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SunOpta Inc. Invests in Stand-Up Pouch Packaging Technology to Meet Growing Demand in Consumer Packaged Goods

TORONTO, Aug. 26, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on organic, non-genetically modified and healthy foods, has continued its investment in its consumer products business with the expansion of stand-up pouch packaging capabilities in its frozen fruit, roasted snacks and fruit snack platforms.

To meet growing customer demand, SunOpta has added new stand-up pouch packaging capabilities at its Buena Park, Calif. frozen fruit operation, and in its Wahpeton, N.D. roasted snack operation. Stand-up pouch capabilities will also be added at SunOpta's fruit snack operations in Omak, Wash., scheduled to be completed in the first half of 2016.

"Our recent investment in pouch stand-up packaging capabilities throughout our integrated platform meets the growing customer and consumer demand for stand-up pouches in multiple categories including frozen fruit, roasted snacks and fruit snacks," said Rik Jacobs, SunOpta President and Chief Operating Officer. "Stand-up pouches are quickly becoming preferred by many consumers, with 90 percent of consumers influenced by the package and 45 percent of consumers placing packaging ahead of price in buying decisions. The enhanced technology and added capacity has led to new customers and expanding order volumes from existing customers. Our investment is in line with our core two-touch strategy and supports our growth plans in value added consumer products."

In the frozen fruit operations the addition of a second stand-up pouch line was necessary to accommodate additional demand for this specific package type, and the new pouch packaging capability in roasted snacks has led to supplying new innovative products commencing in the third quarter. SunOpta currently outsources pouch packaged volumes for fruit snacks, which, in hand with newly contracted business scheduled to commence in early 2016, will allow this volume to be packaged internally, improving efficiency and control over finished product.

In addition to its new stand-up pouch packaging capabilities, SunOpta has significantly enhanced its consumer product goods portfolio with the recently announced acquisitions of Sunrise Growers and Niagara Natural. The transformative acquisition of Sunrise Growers is anticipated to close this fall. The acquisition is expected to provide SunOpta significant scale in private label frozen fruit, a growing market segment that aligns well with consumer demands for healthy, nutritious and minimally processed foods. The addition of Niagara Natural extends SunOpta's market presence in fruit snacks and, importantly, gives the company fruit snack manufacturing operations in both the West and East Coasts of North America. Both of these businesses have also recently invested in stand-up pouch capabilities.

About SunOpta Inc.

SunOpta Inc. is a leading global company focused on organic, non-genetically modified ("non-GMO") and specialty foods. SunOpta specializes in the sourcing, processing and packaging of organic and non-GMO food products, integrated from seed through packaged products; with a focus on strategic vertically integrated business models. SunOpta's organic and non-GMO food operations revolve around value-added grain, seed, fruit and vegetable based product offerings, supported by a global sourcing and supply infrastructure. SunOpta also holds an approximate 66% ownership position in Opta Minerals Inc. (TSX:OPM), a producer, distributor, and recycler of industrial minerals and silica-free abrasives. Opta Minerals is a non-core holding.

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 timing for adding stand-up pouch capabilities to the Company's fruit snack operations in Omak, Wash. and for commencing newly contracted fruit snack business as well as the anticipated closing date of the acquisition of Sunrise Growers. Terms and phrases such as "will", "scheduled", "expected", "believes", "intends" 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. 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 which include, but are not limited to: risks associated with expansion projects generally such as inability to obtain or delays in obtaining required regulatory approvals, cost overruns or unanticipated variations in budgeted costs, and labor, construction and other delays or issues; risks associated with the acquisition of Sunrise Growers generally such as the inability to obtain or delays in obtaining required approvals under applicable anti-trust legislation and other regulatory and third party consents and approvals, potential volatility in the capital markets and impact on the ability to complete the proposed debt and equity financings necessary to satisfy the purchase price, or adverse changes in the frozen fruit industry generally; local and global political and economic conditions; conditions in the securities market that are less favorable than expected; changes in demand for stand-up pouches, 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). 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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