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To meet the growing need of single use technologies in biopharma production, Pall Corporation is introducing the first disposable depth filter capsule for pilot to large-scale biotech drug manufacturing.

The SUPRA clean depth filter capsule combines the performance, value and safety of Pall's depth filters into a single use capsule that saves time, labor and operating costs. The depth filters are an invaluable tool for efficient and economical clarification and prefiltration of biological solutions used to manufacture recombinant protein-based drugs, vaccines and blood products. The capsule will play a critical role in drug production as biopharmaceutical companies increasingly adopt disposable processing solutions to reduce validation bottlenecks, contamination risks and cost, according to the company's release.

"The SUPRA clean capsule is the latest addition to our growing portfolio of single use solutions for biopharmaceutical manufacturing and will further drive our business through recurring sales," said Ed Hoare, president, Pall BioPharmaceuticals. "Disposable products help the industry bring new drugs to market faster, prevent costly setbacks in commercial production and also reduce capital costs in new plant designs."

According to the official release, the SUPRA clean depth filter capsule gives manufacturers a host of benefits that only a single use system can provide. It eliminates the costs associated with the Cleaning-in-Place (CIP) cycle. This includes cleaning of the housing, which can cause production bottlenecks and add cost, and cleaning validation, which can delay commercialization of new drugs.

Its design increases safety by significantly decreasing operator exposure to the product. The capsule design also provides a lower hold-up volume than standard module housings, allowing for greater recovery of the product. The housing, which functions primarily as a means of secondary containment, is cleanable, improves sealing and promotes uniform flow distribution. It can be used with Pall's full range of depth filter modules.

Praj begins new fiscal on promising note

Pune-based Praj Industries Ltd has begun its new financial year on a promising note with six orders for ethanol fuel plants in the domestic market and is expecting major breakthroughs soon in international markets.

Recently Praj commissioned a 150,000-liter per day ethanol fuel plant near Mumbai. This plant is said to be among the largest plants in India. It has also received three orders from Gujarat for Greenfield ethanol fuel plants. Praj has already commissioned one plant and another is under execution in the state.

Pramod Chaudhari, chairman and managing director, Praj said, "We have consolidated not only on the domestic front, but with the recent orders from the South American market for ethanol fuel plants, we are also establishing ourselves as technology leaders in markets dominated by developed countries." Praj has finalized contracts for two Greenfield ethanol fuel plants in Colombia. These orders, worth over \$15 million were won against formidable competition from companies in Brazil and Europe. Praj was also awarded a contract for a large sized ethanol plant based on molecular sieve dehydration technology for installation in Central America.

For the year ended March 31, 2004, Praj's sales grew by over 20 percent over previous fiscal and the PBT by over 150 percent. With this, income from operations stands at Rs109.50 crore (Rs 88.10 crore), profit before tax at Rs 11.17 crore (Rs 4.74 crore) and PAT at Rs 8.34 crore (Rs 2.42 crore) for the year ended March 2004.

With the consolidation of its financial and market performance, Praj is focusing on its operations to ramp up for healthy growth. Praj has recently inducted two new directors on its Board. Rakesh Jhunjunwala joined the Board in March 2004. Ajit Lele, who has several years of experience in the engineering industry joined as the joint managing director in April this year, in addition to Shashank Inamdar joint managing director. Inamdar and Lele will assist Chaudhari, CMD, to gear up to take on new challenges in the international market where the company foresees itself exploring new markets more aggressively.

MeasureTest Corp organizes seminar in June

MeasureTest Corporation is organizing a seminar on TOC measurement and particle counting of interest to pharmaceutical and allied industries (clean room contractors, purified water manufacturers/users). The seminar will be held at Hyderabad, Bangalore and Goa respectively. Topics covered during the seminar include basics of airborne particle counting, impact of new international cleanroom standards on pharma industry, HEPA filter design, leak testing and on-line total organic carbon measurement of pharmaceutical waters. Michael Retzik, director TOC Applications, Hach Ultra Analytics USA will be the keynote speaker. A similar seminar was held in Mumbai in March.

