

PMA expo draws record-breaking crowd

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Over 19,000 attendees took part in the 60th Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Convention & Exposition in California

The largest US gathering for the global fresh fruit, vegetable and floral industries (PMA Fresh Summit International Convention & Exposition) attracted over 19,000 attendees to its 60th edition, which was held in Anaheim, California, on 2-5 October.

Organized by the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), the event was named last month in the Top 100 US trade shows by Trade Show Executive magazine, and in April ranked 100th on Trade Show Week's Top 200 Trade Shows of 2008.

During the event, PMA recognized four exhibitors with "Best of Show" awards for their outstanding salesmanship and presentation excellence.

Sunsweet Growers, Yuba City, Calif., and Temple-Inland, Austin, Texas, were first and second place winners, respectively, in the Island Booth category.

Fruit2Day, Broomfield, Colo., and National Watermelon Promotion Board, Orlando, Fla., were placed first and second, respectively, in the In-Line Booth category.

"Knowing how much more important top trade shows such as Fresh Summit become to marketing a business in a down economy, our exhibitors were especially on their toes this year," said PMA president & CEO Bryan Silbermann. "So this year's 'Best of Show' winners should be particularly proud of their achievement."

A further eight companies received the PMA's third annual Impact Award: Excellence in Produce Packaging for the leading way in which their produce packaging demonstrates "out-of-the-box-thinking" and makes an impact on consumers.

The 2009 Impact Award winners are:

- Environment/Sustainability: Earthbound Farm for Earthbound Farm Clamshell Packages: 5oz., 11oz., 1lb., & 2lb.

- Food safety/Traceability: Yottamark Inc. for MICROBAKER Traceable Labels
- Functionality/Technology: Clear Lam Packaging, Inc. & Taylor Farms, Inc. for Taylor Fresh Bag Plus
- Marketing design: The Oppenheimer Group & Zespri for Kiwi Snack Pack
- Marketing messaging/Content: Stemilt Growers, Inc. for Fresh, Flavorful & Family-Farmed Cherry Display Bin
- Supply chain efficiencies: IFCO Systems for Reusable Plastic Containers (RPCs)

“We have seen a positive shift since this award program began,” said Mr Silbermann. “We’re receiving increased interest in the award program, and the entries we are receiving reflect an increasing industry commitment to the role packaging can play in maintaining product quality and safety, in communicating with consumers, and in demonstrating another aspect of the produce industry’s commitment to the environment and sustainability.”