

Foodex Saudi 2018' attracts more Spanish and Pakistani firms

JEDDAH — Jeddah will host on Nov. 12-15 the 6th edition of 'Foodex Saudi', in which 12 Spanish and 11 Pakistani companies will showcase their products among 600 international brands from more than 32 countries to attract influential Saudi food importers, distributors, and investors.

Veronica Puente, international director of Spanish Food and Drink Federation (FIAB) revealed the Spanish companies' wide interest in 'Foodex Saudi 2018', saying that 12 Spanish participating companies are in the fields of oils, mineral water, meat and frozen products. They are seeking opportunities in the Saudi market, the largest in the Arab and Gulf region.

"The Kingdom is an interesting market and is the largest food importer in the Gulf region, with 65% of the region's total consumption. Spanish food and agricultural products imports to kingdom represented 15% of total imports in 2016 with the value of 266 million euros (about SR1.15 billion), 10% increase than the previous year. We anticipate the value to reach SR2 billion in the coming year, which in turn reflects the deep trade relationships between the two countries and the great knowledge of Spanish products that guarantee high added value and quality and receive a wide response from Saudis," said Puente.

Jose Ramon Godoy confirmed that the Spanish pavilion will display a wide variety of known beef brands, as Spain has over 115,000 livestock farms, 250 slaughterhouses and 150 cutting rooms and warehouses, as well as filleting and packing plants.

Godoy said: "Saudi market is one of the best Arab and global markets. A country with a high purchasing power which recognizes the quality of the best brands and desires to buy products that guarantee the natural production and the guarantee of food safety. Spain offers meat of young animals ranging between 12-24 months which fed on cereals and green pastures.

Following the wide response of last year, Ramon noted the increased number of Catalan companies and that companies from Barcelona are participating again this year, seeking a position in the Saudi market and showcasing organic products as well.

Shahzad Ahmad Khan, commercial consul in Jeddah of the Republic of Pakistan, said the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) will participate in Foodex Exhibition under Pakistan Pavilion.

"We have been participating for many years and last year was the best participation as our 11 companies showcased leading brands in different sectors such as rice, bakery & confectionery, beverages, cosmetics & herbal products, spices and juices. The main reason to participate was an extraordinary support of Reed Sunaidi who acted as a partner for us."

Haya Al-Sunaidi, the chairwoman of Reed Sunaidi Exhibitions, noted that the exhibition is an outstanding trade platform for suppliers from around the world to compete over their share in the largest food market in the Gulf and Middle East region as the Kingdom has massive economic and consuming power and its food market is flexible and attractive having huge economic and consumer capacity.

Mohamed Talaat, show manager, said the wide participation of European, Asian, and Arab countries proves the event's importance and that there is a high demand for diversity in the local food market.

According to recent statistics, the Kingdom imports about 70% of its food and spends about SR 87 billion annually.