



SunOpta Enters Into Strategic Alliance With Specialized Protein Products of South Africa

TORONTO, Dec 1, 2009 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- SunOpta Inc. ("the Company" or "SunOpta") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that the SunOpta Grains & Foods Group, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, SunOpta Africa, has entered into a strategic alliance with Specialized Protein Products ("SPP") of South Africa, to manufacture and sell liquid and powdered soy ingredients and soymilk beverages in Africa and other international markets. This exclusive manufacturing and supply agreement provides the SunOpta Grains & Foods Group with an increased supply of high quality soymilk products and improved logistics that are expected to enable it to compete effectively in world markets for natural and organic soy-based ingredients and packaged products.

The SPP facility, located in Potchefstroom, South Africa, is a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with capacity of over 200,000 liters of concentrated soymilk per day and capable of producing 20 metric tons per day of high quality soymilk powder. Commissioned in 2001, the modern facility was sold to a new private group of investors in early 2008, who have been working with SunOpta since earlier this year to develop this strategic relationship.

As part of this alliance, SunOpta is working with SPP plant operations to improve quality control processes and reduce production costs and water usage through a series of technology improvements. In addition, SunOpta is working with local farmers in the Southern African region to implement programs to improve the quality of soybeans that the facility will ultimately use for manufacturing. In order to support operations, SunOpta Africa has opened an office in Durban, South Africa for sales and technical support.

The SunOpta Grains & Foods Group have commenced sale of liquid and powdered products from the South African venture and expect sales to grow over time to in excess of \$15 million USD.

Allan Routh, President of the SunOpta Grains & Foods Group and Peter Golbitz, Director of International Business Development in the SunOpta Grains & Foods Group commented, "We believe this relationship will add value to the food and agricultural processing industry in South Africa and serve to improve quality and nutritional attributes of food products in the region. In hand with this, the first-class infrastructure, lower production costs and enhanced reach that South Africa gives us for exports should help make these products competitive internationally and allow us to continue to grow our global foods business."

Steve Bromley, President and CEO of SunOpta Inc. commented, "This venture continues to expand our global footprint focused on value added natural and organic food ingredients. In hand with our organic coffee and sesame operations in Africa, we are continuing to expand supply of quality ingredients while at the same time fostering sustainable economic development for this region."

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 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 materials; 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. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, management's expectations and opinions regarding plant capacity, future revenues, the quality of the facility, improved quality of soybeans, the improved logistics, the quality and nutritional attributes of the food products and the fostering of sustainable

economic development. Terms and phrases such as "enable it to compete", "expects", "should", "are expected to", "will help", "will add value", "improve", "reduce", "fostering", "continues to expand", "we are continuing" 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, but not limited to, general economic conditions, product pricing levels, consumer trends, preferences and spending patterns, manufacturing capacity and capabilities of the Company's suppliers and partners. Whether actual timing and results will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including customers acceptance of the new products, potential manufacturing and processing issues or delays, competitive reaction, our ability to control input costs and achieve expected margins, potential changes in the political environment. 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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