



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

CINDY HYDE-SMITH
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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Mississippi Specialty Food Company Wins Award During Trade Show

JACKSON, Miss. — Several Mississippi specialty food companies recently exhibited their products at the 2017 Summer Fancy Food Show hosted by the Specialty Food Association in New York City, where one of the companies brought home a 2017 Specialty Outstanding Food Innovation (sofi) Award.

The 63rd annual show served as a way for the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce to promote three Mississippi companies at the largest specialty food trade event in North America.

Ubons Sauce of Yazoo City, Flathau's Fine Foods of Hattiesburg and The Shed Saucery, LLC of Ocean Springs represented the Magnolia State at the trade show as Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) exhibitors. The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce is a member of SUSTA and works as a partner in recruiting companies and serving as managers for trade activities. This year, Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Cindy Hyde-Smith is serving as SUSTA President.

Each year, SUSTA hosts a pavilion of 20 booths at the Summer Fancy Food Show. The domestic trade show provides an introduction to international trade shows for food and agricultural businesses. This year, the show had more than 2,500 food producers, displaying over 180,000 food products from 47 countries.

Flathau's Fine Foods, one of the SUSTA exhibitors, won a silver 2017 sofi Award in the cookie category for their all-natural shortbread cookies. This is the company's third sofi Award.

"We had a fantastic show in New York in the SUSTA pavilion at the Fancy Food Show," Flathau's Fine Foods owner Jeff Flathau said. "Our winning another sofi prompted us to attend and SUSTA made it so easy. They helped us every step of the way and were on site at the show to help with whatever we needed. The show was well worth it for us."

According to the Specialty Food Association, sofi Awards have honored the best culinary creativity in specialty foods across the world since 1972. As President of SUSTA, Hyde-Smith is proud that a Mississippi company was able to earn such a prestigious award working with the trade organization.

"I congratulate Jeff on his third sofi award," Hyde-Smith said. "It is wonderful to see a Mississippi company, such as Flathau's Fine Foods, receive national recognition for the quality of products that they offer. I encourage other specialty food companies that are interested in expanding into international markets to contact our office to find out how SUSTA can help in these efforts."

In addition, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce worked with SUSTA on an inbound trade mission prior to the Fancy Food Show.

Mississippi companies exhibiting and those visiting the show in preparation to exhibit in the future, like Beck's Confections of Gulfport, had the option to meet one-on-one with buyers from Canada, Europe, Japan and Mexico, in an effort to increase exports of food and agricultural products.

Inbound trade missions provide opportunities for companies to meet with pre-vetted buyers from around the globe without having to leave the country, in hopes of making sales and increasing their international exposure.

Three other Mississippi companies — Indianola Pecan House, Inc./Wheeler's Gourmet Pecans of Indianola, Mississippi Cheese Straw Factory, Inc. of Yazoo City and DeBeukelaer Corporation of Madison — also presented their products at the three-day show as returning exhibitors.

For more information about participating in international trade activities or SUSTA's marketing programs, contact Susan Head at 601-359-1196 or susan@mdac.ms.gov.

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