



## **SunOpta Announces Expansion of Aseptic Beverage Processing and Packaging Capabilities to Meet Increased Demand**

TORONTO, Sept. 29, 2011 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or "the Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods and natural health products, today announced that it intends to further expand its vertically integrated non-dairy beverage processing and packaging capabilities with the expansion of the Company's Modesto, California operations.

The expansion will include the addition of further processing technologies which are expected to leverage existing packaging capabilities at the operation and increase the capacity at the Modesto plant by approximately 40%, and the Company's overall aseptic non-dairy beverage and broth capacity by approximately 10%. The expansion will commence in the fourth quarter of 2011 with full capacity expected to be on-line early in the third quarter of 2012.

The expansion is required to meet growing demand for aseptic non-dairy beverages, broths and soups from existing customers, plus accommodate the production of new private label non-dairy beverages that are scheduled to be launched with a large club format retailer in early 2012.

SunOpta's vertically integrated non-dairy beverage capabilities utilize operations integrating raw material sourcing through ingredient production and finished packaged products, ensuring control of quality and organic certification and providing traceability from the farm gate to the retail shelf. Current production capabilities include natural and organic soymilks, rice beverages, almond beverages, hemp milk and broths, plus the Company's recently launched sunflower beverage which is being sold under the SoL™ brand name. Once this capacity expansion is completed the Company will have production capacity of between 250 and 300 million quarts of non-dairy beverages and broths, dependent upon product mix.

SoL™ sunflower beverage is a delicious new addition to the non-dairy beverage category that is made from wholesome sunflower seeds grown on American family farms. SunOpta is one of the largest processors of confection sunflower seeds in the world and the development of a sunflower beverage adds further value to and extends the Company's vertically integrated production capabilities.

SoL™ sunflower beverage is naturally free of the eight most common food allergens, which include soy, dairy, wheat, and tree nuts. SoL™ also provides an excellent source of Vitamin E, Folic Acid, Calcium, Vitamin D, and Phosphorus. Each 8 oz. serving provides 50% of the recommended daily allowance for Vitamin E, 30% for Calcium, 25% for Vitamin D, and 20% for Folic Acid. The product is available in shelf stable, aseptic 32 ounce Tetra Pak containers and comes in three flavors: Vanilla, Original, and Unsweetened and is currently distributed nationwide through United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI) and is available in supermarkets such as Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Markets.

### **About SunOpta Inc.**

SunOpta Inc. is a leading global company focused on natural, organic and specialty foods and natural health 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. (a Toronto Stock Exchange listed company), 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 anticipated completion date of the proposed expansion, the estimated production capacity following the proposed expansion, management's expectations regarding the potential impact of expanding non-dairy beverage processing and packaging capabilities, the addition of a new non-dairy private label beverage product for

a club format retailer plus the benefits of consuming sunflower beverage. Terms and phrases such as "intends", "will include", "expected", "will commence", "scheduled to be" and "will have" 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 labour, construction, administrative and/or regulatory issues which might delay completion of the proposed expansion or the launch of the Company's new private label non-dairy beverages, consumer preferences and acceptance of the Company's new beverage products, potential manufacturing and processing issues or delays and whether or not the additional production capacity and the addition of new private label non-dairy beverage products 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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