

Food ingredients Europe 2024

Sustainability Report



Europe

Sustainability at Fi Europe

Event Data



61,491 m²
of gross space



33,755 m²
of used space



23,221
attendees



130+
attending countries



29
country pavilions



1,448
exhibiting companies

Our sustainability goals

Our first goal is for the event to **inspire sustainable development** in the food ingredients industry. This includes both the sustainability of the industry itself and how we inspire our attendees, exhibitors, and event teams to deliver a sustainable event.

Our second goal is to **run the event in an environmentally responsible manner**. The key to this is considering how we can reduce our carbon footprint through energy efficiency and energy use, waste reduction, and our procurement choices.

Our third goal is to **run the event in a socially responsible manner**. This requires us to think about the impact that running our event has on the local community and whether we are being a good neighbour. It is also how we consider the welfare of all at our event, how we ensure we do business in an ethical and safe manner, as well as how we enhance equality, diversity, and accessibility.



2024 Sustainability Highlights:



0



waste to landfill

88% was recycled
12% was incinerated
for energy



70%

of carpet got recycled

0

name badges



58

female speakers,
representing **57%** of
total speakers



100%

of the venue's
electricity powered by
renewable sources

12

connected people under the
"Connect the Disconnected" initiative

17,660 m²

of stands with
minimum Bronze-level
on Better Stands



Inspiring Sustainable Development at Fi Europe 2024

At Fi Europe 2024, sustainability was a core aspect of our programming, driving meaningful discussions, fostering industry collaboration, and promoting innovation. Through high-impact content, strategic partnerships, and industry recognition initiatives, we enabled professionals in the food and beverage sector to gain insights, exchange best practices, and accelerate sustainable transformation.

Driving industry dialogue through content

Sustainability was a major focus across the Future of Nutrition Summit, Fi Europe Conference, and the Innovation Hub, where industry leaders tackled pressing issues related to sustainable food systems, plant-based innovation, regenerative agriculture, circular economy models, and supply chain resilience.

Key discussions and insights included:

- The role of food as medicine in driving both health and sustainability.
- Decarbonization strategies and how companies can achieve net-zero emissions.
- Navigating the evolving EU regulatory landscape on sustainability (CSDDD and CSRD)
- Innovative approaches to alternative proteins, precision fermentation, and upcycled food solutions.
- The palm oil industry's journey toward sustainability, featuring the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

Women's Networking Breakfast

In addition, the Women's Networking Breakfast, held in partnership with Women in Nutraceuticals, provided a platform to discuss gender equity and leadership in the food industry.

This year's session saw a 138% increase in unique attendees, reflecting the growing importance of diversity and inclusion in driving progress across the industry.



Showcasing sustainable innovation

Beyond content sessions, Fi Europe 2024 provided a stage for startups, companies, and organisations to showcase groundbreaking sustainable solutions that enhance responsible sourcing and production in the food sector.

The Fi Europe Innovation Awards featured a record 18 entries for the Sustainability Award, highlighting a significant rise in exhibitor commitment to building sustainable supply chains.

The Startup Challenge had a special jury award for Sustainability, ensuring rigorous sustainability criteria were applied. This year's winner, **Akoua**, was recognised for its



innovative upcycling of cashew apples into valuable ingredients.

The Sustainability Innovation Tour engaged participants guiding them through exhibitors leading the way in sustainability. This initiative provided direct exposure to innovative sustainable solutions in food production.



Gaining deeper industry insights:

The sustainability questionnaire and focus group

Understanding the sustainability priorities and challenges faced by industry stakeholders is crucial for us to provide the right content, platforms, partnerships, and solutions. In collaboration with the Customer Insights team, we developed a comprehensive Sustainability Questionnaire, which was completed by 244 respondents during and after the event.

The questionnaire explored key industry topics, including:

- Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Top sustainability priorities for companies.
- Challenges organizations face in advancing their sustainability efforts.

