



SunOpta Announces Energy Recovery Project at Cambridge Oat Fiber Operations and Receives Awards for Environmental Stewardship

TORONTO, Jan. 27, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that it has commenced an environmentally responsible energy recovery project at its Cambridge, Minnesota oat fiber facility. The planned installation will extract methane from the digestion of waste-water resulting from the oat fiber production process, converting the methane to pipeline quality natural gas and using this energy to power the facility. When completed, the project will significantly reduce the release of greenhouse gases and various waste materials from the facility as well as provide an excellent return on invested capital of approximately \$1 million USD. This initiative is consistent with SunOpta's stated objective of reducing its environmental footprint and promoting sustainable business practices.

SunOpta's environmental initiatives are widespread and over the past year SunOpta received two awards in recognition of the Company's commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) presented SunOpta with the Spotlight Award – Environmental at the CHFA Expo East tradeshow held in Toronto, Ontario this past October. The CHFA honoured both a supplier and a retailer with the Spotlight Environmental Award for their leadership and outstanding commitment to the environment. SunOpta, Canada's leading distributor of natural and organic foods and natural health care products, received the Supplier award for its focus on environmental sustainability at both a local and global level.

Earlier this year, SunOpta also received the Industrial Environmental Achievement Award from the Central States Water Environment Association. This award was granted to SunOpta's oat fiber manufacturing plant in Cambridge, Minnesota for outstanding contributions in waste minimization, pollution prevention, environmental compliance, and environmental stewardship. SunOpta's Cambridge facility reduced water use by approximately 20 million gallons (77 million liters) in a 12 month period, dramatically improved the water quality of its waste-water discharge, and achieved significant energy savings.

SunOpta's environmental sustainability initiatives also include:

- **The United Nations CEO Water Mandate** - SunOpta is one of the ten founding global corporations to endorse the CEO Water Mandate which represents a call for action and provides a strategic framework to address issues of water sustainability in response to the emerging global water crisis. Since signing on to the mandate in July 2007, SunOpta has successfully completed a series of water conservation programs at its SunOpta production plants in Minnesota, Kentucky, and Iowa and has reduced consumption of water by over 200 million gallons (909 million liters). The learnings gained from these initiatives are being applied to other SunOpta facilities around the world.
- **Waste-Water Conversions** - SunOpta is implementing innovative waste-water conversion projects at its food manufacturing facilities. For example, SunOpta is extracting fruit solids from waste-water at its fruit manufacturing plant in South Gate, California and diverting the solids to an ethanol producer. In addition, SunOpta is developing further projects to extract methane from waste-water, reducing carbon emissions and waste materials, and drive energy savings.
- **Sustainable Organic Agricultural Production** – SunOpta, which is one of the world's largest organic ingredient suppliers, actively encourages farmers world-wide to convert to sustainable farming practices and organic agriculture. The Company supports growers through the three year transition to organic by paying a premium for their products and assisting them with agronomic, business and community development issues.
- **Carbon Footprint Reporting and Facility Programs** - SunOpta is tracking its carbon footprint at each facility (74 facilities world-wide) and is implementing company-wide energy conservation programs. In addition, facility-based environmental teams are actively involved in recycling and waste-reduction and supporting community environmental programs.

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is an operator of high-growth ethical businesses, focusing on integrated business models in the natural and organic foods and natural health products 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) (66.5% owned by SunOpta), a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial minerals; 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

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. Terms and phrases such as "reduce", "reducing" "promoting", "improved", "innovative", 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 agree with expectations and predictions of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including as the success of the Company's environmental initiatives including its waste-water conversion projects, energy conservation programs and support to growers conversion to organic production as well as those detailed under "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report of 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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