

2023-2024 Minnesota Grown *Retailer of the Year Contest*



Contest Overview

The Minnesota Grown Program and Minnesota Grocers Association annually sponsor Retailer of the Year, a statewide contest to celebrate retail grocers who promote foods from [Minnesota Grown member farmers and producers](#), including fresh produce, meat and poultry, cheese and dairy, packaged goods, wine, cider, beer, spirits and more!

Contest Period

The contest period runs through **08/01/2023 – 09/29/2023**. Each applicant will **choose a one-week showcase** during the contest period for a focused promotional effort in their store and through related marketing. Scoring will be based on 60% of total points for the one-week showcase and an additional 40% of points will be awarded for partnerships throughout the entire MN Grown contest period.

Entry Deadline

All entries must be received no later than **4:00 PM on Friday, 10/13/2023** through the online entry portal.

Award Announcement

Winners will be announced in Spring of 2024, with an official award presentation at an MGA spring event, followed by a Retailer of the Year Tour in late Spring 2024.

Prizes

The 1st place winner in each category will receive exclusive rights to a “Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year” logo for award year in their region, recognition, and commemorative plaque. Winners who submit for promotions during the 2023 growing season will be the “2024” contest winners.

Eligibility

- All entrants **must be members in good standing of the Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA)** at time of entry and award.
- Entries must represent the promotional efforts of a **single store**. Grocery retailers with multiple locations should **consider operating a [mini-contest](#) among branches** to identify a winner to submit for the Retailer of the Year contest (see Resources for a Successful Entry below).

Award Categories

- **Beer, Wine, & Spirits (Statewide, Single Winning Store)** Promotions must align with the definitions within the Minnesota Grown program for beer, wine, and spirits. *See definitions below.*
- **Retailer of the Year (winners to be selected regionally)** One Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year winner will be selected **from each region of the state**.
- **People’s Choice Award Photo Display Contest (Statewide, Single Winning Store)** One **single** photo (no collages) from each Retailer of the Year entry will be entered into the **Minnesota Grown People’s**

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Choice Display. One winner statewide will be chosen based on 50% weighted fan voting on the Minnesota Grown Facebook page and 50% judge-awarded points for display appearance & use of the Minnesota Grown logo. Minnesota Grown staff will alert entrants when the Facebook voting will occur in late 2023.

Contest Procedures

Online Entry Form

For the 2023-2024 contest, stores will submit their entry for Retailer of the Year through an online form. To do this, follow these steps:

1. [Create account with Minnesota Department of Agriculture online platform](#)
2. **Review entry form** as you get started with your promotional efforts by
 - a. Selecting “2023 Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year” within the portal.
 - b. Reading the PDF version of the entry questions on the Retailer of the Year webpage.
3. **Upload information** about your promotion anytime during the contest period – you can return at anytime to add more information, edit your responses, etc.
 - a. Include photos, examples of print marketing materials, etc. in the fields provided.
 - i. **Note:** Please only submit photos in the provided upload slots on the application. Any outside links with photos or marketing materials will not be considered as part of the submission.
 - b. Make sure to review contest rules as you finalize your entry.
4. **Submit your entry by 4pm on Friday, October 13, 2023.** Incomplete entries will not be considered.

Entries should be uploaded into the online application portal. If you cannot utilize the online portal or have questions, contact Jennifer Alexander at jennifer.j.alexander@state.mn.us

Resources for a Successful Entry

Entrants are encouraged to use the following resources for planning and executing their Retailer of the Year promotions and activities.

- [Minnesota Grown Marketing Items](#)
- [Request Minnesota Grown Logo](#)
- [Minnesota Grown Wholesale Directory](#)
- [Mini-Contest Sponsorship for Distributors and Grocery Chains](#)

Entry Checklist:

Applicants should have the following information ready as you work on your entry form:

- ☐ Summary of promotional activities **during your one-week showcase period.**
- ☐ Summary of activities **during the entire contest period** (08/01/2023 – 09/29/2023), including:
 - Number and list of local, Minnesota products featured *during the contest period*
 - List of the Minnesota Grown member farms whose products were featured
 - Summary of retail activities conducted during the contest period

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- ☐ Samples of ads, social media posts, photos, and other merchandizing/promotional samples of Minnesota Grown products are strongly encouraged.
- ☐ **Single photo (no collages) of promotional display to enter into the People's Choice Contest.**

Minnesota Grown Beer, Wine, and Spirits Definition

For a beer, wine, or spirit to qualify for this contest, they must be [Minnesota Grown members](#), meaning they must have at least one key ingredient which was +80% grown in Minnesota. Examples include:

- **A wine made with grapes grown in Minnesota.**
- **A hard cider made with apples grown in Minnesota.**
- **A beer made with 85% hops grown in Minnesota.**
- **A vodka made with 100% rye grown in Minnesota.**

To quickly identify qualifying beverages, use the Minnesota Grown Directory and [search by Specialty Foods & Beverages](#), or request the list of Minnesota Grown members offering qualifying products.

