SLFPA ORGANIZE AN AWARENESS AND TRAINING PROGRAM ON FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT (FSMA) OF USA

The Sri Lanka Food Processors Association with the assistance from VEGA FEG project in Colombo and in partnership with the Spice Council and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce conducted an "AWARENESS AND TRAINING PROGRAM ON FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT (FSMA)" OF USA on 11th of June at the auditorium of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

The Training which is very comprehensive included workshops with factory visits to provide Sri Lankan manufacturers and exporters of food products and the supply chain to USA, with a better understanding of the above FSMA rules and regulations.

Participation at the awareness program was more than expected and the Hon. Rishad Bathiudeen, Minister of Industry and Commerce was the Chief Guest.

Mr. Hamilton Diaz - President, Sri Lanka Food Processors Association welcomed the distinguished invitees and participants. Mr. Sarada De Silva - Chairman Spice Council, made the thank you note. Among others who spoke are; Mr. Christopher Corkey, Economic and Commercial Attaché at the US Embassy and Sanjaya Pathirage - Vice President/Chairman - Training Program Committee of SLFPA. Among many other distinguished persons in attendance were; Mr. Anura Siriwardana - Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Asitha Senevirathne - Additional Secretary, Mr. Karunarathne - Director, Paul Richardson, Director of the Office of Economic Growth at USAID, Mr. Jamaldeen - Chief of Party, VEGA, M.Z.M. Farhad - Agribusiness Advisor US AID/VEGA-FEG and Mr. Mervin Gonawela - Secretary, Sri Lanka Food Processors Association together with a few more members from the SLFPA Ex-Co.

The facilitator for this Training Program, Dr. Barbara Rasco, BSE,Phd, Professor, School of Food Science, Washington State University USA is an Internationally recognized attorney and expert in the areas of domestic and international food law and food production with over 20 years experience advising domestic and international clients. She is a proven leader and current manager of multidisciplinary programs with large program budgets and diverse staff. Dr. Barbara Rasco has Substantial private sector and international experience, both legal and technical, in food and natural resource based businesses including: production, import, market development and export of high value food products. And, significant appointments to international advisory boards and national expert panels on food policy and international trade including FDA Advisory Boards on Food Safety Modernization Act implementation. Dr. Barbara Rasco has 170+ publications to her credit.

The Training concluded with a wrap-up program in partnership with the Sri Lanka Standards Institute (SLSI) on 21st June, with Dr.Barbara Rasco giving a presentation and her report at the SLSI auditorium.
NIGHT FOOD MARKET

The "Night Food Market" (Hawker Street) of the SLFPA, with a GO SRI LANKAN theme was held at "Diyatha Uyana" Battaramulla on the 8th & 9th of April. The venue is so serene that people from all walks of life gathered to refresh themselves. Reputed brands displayed their products and services at discounted prices to consumers.

The sponsoring brands of the event were: SMACK, ELEPHANT HOUSE, CARGILLS, MA’S, CENTURY and DERANA.

The Hon. Basil Rajapakse, Minister of Economic Development who graciously accepted our invitation, declared opened the event. Defense and Urban Development Ministry Secretary Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa graced the occasion as the guest of honor.

The Hon. Basil Rajapakse, examined the products on display and discussed their quality and manufacturing process with the stall holders.

This event is organized, to provide the membership opportunities to develop their business and interact closely with the consumers.
THE MANY USES OF VINEGAR

Vinegar is used worldwide in food preparation and as a food preservative. It is made by two distinct biochemical processes, both results of action of microorganisms. The first process involves the action of yeast which converts the sugar to alcohol by alcoholic fermentation and the second process involves the action of Acetobacter group of bacteria which converts the alcohol to acetic acid by acetic or acid fermentation. The Vinegar Institute of USA claims that vinegar came to be by accident more than 10,000 years ago. During the seventeenth century, large scale manufacture of vinegar started in France. In Sri Lanka, Vinegar is mainly used as a food ingredient in the preparation of pickle (achcharu) especially during the Sinhala and Hindu New Year time and also for softening of meat. Natural Vinegar in Sri Lanka is prepared by either using coconut toddy or coconut water. In the nineteenth Century, Sri Lankans used conventional method which is called the 'left alone method' to make vinegar. In 1956 Dr. W.R.N. Nathaniel the chemist at the Coconut Research Institute who later became the director, introduced a quicker method of preparing vinegar and this is called the 'generator process'. During the latter part of the twentieth Century, a German Company, Heinrich Frings invented the 'Acetator method' which is the latest and most efficient method presently being used in several countries of the world.

