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Organic Industry to Honor Brands with Responsible Packaging Awards

(Anaheim, CA) The Responsible Packaging Awards will be held on March 10, 2011 4-5 PM in Ballroom A at the Anaheim Convention Center, during Natural Products Expo West Anaheim, CA. The public event will showcase and celebrate the latest brands to receive this special acknowledgement.

The bi-annual Awards recognize organic and natural products industry achievements and innovations in environmentally responsible packaging, including materials reduction, the use of 100% post-consumer recycled, non-GMO, compostable and 3rd party certified materials, and packaging that is returnable for reuse and easily recycled or reused by the end user.

The Awards are co-sponsored by the Responsible Packaging Project, a non-profit collaboration of the Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association, Independent Natural Foods Retailers Association, National Cooperative Grocers Association, New Hope Natural Media, Organic Trade Association, United Natural Foods Inc. and Whole Foods Market's Green Mission.

"The Responsible Packaging Project seeks to drive ecologically and socially responsible packaging innovation across the organic and natural products industry. Its aims to raise the bar in company practices through open inquiry and cross-supply chain collaboration and engage the trade in moving toward a zero waste future," says Natalie Reitman-White, executive director of Food Trade Sustainability Leadership Association.

Project partners evaluated the lifecycle impact of each packaging item that was nominated, using extensive criteria in three areas: commitment to transparency, extended producer responsibility, and ecological systems design principles, with a strong focus on achieving zero waste.

The seven brands receiving awards are:

- Arizona Nutritional: 100% recycled PET (rPET) supplement bottle
- Avalon Organics: 100% rPET and reducing in packaging weight for body care bottles
- Broguiere Dairy: Glass milk bottles that can be returned to the point of purchase for company collection and reuse, and can be refilled and reused by consumers
- Hummingbird Wholesale: Certified compostable and non-GMO cellulose film for various retail and bulk items, numerous glass and plastic bulk containers that the company picks up and takes back for reuse
- Jovial Foods: Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paperboard with 80% post-consumer recycled content, certified compostable non-GMO cellulose film for whole grain pasta products
- MyChelle Dermaceuticals: 100% Post Consumer Paperboard for skincare line, converting all packaging to glass and HDPE (eliminating #7 plastics)
- Pangea Organics: FSC certified paperboard with 80% post-consumer recycled content, eliminating glue and reducing packaging materials for skincare products

Justin's Nut Butter will receive a special mention for their efforts to collaborate across brands by hosting the Sustainable Squeeze Pack Summit in the fall of 2010. This brought together film suppliers, retailers and manufacturers to develop a sustainable film that could be used across the industry.

The Project also works to encourage continuous improvement through ongoing education. It has produced ten Responsible Packaging Forums, addressing topics ranging from ecological principles and bio-based substrates to eco-labeling and marketing. *The next Forum will be held prior to the awards ceremony March 10, 2011 from 1:30-4pm in Ballroom A at the Anaheim Convention Center as part of New Hope's Educational Sessions.*

The Project has released the draft form of its “Responsible Packaging Guidelines.” Interested stakeholders are invited and encouraged to review the draft guidelines and share input. “We hope these guidelines will provide a common ‘open source’ framework that will guide action and catalyze innovation,” says Michael Besancon, Senior Global Vice President of Purchasing, Distribution and Marketing at Whole Foods Market.

The next round of Awards will occur at Natural Products Expo East in Boston, MA. A call for nominations will be distributed in the fall of 2011. More information on the Responsible Packaging Project and the draft Guidelines at <http://www.responsible-packaging.org>.

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