

## **COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **CSO to present Hepatitis E and A diagnostics at conference**

**Melbourne, Australia. 13 Dec 2004.** Select Vaccines Limited (ASX: SLT) today announced that Associate Professor David Anderson, Chief Scientific Officer of Select Vaccines, will present a plenary lecture at the 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver in India, December 11-15th. The paper to be presented by Professor Anderson is entitled "Testing for Hepatitis E". It will detail Select Vaccines' success in developing Hepatitis E and A Rapid and ELISA diagnostic assays and compares the performance of these to other commercially available assays.

In July 2004 Select Vaccines signed an agreement for the commercialisation of its Hepatitis E diagnostic kits with Genelabs Diagnostics Pte Ltd. This is the first of several commercial deals expected to be concluded by Select Vaccines. The agreement grants an exclusive, worldwide (except USA) 12 year license to Genelabs for the manufacture and distribution of Select Vaccine's Hepatitis E diagnostic technology.

Hepatitis E is endemic in the Indian subcontinent, China, the Middle East and throughout SE Asia. It is most commonly acquired from contaminated water. The mortality rate is typically between 0.4% and 4%. This rate jumps to 20% during the third trimester of pregnancy. In the worst affected countries (such as Egypt) general population infection rates exceed 60% by the age of 10 years.

Existing methods for the diagnosis of Hepatitis E require a blood sample from a vein and take between 24 and 48 hours to yield a result through examination by a pathology laboratory. These tests cost several times as much as the rapid assay, and in their current form are considerably less accurate. The test developed by Select Vaccines has a 98% accuracy rate. There is an immediate need, as evidenced by the WHO's current usage of the Select Vaccines' kit in North Africa, and considerable market for this technology.

Hepatitis A is a global disease with approximately one-third of developed world population having been infected. There are approximately 1.5 million new cases per year in the USA alone. Although there are Hepatitis A vaccines available, there are no rapid diagnostic or screening assays and there is therefore a significant unmet need for Select Vaccines' rapid Hepatitis A assays both for diagnosing the infection as well as for pre-vaccine screening. This technology has been evaluated recently by several potential commercial partners and the Company is currently conducting licensing negotiations with a number of interested parties.

Select Vaccines' Managing Director, Dr Martin Soust commented that "the invitation to Associate Professor Anderson to present the Company's work on Hepatitis rapid diagnostic assays at an International conference is an important endorsement by the international scientific and medical community of the importance of this technology. It meets a significant need for more accurate, simple and cost effective diagnostics for Hepatitis E and A. The results of an independent evaluation of the Hepatitis E assay conducted on behalf of Genelabs Diagnostics by the US Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science (AFRIMS) were presented earlier this year at the conference of the American Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Florida, USA, held in November."

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**Background**

Select Vaccines listed on the ASX on 3 July, 2003. It is in partnership with Melbourne's Burnet Institute to commercialise research outcomes in the areas of diagnosis, vaccination and therapy for infectious diseases caused by viruses.

The Burnet Institute, established in 1986, is Australia's leading research organisation in the field of infectious diseases caused by viruses and other agents.

Select has two project companies, Hepgenics Pty Ltd and Picoral Pty Ltd, to deal with different areas of research and development. Hepgenics is commercialising highly promising R&D projects in hepatitis diagnostics and vaccines developed by researchers at the Burnet Institute.

Picoral's research interests cover the development of therapeutic products with actions against the picornavirus family, responsible for a range of illnesses that includes the common cold, meningitis and encephalitis.

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