Although we in Sri Lanka use vinegar only for culinary purposes, there are numerous non-culinary uses of vinegar and we will highlight some of them in this article. Hannibal was supposed to have used vinegar to help clear a path across the Alps. In World War I, vinegar was used to treat wounds as it acts as a mild disinfectant by lowering pH. Vinegar has been used to soothe sunburn and insect bites. The key constituent in vinegar, namely acetic acid makes it useful in cleaning, deodorizing and many other tasks. Vinegar and salt mixture in equal proportions will clean Tea and Coffee stains from cups. Spots in the stainless steel kitchen equipment can be removed by rubbing the spots with a cloth dampened with vinegar. These are a few of the ways in which vinegar can help you to live a more pleasant life. The minerals found in water and food often leave a dark stain on aluminium utensils. This stain can be removed by boiling a cup of water to which a tablespoon of vinegar is added in the utensil. Inner walls of small necked bottles can be cleaned by pouring vinegar into the bottle and shaking it. Unpleasant cooking odours can be eliminated by boiling a teaspoon of vinegar in a cup of water in the room with the odour. Fresh cut flowers can be kept blooming longer by adding two tablespoons of vinegar and three tablespoons of sugar to each litre of warm water and keeping the stems dipped to a height of three to four inches in this nutrient solution. Vinegar is called the friend of Chinese herbs as it is often used to process the herbal preparations. It is known to enhance the desired effects and inhibit the undesired effects. It is a known fact in China that in the food processing industry, workers in the vinegar section suffer less when they fall ill.

This article comes by courtesy of C.D. De Fonseka & Sons (Pvt) Ltd., Panadura who have been manufacturing coconut vinegar since 1896. They are thankful to Mr. Jim Brown of the Houston Chronicle and Mr. Lawrence J. Diggs, 'the Vinegar Man' for some of the information

“WHY YOU SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF SLFPA AND BENEFITS OFFERED BY US”

BRIEF PROFILE OF SLFPA

Founded in 1997 as an advocacy Group Sri Lanka Food Processors Association currently consists of over 140 member companies. Committed to the Development of the country’s processed food and beverage industry the Association consist of members from all relevant sub sectors addressing such issues as National Policy, Intra regional cooperation, Technology, Knowledge transfer and Marketing. The Group offers leadership to a small but vibrant National Processed Food Industry. Vital to the Island Nation’s Agro based economy the sector directly employees over three hundred thousand persons while supporting over four million back stream producers. The SLFPA consists of all sizes of industry, including Multinational, Large, Medium, Small and Micro scale industries. The member industries consist of Food Ingredients, Grocery products, Confectionery and Bakery products, Frozen Foods, Fruit and Vegetable based products and Beverages.

OUR ACTIVITIES

- Policy Dialogue with the Government, with a view to obtaining duty concessions for import of inputs
- Training and knowledge Transfer
- Taking up Macro and Micro issues of the Sector with public Officials
- Participation in International Food and Beverage Fairs through the Association
- Dissemination of information to members, conducting training programs, workshops and seminars
- Representation - Food and Beverage advisory committee, Export Development Board
- Representation - National Food Advisory Committee, Ministry of health
- Annual International Processed Food Fair and Exhibition (Profoods/Propack Ag biz –www.profoods.com)
- Annual Cleaner Dining Competition among the Food Outlets & school canteens to promote better hygiene
The Food Processing, Packaging and Agribusiness fraternities will once again come together on 23rd, 24th and 25th of August 2013 to showcase Sri Lanka’s complete food supply chain. As in previous years, the exhibition will create opportunities for individuals and companies to introduce new products, technology and services. The event is a public private partnership, with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture Development supporting the event for the 12th year in succession. The 12th edition of the Pro Foods/Pro Pack 2013 exhibition will have over 300 stalls covering the totality of the food supply chain, giving opportunities for investors, traders and consumers to see first hand, the availability and opportunities in this industry. The event will showcase the latest products in the local processed food industry, sampling of consumer favorites, innovations and technology development in Packaging, newest agricultural machinery & services, processed food, hygiene education and many more. The exhibition which has witnessed an evolutionary increase over a decade will be held under the theme “from Farm to the kitchen” denoting the entire chain of the food industry which mainly revolve around farms, the food process and finally the food table of the consumer. “Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Asia” together with the cleaner diner programme will feature as a concurrent event, which will benchmark best practices and reward performance within the industry.

The exhibition will also feature two separate pavilions from two of the largest global players in the industry, India & China. Many stakeholders from South East Asian countries too are attracted to this event. Mr. Dammika Gunasekara, chairman of the organizing committee of the exhibition said that the event has been earmarked as “one of a kind” through the entirety of its existence, and has been renowned for providing all visitors and stall holders a unique experience. “This is the only event of this kind to be held in the Island and over the years it has been known to provide each visitor and stall holder with a unique and unparalleled experience in terms of networking, sales leads and knowledge. This year too the event will most certainly be the main attraction for both local and international players in the industry and it is not an event to be missed.” A significant outcome from the past few events was the small and medium scale industry pavilion organized for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. This pavilion was a huge success among all visitors and assisted all small and medium scale enterprises to showcase their latest products and services. The organizers plan to increase the number of stalls allocated for these companies thereby encouraging more participation from the rural areas while opening the doors of opportunity to entrepreneurs from North and East of the country. This would give all SME companies the greatest opportunity to introduce their products and services to this ever growing market.

The event is a platform to discover and learn about the latest innovations in Food Processing Engineering & Packaging services, it will also be an opportunity to meet supermarket buyers, importers and distributors on one platform to establish business contacts and generate genuine sales leads. In 2012, many companies launched new products and services by demonstrating their products to stay ahead of the competition. This exhibition has been designed in such a manner that the general public, who are the end consumers, derive substantial knowledge and information about new products and advanced food technologies. This is evidenced by the growing number of visitors to the exhibition every year, making it one of the most popular exhibitions to be visited.