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Crystal ball Gazing 2015: Horizon Discovery

22 January 2015 | Views | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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The emergence of CRISPR in 2014, an RNA-guided nuclease based gene editing technology, has revolutionized gene editing allowing anyone to try and build better research models. This year many labs started to try gene editing, and are beginning to realize not only the power of these models in their work, but also the challenges that still exist in their development. 2015 will continue to extend this trend as this exciting technology moves from hype to practical use through refinements and by combining CRISPR with other technologies such as Horizon's proprietary rAAV.

Horizon, as true experts in all methods of in vitro and in vivo gene editing are providing the critical tools and services needed to support customers in in their work.

2014 was a transformational year for Horizon. In March 2014, Horizon was floated on the UK Alternative Investment Market, raising Â£68.6 million, nearly triple the target figure. This provided us with the funds to actively pursue our goals, which were to help expand Horizon's reach to new customers, to expand our access to key intellectual property and to grow our capabilities to cover all of the stages of the drug development process.

Since the IPO, Horizon has completed two M&A transactions including the combination screening services business CombinatoRx based in Cambridge, Massachusetts and the world-leading in vivo gene-editing business SAGEÂ® Labs based in St Louis, Missouri and Boyertown, Pennsylvania. The acquisition of CombinatoRx deepened our screening capabilities, allowing us to offer high-throughput combination screening to customers so that they can identify combinations of drugs or other factors that lead to the optimal therapeutic effect with the lowest risk of side effects, while the acquisition of SAGE Labs has allowed Horizon to extend its offering to include in vivo models, critical tools for preclinical research.

Horizon's goal in 2015 is to further implement its strategy to build a fully-integrated life science business company, becoming the go-to company for the provision of integrated product, service and research solutions at all stages of translational genomics and personalized medicine research from sequence to treatment. A particular focus is to develop the platforms and infrastructure to industrialize gene editing and functional genomics making it possible to increase productivity (eg cell line generation and functional data generation and analysis) by a factor of 10-100.

The lifescience sector has been the strongest performing sector in the public markets for the past number of years and we expect this to continue.