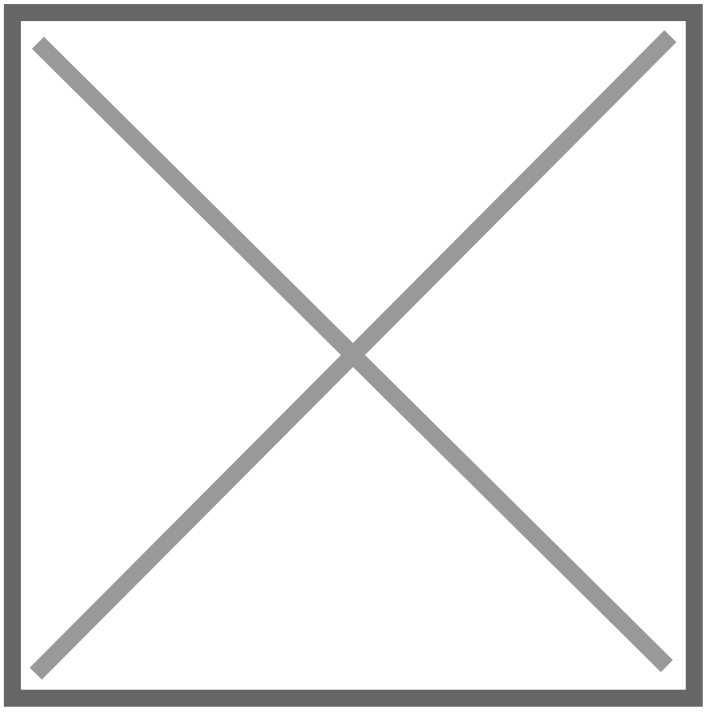
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Fresh impetus for European biotechnology

10 June 2004 | News



The European Commission presented a report on the implementation of the "Life Sciences & Biotechnology Strategy" adopted in 2002. The report highlights that progress has been made in the biotechnology sector players as well as the public and business stakeholders based on the EU action plan's recommendations.

Highlights over the last 12 months include the launch of a high level advisory group on "Competitiveness in Biotechnology", the completion of an EU regulatory framework for Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and initiatives to boost research and increase the number of scientists in the biotech sector. The progress report identifies upcoming issues, including genetic testing and animal biotechnology.

This month the EU commissioners have granted a license for the importation and use of a GM maizeÃ¢â?¬â?the insect resistant Bt11 variety from Swiss firm Syngenta. The move brings an end to the five-year moratorium on new approvals introduced in June 1999. Bt11 maize is already used in the EU in animal feed and processed products such as maize oil, having been approved under a previous body of legislation. The biotech lobby group EuropaBio considers the move as a positive signal for Europe.

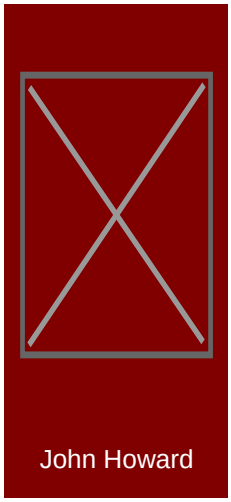
The corn, known as Bt-11 has been approved only for consumption, meaning Europeans will be able to eat the corn after it is imported from other countries but European farmers will still not be able to grow it themselves. The corn contains a bacterial gene that produces a toxin making the corn resistant to the corn borer and the corn earworm. The corn is also resistant to glufosinate, an herbicide.

Biotechnology covers a wide range of powerful, but also sometimes controversial, technologies. It can make a vital contribution towards the long-term future of industries such as pharmaceuticals, food, agriculture, energy, textiles and chemicals. But success in developing biotechnology also depends on finding solutions to the significant ethical, societal, economic and environmental issues it throws up. The EU strategy provides a consistent approach to these challenges.

In adopting the strategy, European leaders recognized that many decision-makers in both government and the private sector have to play a more active role in its implementation. This is now starting to happen in the member states. The process should be supported by the new "Competitiveness in Biotechnology" advisory group. The group, which includes business leaders and academics, is helping to identify issues affecting European competitiveness.

Source: http://www.bba-bio.be

AusBiotech welcomes science and innovation package



John Howard

Australia's Biotechnology Organization (AusBiotech) welcomed the Federal Governments' $5.3 billion balanced science and innovation package announced by Prime Minister John Howard. The planned $1 billion Commercial Ready package will roll together programs and innovation access to provide a one-stop, continuum-support shop for small to medium enterprises, which will ensure global competitiveness.

