



Contact: Maria Omar
+1-773-283-3708
m.omar@ifanca.org

IFANCA® Organizes 13th International Halal Food Conference to Update Companies on Latest Technical Developments in Halal

(April 10, 2011 -- Schaumburg, IL...) The Chicago-based Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA®) is all set to host the 13th Annual International Halal Food Conference in Schaumburg, Illinois, on April 10 and 11, 2011. This year's conference theme is **Halal: New Frontiers**, and will take place at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel in Schaumburg – a suburb of Chicago, USA.

The annual *International Halal Food Conference* series provides technical sessions on the latest development in global halal certification guidelines for food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and non-food products. From governmental guidelines, to the latest case studies, the *International Halal Food Conference* series specifically seeks to accommodate the needs of Quality Assurance Managers, Compliance Professionals, and Food R&D Technicians that already supervise halal programs. IFANCA has been alternatively hosting this technical conference series with its European counterpart, the Islamic Food Council of Europe (IFCE); as well as others; every other year since 1999.

Dr. Muhammad Munir Chaudry, President of IFANCA, looks forward to this year's selection of panels and speakers. "As a food science practitioner and quality assurance professional, it is necessary to be up to date with the latest technical advancements and compliance issues that concern halal certified manufacturing," says Dr. Chaudry. He says, "To keep in mind the growing needs of halal certified companies, we have added emerging halal lifestyle products and the opportunities they present to this year's program."

This year's new categories consist of personal care products, specialty, and food service market segments. The addition of these new categories reflects the evolving nature of the global halal industry - a commendable journey from the age when topics remained limited to only halal compliance of meat and gelatin. Other popular topics at the conference cover food processing aids, packaging materials and chemicals that are used for halal certified manufacturing.

Global and Governmental Guidelines

What is the next level for global halal product standards? As the halal food industry matures, and halal ingredient availability increases, what direction will Muslim-majority governments develop their halal certification standards? In order to frame halal certification standards' historical context, Mr. Munir Hussain, a Halal Strategic Unit Executive at Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS), will present his organization's role in *Pioneering the Way in Halal Certification*. To provide the academic perspective on halal industrial standards, Texas A&M University's Director of Food and Protein R&D Center, Dr. Mian Nadeem Riaz will be presenting his thoughts in an *Overview of Halal Development*. As a senior auditor for IFANCA, Dr. Riaz will also introduce this year's conference theme.

In an increasing globalized world, exporting food companies regularly juggle multiple national food laws. For this reason, the Special Assistant to Chicago District Office for the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), William Weissinger has been invited to give a talk on the *FDA's Enforcement Trends*. Similarly, to explain the recent developments in halal inspection procedures, the director of Indonesian Assessment Institute for Food, Drugs and Cosmetics (LPPOM-MUI), Ir.

Lukmanul Hakim will be speaking on ***Implementing Halal Assurance Systems***. As an exemplary instance of global halal products that manage multiple food regulatory systems, Abbott Nutrition's Halal/Kosher Program Manager, Donald L. Sgontz will describe how his company is ***Leading the Way in Halal Nutritional Markets***.

To keep on top of global halal trading patterns, it is important to be abreast of the latest governmental incentives and climate for halal market trade and production. In order to shed light on the topic, Deputy Director General of Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), Hj. Othman Mustapha will explain how his organization is ***Positioning Malaysia as a Global Halal Hub***. Malaysia has been a leader in halal certification for the past two decades. Likewise, Director General of National Institute of Food Science and Technology (NIFSAT); from Pakistan's University of Agriculture; Dr. Muhammad Faqir Anjum will be presenting a session on the ***Emerging Halal Market in Pakistan***. Pakistan is another region that is quickly changing its industrial policies to service the international halal manufacturing industry. Finally, Halal Development Corporation Malaysia's Chairman, Tan Sri Syed Jalaluddin, will present his views on the future in his conference key note address, ***Halal: New Frontiers***.

Halal Food Science and Technology

How do food companies maintain their current halal product programs? What have been their recent challenges? From better understanding their Muslim consumer, to pioneering new halal product categories – such as cheese, salad dressings, condiments and accompaniments – how are companies developing these halal programs? To lend some insight, Kraft Foods' Senior Director for Retail Culinary Experience, Janet Myers, will discuss some of the recent studies Kraft has done in her talk on ***Developing Relationships with the Muslim Consumer***. Volys Star's General Manager, Koen De Praetere, presents a case-study of ***Halal Certification at Volys Star***.

