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MEDIA RELEASE
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Mt. Cook Alpine Salmon Wins Supreme Award at the 2011 New Zealand Food Awards

South Island Company, Mt Cook Alpine Salmon's innovative Saikou Sushi-Grade Salmon product has won the company the prestigious, judge nominated New Zealand Food Award 2011 Supreme Award at the gala awards dinner held at the Viaduct Events Centre in Auckland on the 19th October.

Mt. Cook Alpine Salmon were awarded a total of four awards for the night including; the Food Safety Award for outstanding achievement and innovation in Food Operations, the MAF Food Operations Innovation Award, the Award for outstanding achievement in product innovation in its category, and the 2011 Supreme Award.

The New Zealand Food Awards, held in association with Massey University, celebrate food innovation in New Zealand and reward excellence in a range of categories, recognising companies and people for their creativity and business acumen behind the very best in our largest export sector.

Ray McVinnie, New Zealand Food Awards Chief Judge, MasterChef judge, renowned cook and food critic, says the company's Saikou Sushi Grade Salmon stood out for its excellent taste and the innovative operations system that ensured the farmed fish reached its customers in the best condition.

"The quality has changed the world of salmon," says Ray McVinnie.

"Mt Cook Alpine Salmon is a prime example of New Zealand home grown produce at it's best; packaged to perfection, finest grain, destined for the best sushi restaurants in the world," he says.

New Zealand Food Awards Food Safety Judge, Professor John Brooks, of AUT says, "Mt Cook Alpine Salmon's meticulous attention to detail in the production, post harvest handling through its cool chain processes has enabled this company to extend the typical shelf-life of this fresh product from 7 days to 15 days thus extending its access to export markets in North America."

Geoff Matthews, CEO of Mt. Cook Alpine Salmon says Saikou Sushi Grade Salmon reflects the company's commitment to an unbroken chain of care and attention. "In creating Saikou Sushi Grade Salmon the company had to re-examine the whole value added chain," he says.

"To truly deliver the world's finest salmon to the most discerning customers in the world, we had to re-engineer the whole business and create innovative new processes. From harvesting, to packaging, processing and transportation, we left no stone unturned in the pursuit of excellence, to ensure that on every level the brand promise was delivered," Geoff Matthews says.

Geoff Matthews says winning the New Zealand Food Awards Supreme Award is a significant event for the company, as it recognises the effort put in by all of the staff and management who are charged with operationalising the company's vision.

"Mt. Cook Alpine Salmon won the Transformational Marketing Award at the 2011 TVNZ New Zealand Marketing Awards, in August this year, but this proves the product and the people standing behind it are as good as the strategy," he says.

"It is critical that the company can walk the walk, and this award recognises the people in our business walk it and live it everyday," Geoff Matthews says.

Scott Murray, Mt Cook Alpine Salmon's Master Sushi Chef and Product Development Manager believes the company has still more to achieve, "we haven't finished yet", he says. "I think we still have another 50% improvement in this. Our aim is to be acknowledged as having the world's finest salmon."

The company has also been named as a finalist in the New Zealand Innovation awards.

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For a full list of winners and more information about the New Zealand Food Awards visit:
<http://foodawards.massey.ac.nz/default.asp>

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