



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Vilma Consuegra, Acosta, (904) 245-6742

Natural Specialty Sales, Inc., Enters Letter of Intent to Acquire Specialty Partners, Inc.

(Denver; January 15, 2004) —Natural/Specialty Sales Inc. (NSSI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Acosta, Inc., has entered into a letter of intent with Tree of Life, Inc. to acquire the assets of its subsidiary Specialty Partners, Inc., a specialty and natural foods sales and marketing company. The acquisition is expected to close in February 2004.

According to NSSI President Jamie Gronowski, the Specialty Partners' acquisition strengthens NSSI's presence in three key areas of the country. "For the last year NSSI has been working to build our business in the northeast, midwest and southeast. This acquisition will help us further that strategy," Gronowski said.

Furthermore, the acquisition will strengthen the overall NSSI organization by providing additional resources against retail execution and will allow NSSI to enhance the services it currently offers to clients and customers.

"In the process of reviewing Tree of Life's strategy of returning to our core competencies, it became evident that the brokerage activities of Specialty Partners were not core to our future business," said Richard A. Thorne, chairman and CEO of Tree of Life. "Consequently, we searched for a suitable company that Specialty Partners would complement, while at the same time benefit our Specialty Partners associates. We believe that Specialty Partners is a perfect fit for Acosta and NSSI, and that the acquisition is advantageous for all parties."

Natural/Specialty Sales, Inc. (NSSI) brings small company experience to the dynamic natural, specialty and ethnic food markets. NSSI is a unique service offering which provides the only national solution for natural, specialty and ethnic food manufacturers; dedicated contacts for retailers and distributors in these classes of trade; and senior management with over 150 years of experience in natural and specialty foods. NSSI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Acosta, Inc.

Tree of Life, Inc. is the world's leading marketer and distributor of natural and specialty foods, serving customers throughout the United States and Canada. Tree of Life, Inc., parent company of Specialty Partners, Inc., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Wessanen U.S.A., Inc., a subsidiary of Koninklijke Wessanen. The parent company, Wessanen, has over two centuries of experience in the food industry.

Acosta Sales and Marketing Company

Acosta Sales and Marketing Company is a leading full-service sales and marketing agency in North America, providing outsourced sales, merchandising, marketing, and promotional services to manufacturers in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry. Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., Acosta has operations throughout the U.S. and Canada. For more information visit www.acosta.com.