- Approach to compliance with new sustainability regulations (e.g., CSDDD, CSRD, EUDR).
- Support needed from Fi Europe to accelerate sustainability progress.

To complement these insights, we held an in-person Sustainability Focus Group at the event with 13 visitors, engaging in detailed discussions around the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) challenges companies face. Topics included:

- How organizations are currently implementing sustainability initiatives.
- The impact of new regulatory requirements on sustainability strategies.
- The role of industry collaboration in accelerating sustainability.
- How Fi Europe can provide more targeted support through content, partnerships, and exhibitor engagement.



Using these insights to shape future sustainability efforts

The feedback gathered from both the questionnaire and focus group will directly inform our sustainability strategy for Fi Europe 2025 and beyond. Key actions based on these insights include:

1

Refining our sustainability content & programming

- Expanding coverage of regulatory compliance, ESG reporting, and sustainable sourcing.
- Bringing in more case studies and practical applications of sustainability frameworks.



2

Strengthening industry support & collaboration

- Working closely with associations, policymakers, and sustainability experts to provide exhibitors and attendees with practical guidance on sustainability best practices.
- Exploring new partnerships and sponsorship opportunities focused on sustainability solutions.

By leveraging these insights, Fi Europe will continue to act as a catalyst for sustainable transformation within the food industry, ensuring that our platform not only reflects but actively accelerates the industry's shift toward sustainability.

Building a year-round knowledge hub for sustainability

Sustainability is not just a focus during the event but an ongoing conversation throughout the year.

Key engagement channels include:



Ingredients Network, a leading online platform for the food ingredients industry, offers daily news, expert analysis, and trend reports on key topics such as sustainable sourcing, regulatory developments, and supply chain solutions. With a wide-reaching audience (900,000+ annual visitors), the platform ensures sustainability content remains accessible to industry professionals throughout the year.



Food Ingredients Global Insights delivers in-depth coverage of sustainability-driven innovation, R&D advancements, and evolving industry regulations, equipping businesses with the knowledge to stay ahead of market trends. Through a strong readership base, the platform serves as a valuable resource for food and beverage professionals focused on responsible production and innovation.



Finally, the **Fi Webinar Series** continues to provide insightful discussions with industry experts, exploring sustainability challenges and opportunities. Recent sessions have attracted strong participation, highlighting the increasing industry focus on sustainable brand development and responsible business practices.

Through these efforts, Fi Europe is more than just an annual event – it is a year-round platform supporting the industry in navigating sustainability challenges and identifying opportunities for impact.

Running an Environmentally Responsible Fi Europe 2024

Energy

Energy efficiency and renewable sourcing were central to our event's sustainability strategy. A total of 322,890 kWh of electricity was used during the event, sourced entirely from renewable energy. The venue, Messe Frankfurt, supports this commitment through its solar panels placed over Hall 12, with a capacity of 2.4 GWh annually. However, as this capacity is insufficient to meet the venue's full energy needs, renewable energy with guarantees of origin is purchased from wind farms in Wilhelmshafen, Saalekreis, and near Cologne, as well as the Boitzenburger Land solar farm between Berlin and Stettin.

Additionally, all lighting provided by the event's official contractors utilised energy-efficient LED technology. To further conserve

energy, minimal lighting was employed during the build-up and dismantling phases of the event. On top of that, the venue optimised heating systems by dynamically adjusting temperatures based on the number of attendees in the halls and the external weather conditions.

Better Stands

The **Better Stands programme** is an Informa initiative designed to inspire exhibitors and their appointed contractors to transition from disposable, single use stands to re-usable or recyclable structures for events. Focusing exclusively on space-only stands, the programme seeks to reduce environmental impact by promoting sustainable design and construction practices.

By 2025, the goal is for all space-only stands to meet at least the Bronze level, which requires the stand's structure and walls, platform or raised flooring, furniture and equipment, and lighting to be reused after the event.

