

First Malaysian Wood Expo an all-round success

The inaugural Malaysian Wood Expo (MWE) chalked up sales of R500-million and the organiser the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC) is delighted because this far exceeded the target of R89-million

Held at the Putra World Trade Centre from 19-21 November, MWE was the first international wood and woodworking machinery event organised by MTC in partnership with the Panels & Furniture Group. The three-day expo attracted 135 exhibitors from 22 countries and over 3000 visitors.

The exhibitors showcased a wide range of products such as tropical hardwoods, temperate softwoods, wooden flooring, sawn timber, wooden pallets, door and door frames, cutting tools, abrasives, adhesives, coatings, traditional and hi-tech woodworking machines, dust collecting equipment, edge banding and finishing materials, handling equipment and design software.

Most of the exhibitors were from Germany, Italy, Australia, France, Belgium, Gabon, China, Chile, New Zealand, Taiwan and Singapore, while the trade visitors were from France, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Singapore and Maldives.

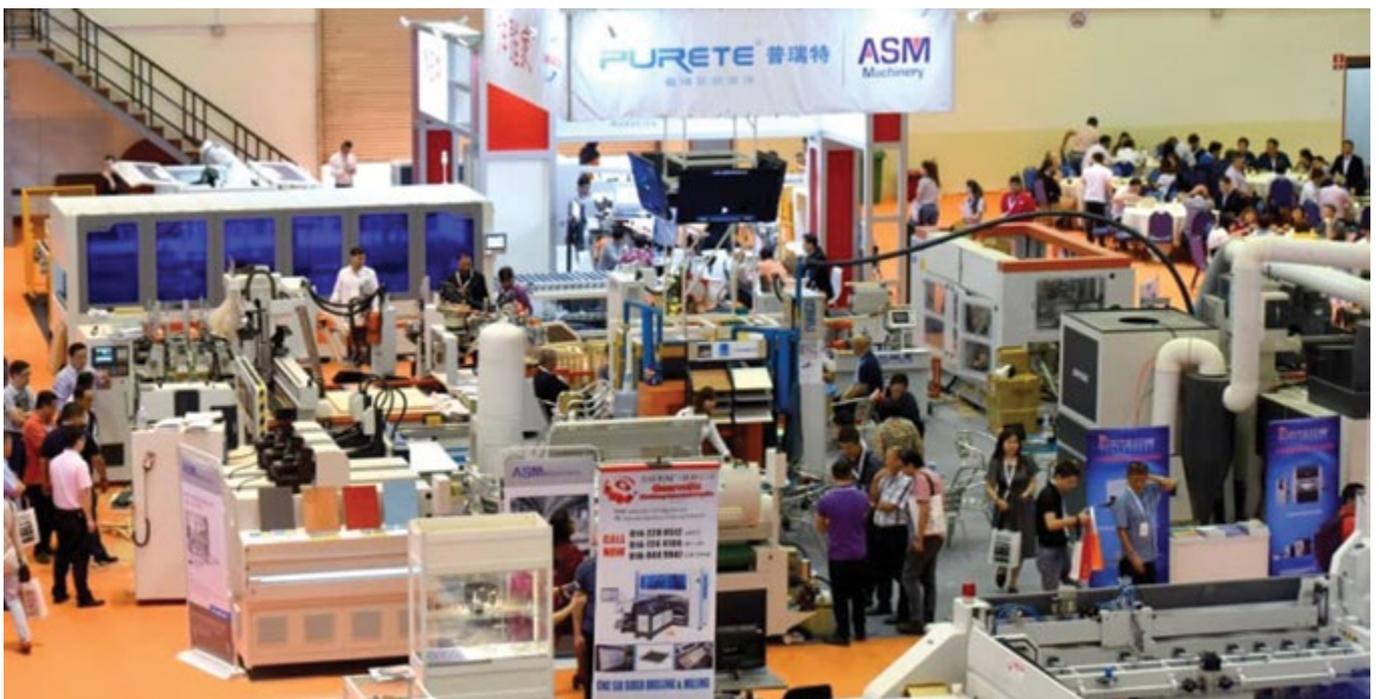
"We are pleased with the outcome of the MWE. Although tiny when compared with woodworking events like Ligna, our



show was a commercial success with brisk sales. The expo was well-attended by a broad spectrum of visitors and buyers from day one. And to our great surprise, our sales far exceeded the initial target of R89-million," says MTC chairman Dato' Low Kian Chuan.

Business matching sessions

To boost business at the expo, MTC organised two business matching sessions, the Overseas Suppliers-Malaysian Importers/Manufacturers Exchange Programme, and the Incoming Buying Mission (IBM). MTC also offered special incentives for the purchase of machinery under its Financial Incentive for Purchase of Machinery Programme (FIPM) as well as the importation of raw materials under its Import Assistance



The first Malaysian Wood Expo was a success

Programme (IAP). The Overseas Suppliers-Malaysian Importers/Manufacturers Exchange Programme facilitated the purchase of R216-million raw materials by customers from New Zealand, Chile, Gabon, France, Romania, Sweden, Ukraine, Canada and the United States.

The incoming business mission conducted in collaboration with the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and MTC's regional offices, generated estimated sales of R430-million, instead of the targeted R10-million. A total of 64 foreign buyers from 14 countries had over 470 meetings with 93 Malaysian suppliers during the IBM.

"Despite the rather sluggish world economy, the IBM has demonstrated that there are many strong investment plans in the timber sectors overseas, thus creating a huge demand for our Malaysian timber-based products," added Low.

An appetite for machines

The council's machinery purchasing programme also served as a major boost for buyers as 86 Malaysian companies



Malaysian wood processing companies are hungry for technology to add value to their country's raw materials

purchased machinery worth R7400-million. Most of the machinery exhibitors were surprised by the interest in their equipment and the sales they garnered at the expo.

"We are amazed by the volume of business we generated. We sold all the machinery brought to MWE," says Wood-Mizer Asia's regional director-Asia South African born Robert Moxham.

Adding value

The Minister of Primary Industries Teresa Kok opened the expo. Also present at the opening ceremony was the

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secretary-general of the ministry, Dato' Dr Tan Yew Chong, MTC chairman Dato' Low Kian Chuan, MTC board of trustees and MTC CEO Richard Yu. Among the dignitaries who also visited the expo was the Deputy Minister of Primary Industries Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Hj Mohd Akin.

"I applaud MTC for organising this expo as it is a holistic exhibition which showcases Malaysia's tropical hardwoods and temperate hardwoods and softwoods.

We can use these exotic timber species to produce furniture and other timber-based products which will increase the



Chinese machinery manufacturers were out in force at the Expo

value of our exports. This will also reduce our reliance on local raw materials," said Kok, adding that the exhibits at the woodworking machinery and tools sections were impressive. 



Woodmizer celebrated the sale of all the equipment it brought to the show



Italian and Germany manufacturers received a steady stream of interested buyers