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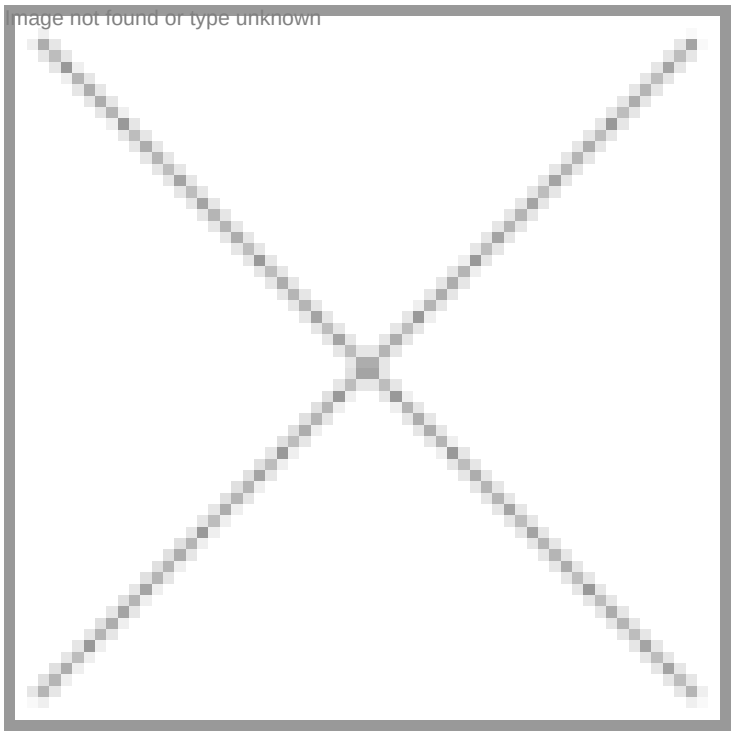

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"Industrial biotechnology is causing a dramatic paradigm shift in transportation fuels that will end our national addiction to oil. We need to rapidly move forward commercializing these technologies for cellulosic ethanol production, which will strengthen our energy and national security. Congress can improve our energy independence by acting decisively to provide the funding and loan guarantees authorized in last year's energy bill, speeding up the delivery of this vital fuel to the pumps so consumers can begin using it," said Jim Greenwood, president and CEO, Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO).

Greenwood made his remarks at a panel of experts and industry representatives convened at Washington on March 13, 2006. This panel described the industrial biotechnology processes that make possible large-scale, inexpensive production of cellulosic ethanol from crop waste and switch grass.

BIO released a letter to Congressional appropriators requesting full funding for programs authorized in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 that would support research and development into advanced cellulosic ethanol production, support private investment in modern biorefinery construction, and provide loan guarantees and market incentives for rapid adoption of cellulosic ethanol motor fuel. Cellulosic ethanol could replace much of the imported oil in America's domestic transportation fuel supply.

President Bush has announced his intention to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive.

Source: www.bio.org

NZBio honors biotechnologists with awards

New Zealand's biotech community has recognized two of its high achievers, Robert Webster and Adrian Cookson by awarding with the 2006 NZBio Distinguished and Emerging Biotechnologist of the Year Award respectively.

Robert Webster has received the Award, for his work in virology and particularly avian influenza (bird flu). Currently working for St Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Tennessee, USA, Dr Webster was born in New Zealand and obtained his degree in microbiology from Otago University.

He is considered the world leader in avian influenza virus research. Dr Webster's most significant work was the discovery that all influenza viruses originated in aquatic birds, and he has been involved in studying recent bird flu outbreaks on chicken farms in Hong Kong and their spread to humans. He is also the head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) collaborating laboratory on animal influenza.

Adrian Cookson, the winner of the 2006 NZBio Emerging Biotechnologist of the Year Award is now based at AgResearch's Grasslands Research Centre in Palmerston North.

Born in Surrey, he received an Honours Degree in Microbiology from the University of Manchester. At Grasslands, Dr Cookson leads the Alternative Antimicrobial program, which aims to discover novel molecules that are effective in treating animal or human disease.

Source: www.nzbio.org.nz

Novo Nordisk opens facility in China

Denmark-based pharma major Novo Nordisk inaugurated a major expansion of its production facilities in Tianjin, China. The Tianjin plant has been designated Novo Nordisk's primary production base in the Asia Pacific region and will supply both China and export markets.

The expansion includes a new assembly plant for Novo Nordisk's NovoPen 3 insulin pen as well as an expansion of current packaging facilities for Penfill insulin cartridges and FlexPen prefilled insulin pens.

"Our expansion in China reflects the internationalisation of our production base and our commitment to the Chinese market. The new plant is yet another example of the increasingly important role China is playing in Novo Nordisk's global operations, and we will continue to build the Tianjin plant into a world-class insulin production base," says KÃ¥re Schultz, Chief Operating Officer of Novo Nordisk.

To celebrate the completion of the new plant, Novo Nordisk held a grand opening ceremony with representatives from among others the Chinese Ministry of Health, officials from Tianjin Municipal Government, the Danish embassy in China and leading diabetologists from China.

"The new plant will create more than 100 new jobs in China, and will help meet the increasing demand for Novo Nordisk's insulin products in Asia and other countries. With the new plant and our R&D centre in Beijing, Novo Nordisk now has a strong platform for future growth in China," says Ronald Frank Christie, president of Novo Nordisk China.

Novo Nordisk's first plant in Tianjin was built in 2002, and the new plant has been built on the existing 40,000 square metre site. With the opening of the new plant, the production of NovoPen 3 in Denmark will be phased out. The Danish plant has been re-equipped, and employees are being transferred to the production of NovoPen 4, the latest version of Novo Nordisk's durable insulin pen system.

Today, almost three and a half million people worldwide use a NovoPen system for their daily insulin injections, and NovoPen 3, which was launched in 1992, is the highest-selling insulin pen in the world.