



BIO INSPIRE

» NEWS YOU CAN USE

Welcome to the April issue of *Bio Inspire*. We've had an exciting couple of months at NZBio, with a new CEO on board, our fourth (highly successful) annual conference and the publication of our latest journal, the NZBio Report. Here's some of what's been happening:

In this issue

- What's hot? Pfizer Animal Health has **snapped up local firm Catapult Genetics**, Living Cell Technologies has **raised in excess of A\$15 million** in its latest capital raising rounds, and a recent report shows **high-quality biodiesel** from locally grown oilseed rape is **sustainable** and emits around 50% less carbon dioxide over its life cycle than mineral diesel.
- **Smart science from New Zealand** was recognised and celebrated at the annual NZBio Conference last month. The 2008 NZBio Distinguished Biotechnologist of the Year Award went to **Professor Ross Clark** for his work with Tercica, the biotech company that developed and marketed insulin-like growth factor (IGF) to treat short stature in children. The 2008 Emerging Biotechnologist of the Year Award went to AgResearch mathematician **Dr Paul Shorten**.
- A deal focusing on the development of **new treatments for hay fever and asthma** won the 2008 NZBio Deal of the Year Award. BioPacificVentures' investment of more than \$10 million into New Zealand start-up company, Anzamune, took the prize.
- A successful trial at two Aranui schools of a Christchurch-designed smart instrument that **breath-tests for chronic diseases** has brought early detection of **asthma and diabetes in at-risk children** closer.
- **Japan's biggest buyer of corn** for use in food is importing **genetically modified** supplies for the first time this year due to the high price of non-GM product. The country is the world's largest corn importer.

What's hot?

- Pfizer Animal Health is positioning itself at the forefront of livestock gene marker R&D by acquiring two market-leading livestock genomics companies: **Catapult Genetics** and Bovigen LLC. **NZ-based Catapult** is focused on developing and commercialising innovative **livestock DNA tests and gene markers** to assist food producers, processors and retailers in improving profitability and quality in the international food chain. For more details see: www.nzbio.org.nz
- **Living Cell Technologies** is going from strength to strength and attracting some influential friends along the way. The latest news from this global company with a strong NZ base shows **another successful financing round** which will allow the firm to continue its **novel diabetes treatment** research and trials. See their web site at: www.lctglobal.com

Trends

- An independent life cycle assessment of **oilseed rape produced biofuel** concluded the crop will make a sustainable contribution to New Zealand's climate change efforts and that it is **55% more energy-efficient than mineral diesel**. "As a result biodiesel will enhance New Zealand's energy security through onshore fuel production," Biodiesel New Zealand General Manager Paul Quinn says. Read the article online at: www.nzbio.org.nz

- **Japan** - long considered one of the more GM averse consumer markets - is to **process 250,000 tonnes of GM corn** imported from the US this year, signaling a policy change on corn procurement by the country's biggest corn starch maker. Mitsubishi Corporation subsidiary Nihon Shokuhin Kako buys more than 750,000 tonnes of corn per year, and market prices for the grain have skyrocketed 56 percent in the past 12 months, reaching a record US\$6.16 a bushel in the US recently. Read more at: www.nzbio.org.nz

- In related news, Philippine researchers have begun **trials** of genetically modified **Golden Rice** as prices of the grain soar internationally and importing nations are clearly beginning to worry about possible shortages. **Golden rice is enriched with Vitamin A** and is intended to improve nutrition in the developing world. More on this here: www.nzbio.org.nz

Smart Science in NZ

- The annual **NZBio Conference Awards** are a time to celebrate some of our most talented kiwis. This year was no different, with the Hon Pete Hodgson, Minister of RS&T, Tertiary Education and Economic Development, joining us for what was a special evening. As Ross Clark is very unwell, his son Andy collected the Distinguished Biotechnologist Award on Ross's behalf and gave a moving speech, impressing the audience of around 300 people with his courage and composure. More about the awards here: www.nzbio.org.nz

- Anzamune and BioPacificVentures also received the **2008 NZBio Deal of the Year Award**. This is an **interesting technology**, essentially using **ground up shrimp shells to boost the immune system** and protect against common allergic illnesses such as hay fever and asthma. Read the full story in the conference issue of the **NZBio Report** online here: www.nzbio.org.nz or email: christine.ross@nzbio.org.nz for a hard copy.

- Syft Technologies' **mobile breath-testing device, Voice200**, was used to test 230 children aged between five and 12, with each child blowing into the machine for two 30 second periods. **Voice200 can instantly detect several biomarkers** (or volatile organic compounds) that may indicate the presence of certain **diseases such as diabetes and asthma**. The company says its new instrument is user friendly and small enough to install in vehicles, allowing it to be taken into communities with high health needs. More details here: www.nzbio.org.nz

Fast facts

Twenty-one percent of biotechnology organisations are active in the Auckland region, but biotechnology activity is spread evenly across the remainder of the country, Statistics New Zealand said in its most recent sector update.

For more details on all these stories see the **News** pages of the NZBio web site: www.nzbio.org.nz *You'll need your login & password. Contact us if you require a reminder.

Please get in touch if you require further information or there is anything in *Bio Inspire* you wish to discuss.

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