To ensure compliance and accountability, stands are audited onsite by a third party, Abraxys, which drafts a detailed report for each stand based on its build-up and dismantle. These reports include photographic evidence



for each of the 10 elements outlined in the **programme's framework**, providing a transparent and comprehensive review.

Disposable stands present significant challenges, including large volumes of onsite waste, heightened risks from unsafe construction, and the toxic effects of using raw materials for short-term purposes. The Better Stands programme addresses these issues, creating a safer and more sustainable environment while encouraging exhibitors to align their practices with broader environmental and safety goals. By embracing reusable and recyclable stand solutions, exhibitors can contribute to reducing waste and enhancing the overall event experience.

Better Stands in action: Exhibitor testimonials

Faravelli (Bronze Level Exhibitor)

"Sustainability is becoming an increasingly important value for our company, and joining the Better Stands programme was a natural step in our commitment to reducing



environmental impact," said Faravelli. The company saw trade shows as an opportunity to embrace a circular approach, minimising waste while maintaining an impactful stand design.

To meet the Bronze criteria, Faravelli worked closely with their stand builder to analyse materials and ensure compliance with program requirements. They found lighting and furniture to be the easiest elements to align with the criteria by using LED systems and renting or reusing furniture. However, they faced challenges with graphics, as "they are not always suitable for different trade shows."

An unexpected benefit of reusing materials was cost savings - both in terms of production and setup time. Looking ahead, Faravelli is interested in reaching Silver or Gold levels.

LBG Sicilia (Gold Level Exhibitor)

LBG Sicilia has prioritised sustainability for years, designing stands to be reused across multiple trade shows. "Although the life cycle of a booth may seem ephemeral, the choice of recyclable and reusable structures, materials, and finishes ensures a much more forward-looking perspective."

One of the standout features of their booth is a carob tree, which has been part of their stand since 2019. "It symbolises the region we come from (Sicily, Italy) but also the message we want to get across to our customers – our commitment and devotion to the environment."

Achieving Gold level did come with challenges. A major obstacle was constructing a large, recessed LED wall without on-site painting. “We could have left the joints exposed, but it would not have been aesthetically satisfactory. We could have used a fabric banner, but there was a risk of it wrinkling on the edges of the recess.” Eventually, they opted for high-performance laminate cladding, which, while more expensive, provided the best balance of durability and quality.

For exhibitors looking to reach Gold, LBG Sicilia recommends focusing on reusing materials efficiently rather than seeking out entirely new sustainable alternatives. “A honeycomb panel can be used once or a thousand times – you just have to handle it the right way.”

Valio (Bronze Level Exhibitor)

Valio has embedded sustainability across its operations, and participating in the Better Stands programme was a natural extension of its broader goals. “For us, sustainability is an important topic, and we want to do our part in solving global challenges. The Better Stands programme supports us in working towards a more sustainable future.”

For stand design, Valio ensures that structure and walls, floor platform, furniture, and lighting are reusable. “In fact, all our materials are reusable. The only exception is printed graphics, although even some of those – like logos and smaller prints – can be reused.” They also use carpets made from recycled materials, reducing waste without compromising quality.

Valio found that reusability brought unexpected advantages, including cost savings and a streamlined setup process. “It is both cost-saving and sustainable that

all our structures, furniture, lights, etc., are reusable. This way, we generate less waste, and setup is clear.”

Having previously achieved both Bronze and Silver, Valio aims to reach Gold in future exhibitions, aligning with their ambition to cut milk’s carbon footprint to zero by 2035.

Better Stands Results at FiE 2024

NUMBER OF STANDS		
Disposable	165	34%
Bronze	39	8%
Silver	195	40%
Gold	93	19%

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Disposable	8.651	33%
Bronze	2.183	8%
Silver	9.724	37%
Gold	5.753	22%





In comparison to 2023, disposable stands were +20% in terms of m² and +2% in terms of number of stands. In 2025, we will work closely with our exhibitors to significantly reduce the presence of disposable stands on the show floor, striving to get as close as possible to our goal of eliminating them entirely.

