

Fresno Food Expo ready to roll out this summer

By Robert
Rodriguez



Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin greeted several elected officials and business leaders during a morning news conference at Nichols Farms, a pistachio grower and processor in Hanford. The farm was part of a tour showing the diversity of food products produced in the Valley. ROBERT RODRIGUEZ — The Fresno Bee

-
-

Elected officials, agriculture companies and business leaders gathered Tuesday to promote the 2015 Fresno Food Expo — a regional showcase of the central San Joaquin Valley's premier food and beverage makers.

The food expo, now in its fifth year, has become a valuable event for food entrepreneurs launching new products and for established companies seeking new buyers. Since its inception, the expo has grown every year and now hosts 750 local, national and international buyers. About 150 vendors are expected this year, with some slots still available.

The expo will be held at the Fresno Convention Center's New Exhibit Hall on July 22-23.

Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin, one of the expo's founders, said she is pleased that the event continues to generate interest from buyers, vendors and the public.



“More importantly, we celebrate the success of our exhibitors, many of which have been with us since the beginning and who return annually to launch new products, further expand their business and expose their products for the world to experience,” said Swearingin.

The mayor greeted several elected officials and business leaders during a morning news conference at Nichols Farms, a pistachio grower and processor in Hanford. The farm was part of a tour showing the diversity of food products produced in the Valley.

Chuck Nichols, owner of Nichols Farms, admits he was slightly skeptical about the Fresno Food Expo at first, but changed his mind quickly after attending. Nichols said the expo gives buyers the chance to meet face to face with existing suppliers and find new ones.

“The right buyers are there,” Nichols said.

The tour also made stops at SunWest Fruit Company in Parlier, one of the Valley’s largest citrus and tree fruit operations, and Tioga-Sequoia Brewing Company in downtown Fresno.

Michael Cruz, president of the brewing company, said the expo was instrumental in helping the company land its craft beers in Save Mart Supermarket stores in the Valley. The regional supermarket chain accounts for 30% of the brewing company’s sales.

“You can now find us from Bakersfield to Stockton,” Cruz said.

For this year’s expo, the brewing company will unveil a cucumber lager and release details about a new program to release a new beer flavor every month.

“We are excited to make great things happen for the city,” Cruz said.

To register for the expo and to find out more, go to www.fresnofoodexpo.com. A 40% discount for exhibitors is available until Feb. 21. Public ticket sales for the food- and drink-tasting event go on sale in the spring.

Contact Robert Rodriguez: brodriguez@fresnobee.com, (559) 441-6327 or [@FresnoBeeBob](https://twitter.com/FresnoBeeBob) on Twitter.

Copyright

© 2015 www.fresnobee.com and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>