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## **SunOpta's Hope, Minnesota Facility Becomes First to Receive Non-GMO/GE USDA Process Verified Program Certification**

MINNEAPOLIS, May 18, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- SunOpta Inc. (Nasdaq:STKL) (TSX:SOY), a leading global company focused on organic, non-genetically modified and specialty foods, announced its Hope, Minnesota facility is the first food manufacturing facility in the United States to receive U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Process Verified Program (PVP) verification for Non-Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)/Non-Genetically Engineered (GE) products.

In compliance with the AMS Quality Assessment Division policies and procedures, the USDA has granted approval for SunOpta's Hope facility to produce PVP verified Non-GE/GMO food-grade soybeans and corn. SunOpta's soybeans and corn will be the first produced in the United States to have the full auditing and verification of the USDA.

SunOpta's Hope facility processes Non-GMO and organic soybeans and corn, and the company has implemented the required quality management processes for food safety and transparency. SunOpta was granted approval for an initial six month period at its Hope facility, and will apply for a verification extension at the end of the period. SunOpta intends to expand the PVP standards at more facilities across its vertically integrated platform.

"Becoming the first PVP verified Non-GMO food manufacturing facility in the United States is a great honor for SunOpta and consistent with our commitment to Non-GMO and organic food products which are in high demand with today's consumers," said Steve Bromley, Chief Executive Officer of SunOpta. "Having USDA verify that we are complying with our standards ensures that our customers can be confident that they are getting the highest quality Non-GMO soybeans and corn. We look forward to implementing the USDA PVP program at other SunOpta facilities across our vertically integrated platform."

The USDA program verification makes it possible for SunOpta to label its food-grade soybeans and corn as non-GMO/GE.

"I applaud the work of both SunOpta and USDA for their innovative approach," said United States Congressman Tim Walz, who represents Minnesota's 1<sup>st</sup> District. "The voluntary certification gives certainty to consumers and is flexible enough that it doesn't put undue burdens on companies that choose to use GMOs in their products. This is the perfect example of the private sector and the public sector working in tandem to balance the needs of both industry and consumer."

### **About SunOpta Inc.**

SunOpta Inc. is a leading global company focused on organic, non-genetically modified ("non-GMO") and specialty foods. The Company 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. The Company'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. The Company 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.

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