BIOTECH NEWS

Avecia receives grant to develop anthrax vaccine

Avecia Biotechnology has received a $3.9 million grant from the US government to develop a version of Thraxine(tm), a recombinant protective antigen (rPA)-based anthrax vaccine, with increased stability. Due for completion by April 2008, the programme aims to develop a version of the vaccine that can be stored, transported and used without the need for a conventional cold chain. Improved temperature stability could reduce the overall cost of large-scale vaccine provision.

The grant has been made to Avecia by the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), an agency of the US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS).

Collaborators with Avecia on the new programme are Cambridge Biostability, working on glassification technology; Defence Science and Technology Laboratories (Dstl), developing microencapsulation technology; Lyosolutions, looking at freeze drying technology; and XstalBio, providing crystallisation technology.

The requirement for an anthrax vaccine is being driven by the US government for emergency use in the event of an anthrax-based attack on the US civil population. The latest NIAID award follows a $71 million contract awarded to Avecia in September 2003 for ongoing development of rPA vaccine.

Former BIA chairman awarded OBE

Dr David Chiswell, chairman of the BioIndustry Association (BIA) from January 2003 to December 2005, has been awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to the bioscience industry. Glyn Edwards, deputy chairman of the BIA since 2000, has also been awarded a Member of the British Empire (MBE) for his services to the bioscience industry.

Aisling Burnand, Chief Executive of the BIA, commented:

"The BIA wishes to wholeheartedly congratulate David and Glyn for these well-deserved honours. In addition to their substantial work in ensuring the scientific and commercial success of UK bioscience companies, both have given generously of their time to other initiatives of benefit for the sector as a whole, not least their roles on the Board of the BIA."

BMS to build US biologics facility

Bristol-Myers Squibb has announced plans to build a new large-scale multi-product bulk biologics manufacturing facility in Devens, Massachusetts, USA subject to final agreement between the company and the State. Construction is expected to begin by September 2006, and the facility is projected to be operationally complete in 2009. Commercial production of biologic compounds is expected to begin in 2011. Once operational, the site will employ an initial workforce of 350. The facility will be modular in design in order to accommodate future expansion, which would lead to a total of about 550 employees at the site.

The new facility will support increased production capacity for commercially available biologic compounds, such as ORENCIA® (abatacept), and biologic compounds currently in development, including the company's investigational treatments for solid organ transplant rejection and certain types of cancers.

"Biologics offer tremendous potential in treating a number of serious diseases, and they will play a key role in driving our company's future growth and success," said Peter R. Dolan, chief executive officer of BMS. "The investment in the Devens facility represents a significant commitment toward increasing manufacturing capacity so that we can meet future market demand and research production needs for the company's biologic compounds."

BMS currently manufactures biologic compounds in Syracuse, New York, and finishes and packages biologic compounds in Manati, Puerto Rico. The Syracuse site will remain a key component of the company's biologics strategy, serving as the centre of excellence in process development and early product launch for biologics. The Manati facility will continue to finish and package biologic compounds. In March, the company announced a $200 million investment to expand this facility to accommodate increased filling and finishing needs.

Thermo introduces new centrifuge series

Thermo Electron Corporation has introduced the IEC CL Series of centrifuges for clinical and research labs available in both ventilated and refrigerated versions. Consisting of nine models with capacities ranging from 0.5 to 3 litres, the series comprises a full range of compact, user-friendly centrifuges designed for use by clinical and research laboratory personnel for applications such as body fluid separation, microplate and micro-volume processing, and cell culture. The models in Thermo's IEC CL Series are designed to address the needs of the small medical lab through to the higher-volume research lab and clinical environment.

The series features the Auto-Lock® rotor exchange system

on the CL30 and CL31 models, making it fast, safe and convenient to switch between protocols requiring different sample formats. For further information visit www.thermo.com/centrifuge

Comprehensive conference programme at BioFine USA

The inaugural BioFine USA convention takes place at the Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, USA on September 7-8, 2006. This new networking opportunity for companies offering products and services to the life sciences sector features two conferences in conjunction with the exhibition, and will attract key executives from pharma, biopharma and biotech companies.

The two conferences are MedChem USA, organised by Scientific Update, and Biotech for Small-Molecule Therapeutics, organised by avakado Conferences. There are also workshops on Drug Metabolism and hERG.

The programme for the Biotech for Small-Molecule Therapeutics conference includes presentations San Diego based biotech companies, including Cylene Pharmaceuticals; TargeGen, Inc; Immusol, Inc; La Jolla Pharmaceutical Company; Innate Biotech, Inc; and Pharmatek Laboratories, Inc; European companies Biocortech and Graffinity Pharmaceuticals GmbH; and from strategic partners and service suppliers, including Excelsyn Molecular Development; BioCatalytics, Inc; Biotica Technology Limited; Merck Research Laboratories; Ingenza Ltd; Hovione; and Biacore AB.

Delegate fees for this 2-day conference are £595 or $995, with an early bird discount of 15 % for registrations received before July 15. Registration for the conference is now available online at www.biofineusa.com

ChemDiv to supply NervianoMS with discovery libraries

ChemDiv, Inc and Nerviano Medical Sciences have extended their collaboration for an additional two years, in which NervianoMS will use the services of ChemDiv for building and enriching its portfolio of proprietary discovery chemical libraries thus enhancing access to novel bioactive compounds. ChemDiv will also support NervianoMS's inventory with global logistic services.

