

## **Nobilon, BioDiem and leading U.S. scientists developing pandemic avian flu vaccine**

**Arnhem, the Netherlands, August 30, 2006 — Scientists at Akzo Nobel's Nobilon International human vaccines business working to fight the threat of a global bird flu pandemic have received a major boost following the signing of a cooperative research and development agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States.**

The agreement—co-signed with Nobilon's international partner, Australian-based BioDiem Ltd—involves the development of a live attenuated cold-adapted cell culture vaccine against the H5N1 strain of the avian influenza virus. According to experts at the World Health Organization, a live vaccine would offer better and broader protection in the event of a pandemic outbreak.

In 2004, the two companies agreed a licensing deal for BioDiem's cold-adapted intranasal flu vaccine and this technology will now be advanced through pre-clinical development at the CDC in its high-security laboratories in an effort to develop a vaccine which will protect against highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses that pose a pandemic threat.

"This is an extremely important collaborative agreement which could prove crucial in our efforts to develop a vaccine for one of the world's leading health risks," said Toon Wilderbeek, Akzo Nobel's Board member responsible for Pharma. "A key challenge for developers of potential pandemic vaccines is sufficient supply. One of Nobilon's main areas of cutting-edge expertise is in cell culture production to provide benefits of scale-up, speed and efficiency. This is vital to any effective vaccination program."

The cooperative research—to be carried out over two years at Boxmeer in the Netherlands and Atlanta in the United States—will generate, characterize and evaluate in pre-clinical models, live attenuated cold-adapted influenza vaccine (LAIV) candidates against influenza H5N1 viruses.

A live attenuated influenza vaccine has been shown to have a number of advantages. It can trigger a broader immune response than inactivated influenza vaccines in children, as well as allowing for a single dose of a smaller amount of vaccine to provide meaningful protection, compared with currently available inactivated vaccines. The U.S. government has also recently acknowledged that cell culture production of influenza vaccines may provide a superior service compared with the traditional supply based on embryonated eggs. This is because the production timeline may be shortened and vaccine production may be increased with fewer delays.

Pharmaceutical development company BioDiem's existing agreement with Nobilon gives the Akzo Nobel business access to BioDiem's technological expertise in influenza vaccines. Nobilon also has exclusive rights to manufacture, market and sell BioDiem's intranasal influenza vaccine in a number of key world markets.

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