

COMPANIES IN THE NEWS

Ariat Wins Honors, Gives Honor

Ariat International was recently recognized as the Total Company Small Vendor of the Year by Tractor Supply Co. In turn, the company has honored Boot Barn as the winner of the 2005 Ariat World Champion Retailer Award.

Ariat competed with 800 vendors for the TSC award, which recognizes product partners who are innovative, have superior account management, marketing creativity and in-store support. TSC operates 642 retail outlets across the United States.

Ariat selected California-based Boot Barn for honors because it shares the company's commitment to customer satisfaction, represents the brand with integrity and is an inspiration to other businesses, according to a spokesman. It has been an Ariat retailer since 1994.



Mike Cisowski, Boot Barn senior buyer for footwear, hats and belts accepts Ariat's top retailer award from Rial Chew, Ariat's vice president of sales.

SMARTPAK CEO 'Best Boss'

If life dictates that you work for a boss, best it be someone like Paal Gisholt, president and CEO of SmartPak, based in Plymouth, Mass. Gisholt was recently named one of 18 "best bosses" during a Winning Workplaces conference in Chicago, Ill. The winners were evaluated on their own personal statements, employee and customer ratings and interviews.

SmartPak specializes in high-end, customized nutritional programs for horses and dogs. It began as a catalog and online company, but recently opened its first retail store in Natick, Mass. Gisholt founded SmartPak with his wife, Becky Minard, in 1999 and today employs 100 workers.

SmartPak was also named to the Inc. magazine list of the nation's 500 fastest-growing private companies in September.

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TRACTOR SUPPLY'S OPEN BUYING DAYS



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If you have the perfect product for horses, dogs, cats, cows, pigs, people, or even in-store fixtures, call (866) 363-7062 or go online at www.eventlogistics.com, click on program registration, and follow the instructions for Open Buying Days registration to schedule a 30-minute meeting with a buyer. Meetings are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. In the meeting, a buyer will review your product line and determine if there is an opportunity for future discussion.

**TRACTOR SUPPLY COMPANY'S OPEN BUYING DAYS:
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NO APPOINTMENTS TAKEN AFTER NOVEMBER 30TH.**

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HOW THE TSC OPEN BUYING DAYS PROCESS WORKS: Do not contact the corporate office or anyone in it. Do not send samples ahead of time. You may bring samples to the meeting. Any samples sent earlier, however, will be destroyed. Limit attendance to two attendees. If a manufacturer's representative is attending, someone must accompany them from the company they are representing. To learn more about TSC, visit one of our 600+ stores or find us online at www.myTSCstore.com. © 2006 Tractor Supply Co.