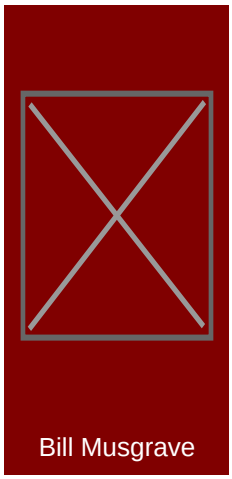
"This is a major and much needed win for boosting Australia's long-term sustainability and global competitiveness of the innovation and science industry," said Dr Anthony Coulepis, executive director, AusBiotech. "We are delighted and welcome the announcement by the Federal Government, which has addressed many of the elements that AusBiotech has been advocating for as a result of member consultation."

"In particular, we are pleased that the Government has maintained its focus on biotechnology innovative industries by providing additional support to organizations such as the National Stem Cell Center and Biotechnology Australia. Enabling a grant-linkage support package will bring win-win partnerships for companies and academia," said Dr Coulepis.

The Government plans to model this program on the process used for the P3 initiative. This will involve an intensive consultation process with key stakeholder groups and industry. AusBiotech is working closely with its members and stakeholders to assist the government with this consultation process.

Source: www.ausbiotech.org

New program to give Israeli companies access to US bio hub



Bill Musgrave

A new program aims to make Israeli life science companies an active part of the business scene in the Silicon Valley area of Northern California. "The Bioentrepreneurial Bridge to Silicon Valley program will give Israeli companies access to Fortune 500 medical device and pharma companies as well as small and medium-sized enterprises looking for collaborations,"` said Bill Musgrave, CEO of TEN, adding that the program will also enable participants to meet local VCs "at a time when VC investment is on the rise again and life science deals are outpacing all other sectors."

TEN, one of the leading business development and incubation organizations in the US, has graduated more than 300 companies during the past 10 years. Best known for launching the highly successful eBay portal, TEN currently is focusing on the life sciences sector and has recently inaugurated a major new nano-bio facility.

The BioBridge program is being subsidized in part by the United States-Israel Science and Technology Foundation, enabling sections of the project to be offered for no charge or at a nominal charge. Agilent Technologies Inc., a global technology leader in life sciences, chemical analysis and other technologies will be one of the presenters at BioBridge 2004. Other US participants include BabyBio, Avigen, Burrill and other leading investors and life science corporations. Israeli participants include 20 early stage companies and incubators.

The BioBridge project comprises three programs: videoconferencing sessions, an incubation program and business development activities. "The video conferencing sessions will be completely interactive between Israeli and US participants and both groups will feel like they are overseas," said Dr Adolfo Nemirovsky, Program Coordinator.

The second component of the BioBridge program involves selecting two Israeli companies from those attending the videoconferencing sessions to be hosted at no charge for six months at the new TEN Bio-Nano Facility for Business Development Acceleration. TEN will provide the successful candidates with free office space and expert consultation. The consulting services (up to 100 hours per company) will include business model development and review; exposure to Silicon Valley and US business opportunities and investors, networking and mentoring support with critical sales efforts; facilitating partnering and fund raising; access to local university resources and student interns; network for business development matchmaking; access to service providers; turn-key office support; and a supportive, high-energy environment.

The third component of the program involves selecting five companies from those attending the videoconferencing sessions to benefit from up to 100 hours of no charge consulting, including business development assistance, similar to that described above. Dr Nemirovsky expects the program, which is limited to 25 Israeli participants, to attract CEOs, business development executives and R&D directors at early-stage and emerging biotech, medical device and healthcare companies.

This program will be held in May. "One of the advantages of having the program during May is that it will enable biotech participants to start networking and generate leads to follow-up at Bio 2004 in San Francisco in June," Dr Nemirovsky noted. The BioBridge Program is being coordinated in Israel by BioIsrael.

Source: www.bioisrael.com

Israel, China to jointly develop hybrid crops

The China National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center and the Israel's FertiSeeds have decided to work together to develop super hybrid crops. The two organizations hope that the hybrid seeds based on FertiSeeds technology will promote the economical production of seeds that will significantly improve yield and quality in major crops as rice and cotton.

