PRESS RELEASES

Apr 23, 2002

Ecolab's First Quarter At Top End of Forecasted Range; Double-Digit EPS Gain Expected For Full Year

ST. PAUL, Minn., Apr 23, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Ecolab, Inc.(NYSE:ECL):

2002 FIRST QUARTER HIGHLIGHTS:

-- Diluted earnings per share from ongoing operations of $0.37
-- Diluted net income per share -12% to $0.30, after unusual charges
-- Sales of $786 million; +2% when compared with last year's pro forma sales (including Henkel-Ecolab)
-- Operations show gradual improvement from fourth quarter 2001

	First Quarter Ended March 31	
(Diluted Earnings per Share)		
	2002	2001
Pro Forma income from ongoing operations	$ 0.37	$ 0.37
Pro Forma Adjustments:		
Acquisition of Henkel-Ecolab	-	0.01
Adoption of FAS 142	-	(0.04)
One-time gain from benefit plan changes	0.03	-
Special charges	(0.11)	-
Discontinued operations	0.01	-
Net Income, as reported	$ 0.30	$ 0.34

Gradually improving trends in key U.S. markets helped lead Ecolab's first quarter results as diluted earnings per share from ongoing operations reached the top end of the company's forecasted range for the period ended March 31, 2002.

Net income per share as reported of $0.30 reflected first quarter restructuring and integration activities as well as a gain from discontinued operations. Excluding these unusual charges, income from ongoing operations totaled $0.37 per diluted share. Comparison of first quarter results are affected by the adoption of FAS 142, Goodwill and Other Intangible Assets (the elimination of goodwill amortization), and the acquisition and consolidation of Henkel-Ecolab at the end of last year. Pro forma earnings per share from ongoing operations for the first quarter of 2001 were also $0.37 per share after adjustment for these changes. The Company has published certain historic unaudited pro forma financial information on its website at www.ecolab.com/investor/proforma.asp to assist investors in understanding the pro forma effects of Ecolab's adoption of FAS 142 and acquisition of Henkel-Ecolab.

Commenting on the quarter, Allan L. Schuman, Ecolab's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer said, "We are very pleased with our progress in the first quarter. Our domestic markets have begun to recover from the fourth quarter's depressed levels, and we are optimistic that this developing recovery will spread more broadly across our other geographic markets. We have leveraged this improvement, as our people did an outstanding job working with our customers in this period.

"We are managing very aggressively in this environment, introducing new products into attractive market segments, adding innovative complementary services and continuing to expand our share of the market. We look for 2002's recovering first half to build momentum and yield attractive comparisons in the latter part of the year. We expect 2002 full year earnings to show double-digit growth, with pro forma earnings from ongoing operations for the year projected to rise to the $1.78-$1.82 per diluted share range, which compares with the pro forma $1.63 from ongoing operations we earned in 2001 (these amounts are detailed in the "Business Outlook" section below.) We remain focused on superior performance, both for our customers and our shareholders, and are working relentlessly to improve our results."

First quarter sales for Ecolab's United States Cleaning & Sanitizing operations rose 1% over the first quarter of 2001 to $392 million, as gains in Institutional and Kay operations were partially offset by lower Food & Beverage and Professional Products' sales. Ecolab's United States Cleaning & Sanitizing operating income rose 7% to $65 million, reflecting the adoption of FAS 142, new products, aggressive sales efforts and promotions, and close attention to costs. Excluding FAS 142, operating income increased 2%.

United States Other Services sales increased 13% to $70 million in the first quarter; excluding acquisitions, sales rose 2%. Operating income in the first quarter of 2002 declined 6% to $5 million due to investments in GCS's infrastructure and systems, which more than offset the benefits of adopting FAS 142. Acquisitions had no material effect on income.

Sales of Ecolab's International Cleaning & Sanitizing operations include the results of operations in Europe (formerly Henkel-Ecolab, which was acquired at the end of 2001.) Reported International sales rose nearly 200% in the first quarter when measured at fixed currency rates. Excluding acquisitions, sales rose 5% at fixed rates. Latin America and Canada showed very good sales gains, while Europe and Asia Pacific sales grew modestly. Fixed currency operating income nearly doubled to $20 million. Excluding acquisitions, International operating income declined 8% primarily due to difficult conditions in North Asia offsetting the benefits from FAS 142.

