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#ISM #ISMFamilY #sweetweekcologne

Sweet euphoria: Full halls, good business, top atmosphere - that was ISM 2025

ISM as a mirror of a globally booming industry in spite of the growing challenges +++ Optimism and innovative spirit determine the atmosphere +++ ISM demonstrates its ability to adapt with new formats like the Creator Day and the Sweet Week Talks & Tasting Stage.

ISM in Cologne confirmed its position as the leading trade fair worldwide of a global flourishing sweets and snacks industry from 2 to 5 February 2025 - and impressively demonstrated that the industry is full of optimism and innovative spirit in spite of all the challenges. The positive atmosphere in the Cologne exhibition halls, the hustle and bustle in the aisles and the enthusiasm of the trade visitors determined the trade fair happenings from day one onwards. With a 5.5% growth in the number of exhibitors and 5% more exhibition space, the trade fair consistently continued on its expansion course: More than 1,500 exhibitors from 70 countries (foreign share 89%) presented an impressive cross-section of the industry and demonstrated the dynamics of a constantly changing market. Around 32,000 trade visitors from 135 countries (foreign share 71%) - and thus just under 7% more than last year - used the trade fair to seal business deals on-site and establish valuable contacts. With innovative formats ISM once again confirmed its role as a pioneering industry trendsetter and demonstrated impressively that personal encounters remain to be essential for long-term partnerships and economic growth, especially in challenging times.

With a strong opening and a star-studded panel on the Mercosur Trade Agreement, ISM 2025 set a strong signal as the central platform for industry-relevant discussions from the very start. Rupert Schlegelmilch, EU Chief Negotiator of the Agreement, was among others one of the important business partners. Together with further international stakeholders from political, business and industry circles, intensive discussions about the opportunities and challenges of the agreement were held.

Successful trade fair duo, ISM and ProSweets Cologne

Together with the co-located ProSweets Cologne, ISM 2025 formed the biggest industry get-together of the sweets and snacks industry worldwide. This unique trade fair duo unites the entire value chain - from raw materials, to packaging, through to the finished product - under the umbrella of the "Sweet Week". The direct and successful co-location of both events in Hall 10.1 created valuable synergies by promoting the exchange between manufacturers, the trade and industry experts. The Sweet Week Production Summit, which brought the participants of both trade fairs together, also contributed towards this.



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"With an increased number of visitors and exhibitors as well as a growing amount of exhibition space, the clear upwards trend of ISM is ongoing. As the global trendsetter and driver of innovations and trends, ISM sets benchmarks for the global booming sweets and snacks industry - with a strong content and event programme, renowned speakers and new formats for creators, which inspire and network the industry," said an impressed Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse GmbH.

"The sweets and snacks industry is faced with major challenges, but also with new opportunities, for example as a result of the EU trade agreement with Mercosur. In times of economic uncertainty, continued extraordinarily high cocoa prices and growing bureaucratic burdens, ISM is presenting itself as a strong partner and platform for the industry. It is quite rightly the industry's leading international trade fair - a place of orientation, dialogue and forward-looking business perspectives," Bastian Fassin, Chairman of the International Sweets and Biscuits Fair Task Force (AISM), added.

Impressive visitor quality and high international participation

With a share of over 70%, there proved to be a strong international participation among the trade visitors. The most strongly represented countries included Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. Outside of Europe, growth was registered above all from Cyprus, Israel, Mexico and Romania.

The European trading companies represented included among others leading national and international companies such as for example Aeon, Albert Heijn, Aldi, Bartels-Langness, Colruyt Group, Coop, Costco, Edeka, Globus, Jumbo Supermarkten, Mercadona, Metro, Migros, Rewe Group, S Group, Salling Group, Schwarz Group, SPAR International, Walmart and many more.

New products and trends for all tastes

In addition to current trends such as sustainability, transparency, health, functionality and new combinations of different aromas or textures, the classic sweets and snacks were also the centre of attention. The "Snacks on the go" trend, which involves conventional meals being replaced by practical in-between meals, is reflected by many of the new products.

Lab5 by ISM which bundled the Trend Snacks, Start-ups, Scale-ups, New Product Showcase, Finest Creations and the Club of the Confectionery Shops sections in Hall 10.1 proved to be a crowd-puller and underlined how future-oriented ideas and solutions can bring the industry forward today already. The new concept of the direct connection to the Raw Materials & Ingredients and the Packaging sections of ProSweets Cologne went down very well and created valuable synergies with the supplier industry.

