



The National Food Laboratory, Inc. (The NFL)

6363 Clark Avenue, Dublin CA 94568-3097

925-828-1440 fax 925-833-9239

www.TheNFL.com

Media Release

CONTACT: Jena Roberts
Vice President, Sales and Marketing
The National Food Laboratory, Inc.
Phone: 925-551-4205
Fax: 925-833-9239
Email: RobertsJ@TheNFL.com

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For Immediate Release

FDA Accepts Filing Prepared by The NFL for the 1st Low-Acid Rotary Aseptic Bottle Filler

(Dublin, CA) –The National Food Laboratory, Inc. (The NFL), the global leader in aseptic consulting, announced today that it successfully assisted HP Hood LLC in obtaining notification from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) accepting filing of the first rotary bottle filler intended for packaging low-acid beverages in the United States.

Dr. Wilfredo Ocasio, Vice President of Process Research and Microbiology for The NFL, said, “We served as the processing authority on behalf of the processing company, HP Hood LLC.” “This has been a complex project, actually starting five years ago with our initial work assisting Shibuya in designing and executing validation protocol to insure their equipment would be capable of meeting FDA requirements for operation of low-acid aseptic equipment in the U.S.” He continued, “Additionally, we assisted in preparing and submitting all filing documents to the FDA on behalf of Hood.” “This entire project has been one that we were very pleased to be part of.”

The aseptic processing system provides a package that locks out air, seals in nutrients and flavor, and allows its contents to remain un-refrigerated for up to six months or more. For those reasons alone, it’s been called the packaging of the future. It is this sterile processing and packaging environment that allows the products to be shelf stable without the use of preservatives.

“We think that HP Hood will be very pleased with their new system,” states Ken Saisho, President of Shibuya International. In addition, the filler is accurate to less than one half gram and is approved for use with HDPE bottles.

The FDA is responsible for overseeing all low-acid aseptic machines in the U.S. While other aseptic dairy processing and packaging machines exist in the U.S., the one at Hood’s Winchester Plant was manufactured by Shibuya Kogyo Co Ltd. of Japan, is the first and only high speed rotary low-acid aseptic dairy application in the country to file with the FDA. Hood worked closely with the FDA and their process authority, The NFL, to conduct validation testing and develop the required reports for the Low Acid Canned Food (LACF) filing. Testing began in November 2004 and the application was submitted to the FDA in early April 2005. The FDA accepted the filing without comment in June, allowing Hood to begin production.

“HP Hood, Shibuya and The National Food Laboratory, Inc. all went to tremendous lengths to make sure the development, safety and operation of the rotary filler met FDA regulatory requirements,” said John A. Kaneb, Chairman, President and CEO of HP Hood LLC. “We are pleased that our affiliation with The NFL allowed us to receive approval in just over two months. I would like to congratulate all who worked on this project with special thanks to the talented team at The NFL,” he added.

With over 25 years experience, The NFL regularly assists food processors and equipment manufacturers around the world with processing and regulatory compliance, product and process development of new and existing food products, consumer and sensory research, and food safety and quality support. Providing such a broad range of resources, The NFL offers collaborative solutions that get new products to market quicker and make protecting existing ones easier. With this latest FDA approval, The NFL remains the industry choice for aseptic equipment qualifications and filings.

For more information on this issue, or to arrange an interview with Dr. Wilfredo Ocasio of The NFL or Ken Saisho of Shibuya International, contact Jena Roberts, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, at 925-551-4205, or via email at RobertsJ@TheNFL.com. A photo of the high speed rotary aseptic bottle filler is attached.

About The NFL

The NFL is a contract research and development facility specializing in Product & Process Development, Chemistry, Microbiology, Consumer and Sensory Research. They are the world leader in aseptic equipment qualifications for compliance with the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations. The NFL has assisted with over 90% of all the filling equipment manufacturers to validate their first aseptic system packaging low-acid product in the US. The NFL is a global resource for food and food related industries. Visit them at www.TheNFL.com or call them at 925-828-1440.

About HP Hood LLC

Founded in 1846, today Hood is one of the largest branded dairy operators in the United States. In 2004, HP Hood acquired Binghamton, New York-based Crowley Foods and Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Kemps, LLC. Hood also has national and super regional franchise rights to process and sell extended-shelf-life products including LACTAID, Nesquik, Coffee-mate, Stonyfield Farm Organic Milk, Arizona FRESH Iced Tea and Southern Comfort Eggnog. For more information about Hood, please visit www.Hood.com.

About Shibuya International

Shibuya International, Inc. is a US office in Modesto, CA of Shibuya Kogyo Co., Ltd., corporate headquarters in Kanazawa, Japan. Shibuya has been manufacturing bottle filling and capping systems for more than 70 years and is one of the world's leading suppliers of aseptic filling equipment for plastic bottles with years of experiences and installations of 35 aseptic fillers worldwide for low acid foods. For more information about Shibuya, please visit www.shibuya.co.jp or call them at 209-529-6466.

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