

Identigen and Warnex sign agreement for GMO testing and meat identification kits

LAVAL, QC - Warnex Inc. (TSX: WNX) announced (June 7) that it has signed a licensing agreement with IdentiGEN Ltd to develop products incorporating IdentiGEN's proprietary know-how and Warnex's Genevison(TM) technology platform for the detection of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and meat identification in food and feed products.

'The development of these new tests highlights the broad range of applications of our Genevison platform to address markets beyond the multi-billion dollar pathogen detection market,' said Mark Busgang, President and CEO of Warnex. 'These automated tests will provide rapid and accurate results, replacing commonly-used tests that are labour-intensive and time-consuming. IdentiGEN's technology enables us to bring these tests to market faster, with an anticipated launch date in early 2005.'

GMO testing represents rapidly growing market. Genetically modified foods have been increasingly receiving attention in North America and especially in Europe, where last April, new European Union rules came into force requiring the labelling and traceability of all food products containing GMOs. Warnex's tests, using the state-of-the-art Genevison technology, will allow food producers or regulatory agencies to verify the presence or absence of GMOs in a given food product. In addition, the tests may also be used to identify the presence of a specific GMO, which for example, may have a beneficial quality.

'The development of GMOs and their use in foods has generated significant controversy. The European Union has been among the first jurisdictions to adopt strict legislation on the labelling of GMOs which has fuelled a corresponding demand for products and services to identify foods and animal feeds that contain genetically modified content,' said Ronan Loftus, Business Development Director, IdentiGEN. 'The Genevison DNA rapid detection platform represents an excellent system for this type of identification and a practical application of our genetic identification expertise.'

There is also an increasing demand for methods of meat identification or meat speciation, especially due to the occurrence of mad cow disease. Evidence shows that mad cow disease is spread when infected animal by-products are used as protein supplements in animal feed. The Genevison meat speciation test will determine the presence of a particular type of meat, such as beef, and will hence provide a tool for improving the quality control of animal feed. Other applications may include identifying the presence of certain meats in food products, such as those certified as Halal or Kosher, and the authentication of food ingredients.

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