

The 2019 [N.C. Specialty Foods Association](#) held its annual competition Aug. 28 and 29. Strawberry Habanero Pepper Jelly made by [Valley Brook Farms](#) of Durham was named Grand Champion.

Almost 100 products competed in nine different categories. Categories were: Baked Goods, Beverages, Confections, Condiments, Deli, Honey & Preserves, Pantry, Plant-Based Foods and Snacks. Products were judged based on appearance, aroma, taste, texture and aftertaste.

Winners of the competition were announced at the annual N.C. Specialty Foods Association fall conference at WinMock in Bermuda Run on Sept. 6.

“We had a great group of judges and products at this year’s judging,” said Sherry Barefoot, NCDA&CS marketing specialist. “Many of these products are available at farmers markets, specialty markets and online. I encourage everyone to go judge for themselves the delicious products made in North Carolina. They won’t be disappointed.”



The North Carolina Specialty Foods Association is a volunteer organization providing its membership with educational, marketing and collaborative opportunities that promote their passion for culturally diverse and excellent specialty food products, while creating quality brand

recognition. The association currently has 125 members. The association is celebrating its 25 year anniversary in 2019.

With the assistance of the NCDA&CS, the organization helps its members heighten awareness of their brands. The group regularly hosts activities such as pop-up markets like the Artisan Food Fairs at state-owned farmers markets and some other regional farmers markets throughout the year. Members can also take advantage of NCDA&CS sponsored booth spaces at shows such as the Southern Women's Shows, Raleigh Junior League "A Shopping Spree", etc.

A complete list of winners follows:

## **2019 NC Specialty Foods Association Product Competition Winners**

### **BAKED GOODS**

1st Place – Robert Carey Food Group (Highlands) – Handmade Lace Cookies  
2nd Place – Anna's Gourmet Goodies (Wake Forest) – Big Chocolate Brownies

### **BEVERAGES**

1st Place – Tryon Mountain Farms (Tryon)– Lavender Hibiscus Simple Syrup  
2nd Place – Cherry Orchard Foods (Archdale) – Bahama Mama Slushie Mix

### **CONDIMENTS**

1st Place – Vegetable Kingdom (Asheville) – Green Tomato Chow Chow  
2nd Place – Little Black Dressing (High Point) – Honey, It's Dijon Dill

### **CONFECTIONS**

1st Place – Dew Drop Chocolates (Fuquay-Varina) – Chocolate Peanut Clusters  
2nd Place – Dew Drop Chocolates (Fuquay-Varina) – Chocolate Almond Clusters

### **DELI**

1st Place – Red Clay Gourmet (Winston-Salem) – South Meets East Sriracha Pimento Cheese  
2nd Place – Red Clay Gourmet (Winston-Salem) – Classic Sharp Cheddar Pimento Cheese

### **HONEY & PRESERVES**

1st Place – Valley Brook Farms (Durham) – Strawberry Habanero Pepper Jelly  
2nd Place – Valley Brook Farms (Durham) – Flying Habanero Pepper Jelly

### **PANTRY**

1st Place – Tryon Mountain Farms (Tryon) – Beer Thyme Salt

2nd Place – Mariah’s Relishes (Fayetteville) – Mariah’s Sweet & Mild Relish

**PLANT-BASED FOODS**

1st Place – Haw River Mushrooms (Graham) – Sassy Sesame Teriyaki Mushroom Jerky

**SNACKS**

1st Place – Robert Carey Food Group (Highlands) – Creole Cheddar Cheese Biscuits

2nd Place – Haw River Mushrooms (Graham) Mild Sesame Teriyaki Mushroom Jerky

**GRAND CHAMPION**

Valley Brook Farms (Durham) – Strawberry Habanero Pepper Jelly