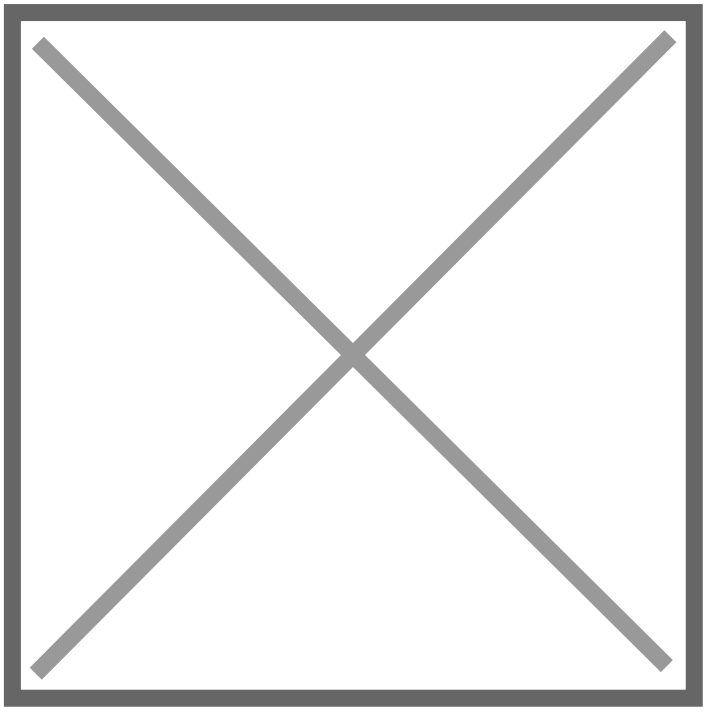
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Shantha wins tech award again

10 June 2003 | News



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Shantha Biotechnics, the Hyderabad-based pioneers in recombinant biotechnology in India, has won the prestigious fifth National Technology Award Ã¢â?¬â??2003 for "successful commercialization of indigenous technology" given by the Technology Development Board of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Shantha Biotechnics won this award for the successful development, manufacture and marketing of the Shanferon, a recombinant human Interferon Alpha 2b. This vaccine is the only indigenous interferon developed, manufactured and marketed by an Indian biotech company. Earlier in 1999 Shantha had won the first National Technology Award, for its Shanvac-B, a recombinant DNA Hepatitis-B vaccine.

Shanferon, launched in April 2002, is the only Interferon Alpha 2b to be cloned and expressed in Pichia pastoris, a eukaryotic new generation host having immense advantages over prokaryotic E. coli host. This technology has resulted in a cost-effective product that is very safe and has a lower side effect profile compared to other interferons in the market. With quality comparable to international standards, Shanferon has offered stiff competition to MNC brands. Within a year it has garnered 20 percent market share in a total of Rs 30 crore interferon market and provided an affordable therapy to the masses. Shanferon will help the Indian economy to save foreign exchange due to the low-cost of the indigenous medicine. Shanferon is also being exported to several countries. Shantha has applied for patents for this drug in many developed countries.

Shantha plans to launch similar novel recombinant DNA products and vaccines in the near future that conform to international quality standards while meeting the health-care needs of the Indian masses at affordable cost.