PRESS RELEASES

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Ecolab Joins Consortium Leading a National Effort in Food Biosecurity

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 26, 2004--Ecolab Inc. announced that it has joined a consortium of academic, private sector and government experts charged with identifying security gaps in the United States' food supply and developing comprehensive plans to respond to those gaps.

This new national biosecurity effort is being coordinated by the University of Minnesota, which was recently named one of three U.S. Department of Homeland Security Centers of Excellence. Other partners in the 90-member consortium include three other universities (Michigan State University, North Dakota State University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison), experts at 12 more universities, independent research facilities, state health and agriculture agencies, professional organizations, and agriculture and food industry companies, and private sector consultants.

"This will be a great opportunity to leverage Ecolab's expertise in the food industry," said Susan Nestegard, Ecolab's vice president of Research, Development & Engineering and chief technical officer. "Participating in these research activities will further strengthen Ecolab's position as a leader in the area of food safety and will likely lead to improved programs and services that benefit our customers."

In support of the initiative, the University of Minnesota has received a $15 million, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to help the group develop ways to protect the nation's food supply from deliberate contamination or terrorist attack.

According to the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. food system - from farms to processing and distribution to retail food service - presents an array of vulnerable targets for terrorist attack. Intentional contamination of agricultural or food products with biological, chemical, or radiological agents could lead to potentially devastating effects on human health, as well as major economic losses to a critical sector of the economy. Historically, efforts to protect the food supply have focused primarily on preventing and reducing accidental contamination by naturally occurring agents. Today the focus is on protecting against potential deliberate contamination and enhanced capabilities to anticipate, prevent, respond to, and minimize the impact of such attacks.

"One of the goals of this research is to identify disposal and decontamination procedures in the event the food supply is affected by a biological or chemical agent," commented Bruce Cords, Ecolab's vice president of Environment, Food Safety and Public Health. "Ecolab was asked to participate in this effort because of our depth of expertise in the area of antimicrobial agents and our knowledge of food industry processes from farm to table."

With 2003 worldwide sales of $3.8 billion, Ecolab is the leading global developer and marketer of premium cleaning, sanitizing, pest elimination, maintenance and repair products and services for the hospitality, foodservice, institutional and industrial markets. Ecolab shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol ECL.

Ecolab news releases and other investor information are available on the Internet at www.ecolab.com.

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