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GULFOOD

## UAE's F&B community launch innovative new products at Gulfood

Gulfood gives local food producers to turn global heads with new innovations

by Yousra Zaki | February 16, 2022 | SHARE



The UAE's growing community of food producers has been turning heads at this week's **Gulfood**, with a number of homegrown innovators launching and championing a variety of new-to-market products at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).

As the UAE government pursues a multi-pronged food strategy to reduce the country's reliance on imports, a range of homegrown startups and established food sector heavyweights have leveraged Gulfood to readdress the import-export imbalance.

One of the market entrants, Abu Dhabi-based Below Farm, is seeking to increase reliable and cost-effective access to exotic and flavourful mushrooms by growing locally, with the additional benefit of facilitating fresh produce supplies quicker than international competitors.

### Gulfood's new-to-market products

Bronte Weir, co-founder, Below Farm said: "We are excited to be launching Below Farm at Gulfood in the UAE. Our goal is to supply affordable, hard-to-come-by products of good quality from the region for the region. We will be supplying a sustainably-grown range of mushrooms, including king oyster, shitake, and lion mane, which are a great alternative to seafood. The response from retailers has been incredible and we are looking forward to seeing our products on the UAE supermarket shelves in the very near future."

Elsewhere, AWS Distribution – a leading FMCG distribution company that has operated in the UAE for over 40 years – has launched a dedicated range of private-labelled brands to help meet gaps in consumer demands, especially around affordable products, that have been escalated by supply chain issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Usama El Gohary, general manager, AWS Distribution, said: "Post-pandemic, we saw a great opportunity to enter the market with new products to address the gaps arising from consumer demands shifting to more affordable products. In the region's private label industry, where the focus remains on offering the best quality and price to reach the most customers, there is strong and healthy competition from brands. Some of our new launches include a line of products tailor-made for the Filipino expat market, new lines of washing and baby detergents, as well as coffee brands which will be available on UAE shelves from next month."

Hunter Foods Limited, a MENA region leader in innovative, alternative snacks and foods, has leveraged Gulfood 2022 to launch four new flavours of hand-cooked potato chips. One new flavour is Bzar, an Emirati spice mix created by UAE entrepreneur Shaima Al Zaabi, who took part in an F&B Innovation Lab initiative held in cooperation with the Khalifa Foundation.



Ananya Narayan, managing director at Hunter Foods Limited said: "The collaboration with Shaima and the Khalifa Foundation has been a fantastic journey for us. One of our aims is to work closely with, and launch products for, the local community. This new flavour range perfectly aligns with our objective," said

Finally, Food Specialities Limited (FSL), a leading solutions provider to the MEA's food and beverage industry, has launched the region's first meat-replacement ready-mix. The award-winning innovator has created plant-based (vegan) chicken and beef replacements, PLANTA, created in just five minutes using pea protein, plant fibre and seasoning mixes. The resulting blend can be used to make an array of dishes such as outlets, burgers, nuggets, kebabs.

FSL head of marketing and innovation, Dhruv Dhawan, said: "Our market research revealed the majority of plant-based products are imported, and with this comes higher price points for products. Our plant-based mix is a regional first, and is the result of major investments in our innovation lab to research the best blend of ingredients and create a more cost-effective, locally-produced healthy meat replacement."

**Gulfood** 2022 is being held under stringent safety and hygiene protocols. DWTC has proved its capability to curate the safest face-to-face business environment and deliver world-class events with the highest safety protocols. More information on the event safety guidelines can be found [here](#).

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