"Our business relationship with ChemDiv is entering a phase of joint scientific endeavours with ambitious goals of innovation. The strengths of high-throughput screening and combinatorial chemistry at NervianoMS will be complemented with ChemDiv's fully aligned synthetic productivity. NervianoMS is a world leader in oncology-focused R&D and one of a handful that performs HTS with a throughput of millions of data points per year. It is also one of only a couple in the world that conducts HTS campaigns running assays in parallel. Useful new chemical entities will be generated and tested with an efficiency level of the highest standard," said Francesco Colotta, VP of Oncology , NervianoMS.

"Collaboration with NervianoMS, a leader in the area of oncology-focused drug discovery and development, further expands our capabilities to elaborate and accomplish custom synthesis projects to fulfill all requirements of our partners. Our alliance with Nerviano has already produced very promising results and we expect it to strengthen our competitive position," said Alexander Kiselyov, executive vice president of research & development at ChemDiv, Inc.

Degussa and Lynchem establish Chinese exclusive synthesis joint venture

Degussa and Chinese company Lynchem Co, Ltd have agreed to establish a joint venture for the production of custom fine chemicals. Degussa (China) Co, Ltd, based in Beijing, an affiliate of Degussa AG, will acquire 51 per cent of Lynchem. The remaining 49 percent will be held by the current owners. Closing of the transaction is expected before the end of the year. The new company will operate under the name Degussa Lynchem Co, Ltd and will be fully integrated into Degussa's global network..

avakado Ltd - new member of life science association BIOCOM

avakado Ltd, the publisher of ***sp²*** and organiser of the BioFine series of conventions, is now a member of the California-based life sciences trade association BIOCOM. avakado's inaugural BioFine USA Convention takes place at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego on September 7 - 8, 2006. The company is working with a number of BIOCOM members in presenting the Biotech for Small Molecule Therapeutics conference as part of the convention. This includes presentations from Cylene Pharmaceuticals; TargeGen, Inc; Immusol, Inc; La Jolla Pharmaceutical Company; Merck Research Laboratories; and Pharmatek Laboratories, Inc.

For further information on attending the BioFine USA Convention go to www.biofineusa.com

Cellexus Biosystems moves to new headquarters

Cellexus Biosystems PLC has relocated its headquarters the new Hereward Innovation Centre in March, Cambridgeshire, UK. The Centre is designed to support the expansion of fast-growing early-stage companies, with suites of offices, laboratories, production, storage and clean area facilities. Cellexus Biosystems is the first company to relocate to the Hereward Innovation Centre.

Cellexus Biosystems is developing a range of disposables to help researchers in the biopharmaceutical industry and academia develop new products from cell lines. The company has already developed its core technology from which a range of products is being created. Three products will be developed all based around the CellexusBag™ and will be marketed under the name CellMaker Lite™. These products potentially offer significant technological improvements over existing products for cell culture and cell growth in the developing disposables market. A patent application was filed in 2005.

BIOTECH NEWS

European Patent for Domantis' half-life extension technology

Human domain antibody (dAb) therapeutics company Domantis has been granted a European Patent with broad composition-of-matter claims protecting its 'AlbudAb' technology. AlbudAbs are dAbs that specifically bind to serum albumin and they can dramatically enhance the half-life and efficacy of any molecule attached to them. The granted patent covers two or more dAbs linked to one another, where at least one dAb binds to serum albumin. The patent is the first granted in a series of filings based on Domantis' AlbudAb approach. The company's lead AlbudAb programme will enter late-stage preclinical testing this year.

Domantis' executive vice president and chief scientific officer Dr Ian Tomlinson said: "We are delighted that such a broadly applicable technology has now been granted such extensive patent coverage. As part of Domantis' Albutherapeutics franchise, we are using the AlbudAb approach to further expand our extensive pipeline of proprietary products, both by improving existing drugs and by creating a range of entirely new drugs with exceptional half-lives. We expect our lead AlbudAb to enter late stage preclinical testing this year."

The EP1517921B patent provides Domantis with dominant composition-of-matter protection until 2023 and covers all major European markets. Coverage is provided for various formats, directed against any therapeutic target, and for numerous specific therapeutic targets. Methods of producing AlbudAb products, pharmaceutical compositions of AlbudAb products, nucleic acids encoding them, vectors and host cells are also protected. The patent complements other worldwide IP in the company's portfolio that cover AlbudAbs conjugated to non-antibody drugs.

Combined antibody ranges from AbD Serotec

AbD Serotec, a division of MorphoSys, is now a single source for more than 10,000 antibodies from the combined ranges of Serotec, Biogenesis, and Oxford Biotechnology. AbD Serotec has more than 20 years' experience in antibody production and the antibodies are available in bulk or can be prepared in custom formats for specific applications including diagnostic kits and screening assays.

AbD Serotec also includes the Antibodies by Design service, which generates highly specific, ELISA-positive novel custom monoclonal antibodies.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister visits Ranbaxy's R&D centre

The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Dato Sri. Mohd. Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak visited the Ranbaxy Research & Development Centre at Gurgaon, near Delhi, India on June 7, 2006. Ranbaxy's top management team, led by Malvinder Mohan Singh, CEO & MD, Ramesh Adige, executive director, and Dr Vijay Batra, vice president, R&D, welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister and his entourage. Ranbaxy showcased its research efforts and made a presentation on its global presence. The Deputy Prime Minister and his team acknowledged the quality of work Ranbaxy delivers across the globe, including in Malaysia. The delegation later toured the R&D facility. Malaysia is an important market for Ranbaxy. Reinforcing its commitment to this market, Ranbaxy Malaysia Sdn Bhd (RMSB), a subsidiary of Ranbaxy Laboratories Limited (RLL), commissioned its new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Sungai Petani, Kedah, Malaysia in August 2005, further complementing its existing manufacturing presence in the country. The therapeutic focus areas for Ranbaxy's Malaysian operations include cardiovasculars, antibiotics and gastrointestinals. A large number of the company's products are also brand leaders in their respective segments.