First quarter results include special charges and a one-time gain from benefit plan changes. These were related to plans management announced earlier in the year to undertake restructuring and cost saving actions during 2002. Actions taken in the first quarter included workforce reductions, employee benefit plan changes and product discontinuations. Further actions and expenses are anticipated during the remainder of 2002. During the first quarter, the company also settled remaining issues related to the disposal of a business in 1992.

Business Outlook

The following statements are based on current expectations. These statements are forward-looking, and actual results may differ materially. These statements do not include the potential impact of business acquisitions or other material corporate transactions, which may be completed after the date of this release. This Business Outlook section should be read in conjunction with the information on "Forward Looking Statements" at the end of this release.
Ecolab expects sales for both domestic and international operations (in fixed currencies and adjusted for acquisitions) to increase in the second quarter 2002 over the second quarter 2001. Gross margins are expected to be in the 50%-51% range, reflecting a reclassification of certain selling, general and administrative (SG&A) expenses to cost of sales. Excluding the impact of the reclassification, and the component of the restructuring charges to be included in Cost of Sales, gross margins should be similar to 2001's second quarter. Conversely, SG&A expenses are expected to decline to around 38%, reflecting the same reclassification. Excluding the impact of the reclassification, the SG&A expense ratio will likely be similar to the second quarter of 2001. Interest expense is likely to be in the $12 million area for the second quarter, reflecting the additional debt incurred in the purchase of Henkel-Ecolab. Currency is expected to be a negative influence.

Pro forma earnings per share from ongoing operations for the second quarter of 2002 are expected to be in a $0.41 to $0.44 range. This compares to pro forma earnings of $0.42 per share in the second quarter 2001.

For the full year ended December 31, 2002, Ecolab expects diluted earnings per share from ongoing operations to be in a $1.78-$1.82 range compared with pro forma earnings of $1.63 in 2001.

These projected results do not reflect the impact, if any, of potential transitional goodwill impairment from adopting FAS 142. The Company is in the process of completing its preliminary analysis for impairment and plans to complete this analysis by the end of the second quarter 2002.

A summary of the outlooks for the second quarter and full year 2002 is presented below:

	EARNINGS PER SHARE FROM ONGOING OPERATIONS			
	Second Quarter		Full Year	
(Diluted earnings per share)	2002E	2001	2002E	2001
Pro forma income from ongoing operations	$0.41-$0.44	$0.42	$1.78-$1.82	$1.63
Pro Forma Adjustments:				
Acquisition of Henkel-Ecolab		(0.01)		(0.03)
Adoption of FAS 142		(0.04)		(0.15)
One-time gain from benefit plan change			0.03	
Special charges	(0.09)-(0.13)		(0.23)-(0.27)	
Discontinued operations			0.01	
Net income, as reported	$0.28-$0.35	$0.37	$1.55-$1.63	$1.45

With worldwide sales exceeding $3 billion, Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products and services for the hospitality, institutional and industrial markets.

Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the Pacific Exchange under the symbol ECL. Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at http://www.ecolab.com and by telephone at 1-800-FACT-ECL.

Ecolab will host a live webcast to review the first quarter earnings announcement today at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. The webcast will be available to the public on Ecolab's website at http://www.ecolab.com/investor/. A replay of the webcast will be available at that site through May 3, 2002.

Listening to the webcast requires Internet access, a soundcard and the Windows Media Player or other compatible streaming media player. If you do not have the Windows Media client installed on your PC, you may download a free version, Media Player 7.1, at http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/players.asp.

Supplementary information regarding historical pro forma earnings may be found on Ecolab's web site at http://www.ecolab.com/investor/proforma.asp.

This news release contains various "Forward-Looking Statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These include statements concerning our 2002 second quarter and full year financial and business prospects. These statements, which represent Ecolab's expectations or beliefs concerning various future events, are based on current expectations that involve a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those of such Forward-Looking Statements. These risks and uncertainties include: the vitality of the hospitality and travel industries; restraints on pricing flexibility due to competitive factors and customer consolidations; changes in oil or raw material prices or unavailability of adequate and reasonably priced raw materials; the occurrence of capacity constraints or the loss of a key supplier; the effect of future acquisitions or divestitures or other corporate transactions; the company's ability to achieve plans for past acquisitions; the costs and effects of complying with: (i) laws and regulations relating to the environment and to the manufacture, storage, distribution, efficacy and labeling of the company's products and (ii) changes in tax, fiscal, governmental and other regulatory policies; economic factors such as the worldwide economy, interest rates and

