



SunOpta Provides Update on Arbitration Ruling Related to SunOpta BioProcess Inc.

TORONTO, Feb. 18, 2010 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. ("SunOpta" or the "Company") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today provided details related to the recently rendered decision of the Arbitrator in *SunOpta et al v Abengoa Bioenergy New Technologies Inc. et al*. This action was initiated by SunOpta in early 2008 and subsequently was referred to arbitration in order to i) clarify disputed provisions of a Technology Development Agreement ("TDA") between the parties, and ii) to recover damages associated with breach of the TDA and misappropriation of trade secrets resulting from work completed by SunOpta under various agreements.

Under the TDA, SunOpta BioProcess, Inc. ("SBI") and Abengoa Bioenergy New Technologies, Inc. ("ABNT") jointly developed a dilute acid hydrolysis biomass preparation and pretreatment system (the "system") useful in the production of cellulosic ethanol. A version of this system was installed at Abengoa Energia's cellulosic ethanol plant in Salamanca, Spain. As part of its claim, SunOpta alleged that ABNT misappropriated the system and used it in other ABNT cellulosic ethanol projects in contravention of SunOpta's exclusive supply rights.

After a hearing, the arbitrator ruled that, as a result of ABNT's decision to not purchase the required number of systems as per the TDA, ABNT forfeited its exclusive rights to exploit the system, and that SunOpta, in lieu of monetary damages, could sell the system to other cellulosic ethanol producers. Prior to the arbitrator's award, SBI had agreed in the TDA to abstain from entering the cellulosic ethanol market using the jointly developed technology.

In addition, the arbitrator also ruled that the information SunOpta shared with ABNT during the parties' joint development work was not a trade secret, as that information could be found in the public domain. SunOpta maintains its rights in its continuous auto hydrolysis system and ABNT was awarded no rights in the system other than to information deemed to be available in the public domain and not patented by SunOpta. Continuous auto hydrolysis remains the core fiber handling and pretreatment process utilized by SBI in its various applications including the production of cellulosic ethanol.

SBI continues to develop new and improved technologies to be deployed in the production of cellulosic ethanol and other biomass-based products, including its recently announced projects in China and Canada. The addition of dilute acid hydrolysis processing technologies to SBI's portfolio enhances SBI's range of capabilities in the area of fiber preparation and pretreatment. SBI continues to pursue a number of unique and proprietary processes applicable to fiber preparation and pretreatment and downstream processes and believes these fields offer solid growth opportunities.

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) (66.5% 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>

About SunOpta BioProcess Inc.

SBI 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 with respect to SBI's plans to continue to develop new and improved

technologies and growth opportunities that may be available to SBI 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. Forward looking statements are based on information available to the Company 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 agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties 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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