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5th Annual 2023 Real California Pizza Contest Kicks Off Search for Top U.S. Pizza Chefs

Entries open to professional pizza chefs, culinary students, \$30,000 in prizes on the line for innovative pizzas using California cheese and dairy

Tracy, Calif. – March 15, 2023 – The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) today opened entries for the 2023 Real California Pizza Contest, the fifth annual search for the best pizza recipes using Real California cheeses. The contest, open to professional chefs and culinary students throughout the U.S., will award prizes up to \$30,000 for the most innovative uses of cow’s milk cheeses from California during a bake-off event August 2 in Napa, Calif.

The culinary competition is open for chefs to submit recipes in three categories: Cal-Mex, the REAL Californian and Plant-Forward. Cal-Mex recipes incorporate toppings that combine flavors from California and Mexican cuisines and feature Hispanic-style cheeses from California. The REAL Californian pizza category incorporates ideas inspired by the Golden State that highlight California dairy products and toppings. Plant-Forward pizza recipes emphasize the delicious flavor combinations of fruits, veggies, and Real California cheeses.

“Cheese is the heart and soul of every great pizza. As the leading producer of Mozzarella as well as Hispanic-style and originals like Monterey Jack, chef participants have a broad range of options to

showcase how California cheese and dairy helps them create innovative pizzas,” said Mike Gallagher, Business and Market Development Consultant for the CMAB.

Participants can access the requirements, submit recipes, and complete entry documents at <http://realcaliforniamilk.com/foodservice>. This year’s simplified entry form includes pizza name, photograph, and a short description detailing the recipe concept and use of Real California cheese and dairy. Chefs can choose from more than 250 varieties and styles of cheeses that carry the Real California Milk seal, which means they are made with sustainably sourced milk from California’s more than 1,100 family dairy farms. Final deadline for submissions is May 21, 2023.

All entries will be evaluated by an internal judging team with the top four recipes in each category selected as finalists. These 12 finalists will receive an all-expense paid trip to compete head-to-head at a bake-off event on August 2, 2023, at the Culinary Institute of America at Copia in Napa, Calif. The winners of the Cal-Mex, REAL Californian and Plant-Forward categories will each receive \$5,000. The best overall pizza recipe creator, as selected by the judging panel, will receive an additional \$10,000 grand prize award. All finalists who are not category winners will receive \$500 each.

Bakeoff finalists will be judged by a panel of award-winning pizza chefs including 13-time world pizza champion Tony Gemignani, renowned Italian and pizza chef Glen Cybulski, and 2022 Real California Pizza Champion David Jacobson.

California is a reliable, consistent source of sustainable dairy products used by chefs throughout the world. As the nation’s largest dairy state, California boasts an impressive lineup of award-winning cheesemakers and dairy processors, that are helping to drive dining innovation.

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About Real California Milk/the California Milk Advisory Board

The California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB), an instrumentality of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, is funded by the state’s dairy farm families who lead the nation in sustainable dairy farming practices. With a vision to nourish the world with the wholesome goodness of Real California Milk, the CMAB’s programs focus on increasing demand for California dairy products in the state, across the U.S. and around the world through advertising, public relations, research, and retail and foodservice promotional programs.

The Foodservice Division of the CMAB supports foodservice operators and distributors that use Real California dairy products. The CMAB offers marketing and promotional support for foodservice operators that purchase dairy products with the Real California Milk seal, which means they are made with 100 percent milk from California’s more than 1,100 family dairy farms, using some of the most sustainable dairy practices in the nation.

For more information on sourcing cheese from California, contact the foodservice team at 209.883.6455 (MILK), businessdevelopment@cmab.net or RealCaliforniaMilk.com/Foodservice, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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