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SunOpta Increases Processing Capabilities for Value-Added Organic and Specialty Cocoa Products With Commissioning of New Facility

TORONTO, Oct. 2, 2013 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that it has completed the construction and commissioning of a new value-added organic and specialty cocoa processing facility located in Middenmeer, The Netherlands, approximately one hour north of Amsterdam. Operated as 'Crown of Holland', the facility processes internationally sourced cocoa beans into cocoa liquor, butter and powder, and provides needed capacity to accommodate the Company's growing organic and specialty cocoa business that has historically been processed by third parties. The operation will ramp-up production capabilities and volume over the balance of 2013.

Gerard Versteegh, President of the International Foods Group, commented, "Vertically integrating into our own dedicated cocoa facility allows 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 is consistent with our strategy of becoming a pure play natural and organic foods company, aggressively growing our value-added ingredients and consumer 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."

The facility was built using the latest in environmentally friendly building materials and technologies. The operation has annual processing capacity of approximately 9,000 MT of raw cocoa and is one of the only operations in the world focused 100% on organic and specialty fair trade cocoa products. The facility utilizes a unique whole-bean roasting technology, which when combined with globally sourced cocoa bean varieties, provides customers with a range of unique flavor profiles. With its own processing capabilities now in place, the Company intends to expand its organic and specialty cocoa business and better serve the specialty chocolate industry with certified and specialty cocoa products.

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>

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, the expected processing capacity of the new facility, our plans to expand our organic and specialty cocoa business, the impact of vertical integration on our margins and our strategy to become a pure play natural and organic foods company. The terms and phrases "will", "intends", "allow", "anticipate", "growing", "leveraging" 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 there are no unanticipated labour or other operational issues with the new facility, there is no material change in the supply or cost of cocoa beans and the demand for cocoa products will continue to increase consistent with prior years. 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 labour or other operational issues with respect to the new facility, constraints on supply of cocoa beans, our ability to control costs and expand margins, 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). 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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