



SunOpta Announces Opening of Natural and Organic Sesame Hulling Operation

TORONTO, Nov 19, 2009 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX News Network) -- SunOpta Inc. ("the Company" or "SunOpta") (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY) today announced that the SunOpta International Sourcing and Trading Group, in hand with its joint venture partner, has completed the construction of the first natural and organic sesame hulling plant in Ethiopia, operated as Selet Hulling Plc. ("Selet"). The operation is 35% owned by Tradin Organic Agriculture B.V., a division within the SunOpta International and Sourcing Group, and 65% owned by Kaleb Service Farmers House, an Ethiopian company.

Located near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the plant was funded by the joint venture partners with a financial grant from the Government of the Netherlands and has current capacity to process ten thousand metric tons of sesame per year with the potential to generate revenues in excess of \$20 million US. Selet's natural and organic sesame products will be sold exclusively by Tradin Organics to export markets to be used in the food ingredient and bakery industries. Additional investments will be contemplated to further process and add value to hulled sesame products as markets and applications are developed.

The facilities have been built to comply with international standards for food manufacturing and utilize state-of-the-art technologies including dry hulling and color sorting. A full quality assurance program has been implemented and extensive training and monitoring programs are in place to ensure that Selet's products comply with stringent quality standards, providing full traceability from the farm through production and delivery.

Selet will purchase sesame seeds from grower owned cooperatives representing over 1500 farmers in Humera, a region situated to the north of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Selet has also developed a research and development operation in Humera and is working on methods to improve product quality and farm yields. When combined with an equitable payment structure, Selet is creating a platform for sustainable agriculture in Ethiopia which will provide better incomes for farmers, improve the well-being of their families and provide needed support for local schools and other community infrastructure.

"The plant opening is the culmination of several years of hard work by the Selet team," said Gerard Versteegh, President of Tradin Organic Agriculture B.V. "We believe we not only have a very strong business opportunity in Ethiopia, but one that can really make a difference in the communities we do business in, having a positive impact on thousands of people. We are pleased to be part of this exciting venture and proud of our contribution to the economic development of this region."

The inaugural ceremony for the sesame hulling plant was attended by Ethiopia's President Girma Woldegiorgis, as well as several Ministers of the Ethiopian Government and the Dutch, Japanese and Canadian ambassadors to Ethiopia.

Tradin Organic Agriculture B.V. specializes in sourcing and selling organic products from all over the world, including certified organic and fair trade coffee from Ethiopia. The company is a division of the SunOpta International Sourcing and Trading Group and is headquartered in Amsterdam with offices and operations in several countries including China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Germany, and several other countries in the European Union.

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 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 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 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,

management's expectations regarding plant capacity to generate specified revenues and the anticipated benefits of the Selet platform with respect to agriculture in Ethiopia, income for farmers, the well-being of families and support for local schools and other community infrastructure. Terms and phrases such as "potential to generate", "will be contemplated", "to improve", "creating", "will provide", "believe", "can make a difference", 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, but not limited to, general economic conditions, product pricing levels, consumer trends, preferences and spending patterns, capabilities of the Company's suppliers and partners and potential changes in the political environment. Whether actual timing and results will agree with expectations and predications of the Company is subject to many risks and uncertainties including customers acceptance of the new products, potential manufacturing and processing issues or delays, competitive reaction and our ability to control input costs and achieve expected margins as well as those detailed under "Risk Factors" in the Company's Annual Report of 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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