



World Cheese 2009: Awards; Congress; Festival

Gran Canaria, 1st – 3rd October 2009

World Cheese 2009 will take place this autumn in Gran Canaria over three days, and comprises three key events: the World Cheese Awards, an international and local congress and the World Cheese Festival. In a market worth **£2.1 billion in the UK alone**, no-one can afford to rest on their laurels, particularly as recent research shows that for six out of ten consumers consider price/value for money as the single most important factor when purchasing cheese.*



The **World Cheese Awards** is the world's largest international cheese competition: over 3000 cheeses will be judged by more than 200 international experts including leading cheese buyers and food journalists from around the world, who will be flown in especially for the event. It is only the second time the Awards will take place outside the UK, and Gran Canaria is a particularly appropriate choice: not only is per capita cheese consumption one of the highest in the world, but a Canary Islands co-operative was the proud producer of the World Champion Cheese 2008.

Judging will take place on Thursday 1st October and the major winners, including the **World Champion Cheese 2009**, will be announced at an exclusive presentation dinner that evening. The dinner will be held at the Santa Catalina hotel, and 500 guests will experience Canary Island hospitality and enjoy an unrivalled opportunity to network with the great and good of the cheese industry. Judges for the 2008 World Cheese Awards, which took place in Dublin, included Antony Worrall Thompson and Mark Hix. The panel was chaired by BBC Radio 2 food correspondent Nigel Barden.

A further 400 key buyers, retailers, chefs and opinion formers are expected to attend the **World Cheese Congress** at the **Alfredo Kraus Auditorium, Las Palmas**. This two-day series of seminars (October 1st and 2nd) focuses on how the cheese and dairy industry is likely to develop over the coming decade for both international and Spanish markets. Chaired by Pilar Merino, the Minister of Agriculture from the Canary Islands and featuring several key industry figures among the speakers, it promises to be one of the most important global dairy networking occasions of 2009.

Also new for 2009 is the **World Cheese Festival**, a celebration of the very best cheeses from every corner of the globe and fine foods including speciality meats, oils and wine from the Canary Islands and mainland Spain. The 500 delegates to the Congress are expected to attend the festival on the trade-only day (Thursday October 1st), allowing exhibitors to talk in-depth with key buyers before the Festival opens to the public (Friday October 2nd, Saturday October 3rd), when upwards of 10,000 visitors are expected. Friday October 2nd is open to both trade and consumer, allowing exhibitors to maximize both opportunities.

"This is undoubtedly the cheese Olympics," said organiser Bob Farrand. "More cheese and more cheese people will be together in a single location than ever before. It's a must-attend event for everyone in the business."

How to enter?

Cheese-makers wishing to enter products in the World Cheese Awards can download entry forms from the website, www.finefoodworld.co.uk/wca, where they will also find a comprehensive list of the classes and details of the entry mechanism. Closing date for entries is September 3rd 2009.

There are still some places available for anyone wishing to sponsor the Awards or exhibit at the Festival. Interested parties should contact www.wca-spain.com or elipse@elipse-eventos.com for more information on exhibiting, and john.farrand@finefoodworld.co.uk for more information on sponsorship.

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*Mintel Cheese Report, April 2009

Press enquiries

For further **press information**, please contact:

Gemma Massey: gemma@completemediagroup.co.uk

Sarah Lewis: sarahl@completemediagroup.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)20 7420 3550

The Guild of Fine Food

The Guild of Fine Food promotes excellence in speciality food and drink through its magazines, training programmes, awards, exhibitions and other food events.

The Guild of Fine Food is the trade organisation of the UK speciality food & drink sector, with a membership of around 1,300 fine food retailers, producers and distributors. As well as running the World Cheese Awards, it organises the Great Taste Awards, which attract nearly 5,000 product entries annually.

www.finefoodworld.co.uk