Ranbaxy set up operations in Malaysia in 1983, with the formation of a joint venture between RLL and its Malaysian shareholders.

The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Dato Sri. Mohd. Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak visiting Ranbaxy. Pictured with him are Malvinder Mohan Singh, CEO & MD of Ranbaxy (left) and Ramesh Adige, executive director (centre).

Prova constructs new R&D facility

Prova, the UK-based CMC contract development organisation, has announced the construction of a new £2.5 million R&D facility in Camberley. The new site, already well under development, will extend and expand Prova's analytical, formulation, regulatory and biologicals analysis capabilities in a 16,000 sq ft state-of-the-art facility. The building is being constructed by Scientific Lesser Ltd and is due to be completed in November 2006. All of the existing business will be transferred shortly after completion.

Prova has been providing a 'first-stop-shop' approach for pharmaceutical development activities since 1990. The company mainly supports 'high-tech/biotech' research-based companies with chemistry and pharmacy activities for early clinical and preclinical programmes for a wide range of international clients. In particular, the company provides pre-formulation, formulation, analytical method development, stability testing, transfer to GMP sites, regulatory support and project management for both biological and new chemical entities for Phase I/II studies in a GLP/GMP environment.

Nobilon and CoroNovative in virus discovery programme

Akzo Nobel's Nobilon International business, which is active in the field of human vaccines, is to work with the Dutch Erasmus Medical Center's spin-off, CoroNovative BV, to expand and accelerate CoroNovative's virus discovery programme. The companies have signed a joint R&D agreement to use their proprietary technologies for discovering new viruses that cause a variety of diseases, including conditions for which no infectious agents have so far been recognised, in oreder to develop novel treatments.

Nobilon will provide research funding and know-how to CoroNovative in exchange for preferential access to intellectual property outside the field of diagnostics. CoroNovative will choose an additional strategic partner in the field of in-vitro diagnostics. The collaboration will place special emphasis on respiratory syndromes, building on notable recent discoveries relating to SARS and another newly discovered human coronavirus, hCoV-NL63.

NPIL acquires Pfizer's Morpeth facility

Nicholas Piramal India Limited (NPIL) is to acquire the manufacturing facility of Pfizer, Inc located at Morpeth, UK. The site is one of Pfizer's global integrated facilities and has end-to-end production and supply chain capabilities that cover APIs, finished dosage, packaging and distribution. NPIL's wholly-owned UK subsidiary, NPIL Pharmaceuticals (UK) Limited has agreed to acquire the Morpeth facility on an asset purchase basis. The transaction includes a supply agreement in effect until November 2011 with potential revenues of more than $350 million. The Morpeth facilities are approved by the FDA and the MHRA, and act as a supply hub for certain Pfizer products supplied to the USA, Europe and Japan. The transaction is NPIL's third acquisition in the UK after its acquisition of Rhodia's Inhalation Anaesthetics business in December 2004 and the acquisition of the Avecia Pharmaceuticals custom manufacturng business in December 2005.

Global Bio Program at UC Berkeley

The inside story and network to Bio in Silicon Valley

The Global Bio Program being held at UC Berkeley's Center for Executive Development brings together high-potential and senior managers in life science companies to explore the strategies and tactics in commercialising science. Participants, through a six-day Program led by world renowned faculty and leading industry experts dealing with the core components of the commercialisation of science, will impart their insight and experience into how to perform within these areas to maximum potential.

The Program also features three special pre-module evening events at a variety of international embassies and consulates for global exposure to the bio industry. The kick-off session features a 'fireside chat' with luminaries of the industry who will talk about the history and the future of the industry. The Grande Finale of the Program is a holiday soirée that will host all previous alumni from the Global Bio Programs, in addition to the participants from the current Program. In short, participants will graduate from this Program with invaluable insight and powerful networks to deliver bottom-line value in this growing industry.

Module 1 - Translating Product Management into Profitability: November 13-14, 2006
Module 2 - Operational Strategies to Minimize Costs: December 4-5, 2006
Module 3 - Market Strategies for Innovation and Growth: December 11-12, 2006
For registration information contact: Lucy Jun, Prescience International, Partner of UC Berkeley's Center for Executive Development. Tel: +1 408 219 7197. Email: lucy@sjbiocenter.com

Ferro Pfanstiehl first approval for client-sponsored NCE

A new drug to combat myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) is the first client-sponsored high potency new chemical entity (NCE) developed and produced by fee-for-service provider Ferro Pfanstiehl Laboratories, Inc to obtain approval from the FDA. Ferro Pfanstiehl provided API development, validation, clinical trial material and commercial production of Dacogen® (decitabine) for Injection for MGI PHARMA, Inc. The drug received FDA approval in May of this year for the treatment of adult patients with MDS, a group of diseases of the bone marrow characterised by the production of poorly functioning and immature blood cells.

MAT Biopharma and AlgoNomics research deal

MAT Biopharma SA and AlgoNomics NV have entered into a research collaboration in which AlgoNomics will employ its structural bioinformatics platform to assist MAT Biopharma in its research related to the structural analysis of its antibody leads. The collaboration is focused on increasing the structural insight and potential immunogenicity of antibodies against hematological cancer and some solid cancers.

CIA NEWS

CIA urges trade unions to continue collaboration on energy pricing

The Chemical Industries Association has called on the trade unions to continue collaborating with chemical businesses in the UK in order to bring an end to spiralling energy costs. Speaking at the 2006 Amicus trade union national conference, Simon Marsh, Director of Employment Relations at the CIA, said that both sides of industry, employers and unions, suffered when energy costs remained so high.

