



July 3, 2012

SunOpta Announces Appointment of Hendrik (Rik) Jacobs as President and Chief Operating Officer

TORONTO, July 3, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or "the Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global natural and organic foods company, today announced the appointment of Hendrik (Rik) Jacobs to the position of President and Chief Operating Officer, effective August 1, 2012. In this role Mr. Jacobs will report directly to Steve Bromley, and assume operational responsibility for SunOpta Foods, the Company's core integrated natural and organic foods business.

Mr. Jacobs brings over 20 years of international sales, marketing, innovation, strategic development and general management experience to this role. Over the past eleven years Mr. Jacobs held a number of progressively responsible positions with Tetra Pak, the world's leading supplier of equipment and materials for the processing and packaging of liquid food products, with revenues of approximately \$12 billion in 165 markets worldwide. Most recently Mr. Jacobs served as Cluster Vice President for North Europe with responsibility for the UK, Ireland, Scandinavia and the Baltic States. Prior to this role, he served as Managing Director Benelux with responsibility for the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg, as Vice President of Strategy and Planning with responsibility for setting long term technology and product development strategies, and as Vice President of Sales for Tetra Pak USA. Prior to joining Tetra Pak Mr. Jacobs held a number of international sales, marketing and general management positions with PepsiCo, Royal Dutch Ahold and the Coca-Cola Company. Mr. Jacobs holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from the American Graduate School of International Management and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Oregon State University.

Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta commented, "I am really excited to welcome Rik to SunOpta. Rik's extensive international commercial and industry expertise will be very valuable as we continue to expand our commercial development and innovation priorities and align our operating segments to markets and customer segments serviced, rather than by historical product groupings. Rik will bring a new perspective to these initiatives and play a key role as we continue to build a global leader in natural and organic foods, categories we believe offer excellent long-term growth potential."

In hand with the appointment of Mr. Jacobs to the new role of President and Chief Operating Officer, Tony Tavares, the Company's current Vice President and Chief Operating Officer will be leaving the Company effective July 27, 2012. Mr. Tavares joined SunOpta in 2008 and over the course of the last four years has focused on improving the effectiveness of the Company's food operations through the implementation of lean manufacturing and continuous improvement processes, sustainability initiatives, enhanced business processes and technologies and improved coordination across operating groups.

Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta further commented, "I want to thank Tony for his many contributions over the last four years and wish him much success with his future endeavors. Tony has contributed to building a solid operational foundation during his time with the Company and Rik will now leverage this platform as we work to enhance our commercial and innovation activities. We have grown rapidly since our entry into natural and organic foods in 1999 and believe we are well positioned in markets with excellent long-term growth potential. The addition of Rik is yet another step as we continue to position SunOpta as a global leader in natural and organic foods."

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 66.2% 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/?pkqid=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, statements regarding the continued expansion of our commercial development and innovation priorities, leveraging our platform to enhance commercial and innovation activities and our positioning as a global leader. The terms and phrases "will", "continue", "leverage", "enhance", "position" and "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 including, but not limited to, general economic conditions, consumer interest in health and wellness, product pricing levels, current customer demand, planned facility and operational expansions, competitive intensity, cost rationalization and product development initiatives. Whether actual timing and results will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including, but not limited to, the ability of Mr. Jacobs to draw upon his considerable experience in similar businesses and successfully leverage our platform and build a global leader, as well as global economic conditions generally, consumer spending patterns and changes in market trends, decreases in customer demand, potential failure of product development initiatives, working capital management, inability or delays in implementing continuous improvement initiatives, availability and pricing of raw materials and supplies, and 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.

CONTACT: For further information, please contact:

SunOpta Inc.

Steve Bromley, President & CEO

Rob McKeracher, Vice President & CFO

John Dietrich, Vice President, Corporate Development

Susan Wiekenkamp, Information Officer

Tel: 905-455-2528, ext 103

susan.wiekenkamp@sunopta.com

Website: www.sunopta.com