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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amersham Pharmacia Biotech and BioImage collaborate to commercialize new cell-based screening technology

"Tracking" protein has potential to ease the bottleneck in identifying new drug targets

PISCATAWAY, NJ and SOEBORG, DENMARK, 18 December 2000 - Amersham Pharmacia Biotech (APBiotech) and BioImage announced today that the two companies will collaborate to commercialize a new cell-based screening technology based on Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP). Under the terms of the agreement, APBiotech will gain an exclusive license to BioImage's European patent portfolio on GFP, including the right to sublicense the technology.

Green Fluorescent Protein has a number of applications in drug discovery research. Of particular importance, it can be used as a 'tracking device' within a cell, allowing the researcher to build a detailed picture of the production and movement of proteins inside the cell. In drug discovery research, GFP can help evaluate the potential of a drug candidate.

"GFP addresses a key problem in drug discovery by giving a detailed picture of how the drug candidate interacts with the cell. APBiotech is looking at using the technology in high-throughput and high-content cellular screening assays that will tell researchers early on whether a 'hit' is worth pursuing further as a lead compound." said Neil Cook, VP of Drug Discovery for APBiotech. "The industry is demanding faster, cheaper, smarter technologies to cope with the increasing number of drug candidates. One of the big bottlenecks now is analyzing these 'hits' in cells."

APBiotech's will use GFP in its LEADseeker™ Homogenous Imaging System for the discovery and screening of potential new drug targets. The LEADseeker platform includes instrument, reagents, software and application support. The system revolutionized drug screening when it was launched in 1998 and is now used by many of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies.

GFP was originally identified in the luminescent jellyfish *Aequorea victoria*. The naturally occurring form of GFP functions best in cold seawater (around 10°C) but is of limited use at the higher temperatures required to run cellular assays. BioImage, however, has patents covering a mutation known as F64L, which enables GFP to assemble correctly at body/cell temperatures (37°C), making it ideal for use in these assays.

Dr. Jonathon Pines with the Wellcome CRC Institute, University of Cambridge, and a leading expert in the GFP field, said: "At higher temperatures, F64L has increased solubility and fluorescence so that much less GFP is needed in the cells to give a good signal. Therefore, you are less likely to introduce experimental error."

"BioImage has pioneered the development of assays using our patented GFP to track the movement of intracellular signaling proteins in living cells and in real time," said Ole Thastrup, Chief Technical Officer for BioImage "This agreement supports our technical leadership in this exciting field. It will make some of our novel technologies and competencies available to APBiotech's customers and helps us in our pursuit in discovering drugs with completely different selectivity profiles compared to traditional enzyme inhibitors."

APBiotech, the life sciences business of Nycomed Amersham plc (LSE: NAM; NYSE: NYE), is a leading global provider of biotechnology systems, products and services for research into genes and proteins, for the discovery and development of drugs and for the manufacture of biopharmaceuticals. The customers for APBiotech's products and technology are pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies and research and academic institutions in North America, Europe, Latin America and Asia. BioImage is a Danish based biotech company, which is a spin off from the pharmaceutical company Novo Nordisk. The company was funded in the spring of 1999 with substantial venture capital from funds advised by Apax Partners & Co. BioImage is based around its proprietary redistributionTM concept, which comprises of technologies for observation of protein movements within living cells, of which an important tool is the widely used GFP, on which the company holds a strong patent position. BioImage collaborates with pharmaceutical and biotech companies in the development of new classes of drugs showing fewer side effects.

For more information please visit www.bioimage.com