

SPL Labware forays into Indian Market

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Korea-based SPL Labware (SPL), a bioscience labware manufacturer, has launched its operations in India through Hysel India Pvt Ltd. VS Narayanan, managing director, Hysel informed, "We have recently signed a MoU with SPL to market their entire range of products in India. We expect a good market for SPL's products here as the initial few customers are satisfied with the performance of these products."

According to Narayanan SPL's clientele in Korea include the leading establishments like the Korean National Institute of Health, Korea Food and Drug Administration, the Rural Development Administration, Korea Institute of Science and Technology, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, National Cancer Center, Korea Cancer Center Hospital, university hospitals including Seoul National University Hospital and many research institutes in the private sector.

SPL was founded in May 1987 as Sewon Precision Industry Co. to design and produce injection Molds and plastic products. SPL developed and succeeded with the surface treatment technology of high polymer plastic in 1994 and started the production of the cell culture dish. The name of the company was changed to SPL Labware in January 2001. SPL supplies its products to over 1,200 laboratories.

Mabtech's ELISpot hits the Indian market

The Swedish Biotech major Mabtech will supply its high quality ELISpot reagents in India through Jain Biologicals Pvt Ltd, which is in Panchkula, near Chandigarh. Lalit Jain, managing director, Jain Biologicals informed that he was satisfied with the initial feedback from customers.

The ELISpot assay is a simple and sensitive assay for analysis of cell activation at the single-cell level. It is particularly useful for analyzing specific immune responses to whole antigens or peptides. Depending on the cytokine analyzed, the assay can be used to identify and discriminate between responses by different subsets of T cells (e.g., Th1 and Th2 cells).

Hybrigenics optimizes protein-interaction mapping

Hybrigenics, the pathway-based drug discovery company, has enhanced its protein interaction mapping services for the drug discovery industry by integrating Millipore's Montage PCR384 and SEQ384 kits. The use of these kits is believed to improve and simplify the automation of Hybrigenics' process used to analyze complex cellular pathways.

Based in Paris, France, Hybrigenics SA is a specialized provider of large-scale protein interaction technology and information for the drug discovery industry.

Axygen to distribute Corning's products in India

Corning Life Sciences has joined hands with Delhi-based Axygen Scientific Pvt Ltd. Axygen will market Corning's entire range of life science products in the Indian market. Corning Life Sciences specializes in polymer science, biochemistry and molecular biology, glass melting and forming, surface modification and characterization science. Navneet Trehan, director, Axygen informed, "The Indian scientific bay is already familiar with the quality of Corning's products." This tie up was announced in Jaipur, Rajasthan, where Axygen's entire team attended the company's distributor "family meet 2004" and got familiarized with Corning's product range.

Jeri McMohan, global product manager, Corning Life Sciences, who was present at the launch, said, "I am very pleased to see the kind of interest that each and every employee of Axygen India has shown and am confident that this relationship will produce some good examples." Corning Life Sciences also offers custom capabilities such as special packaging, bar coding and printed lot numbers. Its key areas of expertise include assay and HTS, cell culture, liquid handling and laboratory filtration.

Thermo launches LIMS training facilities

Thermo Electron Corp. has inaugurated its modernized training facilities in Altrincham, UK and Woburn, MA. The latest hardware and software technology has been utilized to facilitate advanced training techniques and to enhance the learning experience for users of LIMS and other laboratory informatics solutions. For a limited time Thermo will offer special pricing for new training courses purchased at these facilities, according to company release.

Thermo Electron is offering customers a special incentive to experience this informatics-training environment. The promotion includes attendance at any three informatics training courses for a special fixed price that represents savings of up to 50 percent. Training vouchers are valid for 12 months from the date of issue and can be used with any of the qualifying courses within this period.

Alfa Laval, Haldex create Alfdex

The two Swedish multi-national companies Alfa Laval and Haldex have created a jointly owned company, Alfdex AB (a 50:50 equity joint venture) to serve the market with high efficiency solutions for cleaning crankcase gases. Alfdex will use Alfa Laval's unique and long tradition in centrifugal separator technology and Haldex' skills in serving the vehicle industry with high performance systems.

Alfdex has been formed to function as the formal license taker of the technology as well as being the central coordinator of the activities. Mats Ekeroth, who has been heading the project since 2002, has been appointed president of Alfdex AB.

The release quoting Mats Ekeroth, president of Alfdex, said, "There has been a great interest for the Alfdex separator and most of the engine manufacturers have already done their initial tests. Moreover, the process to adapt the Alfdex Separator to specific engine projects are already in process with many engine manufacturers."

Bio-Rad to acquire MJ Gene Work

Bio-Rad Laboratories Inc., a multinational manufacturer and distributor of life science research products and clinical diagnostics, announced that it has signed a binding letter agreement to acquire MJ GeneWork Inc., and its subsidiaries for approximately \$47 million in cash. MJ GeneWork is the parent company of MJ Research Inc. of Waltham, Massachusetts, a biotechnology company that specializes in thermal cycling instrumentation and reagents used to amplify DNA.

The acquisition is subject to completion of a definitive purchase agreement and necessary government approvals. MJ Research is known to have pioneered the use of Peltier-effect technology and has introduced a number of other innovations in the thermal-cycling field. MJ Research employs approximately 300 employees.

