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VIDO-InterVac signs agreement for developing CWD vaccine

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On May 19th the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre (VIDO-InterVac) at the University of Saskatchewan announced the signing of an exclusive license agreement with Pan-Provincial Vaccine Enterprise Inc. (PREVENT) for a vaccine targeting Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

CWD is a progressive, fatal and incurable prion disease known to infect deer and elk and has spread significantly within these populations in Canada and the United States. Further transmission within captive and wild herds, and to other species such as moose and caribou, would have serious economic impacts on alternative livestock, game farm and hunting industries, and on the diets of many Canadians, particularly in Northern and aboriginal communities, emphasizing the potential social impact CWD may have.

“This is another example of groundbreaking collaborative research being conducted at VIDO-InterVac. A successful vaccine for CWD will result in social and economic benefits for Saskatchewan, Canada and other countries challenged by this disease,” said Karen Chad, vice-president research for the University of Saskatchewan.

Andrew Potter, CEO and director of VIDO-InterVac, concurs. “Further spread of CWD can potentially devastate industries and rural populations that rely on these species. The containment level 3 facilities in our new International Vaccine Centre set to open in late 2010 will enable further work on this vaccine and others for a number of related diseases of humans and animals.”

The University of British Columbia, PrioNet and the University of Toronto are also stakeholders in the licensed patents. During the commercialization process, PREVENT may utilize PrioNet Canada’s specialized facilities at the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute.

The project will initially target development of an injectable vaccine for use in farmed elk and deer in Canada. Subsequent expansion into other countries is anticipated as well as development of an oral vaccine for use in wild populations as a second generation product.

About VIDO-InterVac:

Created in 1975, VIDO-InterVac has Containment Level 2 and 3 facilities that include virology, immunology, bacteriology and biochemistry labs and a 160 acre research station. A research organization of the University of Saskatchewan with operating support from provincial and federal governments as well as industry grants, VIDO-InterVac holds 80+ U.S. patents and has developed technology for eight commercial vaccines.

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