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Contact:
Molly Iovino
Quality Chekd Dairies, Inc.
(800) 222-6455 ext 2007
miovino@qckekd.com

HEADLINE: 2010 QCS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

TEXT:

Hiland Dairy Foods Co. (Springfield, Mo.), Hiland Dairy (Fort Smith, Ark.) and Alqueria Dairy (Cajica, Colombia), took the top Quality Chekd honors in dairy excellence, plant performance and marketing at the 2010 QCS Leadership Conference.

With a focus on “People, Purpose, and Passion”, the 2010 QCS conference was a mixture of education, motivation and recognition for its member and supplier community. Key dairy supply services, a supplier trade show and educational workshops highlighted the Fifth Annual Leadership Conference held April 11-13th at the Hyatt Regency Dallas in Dallas, Texas. Conference attendees included members and suppliers of QCS Purchasing partners Quality Chekd Dairies, SECO, and Allied Purchasing.

“Our members understand and appreciate that their success depends to a great extent on the commitment and quality of their people,” said Peter Horvath, president of QCS Purchasing, Quality Chekd Dairies and SECO. “Our leadership conference emphasizes this critical workplace element so attendees may learn and take back to their companies’ action items that can have a significant impact on their operations.”

Quality Chekd Dairies, Inc. (Naperville, Ill.) and Deland, Fla., based SECO/Golden 100 established QCS Purchasing in 2005 to formalize the longstanding buying alliance of the two member-owned organizations. In November 2007, Allied Purchasing of Mason City, Iowa, joined forces with QCS so members of all three groups could enjoy an increase in overall dividends, and programs tailored to individual company needs that serve the bottom line.

According to Brian Janssen, president of Allied Purchasing, “QCS Conference participants enjoyed many occasions to seek out new ideas, business opportunities and forge relationships created by the strengths of the members of all three organizations. Conference attendees learned innovative ways to improve work performance, new methods to strengthen purchasing opportunities, participated in training workshops and product judging as well as visit exhibitor booths at the supplier trade show.”

Quality Chekd Award Presentations

Long considered a highlight of the conference, the annual Quality Chekd awards and recognition ceremony honored the winners of the coveted Irving B. Weber, Wayne Gingrich and Harlie F. Zimmerman awards. “This awards program calls attention to the commitment of Quality Chekd Dairies and its membership to continued excellence and quality in products, manufacturing and promotion,” said Horvath.

At the conference, Hiland Dairy Foods Company, Springfield, Mo., was honored with the prestigious Irving B. Weber Distinguished Award for Quality Excellence that included both a trophy and \$25,000 check. In capturing the Weber Award, Hiland was recognized as having achieved the highest combined annual score of any Quality Chekd member in leadership, customer satisfaction, production quality, marketing communications, staff development and overall business ethics.

Named for Quality Chekd's first board president, the Weber Award is modeled after the esteemed Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Dairies that compete for this award go through an extensive, year-long process that includes on-site assessments, monthly finished product testing, a quality compliance evaluation, and leadership questionnaires. Finalist trophies for the Weber Award were given to Alqueria Dairy (Cajica, Colombia), and Hiland-Roberts Ice Cream (Norfolk, Neb.). Both were applauded for their company-wide commitments to improving overall business practices.

The 2010 Wayne Gingrich Award, which recognizes the best single production plant within the Quality Chekd membership, was awarded to Hiland Dairy in Fort Smith, Ark. The Fort Smith facility, a fluid milk operation, produced the highest quality product, received exemplary scores from on-site evaluations and achieved manufacturing excellence that surpassed all other Quality Chekd member facilities. In honor of this meritorious accomplishment, Hiland Dairy was presented with a choice of a grandfather clock or scholarship for their dairy.

Named in honor of Quality Chekd's co-founder and first production director, the Gingrich Award acknowledges top production and total quality at a single plant. Selection criteria for this award includes results of plant visits, an evaluation of a plant's process and systems for assuring product quality, customer communications, quality standards, and laboratory test scores. Gingrich award finalists for this year included Hiland Dairy (Fayetteville, Ark.), Hiland-Roberts Ice Cream (Norfolk, Neb.), Super Store Industries (Turlock, Calif.) and Turner Dairy (Fulton, Ky.). Finalists were presented a trophy in recognition of their accomplishments.

The 2010 Harlie F. Zimmerman Award for marketing excellence and best communication of its brand was presented to Alqueria Dairy of Cajica, Colombia. Named in honor of Quality Chekd's inaugural managing director, this award recognized as 'Best In Class' Alqueria's clearly defined marketing objectives and strategies, creative execution and measurable results. In recognition of its efforts, the company was presented with a \$2,500 scholarship for their dairy.

Zimmerman award entries are judged by an independent panel that reviews each dairy's marketing plan, promotional materials, merchandising programs, their ability to enhance brand awareness and generate positive sales results. The other finalists for this award were Galliker Dairy (Johnstown, Pa.) and Hiland Dairy (Springfield, Mo.). Representatives of each company received a plaque in honor of this recognition.

The Plant Assessment of Excellence award was presented to 30 member plants each of whom reached 95 percent or higher in the annual plant audit. Each recipient was given a wall clock and plate depicting the year in honor of their achievement. During the annual conference additional Merit of Excellence Awards were given to Quality Chekd members for distinction in the areas of production and marketing.

QCS Award Presentations

To honor their members' commitment and highlight the achievements they have made through out the year, QCS Purchasing developed two awards that were presented at the conference.

The QCS Leadership Award recognizes members who make significant contributions to the QCS community, highlighting those who provide innovative programs, solutions and features that provide additional value to the QCS membership. Alpenrose Dairy of Portland, Ore. was the 2010 recipient this award.

The QCS Participation Award was presented to 2 members; Prairie Farms of Carlinville, Ill. and Stremick's Heritage Foods of Santa Ana, Calif. This award exemplifies the spirit and purpose of member participation and recognizes the members who made the largest year-to-year increase in dollar participation in all QCS

programs. Prairie Farms and Stremick's Heritage Foods were given a plaque in honor of their accomplishments.

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