



SunOpta Announces Decision On Abener Arbitration

TORONTO, Dec 23, 2008 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- SunOpta Inc. (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) and SunOpta BioProcess Inc. ("the Company") today announced that the arbitrator has rendered his decision in the arbitration proceedings with Abener Energia S.A. ("Abener") regarding the Equipment Supply and Engineering Services Agreement related to a bioethanol plant being constructed in Salamanca, Spain.

The ruling of the arbitrator partially allowed Abener's claim and ordered payment be made to Abener in the amount of the EUR 1,329,898. The arbitrator's decision resolves certain disputes related to the interpretation of contractual business terms and does not reflect on the effectiveness of the Company's products and technologies nor the value of its intellectual property. The Company is reviewing and assessing the English translation of the lengthy ruling and consulting with its counsel to review its options and determine what steps, if any, should be taken in response to the decision. The Company's claim for damages against Abengoa BioEnergy New Technologies, Inc., a related party to Abener, continues in arbitration and a decision at this time is expected in mid 2009.

Due to confidentiality requirements that were agreed upon by both parties as part of the arbitration proceedings, neither party is at liberty to disclose further details.

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is an operator of high-growth ethical businesses, focusing on integrated business models in the natural and organic food and natural health markets. The Company has three business units: the SunOpta Food Group, which specializes in sourcing, processing and distribution of natural and organic food products integrated from seed through packaged products; Opta Minerals Inc. (TSX:OPM) (66.6% owned by SunOpta), a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial materials; and SunOpta BioProcess Inc. which engineers and markets proprietary steam explosion technology systems for the bio-fuel, pulp and food processing industries. Each of these business units has proprietary products and services that give it a solid competitive advantage in its sector.

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

Forward-Looking Statements

The statements in this press release about the Company's intention to consult with counsel and assess its options in response to the arbitrator's decision constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward looking statements are based on certain assumptions made by the Company as well as other factors that we believe are appropriate in the circumstance. There can be no assurance that our plans will have a positive outcome.

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