

Aventis CropScience

.....acquisition rumours continue

Aventis has announced plans to sell its Aventis CropScience subsidiary following the resignation of its chief executive Alain Goddard. Proposals for the sell-off were first made in November 2000, and in July 2001 Bayer signed a letter of intent with the parent company to acquire the CropScience division. Meanwhile, Schering is restructuring with emphasis on pharmaceuticals and plans selling its stake in Aventis CropScience as well as reducing its participation in the biotechnology company Metagen.

.....in Japan

Aventis CropScience and Shionogi are to form a crop protection chemicals joint venture in Japan. The new company owned 66% by Aventis and 34% by Shionogi will be named Aventis CropScience Shionogi having initial annual turnover of EUR 290 M. The company based in Tokyo will be headed by Jacques du Puy who is currently chief executive of Aventis CropScience Japan. Aventis CropScience Shionogi will benefit from Shionogi's well-established distribution network throughout Japan.

....sells household insecticide division

Aventis CropScience has sold its household insecticides division to Sumitomo Chemical Co Ltd in Osaka.

....eyes 2004 launch for novel wide-spectrum insecticide

Aventis CropScience expects to launch its novel insecticide ethiprole in 2004. In Japan, the product is expected to have widespread application against paddy field insects and generate annual sales of several billion Yen.

....sells formetanate in North America

Aventis CropScience is to sell formetanate, its active ingredient for insecticides, to US company Gowan. The sale includes registration documents, product expertise and the Carzol and Dicarzol brands. The product will be marketed in the US and Canada by Gowan; by Gowan de Mexico in Mexico; and by Margarita Internacional elsewhere in the world.

Paradigm and Bayer extend commercial partnership

Paradigm Genetics, Inc. and Bayer AG have announced an extension and expansion of

their commercial partnership for herbicide discovery and development. Per the agreement, the companies will collaborate on herbicide discovery for an additional 5 years, with 3 years of committed funding, plus a 2-year option that would extend the collaboration to October 2006. Under the terms of the contract, Paradigm will receive up to \$30 million, including milestone payments. Paradigm will also receive success fees for all products that reach the market.

DuPont discontinues Benlate

DuPont Crop Protection is to discontinue the production of its fungicide benomyl and the sale of its Benlate 50 DF fungicide. Benlate will not be sold after 31 December 2001 and all trade channels are expected to cease by 2002. Benlate had global sales of \$90 M in 2000. DuPont has been in litigation over the product since the early 1990s.

Acquisitions and mergers

....Sumitomo Chemicals and Mitsui

By March 2004, the merger of Sumitomo Chemical and Mitsui Chemicals is due to be completed. There will be seven component companies in the final structure. These will be for Petrochemicals, Basic Chemicals, Specialty Polymers, Specialty Chemicals, IT and Electronic Materials, Agricultural Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals. The new company will be known as Sumitomo Mitsui Chemical Co Ltd. A joint holding company is to be established by October 2003, with Mitsui Chemicals and Sumitomo Chemical being absorbed at the end of March 2004.

Kumiai-Bayer joint development

Kumiai Chemical Industry has signed a license option agreement with Bayer for the novel fungicide benthiavalicarb. Kumiai is planning to make a simultaneous global launch of a range of proprietary combination formulations during 2003. The fungicide is effective against downy mildew and infectious diseases in grapes, potatoes and leaf crops at doses of less than 100 g ha⁻¹. It is safe to animals and humans and meets environmental standards. Ihara Chemical will produce the active ingredient.

...Sumitomo Chemical restructuring

Sumitomo Chemical is to merge its Agros

Corp subsidiary into its plant protection division with effect from 1 October. Agros markets Sumitomo's pesticide products to Japanese wholesalers and retainers, and has sales of Yen 10 bn/y. It also undertakes some pesticide formulation work.

...Nufarm acquires Agtrol's fungicides

Nufarm has bought Agtrol's copper and tin based fungicides division from Philbro-Tech. The group is also negotiating the sale of its European operations to Nufarm. The fungicides division accounts for 60% of Agtrol's \$50 M turnover. Nufarm will take over its 45 employees but Philbro-Tech will retain the units and supply products to Nufarm under long term contracts. Agrochemicals account for 65% of Nufarm's \$521 M turnover but this deal represents the Australian group's entry onto the fungicides market.

Disappointing first year for internet trading

Two internet traders have announced staff cuts recently, triggering speculation of an uncertain future for online trading. The UK launch of Agrifirst.com, due in April 2001, has been postponed "indefinitely" with all UK staff laid off, although marketing in France will continue. The company conducted only some £0.95 M trade in France in its first year, against an estimated total trade in supplies of £53 bn. Globalfarmers.com has cut its development team and dispensed with its editors completely. However, it claims to have achieved higher trade in its launch year than Agrifirst, with output now doubling each month. The company's most popular products are Temik (aldicarb), Topik (clodinafop-methyl) and chlormequat. A new company, first4 farming.com, a low-cost joint venture between several suppliers and distributors, is to trade soon.

BASF site to close

By the end of the 3rd quarter of 2002, BASF's R&D centre at Princeton, NJ, is to be closed by BASF, with all of the company's agrochemicals research being carried out in Limburgerhof, Germany, and Research Triangle Park, NC. The closure will result in the loss of around 500 jobs. The operations at Princeton were acquired by BASF in 2000 when it bought American Cyanamid.

Please send any contributions to the NEWS sections in *Pesticide Outlook* to Hamish Kidd, The Royal Society of Chemistry, Thomas Graham House, Science Park, Cambridge CB4 0WF. FAX +44 (0)1223 420247; email KIDDH@RSC.ORG.