Judging Criteria

Part 1: One Week Showcase (Up to 60 points)

Scores will be awarded based on promotional activities during a **one-week showcase period** of the store's choosing. Stores choose the week they want to compete, anytime between 08/01/2023 – 09/29/2023, and will note the dates on their entry form.

- **Promotional Displays: Up to 25 points:** Use of Minnesota Grown logo and Minnesota Grown farmers/products *within* store displays/signage.
- **Promotional Activities: Up to 15 points:** Use of Minnesota Grown logo and Minnesota Grown farmers/products in innovative promotional experiences.
- **Marketing Materials: Up to 20 points:** Social media, print (such as circulars), and other marketing to highlight local foods and Minnesota Grown farmers/products.

Part 2: Overall Contest Activities (Up to 40 points)

Scores will be awarded based on **overall activities** from 08/01/2023 – 09/29/2023:

- **Producer Relationships: Up to 15 points:** Number of Minnesota Grown member farms from which products were purchased *during the contest period*. We encourage previous Retailer of the Year participants to establish new purchasing relationships with producers.
- **Products Sold: Up to 15 points:** Variety of products within Minnesota that were sold. We encourage previous Retailer of the Year participants to expand and diversify the products sold.
- **Promotional Activities: Up to 10 points:** Promotional activities and experiences above and beyond displays/advertising (e.g. local foods educational opportunities, cook-offs with local ingredients, meet-your-farmer opportunities). This does not include activities during the showcase week.

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Privacy Notice

All information and materials provided by entrants to the MDA as part of the Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year contest are legally classified as public data under Minnesota law. This means that any member of the public has a right to view and/or request copies of contest submissions, and all associated information and materials, at any time and for any reason.

1. **No Confidentiality:** Photographs submitted to Minnesota Grown and the MDA as part of this contest will not be treated as confidential, private, or otherwise not public. By submitting a photograph you affirm that you are not including or disclosing any trade secrets or other confidential information, including without limitation confidential information of any third party, in any photographs.
2. **Non-Infringing Materials:** By submitting a photograph, you hereby represent and warrant that: (a) you are above the age of majority in the jurisdiction of your residence; (b) the photograph is original to you, you personally are the photographer of the photograph and that you are the owner of all right, title and interest in and to the photograph and have the right to grant the rights granted herein or, alternatively, you have obtained all necessary rights and permissions to use and submit the photograph in connection with Minnesota Grown and the MDA and to provide all the rights specified herein; and (c) the photograph and the use thereof as contemplated herein does not and will not violate or infringe any law or regulation or the rights of any third party, including, without limitation, any copyright, trademark, patent, or any rights of publicity or privacy, or any other intellectual property, personal, or proprietary rights.
3. **Permissions:** Except where prohibited by law, by submitting a photograph you grant permission to Minnesota Grown and the MDA to use the photo without limitation, for promotional, advertising, marketing, awareness, outreach, or educational purposes without further permission or compensation.
4. **General Release:** By submitting a photograph, you release Minnesota Grown and the MDA and all of their respective employees, officers, directors, contractors, and agents from any liability whatsoever, and waive any and all causes of action, related to any claims, costs, injuries, losses, or damages of any kind arising out of rights of publicity or privacy, defamation or portrayal in a false light, whether intentional or unintentional, whether under a theory of contract, tort (including negligence), warranty or other theory.
5. **Intellectual Property Notice:** While photo submitters retain all rights to their images, the submitter grants permission for unrestricted use of the image, including people in the image, to Minnesota Grown and the MDA to utilize the image in future publications, exhibits, on its Internet site and social media accounts to promote the functions and values of Minnesota Grown and the MDA. Minnesota Grown or the MDA may alter the image for their use, including but not limited to adding text over the image.

Questions?

Contact Jennifer J. Alexander, Food Business Development Administrator, at **651-201-6213** or by e-mail at jennifer.j.alexander@state.mn.us