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MEAT INDUSTRY RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE

GUELPH, ON – March 7, 2011 – The Ontario Independent Meat Processors (OIMP) celebrated member accomplishments and excellence at their 31st annual conference The Meating Place in Toronto this past weekend. More than 250 industry guests, including OIMP members, suppliers, and representatives from government and key industry organizations attended OIMP's Awards Gala Saturday night.

"Our awards program plays an important role in paying tribute to our members and recognizing their innovation and excellence," said Laurie Nicol, Executive Director, OIMP. "Meat processors represent a critical step in getting quality Ontario meat and poultry products onto Ontario consumers' tables."

The Honourable Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was on hand to present the 2011 OIMP Meat Industry Achievement (MIA) award to Oshawa-based Halenda's Fine Foods, recognizing their company growth and contributions to the industry.

Tony Facciolo of Holly Park Meat Packers received the prestigious Lifetime Membership Award for his outstanding contributions to the association and Ontario's meat industry. Facciolo served 16 years on the OIMP Board – most recently completing his second two-year term as President – represented OIMP at countless events, and served on numerous committees since joining the association in 1986.

Abattoir Brisson, Holly Park Meat Packers, L'Original Packing, Walnut Hill Farm, MMIS/MONDO and Nitta Casings (Canada) were acknowledged for their twenty five year membership with the OIMP. Mueller Sausages, Food Supplies Company and Multivac Canada received their 10 year Membership plaques.

Awards were handed out to the winners of the 2011 Ontario Finest Meat Competition, which included 149 entries from 21 companies in 14 categories. Halenda's Fine Foods received the Ron Usborne Award of Excellence for the highest overall score of the competition, representing nine award-winning products. A full list of the winners is available at www.ontariomeatproducts.ca.

The Meating Place was held in conjunction with the 2011 Meat and Food Processing Expo. The Expo was held at the International Centre in Mississauga March 4 and 5, where more than 550 participants browsed 81 exhibits showcasing the latest in processing equipment, supplies and services. A full list of exhibitors is available at www.foodindustryexpo.ca.

OIMP is the non-profit, representative voice of the independent meat processor in Ontario. OIMP provides leadership for Ontario's meat and poultry industry by fostering innovation, promoting food safety and integrity and recognizing excellence. The meat sector represents 20% of Ontario's \$33 billion food and beverage processing sector, which directly employs over 110,000 people and more than an additional 100,000 workers in related industries.

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