

PRESS RELEASES

Dec 2, 2010

Ecolab Raises Cash Dividend 13 Percent

19th consecutive annual dividend rate increase

Ecolab has paid dividends for 74 consecutive years

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The Board of Directors of Ecolab Inc. today increased the company's quarterly cash dividend by 13% to \$0.175 per common share, to be paid January 18, 2011, to shareholders of record at the close of business on December 21, 2010. This results in a new indicated annual cash dividend of a record \$0.70 per share for 2011, and represents Ecolab's 19th consecutive annual dividend rate increase. Ecolab has paid cash dividends on its common stock for 74 consecutive years. Ecolab last increased its dividend in December 2009.

Commenting on the increase, Douglas M. Baker, Jr., Ecolab's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer said, "We are pleased to continue our strong dividend performance. Our outstanding dividend record is a result of our excellent business model, and this year's increase reflects our solid balance sheet, our outlook for further growth and our commitment to improving shareholder returns."

With sales of \$6 billion and more than 26,000 associates, Ecolab (NYSE: ECL) is the global leader in cleaning, sanitizing, food safety and infection prevention products and services. Ecolab delivers comprehensive programs and services to the foodservice, food and beverage processing, healthcare, and hospitality markets in more than 160 countries. More news and information is available at www.ecolab.com.

This news release contains various "Forward-Looking Statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These include statements concerning the indicated annual cash dividend for 2011 and our outlook for further growth. 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. 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 include the vitality of the markets we serve; the impact of worldwide economic factors such as the worldwide economy, credit markets, interest rates and foreign currency risk; fluctuations in raw material and delivered product costs; our ability to develop competitive advantages through innovation; restraints on pricing flexibility due to contractual obligations; pressure on operations from consolidation of customers, vendors or competitors; the ability to acquire complementary businesses and to effectively integrate such businesses; the impact of investments to develop business systems or to optimize our business structure; 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; changes in laws, regulations or accounting standards; public health epidemics; the occurrence of litigation or claims, acts of war, terrorism, severe weather or natural or man-made disasters; 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.

(ECL-D)

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Source: Ecolab Inc.

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