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Press release: final report on IFAS 2016

The success story continues

IFAS as a meeting place for the innovative healthcare industry

The healthcare market trade fair IFAS remains an extremely popular hub for the industry, as demonstrated at the 34th incarnation of the event, held at Messe Zürich from 25 to 28 October 2016. It was able to match the outstanding results from 2014 in terms of number of exhibitors and stand area. No fewer than 16'308 visitors came face to face with the industry's trends and innovations. CareFair, the first Swiss careers fair for healthcare professions, also met with a positive response.

Doctors, nurses, therapists, pharmacists, purchasers and administrators from hospitals used IFAS 2016 as an opportunity to gather information and ideas to help them make their future investment decisions. They were given a unique overview of the latest products, innovative services and trends in the marketplace as well as finding out about job vacancies and further training opportunities. The numerous new products included IT solutions like the robot "NAO" that help network different key players in the healthcare sector. The robot links children confined to hospital with their school or home. The young patients can be connected to their chosen environment live via a tablet or smartphone and can operate the robot by remote control.

Exhibitors and visitors pleased

Exhibitors were very happy with the trade fair. "IFAS is a brilliant platform where we can showcase our work and make new contacts," says Tobias Manz, Sales Director at OZG Healthcare. Patrick Mayer launched a new product at IFAS: "I've developed some new walking aids and unveiled them at the trade fair." Domis Consulting, an information technology provider, also gave a positive verdict: "Our presentations were completely booked out on all four days," reports Jan Braunschweiler. "It was also great to see a good mix of visitors, from users and CEOs through to members of boards."

"The encouraging feedback we have received from exhibitors this year at the 34th IFAS echoes the results of a visitor survey we carried out," explains Show Director Heinz

Salzgeber. "The proportion of decision-makers and purchasers was larger than at previous trade fairs, which is a great result for exhibitors. Visitors to IFAS 2016 also seemed very happy with how it went. More than half are already planning to return in 2018," he adds.

CareFair an instant success

"The CareFair was another string to our bow" says Salzgeber. A total of 23 exhibitors presented job vacancies and further training opportunities. Employers and professionals, including both new entrants to the profession and established specialists, had the opportunity to meet face-to-face and build valuable networks in an informal, no-obligation environment. "The exhibitors were delighted to have the chance to meet such a vast array of interesting jobseekers, including many young people," Salzgeber explains enthusiastically. For instance, one exhibitor received 14 top-quality applications in the space of just two days. Employees, including those from the nursing sector, also praised CareFair as the perfect platform for finding out about potential new vacancies.

Debates on healthcare policy

The opening press conference provided a space for a political debate on trends in the healthcare sector. "Big data in healthcare – a move towards transparency or a data jungle?" was the title of the talk given by cantonal councillor Dr Thomas Heiniger, Head of the Department of Health in the canton of Zurich. In his view, the canton is not there to implement electronic data exchange but to promote eHealth, including by means of start-up funding. He believes the key players to be the service providers and, ultimately, the patients who have to consent to having an electronic patient file, concluding his talk with the words, "I believe in the benefits of big data."

Following this, national councillors Ruth Humbel, Bea Heim and Thomas de Courten joined Dr Fridolin Marty, Head of Healthcare Policy at Economiesuisse to discuss the topic "Pushing the limits of social health insurance – do we need to rein ourselves in?", moderated by parliamentary correspondent Dominik Feusi. They were not able to find a simple solution to the complex issue. The panel appealed to the patients' and service providers' sense of individual responsibility among other things. Costs could be significantly reduced if unnecessary operations, which make up around 30 percent, were not performed.

IFAS Forum for interprofessional cooperation

The IFAS Forum was a chance to share market information and expertise. Experts spoke at free talks about topics relating to interprofessional cooperation in the healthcare industry. This year's IFAS Forum once again met with keen interest. The special exhibition entitled "Hotel Solutions for the Health Sector" offered visitors even more opportunities to gather information and network. Exhibitors presented the latest facilities for hospitals, rehabilitation clinics, care homes and nursing homes at the exhibition, including multifunctional modular furniture, antibacterial surfaces, sustainable flooring and integrated multimedia products. They also introduced new ideas for facilities and leisure activities.

Show Director Heinz Salzgeber is happy overall: "We're hoping to match the success of IFAS 2016 in two years' time." Already in its 34th year, IFAS 2016 has demonstrated that there is a great need in the healthcare sector to present at trade fairs and foster customer relationships face to face, as well as keeping up to date with the latest trends and having an opportunity to network.

The next fair date

IFAS 2018: 23-26 October 2018, IFAS Zurich, Zurich-Oerlikon

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Exhibitors, CareFair, special exhibition and Forum – the visitors of IFAS 2016 were very satisfied.

