



LOCAL FOODS MARKETPLACE • Rochester, MN • Dec. 1&2, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Regional food & beverage businesses aiming to grow should apply now for *Feast! 2017*

Rochester, MN (June 19, 2017) – The 4th annual *Feast! Local Foods Marketplace* is now accepting applications for food and beverage businesses from Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota to attend the event at the Mayo Civic Center on Dec. 1-2, 2017.

Feast! 2017 will cap off a ‘food week’ in Rochester that includes the *Feast! Restaurant Week*—showing off *Feast* vendor products in local restaurant specials—and the large annual convention of the Midwest Food Products Association (MWFPA) that features over 150 vendors from equipment manufacturers to packaging and labeling suppliers. Special free entry to the *Feast* tradeshow will be granted to MWFPA registrants, and likewise for *Feast* exhibitors to attend MWFPA Thursday morning (lunch excluded).

The award-winning *Feast! Local Foods Marketplace* hosts over 100 exhibitors who show, sample and sell their artisan food products to wholesale buyers during the Friday tradeshow and to consumers during the Saturday festival. The jury-selected exhibitors also have a half-day of networking and sessions to help them grow. Businesses selected to attend are utilizing locally grown ingredients when possible and operating at or near a distributor-ready scale (2016 exhibitors [here](#)).

After *Feast! 2016*, one exhibitor said they intend to return for *Feast! 2017* because it is a “Great way to make contacts with local customers, find new locations (stores) to sell our product, networking, great workshops.” Another exhibitor said, “I love the focus on local. I had no idea that our region produced so much diverse and delicious food!”

The show is a great way for regional stores to find local products: 75% of *Feast! 2016* buyers surveyed said they purchased products from vendors they met at *Feast*, while others took samples to share and consider for purchase; 44% increased purchases from vendors they were already buying from.

Feast awards also draw attention to popular regional brands. "We're looking forward to having several awards given again this year, including the People's Choice Award," says Tim Penny, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation President and CEO. The 2016 People's Choice Award went to newcomer [K-Mama Sauce](#), and awards for each state went to [O'Brien's Own Gourmet Granola](#) (Iowa), [B&E's Trees](#) (Wisconsin), and [Kakookies](#) (Minnesota). The 2017 People's Choice Award will be announced at the end of the festival this year.

For more information, visit www.local-feast.org or email eli@local-feast.org. To keep in touch with the latest updates, ‘like’ us at *FEAST Local Food Network* on [Facebook](#), follow [@Local_Feast](#) on [Twitter](#), and use #localFEAST to join the conversation.

Feast! Local Foods Marketplace is co-hosted by the [Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation](#) and [Renewing the Countryside](#) non-profit organizations and is supported with premiere sponsorship by [Mayo Clinic](#), [The McKnight Foundation](#) and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

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