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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

National Onion Labs, Inc Announces

"Pungency Plus™ Flavor Certification Program"

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National Onion Labs, Inc., (NOL) announces the availability of its' Pungency Plus™ flavor certification program for onions. NOL recognizes what foodservice professionals and consumers have known all along and this is that TASTE matters. With the Pungency Plus™ program NOL is refining its testing protocols to directly measure the flavor compounds which consumers TASTE. This program will help growers, distributors and retailers provide consumers a better tasting (sweet) onion.

The industry standard for evaluating pungency, the Pyruvic Acid test, does not directly measure the compounds which consumers taste. Pyruvic Acid is to onion flavor what smoke is to a fireworks display. Where there are a lot of fireworks, there is usually an abundance of smoke. When testing traditional Granex type onions the Pyruvic Acid test works very well with general acceptance of a limit around the 5.0 to 5.3 level for a sweet onion.

In the last 10 years many new varieties have been introduced which develop flavors that the pungency test does not adequately measure. In some cases one can obtain low Pyruvic Acid numbers but have onions with strong and often unpleasant flavors. The Pungency Plus™ program addresses these limitations by measuring and reporting the full consumer taste experience of Heat, Flavor Strength, After-Taste and Sweetness.

HEAT is measured by the Lachrymatory Factor Test which identifies the offensive compounds that cause eye tearing, mouth burn and heat.

FLAVOR STRENGTH is measured by the Pungency and Thiosulfinate Profile Tests. The Pungency Test measures Pyruvic Acid which indicates the quantity of the onion flavor compounds. The pungency test has limitations as some onions are reported as

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having low pungency, but do not taste sweet. The Thiosulfinate Profile Test, more than 7 years in development, addresses these limitations.

AFTER-TASTE is measured by the Thiosulfinate Profile Test which directly measures total onion flavor strength. The Thiosulfinate profile test is also used to identify negative flavor compounds that impart metallic, cabbage, bitter and other strong off-flavors. This test is used to help identify mild (and even pungent) onions that simply taste bad!

SWEETNESS is measured by the Total Sugars Test. Brix (Soluble Solids) is normally used to measure sweetness in fruits and vegetables. However, onions contain compounds which interfere with the Brix test. The Total Sugars Test directly measures the sugars that contribute to the consumer experience of sweetness.

"We have known for a long time that onion taste; sweet, mild, or hot is determined by the interaction between variety, location, and grower management", said David Burrell, NOL's President. "Conducting the correct field based test is the only way to know if consumers will have a sweet, mild, or hot taste experience." These advanced testing tools are available for public use and are being actively used by National Onion Labs in the identification and certification of onions as Certified Extra Sweet®, Certified Sweet®, Certified Medio™ or Certified Sizzler™.

NOL, located in the heart of the Georgia Vidalia® onion region, is the acknowledged industry leader in flavor analysis and certification of onions. Since its inception, NOL has tested more than 1.3 million onions utilizing an array of public and internally developed tests to identify factors that cause an onion to provide pleasant or unpleasant taste experiences.

Formed in 1998, NOL has a global scope servicing clients and conducting field surveys in more than 12 US states and 14 countries. More information on the Pungency Plus™ program and on National Onion Labs, Inc. is available by contacting:

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Resources:

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