



May 25, 2012

## **SunOpta Enters Into Agreement to Divest Its Canadian Based Natural Health Products Business**

TORONTO, May 25, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to sell its Canadian natural health products distribution business (operated as Purity Life Natural Health Products) to an affiliate of Banyan Capital Partners ("Banyan"). The transaction, valued at CDN \$14,700,000, before transaction costs, is subject to certain conditions and pre-closing matters and is expected to close early in June, 2012.

Purity Life Natural Health Products ("Purity") distributes a wide range of natural health products including dietary supplements, vitamins, natural body care and earth friendly household goods throughout Canada, and also manufactures a number of natural health care products. Purity is believed to be the largest stand-alone distributor of these products in Canada. The business formed part of the Company's [International Foods Group](#). Purity has annual revenues of approximately CDN \$60 million and contributed positively to SunOpta's first quarter 2012 earnings. The sale is expected to have a modest dilutive effect on earnings per share prior to the redeployment of the funds by the Company.

Banyan Capital Partners is an affiliate of Connor, Clark & Lunn Financial Group ("CC&L Financial Group"), a multi-boutique asset management firm that provides a broad range of distinct and independently managed investment products and services to Canadian individual and institutional investors. CC&L Financial Group and its affiliated companies collectively manage approximately \$40 billion in financial assets under management.

Under the terms of the agreement, Banyan will pay cash on closing of CDN \$14,000,000 and provide a CDN \$700,000 note which is contingent on future EBITDA earnings targets. Matthew James, the existing President of Purity, will continue to lead the business under its new ownership group. All of the employees currently involved directly with the operations will be offered employment with Banyan.

Matthew James, President of Purity commented, "All of us at Purity are very excited about our new ownership group who are committed to the long-term stability and growth of our business. With our seasoned team of professionals remaining intact and based out of Acton, Ontario, we remain focused on improving the quality of the services that we supply as well as the innovation that we provide to the marketplace."

Steve Bromley, President and Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta commented, "As part of our strategy to focus on our core integrated natural and organic foods sourcing and processing platform, we divested of our food distribution assets in mid-2010, and the divestiture of our natural health products assets and operations will complete our exit from the distribution business. This transaction further simplifies and focuses our business model while strengthening our balance sheet and positioning our Company for future growth opportunities. We believe Banyan will be a great owner for the business being they are Canadian based and are committed to continued development of the national natural health products distribution platform they have acquired. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the team at Purity for their hard work and commitment and wish them continued success under Banyan's leadership."

### **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 66.2% 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 anticipated closing of the sale of Purity, the expected dilutive effect of the sale on earnings per share and the continued development of Purity's national natural health products distribution platform. The terms and phrases "expected", "simplifies and focuses", "believe", "continued", 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 to completion of the sale transaction will be satisfied or waived and that there are no material unanticipated variations in budgeted costs. 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 delays or inability to obtain all third party and regulatory approvals, inability of either the Company or Banyan to satisfy certain conditions of closing, changes to Banyan's business plan and priorities 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.

CONTACT: For further information, please contact:

SunOpta Inc.

Steve Bromley, President & CEO

Tony Tavares, Vice President & COO

Robert McKeracher, Vice President & CFO

John Dietrich, VP Corporate Development & Secretary

Susan Wiekenkamp, Information Officer

Tel: 905-455-2528, ext. 103

[susan.wiekenkamp@sunopta.com](mailto:susan.wiekenkamp@sunopta.com)

Website: [www.sunopta.com](http://www.sunopta.com)