

Friday, 2 October 2009

FINALISTS NAMED FOR PREMIER'S FOOD AWARDS

An exciting diversity of food and beverage businesses are represented in this year's finalists of the South Australian Premier's Food Awards.

At a function held last night at the Colonel Light Hotel in Light Square, twenty-three businesses from across the State were revealed as the finalists. They'll now vie to become the winners of the 12th annual awards being announced in November.

The finalists are producing everything from cost effective capers that grow well in dry, saline conditions to a zesty, 'blood orange' extra virgin olive oil, premium A2 milk, rabbit schnitzels, sustainably farmed tuna and hand-made chocolate dessert crackers.

Acting Food Minister, Michael O'Brien says, "the quality of the finalists' produce and the innovation they undertake in running their businesses highlights a dynamic and progressive South Australian food industry."

"These South Australian business owners are creating innovative products and they are getting them onto retail shelves and export pallets and into consumers' mouths," he said.

"The finished food industry is of growing importance in South Australia and is now worth \$4.4 billion a year, after growing by 4.5 per cent annually over the last decade and by as much as 9% in 2007/08.

"The South Australian Food Centre at Regency Park, established by the State Government, is acting as the focal point for the State's food industry development by facilitating their access to resources, programs, research and development, and business and technical capabilities.

"The Centre has also created a 'food network' to bring all the players together.

"The industry has also been set a major challenge by the recent report of Adelaide Thinker in residence, Professor Andrew Fearne, to significantly boost their international competitiveness by adopting a 'value-chain' approach to become consumer driven 'from paddock to plate.'"

In line with the Thinkers' challenge, a new Value Chain category has been added to this year's Premier's Food Awards. It joins other awards for sustainability, innovation, new products, young leaders in the industry, workforce development, agribusiness exports, services to industry and value adding.

The new *Food Adelaide* Value Chain Award has seen impressive industry leaders Robern Menz, Maggie Beer Products, Dalriada and Dover Fisheries named as finalists.

“To have the food industry respond so well to this new category, following the recent release of Professor Fearne’s report, is encouraging and exciting. These businesses are helping to lead the charge for this very significant, new direction for this State’s food and wine industries,” Minister O’Brien said.

Other finalists announced last night in the South Australian Premier’s Food Awards include first timers, Australian Caper Company, Limestone Coast Food Group and Fleurieu Milk Company, alongside previous finalists, La Casa Del Formaggio, Tucker’s Natural and Singapore Airlines.

This year’s Awards are themed ‘celebrate the magic’ and will culminate in the gala dinner awards night on Friday November 6 at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Tickets can be purchased at www.safoodawards.com.au

The full list of SA Premier’s Food Award finalists is attached

<p>For further information contact Loine Sweeney (for Minister O’Brien) on 0407 395 467 Or Jane McBride (for contact with finalists) on 0423 296 579</p>
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FINALISTS – PREMIER'S FOOD AWARDS 2009

Food Adelaide Value Chain Award

- **Dalriada Meat** manages the value chain of their beef products from the consumer through to the South Australian cattle farmers.
- **Dover Fisheries** is a pivotal business in a value chain that reaches from consumers of abalone in Hong Kong through to South Australian abalone farmers.
- **Maggie Beer Products** is passionate about quality, local produce and freshness, and so insist on developing close relationships with all in their value chain.
- **Robern Menz** realise their success is dependent on the wellbeing and success of their value chain partners and have collaborated with Golden North, the AFL and Bedford Industries.

SARDI Innovation Award

- **Australian Caper Company** has introduced an innovative new industry and crop with superior processing techniques through capers, a Mediterranean plant not commercially grown before in Australia.
- **Clean Seas Limited's** successful breeding, hatching, growing out and harvesting of Southern Bluefish Tuna in response to declining wild tuna numbers shows their unique innovation.
- **Southern Waters Marine Products** identified the need to value add Southern Bluefin Tuna and through innovation have increased shelf life and stabilised colour issues in developing a range of branded tuna portions.

