

Awards for projects supporting health, food safety, sustainability and convenience

Award at the first “Mercabarna Innova” for the first natural fruit bars on the market

The company is seeking to promote innovation among the 700 food and agriculture SMEs located on its premises.

Today, Josep Tejedo, CEO of Mercabarna, accompanied by the other jury members, presented the very first “Mercabarna Innova” awards in front of 50 entrepreneurs from the food and agriculture industry. The first award went to a company called Fruit Friends 2012, which has created the market’s first 100% natural fruit bars, while the second award went to the Laumont firm for its mushroom app, targeted at restaurateurs and allowing them to constantly know what is available and to complete online orders for the company's wild products.

With these awards, which will be presented annually, “Mercabarna wants to promote and recognise the research carried out by 700 companies located on the premises, with the goal of distinguishing themselves from the competition by means of products and services directed at customers”, explained Josep Tejedo, Mercabarna’s CEO. He adds that “innovation is the driving force of constant improvement to adapt to the consumer’s changing needs and tastes, as well as being a key factor for competing in today’s market”.

A peel-less fruit, first prize

The first prize, worth €6,000, was presented to Emili Majó, manager of Fruit Friends, one of Mercabarna’s companies specialising in selling both healthy and convenient food products.

Under the Born brand, the firm has created the first fruit bars on the market. The bars, made from semi-dehydrated fruits, are 100% natural with no added sugar, and are targeted at health-conscious and sports-loving consumers. The product is innovative and reinforces both the concept and the practice of being healthy, as it enters the market under the snack foods category. In addition, the bars have all the same benefits as fruit, being healthy (rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre), nutritious, and tasty, but without the disadvantages, because you don’t have to peel them or get your hands sticky, and they are easy and simple to carry and store.

Discover mushrooms on the market in real time, second prize

The second prize, worth €4,000, was awarded to Jordi Serentill, Assistant General Manager and son of the owner of the Laumont firm, a Mercabarna family business specialising in mushrooms and truffles. Under the name Naturchef, the firm has created a mobile application which informs chefs and restaurateurs which mushrooms and truffles the company currently has available, no easy task when dealing with wild-

picked products which are highly dependent on the weather and the season. Via the mobile app, restaurateurs can complete orders online and benefit from having more time to plan their menus. In addition, the application offers information on each of its products and a range of gastronomic recipes for each variety of mushroom or truffle. There is also a direct contact option with the Laumont firm enabling it to listen to customer opinions and suggestions.

Most highly-valued aspects

Seven projects were submitted to the first “Mercabarna Innova” awards, with almost all of Mercabarna’s activity sectors represented among them, including 2 from the fishing sector, 3 from the fruit and vegetable sector, 1 from the floral sector and 1 from the services sector.

All these projects represent innovation in the following aspects: product development, packaging, processes improvement, logistics optimisation, sustainability improvement and customer service.

When it came to evaluating the projects, the aspect which stood out most was the degree of improvement in the quality of the product, the process and the service for the customer. The degree of improvement in productivity was also evaluated, together with environmental sustainability and collaboration between companies.

A jury of experts from the food industry

The awards jury was made up of renowned experts and representatives from the different areas of the food and agriculture industry: university, research, company and administration.

- Lourdes Reig, current Vice-rector of International Relations at the UPC and, until recently, Director of the Barcelona School of Agricultural Engineering.
- Josep Maria Monfort, CEO of IRTA.
- Enric Ezquerro, President of Cat-Dis, the Catalan Association of Supermarkets and Distributors.
- Jaume Llopis, Professor at the IESE Business School.
- Toni Valls, CEO of Alimentaria Exhibitions.

Further information:

Roser Lapuente

Communications and Media Officer

Tel: 93 556 35 08 / 93 556 30 00

lapuente@mercabarna.cat