



## SunOpta Adds Processing Capabilities for Value-Added Products

TORONTO, Dec. 5, 2011 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or "the Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods, today provided an update on the expansion and addition of value-added processing capabilities in two of its operating segments.

Pacific Fruit Processors, the value-added fruit ingredients operation within the SunOpta Fruit Group, has completed the installation of a state-of-the-art aseptic processing line with a processing capacity of approximately 30 million pounds. Target applications for the new equipment include fruit bases for yogurts, smoothies, fruit toppings and food service products, in both organic and conventional formats. The additional capacity will allow the Fruit Group to pursue a number of potential new applications and customers, with revenue potential in excess of \$20 million in this value-added product category.

Michael Jacobs, President of Pacific Fruit Processors commented, "We have been near capacity at times over the past several years on aseptic processing. The new equipment will increase capacity, improve our throughput and also further enhance product quality and flexibility for our customers. We expect to fill the new capacity over the next 12 to 18 months."

In addition, SunOpta Food Solutions, a division of the SunOpta International Foods Group, has added to its existing capabilities and installed two flexible pouch filling lines at a production facility in California. The flexible re-sealable pouch market is well established in Europe and Asia and is rapidly expanding into the North American market. The pouch is applicable to a wide range of product categories including natural and organic fruit and vegetable snacks, apple sauces, tomato products, baby food, yogurts, toppings, and many more. These two filling lines have an estimated annual capacity of 36 million pouches and SunOpta has entered into agreements for the majority of this capacity.

In addition, the Company has finalized arrangements for a facility to be located on the east coast of the United States to accommodate the addition of two more flexible pouch filling lines, scheduled to be operational by August 1, 2012. The facility will be expandable for additional pouch lines based on market demand and will have capacity to house additional fruit snack capabilities as current operations approach capacity.

Joseph Stern, President of SunOpta Food Solutions commented, "We are excited to enter into this fast growing re-sealable pouch market. We are able to leverage our global ingredient sourcing capabilities and combine it with this new and innovative packaging format to bring increased value to our customers. We believe the re-sealable pouch will continue to gain wide spread acceptance across many sectors within the food industry. This expansion of filling capabilities is consistent with our strategy of expanding our natural and organic foods platform with a focus on value-added product offerings."

### 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 66.4% 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/?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. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the estimated capacity following, and the additional revenue potential, improved throughput and enhanced quality resulting from the expansion and addition of value-added processing capabilities and anticipated timeframe for filling the additional capacity, as well as our strategy of expanding our natural and organic foods platform. Terms and phrases such as "revenue potential", "will increase", "further enhance", "leverage", "believe" and "continue" 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 be consistent with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from the Company's expectations and predictions, including potential installation, processing or other operational issues which might affect capacity, throughput and product quality, delays with or inability secure ingredients, consumer preferences and acceptance of the Company's value-added products and whether or not the additional production capacity and intended applications will provide a benefit to 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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