



SunOpta Announces the Revival and Upgrading of Fogo-Origin Coffee in the Republic of Cape Verde

TORONTO, Dec. 8, 2011 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or "the Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods and natural health products, today announced that the SunOpta International Foods Group will expand its fair trade and organic coffee business with the development of operations in the Republic of Cape Verde. Trabocca B.V. ("Trabocca"), 65% owned by The Organic Corporation B.V. ("Tradin Organics"), in hand with a local Cape Verde partner have formed Fogo Coffee Spirit Ltd. ("Fogo Coffee"). Fogo Coffee will establish a coffee processing facility to produce the first certified organic, Fogo-origin, high quality coffee in the Republic of Cape Verde. Trabocca will own 51% while Casa Rodrigo Ltd., a Cape Verde company, will own the remaining share with Trabocca exclusively marketing the coffee worldwide.

Trabocca B.V. specializes in sourcing certified organic and fair trade specialty coffee from key countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Papua New Guinea and South America, and selling it worldwide.

The Republic of Cape Verde is an island country spanning an [archipelago](#) of 10 islands located in the central [Atlantic Ocean](#), 570 kilometres off the coast of [Western Africa](#). The project is to be undertaken on Fogo, one of the islands of the Republic of Cape Verde, named after its volcano. The land is very fertile and is well known for its grapes and wines and most recently for its coffee. To date, the prominence of Fogo coffee is non-existent, as this coffee is not currently available on the world market.

The processing facility will be funded by the two equity partners along with a grant from the Government of the Netherlands' PSI program and is expected to have capacity to process 40 metric tons of specialty organic coffee in 2012, and expected to increase to over 140 metric tons over 5 years.

The facility will be built to comply with international standards for food manufacturing and utilize state-of-the-art environmental friendly equipment and wet processing techniques. The process minimizes the water required for the pulping process and the mechanisation of the washing process and has a plan for the small amount of waste water produced, resulting in no pollution of the local rivers and soil. A full quality assurance program has been implemented and extensive training and monitoring programs are in place to ensure that Fogo coffee complies with stringent quality standards, providing full traceability from the farm through production and delivery.

Fogo Coffee will purchase red cherries from approximately 100 coffee out-grower farmers on the island. Fogo Coffee will create a platform for sustainable agriculture on the island which is expected to provide better incomes for farmers and improve the well-being of their families. Training of the farmers in all the aspects of sustainable organic farming is expected to have a positive impact on the overall ecological environment through the conservation of biodiversity and will contribute to a healthy environment for the farmers, their families and surrounding communities. Overall it is anticipated that this venture will also have a positive impact on the people of Cape Verde through economic development in the region. This aligns with SunOpta's Sustainability Platform in that SunOpta is committed to contributing to the improvement of our communities by promoting sustainable agricultural and commercial practices as well as giving back through philanthropic initiatives, volunteerism and other activities.

"We are excited to be the first to introduce genuine, certified organic, Fogo-origin washed coffee to the international markets," said Menno Simons, Director of Trabocca. "We believe Fogo-origin coffee will be well received and are delighted to have the opportunity to make a difference in the communities we do business in, having a positive impact on hundreds of people." To learn more about Trabocca: <http://www.sunopta.com/tradin-organic/projects.aspx>

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods and natural health 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 66.4% 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. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the estimated production capacity of the facility and the facility's compliance with international standards, as well as management's expectations regarding the potential impact of the facility on the farmers and their families, the environment and economy development in the region. Terms and phrases such as "will", "expected", "should", "anticipated", "believe" 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. Whether actual timing and results will be consistent with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the Company's expectations and predictions, including financing issues or delays, potential labour, construction, administrative and/or regulatory issues which might delay completion of the facility, changes to applicable legislation and building standards, consumer preferences and demand, weather and growing conditions which may affect supply, potential manufacturing and processing issues or delays. 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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