

## Italy at the Summer Fancy Food Show in Washington DC

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Italy's food and wine exhibitors show up in ever larger numbers at the annual Summer Fancy Food this year

The 58th edition of the Summer Fancy Food Show is opening for the second consecutive year in Washington DC.

Summer Fancy Food, the foremost trade show of the food industry in North America, specializes in gourmet food, wines and spirits while the wine and liquor section occupies a limited space. The show is open only to trade and specialized press, covers an area of approximately 310,000 square feet with approximately 2,300 exhibitors from 80 countries. It expects the visit of more than 18,000 representatives of the following categories: importers, cooking schools, consultants, journalists, distributors, producers, restaurant owners and managers of restaurants in the hotel industry.

Among foreign exhibitors, the Italian group, once again the largest, occupies an exhibition area of 2,500 square feet and hosts over 230 exhibitors, regional groups, associations and Chambers of Commerce.



The products Made in Italy most represented are: olive oil and balsamic vinegar, pasta, hams, preserved vegetables, confectionery and bakery products, cheese, tomatoes and fine wines.

The American market has a strategic importance for the Italian wine and food production. In 2011 the USA imported from Italy food and wine for a value of 3.63 billion dollars. In the hierarchy of foreign suppliers, Italy occupies the seventh position, preceded, among others, by Canada, Mexico and China.

For some products, Italy maintains a leadership unchallenged for years compared to competing countries. It is the case of olive oil, with a market share of 56%, pasta with 30.4% and cheese with 28.9%. Despite the economic crisis, which reduced fuel consumption, the Italian wine market continued to show positive trends, with a market share of 31.05% and a value of about \$ 1.5 billion and an increase of 19% over 2010.

This huge success of Italian food production has generated, a few years ago already, a process of imitation - identified as Italian sounding - by the American food industry and other competing countries: they use packaging, names, images and colors that evoke the authentic Italian products. The products most "copied" are also those most exported from Italy, as cheese, olive oil, pasta and wine. A survey of ICE New York found that the American market of 'Italian sounding' reaches, on an annual basis, an average of about \$ 4.5 billion.

To curb this damaging process, ICE New York has been organizing, for many years now, information seminars, tastings of authentic products, information campaigns in the press, in order to make known the true Italian product to the American consumer.

Italy occupies a leading position in organic production. This segment is still growing and continues to offer interesting and exciting business opportunities.

The increased awareness of the American consumer about eating healthy is a big plus for the production of Italian food, which, in particular with the Mediterranean diet, appears to be the best antidote to fight obesity and cardiovascular diseases. The program Club EATalian Nutritious. Delicious. 4Kids, presented by ICE at last year's Summer Fancy Food moves precisely in this direction and is in line with the better known Let's Move campaign, started by First Lady Michelle Obama.

The authentic Italian product is present on the U.S. market with an average price-quality ratio of considerable interest for the American consumer. Among the strengths of Italian production, 1) the great variety of production supply, which comes from the long regional tradition, 2) the continuous industrial research related to growing consumer segments, such as gluten free, kosher, vegetarian, organic.

The abundance of television programs related to nutrition and the growth in the number of foodies - the quality-conscious consumers sensitive to well-being and nutrition - are factors that bode well for the consolidation of food products in the U.S. market and the expansion of the Italian market share.

The Italian producers have understood the importance of the US market trends and rush in great numbers to the annual Summer Fancy Food.

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