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ALLERGY TO MITES

Agreement between STALLERGENES and MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS for recombinant allergens production

MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS (Clermont-Ferrand - France) and STALLERGENES (Antony - France) announce the signature of an agreement on the industrial feasibility and the production of two mites major allergens in plant.

This agreement is part of a project, conducted by STALLERGENES, supported by ANVAR, which aims at replacing natural mites allergenic extracts which are currently used by recombinant major allergens.

This agreement follows a research and development project conducted by the CNRS Research Unit N° 6037, the University of Rouen(FR), the ALTADIS Tobacco Institute (FR), Sanquin Research (NL), STALLERGENES and the Centre Européen de Bioprospective also supported by ANVAR, which demonstrated the scientific feasibility of major allergens expression in plants, on a laboratory scale. IgE of allergic patients showed a better recognition of some recombinant allergens expressed in plant system than in other more classical expression systems.

Following this decisive scientific progress, STALLERGENES, specialised in allergen immunotherapy, entrusts MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS, specialised in recombinant proteins production in plants, with a feasibility study for the production of two mites recombinant allergens in tobacco plant on an industrial scale. Due to considered volumes, production is planned under greenhouse.

Recombinant major allergens are the key axis of STALLERGENES' research and development and represent a major pharmaceutical step forward because of their characteristics in terms of definition, control and standardisation.

House dust mites are responsible for a large part of respiratory allergies. It is estimated that 5 to 10% of the world population should suffer from allergy to mites.

About STALLERGENES

STALLERGENES is the world's leading pharmaceutical laboratory specialising in allergen immunotherapy (in terms of number of patients treated), offering a large range of exclusive products (200 allergen product references) for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of allergies.

STALLERGENES actively promotes the use of sublingual drops, which offer increased tolerance, thereby enabling an expansion of the field of allergen immunotherapy. STALLERGENES devotes 10% of its sales to its Research and Development activities.

STALLERGENES' development is focused on the French market, where it enjoys an 80% market share, and on international markets, which account for 55% of Group sales. International markets are served through the Group's subsidiaries based in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Belgium, as well as through distributors based in Eastern Europe, North Africa and elsewhere.

Shares of the Group parent company, STALLERGENES SA, have been listed on the Second Market of the Paris Stock Exchange since 21 July 1998.

About MERISTEM

MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS, a biotechnology company pursuing development of the unique Molecular Pharming[®] (plant engineering) concept, has succeeded in the production by plants of recombinant proteins, particularly antibodies, with a view to the manufacture of new drugs.

Molecular Pharming[®] enables production of economically more competitive active proteins, while ensuring optimal biological safety. The MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS team was the first to set up an industrial-scale unit for the extraction and purification of therapeutic proteins from plants (corn and tobacco).

Its most advanced project, already in Phase II clinical trials, concerns the gastric lipase used in the treatment of cystic fibrosis and pancreatitis. Several other products are currently at the pre-clinical or clinical stage. Created in 1997, MERISTEM THERAPEUTICS today has a staff of over 80. Its headquarters is located in Clermont-Ferrand, France. The company also has a subsidiary in Cambridge (MA, USA).