For Immediate Release
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Rancho Meladuco Date Farm, Preeminent Seller of Medjool Dates in the US, Launches its 2023 sofi™-winning 'Grinders' Dates with Walmart

The 'No Date Left Behind' Initiative Offers Nutrient-Dense Dates to a Wider Swath of American Consumers While Supporting California's Small Date Producers

Newport Beach, California | May 24, 2023, Rancho Meladuco Date Farm, the award-winning grower and seller of best-quality Coachella Valley California medjool dates, packaged in whimsically illustrated boxes, is newly selling its products in Walmart's 4,500 US stores. Owner, Joan Smith's visionary product, The Grinders, consists of the 'imperfect' dates, previously deemed undesirable and difficult to market by the industry and traditional buyers due to slight imperfections in appearance, and is the next step in her mission to bring dates mainstream as a better-for-you naturally sweet treat.

Packaged in playful pint-cup containers and perfect for snacking, baking and more, The Grinders give consumers across multiple demographics access to nutrient-dense, California-grown dates at a more accessible price point, while helping date growers maintain viable sustainable farming operations.

In 2022, having sold The Grinders exclusively on her website as a bulk and wholesale item, Smith created a consumer-ready pint cup container for in-store retail sales. She then applied for and won a spot in the coveted Walmart Open Call, beating out over two-thirds of her fellow applicants. From over 1,100 applicants invited to compete, approximately 330 products made the cut to be sold by Walmart. Walmart fell in love with The Grinders, quickly recognizing Smith's vision to merge her passion for quality with her mission to support her partner date farmers, and bring a healthy, superfood sweet treat to more Americans.

Just weeks before the Walmart launch, The Grinders were named a 2023 sofi™ New Product Award Winner in the Nuts, Seeds, Trail Mix, Dried Fruit Category, and will compete for the sofi™ New Product of the Year Award at the 2023 Summer Fancy Food Show.

When she launched her company in 2017, Smith, a former accountant and mother of three, had no prior experience in food, farming or grocery. Rancho Meladuco gained a robust following among food enthusiasts – its whimsically illustrated ribbon-tied boxes became go-to gifts and won shelf space in premium markets like Whole Foods, Erewhon and Williams-Sonoma; still, purpose-driven Smith wanted more.

"Dates are the only superfood that tastes like candy, and they deserve the revival in popularity they are enjoying today. Yet premium California medjools generally come at a premium price that can make enjoying them an indulgence rather than a healthy everyday snack for everyone," Smith says. "These slightly imperfect dates contain all the same flavor and nutrition as the pretty dates – the primary difference is to the eye." The Grinders – as rich in fiber, potassium, antioxidants, iron, vitamin B6 and more as any other quality medjool dates – provided Smith with the opportunity of a lifetime: a way to introduce Rancho Meladuco dates to a broader demographic via every Walmart in the country.

The Grinders benefit Smith's community of partner farmers, too. Farmers who previously suffered when their imperfect dates were rejected by industry buyers now have a market for this fruit. California dates are an expensive, labor-intensive crop to grow. Due to variable weather conditions they're also vulnerable to scarring and skin separation or "puffy" skin, as it's referred to in the industry, causing buyers to downgrade crops, making them less valuable. The challenge of selling these imperfect dates can bring economic hardship to small farmers in particular who often cannot recover growing and harvest costs with the historically low value assigned to the "puffy" dates.

By creatively marketing what she lovingly refers to as, "the ugly dates", Smith is able to offer Rancho Meladuco's newest product with attractive pricing and, at the same time, keep more of her industry as well as consumers healthy. "With The Grinders we're tearing up the playbook on date grading standards and leaving no date behind."

For more information, please visit www.ranchomeladuco.com
For press images, click here.

ABOUT RANCHO MELADUCO DATE FARM

Founded by Joan Smith in 2017 and headquartered in Newport Beach, CA, Rancho Meladuco Date Farm is a preeminent seller of premium California-grown dates, sold in whimsically-designed, eco-friendly packaging. On a mission to inspire a national obsession with dates, Rancho Meladuco offers a variety of products, from giftable premium fruit to quality everyday dates sold at more accessible price points. The company sources fruit from its own Coachella Valley date farm and other California date farm partners, and is supporting these date farms with its Grinders initiative. Creative recipes and more information can be found at www.ranchomeladuco.com