Marsh commended the trade unions for their arguments put to the government detailing the damage caused to chemical businesses by last winter's industrial energy bills: "The trade unions have been fantastic in their work on energy. I pay tribute to the bold stand they have taken and I urge them to continue. Isn't it ironic that at the very time when we have worked so hard to make sure our consumption of energy is efficient, the only item escaping through the roof is the cost of energy?"

Chemical businesses and trade unions have jointly called on the UK government to make sure that this coming winter the existing gas import infrastructure is fully utilised before commissioning the building of more long-term strategic storage.

EVENTS

(Events organisers' contact details on page 12)

August 26-27, 2006
Microwave-Assisted Organic Synthesis
Budapest, Hungary
Organiser: Karl-Franzens University, Graz and Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest

September 7-8, 2006
BioFine USA
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, USA
Organiser: avakado

September 7-8, 2006
Biotech for Small-Molecule Therapeutics
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, USA
Organiser: avakado

September 7-8, 2006
MedChem USA
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center, San Diego, USA
Organiser: Scientific Update

September 17-21, 2006
Society for Biomolecular Sciences Annual Conference and Exhibition
Washington Convention & Trade Center, Seattle, Washington, USA
Organiser: Society for Biomolecular Sciences

October 1-3, 2006
Coast to Coast Medicinal and Synthetic Chemistry Symposium
Riviera Conference Centre, Torquay, UK
Organisers: Key Organics, Maybridge, Tripos and RSC

October 3-5, 2006
CPhI Worldwide
Paris-Nord Villepinte, Paris, France
Organiser: CMP Information

October 5-6, 2006
cGMP: Current Good Manufacturing Practices
The Loews Philadelphia Hotel, Philadelphia, USA
Organiser: Cambridge Healthtech Insitute

November 13-14, December 4-5 and December 11-12, 2006
Global Bio Program
UC Berkeley Center for Executive Development, California, USA
Information: Prescience International

More events on page 12

Pfizer licenses potential obesity and diabetes treatments from Bayer

Pfizer Inc and Bayer Pharmaceuticals Corporation, the US subsidiary of Bayer HealthCare, have agreed that Pfizer will obtain exclusive worldwide rights to Bayer's DGAT-1 inhibitors, an innovative class of compounds that modify lipid metabolism. The lead compound in the class, BAY 74-4113, is a potential treatment for obesity, type 2 diabetes and other related disorders. The compound is currently in Phase I clinical development in Europe.

"Obesity and diabetes are expanding hand-in-hand at near epidemic levels throughout the world and the need for new treatment options for patients has never been greater," said Martin Mackay, PhD, senior vice president, Worldwide Research & Technology for Pfizer. "We are excited about the potential of the DGAT-1 inhibitors in the areas of obesity and type 2 diabetes which complement Pfizer's ongoing metabolic disease research programmes."

An estimated 194 million people have either type 1 or 2 diabetes, according to the International Diabetes Federation, and the World Health Organization estimates that by 2025 the number of people with diabetes will exceed the current US population.

Activotec introduces entry-level SFE

The new SFT-100 Supercritical Fluid Extractor (SFE) is an entry-level system, intorduced by Activotec, is designed for a variety of applications from routine analytical work to basic process development. The SFT-100 was developed for people who want to investigate the feasibility of applying supercritical fluid techniques to a wide variety of analytical and processing problems.

The SFT-100 accommodates a wide range of extraction vessels from 10 ml to 100 ml. It may be operated at pressures up to 10,000 psi. (68.9 MPa) and at temperatures ranging from ambient to 200°C. The wide range of vessel volumes available makes the SFT-100 well suited to both analytical scale SFE applications and basic process development work. Inside the SFT-100's oven, a pre-heater ensures that the temperature of the fluid reaching the extractions vessel is controlled precisely.

While carbon dioxide is the most commonly used solvent, the SFT-100, with some modification, allows the user flexibility to work with a variety of supercritical fluids. Extract collection options include: solid phase extraction (SPE) cartridges, fractional cyclone separators, and EPA sample vials.

For further information contact info@activotec.com or visit the website www.activotec.com

Coast to Coast Medicinal and Synthetic Chemistry Symposium

Jointly organised by three chemistry companies based in the South West of England, Key Organics, Maybridge and Tripos in association with the RSC, the first Coast to Coast Medicinal and Synthetic Chemistry Symposium takes place at the Riviera Conference Centre, Torquay, UK from October 1-3, 2006.

The symposium offers a diverse programme of lectures with a strong focus on chemistry developments within the medchem industry, as well as topics from academic research. It is intended that the symposium will become a biennial event to alternate with the biennial RSC-SCI Cambridge Medicinal Chemistry Symposium. The event includes an exhibition and poster session for which entries are invited from industry and academia. There is a limited number of £200 bursaries on offer for student posters. For more information visit www.confsec.co.uk or contact Elaine Wellingham, Tel: +44 1275 853311.

