

NEWS RELEASE



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2023 Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year Winners Announced

February 21, 2023 - Six Minnesota grocers who promote locally grown and produced products have been named a 2023 Retailer of the Year by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's (MDA) Minnesota Grown program, in partnership with the Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA).

This year's winners include:

- Northwest: Lueken's Village Foods, Bemidji
- Northeast: Chris' Food Center, Sandstone
- West Central: Pine River Family Market, Pine River
- Southwest: Mackenthun's Fine Foods, Waconia
- Twin Cities: Kowalski's, White Bear Lake
- People's Choice: Knowlan's Supermarket, Maplewood

"We thank these grocers and their employees for their leadership in highlighting locally grown foods for their customers," said MDA Commissioner Thom Petersen. "Minnesota-grown products are essential in providing fresh and nutritious foods to communities across the state."

MDA and MGA staff will be presenting the awards in-person at an MGA event this spring and will be conducting a Retailer of the Year tour to visit each of the winning stores. The retailers in their respective regions will receive a commemorative plaque, exclusive rights to use the "Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year 2023" logo in their ads and displays, as well as recognition amongst retailers and consumers that they are champions of all things local.

Judging was based on several factors, including the number of Minnesota Grown products and the number of Minnesota Grown farmers and producers that the grocer carried. Judges also looked at how the grocer used ads, displays, social media, and other events to promote Minnesota Grown items.

"Grocers are the foundation of the communities they serve and are incredibly proud of our innovative local partnerships from farm to fork," said MGA President Jamie Pfuhl. "The success of the Minnesota Grown program is driven by the exceptional efforts of all in the food industry. We are proud to play a role in this collective effort that showcases and celebrates innovative partnerships and brings wonderful local products to our customers."

The 2023-2024 contest opens on August 1, 2023, and runs through September 30, 2023. Information about how to participate is available on the Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year website at <https://minnesotagrown.com/minnesota-grown-retailer-year-contest/>.

The Minnesota Grown Program is a statewide partnership between the MDA and Minnesota producers of specialty crops and livestock. It was created over 30 years ago by specialty crop growers to differentiate their produce from produce grown thousands of miles away.

The Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA) is the only state trade association that represents the food industry of Minnesota from farm to fork. We are a legacy organization, having served the industry for over 125 years. We have over 300 retail, manufacturer, and wholesale members supporting nearly 1,300 locations statewide. Our member companies employ over 150,000 union and non-union Minnesotans. We actively advance the common interest of all those engaged in any aspect of the food industry as a leader and advocate in government affairs.

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