

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, SEPT. 24, 2009

CONTACT: *Myrtle Earley, marketing specialist*
NCDA&CS Marketing Division
myrtle.earley@ncagr.gov

Six N.C. Specialty Food Association winners selected

RALEIGH -- Six North Carolina specialty food companies took home top honors recently in a contest sponsored by the N.C. Specialty Food Association. Winners and runners-up were named in snack, condiment and packaging categories. A grand champion, selected from among the winners, was also crowned.

Ricardo's Tomato Sauce by chef Ricardo Fernandez of Waynesville, which won in the packaging category, was crowned grand champion. The selection was based on the highest score of all products entered.

America's Best Homestyle Gourmet Peanuts from Rocky Mount took top honors in the snack category, with Mackey's Ferry Crunchy Peanut Butter of Jamesville selected as the runner-up.

Fryar's Original Sauce from McLeansville won top honors in the condiment category, and D'Vine Chow-Chow of Elizabethtown was the runner-up.

Both the snack and condiment categories were judged on taste, appearance, aroma, aftertaste and texture.

Pumpkin Pie Spice Hot Chocolate Mix from Eden came in second in the packaging category. Entries in the packaging category were judged on legibility, packaging shape, colors, text, sustainability and shelf differentiation.

"I am so impressed with the quality and diversity of North Carolina's specialty food offerings," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "When I was growing up in Browns Summit there was little food variety, but now we have a ton of home-grown businesses making very good specialty foods."

The contest was part of an event that drew specialty food manufacturers from across the state to Raleigh to learn more about specialty food production and marketing. The keynote speaker was Ron Tanner, vice president, of the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade Inc.

For more information, or to order these specialty products online, go to www.ncspecialtyfoods.org.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Professional high-resolution digital images of the winners are available by contacting Myrtle Earley at myrtle.earley@ncagr.gov.