



Planting Hope and Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk Win the 22nd Annual Chicago Innovation Awards

- The Planting Hope Company won the Food category at the 2023 Chicago Innovation Awards for its breakthrough Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk
- Planting Hope was selected for this award from more than 340 nominated companies
- Announced at an awards ceremony attended by more than 600 guests and keynoted by Illinois governor JB Pritzker and Chicago mayor Brandon Johnson, the Chicago Innovation Awards are the highest recognition of innovation for companies and organizations in the Chicago area.

CHICAGO, IL and VANCOUVER, BC / ACCESSWIRE / November 17, 2023 – The Planting Hope Company Inc. (TSXV: MYLK) (OTCQB: MYLKF), a dynamic Foodtech innovation company dedicated to creating breakthrough delicious, sustainable food and beverage solutions through cutting-edge ingredient, formulation, and packaging technology, proudly announces that The Planting Hope Company and Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk have won the Food category in the 22nd annual Chicago Innovation Awards.

For 22 years, the Chicago Innovation Awards have recognized the best cutting-edge innovation in the Chicago area; previous winners in the Food category include McDonald's, Farmer's Fridge, and US Foods. The 20 winners of Chicago Innovation Awards were recognized in categories from technology (Argonne National Laboratory) to medical devices (Abbott Laboratories) to collaboration (the Consulate General of Canada in Chicago).

This year's event, themed 'From Inspiration to Impact', was held on Thursday, November 16th at the UIC Forum, and keynoted by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson. More than 600 attendees, including representatives from top companies and governmental organizations, attended the awards ceremony. The Planting Hope Company was selected from more than 340 nominated companies showcasing cutting-edge innovation. The judging panel for the 2023 Chicago Innovation Awards included leadership at Chicago-area food and food investment companies (Kraft Heinz, Cleveland Avenue). CEO Julia Stamberger and the Planting Hope team received the Chicago Innovation award from Michael Fassnacht, Chief Marketing Officer for the City of Chicago and President & CEO of World Business Chicago.



Planting Hope won the 22nd Chicago Innovation Awards – Food Category for Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk



Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson keynoted the Chicago Innovation Awards

As noted by Governor Pritzker in his keynote address, the companies recognized in the Chicago innovation awards are “solving real world problems and opening up opportunities for generations to come” and “contributing to Chicago’s status as a global innovation hub.”

Planting Hope was recognized for its cutting-edge Foodtech innovation, delivering breakthrough food products that are rooted in sustainability and nutrition and exemplified through its achievements with Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk. By developing better swaps for ‘everyday’ food in the world’s largest food and beverage categories, Planting Hope is reinventing some of the largest global food categories to make them more delicious, ultra-nutritious, extremely sustainable, and scalable worldwide.

Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk is the first major disruptor since oat milk to enter the burgeoning plant-based milk market, which has scaled at a continuous 15% CAGR from \$7B in 2010 to more than \$35B in 2022 and is expected to exceed \$120B globally by 2030. Based on a recent cradle-to-grave water study performed by Planet FWD, Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk uses 76% less water than oat milk, 87% less water than almond milk, and 92% less than dairy milk, delivering comparable nutrition to dairy milk with 8g of complete protein per serving (8x the protein in almond milk). The only commercialized sesamemilk worldwide, and the only plant milk to receive an upcycled certification from the Upcycled Food Association, the base ingredient in Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk is the ultra-nutritious pulp remaining from sesame oil extraction.

Hope and Sesame®'s Barista Blend Sesamemilk has won more than a dozen awards for both taste and performance in hot and iced café beverages and sesamemilk was featured in the September 2023 issue of Consumer Reports as the next new subcategory in plant milk. Today, distribution focus is targeted primarily at cafés and foodservice through distributors like DOT Foods and Odeko, and sesamemilk is also available at retailers like Sprouts Farmers Markets and online retailers including Faire.com and Amazon.com. Sesamemilk is also featured on the menu at Argo Tea® Cafés; Planting Hope acquired the assets of well-loved Chicago-grown Argo Tea® Cafés in August 2023.

“The Chicago region continues to be a global leader in innovation” said Tom Kuczarski, co-founder of the awards with Chicago journalist Dan Miller. “The 2023 winners are solving unmet needs and making a difference in healthcare, science, logistics, art, food & beverage, consumer products, environment, industrial, energy, education, finance, manufacturing, social services, legal, HR and workforce development.”

“We’re incredibly honored to win the 2023 Chicago Innovation Award in the Food category, and would like to thank Chicago Innovation, including the leadership, board, and judges for the recognition of our work at Planting Hope to develop the next generation of food products that will effectively feed generations to come,” said Julia Stamberger, CEO and Co-Founder of Planting Hope. “I have been starting and scaling innovative food-based businesses in Chicago for more than 20 years and have always held the Chicago Innovation Awards in the highest esteem. Historically the winners of this award have been breakthrough leaders in their spaces who have gone on to disrupt the landscape of their industries with local, national, and global impacts extending to community, jobs, and the overall innovation ecosystem. We plan to do the same.”

The winning organizations receive a variety of honors, including traveling to New York City to ring the NASDAQ bell in 2024; NASDAQ is a partner of the Chicago Innovation Awards.

“Nearly 350 organizations were nominated for this year’s awards,” said Luke Tanen, President and CEO of Chicago Innovation. “As a group, these nominees are responsible for generating over \$3.8 billion in new revenues and creating over 10,000 jobs. The winners represent the best from this very impressive group.”

The complete list of this year’s Chicago Innovation Award winners can be found at www.chicagoinnovation.com. Chicago Innovation is supported by over fifty sponsors, including Diamond Sponsors Wintrust, Accenture, Molex, Lessen (formerly SMS Assist), Gold Sponsor Comcast Business, Silver Sponsor VedderPrice, and Bronze Sponsors Thompson Coburn, Crown Castle, KPMG, and Kraft Heinz. For more information about the Chicago Innovation Awards, contact Luke Tanen, luke@chicagoinnovation.com.

About The Planting Hope Company Inc.

Planting Hope is reimagining and reinventing food today so that our planet can feed 10 billion people tomorrow. A Foodtech-driven company at the forefront of sustainable consumer food and beverage evolution, Planting Hope transforms nutrient-dense, widely cultivated crops into innovative, nutrient-rich products that reimagine pantry staples in the largest, fastest growing global food categories.

Our award-winning breakthrough brands, including Hope and Sesame® Sesamemilk, RightRice® High-Protein Veggie Rice, and Mozaics™ Real Veggie Chips, are not only disrupting global markets but also significantly reducing environmental footprints. Available across the US and Canada in grocery retailers (Whole Foods Market, Sprouts Farmers Markets), through foodservice operators (CAVA Mediterranean restaurants – NYSE: CAVA), and e-commerce and alternative retail channels (Amazon, QVC), our products blend culinary innovation with advanced technology, offering breakthrough products with wide moats. Our products are poised to disrupt global food and beverage categories, make a positive impact on the world, and provide investors with valuable opportunities in the growing sustainable food market.

This is the food that Gen Z is demanding and that Gen Alpha will grow up with: this is the future of food.

Explore more at plantinghopecompany.com, sign up for Planting Hope news emails [HERE](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#).

For Planting Hope product sales and distribution opportunities, please contact James Curley, EVP of Sales, at james@plantinghopecompany.com.

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