

**Akzo Nobel opens Europe's most advanced research center for the discovery of new medicines in psychiatry**

**Arnhem, the Netherlands, December 11, 1998. – Organon, a business unit of Akzo Nobel, is expanding its research activities with the opening today of new chemistry laboratories at its Newhouse site in Lanarkshire, Scotland. The Newhouse site will be Europe's most advanced research center for the discovery of new medicines for depression and schizophrenia. The state-of-the-art chemistry laboratories – a NLG 50 million (USD 26 million/ GBP 16 million / EURO 23 million) expansion - will be accommodated in Organon's Newhouse research center with the aim of delivering better treatments for the many millions suffering from depression and schizophrenia.**

"Innovation is the cornerstone for Akzo Nobel's successes and growth in the healthcare sector, and the choice for key investments in this Scottish UK site has been stimulated by the generally positive environment for Organon's innovative activities there" said Paul Brons, Akzo Nobel's Board Member responsible for the pharmaceutical business.

Tjeerd Kalff, President of Organon and Lord Macdonald, Industry Minister at the Scottish Office, opened the new chemistry laboratories. The new research center marks completion of the first phase of Organon's development program in Scotland and will enable Organon to increase its drugs discovery research staff at Newhouse from 90 in 1996 to 190.

"Mental illness is expected to cause the greatest burden of ill health by the year 2000" said Tjeerd Kalff, President of Organon. "Organon has a renowned tradition in gynaecology but has over the past years become an important player in psychiatry with the launch of Remeron®, our dual-action antidepressant. We expect that this new research center, with its state-of-the-art technologies and expertise, will keep our drug discovery program in depression and schizophrenia at the forefront of progress in science and medicine."

The techniques of drugs discovery have been revolutionized in the past decade by powerful computerized systems. New combinatorial chemistry techniques, for example, which will be accommodated in the new laboratories at Newhouse, now allow the synthesis of tens of thousands of new compounds in a short period of time; only a few years ago traditional chemistry techniques restricted synthesis to between 20 and 40 compounds per chemist per year. Similarly, high throughput screening now allows

scientists to measure the impact of many thousands of molecules at selected and often newly discovered drug targets (a receptor, enzyme or other protein) at high speed. All these advanced systems will be accommodated in Organon's Newhouse research center.

The concentration of Organon's central nervous system (CNS) drug discovery research at Newhouse is testimony to Organon's long-standing commitments to Scotland (the company's first Newhouse factory opened in 1948) and to the expertise available in neighbouring medical centers and universities. Organon is already involved in a major research collaboration with the University of Edinburgh into the genetic basis of depression and schizophrenia and how that might offer opportunities for treatment.

Organon, a business unit within Akzo Nobel's Pharma Group, develops and produces pharmaceutical products in the fields such as gynaecology, psychiatry, athero-thrombosis, and auto-immune diseases. Major product groups are oral contraceptives, infertility treatments, and preparations for menopausal complaints, depression, and psychosis. Organon employs approximately 9,000 employees worldwide. Year after year, between 15 and 20 per cent of Organon's sale income is invested in its drug discovery and development programs.

Akzo Nobel, based in the Netherlands, serves customers throughout the world with healthcare products, coatings, chemicals and fibers. The company currently employs some 87.500 people in more than 60 countries. Consolidated sales for 1997 totaled NLG 24.1 billion (USD 12 billion / GBP 7.5 billion / EURO 10.8 billion).

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**Internet:**     <http://www.organon.com/index2.html>  
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**Note for the editor / not for publication**

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