



SunOpta BioProcess Signs Contract With Major Ethanol Producer in China

TORONTO, Jan. 21, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. (SunOpta or the Company) (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that SunOpta BioProcess Inc. (SBI) has been awarded a contract to supply a major ethanol producer in China with the Company's proprietary fiber preparation and pretreatment equipment for use in the production of cellulosic ethanol.

The Chinese client is one of the largest operators in the corn biochemical processing and new energy sectors in China and is owned by a consortium of leading Chinese companies including one of the largest petrochemical companies in China. SBI's equipment will be installed in a planned cellulosic ethanol demonstration plant scheduled for completion in late 2010. The plant will be located adjacent to an existing starch-to-ethanol facility and will utilize local corn stover as feedstock. The development of cellulosic ethanol alternatives has taken a high profile in China as the Central Government has discouraged further development of corn to ethanol plants due to environmental and food supply issues.

Under the terms of the contract, which was obtained with the assistance of Pacitec, Inc., SBI's exclusive agent in China, the Company will realize revenues of approximately \$6.5 million from supply of equipment and a technology license as well as certain design and engineering services.

Murray Burke, President of SBI, commented, "We are extremely pleased that one of the largest fuel alcohol companies in China has selected SBI as its supplier of choice for fiber preparation and pretreatment as it expands its capabilities to include fuel alcohol produced from cellulosic biomass. We look forward to working with our customer to help make the demonstration plant an unqualified success. As SBI's second major project in China, it represents another important step forward as SBI establishes its business in this very important market."

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>

About SunOpta BioProcess Inc. and SunOpta BioProcess USA Inc.

SunOpta BioProcess Inc. is a leader in the design, construction and optimization of biomass conversion process technologies, equipment and facilities. With over 30 years experience in delivering biomass solutions worldwide, SBI combines its applications expertise with innovative, patented, and proprietary technologies to produce cellulosic ethanol, cellulosic butanol, xylitol, and dietary fiber for human consumption. The company is currently designing and supplying equipment and process technology for pilot and commercial demonstration cellulosic ethanol projects worldwide.

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 the expected results related to the future growth and strategies 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 without limitation the expected results and success of the demonstration plant identified above, results of which may be 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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