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Belgrade hosts WUWM Spring 2019 congress



Disruptions and challenges take centre stage at the recent gathering of the World Union of Wholesale Markets

Disruptions and challenges in chains of supply topped the agenda as representatives from the world's leading wholesale markets gathered in Belgrade for the biennial World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) Congress in May.

Knowing that the markets of Serbia and the region possess significant potential, Belgrade was a natural choice to host the 2019 edition of the conference, which attracted more than 150 delegates from 27 countries.

The daylong event, which was opened by WUWM chairman Zengjun Ma and Bojan Bajagic, director of Belgrade City Markets, covered a range of topics including shopping and consumer habits, technology, logistics, marketing channels and trade policies.

The take-home message for delegates was that the markets of tomorrow must

adapt, adjust and embrace changes in the current trade landscape. The presenters talked at length about the challenges that business faces in the trade of fresh food in the modern era, such as integrating new technologies like blockchain, establishing sustainable local food systems and improving food safety provision.

A global panel of speakers shared their experiences and knowledge with the delegates. The keynote session, presented by agricultural economist J. Philip Gottwals, provided an overview of the emerging challenges in urban food supply as well as an insight into the role of wholesale and retail markets.

On the last day of the Congress, delegates had the opportunity to visit three markets: Palilula Market, which is the most significant investment of the PUC Belgrade City Markets. Zemun Market, which is located at the Masaryk Square,

and equipped with 45 mobile stalls with umbrellas, and 353 stalls and 40 cooling display cases. Lastly, the Wholesale Market Veletznica, which represents a particular market institution of the extensive range trade, primarily in the domain of agricultural and food, and the other accompanying products as well.

WUWM's autumn 2019 conference takes place in China and will be hosted by the China National Agriculture Wholesale Market Association (CAWA). For further information visit www.wuwm.org