

WUWM CONGRESS

WUWM looks to burst price bubble

At the recent annual congress of the World Union of Wholesale Markets, economic, social and environmental issues were very much to the fore

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In a declaration resulting from its recent 26th annual congress held in Copenhagen, Denmark, the World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) has observed that recent rises in food prices should be seen as a “bubble” rather than a permanent effect within the global food economy, stating that food wholesale and retail markets help to provide consumers with the best price-quality ratio through a combination of open competition, choice and efficiency.

Delegates to the congress also thanked the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel, for her support and recognition of the value of the work of WUWM and its member markets, and accepted the invitation for further involvement and feedback in helping to achieve the goals and aims of her directive.



Mariann Fischer Boel addresses WUWM delegates

In her opening speech via a video link, the Danish commissioner addressed the participants present from 30 countries, pointing out the significant responsibility that European food markets have in ensuring the continent’s consumers eat more fruit and vegetables.

WUWM took the opportunity to urge the European Commission to support and facilitate its access to marketing and promotional funds that will ensure retail

The WUWM Congress in Copenhagen also saw the presentation of the WUWM 2008 Wholesale Market Awards. Submissions were received throughout the year from member markets and the winners were as follows:

Market Innovation

Hamburg Wholesale Market in Germany received the WUWM Award for Market Innovation. The jury awarded the prize on the strength of three new innovative facilities at the market: a German Additives Museum which opened in the spring of this year, a SCOLAB schools laboratory, and a pesticides laboratory which opened in June 2007.

This award was open to markets that had implemented innovations that demonstrably supported and improved their market’s construction, management or organisation. Hamburg Wholesale Market’s three progressive concepts impressed the judges, especially in the areas of marketing and promotional benefits, as well as market competitiveness.

“We are very proud to have received this award” said Torsten Berens, Managing Director of Hamburg Wholesale Market on accepting the award. “We hope that these still rather new facilities will make a significant contribution to the protection and education of consumers.”

Community Support

The WUWM Award for Community Support went to Garak Wholesale Market in Seoul, Korea. The judges found this Market’s community support programme most impressive and wide-ranging, covering various community education services, a number of social contributions to rural communities, a trader-market employee sponsored Neighbours in Need programme and a Green Market Festival which feeds upwards of 5,000 people every year.

Environmental Sustainability

The WUWM Award for Environmental Sustainability was given to Sydney Markets in Australia for its impressive environmental sustainability activities, which included waste management, energy savings and water saving programmes. The market’s carbon footprint has been reduced by 10 per cent through improved waste diversions and initiative, leading to savings on energy and water, waste diversions and waste recycling.

In addition, New Spitalfields Market in London, UK, was highly commended in this category due to its impressive programme and the enormous work that has been done at the centre over the past two years, specifically in terms of environmentally managing its waste disposal.

and wholesale markets can promote healthy, high quality fresh produce and thereby better support the movement for increased fresh fruit and vegetable consumption globally.

The Union also reinforced its commitment to strengthen collaboration with the European Commission, notably with the DG for Agriculture and Rural Development as well as that with SANCO within the DG for Health and Consumer Protection.

The congress event also provided an opportunity to publish the latest figures detailing the economic benefits of wholesale markets worldwide. A recent

survey showed that wholesale market membership within WUWM employs more than a quarter of a million people, and has a total annual turnover of €55.5bn from a throughput of 54m tonnes of fresh produce. Over 100,000 businesses are located at these markets.

The vitally important economic role that food markets play in providing competition and choice for customers via an alternative food channel was also discussed. Food markets clearly allow producers access to an efficient supply and distribution channel, improve availability and affordability through market-led price transparency, and support small business development. ■