Ultra-small volume dissolution in drug apparatus

The pION μDiss ultra-small volume dissolution apparatus is now available from UK-based Heath Scientific Co Ltd. The apparatus allows users to obtain accurate dissolution data during early-phase discovery and development. The μDiss is designed for the characterisation of intrinsic dissolution of powders and for polymorph screening where the active pharmaceutical ingredient is not available in large quantities. Using in situ fibre-optic UV measurements in volumes as small as 2ml, the μDiss can generate detailed dissolution profiles in minutes. Each of the six channels of the μDiss apparatus has a dedicated photodiode array detector for fast, whole-spectrum UV data. For further information visit www.heathscientific.com

Degussa sells Raylo Chemicals to Gilead Sciences

Degussa AG and Gilead Sciences have agreed that Gilead will acquire Degussa's subsidiary Raylo Chemicals Inc for about €115 million. In addition, Degussa has entered into long-term agreements for the supply of raw materials to Gilead and the manufacture of certain APIs for Gilead products. The companies expect the transaction to close in the fourth quarter of 2006. Located in Edmonton, Canada, Raylo Chemicals is currently part of Degussa's Exclusive Synthesis & Catalysts Business Unit with about 200 employees at two sites, Clover Bar and Argyll Road. Raylo's operations comprise custom manufacturing of APIs and advanced intermediates for the pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical industries. Gilead has worked with Raylo over the past 14 years, during which time Raylo has provided development expertise and commercial product on a large scale for Gilead. Gilead will use the Clover Bar site primarily for manufacturing development of investigational products, supplying APIs for clinical research programmes and contributing to new product launch supplies. Degussa will maintain the business and supply relationships with Raylo's existing customers other than Gilead, and the Raylo name and the Argyll Road site will remain assets of Degussa.

New library screening format from Key Organics and Reaction Biology Corporation

Key Organics Ltd and Reaction Biology Corporation (RBC) have together produced a new drug-like compound library screening format. All of Key Organics' Bionet library of 37,500 diverse compounds will be offered for 'rental' screening on RBC's DiscoveryDot(tm) platform. Customers will be able to screen the Bionet library without having to purchase it outright. The library will be screened at RBC's lab facilities in Malvern, Pennsylvania, USA, and RBC will reformat the library to its microarray-based platform. "While we have many large pharma clients who wish to purchase compounds directly, we see an unmet need in smaller pharma and biotech companies that want to screen one or more of their targets without investing in a library purchase," said Colin Piper, business development manager for Key Organics. "RBC's platform gave us an economical way to reach these potential customers. Now researchers who do not have a budget for library purchases can still afford screening."

CIA NEWS

CIA welcomes UK government momentum on energy

The CIA has welcomed a series of UK government announcements recognising the significance of security of energy supply and related price concerns in the country. Support from the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, for the renewal of the UK's nuclear generation capacity was especially welcomed; in an earlier announcement, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Alistair Darling, appealed to planning authorities to be more mindful of the urgent national interest when considering applications for new gas storage facilities. He also announced the creation of a Business Energy Forum to address urgent concerns for the next winter.

Stephen Elliott, Chief Executive at the CIA, commented:

"Secure, competitively priced energy supplies are vital to the future of chemical manufacturing in this country and we see nuclear energy as an essential component of a diversified, low-carbon energy supply mix for the long term future."

Turning to the more immediate issue of gas storage he added:

"As the UK's natural resources decline we are becoming more reliant on other sources of gas to meet our national needs. The CIA welcomes the considerable investment being undertaken to enable new supplies to reach our shores. However, last winter taught us that this import capacity is not always fully utilised. It is therefore essential that the UK rapidly increases its gas storage capabilities to ensure all demand, both domestic and industrial, can be met even when import flows to the UK are restricted."

The CIA has also welcomed the decision by the electricity and gas markets regulator Ofgem to implement energywatch's network code modification to release close to near real time flow information.

The CIA said it agreed with Ofgem that a central foundation of any competitive market is information provision, and that the implementation of this modification represented an important development in the UK market.

Alan Eastwood, Head of Competitiveness and Utilities at the CIA, said:

"We recognise the leading role the UK, Ofgem and North Sea producers have taken within Europe in data provision and we believe that this modification represents an important step for the UK along the road to transparency. We now look to Ofgem to ensure that the light is turned on in Europe."

EVENTS

November 16-17, 2006
NanoBiotech World Congress
Boston, USA
Organiser: Select Conferences

December 1-3, 2006
CPhI India
Bombay Exhibition Centre
Organiser: CMP information

Organisers' contact details

avakado
Contact: Mark Harrington or Jaymin Amin
Tel: +44 1403 220760
Email: mark@sp2.uk.com or jaymin@sp2.uk.com
Web: www.biofine.uk.com

Cambridge Healthtech Institute
Contact: Margit Eder
Tel: +1 617 630 1378
Email: eder@healthtech.com
Web: www.healthtech.com/2006/gmp/index.asp

CMP Information
Tel: +31 346 559444
Fax: +31 346 573811
Web: www.cphi.com

Karl-Franzens University
Contact: Prof. C. Oliver Kappe
Tel: +43 316 3805352
Fax: +43 316 3809840
Email: oliver.kappe@uni-graz.at
Web: www.maos.net

Key Organics, Maybridge, Tripos and RSC
Contact: Elaine Wellingham
Tel: +44 1275 853311
Web: www.confsec.co.uk

Prescience International
Contact: Lucy Jun
Tel: +1 408 219 7197
Email: lucy@sjbiocenter.com

Scientific Update
Contact: Claire Francis
Tel: +44 1435 873062
Email: claire@scientificupdate.co.uk
Web: www.scientificupdate.co.uk

Select Conferences
Contact: Paul Raggett
Tel: +44 1787 315117
Email: paul.raggett@selectbiosciences.com

Society for Biomolecular Sciences
Contact: Marietta Manoni
Tel: +1 203 743 1336
Fax: +1 203 748 7557
Email: mmanoni@sbsonline.org

Novartis makes offer for NeuTec Pharma

Novartis has made an offer to acquire NeuTec Pharma plc, a UK biopharmaceutical company specialising in hospital anti-infectives. NeuTec has a strong late-stage portfolio as well as a platform of early research activities.

