



# PBL NEWS



PBL News - Issue 11 - July 2007

## New PBL Venture - Procarta Biosystems



PBL is delighted to announce the launch of a new venture based on the John Innes Centre's world-leading expertise in streptomycetes. Dr Michael McArthur and Professor Mervyn Bibb are the scientific co-founders of Procarta Biosystems Limited which is commencing operations in the Norwich BioIncubator. Procarta offers the biotechnology and life science industries a range of services in the area of bacterial strain enhancement, based on the company's proprietary technology for efficient genetic optimisation of whole metabolic pathways. Procarta will also be developing new proprietary therapeutic agents for overcoming antibiotic resistance in pathogenic microorganisms, widely recognised as an extremely serious problem for the healthcare industry.

Contact Dr Michael McArthur (michael.mcarthur@bbsrc.ac.uk). Website going live soon [www.procartabio.com](http://www.procartabio.com).

## PBL Launches LabEnhancer™ a Novel Lactobacillus Prebiotic

PBL has commenced marketing a unique and novel prebiotic technology developed by Dr Primrose Freestone of the University of Leicester. LabEnhancer™ is a fruit-based extract which dramatically improves growth and probiotic qualities of lactic acid bacteria. The technology was showcased at the Probio2007 conference in Nantes where it received a great deal of interest from companies wanting to evaluate *in diagnostics, bulk culture and as a prebiotic supplement*. For information please contact Dr Andrew Lee (andrew@pbltechnology.com).

## Genie™ - The Evolution of Compost™

The new peat-free, soil-free Genie™ (see Newsletter 10) composts developed by PBL and manufactured exclusively by Vital Earth (Derby) Ltd, are now available in garden centres around the UK.

The Genie™ Compost has received much media interest. For example, The Guardian (21 June 2007) says: *"With a mere 6% of the UK's lowland peat bog remaining, a peat-free compost is a must, not just for the green gardener, but for anyone who fancies a horticultural dabble. However, finding one that really does the business is not easy. Many peat-free substitutes are not as effective as main-stream brands. So, naturally, a peat-free compost that is endorsed by composting legend the John Innes Foundation, has got us all a-quiver. Pass the trowel."*



## Tobacco rattle virus (TRV) technology

Another commercial licensee has signed an agreement with PBL for access to PBL's and Yale's intellectual property for using the TRV virus induced gene silencing (VIGS) system. The TRV VIGS technology is a convenient tool for high throughput screening of sequences and extremely useful as a functional genomics tool. PBL offers a comprehensive IPR package that relies both on the underlying intellectual property developed by David Baulcombe and co-workers at the Sainsbury Laboratory as well as improvements developed at Yale by Dinesh-Kumar and co-workers.

For information please contact Dr Lars von Borcke (lars@pbltechnology.com).

## Research Councils Business Plan Competition - PBL Coaching



Research Councils UK recently announced the Business Plan Competition for 2007/2008.

[www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/bpc](http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/innovation/bpc)

PBL offers *free advice and coaching* to groups of researchers from BBSRC institutes who are preparing an entry, on a first come first served basis.

For information please contact Dr Jan Chojecki (ajsc@pbltechnology.com).



IP protection

Funds and manages patent filing and prosecution

Builds complementary technology packages

Markets technology to commercial users

Concludes and monitors technology licences

Manages and mentors the formation of new technology-based business

## Innovation in life sciences

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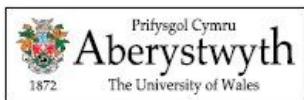
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## IP and Technology Transfer Workshops

In recent weeks PBL has run its IP and Technology Transfer Workshop modules for the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, together with the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research, and also for the student community at the John Innes Centre. These workshops can be tailored to individual requirements, and are supported by the BBSRC. For information please contact Dr Jan Chojecki (ajsc@pbltechnology.com).



IP protection

## PBL's Developing Business in India

Lars von Borcke recently presented at the STEM (Society for Technology Management) organised Graduate Course in IP Management & Technology Transfer in Goa, India. Lars presented on topics related to the AgBiotech industry giving insight from PBL's experience into the areas of the "Competitive Licensing Landscape in Agricultural Technologies" and presenting on "Technology Marketing Strategies". The course was highly informative, sharing experiences from Indian organisations (including ICAR, ICMR and CSIR) with PBL, AUTM, Cornell University, the South African Medical Research Council and MIHR. The objective was to provide models for the Indian academic and commercial community to establish technology transfer and IP management in India.

In addition Lars also visited a number of AgBiotech and seed companies in India and forged important links to both industry and academia in the rapidly evolving Indian AgBiotech market. For more information please contact Dr Lars von Borcke (lars@pbltechnology.com).

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## New Scientific Publications on PBL Technologies

### Root-Hair Gene - Published in Science

Professor Liam Dolan's group at the John Innes Centre have cloned and characterised basic helix-loop-helix transcription factors that control the development of root hairs in species as diverse as Arabidopsis and the bryophyte, *Physcomitrella patens*. The technology is assigned to and the subject of patent applications filed by PBL.

An Ancient Mechanism Controls the Development of Cells with a Rooting Function in Land Plants. Menand, Yi, Jouannic, Hoffman, Ryan, Linstead, Schaefer and Dolan. SCIENCE Vol 316, 1477-1480 (2007).

### Stress Resistant Plants - Two New Papers on PBL's Flavodoxin Technology

Enhanced plant tolerance to iron starvation by functional substitution of chloroplast ferredoxin with a bacterial flavodoxin. Tognetti VB, Zurbriggen MD, Morandi EN, Fillat MF, Valle EM, Hajirezaei M-R and Carrillo N. PNAS (2007): Vol 104 No. 27 pp 11495-11500.

Detoxification of 2,4-dinitrotoluene by Transgenic Tobacco Plants Expressing a Bacterial Flavodoxin. Tognetti VB, Monti MR, Valle EM, Carrillo N and Smania AM. Environmental Science and Technology (2007): No 41 Issue 11 pp 4071-4076.

For more information, please contact Dr Jan Chojecki (ajsc@pbltechnology.com).

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## Model Gut Wins an Award from EEDA's "Proof of Concept" Fund

PBL's Model Gut project has won a grant of £26,250 from EEDA's "Proof of Concept" Fund to consider viable routes to market for the innovative model of the human stomach, which was developed from research at The Institute of Food Research, Norwich. For information please contact Martin Wickham (martin.wickham@bbsrc.ac.uk).



East of England Development Agency

## PBL Patents Granted in USA

PBL's patents on -Amyrin Synthase Gene, developed by Dr Anne Osbourn and coworkers at The Sainsbury Laboratory, have been issued in the USA - 7186884, and granted in Australia - 783739.

For more information, please contact Dr Lars von Borcke (lars@pbltechnology.com).

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