins. With the ColdStream T, colour, binding properties and structure of the meat all remain intact.

Cargill unveils 12 new ingredient prototypes

Cargill unveiled 12 ingredient prototypes for a broad range of applications. The new ingredient prototypes are derived from four key trends resulting from Cargill's research into local tastes. Cargill commissioned an extensive survey on food taste preferences across 12 food categories in nine countries in the METNA region. Using the findings, Cargill's Innovation Centres built concepts along four themes, which are trending in the region.

| Premium indulgence: Due to rising income levels in the emerging markets, consumers are looking for products that fulfil their desire for high quality ingredients.

| Health: As consumers look for healthier products, manufacturers require solutions to meet the consumers' needs.

| Innovation: By developing ingredients that are unique, manufacturers have the opportunity to be first-to-market with exceptional products.

| Cost optimisation: This trend meets the requirement of cost efficiency without compromising on quality.

Nedim El Cheik, Commercial & Market Development Director of Cargill Foods Middle East, Turkey & North Africa, said: "We help our customers stand out in the market by applying these latest trends to our ingredients which in turn are used in our clients' products to the great satisfaction of their consumer audiences. We believe that the ingredient prototypes we have showcased today are of the highest quality and will be welcomed by our customers and by consumers in the region. We want our customers to know that we have a genuine commitment to helping them sustainably grow their businesses. Our global expertise and international application centres, coupled with a strong understanding of the local and regional market, reinforces our pledge to provide relevant and quality products that consumers will love."

Dubai's FBMG endorses 'unique business potential'

Dubai's Food and Beverage Manufacturing Business Group (FBMG), a non-profit industry body for F&B manufacturers based in the Emirate, has praised the inaugural Gulfood Manufacturing for its 'unique business potential'. "International F&B producers will rightly view Gulfood Manufacturing as a strategic gateway to tailor their products to suit regional tastes and foster new, lucrative inroads into markets across the Middle East, Africa and South Asia," said Mr. Mohamed Al Owais, Vice Chairman and Executive Director, United Foods. "Furthermore, UAE and GCC-based food manufacturers will discover the latest in cutting-edge business improvement solutions to drive innovation, improve cost-efficient manufacturing and enhance operational quality."

According to data compiled by Dubai Exports, the export promotion agency of the Department of Economic Development (DED), Dubai's total foreign trade in food products from January to September 2013 rose to Dh46 billion – a 7% rise on the Dh43 billion accrued in the same period a year earlier. While food import increased by 3% from Dh31 billion to Dh32 billion over the nine-month comparative period, exports and re-exports rose by 17% from Dh12 billion to Dh14 billion. FBMG members are principal players in Dubai's annual food trading industry and several have already invested in expansive new production facilities in Dubai Investment Park, including DRC's new US\$136 million (AED500 million) bottling plant.

Combined resources for baking excellence

Markel Bakery Group companies manufacture commercial baking equipment and together offer a growing portfolio of high-quality solutions for snack foods, breads, buns, pizza, pies, pastries and other food products. A special focus at the MBG stand was on AMF Bakery Systems, Reading Bakery Systems and the Tromp Group - all members of the Markel Bakery Group.

Strong showing by bakery sector

Members of the USA's Bakery Equipment Manufacturers Association (BEMA) exhibiting at the BEMA Pavilion included American Pan, Bettendorf Stanford, Burford Corporation, Hansaloy Corporation, KWIK LOK Corp., LeMatic Inc., Unifiller Systems, Topos Mondial and Shaffer Mixers & Processing Equipment. Quick-serve restaurant growth and much-needed bakery support in the Middle East, Africa and Indian sub-continent were areas of special interest to BEMA members who can bring the required automation and quality equipment to regional wholesale producers, reported Kerwin Brown, BEMA President and CEO. In addition to selling direct to GCC markets, BEMA members were interested in expanding their business by engaging new agents and distributors that can sell and support their machinery and products.

Case erectors and sealers

Visitors to the Endoline Machinery stand were treated to live demonstrations of Endoline's latest SMART machines - some of which are up to 50% faster than current case-erecting and sealing equipment. The display included the company's Fully Automatic Random Case Sealer, believed to be the fastest of its type in the world. Endoline's SMART systems are able to deal with random case sizes, require less manual adjustment, and can report back information for monitoring productivity rates.

Endoline's Middle East distributor partner, Al Thika Packaging, had its own stand at the show and exhibited Endoline's 247 high-speed case erector.

Hot on the heels of the launch of Endoline's fully automatic random case sealer the company announced that it will be extending its range of SMART machines – with the launch of RACE. This random automatic case erecting system features a dual-sided hopper to handle different-sized cases, feeding two separate packing lines while eliminating downtime during case changeover.

Purposely designed to suit the growing needs of demanding production halls, RACE can be integrated into any line conveyor and is ideally suited to manufacturers who regularly have long runs of different case sizes.