



ASX ANNOUNCEMENT

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Avian influenza vaccine efficacy trials to begin late November

US poultry trials for the two avian influenza vaccine candidates

Sydney, Australia: Imugene Limited (ASX:IMU) has finalised arrangements to commence the efficacy trials for its new avian influenza vaccine candidates. The initial trial in poultry will be undertaken by Benchmark Biolabs Inc at its state of the art high level containment animal trial facilities in the United States.

The trial is scheduled to commence by the end of November 2006 with expected completion during January 2007. Results should be available shortly thereafter.

Benchmark Biolabs is a specialist contract research provider with clinical trial facilities located in the US Midwest. The Nebraska clinical facility is an approved Animal and Laboratory Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory and trial facility making it one of the few locations worldwide that can undertake animal trials with infectious agents such as avian influenza.

The trial will determine the ability of the vaccine candidates to protect chickens against infection with the deadly bird flu virus. Imugene Managing Director, Dr Warwick Lamb said, "We have evaluated a number of potential trial facilities around the world and have chosen Benchmark Biolabs because of its commercial approach and expertise. Recently Imugene moved into our own laboratories and successfully completed the construction of the avian influenza vaccine candidates."

"To ensure our trials are conducted precisely to trial parameters and reliable timelines Imugene has moved the trial site to Benchmark Biolabs. This will add momentum and lead to greater international recognition of the trial result."

About the Imugene avian influenza vaccines

Imugene has developed two different avian influenza vaccines for poultry. One is for the broiler (chicken meat) market and the other is for the breeder and egg layer markets.

The trial vaccines both utilise Imugene's proven *Fowl Adenoviral Delivery Vector* technology to deliver the necessary genetic material to stimulate a bird's immune system to protect against the bird flu virus.

The two vaccine candidates differ as the commercial requirements for broilers and breeders or layers vary. The primary aim for a commercial bird flu vaccine for broilers is to provide immunity early in a bird's life but the protection need only be short term as broiler birds typically reach market weight by 42-49 days of age. Layer birds and birds used for breeding stock for the broiler market require longer lasting immunity.

Perth Office

Level 20, Allendale Square
77 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Tel: +61 8 9440 2660
Fax: +61 8 9440 2699

ABN: 99 009 179 551

Sydney Office

Registered Office
Level 1, 14 – 20 Delhi Road
North Ryde NSW 2113
Tel: +61 2 9870 7330
Fax: +61 2 9888 9338

www.imugene.com

The vaccine designed for layers and breeders uses two antigens (rather than the single antigen used in the broiler vaccine) to elicit both antibody and cell mediated immunity.

The vaccine candidates have been thoroughly verified by a series of in-house and external tests.

Major advantages of the Imugene vaccine candidates

An effective vaccine could be used to protect the world's poultry industry from further avian influenza outbreaks and halt the spread towards Australia, Europe and the US. A viable vaccine to control outbreaks must be safe, effective and able to be quickly and easily administered on a large scale.

The Imugene vaccine candidates use technology that allows authorities to differentiate between infected and vaccinated birds, a vital consideration for the international poultry industry.

The vaccine candidates deliver only a portion of the flu genetic material instead of the whole virus. This makes the Imugene vaccines safe by preventing mutations or recombination with human flu viruses.

The vaccine candidates generated using the Imugene delivery system are very cost effective for mass administration to entire poultry sheds and do not require injection of each bird.

The vaccine candidates are specific to the H5N1 strain of avian influenza, but can be easily and quickly adapted to protect against other strains of influenza.

The advantages of the Imugene vaccine solve the limitations of existing vaccines and treatments.

About Benchmark Biolabs

Benchmark Biolabs Inc, based in Lincoln, Nebraska, is a privately held contract service provider serving the life science industry. Benchmark's customers include traditional and non-traditional biologics firms seeking technology development in a compliant environment. Benchmark has developed particular capabilities for the application of creative scientific solutions to address product development needs along a defined regulatory pathway for conventional and novel technologies.

Benchmark Biolabs provides support to the animal health and life sciences industries by offering contracted services in the areas of laboratory services, clinical and pre-clinical studies, regulatory services and compliance, and small-scale manufacturing. Benchmark also provides business development and general management services to those clients in emerging businesses. Benchmark's staff of scientists and professionals has an outstanding track record for bringing leading edge technologies from concept to the laboratory to the marketplace.

The National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) has approved Benchmark's Nebraska clinical facility to the required Animal and Laboratory Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) status. NCIE requires BSL-3 status for research involving certain infectious agents, including avian influenza.

For procedures involving manipulation of infectious materials scientists conduct procedures within biological safety cabinets or other containment devices.

Personnel wear protective clothing and equipment, and the laboratory includes special engineering and design features to ensure microorganisms are contained within the facility.

According to Dr Tom Overbay, Director, Business Development, "The BSL-3 approval recognises Benchmark has the facilities, personnel and procedures to work safely with and contain pathogenic agents."

There are very few BSL-3 approved facilities within North America, a deficit which has impeded research efforts aimed at addressing important infectious disease threats, including avian influenza.

About Imugene

Imugene specialises in commercialising animal health products for production animals including pigs and poultry.

Imugene owns the worldwide rights to the *Fowl Adenoviral Vector Delivery System* for poultry and the *Porcine Adenoviral Vector Delivery System* for pigs. Imugene has successfully licensed the first product based on the *Fowl Adenoviral Vector Delivery System* – the *Poultry Productivity Enhancer*.

Imugene's poultry and pig portfolio is targeting a worldwide US\$3 billion annual market with four lead vaccine products under development and a strong product pipeline. Consumer demands for disease free and residue free food will bolster Imugene's prospects.

Imugene's products safely prevent disease and reduce or eliminate antibiotics and harmful chemicals in animals. Animal antibiotics and chemicals in the human food chain have been linked to the emergence of dangerous resistant bacteria in people and food residues.

For more information please visit the Imugene Website www.imugene.com

For more information:

Dr Warwick Lamb
Managing Director
+61 2 9870 7330

Mr Graham Dowland
Executive Chairman
+61 8 9440 2660

Mr Rudi Michelson
Monsoon Communications
+61 3 9620 3333