

Growing Appetite

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Now in its 12th edition, THAIFEX – The World of Food Asia 2015 – is one of the region's most important and best-visited expos for food products, service and technology.

"We've seen a steady growth of trade visitors over the past few years and this year we're expecting at least 32,000 trade visitors," said Rena Bay, marketing communications manager of Koelnmesse. Her THAIFEX pre-show prediction was easily achieved with the total number of visitors, including public days, totalling a record-breaking 35,000.

Held at Bangkok's IMPACT Arena from May 20 to 24, this year's expo also saw a significant increase in the number of exhibitors – to 1,675, up from 1,400 last year – while the show floor was expanded from 60,000 to 70,000sqm, accommodating the food service sector in its own dedicated conference hall.

Organised by the DITP together with the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Koelnmesse, THAIFEX is a showcase of the best offerings from the Thai and global food industry. A testament to the fair's increasingly international focus, Asia's largest food products expo featured over 811 international exhibitors, making up 48% of the show. Besides Turkey who came on board this year as a new partner country, Germany and Mexico also had their own pavilions, presenting a diversified array of national products, from handcrafted Mexican tequilas to German-style sausages and Turkish frozen seafood.

A key driver in economic growth, last year the Thai food industry generated 800 billion baht (US\$24 billion) in revenue for the country, with products such as rice, processed chicken, canned and processed seafood, frozen and processed shrimp, and food additives ranking among the world's top five in export value. According to DITP Director-General Nuntawan Sakuntanaga, the Thai food industry is well positioned for the forthcoming ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), thanks to the wide range of quality food products that are recognised by nations the world over.

"Thai businesses possess the ability and creativity to innovate and create, while the government is actively supporting them through the opening of new trade channels that continually expand Thailand's network of international trade relations," she said. "These factors will help drive the growth of our food industry on the continental and global stages effectively and fulfil the policy of making Thailand the kitchen of the world."

For easy navigation, THAIFEX 2015 was divided into various zones. These included a general food and beverage zone and special zones for certain product and service categories, such as World of Seafood, World of Coffee & Tea, and World of Food Service, while 'Thailand: Kitchen of the World' showcased the country's many rice-based products and world-famous cuisine.

On the menu were a host of other activities, exhibitions and seminars, such as those relating to food and food products featuring the THAI SELECT mark, the I+D Style Café, TTM (Thailand Trust Mark) and Prime Minister Business Enterprise Award (PM Award). Professional cooks from Asia had the opportunity to sharpen their knives in the Global Chef Challenges competition, hosted by THAIFEX for the first time. Organised by Worldchefs, the global association of chefs, the Asia selection was a resounding success. Singapore took the podium for both Global Chef Challenge and Hans Bueschkens Young Chef Challenge, while South Korea championed the Global Pastry Chef Challenge.

For more information, visit www.worldoffoodasia.com, www.thailandfoodfair.com

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