BD to make vaccine delivery safer with BD Uniject™

For the first time in India, three majors players in this industry, Panacea Biotec, Chiron Vaccines and Becton Dickinson (BD) have come together to offer combination vaccines in a single use delivery system. BD's Uniject, a single-use prefilled device, will be used to administer the combination vaccine shots.

BD India has the license for production, distribution and marketing of the device. Masood Alam, head commercial operations, Indian subcontinent, Chiron Vaccines, said, "The new concept of combination vaccine in BD Uniject would not only increase the immunization substantially in India but will also change the way immunization is done." The global experts on the subject also emphasized the need of combination vaccines and the BD Uniject device at Pedicon 2004, an annual event organized by Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP).

Cambrex completes expansion of cGMP production capacity

Cambrex, a diversified life science company, has announced the completion of the expansion of cGMP contract biologics production capacity at its Hopkinton, Massachusetts' facility. The manufacturing suites contain 2,800-liter production fermentor, 280-liter feed tank, continuous-flow centrifuge, high-pressure homogenizer, and 500 to 2500-liter process vessels for recovery, extraction and refold operations.

The two Cambrex contract biologics manufacturing facilities located in Hopkinton, Massachusetts and Baltimore are FDA/EMEA approved to produce licensed products for the US and Europe.

Agilent, TGen collaborate on microarray use for cancer research

Agilent Technologies Inc. has entered into a collaboration with the Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) on a breakthrough application of oligonucleotide microarray technology called Comparative Genomic Hybridization (CGH) that could greatly enhance researchers' ability to identify and precisely locate genetic alterations that contribute to cancer.

This collaborative effort will validate and further develop commercial microarray-based CGH solutions based on Agilent's custom in situ manufacturing process, in which DNA oligonucleotides are synthesized base by base directly on a glass slide. The release noted that the speed, simplicity, sensitivity and widespread availability of CGH assays employing these oligonucleotide microarrays could significantly accelerate the pace of genomic disease research.

Invitrogen releases first microarray with yeast proteome

Invitrogen Corp. has announced the upcoming launch of the Yeast ProtoArray, the first commercial release of a comprehensive protein microarray, or protein chip, for general research applications. This technology permits simultaneous and rapid screening of thousands of proteins in a miniaturized format that is compatible with standard laboratory equipment. The release of the Yeast ProtoArray is an important step toward applying this powerful microarray technology to protein studies in humans, and as a result Invitrogen also announced its intent to release microarray chips containing collections of human proteins beginning in the fall of 2004. Delhi-based Life Technologies is an exclusive supplier of Invitrogen's range of products in India.

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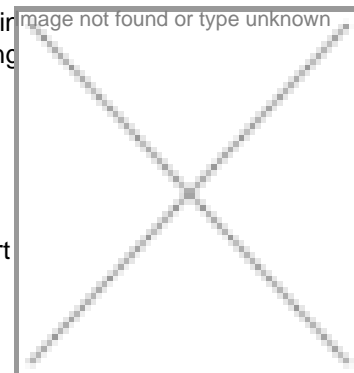
Jerold Martin, senior vice president and global technical director, Pall Life Sciences, USA

Jerold Martin was in Mumbai recently to address a conference on "technological challenges in biotech processing". He has over 27 years of industrial experience and a strong understanding of separation technologies. He spoke about the direction that Pall is taking.

W hich are the new technologies that Pall Life Sciences plans to launch in India?

Pall is introducing several new technologies for biotechnology drug manufacturing in India. These include preparative chromatography columns with unique pack-in-place features for greater performance, reliability and product purity. These columns can also be provided as part of fully automated process chromatography systems built by Pall.

We are introducing ion exchange membrane based chromatography units for final polishing to remove DNA, host cell proteins, viruses and endotoxins. These provide rapid and low cost means to ensure freedom of trace contaminants in final products. Other new technologies include new aseptic connection



devices that enable two sterile components to be safely joined, while maintaining a sterile pathway, anywhere on the production floor without the need for capital equipment such as clean air hoods or tubing welders. We are also introducing new cell harvest, protein ultra filtration, buffer filtration and virus removal filter products to enhance productivity and product purity while improving process economics.

How do you foresee the opportunity for your products in the Indian market?

There is a strong growth opportunity for our technologies and products holds in India, as the biotechnology drug development and manufacturing sectors in India are expanding. India is the third largest in Asia after China and Korea in terms of biotech investments. This portends for significant growth in the next 5-10 years. Further, the application of World Trade Organization patent protection will facilitate development and production of new, world-class drugs in India. We are projecting 25-30 percent growth per year for our Life Sciences business over the next five years.

Will you step up your base in India?

We are taking several initiatives to expand our business. This year, Pall Corp. invested in our prior joint venture to make Pall India a 100 percent subsidiary. We have opened a new office in Mumbai with expanded on-site laboratory facilities to aid customers in process development and validation. We have brought in experts from the UK and the US to conduct customer visits and public seminars on the latest developments in biotech drug manufacturing technologies offered by Pall and to provide advanced training for our sales and technical staff. We are also actively hiring several additional sales and technical support personnel to expand our customer interactions.

Are there any regulatory problems troubling you in India?

No. In fact, increased regulatory scrutiny of product quality specifications and GMP is a driver for our business. The more customers need higher purity and world-class production equipment and services, the more they rely on Pall.

Narayan Kulkarni