



Sarum Biosciences signs licence agreement with PBL for *Clostridium difficile* bacteriophage endolysin technology.

January 22nd 2010: Sarum Biosciences Limited (“Sarum”) and PBL, the UK technology management company, today announced the signing of an exclusive worldwide licence agreement which enables Sarum to develop and exploit therapeutic and diagnostic applications of a bacteriophage endolysin protein for the treatment and detection of *Clostridium difficile*, a serious healthcare concern both within the UK and the rest of the world.

The bacteriophage endolysin technology was developed by scientists at the Institute for Food Research in Norwich (IFR), with support from the BBSRC’s Follow on Fund, and exploits naturally occurring proteins expressed by bacterial viruses (bacteriophage) that have very specific antibacterial activity. A targeted antibacterial approach to the treatment of *C. difficile*, such as that promised by the endolysin technology, is ideal for the treatment and prevention of this particular infection as it does no damage to the normal bacterial populations in the gut – the broad nature of existing antibiotics, and the loss of normal bacteria during antibiotic use is very often the cause of *C. difficile*-associated disease. Treatment with the endolysin has the potential to destroy or suppress the *C. difficile* infection, while allowing the re-establishment of normal levels of “good” bacteria in patients.

Dr. David West, CEO of Sarum commented: “This *C. difficile* endolysin technology has the potential to become an important weapon in our fight against this important healthcare problem. Sarum is pleased to have secured this exclusive licence which adds another dimension to the company’s existing bacteriophage-based product pipeline.”

Dr. Martin Stocks, Business Development Manager of PBL commented: “The IFR endolysin technology could be a vital tool for ridding the healthcare industry of the scourge of *Clostridium difficile* infection. In Sarum, we have found a first class partner with the expertise and experience to develop the technology and bring it to market.”

"Using bacterial endolysins has been of interest to IFR for many years in the food context," said Dr Arjan Narbad of the IFR, an institute of the BBSRC, which funded the study. "Now we have an endolysin that is active specifically against *C. difficile* we are looking forward to developing it into a potent weapon against this problem."

Sarum will be working with the support of the teams at PBL and IFR to develop the endolysin technology and take it through pre-clinical and, ultimately, clinical development. This alliance will enable the project to benefit from IFR’s expertise in the area of *C. difficile* and gut microbiology, allied to Sarum team’s in-depth experience in bacteriophage-based technology and the drug development process.

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About PBL

PBL (Plant Bioscience Limited: www.pbltechnology.com) was formed in 1994, and is now owned by The John Innes Centre (JIC), The Sainsbury Laboratory and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). PBL manages and develops intellectual property in the life sciences emerging from public research institutions, including IFR and other BBSRC-sponsored Institutes such as JIC. PBL also handles technology for many other public research sources worldwide.

About Sarum

Sarum Biosciences is a healthcare company developing novel solutions to bacterial infections and diseases, by exploiting the action of naturally occurring bacterial predators called bacteriophage. Established in 2003, the company has facilities in Cardiff and Salisbury, UK, and focuses on a range of infections and conditions caused by bacteria, addressing problems where medical needs are unmet and there is a requirement for alternative and innovative approaches to treatment.

See www.sarumbiosciences.co.uk for further information.

About IFR

The mission of the Institute of Food Research (www.ifr.ac.uk) is to undertake international quality scientific research relevant to food and human health and to work in partnership with others to provide underpinning science for consumers, policy makers, the food industry and academia. It is a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, and an Institute of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (www.bbsrc.ac.uk).

About BBSRC

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is the UK funding agency for research in the life sciences. Sponsored by Government, BBSRC annually invests around £450 million in a wide range of research that makes a significant contribution to the quality of life for UK citizens and supports a number of important industrial stakeholders including the agriculture, food, chemical, healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. BBSRC carries out its mission by funding internationally competitive research, providing training in the biosciences, fostering opportunities for knowledge transfer and innovation and promoting interaction with the public and other stakeholders on issues of scientific interest in universities, centres and institutes.

The Babraham Institute, Institute for Animal Health, Institute of Food Research, John Innes Centre and Rothamsted Research are Institutes of BBSRC. The Institutes conduct long-term, mission-oriented research using specialist facilities. They have strong interactions with industry, Government departments and other end-users of their research.