Halal food ingredients and their development have come a long way from the 1980s and 1990s. Today, halal versions of virtually every ingredient exist in the marketplace. Yet, food scientists still need to stay abreast of the latest halal ingredient trends and markets. For this reason, Dr. Javed Rashid, Vice President of Technical Services at Golding Farms Foods, will present a special session called ***Demystifying Ingredient Complexity***. Dr. Rashid also serves in the role of IFANCA's Director of Audits and Inspections. To shed light on the supply and demand side of the industry, DSM Nutritional Products' Quality Director, Dr. Stephan Heck will be delivering a talk on ***Servicing the Industry with Halal Ingredients***; while Dr. Ravindra Kumar, Technical Director of Danisco India, will speak on the ***Emerging Halal Market for Food Ingredients in India***. Finally, to give an in-depth understanding of one of the most complex halal ingredients – gelatin – Dr. Mujahid Masood, Senior Halal Auditor at IFANCA, will head a special session called ***Conforming Gelatin Products to IFANCA Guidelines***.

Nutritional products constantly seek to expand their health and wellness standards to the highest levels. Like food, nutritional products, supplements and drugs must meet halal certification standards to enter global halal markets. To describe today's international halal nutritional standards, Liliana Totoiu, a Technical and Regulatory Affairs Analyst from Access Business Group's Nutrilite Division, will present a session exclusively on ***Halal Certification of Nutritional Products and Supplements***. Herbalife International's Global Product Compliance Specialist, Dr. Afshin Doustkam, will speak on ***Growth of Nutritional Products in Halal Markets*** – an emergent global wellness trend that is rapidly gaining attention. Lastly, Andrew Fong, Director of Quality Systems at Pfizer/Wyeth Biotech, will speak on the ***Development of Halal Vaccines***. Halal vaccines development is one of the world's most recent halal certification breakthroughs, and Pfizer will provide some insight into the development process.

The subject of international halal compliance and competing certification standards can often seem a complex spectrum of issues. Cargill Inc.'s Global Certifications Manager, Mark Overland, will give some solutions to these issues in this session titled ***Mutual Recognition amongst Halal Certifiers***. As a case-study to international halal compliance of flavors, Dr. Anne Giraud - Firmenich's Regulatory Affairs Manager, and Global Dietary Compliance and Product Safety - will give a presentation on ***Halal Compliance at Firmenich***.

New and Emerging Halal Market Opportunities

The global halal industry is estimated at around US \$1.2 trillion to US \$2 trillion dollars. Mintel reports a 150 percent growth in the last 5 years in global and US halal product launches. IFANCA itself is one of the world's leading halal certification not-for-profits that services more than 2,500 food, beverage and pharmaceutical companies worldwide. This is why it was necessary to expand topics to keep up with emergent halal market trends such as halal foodservice and hospitality; personal care products; and the American-Muslim specialty food market.

To speak on *Halal Opportunities in Personal Care*, Ellen Saksen, Brand Manager at Tom's of Maine, will discuss how her company has succeeded with halal-certification since 2006. One of the pioneers in bringing halal frozen meals to a nationwide American grocery chain, Adnan Durrani, CEO of American Halal Company, will be talking of the potentially lucrative halal food market in USA. His talk, *Taking Halal to the Next Level*, will include the story of his successful halal product launch (Saffron Road) in 2010.

Likewise, Don Tymchuck, President of Med-Diet and Foodservice Express, will be giving a special talk on how are American Muslims *Searching for Halal Meals*. Tymchuck has a track record of working with specialty food markets in the US; his rich experience with gluten-free foodservice has led him to believe that it is only a matter of time that the US food industry will jump on the potential US \$170 billion American Muslim consumer bandwagon. By some estimates, American Muslim consumers have as much as US \$20 billion to spend on food per annum. Tymchuck was a panelist on last year's National Restaurant Show's education panel called *9 Million American Muslims searching for Halal Meals*, and has seen tremendous interest growing around providing halal meal options to American Muslims in universities, hospitals, and restaurants.

The technical sessions are divided between April 10, Sunday, and April 11, Monday. The conference will also feature a celebratory banquet on Sunday evening that will feature PepsiCo's Chief Scientific Officer, and CEO of PepsiCo's Global Nutrition Group, Dr. Mehmood Khan as the banquet's keynote speaker.

Registration for this conference is available at www.ifanca.org/conference.

IFANCA:

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA®), is one of the world's leading and well respected not-for-profit halal-certification organization. Featured in various media such as The Wall Street Journal, Prepared Foods, CNBC and CNN, IFANCA has been promoting halal since 1982. IFANCA was recognized in the Best Halal Related Service Provider Award by the Halal Journal at World Halal Forum 2007. IFANCA-certified halal products are recognized by Indonesia (MUI), Malaysia (JAKIM), Singapore (MUIS), United Arab Emirates (GSM), and are sold in nearly every country of the world. IFANCA's halal certification expertise covers all food industry categories.

For more information about IFANCA, visit www.ifanca.org.

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