Fertiseeds Ltd operates in the agricultural biotech field and offers a universal solution for producing high yield hybrid seeds based on a revolutionary "green" molecular genetic technology. This technology promises to revolutionize production of hybrid seeds for key food crops, animal feed and fibers. The technology places genes in a plant genome so the offspring will produce 100 percent hybrid seeds. The resultant hybrid plant will show high yields and other hybrid-vigor related characteristics.

Prof. Yuan Longping, director of the China National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center said that the joint testing by his center and Israel's FertiSeeds to develop super hybrid rice is a pilot effort. It will take at least five years to market the technology developed in the experiment, he added.

Dr. Vered Yesodi, chief executive officer of the private agro-biotechnology company FertiSeeds, expressed his confidence that the new technology will develop high-yield rice hybrids and related technologies for China. He said that this cooperation is the first of its kind between the two countries.

Yuan, 74, who is known as the father of hybrid rice in China, shared the 2004 Israeli Wolf Prize in Agriculture with Professor Steven Tanksley of Cornell University, US. Israeli President Moshe Katsav awarded the prize to Yuan in Jerusalem.

Source: China Daily

New Zealand, Queensland work together for growth of biotechnology

There is a real opportunity for New Zealand and Queensland to work together and build a formidable Australasian biotechnology industry by 2010, reported a task force appointed by New Zealand to research on an action framework for growing the biotechnology sector.

The task force noted that both the countries already have strong and often complementary research strengths, competitive R&D costs, outstanding natural resources and magnificent environments. Besides both the countries have all the ingredients required to make major contributions to human health and agricultural biotechnology.

To achieve this, the task force observed, the countries need to identify biotechnology and particularly agricultural biotechnology, as a key driver for future growth. They also need to build their skills in bioentrepreneurship and further strengthen them by developing mutually supportive links between the managers of New Zealand and Queensland biotechnology companies. Additionally there is also a need to secure substantial public and private investment in a combined New Zealand/Queensland biotechnology fund ensuring that the full potential of the emerging biotechnology industries is achieved.

The task force also made recommendations to increase focus on agricultural biotechnology, attract, train and retain the competent technology managers and establish a Trans-Tasman venture capital fund aimed at generating, with appropriate private sector leveraging, a total of $500-1000 million in about five to seven years. The report was commissioned to explore collaborative opportunities between New Zealand and Queensland in the field of biotechnology.

Source: http://www.industrytaskforces.govt.nz/

Biotech business and academic groups unite under FlandersBio

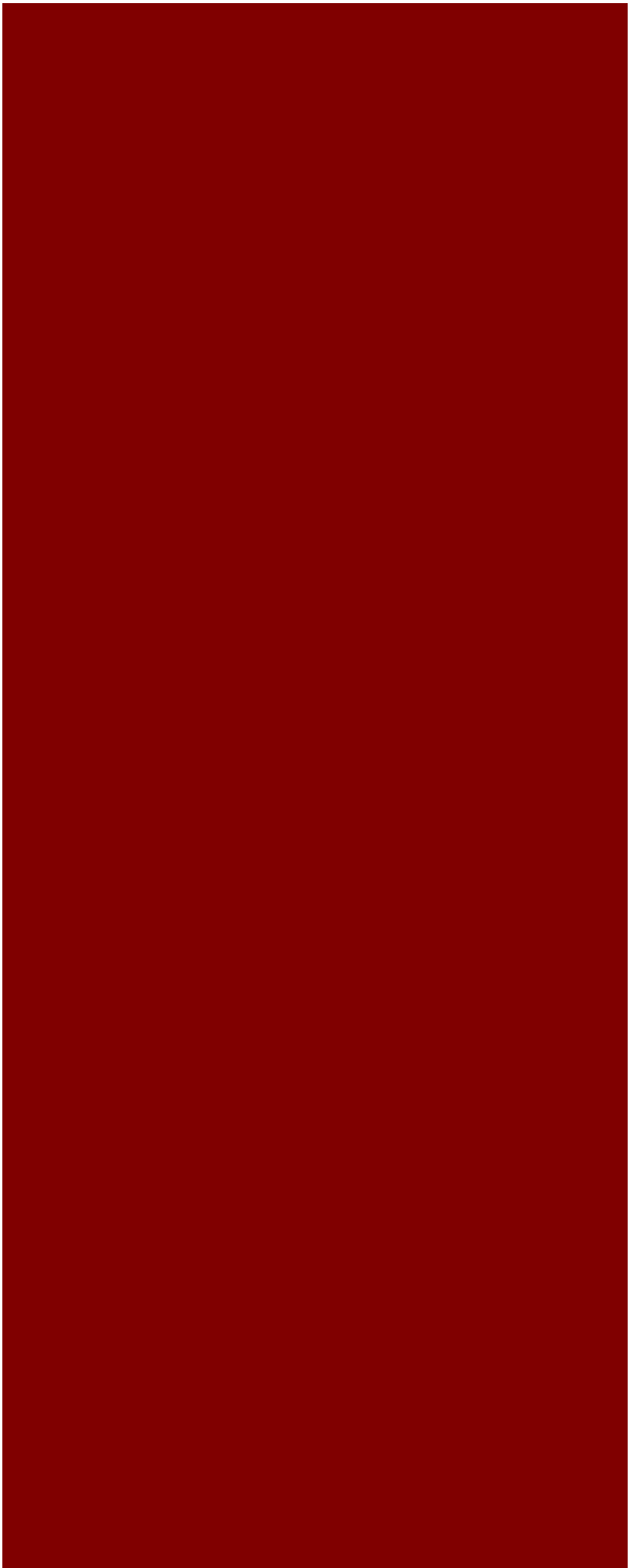
The academic and business groups of biotechnology in Flanders have been united under an umbrella organization named FlandersBio, in an effort to continue sustained growth of the sector in the region. The first president of the organization is to be Staf Van Reet, a former President of the Janssen Research Foundation and CEO of Janssen Pharmaceutica who currently represents the Johnson & Johnson Development Corporation and the Johnson & Johnson Office of Science and Technology in Europe.

