

17 October 2008

PRESS RELEASE



Botswana business scoops top award for natural products

WildFoods of Botswana has won the 2008 PhytoTrade Africa Natural Product Award. The award, now in its third year, is offered to a person, product or business in Southern Africa that has demonstrated commitment to developing ethical and environmentally sustainable products with natural ingredients.

The criteria against which the judges made their decision was active engagement in the areas of product research and development; market development; production, processing and trade; and lobbying, advocacy and awareness-raising.

The award was presented to WildFoods Director Frank Taylor by Tshenge Demana, Executive Director for the South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) at the opening ceremony of the Natural and Organic Products Exhibition in Cape Town on the evening of Thursday 16 October 2008. WildFoods wins a cash prize of R20,000 and an all-expenses-paid booth at the 2009 Natural & Organic Products Exhibition.

WildFoods won the award for its tasty and innovative Marula Stix snack product made from marula pulp and sugar. Marula Stix are already popular with many safari companies whose clients snack on them during on game drives. Air Botswana also offer complimentary packets of Marula Stix to their passengers.

Wild Foods has been committed to the development of ethical and sustainable products for many years. The company produces a range of naturally organic products made from natural ingredients harvested in the wild by impoverished rural communities in Botswana. The income from selling marula and other ingredients to Wild Foods makes an important contribution to the livelihoods of these communities.

According to Gus Le Breton, CEO of PhytoTrade Africa, WildFoods director Frank Taylor has long been a driving force behind the commercialisation of natural products in southern Africa. 'He has led by example through his commitment to environmental sustainability and community development,' he said.

Frank Taylor said the prize money would be a huge boost to WildFoods and instrumental in helping the company to develop its business and increase the support it provides to local communities.

The expert judging panel for comprised:

- **Mr Saliem Fakir**, senior lecturer at the Department of Public Administration and Planning at the University of Stellenbosch
- **Mr Grant Momple**, microbiologist, food technologist and Director of specialist extracts company Afriplex.
- **Mr Trevor Steyn**, a specialist in the chemistry of indigenous medicinal plants. Trevor owns Esse Organic Skincare and Ubuntu Health Products.
- **Dr Nigel Gericke**, a medical doctor and botanist. He is the co-author of *Useful Plants of Southern Africa*, founder of Phyto Nova Pty Ltd, and president of BioGenesis Laboratories.
- **Prof John Hanks**, conservation expert.
- **Ms Jennifer Seif**, Executive Director of Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA), board member of the Tourism Business Council of South Africa and a founding Trustee of Fairtrade South Africa (FTSA).

Commenting on why he picked WildFoods as the award winner, Saliem Fakir said, 'What struck me is the novelty of the Marula Stix product, the versatility of it and the fact that they have done it without a lot of financial backing.'

Jennifer Seif said, 'Marula Stix are a unique take on an iconic African resource. WildFoods has demonstrated commercial potential and a positive impact on livelihoods in rural Botswana.'

Previous winners of the award include Elephant Pepper in 2007 for its Baobab Gold Pepper Sauce and Grinder, and Speciality Foods of Africa in 2006 for its Baobar baobab cereal bar.

Also announced was the winner of the PhytoTrade Africa Best in Show Award, for the best product exhibited at the 2008 Natural & Organic Products Exhibition in Cape Town. The winner was Red Cedar for its range of high quality and hand-made rooibos-based soaps and body care products. Red Cedar received a cash prize of R10,000 and an all-expenses-paid booth at next year's exhibition. www.redcedar.co.za

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For further information contact:

Lucy Welford, PhytoTrade Africa
Phone +27 21 790 5707

lucy@phytotradeafrica.com
Mobile +27 763 750220



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2008 PhytoTrade Africa Natural Product Award

The Shortlist

Ten southern African products were shortlisted for the 2008 PhytoTrade Africa Natural Product Award. Aside from the winner (Marula Stix from WildFoods of Botswana) the shortlist included:

The African Indigenous Collection from The Victorian Garden, South Africa

A range of products developed with help from African people sharing secrets passed down from generation to generation. Dedicated to using all-natural ingredients, many of them organic, the company either grows its own ingredients or sources raw materials that are 100% chemical free. www.thevictoriangarden.co.za

Mafura Butter from Coconut Oil Mozambique (COM)

COM presses mafura butter for export to the international cosmetics market. The company's factories are situated in remote rural areas and therefore social upliftment and fair trade factors are crucial. COM is also actively involved in organic soil and crop husbandry methods with communal and local farmers. www.millbrook.co.za

African Earth Repair from Kigelia Cosmetics, South Africa/Zimbabwe

Kigelia Cosmetics has recently reformulated its range, making a significant commitment to natural ingredients. It specialises in products based on *Kigelia Africana* (African sausage tree) used traditionally to treat skin complaints. The company is strongly committed to ethical trading and creating employment in Africa. www.africaneearthworks.com

Esse Organic Skincare, South Africa

Esse has developed a range of outstanding and effective organic skincare products which are certified organic by EcoCert France. The company is committed to the Fair Trade movement, sourcing its ingredients through ethical and local sources wherever possible. www.esse.co.za

Organic Rooibos from Heiveld Cooperative, South Africa

Heiveld Cooperative has over 40 small scale farmers as members and produces organic and Fair Trade tea of the highest quality. It has been Fair Trade certified and has only ever produced and traded in organically certified products. www.heiveld.co.za

Baobab and Pomegranate Herbal Water from Freedom Walker, South Africa

Naturally refreshing drinks and a healthy taste of Africa. The company sources all its botanical ingredients from environmentally sustainable sources. www.freedomwalker.co.za

Commiphora Resin/Perfume plant from Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), Namibia

IRDNC pioneered linking wildlife conservation with rural development and democracy. Commiphora resin has been used for hundreds of years in north-west Namibia as a perfume and medicine. IRDNC sells the resin internationally ensuring ecological sustainability, equitable distribution of income and full community participation. www.irdnc.org.na

Lip Balm from Bio Oleos de Maxixe (BOM), Mozambique

Lip balm made from organic and sustainably sourced mafura butter. BOM is a young, creative and environmentally-focused business initiative committed to creating partnerships with communities and economic incentives for the preservation of forests. www.allanschwarz.com

Africology Body Balm from Africology, South Africa

Africology is the creation of Renchia Droganis, a holistic therapist who is truly committed to community regeneration in South Africa through the use of natural African ingredients. Its 100% natural skincare range uses indigenous ingredients such as marula, African potato, aloe ferrox and rooibos. www.africology.co.za

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