

Four Global Food Awards for SA

Local products in the South African food industry have been rated among the best in the world, having won four out of nine Global Food Awards at the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST) World Food Congress held in Cape Town last week.



(Seated front l-r): IUFoST president, Geoffrey Campbell-Platt, Rosie Maguire (Immediate past president of SAAFoST) with the Global Food Award winners and President's Award recipients.

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Of the seven local products that progressed to the finals, four garnered awards, having been evaluated by an international team of nine judges. Awards were made in three categories:

Product and/or Process Innovation

This includes the industrialisation of traditional foods and produced a local winner in Port Elizabeth-based Dynamic Commodities' Bits o' Juice. Pure lemon pods can be applied to any food without the limitations of a lemon wedge. The company pioneered the process of separating the peel, membrane and segment pulp of citrus fruit, after which the segments are cryogenically frozen and shaken into individual citrus cells.

Packaging Innovation

Provided two South African winners. Nestlé's Cremora dual tamper-evident closure and container, which removes the need for an internal hermetic seal, allowing the packaging to "breathe" and adjust to varying altitudes without panelling. Nouvelle Mushrooms' macro-permeable, block-bottom FreshWorks bag, which works in tandem with an outer box. As exotic mushrooms have a very short shelf life (due to dehydration and bacterial growth), this bag regulates the optimum humidity balance inside the sealed bag. It eliminates residual moisture, while retaining the inherent moisture in the product, extending product shelf life by 30 percent and reducing product wastage by 50 percent.

Communicating Science-related Knowledge to Consumers

This is aimed at improving their lifestyle. Unilever won with its Flora Test the Nation campaign, which focussed on high blood cholesterol. A free test with a quick result was made effective by professional advice and leaflets. The campaign was partnered by a major retailer and was credible through involvement with the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

The President's Awards

The President's Awards, a new category at the IUFoST Global Food Industry Awards, recognises efforts to advance food science and technology for the benefit of all.

Companies that received the 2010 awards were:

- Cargill for its food safety leadership and collaboration, commitment to improving access to food and to ensuring food safety through education.
- JDB Group for applying modern process technology and modern packaging to a traditional herbal health drink, making it available to a wide population of consumers.
- Nestlé for providing world leadership in quality, safe, nutritious food products to people worldwide, for encouraging and sponsoring young scientists and supporting food-safety education.
- Beijing Air Catering Company for its commitment to improving food safety dissemination of information, through support of IUFoST initiatives in Beijing and at the World Expo in Shanghai.
- Almond Board of California for its leadership in encouraging young scientists and student exchange and education, and for its promotion of and support for food safety efforts around the world.
- Mengniu Dairy Group for the development of a digestible yoghurt in an environmentally-friendly, recyclable, paper-based package. The yoghurt provides a healthy, functional dairy food, allowing increased milk consumption, alongside improved intestinal and body health, to a huge consumer group.

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