About 40 biotech companies have confirmed their participation in the FlandersBio initiative, according to the Flanders Interuniversity Institute for Biotechnology (VIB), a non-profit scientific research institute that groups biotech research at universities in the region. Along with VIB, the other major Flemish biotech companies and financiers which have collaborated in the creation of FlandersBio are 4AZA Bioscience, Bayer BioScience, Innogenetics, Life-Sciences Group, Methexis Genomics, Thromb-X, Tibotec, Tigenix, Virco, BIP, Capricorn Venture Partners, GIMV, and Johnson & Johnson Development Corporation.

The aim of FlandersBio is to stimulate the flow of technological and non-technological knowledge among the biotech players, raise the international profile of the Flemish biotech sector and build the favorable environment in the region for the development of companies in the sector.

Flanders is ranked the third in Europe for the number of biotech patent applications per million inhabitants. Supported by an array of investors, a unique network of technology transfer offices, attractive investment incentives and a dedicated government, life sciences and biotechnology ventures will further flourish in Flanders.

Top 40 Locations for Biotechnology in the US



1 New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island (NY- NJ-CT-PA CMSA)

2 Boston-Worcester-Lawrence (MA-NH-ME-CT CMSA)

3 San Francisco-Oakland-SanJose (CA CMSA)

4 San Diego (CA CMSA)

5 Los Angels-Riverside-Orange County (CA CMSA)

6 Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City (PA-NJ- DE-MD CMSA)

7 Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill (NC MSA)

8 Washington-Baltimore (DC-MD-VA-WV CMSA)

9 Chicago-Gary-Kenosha (IL-IN-WI CMSA)

10 Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton (WA CMSA)

11 Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (TX CMSA)

12 Detroit-AnnArbor-Funt (MI CMSA)

13 Pittsburgh (PA MSA)

14 Atlanta (GA MSA)

15 Denver-Boulder-Greeley (CO CMSA)

16 Dallas-Fort Worth (TX CMSA)

17 St Louis (MO-IL MSA)

18 Minneapolis (IN MSA)

19 Indianapolis (IN MSA)

20 Cleveland-Akron (OH CMSA)

21 Nashville (TN MSA)

22 Columbus (OH MSA)

23 Miami-Fort Lauderdale (FL CMSA)

24 Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point (NC MSA)

24 Sacramento-Yolo (CA CMSA)

26 Rochester (NY MSA)

27 Tampa-St Petersburg-Clearwater (FL MSA)

28 Cincinnati-Hamilton (OH-KY-IN-CMSA)

29 San Antonio (TX MSA)

30 Portland-Salem (OR-WA CMSA)

31 Salt Lake City-Ogden (UT MSA)

32 Memphis (TN-AR-MS MSA)

33 Oklahoma city (OK MSA)

34 New Orleans (LA MSA

35 Hartford (CT MSA)