

BIOTECH NEWS

Milligen and LFB to develop new generation of therapeutic antibodies

Milligen, a biopharmaceutical company focused on directed molecular evolution (DME), and LFB SA (Laboratoire français du Fractionnement et des Biotechnologies SA), a leading pharmaceutical supplier to French hospitals, have entered into a strategic collaboration. The two companies will design a new generation of recombinant monoclonal antibodies (mAbs), which are therapeutically and economically more effective. In order to achieve this, Milligen and LFB will work to improve the mAbs' pharmacokinetics and effectors functions, which play a key role in their therapeutic capacity.

The deal brings together Milligen's DME platform Mutagen™ and LFB's know-how and expertise in therapeutic antibody discovery and development. This will allow the generation of a new and innovative platform dedicated to the enhancement of therapeutic efficacy. Milligen will apply its Mutagen™ technology to genetically engineer the Fc region of the antibody as a first phase of the project. The second step will involve LFB SA in conducting preclinical evaluation of antibody candidates, in particular in the field of onco-hematology.

The project led by Milligen and LFB SA will also include an academic laboratory (Inserm U858, Toulouse, France), involved in the molecular and cellular engineering of recombinant antibodies.

Both partners obtained grants from the French government for this R&D project, as a result of selection by the Cancer BioSanté Midi Pyrénées competitiveness area for special status.

BioAlliance Pharma sets up jv with Spopharm

BioAlliance Pharma SA, a speciality pharmaceutical company focused on the development and marketing of innovative therapeutics targeting drug resistance in cancer, HIV, and opportunistic infections, has joined forces with Spopharm BV, a speciality pharmaceutical company dedicated to innovative products promotion throughout Europe, in a 50/50 marketing joint venture.

The joint venture will be based in the Netherlands and is being formed to commercialise Leramyc. This BioAlliance was product approved for oropharyngeal candidiasis in France in October 2006 and this Marketing Authorization is the first step of the mutual recognition procedure in the other EU countries. BioAlliance has the option to re-acquire Spopharm's Joint Venture participation and the distribution rights at any time after the fifth year of commercialisation by the joint venture.

AstraZeneca inaugurates global process R&D lab in Bangalore

AstraZeneca has inaugurated a new state-of-the-art process R&D laboratory next to its R&D centre in Bangalore, India. David Brennan, chief executive officer of AstraZeneca, along with guests of honour, P. B. Mahishi, Chief Secretary of the Government of Karnataka, and Narayana Murthy, Chairman & Chief Mentor, Infosys Technologies, officially opened the laboratory at the company's Hebbal campus in Bangalore.

The PR&D facility, built at a cost of \$15 million, covers 8,000 square metres on a 14,200 square metre plot and can accommodate up to 75 highly-qualified process scientists, supported by office and engineering staff. This is AstraZeneca's fourth PR&D facility and the only one outside Europe. The company has two PR&D facilities in the UK and one in Sweden.

The facility will strengthen the existing global PR&D programmes as well as



David Brennan, chief executive officer of AstraZeneca, addressing the audience at the official opening of the company's new PR&D laboratory in Bangalore, India.

provide support to the existing drug discovery programme at Bangalore, engaged in finding a cure for tuberculosis (TB), a disease prevalent in the developing world and making a re-appearance in developed countries. A focus area of the facility will be new chemical entities (NCEs). The PR&D scientists typically work with compounds created by

medicinal chemists to ensure that they are safe and efficient for the manufacturing-related stages of drug development as well as toxicological studies and clinical trials. The co-location at Bangalore of discovery and PR&D scientists will maximise interactions and enable shared use of the PR&D infrastructure, the company says.

MidWest BioResearch introduces microAmes screen test

Midwest BioResearch, LLC (MBR), an outsourced drug disposition and toxicology contract services provider, has introduced a novel microAmes screen that fully predicts the GLP regulatory Ames test (Salmonella/E. coli Mammalian Microsome Reverse Mutation Assay).

Evaluating compounds for mutagenic potential using the GLP regulatory Ames test is required for most small molecules prior to conducting first-in-human studies. Using approximately 5-10 mg of chemist bench sample, MBR can screen for Ames mutagenicity in two weeks or less.

Current screens for mutagenicity use modified Ames bacterial tester strains, are run without a mammalian metabolic activation system, or are performed with just two of the five regulatory ICH-

compliant tester strains often under conditions different than those of the regulatory Ames test. These other screens therefore do not measure all the endpoints needed to fully assess the mutagenic potential of a compound or chemical series or require much larger compound amounts. MBR's microAmes uses all five Salmonella and E. coli tester strains recommended by regulatory agencies and evaluates colony formation, cytotoxicity and compound precipitation using an agar format, factors that make this screen a highly predictive mutagenicity screen for the regulatory GLP Ames assay.



MBR also offers a micro-clastogenicity screen for predicting the regulatory GLP chromosomal aberration assay. It provides the same speed, low compound requirements (10 mg), and cost advantages of the microAmes.

For further information visit www.midwestbioresearch.com