May 2015 will see the opening of EXPO 2015, the Universal Exposition, which will be held in Milan, Italy. Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life will be the main theme, and food safety will be one of the hottest topics. In terms of production – a major area of concern, but processing and packaging, and everything in between – right down to the consumer’s dinner table will be significant. The focus will move upstream across the production chain, with the certification of materials for processing plants being a key aspect.

By KCI Editorial Staff

The countdown has started: within a year, Expo Milano 2015 will open its doors. From May to October 2015, the Universal Exposition will bring the world’s attention to one of the hottest themes relating to the future of the planet: nutrition. It will cover everything from the most tangible aspects related to eating and lifestyle, to a much wider range of topics and critical issues such as malnutrition and overeating, the social consequences for the welfare systems of nations, sustainability and the value of food as cultural heritage for communities.

Food safety will also be dealt with. Expo 2015 will represent a unique global platform, collecting together delegations from 164 countries and three world organizations, all at once. Over twenty-five million visitors will be expected to visit the Expo in Milan.

Food safety issues are widely debated and it is already subject of intense concern all over the world, especially whenever a case of food contamination makes the headlines. During Expo Milano 2015 this topic will surely find a new momentum, and become an even more important issue throughout the industry, leading the way to new, positive developments.

Because the awareness of food safety issues has always been high among members of the whole food chain from seed production process, into the areas of the certification of “raw materials” employed in the food sector. Stainless steels offer excellent workability and excellent corrosion protection, as affirmed by the EHEDG in its Hygienic Equipment Design Criteria: “stainless steels offer excellent compaction properties, and are therefore widely used in the food industry.”

Key factors for the use of stainless steels in the food industry are that they have extremely low surface roughnesses and are non-toxic. Further, their excellent workability and mechanical properties, make them the preferred choice for machinery construction. Researches have shown that food contamination can easily arise during the processing and packaging phases of the food industry. This is why the EHEDG affirms that “equipment for food processing should be designed according to specific hygienic guidelines and that
Stainless Steel is the Language of the Future

Stainless Steel: an alloy regarded as the most recommended of all materials for interacting with food. This has been affirmed by the EHEDG in its Hygienic Equipment Design Criteria: “stainless steels offer excellent corrosion protection, but also racks and shelves – ancillary structures of machinery, but also racks and shelves – thanks to their excellent properties when treated with chemicals employed in cleaning and sterilization processes. These processes tend to be very frequent in such plants. Stainless steel surfaces avoid the absorption of micro-particles that can cause further contamination risks for foodstuffs. The Italian-based Marcegaglia group has one of its most important business lines in stainless steel semi-product processing. It represents over 20% of its global turnover, with eight manufacturing units worldwide, and a pioneering role in quality certifications, including the food and beverage sector. “Marcegaglia has been present on this stage for a long time,” explains Chairman and CEO Antonio Marcegaglia “and as the world’s top manufacturer of stainless steel welded tubes, we believe we have to be at the forefront of the sector. This is why we have strongly advocated the need to certify our products for food, dairy, and beverage applications. Thanks to our internal research and development team we have contributed, a leading role in the development of the new European Norm EN 10357, specific for austenitic, ferritic, and austenitic-ferritic stainless steel welded tubes for the food and chemical industry. This new norm is an expression of shared guidelines across the continent (overcoming the previous DIN 11850) and also extends the range of steel grades that may be employed”. “But most of all we are proud to be the first producer on the market with a range of stainless steel welded tubes with a Conformity Declaration to EC Regulation 1935/2004 certified by an independent technical body - the TIFQ (Institute for the Hygienic Quality of Food Technology and Processes); the ‘glass & fork symbol identifying food safe materials. And we are actively co-operating with several international bodies to further expand our quality certifications,” comments Egidio Bini, Sales Director of the Stainless Steel Division. Marcegaglia as a group (headquartered in Italy, but with activities worldwide) has entered a path of continuous innovation and quality certifications, which is strongly influenced by its territorial roots and by paying specific attention to its most important reference markets: Italy has indeed always been a leader in the field of food processing plant engineering and construction, exporting on a global scale – also to developing regions. Italy is also the ‘homeland’ of food excellence in a wider sense and hosts organizations such as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Parma and the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Varese. “Within the Italian context, it is natural for our company to be very focused on these issues, also with regard to the upcoming Expo 2015,” says Antonio Marcegaglia. “To be able to contribute to the development, application, and diffusion of the most strict requirements for food safety worldwide is part of a strategically important mission – one which involves the consolidation of our presence as a reference partner for all the players operating in the sector”.

Sources:
- TIFQ - http://www.tifq.it/?q=en