



Press Release

CropDesign and Plant Bioscience Ltd. in Licence Agreement

Licensed Technology Targets Protein Production in Plants

GENT, BELGIUM/ NORWICH, UK, 10 January, 2002 — CropDesign N.V. (CropDesign) and Plant Bioscience Ltd. (PBL) announced today that they have signed a broad licence agreement concerning the PBL's AMPLICON, AMPLICON-PLUS, and related technologies for application in protein over-expression in plants. Under the terms of the agreement, CropDesign has exclusive worldwide rights to AMPLICON and AMPLICON-PLUS for the production of industrial-type enzymes and proteins in plants. In addition, CropDesign is granted non-exclusive rights to the technologies in the area of production of pharmaceutical products in plants.

AMPLICON is a gene silencing technology developed at the Sainsbury Laboratory (Norwich, UK) by Professor David Baulcombe. AMPLICON-PLUS, developed by Professor Vicki Vance and colleagues at the University of South Carolina, is a method for achieving hyper-expression of transgenes in plants. The result of combining both these technologies is extremely high and uniform levels of transgene over-expression.

According to Dr. Herman Van Mellaert, CropDesign CEO, "With the licence on AMPLICON and AMPLICON-PLUS we are now well positioned to gain additional leverage from the TraitMill in this new business area. This technology will enable us to rapidly and effectively develop rice lines producing large amounts of recombinant proteins for our partners." CropDesign's core technology platform is the rice TraitMill, an integrated high-throughput system for gene cloning, plant transformation and plant evaluation. TraitMill is designed to deliver improved agronomic traits directly in cereal crops. Van Mellaert added, "Not only is rice a key target for agronomic improvement, it is also ideally suited for cost-effective and environmentally safe molecular farming. The market requires such effective production tools to bring new biotech-based proteins and drugs to market."

Dr. Jan Chojecki, Managing Director of PBL, commented that, "We are very pleased to have had this further endorsement for our technology by CropDesign. We fully expect that AMPLICON and AMPLICON-PLUS will prove to be of considerable value to their product development programs. Novel gene expression technologies are critical for production of new generations of enzymes and other proteins".



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CropDesign, based in Gent, Belgium is an agbiotech company focussed on the application of functional genomics for improved crop performance, including higher yield, heightened tolerance to stress and diseases and better quality. The company also applies its technology in other business areas, including molecular farming. CropDesign applies its technology in rice, wheat and other cereals. Founded in 1998, CropDesign employs over 65 people at its research facilities in Gent.

PBL, based in Norwich, UK is an independent technology management company specializing in plant and microbial sciences. The company manages and commercializes research conducted by leading plant and microbial science laboratories around the world.

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