



## Pro Food/Pro Pack exhibition: Impetus for Lanka's food industry



SANJEEVI JAYASURIYA

The Pro Food/Pro Pack 2011 and Agri Biz, the international processed food, beverage, packaging and agriculture exhibition organized by the Sri Lanka Food Processors' Association together with National AgriBusiness Council was held for the tenth consecutive year with India as the partner country. The exhibition is a showcase of industry achievements and potential where the stakeholders meet under one roof. This event will be a regional exhibition at the SAARC level in the near future with special emphasis on trade development, Sri Lanka Food Processors' Association Chairman Rohantha de Fonseka said at the inauguration of the three day exhibition last Friday.

The food industry has become a vibrant sector in the country's economy where it has grown at a rapid rate of 15 percent per year, he said.

In 2010, the total market was Rs 388 billion compared to Rs 311 billion in the year 2009. The industry was less than Rs 100 billion ten years ago and during the past ten years it has grown by nearly 400 percent. The industry targets to become a trillion rupee market within the next ten years. The rapid growth could be attributed to the success in conducting exhibitions and the contributions made by the Sri Lanka Food Processors' Association.

These exhibitions provide the stakeholders an ideal platform to meet, network and build contacts for fruitful trade relationships, he said.

The Agriculture and Processed Food Development Authority (APFDA) India will support Sri Lanka's organic cultivation by providing certifications in line with the USA and European standards. The country could benefit from this initiative, APFDA Chairman Asit Thirupathy said. "We will collaborate with Sri Lanka to emerge as an organic food supplier in the global market where the food processing and packaging sector has gain priority in the economy. The country needs to expand further in to up market segment of exports and organic food could play a key role in this regard," he said. Sri Lanka could attract more foreign exchange by offering premium priced quality products for health conscious consumers. As there is a growing trend in healthy foods, the country needs to concentrate on niche markets with medicinal products to improve agri businesses, he said. There were 11 exporters from India where a separate Indian pavilion for Indian exhibitors was held for the first time showcasing developments in the food industry. Daily News was the print media sponsor of the event.

Pictures by Saliya Rupasingha

[jayasuriya.sanjeevi@gmail.com](mailto:jayasuriya.sanjeevi@gmail.com)

