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First Canned Tomatoes Certified for Sustainability from Farm to Factory

Food Alliance, a national food certification program based in Portland, Oregon, recently granted certification to the Neil Jones Food Company for its line of San Benito® Organic brand tomatoes. They are the first canned tomato products to be certified by Food Alliance.

Food Alliance certification evaluates and verifies sustainability practices on farming and food handling operations throughout a food product's supply chain. Food Alliance Certified products are grown using sustainable agriculture practices and processed in handling facilities that meet comprehensive standards for social and environmental responsibility as verified through a third-party inspection.

"By becoming Food Alliance Certified, the Neil Jones Food Company and G&J Farms join a growing cadre of progressive businesses that have proven their commitment to greater responsibility, transparency, and accountability in the food system," said Scott Exo, Food Alliance's Executive Director. "Consumers and commercial food buyers should strive to support food businesses that back up their sustainability claims through credible third-party certifications like Food Alliance."

The tomatoes used in San Benito® canned tomato products are grown by G&J Farms/Red Rock Ranch in California's San Joaquin Valley. In addition to meeting Food Alliance certification standards, G&J Farms/ Red Rock Ranch's tomatoes are also Certified CCOF and USDA organic.

Through independent and ongoing inspections, the farm is verified for meeting Food Alliance's rigorous standards for safe and fair working conditions, soil, water and wildlife conservation, and continual improvement of sustainability practices. In 2009, G&J Farms/Red Rock Ranch owner John Diener was recognized with a Leopold Award for Conservation in California.

Available through select distributors nationwide, cans of San Benito® Organic Tomato products are processed by the Neil Jones Food Company in Hollister, California. According to an independent, third-party inspection, Neil Jones Food Company's San Benito Foods canning facility excels in the area of quality control, food and worker safety.

"We decided to get Food Alliance Certified to show our consumers we are truly dedicated to producing socially and environmentally responsible food products," said Cindy Cerri, National Foodservice Sales Director for the Neil Jones Food Company. "Food Alliance is a recognized and respected organization and

their sustainability standards are unparalleled. Certification was a great fit for our San Benito® brand of organic tomato products."

To earn Food Alliance certification of its line of San Benito® canned tomato products, San Benito Foods' canning facility was inspected and verified for ensuring traceability and product purity. The Neil Jones Food Company is committed to continually improving its facility management practices in areas of waste management, energy and water conservation, and human resources.

Products that will now carry the Food Alliance Certified seal include Organic Whole Peeled Tomatoes in Juice, Organic 3/4" Diced Tomatoes in Juice, Organic Fully Prepared Pizza Sauce, Organic Tomato Puree, Organic Tomato Sauce and Organic Tomato Paste.

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Food Alliance is a non-profit organization that certifies farms, ranches, food processors and distributors for sustainable agriculture and facility management practices. Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, use certification to make credible claims for social and environmental responsibility, differentiating their products and strengthening their brands.
www.foodalliance.org

The Neil Jones Food Company is a U.S. food processor producing natural and organic California tomatoes, custom sauces, Northwest fruits, cranberry sauces and juice concentrates. NJFC is a privately owned family-run corporation based in Vancouver, WA and operates three processing facilities in Washington and California. The company is a major supplier to the retail, foodservice and industrial segments of the food industry. Product packaging includes cans in all key sizes, 55 gallon drums, pails, 300 gallon bins and hot fill pouches in sizes from 4 oz to 190+ oz.
www.neiljonesfoodcompany.com