

PRESS RELEASES

Dec 6, 2012

Ecolab Increases Cash Dividend 15%

21st consecutive annual dividend rate increase

Ecolab has paid dividends for 76 consecutive years

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- The Board of Directors of Ecolab Inc. declared an increase in the company's quarterly cash dividend of 15% to \$0.23 per common share, to be paid December 28, 2012 to shareholders of record at the close of business on December 18, 2012. This results in a new indicated annual cash dividend of \$0.92 per share and represents Ecolab's 21st consecutive annual dividend rate increase.

Ecolab has paid cash dividends on its common stock for 76 consecutive years.

Commenting on the increase, Douglas M. Baker, Jr., Ecolab's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer said, "2012 has been a year of substantial growth and business development, and we expect to once again deliver strong sales and earnings growth as well as finish the year in a solid financial position. In addition, we made key investments and took strategic actions to better position ourselves for the future. This cash dividend increase reflects our accomplishments this year and our confidence in our future, along with our ongoing commitment to delivering superior shareholder returns."

Cautionary Statements Regarding Forward-Looking Information

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 and our outlook for sales and earnings. 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-Q and the company's other public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") and include our ability to integrate Nalco and realize the anticipated benefits of the merger as well as to close and integrate the proposed acquisition of Champion; our ability to attract and retain high caliber management talent to lead our business; difficulty in procuring raw materials or fluctuations in raw material costs; our ability to execute key business initiatives; 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; exposure to economic, political and legal risks related to our international operations; 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; our ability to develop competitive advantages through innovation; our substantial indebtedness; information technology systems failures; the ability to acquire complementary businesses and to effectively integrate such businesses; restraints on pricing flexibility due to contractual obligations; pressure on operations from consolidation of customers, vendors or competitors; public health epidemics; potential losses arising from the impairment of goodwill or other assets; potential loss of deferred tax assets; the occurrence of litigation or claims, including related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; acts of war, terrorism, severe weather or natural or man-made disasters; the loss or insolvency of a major customer, supplier or distributor; and other uncertainties or risks reported from time to time in our reports to the SEC. In light of these risks, uncertainties, assumptions and factors, the forward-looking events discussed in this communication may not occur. We caution that undue reliance should not be placed on Forward-Looking Statements, which speak only as of the date made. Ecolab does not undertake, and expressly disclaims, any duty to update any forward-looking statement whether as a result of new information, future events or changes in expectations, except as required by law.

Non-Solicitation

This communication does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities, nor shall there be any sale of securities in any jurisdiction in which such offer, solicitation or sale would be unlawful prior to registration or qualification under the securities laws of any such jurisdiction.

About Ecolab

With 2011 pro forma sales of \$11 billion and more than 40,000 employees, Ecolab Inc. (NYSE: ECL) is the global leader in water, hygiene and energy technologies and services that provide and protect clean water, safe food, abundant energy and healthy environments. Ecolab delivers comprehensive programs and services to the food, energy, healthcare, industrial and hospitality markets in more than 160 countries.

For more news and information, visit www.ecolab.com.

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Ecolab Inc.

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