



# PBL News No. 7: Summer 2005

Since our last newsletter we are pleased to report news on all fronts. Key intellectual property is reaching granted patent status, there has been significant licensing activity. Two of PBL's spin-out companies Novacta Biosystems ([www.novactabio.com](http://www.novactabio.com)) and Chameleon Biosurfaces ([www.chameleonbio.com](http://www.chameleonbio.com)) have completed further rounds of financing, and continue to achieve business and technical milestones. We have continued to invest from our Technology Development Fund, awarded in 2004, and are seeing the first successes.

## PBL at BIO 2005

PBL's Dr Adam Hajjar and Dr Lars von Borcke attended the BIO 2005 Convention that took place in Philadelphia between 19-22 June. The event attracted 18,730 people, from 56 different countries, and is the world's largest biotechnology Industry convention.

PBL were exhibitors in the UK Pavilion, as part of a strong UK delegation organised and led by the BioIndustry Association (BIA). PBL were also assisted by the Eastern Region Biotechnology Initiative (ERBI), with the PBL stand attracting a lot of interest. The event already has resulted in out-licensing negotiations and new technology acquisitions.



## PBL and BioInnovation SA in Technology Transfer Partnership

PBL has entered into a major alliance with BioInnovation SA the biosciences catalyst organisation for the state of South Australia, under which the two organizations will collaborate on a wide range of technology transfer activities.



## PBL Grants RNAi License

PBL is very pleased to announce that in June it signed a licence with a major agbiotech company under its granted patent for the detection of short RNAs in plants. This licence is based on the seminal invention for the detection and use of short RNAs as effector molecules for gene silencing. Made by Professor David Baulcombe and Dr Andrew Hamilton at the Sainsbury Laboratory as published in Science (Vol. 286, pp950-952, 1999) and subject of a granted US patent as well as several pending patent applications.

For further info contact: Dr L. von Borke  
[lars@pbltechnology.com](mailto:lars@pbltechnology.com)

## PBL Welcomes — Andrew Lee

Dr Andrew Lee joins PBL with experience of working in technology transfer, business development and consultancy in the East Midlands. He comes to us after successfully raising the seed financing of a spin out company from the University of Nottingham. Prior to this he was enrolled on the Medici Training Scheme at the University of Leicester. He spent three years as a healthcare consultant working with investors groups and major pharmaceutical and biotech companies and has a research background in molecular immunology, microbiology and botany.



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 businesses

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## PBL Technology Development Fund

PBL has now funded 14 projects from its Technology Development Fund committing almost £400,000 since May 2004 for development of emerging technology. Several of these are already achieving successful outcomes:

### PBL Funds JIC Researchers to Develop Novel Products from Legume Starch

A team of researchers led by Professor Cliff Hedley at the John Innes Centre (Norwich, UK) have developed a range of novel films based on legume starch that have properties making them suitable for *potential wound dressing applications*.

In independent studies, funded by PBL, the films have been shown to have excellent water-absorbing capacities and moisture vapour transmission rates as well as non-toxic and hydrophilic properties. The films are even effective at inhibiting microbial growth, giving them the potential to prevent wound infection.

PBL is now engaging with potential commercial partners for the development of specific wound dressing applications.

For further info contact: Dr Adam Hajjar  
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### Institute of Food Research (IFR) Model Gut project achieves further funding success following TDP investment

PBL's Technology Development Fund has been funding the design and development of the IFR Model Gut as a "state of the art" *in-vitro* system that for the first time simulates human digestion. from a true physiological perspective. It is the only model to combine emerging knowledge of the physical, mechanical, and biochemical environments experienced during digestion in a single predictive system. The Model Gut will be a unique system with significant commercial value for evaluating novel and existing foodstuffs, diets and pharmaceutical preparations.

The project has achieved a double funding success. As well as winning a BBSRC Follow-on-Fund grant to validate the model Dr Martin Wickham, of the IFR leader of the Model Gut project, has been awarded a BBSRC Enterprise Fellowship that will provide project funding and personal business training.

### Follow-On Fund Award

Professor John Turner at University of East Anglia has recently been awarded a grant under the BBSRC Follow-on-Fund to extend work on RPW8 gene mediated plant disease resistance, which is the subject of a pending patent application assigned to PBL.

## NEWS of recently Granted PBL Patents

**03.329 US Patent 6,890,525** Issued on 10 May 2005 for use of Cis-Jasmone as a semiochemical, based on the work of Professor John Pickett and co-workers at Rothamsted Research. PBL is also funding development work at Rothamsted from its TDP Fund.

**97.147 US Patent 6,846,970** Issued on 25 January. 2005 for Cleangene technology. The CleanGene™ transformation system is an important improvement over conventional methods of plant transformation using direct DNA transfer. It was developed by Professor Paul Christou and colleagues at the John Innes Centre in Norwich. CleanGene™ produces transgenic plants with very simple integration patterns and low transgene copy numbers, resulting in stable expression over many generations and almost no transgene silencing. PBL has recently been granted patents on this technology in both the US and Europe.

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