



Univercells introduces breakthrough vaccine manufacturing platform

Univercells and consortium partner Batavia Biosciences have been awarded a \$4 million grant extension by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to scale up their low-cost polio vaccine manufacturing technology.

Nivelles, BELGIUM – January 11, 2019 – Univercells, a business-to-business provider focused on increasing the availability of affordable biologics to address global health challenges, announced today the commercial launch of its proprietary NevoLine™ bioproduction system for vaccines. The system was initially developed as part of a [\\$12M Grand Challenges grant](#) awarded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) to deliver affordable inactivated polio vaccine (sIPV). Leading the consortium, Univercells was responsible for the NevoLine system, [Batavia Biosciences](#) for the polio manufacturing process and Merck for the purification membrane. After attaining its goals of delivering a very low Cost of Goods for an sIPV below \$0.30 per trivalent dose, the consortium has now received a \$4M grant extension to scale-up the manufacturing system and process in preparation for clinical and commercial application. The first NevoLine system will be installed in Batavia Biosciences' polio dedicated Biosafety level 3 Facility in Leiden, the Netherlands.

Based on a novel process architecture, Univercells designed the automated NevoLine bioproduction system that facilitates safer, faster and closed bioprocessing in a much smaller footprint. Through intensification and chaining of unit steps into a continuous process, users achieve high yields with less time and money invested. The sIPV production process using the NevoLine system is capable of producing trivalent sIPV at less than \$0.30/dose, representing a five-fold reduction compared to current manufacturing technologies.

"This challenging two-year project aimed at delivering a new manufacturing system to drastically decrease cost, footprint and time to market for vaccine manufacturers, and we are pleased to have met these goals," Hugues Bultot, CEO and co-founder of Univercells said. *"The NevoLine system is self-contained into a 6m² series of isolators. A facility designed with four NevoLine units would deliver up to 50 million sIPV doses per year for an estimated capital cost of \$20M. These breakthrough achievements further strengthen our dedication to innovating flexible, scalable and accessible vaccines and biotherapeutics manufacturing solutions."*

Dr. Pierre A. MORGON, Non-Executive Director and Advisor to the CEO, added: *"Since my first stint in the vaccine industry in 1986, I have seen few technological breakthroughs bringing a genuine opportunity to change the fundamentals of vaccine manufacturing. The technology developed by Univercells heralds a new era in vaccine production. The massive reduction of the upfront capital investment and of the manufacturing footprint required for bulk vaccine and biotherapeutics production will shake the markets to their foundations and enable greater competition by lowering barriers to entry. Public health stands to gain handsomely from these new market dynamics, with biotherapeutics and vaccines being available in large enough volumes and at affordable prices".*

Univercells remains more than ever dedicated to developing turnkey solutions for a series of vaccines and biotherapeutics, to be delivered at an affordable price.

●●● About Univercells ●●●

Univercells is a business-to-business provider focused on increasing the availability of affordable vaccines and biotherapeutics to address global health challenges. The company is developing turnkey solution for a series of vaccines and biotherapeutics to be delivered at an affordable price. By relying on proprietary core technologies and a continuous process intensification approach, production is achieved with a smaller footprint, and significantly lower overall capital and operational costs.

Univercells was founded in 2013 by experienced entrepreneurs Hugues Bultot, CEO, and José Castillo, CTO, who bring close to 25 years of expertise in the biotechnology and life sciences sectors. Headquartered in Gosselies (Belgium), Univercells benefits from support from the Walloon region, and received €3 million as early seeding from Takeda in 2015. At the end of 2016, the company was awarded a \$16 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

www.univercells.com

●●● About Batavia Biosciences ●●●

Batavia Biosciences significantly contributes to ease human suffering from infectious diseases by improving the success rate in the translation of candidate medicines from discovery to the clinic. We offer our novel technologies and in-depth know-how in order to help our partners to complete preclinical phases in biopharmaceutical product development at higher speed, reduced costs and increased success. The company focuses on the early stages of product development including cell line generation, upstream process development (mammalian & microbial), purification development, product characterization and clinical manufacturing. Headquartered in Leiden, the Netherlands, with a subsidiary in Woburn, Massachusetts, and offices in Hong Kong, Batavia Biosciences is privileged to have strong strategic partners worldwide.

www.bataviabiosciences.com

●●● About Merck ●●●

Merck, the vibrant science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 51,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – Merck is everywhere. In 2017, Merck generated sales of € 15.3 billion in 66 countries.

Scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to Merck's technological and scientific advances. This is how Merck has thrived since its founding in 1668. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company. Merck holds the global rights to the Merck name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials.

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