

PRESS RELEASES

Nov 19, 2008

Ecolab Announces Henkel Completed Its Sale of Ecolab Shares

ST. PAUL, Minn., Nov 19, 2008 (BUSINESS WIRE) --

Ecolab Inc. announced that the sale of 72.7 million Ecolab shares by Henkel has been completed.

Ecolab further announced that it purchased 11.3 million shares for \$300 million directly from Henkel using existing cash and commercial paper to fund the purchase. The purchase is expected to be accretive to Ecolab's 2009 earnings per share.

Douglas M. Baker, Jr., Ecolab's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, commented, saying, "We are pleased this significant transaction has been successfully completed despite turbulent conditions in the stock market. We welcome our new shareholders and look forward to what we hope is a successful long term investment.

"In addition, we believe that our purchase of \$300 million of Ecolab shares is an excellent investment and that we have retained sufficient flexibility in our balance sheet to continue to build our business. We wish Henkel well in its future endeavors following our long and productive relationship."

Baker concluded, "Our focus is firmly on the future. We have a great business, great customers, a great team, and a strong determination to succeed. This combination should produce superior performance in the years ahead."

Henkel had held an investment in Ecolab since 1989. The investment originated as part of a transaction in which Ecolab and Henkel formed a joint venture in Europe, combining each company's European commercial cleaning and sanitizing operations. Also at that time, Henkel sold its remaining worldwide commercial cleaning and sanitizing businesses to Ecolab. In 2001, Ecolab purchased Henkel's interest in the joint venture for cash. In August 2007 Henkel announced its intention to acquire the adhesives and electronic materials businesses of National Starch. In February 2008 Henkel announced its intention to sell some or all of its Ecolab shares. Henkel closed on the acquisition of National Starch in April 2008.

With sales of \$5.5 billion and more than 26,000 associates, Ecolab Inc. (NYSE: ECL) is the global leader in cleaning, sanitizing, food safety and infection prevention products and services. Ecolab delivers comprehensive programs and services to foodservice, food and beverage processing, healthcare, and hospitality markets in more than 160 countries.

This news release does not constitute an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy, any of the common stock or any other security of Ecolab. Any such offers, or solicitations to buy, will be made solely by means of a prospectus and related prospectus supplements filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

This news release contains various "Forward-Looking Statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements, including the potential impact of the company's stock repurchase on earnings per share in 2009, represent Ecolab's expectations or beliefs concerning various future events, and 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. We caution that undue reliance should not be placed on Forward-Looking Statements, which speak only as of the date made.

Risks and uncertainties that may affect operating results and business performance are set forth under Item 1A of our most recent Form 10-K and Item 1A of Part II of our subsequent reports on Form 10-Q and include the vitality of the markets we serve; the impact of economic factors, such as the worldwide economy, interest rates and foreign currency exposure; our ability to develop competitive advantages through innovation; fluctuations in raw material costs; restraints on pricing flexibility due to contractual obligations; pressure on operations from consolidation of customers, vendors or competitors; the impact of acquisitions, divestitures and investments to develop business systems or to optimize our business structure; changes in regulations or accounting standards; the costs and effects of complying with laws and regulations relating to the environment and to the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and use of our products; the occurrence of litigation or claims, acts of war, terrorism, severe weather or public health epidemics; the loss or insolvency of a major customer, supplier or distributor; our ability to attract and retain high caliber management talent; and other uncertainties or risks reported from time to time in our reports to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Except as may be required under applicable law, we undertake no duty to update our Forward-Looking Statements.

(ECL-C)

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