HOWARD, MERRELL & PARTNERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Howard, Merrell & Partners Recognized For Industry-Leading Blog

BASF Plant Science Blog Honored by NAMA

RALEIGH, N.C., February 22, 2010 – Howard, Merrell & Partners won a first place award at the Carolinas/Virginia Best of NAMA (National Agri-Marketing Association) program for a blog the agency developed for BASF Plant Science's NutriDense® brand. The NutriDense blog (www.nutridense.com/blog) won first place in the chapter and regional categories of the Interactive Marketing Tools division. The Best of NAMA awards program honors the best work in agricultural communications.

In early 2009, strategic branding and advertising firm Howard, Merrell & Partners was tasked with educating BASF Plant Science's audiences about NutriDense, a trait used in corn grown for livestock feed, as well as positioning the company as a leader in the agricultural community. Once the agency evaluated the online landscape and the opportunities within the agriculture community, the NutriDense blog idea was born.

According to BASF North American Group Communications Manager Fran Castle, the goals of the blog are to provide relevant product information, educate the audience on animal nutrition, supply a platform for conversation within the crop and livestock community, drive traffic to the NutriDense Web site and increase the Web presence of NutriDense using relevant industry keywords. "We are very pleased with the results we have seen thus far with the NutriDense blog," explains Castle. "The blog is an important component of our integrated marketing communications strategy and we hope it will continue to have a significant impact in the coming year."

The blog has two primary audiences: NutriDense users (corn growers and livestock producers) and user influencers (nutritionists, veterinarians, consultants, media). Technical conversations, advice from nutritionists, links to research, industry tips and trade show updates make up much of the blog's content. Blog posts come in a variety of forms including straight copy, audio podcasts and video interviews.

The NutriDense blog will continue on for judging at the National Best of NAMA competition, held April 21 in Kansas City, Mo.

Howard, Merrell & Partners also earned chapter and regional merits from NAMA in the Single Page Ads series category for its "Starry Night," "Maze" and "Rainbow" advertisements for NutriDense.

"It is an honor to be recognized for our abilities to create effective forms of marketing while staying on top of the latest communications trends," explains Stephanie Styons, SVP public relations and social media marketing at Howard, Merrell & Partners. "We are very proud of the work we have conducted for BASF Plant Science in 2009, and we are excited that our marketing peers in the agriculture industry agree."

About Howard, Merrell & Partners
Raleigh, NC-based Howard, Merrell & Partners Inc., specializes in linking business and communications strategies to yield higher levels of financial performance for its clients. Founded by Jack Howard in 1945 and later reorganized as Howard, Merrell & Partners under Mac Merrell's leadership, the agency is a pioneer in understanding and applying the power of emotions to develop more effective business and communications strategies. Agency service offerings include brand development, creative development and production, consumer insight research, public relations, media asset services, event planning and management, social media, interactive services, Hispanic marketing and strategic planning.

Recent clients include BASF, Butterball, Canvas on Demand, Central Aquatics, CHD Meridian Healthcare, Cisco, Colonial Bank, Component Hardware Group, Doctors Vision Center, Georgia-Pacific Professional (Dixie® and enMotion®), Hewlett-Packard, Interton, INVISTA (CORDURA® brand), Naughty Bits, NC Beautiful, O2 Fitness, Oliver Twist Restaurant, ReSound, THOR•LO, UltraPet, and Zilla. The agency's work has been honored by, the Telly Awards, the Addys, Graphis, The London International Advertising Awards, The Communicator Awards, Sir Walter Raleigh Awards, Hermes Creative Awards, The InSpire Awards and the North American Precis Syndicate. For more information, visit http://www.merrellgroup.com.

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