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â??Biopharma companies can use collaboration with suppliers to help enhance their regulatory complianceâ?•

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A global provider of mission-critical products and services to customers in the biopharma and healthcare industries, US headquartered Fortune 500 company Avantor has recently boosted its global production of singleÂuse technologies to address the growing biopharma demand particularly for vaccine production



Narayana Rao, Vice President, Biopharma, Asia-Pacific, Middle East and Africa, Avantor, Singapore spoke to BioSpectrum about how the company is contributing to the biopharma space.

Edited excerpts-

What were the key highlights at Avantor during the FY20-21? Which new products were launched?

Innovation is a critical focus at Avantor. It is paramount to what we do in order to help our customers achieve their goals faster, more efficiently and more effectively. And especially now, as a global Life Science company central to helping our customers within the biopharma and healthcare industries as they have developed and rapidly scaled novel vaccines to address the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Innovation is embedded especially within our biopharma production business offering where last year, we launched a number of new products within our cGMP, single-use and sera product portfolios. One prominent feature was our expanded range of J.T.Baker® BAKERBOND® process chromatography resins. J.T.Baker® BAKERBOND® PROchievA™ is a new best-in-class recombinant protein A resin for monoclonal antibody (mAbs) downstream purification.

Additionally, for cell and gene therapy manufacturing, we launched the Avantor OmniTop Sample Tubes® Adjustable Volume Sampling System (AVSS) platform. Sampling is a net-negative to any process, but it is critical to ensure that the products are being produced as expected, meeting certain standards for quality, purity and efficacy along the way. This single-use offering enables small volume samples to be taken during bioprocessing in a safe and effective manner, reducing waste of high-value biologics, so more product ends up reaching final-fill stages in order to maximize the delivery of treatments to patient populations in need.

What are the major plans lined up for 2021?

Recently, we extended our offering of J.T.Baker® BAKERBOND® process chromatography resins further to incorporate a new range of lab columns. These products add the convenience of being pre-packaged and pre-filled with our high-performing range of BAKERBOND® process chromatography to support areas like ion exchange (IEX) and hydrophobic interaction (HIC) chromatography, as well as protein A with the PROchievA™ resin.

BAKERBOND® resins can be used in combination with one another, as well as with J.T.Baker® buffers, and Avantor single-use technologies to offer a total solution for monoclonal antibody downstream purification, from the lab to scale-up and production steps.

How is Avantor contributing to the COVID-19 space currently?

As a global Life Science company, we are proud to manufacture and deliver the products and services that are essential to the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We have been at the forefront with our customers within the biopharma and healthcare industries supporting the end-to-end research and delivery—from virus detection, therapy research and development and clinical trials, to scale-up and commercial manufacturing of novel mRNA, viral vector and other vaccine modalities, as well as other therapies, that are helping to address SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19.

How does Avantor foresee its growth in the Asian market? Which Asian country contributes majorly to the company's business?

As a supplier of mission critical technologies to lifesaving therapies, pre- and post-sales service is the backbone of our business model. Avantor Innovation and Customer support centers and our applications teams across the globe focus on supporting the customers with samples, proof of concept trials, process optimization and troubleshooting activities.

In the AMEA region, our chemicals manufacturing footprint at our facility in Panoli, India, serves the region as well as the world. We've recently established biopharma innovation centers in China and Korea and expanded our distribution strength across the entire region, including the addition of a new cGMP warehouse in Singapore in 2019.

What are the current challenges facing the biopharma sector?

Aside from recent challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for novel biologics had been growing at a tremendous rate across the board, ranging from mAbs to cell and gene therapies. The global market monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) is expected to approach $140 billion by 2024, and cell and gene therapies are without a doubt the future of medicine that we will see offer promise in how we may address a number of challenging conditions and diseases.

Rising demand for biopharmaceuticals also reflects how biologics are expanding into new therapeutic areas, such as neurodegenerative and cardiovascular diseases. Finally, rising demand is being sustained by better geographic reach, label extensions, and the emergence of biosimilars.

Overall, collaboration with suppliers is a major area that biopharma companies can use to help enhance their regulatory compliance, minimize risk, drive cost-effectiveness and improve time-to-market for any product. Biopharma is a highly regulated industry, and our customers strive for producing the lifesaving drugs at the highest quality standards in all regions. At Avantor, we play a vital role in delivering our globally proven high-quality products & services in helping them achieve it.

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