



SunOpta Enters Into an Agreement to Divest Canadian Food Distribution Assets

TORONTO, May 11, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement with United Natural Foods, Inc. ("UNFI") and a wholly-owned subsidiary of UNFI to sell the Company's Canadian Food Distribution Assets for cash consideration of approximately CDN \$68 million. The transaction is subject to certain customary closing conditions and is expected to be completed by early June 2010.

The Food Distribution Assets included in this transaction form part of the [SunOpta Distribution Group](#) ("SDG"). SunOpta will retain the natural health products distribution and manufacturing assets which represent the balance of the assets in SDG. Active employees currently directly involved in the Canadian food distribution operations will be offered employment with UNFI, the leading distributor of natural, organic and specialty foods in the United States.

For fiscal 2009, the SunOpta Distribution Group realized revenues of US \$237.3 million. The Canadian food distribution operations generated revenues of US \$169.6 million and positive operating earnings while the natural health products operations generated the balance of the revenues of US \$67.7 million, realizing negative operating earnings due in most part to additional costs in the year related to the relaunch of a number of natural health products brands. The Company expects to realize a net gain on the sale of the Canadian food distribution assets, dependent upon a number of closing matters and related costs. In addition, the transaction is expected to have a small dilutive effect of \$0.02 on earnings per share in 2010, prior to the expected gain on the sale. Net proceeds from the sale will be used to reduce existing debt.

"This acquisition is the latest step in our strategy to grow our organic and specialty foods business and represents an opportunity for UNFI to diversify its operations by entering into the Canadian market," commented Steve Spinner, President and Chief Executive Officer of UNFI. "We are excited about entering the dynamic Canadian market and feel terrific in welcoming this business to our organization."

Steve Bromley, President and Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta, commented, "In 2002, we started to build our natural, organic and specialty food and natural health products distribution business in Canada. We are very proud of the attractive platform that has been put in place. Divesting the food distribution assets is an important milestone in our strategy to focus on our core food manufacturing platform, strengthening our balance sheet and positioning the Company for the future. We have long admired UNFI's strong values and commitment to the natural, organic and specialty foods industry, and believe they will bring great value to the Canadian marketplace. We want to express our sincere appreciation to our dedicated employees for their years of hard work and dedication and wish them continued success under UNFI's leadership."

About United Natural Foods

United Natural Foods, Inc. (<http://www.unfi.com>) carries and distributes more than 60,000 products to more than 17,000 customer locations nationwide. The Company serves a wide variety of retail formats including conventional supermarket chains, natural product superstores, independent retail operators and the food service channel. United Natural Foods, Inc. was ranked by Forbes in 2005 as one of the "Best Managed Companies in America," ranked by Fortune in 2006 - 2010 as one of its "Most Admired Companies," winner of the Supermarket News 2008 Sustainability Excellence Award, and recognized by the Nutrition Business Journal for its 2009 Environment and Sustainability Award.

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 products 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) (66.4% owned by SunOpta), a producer, distributor, and recycler of environmentally friendly industrial minerals; 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. These forward-looking statements are based on information available to us on the date of this release, and are attributable solely to SunOpta and not to UNFI or any other person or company. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, the anticipated closing of the sale of the Canadian food distribution assets and the estimated dilutive effect of the sale transaction on earnings per share. Terms and phrases such as "will", "expected", "continue", "positions" and other similar terms and phrases are intended to identify these forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements 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 management's best judgment based on current facts and assumptions that management considers reasonable, 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. Forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause the actual results, performance or achievements of the Company to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements including those detailed 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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