The NeuTec Board of Directors has unanimously recommended that the company's shareholders accept a cash offer by Novartis that values NeuTec's issued share capital at about £305 million. The acquisition will expand Novartis' offering of speciality medicines, which includes the company's leading oncology portfolio, and expand access to the dynamic hospital segment of the worldwide anti-infectives market.

NeuTec submitted a validated application with the EMEA for market authorisation for its anti-infective Mycograb in March 2005. The product has been granted Orphan Drug status in Europe and the USA for use against invasive fungal infections, including systemic candidiasis. New clinical trials will be conducted to further expand the potential use of this medicine in new therapeutic areas, such as invasive aspergillosis, and new geographies.

NeuTec's Aurograb is currently in a double-blind placebo-controlled clinical trial to demonstrate superior clinical efficacy of Aurograb in combination with vancomycin versus vancomycin alone in the treatment of MRSA infections. Novartis plans to start clinical trials with other antibacterials, such as daptomycin, as an add-on therapy. Submissions in the USA and EU are planned for 2010.

"Our proposed acquisition of NeuTec exemplifies our commitment to innovative medicines for severely ill patients," said Dr Daniel Vasella, chairman and CEO of Novartis. "In clinical trials, Mycograb has been shown to significantly lower the mortality of patients with severe fungal infections. Both Mycograb and Aurograb promise to dramatically improve the treatment possibilities in this area, and will also enable Novartis to strengthen its biologics pipeline and anti-infective drug portfolio."

PTC Therapeutics and CV Therapeutics in research and licensing deal

PTC Therapeutics, Inc and CV Therapeutics, Inc have formed a research collaboration and licensing agreement for the development of orally bioavailable small molecules through the application of PTC's proprietary GEMS (Gene Expression Modulation by Small-Molecules) technology. The companies will jointly select five targets, including targets with the potential to raise HDL, through a collaborative process of determining the applicability of the GEMS technology to targets of interest.

CV Therapeutics will make an initial payment to PTC of $10 million and has the exclusive option to enter into one or more worldwide, exclusive licences, on a target-by-target basis, for collaboration compounds it decides to take forward. CV Therapeutics will pay PTC royalties on worldwide net sales of products developed under the collaboration. PTC retains the option to co-fund research and development for increased royalties or co-promotion rights.

Genedata in fermentation genomics collaboration with Kluyver Centre

Swiss bioinformatics company Genedata has established a collaboration with the Netherlands' Kluyver Centre, a joint industry and academic consortium that applies genomics technology to improve industrial fermentation. The company will support high-throughput genomics data analysis and result-sharing among the consortium's nine interdisciplinary research partners.

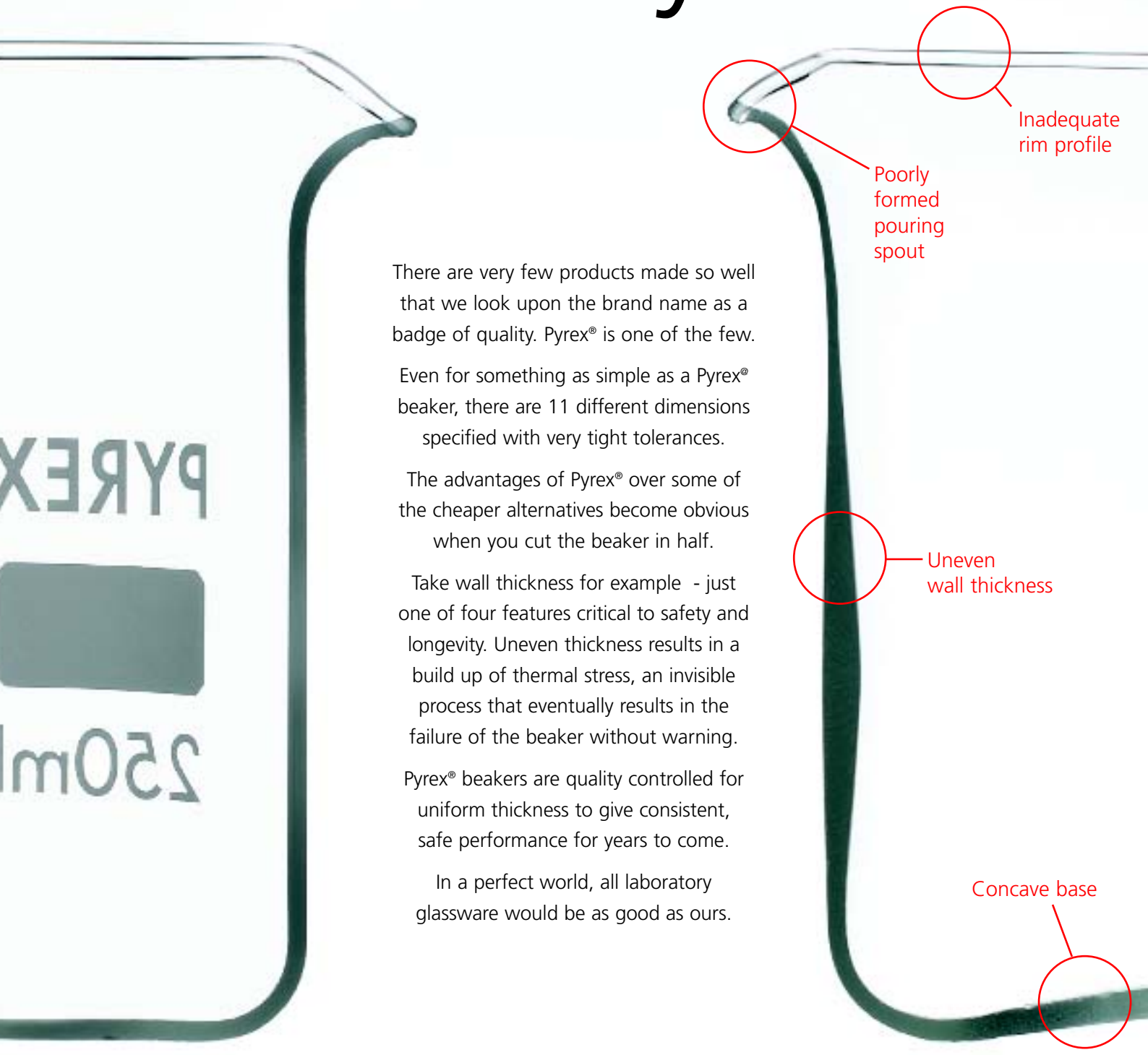
The Kluyver Centre is part of the Netherlands Genomics Initiative and focuses on addressing major scientific challenges in metabolic engineering and biotransformation. It also develops sustainable and environmentally-friendly production methods.

