



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**In Celebration of Michigan Food and Agriculture Month, Michigan Restaurant Association, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan Ag Council announce a NEW restaurant award for Michigan Products**

**Lansing, Michigan** - The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) has partnered with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Michigan Ag Council to raise awareness of the economic impact of restaurants using Michigan manufactured products. This is a group partnership that will be working together to recognize restaurants with the 2017 Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT Restaurant Award.

There is no question that today's consumers crave locally grown produce. It's been one of the top culinary trends for the past five years, according to the National Restaurant Association's annual chef survey, and 54 percent of adults say they look for limited-service restaurants that serve locally-sourced food.

"Locally sourced food is a big deal in Michigan, and the economic tendrils of the movement reach deeper than anyone might imagine," stated Justin Winslow, President and CEO of the MRA. "Throughout the state, you'll find restaurants that have made local ingredients a guiding principle a positive economic impact. We are thrilled to announce this partnership and crown the 2017 Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT Restaurants."

"Consumers in Michigan are really interested in supporting local businesses, and foods and other agricultural products are no exception," stated Elaine Bristol, Michigan Ag Council Program Coordinator. "We all benefit from Michigan farm families who take pride in perfecting the art and science of growing fresh, high-quality foods and products, year after year. This award is a great way to demonstrate the impact of Michigan's agricultural industry in all of our lives."

"There are only a handful of states in which this kind of award would make sense, and Michigan is definitely one of those select few," said Jamie Clover Adams, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Michigan is the second-most diverse state when it comes to agriculture, so we are incredibly fortunate to have a wide variety of options, as well as so many innovative and conscientious restaurants throughout the state that see the benefits of using locally grown and processed foods."

Applications are due by July 15, 2017 to Heather Throne, MDARD's XXXXXXXXXX, at [ThroneH@michigan.gov](mailto:ThroneH@michigan.gov).

The award will be presented during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Michigan Restaurant Show located at the Novi Suburban Collection Showplace in October.

**PDF: 2017 Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT Restaurant Awards Application**

**Michigan Restaurant Association**

Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents approximately 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 421,500 people and generating \$15.4 billion in annual sales.

**Michigan Restaurant Show**

The Michigan Restaurant Show is a premier foodservice industry trade show. More than 200 exhibitors will proudly feature their products and services to the thousands of industry professionals who attend. Free educational seminars, live cooking demonstrations, and unique vendor specials will be food throughout the Show exhibit hall.

**Michigan Ag Council**

The Michigan Ag Council is a coalition of commodity groups, ag businesses and retailers working together to build awareness among Michigan consumers about food and agriculture. Council partners design and implement a variety of projects – including the Michigan GROWN, Michigan GREAT brand – to build consumer trust in Michigan’s farmers and farming practices.

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