Kroger Receives the Prestigious Black Pearl Award for Food Safety

CINCINNATI, May 15, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The Kroger Co. (NYSE: KR) is honored to be named the 2012 recipient of the prestigious Black Pearl Award for advancing food safety and quality.
The International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) names one company annually for its efforts to advance food safety and quality through consumer programs, employee relations, educational activities, adherence to standards, and support of the goals and objectives of the IAFP.

"Food safety is Kroger's top priority. We want to ensure our customers can count on wholesome, fresh, and safe food from farm to table. We are proud to receive this important recognition from the International Association of Food Protection," said David B. Dillon, Kroger's chairman and chief executive officer. "Kroger's focus on food safety is a natural extension of our Customer 1st strategy, which engages all of our employees – in every store, plant, distribution center and office – around one common purpose, to serve the customer first in every decision we make. While every Kroger associate plays an essential role in food safety and shares in this award, I'd like to thank our team of food safety experts for their leadership in the areas of risk prevention, continuous improvement, and safety innovation."
"Kroger is truly honored to receive the Black Pearl Award. Every day, 339,000 associates work to ensure the safety of the food products manufactured in our plants and sold in our stores. This award is a reflection of their commitment and efforts," said Payton Pruett, vice president, corporate food technology and regulatory compliance. "We appreciate what IAFP does to raise food safety awareness in our industry through collaboration, education, and recognition."
Kroger develops and maintains programs to ensure food safety and quality, including:

Food Safety Review Audits. Kroger conducts a bi-monthly food safety review audit of each store. These audits are conducted by third-party firms and augment inspections conducted by local health departments and Company associates. In 2010, Kroger conducted 14,753 food safety reviews and followed up on results to resolve any issues that were identified.
Customer Education. Kroger works to equip our customers with information to ensure safe food handling. We provide education around proper grilling and cooking temperatures, safe food handling tips, and general information about food safety at home.
Recall Notification System. Kroger was one of the first retailers to implement a customer notification system for certain types of recalls. Using our customer loyalty database, we are able to notify customers through register receipt messages and automated phone calls about recalls of products they may have purchased. Kroger was also one of the first retailers to endorse the Rapid Recall Exchange, the food industry's only online recall notification system – and was the first national retail chain to encourage its suppliers to subscribe to this industry-leading program.
GFSI Audits. Kroger manufactures almost half of the company's corporate brand items in its 39 food-processing plants and stocks about 11,000 of corporate brand items per supermarket. In 2010,

every Krogermanufacturing plant received full Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) certifications. These standards are best-in-class and require constant improvement in food safety as measured by certified third-party auditing companies. All of Kroger's private-label suppliers are required to have GFSI certification as well.

More information about Kroger's food safety initiatives can be found in our 2011 Sustainability Report, available for download at http://sustainability.kroger.com/.

The Black Pearl Award will be presented at IAFP's Annual Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island in July.

Kroger, the nation's largest traditional grocery retailer, employs more than 339,000 associates who serve customers in 2,435 supermarkets and multi-department stores in 31 states under two dozen local banner names including Kroger, City Market, Dillons, Jay C, Food 4 Less, Fred Meyer, Fry's, King Soopers, QFC, Ralphs and Smith's. The company also operates 791 convenience stores, 348 fine jewelry stores, 1,090 supermarket fuel centers and 39 food processing plants in the U.S. Recognized by Forbes as the most generous company in America, Kroger supports hunger relief, breast cancer awareness, the military and their families, and more than 30,000 schools and grassroots organizations in the communities it serves. Kroger contributes food and funds equal to 125 million meals a year through more than 80 Feeding America food bank partners. For more information, please visit www.kroger.com.

SOURCE The Kroger Co.

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