



25th July 2008

SHOP...ORGANIC!

- The National Organic Awards are welcomed back to SHOP 2008 -

SHOP - Ireland's leading food and drink event, which takes place at the RDS on the 29th Sept - 1st Oct - will welcome the return of the prestigious National Organic Awards for its second year. Organised by Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the awards will celebrate innovation and excellence of products across the organic Food and Drinks range.

Last year The National Organic Awards had 73 products submitted by 32 entrants, from all over Ireland, to compete throughout the various categories. This year, Organic food producers will enter categories including Best Organic Chilled/Frozen Product, Best Organic Grocery Product, Best Organic Sweet, Flour & Chocolate Confectionery, Best Organic Meat Product and Best Overall Organic for 2008. The winners of these awards gain an automatic edge over their competitors having received the ultimate professional kudos from expert industry judges.

Eileen Bentley, Manager Bord Bia Small Business Dept., says:

"This is the second year of The National Organic Awards at SHOP and we are delighted to be returning for the 2008 event. Last year's inaugural awards were a huge success and served as an ideal platform to demonstrate to Irish food buyers the range and quality of the Irish organic products available.

Building on a wonderful response to the awards last year, we have introduced the Best Organic Meat category award to recognise the number of quality producers working in this sector. We anticipate a strong interest in all the categories in the awards again this year."

Research in the sector has shown that the main reasons consumers give for buying organic food and drink include perceived benefits in health, quality and taste and the lack of artificial chemicals and pesticides.

In a report published by the Western Development Commission (2001), the Irish organic food market was valued at €21m and has since grown rapidly to the current value of €66.4m in the space of just 7 years. This dramatic increase evidences the growth in the sector and highlights the importance of acknowledging Irish organic food producers through respected ceremonies such as the National Organic Awards.

Joint Managing Director of EXPO Events, Garret Buckley says:

“During the country’s economic boom, Ireland developed a culture of sophisticated and educated tastes and our food & drink industry has been growing in line with this trend. The return of the National Organic Awards to SHOP is a testament that the event is continually moving forward in terms of innovation and industry relevance. SHOP has become an unmissable event on the Irish food and drink calendar for showcasing skill and ingenuity in the industry and for launching new products onto the market, not to mention its value as an information centre for the sector in general.

Although the economy is facing more challenging times, we continue to tailor the educational talks and seminars at SHOP, to advise industry professionals on the most proactive and innovative steps to take during this period of unrest.”

Valued at an estimated €23.8 billion with exports of €8.62 billion, the food and drink industry remains one of the most important cogs in the economic wheel in Ireland despite the recent downturn. The 3-day SHOP exhibition is designed to unite all those in the Retail, Food and Drink sector in order to launch new products, develop new business, network and gather the best advice in the industry each year.

An estimated 5,000 buyers and decision makers are set to descend on SHOP where they’ll witness a showcase of the most innovative and exciting new products to be found in Ireland, while gathering practical and manageable advice on how to increase profits and drive down costs.

Further information on the series of seminars and workshops can be viewed on www.shopexhibition.com

- Ends -

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EDITORS NOTES:

SHOP places particular emphasis on the provision of information and education to the sector by means of a series of seminars, workshops and initiatives with key industry associations such as: Convenience Stores and Newsagents Association (CSNA), POPAI - the retail marketing trade association (UK & Ireland), Irish Petrol Retailers Association, the Specialist Coffee Association of Europe (SCAE) and more.

SHOP will also host its prestigious **Product of the Show Awards** which has proved a launchpad for smaller businesses/new products into the market limelight over the years

Building on its reputation of excellence SHOP once again presents a menu of initiatives both recognising and promoting innovation across the industry including and the **Irish Chapter of the Speciality Coffee Association**, which will stage the National Cupping Competition challenging the tastebuds of coffee experts throughout the country.

SHOP 2008 will also welcome the **World Cheese Awards**, on Irish shores for the first time ever. The **Great Taste Gourmet Food Hall** organised by The Guild of Fine Food will also be making its inaugural appearance at the event.