



March 11, 2013

## **SunOpta Increases Processing Capabilities for Value-Added Organic and Specialty Cocoa Products**

TORONTO, March 11, 2013 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that the SunOpta International Foods Group is expanding its integrated processing capabilities with a new value-added organic and specialty cocoa facility located in Middenmeer, The Netherlands, approximately one hour from Amsterdam. To be operated as the Crown of Holland, the facility will process internationally sourced cocoa beans into cocoa liquor, butter and powder, and will provide needed capacity to accommodate the Company's growing organic and specialty cocoa business that is currently processed by third parties.

The facility is being built using the latest in environmentally friendly building materials and technologies and will process organic and specialty cocoa products. When commissioned, it is expected that the facility will have an annual processing capacity of approximately 9,000 MT of raw cocoa. Testing and commissioning of the new facility is expected to begin in the second half of 2013, with the planned transfer of the Company's existing cocoa volume by July 2013. With its own processing capabilities in place, the Company plans on expanding its organic and specialty cocoa business and serving the specialty chocolate industry with certified and specialty cocoa products.

Gerard Versteegh, President of the International Foods Group commented; "Vertically integrating into our own dedicated cocoa facility will allow us to have increased control over our business and expand our margins, especially as we increase throughput. Organic and specialty cocoa products remain a key category for the International Foods Group, and we anticipate above average growth prospects in this segment of the market."

Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta Inc. commented; "This expansion along with the previously announced acquisition of OLC is consistent with our strategy of becoming a pure play natural and organic foods company, aggressively growing our value-added ingredients and packaged foods portfolio, and leveraging our integrated platform. This dedicated organic and specialty cocoa facility adds to our value-added processing capabilities in our International Foods Group and increases our capacity to service this fast growing market segment."

### **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 66.1% 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>

The Crown of Holland logo is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=17526>

### **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, our expansion plans for a new facility, the expected processing capacity of the new facility and the anticipated timing for testing and commissioning of the facility and the transfer of our existing cocoa volume and the effect on our margins. The terms and phrases "will", "expected", "plans", "expand", "fast growing" 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 that all third party and regulatory approvals and other conditions for construction of the new facility will be obtained, that there are no material unanticipated variations in budgeted costs and that there is no material change in

the supply of cocoa beans or the demand for cocoa products. The Company makes no representation that reasonable business people in possession of the same information would reach the same conclusions. Whether actual timing and results will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including, potential construction, labour or other delays in commissioning the new facility, cost overruns in our capital expansion activities, ability to increase margins, constraints on supply of cocoa beans, declines in the expected growth of the cocoa product category and the ability to remain competitive and continue to sell our products as well as 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](http://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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