



United Natural Foods To Adopt Hydrogen Fuel Cell Technology at Its Sarasota, FL Distribution Center

March 12, 2010

PROVIDENCE, R.I., March 12, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Complementing its culture of social responsibility and its commitment to utilizing clean energy, United Natural Foods, Inc. (Nasdaq: UNFI) today announced plans to adopt hydrogen fuel cell technology to power the lift truck fleet at its Sarasota, Florida distribution center. Intended to improve efficiency, productivity and reliability, 65 GenDrive(TM) fuel cell powered lift trucks will be mobilized at the Sarasota distribution facility, with a targeted completion date in June 2010. The Company will add 29 new hydrogen fuel cell-powered lift trucks, to its fleet, and 36 existing lift trucks will be retrofitted to hydrogen fuel cell technology.

"We consider environmental stewardship an essential component in every facet of our business. This hydrogen fuel cell project is further proof of UNFI's leadership as an environmentally-conscious organization by advancing the use and development of alternative-fuel technologies," commented Steve Spinner, UNFI's President and Chief Executive Officer.

As part of the Sarasota initiative to replace lead acid batteries and their associated charging equipment with hydrogen fuel cells, UNFI has partnered with a number of companies to implement the roll-out, including Plug Power Inc., (Nasdaq: PLUG), Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (NYSE: APD) and Abel Womack, Inc.

As background, a hydrogen fuel cell produces energy by combining hydrogen and oxygen in an electrochemical reaction that yields electricity, heat and water. Hydrogen is non-toxic, non-poisonous, the lightest of all gases and the most abundant element in the universe. By converting UNFI's Sarasota lift truck fleet to hydrogen fuel cells, the Company expects carbon emissions will be reduced by approximately 132 metric tons annually, an amount equivalent to the annual emissions of 35 automobiles.

Tom Dziki, Senior Vice President of Sustainable Development, commented, "This project is a natural extension of our strategy to create an environmentally and socially responsible environment in all the communities we serve. Hydrogen fuel cells not only provide greater productivity and lower operating costs but will be an important component of a clean energy future and we are happy to be pioneering the use of this technology in Florida. Once implemented, this fuel cell project is expected to create annual energy savings of approximately 640,000 kilowatt hours."

The 352,000 square-foot Sarasota facility, which employs approximately 160 associates, serves as a regional distribution hub for customers in the Southeastern United States.

About United Natural Foods

United Natural Foods, Inc. (<http://www.unfi.com/>) carries and distributes more than 60,000 products to more than 17,000 customer locations nationwide. The Company serves a wide variety of retail formats including conventional supermarket chains, natural product superstores, independent retail operators and the food service channel. United Natural Foods, Inc. was ranked by Forbes in 2005 as one of the "Best Managed Companies in America," ranked by Fortune in 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 as one of its "Most Admired Companies," winner of the Supermarket News 2008 Sustainability Excellence Award, and recognized by the Nutrition Business Journal for its 2009 Environment and Sustainability Award.

For more information on United Natural Foods, Inc., visit the Company's website at www.unfi.com.

"Safe Harbor" Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995: Statements in this press release regarding the Company's business that are not historical facts are "forward-looking statements" that involve risks and uncertainties and are based on current expectations and management estimates; actual results may differ materially. The risks and uncertainties which could impact these statements are described in the Company's filings under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, including its annual report on Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on September 30, 2009 and its quarterly reports on Form 10-Q filed thereafter, and include, but are not limited to, the Company's dependence on principal customers; the Company's sensitivity to general economic conditions, including the current economic environment, changes in disposable income levels and consumer spending trends; increased fuel costs; the Company's sensitivity to inflationary pressures; the relatively low margins and economic sensitivity of the Company's business; the ability to identify and successfully complete acquisitions of other foodservice distributors; and management's allocation of capital and the timing of capital expenditures. Any forward-looking statements are made pursuant to the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and, as such, speak only as of the date made. The Company is not undertaking to update any information in the foregoing reports until the effective date of its future reports required by applicable laws. Any projections of future results of operations are based on a number of assumptions, many of which are outside the Company's control and should not be construed in any manner as a guarantee that such results will in fact occur. These projections are subject to change and could differ materially from final reported results. The Company may from time to time update these publicly announced projections, but it is not obligated to do so.

SOURCE United Natural Foods, Inc.