Research focuses on fermentation in yeast, filamentous fungi and lactic acid bacteria and involves sequencing, genome-wide functional studies and strain and process design. Genedata's computational solutions will support all aspects of the research.

Pharming receives orphan drug designations for recombinant human C1 inhibitor

Biotech company Pharming Group NV has received orphan drug designations for recombinant human C1 inhibitor (rhC1INH) from the FDA. The company has obtained designations on rhC1INH for two separate disease indications: the prevention and/or treatment of delayed graft function (DGF) after solid organ transplantation; and the treatment of capillary leakage syndrome (CLS). Pharming also has an orphan drug designation on rhC1INH for the treatment of hereditary angioedema. Over 25,000 solid organs were transplanted in the USA last year, including kidney, liver, lung and heart transplants. Delayed graft function is a common complication affecting all solid organs in the post-transplant period. C1 inhibitor has been shown in numerous models of organ transplantation to improve early graft function.

What price safety?



There are very few products made so well that we look upon the brand name as a badge of quality. Pyrex® is one of the few.

Even for something as simple as a Pyrex® beaker, there are 11 different dimensions specified with very tight tolerances.

The advantages of Pyrex® over some of the cheaper alternatives become obvious when you cut the beaker in half.

Take wall thickness for example - just one of four features critical to safety and longevity. Uneven thickness results in a build up of thermal stress, an invisible process that eventually results in the failure of the beaker without warning.

Pyrex® beakers are quality controlled for uniform thickness to give consistent, safe performance for years to come.

In a perfect world, all laboratory glassware would be as good as ours.

PYREX®

Barloworld Scientific Ltd., Beacon Road, Stone
Staffordshire ST15 0SA United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0)1785 812121 Fax +44 (0)1785 815066
Email: glassware@barloworld-scientific.com
www.barloworld-scientific.com

Barloworld Scientific

BOOKWORM

Reviews of scientific, technical and business management publications

Advanced Process Biotechnology, by S.N. Mukhopadhyay, pub Anshan Ltd. Hardback, 400 pages. ISBN: 1-9047-9873-X. Price: £29.99.
This publication gives a good overview of how process biotechnology practice has developed in recent years, including advances with microbes and microbial systems, as well as with mammalian, animal and plant cell culture systems. The book covers the patenting of new biotechnologies, as well as describing the processes themselves. The book is highly useful for academics, students and postgraduates in biology, biochemistry and biological engineering, as well as for bioprocessing and biotechnology industry professionals.
Web: www.anshan.co.uk

Protein Design: Methods and Applications (Methods in Molecular Biology Series), ed Raphael Guerois, pub Humana Press Inc. Hardback, 288 pages. ISBN: 1-5882-9585-0. Price: $99.50.
This publication describes the latest protein design and engineering strategies, enabling readers to undertake their own projects within the framework of these strategies and thereby maximise their success. Subjects convered include protein design, peptide-target binding, protein folding stability, and structural aspects of proteins.
Web: www.humanapress.com

Amino Acids, Peptides and Proteins (Specialist Periodical Reports Series), ed J.S. Davies, pub Royal Society of Chemistry. Hardback, 460 pages. ISBN: 0-8540-4247-4. Price: £259.50.
This RSC publication is an annual compilation of worldwide research in biological chemistry. The review starts with a description of amino acids and their applications and follows this with a description of modern peptide research, including synthesis, conformational and structural analysis, peptidomimetics and peptide-related molecules. The publication represents a valuable reference source for researchers in the pharmaceutical and related industries, and for academics working at the biology/chemistry interface.
Web: www.rsc.org

Galapagos to acquire drug discovery service operations of Discovery Partners International

Discovery Partners International, Inc and Galapagos NV have entered into a definitive purchase agreement to transfer all of the drug discovery service operations of DPI to Galapagos for €5 million. The acquisition includes the assets of all four of DPI's drug discovery services sites: San Diego and South San Francisco, USA; Allschwill (near Basel), Switzerland; and Heidelberg, Germany, as well as DPI's Japanese sales office in Tokyo.

All four of the current DPI sites will remain fully operational and will be merged into BioFocus, the drug discovery services division of Galapagos. BioFocus will assume the scientific management of these sites, including execution of all current service contracts, while other operational functions will be managed directly by Galapagos. The companies anticipate some downsizing of general and administrative functions in the San Diego facility, related to the integration of the various service organisations. As a result of the integration of the DPI activities within BioFocus the company is changing its name to BioFocus DPI.