DTED New Product Award

- **La Casa Del Formaggio** Grande Bocconcini is one large ball of fresh Mozzarella stored in brine, exhibiting a delicate flavour and maintaining maximum freshness, and can be torn or sliced to create specific recipes.
- **Pendleton Fine Foods** Blood Orange Argumato Extra Virgin Olive Oil is made using the traditional argumato method of cold pressing fresh blood orange fruit and premium olives together to create distinctive, fresh zesty oil.
- **Tuckers Natural** Chocolate Dessert Cracker is a uniquely shaped wedge biscuit created to pair with desserts. It is handmade, 100% natural and is subtly sweet in flavour, with great crunch.

Peats Soil and Garden Supplies Sustainability Award

- **Australian Caper Company** is providing a cost effective alternative to imported products in a niche market as well as a sustainable crop for areas affected by dry and saline conditions.
- **Clean Seas Limited's** response to declining wild tuna numbers was the development of catch, tow and farming of live Southern Bluefin Tuna showing their commitment to the sustainability of the industry.
- **Humbugz Honey** understands the role of bees in the wider environment, and their vitality to the local region and economy given that bees are critical to the success of 80% of Australia's horticultural production.

NAB Agribusiness Export Award

- **Beerenberg** started out as a strawberry grower and gourmet jam producer to become an international brand exporting to over 25 countries throughout Asia, USA and the UK after diversifying into food service.

- **Dover Fisheries** is one of Australia's largest abalone processors and exporters with 92% of sales being to export markets such as China, Hong Kong and Japan in particular with their canned black lipped abalone product.
- **Mayura Station** export consistent, premium quality Wagyu beef to Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai and some of the world's most reputable restaurants after undertaking significant customer market research.
- **Southern Waters Marine Products** have developed a range of tuna portions, under the brand Morituna to fill a significant gap in the export markets of Europe, China, Malaysia, Singapore, USA and Japan.

Rabobank Value Adding Award

- **Almondco** accounts for around 30% of Australia's almond production. Their value adding of almonds include flavoured, organic, blanched and dry roasted enabling introduction across multiple market segments.
- **B.-d. Farm Paris Creek** is an integrated biodynamic business operating a dairy farm and processing premises of biodynamic/organic milk which is value added into quark, yogurt, butter, and soft and hard cheeses.
- **Bushmin Farmed Rabbits** breed and supply quality rabbit products to consumers and food service trade year round, with value added products including schnitzels, fillets, smoked rabbit and sausages.
- **Fleurieu Milk Company** produce premium milk that tastes like milk, with a range of products including A2 premium, full and low fat milks, iced coffee, chocolate milk and pouring cream.
- **Pendleton Fine Foods** take a low cost commodity product, olives and turn it into a premium product, producing a range of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in various flavours.

Rural Solutions SA Services to Industry Award

- **AgriExchange** are accredited with pioneering some of the most progressive precision farming, drought management techniques available to Australian citrus growers.
- **Limestone Coast Food Group** is a not for profit community organisation of proactive and enthusiastic members promoting local food produce and businesses in the region.
- **Singapore Airlines Cargo** service all the major food and beverage exporters in South Australia, providing airfreight logistic solutions tailored to customer requirements.

KPMG Young Leader Award

- **Claude Cicchiello**, 35, Managing Director, **La Casa Del Formaggio**, a family business since 1988 manufacturing a range of premium quality Italian style cheeses.
- **Sam Tucker**, 34, Managing Director, **Tucker's Natural**, an international manufacturer of sweet and savoury biscuits, and Food Service Solutions operating since 1997.

Food and Beverage Development Fund Workforce Development Award

- **Cocolat** has been preparing staff for future growth with training focussed on developing strategies, business basics, leadership and management through their customised training program, 'Cocolat Moments'.
- **Robern Menz** acknowledges that its business is as good as its people and works tirelessly to recruit, train and retrain good people in a competitive labour market and as a result have a low staff turnover rate.