Asian healthy eating conference kicks off

To boost healthy eating in Asia, Singapore is hosting the first Asian edition of the World’s Healthiest Flavours conference from today till Friday at the Raffles City Convention Centre.

Organised by The Culinary Institute of America and the Harvard School of Public Health department of nutrition, this trade conference, attended by chefs and those in the food industry, has been held in the United States for the past eight years.

Both institutions are working with the Health Promotion Board and the National University of Singapore’s Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health for the three-day educational forum, which will address major nutrition and health issues in Asia such as diabetes and obesity.

The programme hopes to reach out to all segments of the industry, from fine dining restaurants to restaurant groups, and to boost foodservice operators.

Food preparation demonstrations in Singapore will be the centre of the focus points that Mr Ang Hay Seng, the health booths’ chief executive officer, hopes to improve. "Our studies show that in 10 adult Singaporeans out of every 10 there are 20-30% who are obese and this has been increasing over the past few years.

"With more people eating out, we need to pay attention to not only the supply of healthy products and ingredients, but also improve the way we prepare our food so that dishes served remain healthy."

Some of the boards’ initiatives so far include the Healthy Choice Symbol Programme for food products as well as the Healthier Hawker Programme for nutritious hawker fare, which will also be discussed during the event.

Chiefs who will be doing live demonstrations include Michel chef Guillaume Léger, executive chef of two-Michelin-starred restaurant Le Chapeau, Jean-Christophe Novelli, chef-owner of the Michelin-starred restaurant 51Burger in London, and David Tan, chef-owner of The Cordial Kitchen in Singapore, and Faith Ong, chief of San Francisco’s Le Cirque.

"The fight to reduce obesity is not won yet. We need to continue to change the food industry's approach to food," Mr Ang told ST. "We hope to bring a new perspective to healthy eating habits and practices in Asia and beyond, and to work with the industry to improve its offerings."