



Royal Agricultural Society of NSW

Media Release

13 July, 2010

## **HOLY GOAT CHEESE TAKES 2010 PRESIDENT'S MEDAL** **STRICTLY EMBARGOED – 11PM WEDNESDAY 14 JULY**

Holy Goat Cheese at Sutton Grange in central Victoria has beaten some of Australia's most famous farming dynasties to be named the best agricultural producer for 2010 by the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) of NSW.

Holy Goat Cheese was presented with \$10,000 in cash and the prestigious silver heritage President's Medal at a gala dinner with Australia's top food and wine aficionados at the Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney.

Glenn Dudley, President of the RAS, congratulated Holy Goat Cheese on being named the 'best of the best' in Australian agricultural production.

"The President's Medal recognises Australian producers that create the highest quality products using sustainable practices, all of which are crucial to the future of Australian agriculture.

"Judges evaluate the product's manufacturing process for financial, social and environmental performance, as well market acceptance of the product. Human elements such as passion, commitment and enthusiasm are also considered and rewarded," Mr Dudley said.

Holy Goat Cheese, nominated for its La Luna Goat Cheese, was awarded the Champion Cheese of Show and Champion Sheep, Goat and Buffalo Milk Product at the 2010 Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Produce Show, making it eligible for the President's Medal.

The six finalists nominated for this year's award were selected from the 96 products that reached Champion status at the Sydney Royal Wine, Dairy and Fine Food Shows. They were then judged on a whole of company approach to the production and marketing.

Cheese maker and co-owner of Holy Goat, Carla Meurs said the company is proud their organic farm-based cheese production enterprise was nominated for such a prestigious award.

"We believe our goat dairy and on-farm manufacturing processes provide a model for revitalising and inspiring farming communities. The success of our product starts with respecting and caring for our soil, our native grass pastures, protecting remnant bush habitats and ensuring our goats are healthy without using chemical fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides or antibiotics.

"At Holy Goat we strive to produce a cheese that inspires a celebration of what the Australian speciality cheese industry can achieve. We milk 70 goats, produce 10 tonnes of cheese per year and employ 6 local people," said Ms Meurs.

Simon Marnie, ABC 702 Weekends presenter pursues a gourmet passion and has been a member of the judging panel since the first President's Medal was awarded in 2006.

"This year could not have seen a tighter result. As a judge in this process may I say how inspiring it is to meet such passionate, dedicated and determined producers who are the true elite of agricultural practice.

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“This year’s finalists clearly demonstrated that a sound producer can be at the leading edge of technology and production standards without sacrificing a keen awareness of social and environmental responsibility.

“Holy Goat showed that with dedication and determination the combination of artisan techniques and new technologies can walk hand in hand, no matter the size or market leverage of the producer,” said Mr Marnie.

Simon Marnie and Department of Industry & Investment Chief Economist Scott Davenport visited each producer to review operations and observe their production practices to gather economic, environmental and local information on the production of each Champion product.

**The other five finalists in 2010:**

- **Bulla Dairy Foods (VIC)**, Light Sour Cream
- **The Yalumba Wine Company (SA)**, 2008 Yalumba Hand Picked Shiraz Viognier
- **Peter Lehmann Wines (SA)**, 2006 Wigan Eden Valley Riesling
- **Huon Aquaculture (TAS)**, Banquet Slice Tasmanian Smoked Salmon
- **T & R Pastoral (SA)**, Murraylands Premium Lamb

**About Holy Goat Cheese:**

Carla Meurs and Ann-Marie Monda produce organic chèvre at their Sutton Grange Organic Farm, located east of Castlemaine. Set on 200 acres of rolling granite plains with free-range access to a rich variety of native grasses, herbs and shrubs, the goats produce high quality Certified Organic milk.

Having gained experience on farms in Australia and overseas, Ann-Marie and Carla believe their cheese-making skills reflect their respect and care for the natural environment. With the wellbeing of the goat herd and integrated holistic farm management taking priority, animals and their pastures are maintained at a level of optimum health.

Holy Goat Cheese’s La Luna Goat Cheese was awarded Champion Cheese of Show and Champion Sheep, Goat & Buffalo Milk Product at the 2010 Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Produce Show.

**The Judges:**

- Simon Marnie, ABC Radio;
- Scott Davenport , NSW Chief Economist, Industry & Investment NSW;
- Justin North, renowned Australian chef
- Annette Karantoni, Senior Business Manager Marketing, Woolworths Supermarkets.

**Judging Criteria:**

- Triple Bottom Line - producer’s financial, social and environmental performance.
- Human factors - passion, commitment and enthusiasm as they pursue excellence.
- Market acceptance in the marketplace, point of sale appeal.

The President’s Medal is proudly sponsored by Industry & Investment NSW and Woolworths Supermarkets.

**Further media information, interview requests and a selection of high res images including; the awards night and menu, product and on farm images**

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