Waste

Our commitment to sustainability extends to waste management, with significant efforts made to reduce, recycle, and repurpose materials used throughout the event.

In 2024, we consolidated halls strategically to minimise carpet usage and other void spaces. A total of 27,730 m² of carpet was utilised, with 70% being recycled and 30% incinerated for energy recovery post-event.

All event theatres built by us, the organisers, adhered to Gold or Silver levels of the Better Stands programme, ensuring sustainable design and construction practices.

Furthermore, all signage and fabric used by the official contractor were recycled post-event, with the exception of vinyl signage. Plants used in the theatres were donated to venue staff, providing a thoughtful solution for their reuse.

In total, the event generated 330 tons of waste (excluding food catering), with none of it sent to landfill. 88% of the waste was recycled, while the remaining 12% was incinerated to generate energy. These efforts underscore our dedication to minimising environmental impact and continuously improving our waste management practices.

Food & Beverage

The event highlighted sustainability across all food and beverage (F&B) offerings, showcasing a commitment to responsible practices in collaboration with

the venue's catering partner. The Sky Restaurant led the way by offering primarily vegetarian and vegan options, while all other food outlets ensured at least one vegetarian dish was available. Plastic-free takeaway options were implemented across the venue's food outlets.

Catering focused on fresh, seasonal, and regional products, emphasising organic quality and fair-trade beverages. Fruit and vegetables were locally sourced, whenever possible, from Frankfurt's Oberrad district, while meat came from Karl Eidmann, a sustainable butcher shop near Frankfurt. Regional beverage producers also played a key role, with mineral water from Bad Vilbel, juices from Karben, and wines from the nearby Rheingau and Rheinhessen regions. Halal and kosher options were included, ensuring inclusivity for diverse dietary needs.

An electric fleet transported food internally within the venue, reducing carbon emissions, and organic waste was composted in collaboration with a regional recycling company. These efforts collectively advanced the event's sustainability goals, delivering a responsible and inclusive F&B experience.



Optimising impact of attendee travel

To support sustainable travel and reduce the event's overall carbon footprint, initiatives were implemented to encourage eco-friendly transportation choices for attendees. One such initiative was a partnership with Deutsche Bahn (DB), offering attendees a capped-price train ticket regardless of booking date. This ticket also included free public transportation within Frankfurt to their final destination and back to the train station.

In addition to travel, the event's accommodation partner, bnetwork, contributed to promoting sustainability through a dynamic indicator on the event website, showcasing the percentage of eco-conscious bookings in real time. This initiative aimed to inspire more attendees to select sustainable accommodations. The results revealed that 83% of the rooms booked through bnetwork were eco-friendly, while 67% of the hotels available on the platform held eco-friendly certifications.

Post-show survey insights highlighted attendee travel habits and carbon offsetting practices. Among 1,088 respondents, 52% travelled to the event by plane, 24% by train, metro, or tram, 22% by car, taxi, or ride-share, and less than 1% by bus or coach. Only 23% had their emissions offset by their companies, while 43% did not offset, and 34% were unsure. This data provides valuable context for planning future Fi Europe events, enabling targeted actions to further optimise attendee travel.

Running a Socially Responsible Fi Europe 2024

Ensuring Fi Europe 2024 was an inclusive and socially responsible event was a key priority, with initiatives focused on community engagement and diversity. By partnering with local organisations, supporting charitable causes, and creating spaces for underrepresented voices, we fostered a more equitable and welcoming environment for all attendees and the industry we serve.

Purposeful Partners

In 2024, we continued our collaboration with **Solidaridad**, building on the successes of 2023. As a civil society organization dedicated to helping food supply chains adopt more socially and environmentally sustainable practices that benefit smallholder farmers, Solidaridad plays a role in supporting and accelerating sustainability initiatives in the food industry.

During the 2024 event cycle, Solidaridad was not only present on the show floor but also served as a content partner across publications within the Food Ingredients ecosystem. They contributed valuable content to Ingredients Network and Food Ingredients Global Insights.

