

There are more people in the Middle East than in the US and Canada combined, making the region one of the world's top food markets. Countries such as the UAE, the state with the highest population growth rate in the region at 3.69%, have been actively pursuing solutions to growing food demand, a huge expatriate population with diverse food preferences, and more discerning consumer tastes.

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Government and private entities involved in the Middle East food sector are becoming increasingly attuned to the latest international developments in food technologies and practices in a bid to optimize their respective food strategies.

The Trends and Innovations Zone included as part of SIAL Middle East, the first regional edition of the world's largest professional food events network, will introduce the Middle East's food players to 15 major trends that will shape the future of food products. 50 winning products chosen by innovation and food experts during various global SIAL editions will make their Middle Eastern debut at Hall 9 of the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, the venue of SIAL Middle East which runs from November 22 to 24, 2010.

"Today's consumers prefer products that offer something new and provide them with substantial benefits. This explains the radical shifts in the way global food players develop and market their products. The Middle East needs to be more aware of underlying food trends across the world given its diverse and expanding demographic profile. SIAL has been a remarkable source of innovative food concepts over the past 40 years that the Middle East should look to for inspiration," said Xavier Terlet, President, XTC world innovation.

"We cannot stick to traditional approaches if we want to address the unique food challenges our region faces as it goes through the next two decades. Here in Abu Dhabi food safety and security rank high within our development plans through 2030. We believe the Middle East needs to rethink its food agenda and adopt fresher technologies and practices to meet the demands of food consumers," said Mohamed Jalal Al Reyaysa, Director of Communication, Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority.

"For our part we have committed to moulding Abu Dhabi as a model of innovative food development strategies for the region which is why we are strengthening our collaboration in this regard with the private sector," Al Reyaysa added.

Every two years, SIAL unveils consumer innovations and trends in the global food industry via its Trends & Innovations Observatory which has become a favorite feature of SIAL events for the last 10 years. A jury of independent professionals selects some featured products under the three main categories of Mass Consumption, Foodservice, and Semi-Processed Food Products and Ingredients based on their innovative qualities. The top products are bestowed a special Trends & Innovations award and have made the SIAL brand synonymous with food innovation and excellence.

SIAL Middle East's Trends and Innovations Zone will display winning products chosen by the respective juries of SIAL Paris, SIAL China and SIAL Canada. Among the major trends and innovations reflected by the inclusive items are 'fusion food' or the use of exotic ingredients; allergen-free food; real-time point-of-sale acquisition of food information; and 'like a chef at home' cooking products.

The zone will also host discussions on the flavours, textures and ingredients influencing food product innovation, the producers of such products, and food innovation trends in Europe, the Americas and Asia.



Left to right: Mr. Olivier Hausheer, Managing Director, XTC World Innovation, & Mr. Xavier Terlet, President, XTC World Innovation examining products at the Trends & Innovations Zone - SIAL Middle East.

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