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#ISM #ISMFamilY #sweetweekcologne

ISM 2026 sets new benchmarks: Record bookings, new country pavilions and the innovative "Functional Sweets" theme area

+++ Around four months before the opening of the fair, ISM 2026 has already topped the end result of ISM 2025 +++ New countries and brands on the exhibition space +++ Premiere of the "ISM Functional Sweets" theme area+++ Expert jury selects winner of the ISM Start-up Pitches Award for the first time +++ New ISM Opening Night in the Confex

ISM 2026, scheduled in Cologne from 1 to 4 February, records strong response at an early stage: Four months before the opening of the fair, the booked space already exceeds the final result of ISM 2025. Companies from 71 countries and all Continents have already confirmed their participation - a clear signal of the dynamism and international significance of the world's leading trade fair for sweets and snacks.

In 2026, there are new exhibitors for example from Albania, Bangladesh, Iran and Luxembourg. Established international brands are also focusing on continuity: **Morinaga**, one of the leading sweets manufacturers in Japan, is returning after its successful debut in 2025 and has significantly expanded its stand area. Like last year, **Walker's Shortbread**, a long-standing exhibitor in the UK pavilion, will once again be represented with its own exhibition stand. **Fazer**, which previously had a lounge in the Europasaal, also has its own stand this year.

"The fact that ISM 2026 has already topped last year's booking level, demonstrates the industry's great confidence in the trade fair. New country participations and the return of international market leaders confirm ISM's position as the leading global platform for trends, exchange and business development," emphasised Sabine Schommer, Director of ISM.

High level of internationality: 37 pavilions from 27 countries and regions

With 37 pavilions from 27 countries and regions (ISM 2025: 34 from 25), ISM 2026 has reached a new record level in international participation. The new pavilions include two from the Ukraine, organised by the Export Promotion Center KCCI LLC (Kyiv) and the Ukrainian Food Association U-Food (Uman), as well as a pavilion from Morocco coordinated by the FENAGRI - National Federation of the Agro-Food Industry (Casablanca).

ISM Functional Sweets celebrates its premiere

In the scope of the new "ISM Functional Sweets" theme area, ISM 2026 is focusing on the theme functional sweets for the first time. In Lab5 by ISM in Hall 10.1 exhibitors



ISM
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www.ism-cologne.com

Your contact:
Patrick Schmitz
Tel.
+49 221 821-3083
e-mail
p.schmitz@koelnmesse.de

Koelnmesse GmbH
Messeplatz 1
50679 Köln
P.O. Box 21 07 60
50532 Köln
Germany
Tel. +49 221 821-0
Fax +49 221 821-2574
www.koelnmesse.com

Executive Board:
Gerald Böse (President and Chief Executive Officer)
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Mayor of the City of Cologne
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Headquarters and place of jurisdiction:
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District Court Cologne, HRB 952

will showcase products that combine health and well-being with enjoyment: from sweets containing vitamins and probiotic fruit gums, through to herbal products to reduce stress. A special event with information, product presentations and tastings will illustrate how modern sweets are conceived today - as small everyday assistants and part of a healthy lifestyle.

"Functional sweets aren't a short-lived trend, they are an expression of the new consumer understanding: People are looking for products that combine taste with well-being. This is precisely what ISM 2026 will demonstrate and make visible on the new special zone," stated Sabine Schommer.

Experience innovations live: ISM Start-up Pitches Award 2026

The Start-up Area in Lab5 by ISM will also give an exciting insight into the future of the sweets and snacks industry in 2026. The **ISM Start-up Pitches Award 2026** which will be presented on 2 February 2026 for the first time is a special highlight. Eight selected start-ups will present their innovative ideas and products on the Talks & Tasting Stage in Hall 10.1. A panel of experts will evaluate the entries and select the winner live on stage. The pitches will be hosted by Robert Kronekker - food entrepreneur, investor & start-up mentor. He will also accompany the participants in their preparation.

Start-ups registered for ISM can apply for one of the places up until 31 December 2025. Further details regarding applications can be found [here](#).

ISM Opening Night as a festive prelude

The **ISM Opening Night**, which is open to all participants of ISM, ISM Ingredients and ProSweets Cologne for the first time, is a further highlight. Together with the industry sponsors of ISM, Koelnmesse is inviting guests to join them at the new Confex at the fair grounds in Cologne on 1 February 2026. The evening marks the festive prelude of the trade fair and brings the international sweets and snacks industry together in a relaxed atmosphere - to enjoy live music, culinary highlights and many networking opportunities. In addition, as part of ISM Opening Night, an outstanding personality from the sweets and snacks industry will once again be honoured with the **ISM Award** for their lifetime achievement.

Tickets for the ISM Opening Night will be available from [ISM's ticket shop](#) from 6 November 2025. Tickets for ISM are already available.

You can find further information on ISM here: <https://www.ism-cologne.com/>

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/>

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The next events:

Cibus Tec Forum - Exhibition & Conference on Food & Beverage Technologies Trends, Parma 28.10. - 29.10.2025

Andina Pack - International Processing and Packaging Exhibition for the Food, Pharma and Cosmetic Industry, Bogotá 04.11. - 07.11.2025

ISM - The world's largest trade fair for sweets and snacks, Cologne 01.02. - 04.02.2026

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Your contact:

Patrick Schmitz
Public and Media Relations Manager

Koelnmesse GmbH
Messeplatz 1
50679 Cologne
Germany
Tel +49 221 821-3083
E-Mail: p.schmitz@koelnmesse.de
www.koelnmesse.com