

8 February 2024

Foodexpo presents a new event area dedicated to retail

The Market Place is the name of Foodexpo's new event area, which combines an authentic market atmosphere with exhibitors, working market stalls and relevant presentations and debates.

Themes and trends in the retail industry thus come into focus at the Nordics' largest food fair, which takes place at MCH Messecenter Herning 17-19. March 2024.



Authentic market atmosphere awaits at The Market Place. Photo: MCH/Tony Brøchner.

When Foodexpo opens the doors to the The Market Place it will include, among other things, four market stalls – The Butcher, The Fish Monger, The Cheese Shop and The Bakery - as well as the main stage, The Market Stage, where topics from the Danish retail industry are highlighted. And there is more than enough to address:

- Since the last edition of Foodexpo (2022, ed.), the industry has been characterized by very high energy bills and the highest inflation in this millennium. Many consumers have therefore focused even more on the price than usual, but here in 2024 there are both expectations of falling interest rates and rising real wages, so there is room for optimism for the coming year, assesses Claus Bøgelund Nielsen, deputy director of “De Samvirkende Købmænd” (The Cooperating Merchants), who has helped to develop The Market Place.

Panel debate about students in the food industry

At The Market Place, a selection of Foodexpo's business partners are ready to talk about what is happening in their respective industries.

Director of "FødevarerDanmark" (FoodDanmark), Leif Wilson Laustsen, also participates in a panel debate at Torvescenen about the lack of students in the food industry - a key challenge in the industry.

- Vocational education in Denmark is severely affected by a lack of students, and this applies across the board, from health and construction to food. Young people have so many choices, and we have to make ourselves more interesting - we have to be attractive all the way from school to contract, states Leif Wilson Laustsen and elaborates:

- We have to get better at attracting and retaining students, and that requires both a political focus and an orderliness that must help make vocational education attractive. To an even greater extent, we must offer professional experiences via, for example, trips abroad, we must be available for career talks, and then we must look at conditions on the labor market.

The packaging change

Likewise, on The Market Stage, visitors can experience a presentation by Marianne Roed Jakobsen, managing director of VANA, who talks about the new manufacturer responsibility for packaging. It comes into force on 1 July 2025 and means that from 1 July 2027 manufacturers take over the legal, practical and financial responsibility for their packaging when the packaging becomes waste. Something that is of great importance to the retail trade.

- With producer responsibility comes a clear financial incentive to work with better and more sustainable packaging. As a manufacturer, you simply have to pay more for the waste management of the packaging if it does not meet a number of criteria for environmental friendliness. Therefore, it can push the development of better packaging, which is already well under way. Specifically, there will be a practical task of mapping the extent and composition of your packaging data, reporting data, and finally, of course, also payment for the packaging, explains Marianne Roed Jakobsen.

At Foodexpo, she gives an introduction to the framework around producer responsibility, so that you as a producer know these and know what you have to decide on practically in 2024 and 2025. In addition, she touches on how you can consider producer responsibility as an opportunity to work with better packaging and get a competitive advantage out of responsibility.

Focus on future consumers

The Market Place embraces everything that characterizes the retail trade in both the smaller specialty stores and overall in the entire industry. Consumer behavior and future research are also on the menu, and it is also here, on The Market Stage, that the industry is celebrated when the winners from the many professional competitions are honoured.

In the market stalls, exciting profiles and representatives from various branches of the retail trade inspire by showcasing the good, proud craftsmanship, just as the stalls offer masterclasses and a range of professional competitions.

The Market Place also includes a restaurant, The Delicacy, which serves traditional Danish open faced sandwiches, "smørrebrød", with a green twist.

Foodexpo takes place in MCH Messecenter Herning 17.-19. March 2024.