

Nobilon and CoroNovative join forces in virus discovery program

Arnhem, the Netherlands, June 14, 2006 — Akzo Nobel's Nobilon International business, active in the field of human vaccines, is to work together with the Dutch Erasmus Medical Center's spin-off, CoroNovative BV, to expand and accelerate CoroNovative's virus discovery program.

Both companies have signed a joint R&D agreement to use their proprietary and proven technologies for discovering new viruses that cause a variety of diseases—including conditions in which no infectious agents have so far been recognized—which will aid the development of novel treatments.

Under the terms of the agreement, Nobilon will provide research funding and know-how to CoroNovative in exchange for preferential access to intellectual property outside the field of diagnostics. CoroNovative will choose an additional strategic partner in the field of in-vitro diagnostics.

Located in Rotterdam, CoroNovative is a privately held company whose Chief Scientific Officer is Albert Osterhaus, the Chief of Virology at Rotterdam's Erasmus Medical Center, from which CoroNovative was spun off in 2004. "Until now we have been very successful in finding new human and animal viruses," explained Prof Osterhaus. "This collaboration will put even more people in the labs with obvious results."

He added that the collaboration will place special emphasis on respiratory syndromes, building on notable recent discoveries relating to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and another newly discovered human coronavirus (hCoV-NL63).

"The collective know-how and expertise of our pharmaceutical businesses is substantial and there is obvious potential for them to benefit from this virus discovery initiative, which will aid the future development of new treatments for a variety of diseases," added Toon Wilderbeek, member of Akzo Nobel's Board of Management responsible for Pharma.

Nobilon's R&D Director, Han van den Bosch, also expressed his delight at joining forces with CoroNovative to conduct such important research. He said: "This agreement fits perfectly into the strategy of Nobilon and Intervet—to identify new targets for disease prevention or intervention in order to improve human and animal health."

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Note for the editor

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