MEDIA RELEASE
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For immediate release

SA Dairy Product of the Year awarded virtually

Lactalis SA's Président Extra Mature Cheddar was crowned the South African Dairy Product of the Year at the Agri-Expo Qualité Awards on Thursday 26 March 2020. This year's award ceremony of the annual SA Dairy Championships, the largest dairy competition in Africa, was presented as a virtual event for the first time in its 187th anniversary in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The judging of the competition took place on 27 February in Cape Town before the first coronavirus case was recorded in South Africa. However, according to Johan Ehlers, Chief Executive of Agri-Expo, the organiser of the SA Dairy Championships since 1834, they had to think innovatively about presenting this year's awards event.

"The cancellation of the black-tie event does not put a damper on the fact that a record number of 975 products from 74 manufacturers competed in more than 100 different classes this year. The increase in entries and the fact that 11 new manufacturers joined, is good news for the dairy industry, which is being hampered by challenges such as the ongoing drought and now also the COVID-19 pandemic," Ehlers says.

From the magnitude of entries, only 23 were honoured with the Qualité mark of excellence (full list of the *crème de la crème* below) and 107 were named SA Champion (attached).
"This is the third time in five years we have won the Product of the Year award for one of our cheeses," says a proud Marek Warzywoda, General Manager: Lactalis SA (LSA). "I am so proud of the LSA team. It is a clear indication of just how high the quality of our products is and how dedicated and diligent our teams are. We would like to thank Agri-Expo for another fantastic and well-organised competition and for upholding such high standards for the local dairy industry. Awards, in particular the Product of the Year accolades, are such incredible testaments to the LSA team's ongoing ambition to deliver quality products."

The chief judge of the championships, dairy expert Alan Fourie, says to produce an exceptional cheddar that can be matured for longer than 10 months is in itself quite a challenge. "The Président Extra Mature Cheddar is full rounded with a sweet, nutty profile that melts in the mouth. Truly an exceptional product which deserves this award as Product of the Year."

Agri-Expo expresses its appreciation to the partners of the Qualité Awards, namely Synercore, Lake Foods, Woolworths, MANE, Guth SA, Orchem, Condio, the Milk Producers Organisation (MPO), The Dairy Mail and the South African Society for Dairy Technology (SASDT), for their commitment to the development of the SA dairy industry.

2020 QUALITÉ AWARD WINNERS:

Fair Cape Dairies (7)	Woolworths Whipping Cream Pasteurised
	Fair Cape Fresh Cream Pasteurised
	Fair Cape Chocolate Dessert
	Woolworths Chocolate Mousse
	Fair Cape Fresh Full Cream Milk
	Fair Cape Full Cream Plain Yoghurt
	Fair Cape Full Cream Guava Yoghurt
Lactalis SA (3)	Woolworths Extra Mature White Cheddar

		Président Extra Mature Cheddar
		Woolworths Mature Gouda
Darling Romery	**(2)**	Fresh Cream
		Full Cream Strawberry Drinking Yoghurt
Fairfield Dairy (2)		SPAR Fat Free Peach Apricot Yoghurt
		First Choice Full Cream Peach Apricot Flavoured Smooth Yoghurt
Polar Ice Cream Company (2)		Strawberry Cheesecake Buttermilk Frozen Yoghurt
		Blueberry Cheesecake Buttermilk Frozen Yoghurt
Clover SA		Springbok Unsalted Butter
Foxenburg Estate		Vanilla Greek Style Yoghurt
Langbaken Karoo Cheese		Langbaken Karoo Crumble
Lausanne Dairies		Pasteurised Full Cream Milk
Limpopo Dairies		Hyjo Full Cream Chocolate Caramel Flavoured Smooth Yoghurt
Marcel's Frozen Yoghurt		Low Fat English Toffee Frozen Yoghurt
Woodlands Dairy		First Choice Unsalted Butter

For more information and full results please visit www.cheesesa.co.za or contact Agri-Expo at +27 (0)21 975 4440 or cheese@agriexpo.co.za.

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