"We are extremely pleased that we will be able to add the excellent drug discovery activities of DPI to our BioFocus division," said Onno van de Stolpe, CEO of Galapagos. "We believe that DPI's capabilities will substantially strengthen our technology, product offering and customer base. This acquisition will position BioFocus DPI as a top-three player worldwide in drug discovery services and provides Galapagos with a strong presence in the US. We will now have a global reach with operations in seven countries. The combined group will be able to provide services ranging from target identification to delivery of drug candidates. We believe this positions the company well for additional turnkey deals," he said.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

David Simmons

Cellzome Inc has appointed **David Simmons, PhD** as chief scientific officer. For the past three years, Simmons was vice president, inflammation discovery research at Wyeth Research in Boston, and co-chair of the Inflammation Therapeutic Area Leadership team (TALT). At Wyeth, he was responsible for the delivery of innovative pipeline projects and clinical development candidate drugs for inflammatory diseases. In addition, as a senior member of the Inflammation TALT, he had responsibility for disease area strategy, the delivery of the portfolio of anti-inflammatory drugs from discovery through to registration, and initiatives for research collaborations and in-licensing opportunities.

Before joining Wyeth, Simmons was director of research at Celltech, Cambridge, UK responsible for the NCE drug discovery pipeline, including all medicinal chemistry on the Cambridge and Slough sites. Previously he had been group director, Neuroscience Research at SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals. From 1988 to 1997 he worked at the University of Oxford, starting as an independent post-doctoral research fellow and rising to become Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Molecular Medicine, John Radcliffe Hospital. Before Oxford, he undertook research at the Department of Genetics, Harvard Medical School, and was a MRC post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

Novexin has appointed **Tim McCarthy** and **James Culverwell** as non-executive directors. They will join founders **Drs Trevor Jarman, Daniel Jones** and **Heikki Lanckriet** on the Novexin Board. Tim McCarthy has extensive experience in the biotechnology industry. He has been instrumental in the start-up and development of a number of successful biotechnology companies over the past 15 years, including being a founder member of vaccine company Peptide Therapeutics (now Acambis). He was a founder of and is currently finance director of biopharmaceutical development company Alizyme.

James Culverwell provides Novexin with over twenty years' experience as a pharmaceutical industry analyst. Until recently he was global coordinator for pharmaceutical research at investment bank Merrill Lynch and has been involved in a number of small-company IPOs and fundraisings. He is now a partner at Sudbrook Associates, a company that assists emerging life science businesses with their corporate development.

Dutch biotechnology company Crucell NV and its technology partner DSM Biologics BV, have announced that **Dr Marco Cacciuttolo** has accepted the position of chief executive officer of their joint PER.C6(r) R&D Center, which will be located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr Cacciuttolo joins the venture with over ten years of experience in technical operations within the biotech and pharmaceutical industries. He has occupied positions of increasing responsibility at MedImmune, Inc, and most recently at Medarex, Inc as the vice president of technical operations. Dr Cacciuttolo received his PhD in Biochemical Engineering from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and his BS in Biochemical Engineering from the Catholic University of Valparaiso, Valparaiso, Chile.

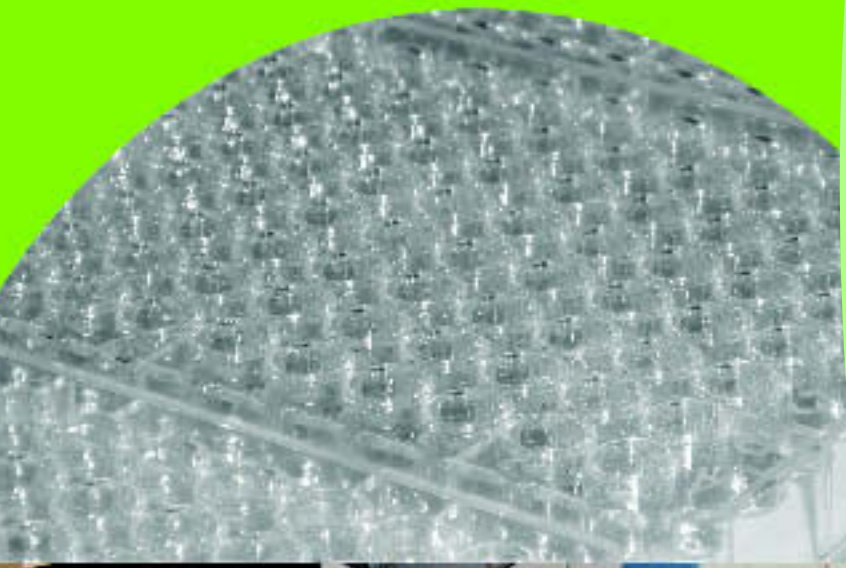
OXiGENE, Inc, a developer of biopharmaceutical compounds to treat oncologic and ophthalmologic diseases, has announced that **Richard Chin, MD** has been appointed to the position of president and chief executive officer, replacing Frederick Driscoll.

Dr Chin, a Harvard-trained, Board Certified Internist, and a current member of OXiGENE's Board of Directors, brings with him extensive experience in drug development and corporate collaborations, having overseen many INDs and NDAs.

BioCatalytics

Making Biocatalysis Simpler

In Addition to the
Broadest Range of Enzymes
We Now Offer the
Broadest Range of Services



Gene Expression

Enzyme Development

Screening

Process Optimization

Metabolite Synthesis

Immobilization

Visit us at

BioCatalytics, Inc. • 129 N Hill Ave, Suite 103 • Pasadena, CA 91106 • USA
BioCatalytics Europe GmbH • Parkring 18 • 8074 Grambach • Austria
enzymes@biocatalytics.com • www.biocatalytics.com