In 2024, Solidaridad supported the creation of three key publications across these platforms. These were featured on the respective portals and in newsletters sent to over 20,000 subscribers.

You can find the publications here:

JDE Peet's: Using AI and advanced satellite imagery to make coffee deforestation-free



EUDR: Is the food industry ready to prove its supply chains are deforestation-free?



How female changemakers are safeguarding the future of food





The purpose of showcases and corporate case studies (e.g., the JDE Peet's article) is to highlight the critical role of smallholder farmers in international food supply chains. It emphasizes that stakeholders across the supply chain have a responsibility to ensure the ongoing well-being of smallholder farmers, supporting the future growth and development of the sector. Furthermore, it demonstrates how they can collaborate with Solidaridad to facilitate these efforts. On the show floor, Solidaridad participated in the following content activities:

1. Delivery of a Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) workshop, titled "How working with smallholders can help solve the due diligence puzzle". Designed for a small audience of around 10 participants, the session fostered interactive discussions and included a planned activity. Participants were tasked with identifying and listing risks across their supply chains, from farming to retail, as part of the CSDDD due diligence process. This is the first and main step for companies who are starting on their CSDDD journeys.

2. Participated in the panel discussion titled "Successful sustainability strategies: CSDDD and beyond".

The local food bank and non-profit, **Frankfurter Tafel**, was also a partner organisation at Fi Europe 2024. The non-profit organisation was given a stand on the show floor to be able to connect and share its work with attendees.

The idea behind the stand was to give the organisation exposure to the local exhibitors and visitors. As part of a bigger German non-profit organisation, the objective was to give them the opportunity to create partnerships and disseminate their work with German attendees. On the last day of the event, exhibitors could donate packaged food, office stationery, and plants to the organisation. Two meeting rooms were reserved for that,

with circa 50 litres of drinks and 120 kg of food donated to the organization.

Women in Nutraceuticals (WIN) was another non-profit partner at Fi Europe 2024. The organisation was a partner at the Women's Networking Breakfast and delivered a panel titled "How to accelerate female leadership to reach gender equity ESG goals". At the Women's Networking Breakfast, the organisation was part of the panel and had two tables where their members could come together.

Future Food Leaders

For the Future Food Leaders programme, three different PhD students presented their research at the Innovation Hub on Day 3 of the event. The presentations covered the students' current research:

- Melissa Greenwood "Developing a Method to Characterise Glycosaminoglycans (GAGs) in Human Breastmilk to Uncover Their Role in Infant Health"
- Ana Rita Mateus "Valorization of Citrus By-Products for Functional Foods and Active Packaging: A Circular Economy Approach"
- Sina Zargarchi "The realm of cold plasma: Influence on antioxidant activity"

The students accessed the event free of charge and had their transport and accommodation expenses covered by the event.

Additionally, there were nine students at the Future Food Leaders sessions as they are linked to a mentorship programme of the **Future Food Makers**, funded by the European Union and **EIT Food**. The programme's objective is to work for changes to transform the food system to be more sustainable, including promoting

regenerative agriculture, defining uniform nutrition and labelling guidelines, and making food systems more inclusive. Attending the event was one of the development initiatives/opportunities as part of the Future Food Maker mentor program. The tickets for the students and Future Food Makers participants were free of charge.

Overall, Fi Europe 2024 demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability by integrating environmental responsibility, social impact, and industry leadership into many aspects of the event. Through energy efficiency measures, waste reduction initiatives, inclusive programming, and strategic partnerships, we continued to push the boundaries of what a sustainable trade show can achieve. While significant progress was made, challenges remain – particularly in reducing disposable stands. Moving forward, we will build on these learnings, deepen our industry collaborations, and drive even greater impact. By continuously evolving our approach, Fi Europe remains a platform for accelerating sustainable transformation in the food ingredients industry, creating lasting change that extends beyond the event itself.

