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## **Fresno Food Expo debuts diverse new products**

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The 2015 Fresno Food Expo will debut 32 innovative new products, varieties and packaging concepts that were entered into the New Product Awards from 29 different San Joaquin Valley businesses. Now in its third year, the New Product Awards have become a strategic new product launching pad, and this year's products include traditional and organic produce.

All products entered are competing for the Buyer's Choice and People's Choice Awards. The 32 products entered were reviewed, ranked and narrowed down to 10 finalists for the Buyer's Choice Award by a panel of marketing and food industry leaders at the New Product Awards Preview event



on July 8. Sierra Lopes and Richard Cowden of Baloian Farms with the company's Mini Pepper Dipper Cups, one of the Fresno Food Expo New Product Awards' top 10 finalists. These products will now advance to the Celebrity Judging Panel comprised of professionals from retail, restaurant, foodservice and packaging industries.

“This judging panel brings extensive experience to the awards with their unique understanding of an ever-changing consumer market from different categories within the food buying industry,” Amy Fuentes, director of the Fresno Food Expo, said in a press release. “They understand the critical attributes a new product needs to be a success in a very competitive industry.”

The People’s Choice Awards allows the public to share their thoughts as a consumer on what products stand out from the others in the marketplace and would be something they would purchase. It is also a great opportunity for those companies who submitted new products to get feedback from a real test marketplace. All 32 new products entered can be viewed on the [Fresno Food Expo's website](#) or [Facebook page](#). Votes are counted by the number of “Likes” on Facebook combined with the votes cast via email through the Fresno Food Expo website between now and the Fresno Food Expo on July 23. The winner of the People’s Choice Award will be announced that night by Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin.

Nearly 4,600 votes were cast last year during the three-week People’s Choice Award voting period resulting in Baloian Farms being crowned as the 2014 People’s Choice Award winner for its Squash Sauté Kits. The attention garnered through the People’s Choice Award boosted product awareness online and gave added promotional value and marketplace energy to not just Baloian Farms, but all participating companies and the San Joaquin Valley as a whole.

The 2015 Fresno Food Expo will be held Thursday, July 23 at the Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center New Exhibit Hall.

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