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SAKAE SUSHI SCORES WITH FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION

- Two outlets certified; new initiative to enhance robust quality assurance programme

24 January 2008, Singapore – Sakae Sushi, Singapore’s largest Japanese food chain managed by Singapore Exchange-listed Apex-Pal International Ltd (‘The Group’ or ‘Apex-Pal’), has set another milestone with the attainment of the international food safety standard – Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, or HACCP in short. Its outlets at Bugis Junction and Changi Airport, Terminal 2 became the first two restaurants to benefit from a pilot Food Safety Programme launched by SPRING Singapore in 2006.

2. This achievement is another signal of Apex-Pal’s long term commitment of serving safe quality food at the best value and excellent service. As one who has always taken pride in having the strictest food standards, the successful attainment of HACCP for its two pilot outlets gives added assurance that the food safety system in place has been measured against a best practice standard and found compliant.

3. “Food safety has always been a top priority on the company’s agenda given that we serve raw fish in our restaurants. The HACCP certification is a further testimony that we only serve food prepared with the highest hygiene standards and sets procedures which prevents unsafe food from reaching our customers,” said Mr Douglas Foo, Chairman and CEO of Apex-Pal.

Robust Quality Assurance Programme

4. HACCP certification for restaurants is the latest initiative that Apex-Pal has added to its robust quality assurance programme. Unlike HACCP for food factories and central kitchens which are mandatory, certification for restaurants is still voluntary. Yet Apex-Pal took the initiative to embark on it as it strongly believes in the importance of food safety. To this end, it has designed and implemented a quality assurance programme which includes the following:

- Sending food items for weekly laboratory tests for salmonella and bacteria count

- Investing in machinery such as rice ball and ramen machines to minimize food handling and thus, contamination
- Ensuring quality and freshness of food by just-in-time ordering of fresh produce and ingredients
- Training of food handlers and service staff
- Designing a belt management system which ensures that food items circulated on its conveyor belt are always safe for consumption

5. Moving forward, Apex-Pal plans to go beyond certifying its 36 Sakae Sushi outlets to HACCP. It hopes to be able to attain certification for all its restaurants in Singapore by 2012. This will include other food brands including Sakae@Campus, Sakae Teppanyaki, Sakae Pizza, Hei Sushi, Sho-U, Crepes & Cream and Uma Uma Men.

6. There's more. It is also looking into the feasibility of using radio signals through RFID (Radio Frequency Identity) chips to track the freshness of its raw and cooked food on the conveyor belts. Mr Foo added, "We are always on the lookout for new technology or ideas that will enhance the quality and freshness of our food. More importantly, they must be safe for consumption as we believe in serving only what we will want to eat ourselves."

About HACCP

HACCP, or Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, is a food safety system based on the Codex Alimentarius Code, which is internationally recognised as a basis for food safety control.

As a prevention-based food safety system, it provides a systematic method for analysing food processes, determining the possible hazards, and designating the critical control points necessary to prevent unsafe food from reaching the consumer. It also helps to identify and prevent microbial and other hazards in each food production phase including raw material procurement, manufacturing, distribution and usage of food products. Specifically, it includes steps designed to prevent problems before they occur and to correct deviations as soon as they are detected.

Therefore, a HACCP certificate proves that the food safety system adopted by the food factory, restaurant or central kitchen has been measured against a best practice standard. The certificate is issued by a third party accreditation body/registrar.

About Apex-Pal International Ltd

Apex-Pal is a homegrown leader in providing innovative food and beverage solutions. With more than a decade of experience under its belt, the Group constantly breaks new grounds offering Singapore a taste of international dining through brands including Sakae Sushi, Sakae@Campus, Sakae Teppanyaki, Sakae Pizza, Hei Sushi, Sho-U, Crepes & Cream and Uma Uma Men. It is supported by Nouvelle Events, the only specialist caterer in Singapore that offers an award winning and unique patented portable *kaiten* (conveyor belt) *sushi* experience. In addition, the Group is involved in franchising its brands, food import and distribution as well as business-to-business supplies.

Listed on the Singapore Exchange since 2003, Apex-Pal manages more than 80 outlets in Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and United States. The Group remains committed to global growth by exploring new emerging markets such as the Middle East, Hungary, Mongolia and Vietnam. In FY 2006, Apex-Pal achieved a record profit before tax of S\$6.7million on the back of a strong turnover of S\$66.6million.

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