

Mr. Manu Leopaiprote, Chairman-Thailand of Informa Markets, says that Fi Asia 2019 is the food and beverage ingredients exhibition which is alternately held in Thailand and Indonesia. This year's event is 25% larger than that in 2017, covering the space from Hall 101-104 at BITEC Bangna. He reiterates that there are more than 750 exhibitors from 50 countries across the globe and over 10,000 visitors registered in advance, while around 20,000 visitors are expected to visit the show. He elaborates that 60% of the visiting entrepreneurs are from Thailand, followed by 25% from ASEAN, and 10% from China and India respectively. This shows that Mr. Manu says, the entrepreneurs from Asia are the most eager to visit the show due to the tough competition in the food and beverage industry in the region. Therefore, they have to keep improving themselves to always meet the needs of consumers. Meanwhile, Mr. Manu says, the food and beverage industry of Asia always have opportunities as there are always emerging markets. Those who have their productions prepared will be able to take these

opportunities. He concludes that Fi Asia 2019 is another platform for food and beverage businesses to use as there is everything entrepreneurs will need.

Ms. Rungphet Chitanuwat, Business Director-ASEAN, Informa Markets, the organizer of Fi Asia 2019, shares that when 'Digitization' takes part in place of everything, the food and beverage industry which is a promising industry of Thailand and the world has to adjust. She says big companies in the food industry have food technologies and innovations for a while. Thus, she further says, smaller companies including SMEs have to follow suit to catch up with the trends before lagging behind the market. She adds that the value of global food technologies is expected to reach 250.43 billion US dollars in 2022. Of this number, 10,000 million US dollars come from Southeast Asia.

"The entrepreneurs in Thailand's food and beverage industry are already internally recognized but they still lack technologies and innovations to uplift their existing products to the level of having better competitiveness. If they can do so, they will have opportunities to expand into other foreign markets and drive Thailand's food industry, which is valued at over 2.7 trillion baht, to grow and gain more popularity in markets around the world. Therefore, Fi Asia 2019 reintroduces a business negotiating platform to support the Thai companies to expand their competitiveness and enhance their production capacity, which will make it become a leader suiting its rank as the kitchen of the world."

"For the highlights of the 24th Fi Asia, we bring together over 750 leading manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage ingredients from 50 countries around the world to showcase their products and innovations. There are also 8 international pavilions, including the USA, China, Ireland, Europe, India, Japan, France, and Thailand. Besides, many international conferences and seminars on various topics are on offer. The event even sets aside the space for the product showcase by the winners of the Start-up Innovative F&B Products Competition and a wide range of activities to provide the latest updates on food and beverage innovations and trends of future consumers," Ms. Rungphet says.

Ms. Rungphet discloses interesting information that 'Vietnam' is a rising competitor in the food industry as it increases its production capacity and competes with Thailand by offering lower prices. She further explains that new trade partners which Thailand should pay attention to include many countries in different regions of the world. The Philippines imports processed food from foreign countries and have high demand in canned processed fruits and vegetables, while the UAE has an increasing demand in noodle products, pasta, and rice due to a rising number of expats moving to live and work in the country. The USA has the 45-billion-dollar market of organic food and beverages, making the country one of the biggest organic markets in the world. Turkey has a continually-growing fruit juice market with the total sales of ready-to-drink fruit juice in 2018 reached 1,033.8 million liters. These high-demand products are the food and beverage products which Thailand can manufacture with high quality. Importantly, Ms. Rungphet emphasizes, staying proactive, developing better products through technologies and innovations, and applying innovations in turning raw materials into food ingredients will help the Thai entrepreneurs to enter these markets more easily.

Fi Asia is a trade event for food ingredients, which is alternately held in Thailand and Indonesia. Next year, Fi Asia will be organized in Indonesia during September 9-11, 2020 before coming back to Thailand during September 15-17, 2021.