



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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Commissioner of Agriculture Congratulates SC's James Beard Semifinalists

COLUMBIA – Today the James Beard Foundation released its 2020 [list of semifinalists](#) for the coveted James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards, and it includes eight nominees from South Carolina.

“The two Upstate restaurants and six Charleston businesses on this list share a common thread: agriculture,” said South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers. “We’re proud to celebrate their hard work and their connection to South Carolina’s farmers.”

Four of the semifinalists are participants in Fresh on the Menu, a program operated by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture that identifies restaurants that use Certified South Carolina food grown by local farmers. Participating restaurants agree to prepare menus that dedicate at least 25 percent of their ingredients to Certified South Carolina Grown products that are in season.

The semifinalists also include farm-to-table eateries that celebrate the bounty provided by local farmers, oyster restaurants dedicated to one of the state’s most important aquaculture industries, and a distillery that sources grain from South Carolina farmers.

The South Carolina semifinalists (* denotes Fresh on the Menu members):

- Best New Restaurant: Oak Hill Café & Farm, Greenville, SC
- Outstanding Hospitality: Leon’s Fine Poultry & Oyster Shop, Charleston, SC
- Outstanding Restaurant: FIG*, Charleston, SC
- Outstanding Restaurateur: Steve Palmer, The Indigo Road, Charleston, SC (Indaco*, The Macintosh*, O-Ku Sushi*, Town Hall*, others)
- Outstanding Wine, Spirits, or Beer Producer: Scott Blackwell and Ann Marshall, High Wire Distilling Co., Charleston, SC
- Best Chef – Southeast:
 - Adam Cooke, Topsoil Kitchen & Market, Travelers Rest, SC
 - Kevin Johnson, The Grocery*, Charleston, SC
 - Shamil Velazquez, Delaney Oyster House*, Charleston, SC

The James Beard Foundation will announce the award finalists on March 25. For more information about Fresh on the Menu and Certified South Carolina, visit freshonthemenu.com and certifiedscgrown.com.

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