currency movements, including, in particular, the company's greater exposure to foreign currency risk due to the recent acquisition of Henkel-Ecolab; the occurrence of (i) litigation or claims, (ii) the loss or insolvency of a major customer or distributor, (iii) natural or manmade disasters (including material acts of terrorism or hostilities which impact the company's markets) and, (iv) severe weather conditions affecting the food service and the hospitality industries; loss of, or changes in, executive management; the company's ability to continue product introductions and technological innovations; and other uncertainties or risks reported from time-to-time in the company's reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition, the company notes that its stock price can be affected by fluctuations in quarterly earnings. There can be no assurances that the company's earnings levels will meet investors' expectations. Ecolab undertakes no duty to update its Forward-Looking Statements.

ECOLAB INC.
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME
FIRST QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2002
(unaudited)

	First Quarter	
(thousands, except per share)	2002	2001
Net Sales	$786,109	$571,399
Cost of Sales (including special charges of $5,184 in 2002)	395,945	272,811
Selling, General and Administrative Expenses	304,945	221,207
Special Charges	12,296	--
Operating Income	72,923	77,381
Interest Expense, Net	10,512	6,668
Income from Continuing Operations Before Income Taxes and Equity in Earnings of Henkel-Ecolab	62,411	70,713
Provision for Income Taxes	25,370	28,639
Equity in Earnings of Henkel-Ecolab	--	2,340
Income from Continuing Operations	37,041	44,414
Gain from Discontinued Operations	1,882	--
Net Income	$ 38,923	$ 44,414
Diluted Income per Common Share		
Income from Continuing Operations	$ 0.28	$ 0.34
Gain from Discontinued Operations	0.01	--
Net Income	$ 0.30	$ 0.34
Weighted-Average Common Shares Outstanding		
Basic	128,406	126,962
Diluted	130,180	130,629

Certain reclassifications have been made in prior years' financial statements to conform to classifications used in the current year. These reclassifications had no impact on previously reported net income or net income per share.

ECOLAB INC.
OPERATING SEGMENT INFORMATION
FIRST QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2002
(unaudited)

	First Quarter	
(thousands)	2002	2001
Net Sales		
United States		
Cleaning & Sanitizing	$ 392,349	$ 389,027
Other Services	70,490	62,277
Total	462,839	451,304
International Cleaning &		

Sanitizing	324,768	109,360
Effect of Foreign Currency Translation	(1,498)	10,735
Consolidated	$ 786,109	$ 571,399
Operating Income		
United States		
Cleaning & Sanitizing	$ 64,940	$ 60,793
Other Services	5,262	5,602
Total	70,202	66,395
International Cleaning & Sanitizing	20,073	10,820
Corporate	(17,480)	(1,226)
Effect of Foreign Currency Translation	128	1,392
Consolidated	$ 72,923	$ 77,381

ECOLAB INC.

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

MARCH 31, 2002

(thousands)	March 31 2002	December 31 2001	March 31 2001
	(unaudited)		(unaudited)
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 30,232	$ 41,793	$ 38,688
Accounts receivable, net	539,350	514,074	358,925
Inventories	278,298	279,785	172,221
Deferred income taxes	54,687	53,781	50,586
Other current assets	44,682	40,150	13,750
Total current assets	947,249	929,583	634,170
Property, plant and equipment, net	636,058	644,323	506,965
Investment in Henkel-Ecolab	--	--	212,004
Goodwill, net	602,157	596,925	250,385
Other intangible assets, net	167,155	178,951	54,481
Other assets	192,587	175,218	103,947
Total assets	$2,545,206	$2,525,000	$1,761,952
Liabilities and Shareholders' Equity			
Current liabilities			
Short-term debt	$ 211,009	$ 233,393	$ 138,937
Accounts payable	194,698	199,772	123,921
Compensation and benefits	121,369	132,720	77,658
Income taxes	17,323	18,887	6,885
Other current liabilities	286,426	243,180	184,455
Total current liabilities	830,825	827,952	531,856
Long-term debt	505,916	512,280	237,191
Postretirement health care and pension benefits	182,572	183,281	114,963
Other liabilities	115,525	121,135	83,572
Shareholders' equity	910,368	880,352	794,370
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity	$2,545,206	$2,525,000	$1,761,952

The balance sheet as of December 31, 2001 and March 31,2002 includes the assets and liabilities of Henkel-Ecolab.

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