

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release



Food Processing Companies Honoured by the BC Food Processors Association

Abbotsford, BC, June, 2009. *Purdy's Chocolate Ltd.* received the *Hall of Fame Award* at FoodPro West on Friday June 5th, 2009, *Leadership Award* was awarded to **Peter Joe, Sunrise Soya Foods** and **Gurpreet Arneja, Punjab Milk Foods Inc.** was awarded the *Rising Star Award*.

Purdy's Chocolates has maintained a commitment to quality and tradition since it was founded in 1907. Accepting the *Hall of Fame Award*, President **Karen Flavelle** cited Peter Higgins, *Purdy's* General Manager, and the *Purdy's* team for ensuring the company's success. *Purdy's Chocolates* has been named one of Canada's Top 50 Employers for four of the last seven years and continues to expand with stores in the Ontario market. *Purdy's* recently partnered with *Island Farms* to produce the first ever *Purdy's Premium Ice Cream*. *Purdy's Chocolates* joins *Freybe Gourmet Foods* in the BC Food Processor's Hall of Fame.

This award was sponsored by **Reliance Insurance Agencies**.

Starting in the family business in the 1970s, Peter Joe has led the company expansion into innovative product lines. *Sunrise Soya Foods* was the first BC company to sell packaged tofu through supermarkets and the first company with organic tofu, *Soyganic* brand. In 2002, Sunrise Soya Foods opened a large manufacturing and warehousing facility in Toronto to service the Eastern Canadian and US markets. Sunrise launched *Pete's Tofu* brand which includes convenient, ready-to-eat products. Last year's winner was Arran Stephens, *Nature's Path*.

Other nominees for the Award were:

- Fady Hayek, *Pita Bread Factory Ltd.*
- Yves Potvin, *Garden Protein International*

The *Leadership Award* was sponsored by **KPMG LLP** and is given in honour of the late Fred Knoedler, *Premium Brands*.

The *Rising Star Award* celebrates a BCFPA member who has demonstrated innovation, shown leadership in industry and the community. Gurpreet (Gary) Arneja is President of *Punjab Milk Foods Inc.* The company recently moved into a new manufacturing facility. *Punjab Milk Foods* manufactures a wide variety of South Asian foods marketed under the *Nanak* brand. *Punjab Milk Foods* won the Agriculture and Primary Products Exporter Award of the Year 2007. Accepting for Mr. Arneja was Vineet Taneja, CEO, Punjab Milk Foods Inc.

Other nominees for the *Rising Star Award* were:

- Michael Dinn, Joie Wines, and
- Lloyd Berhardt, Ethical Bean Coffee Company

The *Rising Star Award* was sponsored by **Revenue Services Group**.

The awards were presented at FoodProWest, the premier gathering of BC food processors. The event included keynote speaker, Don Drummond (TD Bank's Chief Economist), a trade show with over 20 exhibitors, a sumptuous lunch featuring BC processors' products, and a lively Industry Leaders Forum with Randall Ius of *Happy Planet Foods*, Sven Freybe of *Freybe Gourmet Chef* and Doug Brown of *The Original Cakerie*.

"We are delighted with the caliber of people who participated and the stature the event has achieved", said Robin Smith, BCFPA President and Chair of the Board. "Purdy's, Peter and Gary are worthy and inspiring winners. We are delighted that we could honour them in this way."

"This is the first year of FoodProWest," added Nico Human, BCFPA CEO. "We built it out of the successful BCFPA Professional Development Day. We are very happy to see the event grow; up to 235 participants from around 120 in 2008. Our proceeds of the event are used to leverage funding for industry projects that will benefit the entire industry. The event therefore not only celebrates the industry and brings its participants together, it also raises funds for the betterment of the industry as a whole.

"We are already working on FoodProWest 2010," Human added. "The provisional date is June 4, 2010. Please pencil (or "Blackberry") that date is as soon as you can!"

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The **BCFPA** is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to represent all segments of the food, beverage and nutraceutical processing industry, and to coordinate common industry activities and resources under one umbrella. The Association represents micro, small, medium, and large processing companies.

For more information, including photographs of the nominees and winners, contact:

Adam Ford

BCFPA, 35707 Sunridge Place, Abbotsford, BC, V3G 1E5

Tel 604-504-4409 Fax 604-746-4409

adam@bcfpa.ca