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## ***Fresh Solution Farms Opens New State-of-the-Art Facility Creation of new network reduces food miles of potato and onion supply***

WHITE PIGEON, Mich. (Oct. 23, 2008) – Fresh Solution Farms LLC, a marketer, grower, packer, and shipper of potatoes, opened a state-of-the-art facility in Mottville Township, Mich. Backed by a Michigan Economic Development Corp. grant and six grower-owners, Fresh Solution Farms will produce top quality, table-stock potatoes that can be distributed across the Midwest.

“As transportation costs increase, consumers are more concerned with purchasing locally or regionally grown produce,” said Greg Salisbury, Fresh Solution Farms general manager. “We are one of the first facilities in the country to have a high-tech washing, grading and pre-package dry storage system of this magnitude that emphasizes supplying top notch local products with minimal food miles.”

The new facility takes potato processing to the next level with five receiving methods and three-stage washing and grading systems. The three stage wash process includes agitation, a brush or tumble scrub and concludes with an anti-microbial ozone infused rinse. To ensure consistent size and quality in every pack, the potatoes route through a photographic optical sorter, then an X-ray imaging sorter during the grading process. The third and final grading step is the Customer Acceptance Review Evaluation (CARE) where plant employees visually inspect all potatoes immediately before they are bagged and shipped. In addition, throughout the plant, conveyers and loading points are designed so that the potatoes never drop more than eight inches to guard against bruising.

The washed and graded potatoes are conveyed to one of 38 tanks to dry and cool prior to packaging. Each 25,000 or 50,000 pound tank is labeled with the specific size and grade it contains so finished product is packed to order with fresh, clean, dry potatoes and shipped the same day. The plant also is set up so it can handle onion cross-docking today and plans to add processing equipment in the future.

Fresh Solution Farms is the flagship facility of the network bearing its name. The Fresh Solutions Farms Network is a partnership of five multi-generational potato and onion growers across the country. This network will ensure that the freshest product is delivered to the consumer with the lowest food miles possible – no matter what season.

Fresh Solution Farms has already connected with local foodservice and retail grocery customers, including Meijer, a Midwest grocer, headquartered in Grand Rapids, Mich.

“Meijer strives to use local suppliers and growers to provide the best products to our consumers. The opening of the Fresh Solution Farms facility gives us the opportunity to add to our portfolio of locally-grown produce by

purchasing high-quality Michigan-grown and packed potatoes. We can also leverage the Fresh Solution Farms Network to bring the best regional produce to our consumers on a year-round basis while still supporting a local business,” said Mark Stevenson, director of produce merchandising for Meijer.

The other network partners are: Basin Gold Co-op based in Washington, Michael Farms in Ohio, and Sterman Masser Inc. and Keystone Potato Products of Pennsylvania.

“The network partnership enables customers to receive the best products with the lowest transportation costs possible. It also enables all of the network partners to expand their reach,” said Salisbury.

#### ABOUT FRESH SOLUTION FARMS LLC

Fresh Solution Farms LLC is a marketer, distributor and grower of high-quality fresh, processed, and value-added potatoes and onions for the retail grocery and foodservice industries. Grower owned and operated, with the largest irrigated production acreage in the Great Lakes region and a state-of-the-art washing, storage and packing facility in White Pigeon, Mich., Fresh Solution Farms delivers high quality product with minimal food miles and a lower transportation cost to customers throughout the Midwest. Founded in 2007 by six multi-generational potato and onion companies that span North America, Fresh Solution Farms is the flagship operation in the Fresh Solution Farms Network.

Founding partners of Fresh Solution Farms LLC are: Sterman Masser Inc., Michael Farms Inc., Basin Gold Cooperative Inc., Walther Farms, Sandyland Farms Partnership and Eugene Miller.

#### ABOUT FRESH SOLUTION FARMS NETWORK

The Fresh Solution Farms Network is a partnership of five multi-generational potato and onion companies that own production acreage and processing facilities across North America. Each Network Partner provides high quality fresh, processed and value-added potatoes and onions from regional operations, providing customers with products grown close to home while reducing food miles and transportation costs. Through their supply and logistics optimization services, the companies in the network are uniquely positioned to efficiently provide a full line of “seasonally best” local, regional and nationally sourced products year round. The Fresh Solution Farms Network Partners are committed to driving profitable category growth through leadership in innovation, category management, state-of-the-art operations, and sustainable agricultural and supply chain practices.

The Fresh Solution Farms Network Partners are: Sterman Masser Inc., Keystone Potato Products LLC, Michael Farms Inc., Basin Gold Cooperative Inc., and Fresh Solution Farms LLC.

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