The Expert Stage: Know today already what will move the industry tomorrow

The challenges and opportunities of the industry were discussed in detail on the Expert Stage. For example, innovative strategies for the reduction of sugar, the promotion of sustainable cocoa cultivation projects and the development of plant-based protein alternatives came under focus. The famous food expert and futurist,

Hanni Rützler, and the food journalist, Bettina Röttig, showed how the entire value chain - from the agricultural sector, to production, through to the trade - is adapting to the changed consumer expectations. The innovative power of the international sweets and snacks industry was also examined by Innova Market Insights and Euromonitor.

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Mixture between tradition & innovation - on the Sweet Week Talks & Tasting Stage

As an interactive stage, the Sweet Week Talks & Tasting format impressed the trade audience with a mixed programme comprising of live podcasts, influencer tastings, expert panels and product presentations by among others Johann Lafer.

Distinctions innovation and creativity

Ulrich Zuenelli, managing partner of Loacker and member of the third generation of the entrepreneur family Loacker-Zuenelli, is the winner of the ISM Award 2025 - a distinction for his outstanding services and considerable contributions to the sweets industry. In the New Product Showcase Award Primus Wafer Paper BV (the Netherlands) won the prize for its Yummy Super Sour Candy Paper. The ISM Consumer Award was presented to Treet's Vegan Crunchy Corn.

#ISMfamily: Global networking, viral highlights and unlimited business opportunities

The creator programme on Sunday - with tastings, a tour and workshop on the sweets & snacks of the future - established the ISM as a content platform and attracted additional interest. Industry giants like @crispyrob, @heymoritz, @Joeskochwelt, @nathaliegleitman, @piaundhalloumi and the podcast hosts Naschkatzen attended ISM to create content on-site, share the latest innovations with their community and present industry trends to a global audience. A special highlight: ISM mascot and walking act GISMO, who impressed both the audience and creators alike.

ISM satellite events: Central platforms for a globally expanding industry

The ISM foreign trade fairs, ISM Middle East and ISM Japan, were also represented with an information stand and thus actively contributed towards promoting the international exchange and networking within the industry. In an increasingly globalised food world these trade fairs play a decisive role as central points of contact for the diversity of the sweets and snacks industry. They particularly offer small, regional companies a strong quality brand locally and make it easier for export-oriented companies to gain access to the respective country markets and thus support their international business. The ISM family relies on new impulses at both local and global level and shapes the future of the sweets and snacks world.

ISM in figures

1,513 exhibitors from 70 countries, 89 % of which came from abroad, participated at ISM 2025. They included 160 German exhibitors and 1,353 exhibitors from abroad. Around 32,000 trade visitors from 135 countries attended ISM 2025, the foreign share was 71 %.

The next ISM will take place from 01.-04.02.2026.

Koelnmesse - worldwide trade fairs for the food industry and food production:

Koelnmesse is an international leader in organizing global trade fairs for the food and beverage industry as well as for food production. With events such as Anuga, Anuga FoodTec, ISM, and ProSweets Cologne, Koelnmesse covers a wide spectrum - from ingredients to production, packaging, finished products, and the latest technologies and innovations. These globally renowned trade fairs, held in Cologne, Germany, set benchmarks in their respective sectors. In addition, Koelnmesse organizes numerous industry-specific trade fairs in key markets worldwide, including Brazil, China, India, Italy, Japan, Colombia, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates. Through these global activities, Koelnmesse offers its clients tailored events and leading regional trade fairs across various markets, providing a foundation for sustainable international business. Koelnmesse is thus ideally positioned to drive innovation and development in both the food industry and food production.

Further information: <https://www.ism-cologne.com/fair/industry-trade-fairs/>

The next events:

THAIFEX - HOREC Asia - Elevating the hospitality industry to new heights, Bangkok
05.03. - 07.03.2025

Anuga Select Brazil - International Trade Show Exclusively for the Food and Beverage Sector, São Paulo 08.04. - 10.04.2025

Anuga Select Japan - Where Trade and Trends arise, Tokyo 15.04. - 17.04.2025

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