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SunOpta Announces Further Expansion of Value-Added Aseptic Processing and Packaging Capabilities

TORONTO, March 18, 2013 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on natural and organic foods, today provided an update on the the expansion of processing and packaging capabilities at the Grains and Foods Group's aseptic processing and packaging operations in Modesto, California and Alexandria, Minnesota.

Recently the Company completed an expansion at the Modesto, CA operation with the installation and commissioning of a second processor, increasing processing capacity at the facility by approximately 50% in order to meet increased customer demand, while also improving operating flexibility and efficiencies.

The Company will also be adding further aseptic packaging capacities at both the Modesto and Alexandria, MN aseptic processing and packaging operations with the installation of an additional multi-serve filler (liter/quart) at each operation, as well as a single serve (200/250ml) filler at the Modesto operation. Each of the new fillers are expected to be in production during the third quarter of 2013.

Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer, SunOpta Inc. commented, "Continued expansion of our value-added aseptic processing and packaging capabilities remains a key strategic objective designed to further leverage our integrated field to table capabilities. This is consistent with our strategy to aggressively grow our value-added ingredients and packaged foods portfolio, and leveraging our integrated platform to become a pure play natural and organic foods company."

The addition of further processing and packaging capabilities is in response to continued growth in the non-dairy and alternative beverage categories that the Company currently serves. The new fillers will provide unique capabilities and are expected to provide opportunities to bring new and innovative products in a new aseptic package format to the market, further enhancing the profitability of these operations.

SunOpta's vertically integrated non-dairy beverage capabilities are unique and utilize operations incorporating raw material sourcing through ingredient production and finished packaged products, ensuring control of quality and organic certification, as well as providing traceability from the farm to the retail shelf. Current production capabilities include natural and organic soymilk, rice beverage, almond beverage, hemp milk, sunflower milk, teas, and broths among others. Once these filler installations are completed, the Company expects to have total annual production capacity in excess of 400 million quarts of shelf-stable beverages.

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods products. The Company specializes in sourcing, processing and packaging of natural and organic food products, integrated from seed through packaged products; with a focus on strategically vertically integrated business models. The Company's core natural and organic food operations focus on value-added grains, fiber and fruit based product offerings, supported by a global infrastructure. The Company has two non-core holdings, a 66.1% ownership position in Opta Minerals Inc., listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial materials; and a minority ownership position in Mascoma Corporation, an innovative biofuels company.

The SunOpta Inc. logo is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=3958>

Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements included in this press release may be considered "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and applicable Canadian securities legislation, which are based on information available to us on the date of this release. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the estimated capacity following, and the additional revenue potential resulting from the expansion and addition of value-added processing capabilities, as well as our strategy of expanding our natural and organic foods platform. Terms and phrases such as "will", "increasing", "improving", "continued", "designed to leverage", "expected" and other similar terms and phrases are intended to identify these forward looking statements. Forward looking statements are based on information available to us on

the date of this release and are based on estimates and assumptions made by the Company in light of its experience and its perception of historical trends, current conditions and expected future developments as well as other factors the Company believes are appropriate in the circumstances including that all third party and regulatory approvals for the expansion of the packaging capabilities at both the Alexandria and Modesto operations will be obtained and that there are no material unanticipated variations in budgeted costs. The Company makes no representation that reasonable business people in possession of the same information would reach the same conclusions. Whether actual timing and results will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including possible labour or construction delays in connection with the expansion of the facilities, potential installation, processing or other operational issues which might affect capacity, issues with respect to throughput and product quality, delays with or inability secure ingredients and consumer preferences and acceptance of our products, as well as other risks described from time to time under "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K and its Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q (available at www.sec.gov). Consequently all forward-looking statements made herein are qualified by these cautionary statements and there can be no assurance that the actual results or developments anticipated by the Company will be realized.

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