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## Sweden

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### **FAS The Hague Visits the Free From Functional Food Expo in Stockholm**

**Report Categories:**

Beverages

CSSF Activity Report

SP1 - Expand International Marketing Opportunities

Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal

Trade Show Evaluation

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**Report Highlights:**

The Free From Functional Food Expo is the only trade show in Europe focusing specifically on gluten-free, lactose-free, and other food and ingredients with free from claims. The show also features vegan and organic products. This trade show targets producers who want to expand their business in Europe. It also offers some excellent presentations, one-on-one meetings for selected buyers, and market tours.

**General Information:**

The sixth annual [Free From Functional Food Expo](#) (FFFF), Europe's largest event focusing specifically on free-from food products, took place on May 16-17, 2018 at the [Kistamässan](#) (Kista Convention Center) in Stockholm, Sweden. In some ways the show can be compared with the [Natural Products Expo](#) show in the United States and [Biofach](#), [Vitafoods](#) and [Food Ingredients](#) show in Europe.

The free-from movement originated from consumers with allergies and intolerances but has now become a lifestyle market and attracts consumers that prefer vegan, organic and natural products as well. The average consumer of free-from food in this part of Europe is young, female and lives in the city. While Germany and the U.K. lead the free-from market, the Nordic market shows the highest growth potential. Ten percent of the Swedes avoid gluten and Finland has become the coeliac capital of the world. On average free-from food products are 50 percent more expensive than their conventional equivalent.

During the show a parallel conference program was organized in the two theatres and visitors had the opportunity to attend almost 40 interesting seminars, ranging from presentations by retailers, research institutes, Coeliac Society and producers.

Entrance to the show was for free for those that were pre-registered; the standard entrance fee was €65 (\$76).

**Exhibitors:**

The event was visited by an estimated 3,000 visitors predominantly from Europe. The vast majority were buyers from retail chains (60 percent) and food manufacturers (30 percent). The show attracted more than 280 exhibitors.

The vast majority of the exhibitors were companies from Europe. Italy had the largest number of exhibitors, over 30. Germany and Finland each had about 20 companies while there were 15 exhibitors each from the UK and the Netherlands. There were an estimated 25 companies from outside Europe.

The exhibitors presented the latest product innovations covering mainly allergy free, gluten free and lactose free, organic and vegan food ingredients and finished food products.

**Observations:**

A U.S. company interested in targeting the European and more specifically the Nordic market that has food products or ingredients that make a free-from claim should consider visiting this show. One-on-one meetings can be arranged with buyers even if the producer is not officially exhibiting.

In an unofficial survey, several exhibitors stated that they were pleased with the quality of visitors. The show atmosphere was quiet, but this enabled them to have good conversations with buyers. They felt the show attracted a significant number of decision-makers from all over Europe. The vast majority of the exhibitors were small and medium sized companies.

**Types of Products Exhibited:**

The majority of exhibitors offered food products and food ingredients with a free-from, vegan and organic claim. Some of the products offered were gluten free pasta, breakfast cereals, biscuits and

snacks, lactose free ice-cream, yoghurt and cheese, and a diverse range of vegan and organic food products.

**Costs:**

The price for a standard booth of 12 square meters is €2,940 (\$3,439). In addition there is a registration fee per exhibitor of €425 (\$497).

**Expo Business Communications:**

Expo Business Communications has to date been organizing FFFF shows in Northern Europe in even years and in Southern Europe in odd years. They are considering holding the show at one location in the future, Barcelona, Amsterdam or Stockholm.

**EU Market and Import Regulations:**

There are opportunities for U.S. exporters of free-from finished products and ingredients on the EU market. Information on country specific opportunities can be found on the [FAS Europe website](#). Additional information about how to best enter the European market, and the Dutch market in particular, can be found in [the GAIN NL7026 – Dutch Exporter Guide, September 20, 2017](#).

Regulation on Food Information to Consumers (FIC)

In order to be sold on the EU market, food products in general shall follow the general requirements of the [Regulation on Food Information to Consumers](#) (FIC). Specifically, Article 7 on Fair Information Practices establishes that food information shall not be misleading, particularly:

- (a) as to the characteristics of the food and, in particular, as to its nature, identity, properties, composition, etc.
- (b) by attributing to the food effects or properties which it does not possess;
- (c) by suggesting that the food possesses special characteristics when in fact all similar foods possess such characteristics.

Vegan and vegetarian

There is no specific regulation for the labeling of ‘vegan’ and/or ‘vegetarian’ products. These products should follow the general requirements of the FIC. However, according to Article 36 of the FIC, the Commission shall adopt an implementing act on voluntary food information related to suitability of a food for vegetarians or vegans. The Commission announced that preparatory work will start in 2019 for this implementing act.

Lactose-free

For ‘lactose-free’ products, thresholds for making a “lactose-free” claim have only been defined for infant formula and follow-on formula provided that the lactose content in the product is not greater than 2,5 mg/100 kJ (10 mg/100 kcal), see Article 9 of [Regulation 2016/127](#).

Gluten-free

Gluten is the only EU-wide ‘free-from’ claim which is covered by specific legislation. [Regulation No 828/2014](#) lays down harmonized requirements for the provision of information to consumers on the absence or reduced presence of gluten in food. The statement ‘gluten-free’ may only be made where the food as sold to the final consumer contains no more than 20 mg/kg of gluten. The statement ‘very low gluten’ may only be made where the food, consisting of or containing one or more ingredients made

from wheat, rye, barley, oats or their crossbred varieties which have been specially processed to reduce the gluten content, contains no more than 100 mg/kg of gluten in the food as sold to the final consumer.

#### Crossed Grain Trademark

Products with the gluten-free claim may carry [the Association of European Coeliac Societies](#) (AOECS's) [Crossed Grain Trademark](#) (CGT). The CGT is widely recognized by members of international coeliac organizations and a high proportion of non-coeliac, but gluten intolerant, consumers as a source of trust and reassurance that a product is safe to eat. AOECS's Europe wide licensing system means that one trademark license gives producers and retailers the right to use the Crossed Grain Trademark on their gluten free sales in over 30 European countries.

Figure 1: The AOECS's Crossed Grain Trademark



Source: the Association of European Coeliac Societies

If you have questions or comments regarding this report or need other assistance, please contact our office:

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