



## **SunOpta BioProcess Inc. Announces Plans to Develop a 10 Million Gallon Per Year Commercial Cellulosic Ethanol Facility**

TORONTO, Nov 20, 2007 (PrimeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- SunOpta Inc. (SunOpta or the Company) (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that SunOpta BioProcess Inc. (SBI) has signed a Letter of Intent with Central Minnesota Ethanol Co-op (CMEC) of Little Falls, Minnesota to complete a feasibility analysis and engineering study leading to the parties jointly building, owning, and operating a 10 million gallon per year cellulosic ethanol plant. The proposed operation is expected to be located adjacent to CMEC's existing 21.5 million gallon per year corn starch to ethanol plant, will use local wood chips as raw material feedstock, and is dependent upon completion of final engineering and definitive agreements.

Leveraging SBI's extensive intellectual property portfolio, including existing and recently filed patent applications and 30 years of experience in biomass processing, this plant is expected to be one of the first commercially viable cellulosic ethanol plants in the world. The plant will utilize SBI proprietary and patented technology together with CMEC's existing infrastructure, raw material supply sources and operational expertise. The critical "pretreatment" process step will utilize SBI's proprietary auto hydrolysis process, which uses only heat and steam to pre-treat and partially hydrolyze lignocellulosic materials. In this process, no external chemical catalyst is required and water contained in the raw material feedstock is efficiently utilized, eliminating the need for large external water sources.

SBI's proprietary and patented pretreatment technology, widely known as "steam explosion," has been industrially proven in continuous operation in a variety of commercial-scale applications, and is currently being utilized in a number of commercial demonstration cellulosic ethanol facilities around the world.

The proposed plant will be initially designed to produce 10 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol per year, with anticipated modular scale-up plans to expand the plant to over 50 million gallons per year. The plant will be environmentally friendly and use locally contracted woodchips as the cellulose source, with residual lignin serving as fuel stock for an energy efficient gasification and co-generation system that will provide the required power for both the corn starch and cellulosic ethanol operations.

Murray Burke, President of SBI commented, "We are delighted to be partnering with CMEC and anticipate powerful synergies with CMEC's management and operations expertise, excellent existing infrastructure and strong community relationships. We expect the planned cellulosic ethanol facility to be one of the first of its kind in the world, bringing the commercial production of cellulosic ethanol to reality. This venture is consistent with SBI's long-term strategy of leveraging our proprietary technology in the ownership and operation of leading edge cellulosic ethanol operations."

### About SunOpta BioProcess Inc.

SunOpta BioProcess Inc. (SBI) is a leader in the design, construction and optimization of biomass conversion process technologies, equipment and facilities. With over 30 years experience in delivering biomass solutions worldwide, SBI combines its application expertise with innovative and patented and proprietary technologies to produce cellulosic ethanol, cellulosic butanol, xylitol, and dietary fiber for human consumption; and is currently supplying equipment and process technology to commercial demonstration cellulosic ethanol projects in the U.S., Spain, and China. SunOpta BioProcess Inc. intends to build and own or co-own commercial scale cellulosic ethanol production facilities worldwide through relationships with a number of venture partners.

### About Central MN Ethanol Co-op

Central MN Ethanol Co-op (CMEC) is a majority farmer-owned Minnesota cooperative which operates a 21.5 million gallon per year corn starch to ethanol plant in Little Falls Minnesota. The plant is located 30 miles north of St. Cloud making CMEC the most northern ethanol plant in Minnesota. For more information visit [www.centralmnethanol.com](http://www.centralmnethanol.com)

### About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is an operator of high-growth ethical businesses, focusing on integrated business models in the natural and organic food, supplements and health and beauty 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; the Opta Minerals Inc. (TSX:OPM) (66.6% owned by SunOpta), a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial materials; and the SunOpta BioProcess Inc. which engineers and markets proprietary steam explosion technology systems for the pulp, bio-fuel 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.primenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=3958>

#### Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements included in this press release may constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the United States Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to references to business strategies, competitive strengths, goals, capital expenditure plans, business and operational growth plans and references to the future growth of the business. These forward looking statements are based on certain assumptions and analyses made by the Company in light of its experience and its interpretation of current conditions, historical trends and expected future developments as well as other factors that the Company believes are appropriate in the circumstance. However, whether actual results and developments will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including, but not limited to; general economic, business or market risk conditions; competitive actions by other companies; changes in laws or regulations or policies of local governments, provinces and states as well as the governments of United States and Canada, many of which are beyond the control of the Company. 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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