



SunOpta to Commence Commissioning of California Processing and Packaging Operation in March 2009

Commences Production of Organic Soymilk for International Food Service Restaurant Company Utilizing Vertically Integrated Soymilk Operations

TORONTO, Feb 25, 2009 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- SunOpta Inc. (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that the SunOpta Grains and Foods Group expects to commence commissioning of a new soy processing and aseptic packaging operation located in Modesto, California in March 2009 with the facility on schedule for commercial production late in the second quarter of 2009.

The Modesto, California facility will produce and package organic aseptic soymilk and other beverages, plus expand the Company's product offering into other alternative beverage and aseptically packaged product categories. Strategically, it is anticipated that this additional facility will enable SunOpta to meet continued growth in demand and geographically leverage its vertically integrated soymilk model, providing its customers with a cost effective and quality product, while at the same time driving social, economic and environmental sustainability via geographic production in close proximity to consumers. The new Modesto facility, when combined with the Company's aseptic packaging facility located in Alexandria, Minnesota, is expected to bring total annual production capacity to approximately 250 to 300 million quarts of soymilk and other beverages per year once fully operational.

At the same time the Company announced that it has commenced production of an innovative and proprietary organic aseptic soymilk for an international food service restaurant company utilizing the capabilities of the Company's vertically integrated soymilk model. Based on a recently finalized supply agreement, SunOpta will supply organic soymilk for this customer's stores in the United States and Canada, with full product implementation expected over the first half of 2009. Once fully implemented, it is expected that this new business will represent incremental revenues to SunOpta of approximately \$15 to \$20 million annually. Production is initially being supplied from existing soy operations and will be expanded to include production from SunOpta's new soy processing and packaging facility in Modesto, California. The production of this product will utilize organic soybeans produced by North American organic growers who are committed to environmentally sound and sustainable farming practices.

SunOpta believes that its vertically integrated soymilk model is unique and integrated from soy bean sourcing through to packaged products, ensuring SunOpta's control of quality and organic certification and providing direct traceability from the farm gate to the retail shelf. Soy beans are initially sourced and processed at SunOpta's main grains handling facilities in Hope, Minnesota and Moorhead, Minnesota and are also processed at other third party locations. The processed soy beans are then delivered to SunOpta's ingredient processing plants in Alexandria, Minnesota, Heuvelton, New York and Afton, Wyoming where they are converted into liquid concentrated soy base and other soy based food ingredients. The concentrated soy base is then transported to SunOpta's aseptic packaging facilities and third party co-pack partners for blending, packaging and subsequent delivery to our customers.

Allan Routh, President of the SunOpta Grains and Foods Group commented, "We are very pleased to be on schedule with our new state of the art processing and packaging facility and to have been selected as a supplier for this international food service restaurant company. Via our vertically integrated organic soymilk model we will be able to provide a proprietary, great tasting soymilk while at the same time driving tangible social and environmental benefits via reduced packaging waste and sustainable organic agricultural practices."

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is an operator of high-growth ethical businesses, focusing on integrated business models in the natural and organic food 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) (66.6% 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>

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 and applicable Canadian securities legislation. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to the completion of the Modesto facility, the expected annual production capacity for soymilk and other beverages at our facilities in California and Minnesota, the potential benefits of this new business relationship to SunOpta including the expected incremental revenues, the timing of rollout of the supply agreement, and the benefits of the Company's vertically integrated soymilk model. The terms and phrases "expects", "will", "anticipates", "continued", "believes" and 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 on estimates and assumptions made by us in light of our experience and perception of historical trends and expected future developments as well as other factors we believe are appropriate in the circumstances including, but not limited to, general economic conditions, operating efficiencies, product pricing levels, consumer demand, supply constraints and the terms of the supply agreement and its anticipated success. Whether actual timing will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including, but not limited to, labour issues, ability to secure any required building permits, environmental issues, construction delays, ability to secure any required construction financing, problems with installation and operation of equipment, availability and prices of soya and other raw materials, competitive conditions, changes in consumer trends or preferences, as well as issues external to SunOpta encountered by the international food service restaurant 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. We assume no obligation to update these forward-looking statements for any reason, except as required by law.

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