

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Leaders in Natural Products industry recognised**

Leaders in the natural products industry were recognised at the New Zealand Natural Products Summit in Auckland last night.

The annual awards, held by Natural Products New Zealand and sponsored by James & Wells Intellectual Property, the Cawthron Institute, and Label & Litho, acknowledge individuals and companies who have made a significant contribution to the industry.

Natural Products New Zealand executive director, Alison Quesnel, says the natural products sector has not only survived the global recession but thrived through it and there have been outstanding achievements from many companies and individuals.

“Once perceived as a boutique industry, the natural products industry has well and truly come of age, with revenue in excess of \$1 billion. It is now an internationally focussed and recognised industry that is attracting serious attention on the global stage. Strong research, innovation and developing new markets have been key to surviving the global turndown and to drive significant future growth,” says Ms Quesnel.

This year’s **James & Wells Intellectual Property Excellence in Marketing Award** winner was **Absolute Essential** which is one of the few companies in the world supplying genuine therapeutic plant oils of guaranteed medicinal grade. Absolute Essential’s products include 100% natural, organically certified therapeutic essential oils, creams and gels for skincare and well being.

What started 25 years ago as a one woman business supplying local customers has evolved into an international niche-market success story. Founder, Dr Bo Hendgen based her brand on strong environmental principals of sustainability, organic, natural and pure combined with a belief in ethical and fair trade. The organic or wild grown ingredients are sourced from 56 different countries, mainly small eco-friendly businesses, some of which have been supplying Absolute Essential for 20 years.

Absolute Essential’s target market is not your common consumer but a conscientious consumer, predominantly female, who cares deeply about the environment and the wellbeing of herself and family. Driving loyalty through the sharing of the same values has been the basis to a social media strategy which has allowed Absolute Essential to reach out globally on a small budget.

With a brand refresh, a new website, integration with Facebook and Twitter, the establishment of an e-newsletter and public relations programme Absolute Essential has broadened its reach and engaged customers around the world, achieving outstanding growth.

The **Cawthron Innovation in Science & Technology Award** went to **New Image Group** for its scientific approach to creating a compelling new product, with its Colostrum and Stem Cells Research programme. Founded in 1984 New Image Group became a world leader in colostrum products but later diversified its range to include supplements and skincare products, including Living Nature.

Investing significantly in research and development New Image Group has partnered with a leading researcher and the University of Auckland to study the effects of a proprietary blend of promising natural ingredients and bovine colostrum on the generation of stem cells.

Colostrum has long been recognised for its ability to build immunity and fight infection and it has now been shown to have a significant effect on stem cell activity. New Image Group set about to better understand these effects and how they could be developed into products. The result is a new proprietary product Alpha Lipid ColoStem which has been developed to support the body's natural cellular repair and regeneration processes.

**Blackmores** scooped the **Label & Litho Sustainability Award** for its landmark initiative to partner with the global conservation organisation WWF in Australia and New Zealand as part of its commitment to achieving the highest possible standard of sustainability for its fish and krill oils.

The Blackmores and WWF Sustainable Fish Oils Partnership is a three year engagement which will help the company improve its existing sustainable fish oil product sourcing strategy and achieve the highest possible standard for sustainable fish oils by 2015.

Blackmores has also signed the WWF Sustainable Seafood Charter and as there is a lack of traceability data on species of tuna that are and are not fished sustainably, Blackmores made the decision to remove tuna oil from its products. Currently 96% of the tuna oil has been removed and the transition for the final 4% is planned for December 2013.

**The Westpac Exporter of the Year Award** was awarded to **GMP Pharmaceuticals**, the largest supplement manufacturer in New Zealand contract manufacturing a variety of customised supplements for New Zealand and overseas markets.

In 2008 GMP Pharmaceuticals launched an export facility to assist Australian and New Zealand companies enter the Chinese market. The AUNEW programme comprises a concept flagship store in Beijing, a regulatory team, an anti-counterfeiting system, an export/distribution logistic system including a multi functional bonded warehouse, a Chinese portal website and a representative network covering most of China.

In the last year GMP has opened a fully automatic infant formula plant with the capacity to manufacture six million cans per year.

GMP Pharmaceuticals has achieved outstanding export growth by focussing on Asian markets and delivering a comprehensive and quality service to its customers.

Having achieved 126% growth in export sales in the last year, there are plans to replicate this innovative approach in other Asian markets.

The Industry Awards capped off the twelfth annual NZ Natural Products Summit which was attended by natural health specialists, research organisations, government agencies, big and small manufacturers and marketers including brand leaders like Healtheries, Comvita, Blackmores, Good Health and Manuka Health.

**Awards Winners' Summary:**

**James & Wells Intellectual Property Excellence in Marketing Award : [Absolute Essential](#)**

**The Cawthron Innovation in Science & Technology Award : [New Image Group](#)**

**Label & Litho Sustainability Award: [Blackmores NZ](#)**

**Westpac Exporter of the Year : [GMP Pharmaceuticals](#)**

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Released by DonovanPR on behalf of Natural Products New Zealand.

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To learn more about the New Zealand natural products industry visit <http://www.naturalproductsnz.org/>