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## Malaysian exhibitors rake in millions at Gulfood 2010

**DUBAI** • Malaysian exhibitors who took part in Gulfood 2010 here last week secured RM7.8 million in confirmed orders as well as potential sales worth RM32.2 million.

The 48 food-related companies brought in by Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) for the Feb 21-24 exhibition were joined by five entities under the Terengganu State Entrepreneur Development Foundation.

They enticed trade visitors with products such as sauces, health food supplements, vegetable oil, chocolates, energy drink, coffee and tea, ready-to-eat frozen foods, cocoa, confectionery items, biscuits, health food, fruit juices, packaging machinery

and others.

"Malaysian food products are widely accepted in this part of the world because of their stringent standards and high quality," Malaysia's trade commissioner in Dubai Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud told *Bernama*.

In addition, he said, Malaysia's halal certification accorded the products an added advantage in marketing them here.

Held at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Gulfood was touted as Middle East's largest specialised foodstuff, beverages and equipment show.

Citing official sources, Dzulkifli said Dubai was one of the largest importers of foodstuff in the region, with

imports of foodstuff and beverages valued at over US\$4.32 billion (RM14.63 billion) in 2008 compared to US\$3.87 billion in 2007.

More than 75% of its imports of foodstuff are for re-export to other Gulf countries. According to Dzulkifli, Malaysia's exports of processed foodstuff to United Arab Emirates (UAE) decreased from RM381.8 million in 2008 to RM214.1 million in 2009.

The trade commissioner attributed this mainly to the economic slowdown experienced by the UAE last year.

"However, it's expected that growth will return in 2010," he said optimistically.

Dzulkifli said it made sense for Malaysian firms to come

to the UAE as it had established itself as the re-export centre of the Middle East, supplying to more than 1.8 billion people in the region and beyond.

They include countries such as neighbouring Gulf states, Iran, Iraq, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and CIS countries. During 2008, UAE's re-exports were valued at US\$32.78 billion, of which prepared foodstuff amounted to US\$603 million.

"UAE, in particular Dubai, offers tremendous opportunities to Malaysian manufacturers and suppliers of food products who are interested to use Dubai as a trading hub," Dzulkifli added.

— *Bernama*