

SIAL '88

INTRODUCTION

SIAL '88 was held at Parc des Expositions de Paris-Nord Villepinte from Oct. 17-21 inclusive. The fair which is the second largest food show in the world after ANUGA in Cologne attracted some 4,000 individual exhibitors organized in 962 stands, displaying the products of 77 countries. 58 countries including Canada were present as national pavilions. Fifty-four percent of exhibitors were from the host country, France. The number of trade visitors was in excess of 100,000, of which 28 per cent were from abroad.

In addition to the exhibition itself SIAL incorporated an intensive week long program of seminars and meetings on the different aspects of the food industry. The show also devotes a special section to the display of new products. This year a 200 sq. metre area was devoted to the display of some 200 new food products. SIAL organizer's also mount an international competition for new products called the "International Oscars". The international oscars attract considerable press coverage with reviews by some of the world's major food journals. This year for the first time Canada was represented in the awards of the International Oscars for new products by L.K. Ranch/Loblaws Supermarkets, Toronto, Ontario with an award for "Natural Choice", an all natural ground meat product manufactured from animals which have also been nourished with all natural feed.

As the showcase for the world's food industry SIAL mirrors the changing trends in consumption habits, developments in the technology of food preparation and the latest standards in presentation and packaging. The dominant theme of the displays was the overwhelming emphasis on light foods with smaller portions and fewer calories. This trend towards lighter foods which began in the early 1980's has become married to increasingly more sophisticated food preparations, faster cooking methods and improved packaging techniques all of which have greatly simplified home meal preparations. This is in response to demographic change, with the trend smaller families and changing lifestyles with less time spent on food preparation. Increasing affluence and knowledge has also created the demand for higher quality, more sophisticated and nutritionally balanced end products.