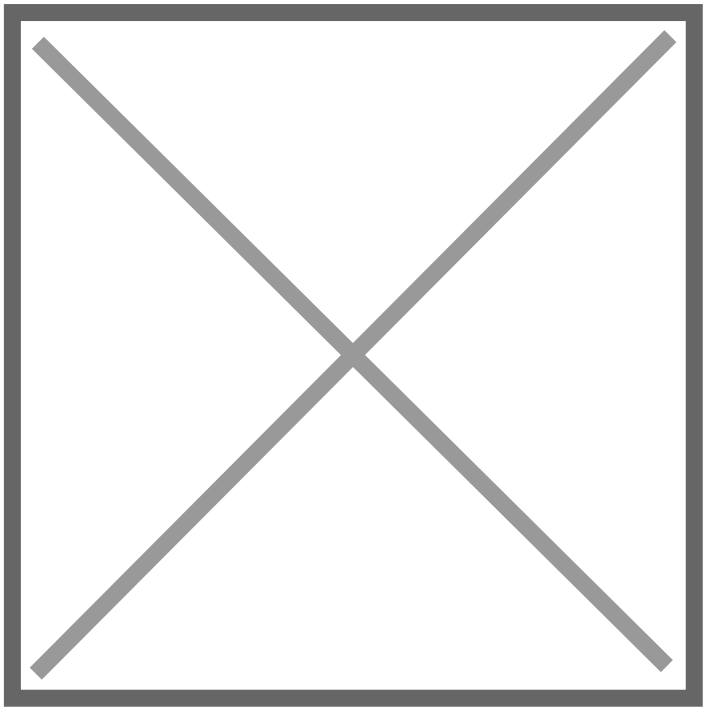
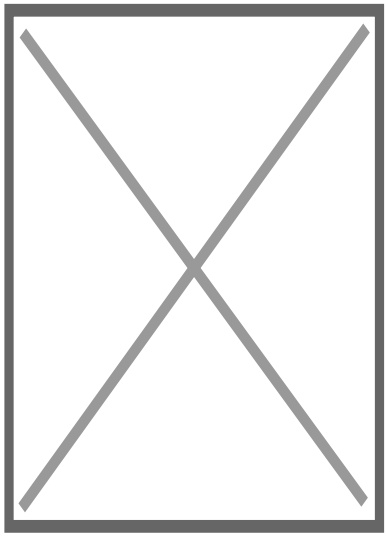
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The right time for biotechnology

05 November 2009 | News



The right time for biotechnology



Success is all about timing. Being at the right place and doing the right thing is necessary of course, but if it is also at the right time then magic happens. We are in India, in biotechnology today in 2009 and magic is happening Q.E.D. I had the privilege of a recent conversation with Steve Burrill (of Burrill and Company) in which he pointed out that four out of the five global challenges today – healthcare, food security, energy security and environment – are directly addressed by biotechnology. So in the modern history of technology, biotechnology is poised very strategically. I would also argue that we are entering an exciting period for the biotechnology enterprise in India. We have gone past the teething problems of a new industrial sector and the threshold of criticality in size and ecosystems. The voice of our enterprise is BioSpectrum and as the newly elected president of ABLE, it is with pleasure that I write this guest editorial.

This special issue of BioSpectrum, dedicated to content created by the readers, covers a lot of ground with a rich variety of topics that reflecting the diversity in our field. Three themes stand out.

Biologics and in particular the emergence of biosimilars is an important one for our industry. Dr Gopal Dasika of Actis Biologics takes us on a global journey of the action in biosimilars with an account of companies in India, China, South Korea and Europe that are leveraging these new opportunities to good effect. The article by Dr Rajeev Soni of Premas Biotech, complements the above article with a useful pedagogic account of the challenges in discovery of novel biologics.

The age of personalized medicine is coming and the agenda that biotechnology innovation has to deliver on presents spectacular opportunities. Dr Bhuwnesh Agrawal of Roche Diagnostics takes us on a historic tour of personalized medicine showing the central role that diagnostics plays in ensuring that safer personalized healthcare can deliver as opposed to a “one size fits all” blockbuster view of yesteryear. Several experts have noted that personalized medicine has been slow in coming because the market segmentation is a challenge that large pharmaceutical companies have resisted. I believe that resistance has passed now and the new mantra has taken root. Dr Rajesh Jain of Panacea Biotec takes us through an understanding of why traditional pharma marketing efforts are nearly over.

To a lay citizen, the field of biotechnology evokes awe because of the deep multi-disciplinary research investments it takes to bring out innovative products. We get a sample of how materials research in academia is leading us to new ways of thinking about drug delivery and health monitoring. The paper by Sharath Ahuja is on the work on silica nanotubes by Dr Aninda J Bhattacharyya and team at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. The issue also raises some immediate concerns for

the sector of clinical research organizations in India that are facing a crisis of overcapacity. Dr Sudhir Pai of Lotus Clinical Research Academy elucidates the issues and suggests strategies to counter the challenges.

In signing off, let me just add that as the executive council of ABLE is keen to represent your interests and help you address your challenges as the apex body of our industry. Please feel free to contact me personally or any of your elected council members if there is such an issue. Happy reading!

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