

Galapagos Launches Gene Silencing Platform at Keystone Symposia

Mechelen, Belgium, January 16, 2003 -- Galapagos Genomics, the Belgian functional genomics company, today announced that it has launched its SilenceSelect™ gene silencing platform. With SilenceSelect, Galapagos complements its adenovirus based gene expression platform with a proprietary silencing technology that induces an effective and long-term suppression of human genes. The SilenceSelect collection contains adenoviruses with gene sequences that induce knock-down through an RNA interference mechanism. This collection, covering the 5,000 genes of highest interest to the pharmaceutical industry, can be analyzed in cellular assays in search for genes that modulate a specific disease phenotype.

Gene silencing through mRNA degradation using small interfering RNA has become a powerful and widely used tool for gene function research. The induced knock-down of an individual gene product in a cellular disease model provides important information on its role in the disease and validates its potential for the development of a new medicine. With SilenceSelect, Galapagos enables the application of this technology on an industrial scale. SilenceSelect provides a unique opportunity to identify and validate the function of chemically tractable and therapeutically relevant targets across different therapeutic areas.

The SilenceSelect platform will be presented at the Keystone Symposium "Drug Target Validation: Gene Suppression" (Tahoe City, CA) by Helmuth van Es, Ph.D., on Saturday, January 18 beginning at 08:00 am PST. Dr. van Es will provide an overview of the platform and the collaboration opportunities.

"We are very excited to roll out this technology platform today," said Onno van de Stolpe, CEO of Galapagos. "The combination of the gene silencing technology with the advantages of our adenovirus based gene delivery generates a powerful platform to study disease relevant drug targets on an industrial scale. We are convinced that the SilenceSelect platform will enable pharmaceutical companies to accelerate their target discovery and validation programs, thereby bringing better molecules faster and at a lower cost to the market."

Technology background

Adenoviruses are widely used gene delivery systems for human cells and tissues because of their unsurpassed transduction efficiency. Adenoviruses infect a broad range of cell types, including most primary cells. The SilenceSelect collection is built in proprietary adenoviral vectors that have minimal interference with host cell physiology by deletion of key adenoviral genes. Knock-down of a target is dependent on (a) the half-life of the protein that is encoded by the targeted messenger RNA, and (b) on the efficiency of the knock-down construct. Using the SilenceSelect knock-down adenovirus, an optimal transduction in combination with long term, high expression levels of the RNA molecule ensures significant knockdown of the targeted messenger RNA. This then provides for a reduction in protein level and a possible change in phenotype.

About Galapagos

Galapagos Genomics is a privately held company headquartered in Mechelen, Belgium. The Company has built a functional genomics platform using arrayed adenoviruses containing human gene sequences. It's knock-in PhenoSelect and knock-down SilenceSelect collections are in an arrayed format that enables high-throughput screening using cellular assays. Galapagos is using its technology platform for the discovery and validation of proprietary drug targets and for partnering with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. It's research programs focus on

three disease areas: Alzheimer's disease, bone diseases and psoriasis. The Company currently employs 92 people, including 22 PhD's, and occupies a 2000 sq.m. research and production facility in Mechelen, with additional research laboratories in Leiden, The Netherlands. Galapagos' current partners include Bayer, Euroscreen, Exelixis, Incyte, Johnson&Johnson, Organon, Pharmacia, Procter&Gamble, UCB Pharma and Vertex. The shareholders are Abingworth Management, Apax Partners, Burrill&Company, NIB Capital Private Equity, Crucell Holland BV (Nasdaq, Euronext: [CRXL](#)) and Tibotec-Virco NV.

More information on SilenceSelect can be found at www.silenceselect.com. PhenoSelect™ and SilenceSelect™ are pending trademarks owned by Galapagos Genomics NV.

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