



SunOpta Announces Progress on Cellulosic Ethanol Activities

TORONTO--Jan. 30, 2006--SunOpta Inc. (SunOpta or the Company) (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that it has made significant progress on several cellulosic ethanol activities that the company is currently undertaking.

The SunOpta BioProcess Group (formerly Stake Technology), a division of SunOpta Inc., is a world leader in the preparation and pretreatment of biomass for the production of cellulosic ethanol and other renewable fuels. The SunOpta Pretreatment System is based on proprietary and patented technologies and is the only industrially proven continuous system in the world for Biomass Pretreatment.

SunOpta is pleased to announce that the detailed engineering and equipment supply for the wheat straw to ethanol plant in Babilafuente (Salamanca), Spain is proceeding on schedule. This facility, which represents the first commercial cellulosic ethanol production plant in the world, is being supplied to Abener Energia S.A. of Seville, Spain, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Abengoa S.A. (Abengoa) (Madrid Stock Exchange - ABG). Abengoa is the largest ethanol producer in Europe and the second largest in the world. This facility, which is scheduled to be operational in the fall of 2006, is located adjacent to an existing cereal grain to ethanol plant operated by Abengoa. Manufacturing of major equipment is currently being completed and will be shipped to site in the coming weeks.

Within the last two weeks SunOpta shipped the Pretreatment System for the Abengoa Bioenergy Research and Development pilot plant to be built at the Abengoa corn starch to ethanol plant located at York, Nebraska. This pilot plant is funded by the US Department of Energy and will prove new advances in Biomass Conversion technologies utilizing the Pretreatment System from SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta will present their Pretreatment Technology for the production of cellulosic ethanol at the 28th Symposium on Biotechnology for Fuels and Chemicals, April 30 - May 3, 2006 in Nashville, Tennessee. This will highlight the latest advancements in SunOpta's Biomass Conversion Technology to produce ethanol from renewable resources such as grasses, wood chips, garbage and energy specific crops. Also to be covered will be SunOpta's 30 year history of providing pretreatment systems in Europe and North America.

In a recent interview with CBS, President Bush stated, "I agree with Americans who understand being hooked on foreign oil as an economic problem and a national security problem." Mr. Bush has further stated his desire to emphasize the production of renewable fuels from waste materials.

In a paper published in the journal Science, "Ethanol Can Contribute to Energy and Environmental Goals", the authors from University of California at Berkeley clearly make the case for the positive net energy benefit of cellulosic ethanol as well as point out the major impact to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by utilizing cellulose as the starting raw material. (<http://rael.berkeley.edu/ebamm/> for full paper).

Murray Burke, Vice President and General Manager of SunOpta's BioProcess Group, commented that "Energy security, GHG emissions and an eventual limit on corn and grain based ethanol supply are all contributing to the push for cellulosic ethanol. We are seeing unprecedented interest in our Pretreatment Technology in the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia."

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is an operator of high-growth ethical businesses, focusing on integrated business models in the natural and organic food markets. For the last seven consecutive years, SunOpta was included in Profit magazine's 'Profit 100' list of the 100 fastest growing companies in Canada. 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 Group, a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial materials; and the SunOpta BioProcess Group which engineers and markets proprietary pretreatment systems for the renewable fuels, 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.

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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