Alfa Laval acquires Biokinetics

Alfa Laval has acquired Biokinetics, the life science division of the Kinetics Group Inc. in the US. Biokinetics is the technology player in the engineering and manufacturing of turnkey process systems for the biotech and pharma industries. The company's main products focus primarily on mammalian cell cultures and include bioreactor modules, cell harvesting modules, purification modules and biodeactivation modules.

The acquisition will allow Alfa Laval to combine Biokinetics resources with Alfa Laval's global presence and move into the European and Asian markets. The combined offering will include process design, modules for unit operations and key components such as high-speed separators, compact heat exchangers, membranes, fluid handling equipment and parts and service.

Biokinetics was part of the US Filter Corporation until August 2000 when it was taken private in an investor-led buyout.

Biokinetics, which has approximately 400 employees, is headquartered in Philadelphia, PA. The company also has facilities in North Carolina, California, Puerto Rico and Toronto. Alfa Laval, with 920 employees in the US and 9350 worldwide has an office in India.

Thermo partners with Block Scientific

Thermo Electron Corporation and Block Scientific Inc. have joined together to offer premium quality ALKO Clinical Consumables and equipment for a total lab solution.

The Lab Solution packages include instrumentation, consumables, parts and service for a broad range of Blood Gas, Electrolyte (ISE) and Chemistry (ISE) analyzers. The analyzers supported by both companies include those manufactured by Bayer (Chiron), Beckman, IL, Olympus, Radiometer, Roche AVL and Roche/Hitachi. Thermo Electron and Block Scientific will work with each laboratory to suit specific product and instrumentation needs.

According to the company's release, ALKO Blood Gas and Electrolyte products from Thermo Electron that helps life science, laboratory, and industrial customers are manufactured under FDA quality system regulations. The company's line of products includes calibrators, accessory solutions, electrodes, accessories and quality controls for use in over 130 clinical instruments. Thermo Electron also offers cytology/histology products of Lerner Laboratories and HPLC products of Chromsystems.

SAS India offers data management solutions to CROs

Apart from providing solutions to the pharmaceutical industry, SAS India offers data management and statistical analysis solutions to the Clinical Research Organizations (CROs) in India. The pharmaceutical/life sciences sector has been a key focus vertical for SAS India and accounted for 15 percent of the company's revenues in 2003, said George Varghese, Head - Marketing, SAS India Pvt. Ltd.

Varghese informed BioSpectrum that, "SAS Solutions adhere to regulatory compliances, which are set by US Food and Drug Association. Having this unique value proposition, SAS Solutions not only help CROs in India to meet the compliance requirements but also play a significant role in enhancing their clinical research processes."

SAS India offers solutions like SAS scientific discovery solutions, SAS drug development, SAS drug discovery, SAS process intelligence, SAS patent portfolio management, customer relationship management, performance management for healthcare, web analytics service and SAS intellivisor to the life sciences/pharmaceutical industry.

Replying to a question, he said that SAS India is offering services to most of the CROs in India. SAS offers unique business intelligence solutions that span the entire value chain and not just isolated components of it. Its clientele include companies like Wellquest, Lambda Therapeutic, Synchron Research, Diagno-search, Asian Clinical Trials, Quintiles, Lotus Labs, Vimta Laboratories, GVK Bioscience, Therapeutic Drug Monitoring Lab, Accutest Research Laboratories, to name a few.

SAS has been in India since 1997 and currently has two wholly owned subsidiaries in the country – SAS India and SAS Global Services (SGS). SAS India operations are headquartered in Mumbai with regional offices in Bangalore and New Delhi. SAS Global Services (SGS) is a key resource arm for the global SAS community and focuses on R&D and industry intelligence solutions development and is headquartered at Pune. Research and development initiatives at SGS are strategically focused to address the Java and web development of the forthcoming SAS solutions. SAS® industry intelligence solutions provide a framework and foundation for addressing critical business areas to enable quick implementation of effective business strategies. Built on 26 years of market leadership, these solutions integrate SAS' leading analytical and data management technology with extensive industry experience.

PerkinElmer, Lab India launch joint Indian operation

PerkinElmer Inc, a drug discovery, life science research and analytical solutions provider along with Lab India Instruments Pvt. Ltd, India's key lab service and marketing organization, jointly announced the launch of PerkinElmer India Pvt. Ltd, a direct sales, service and marketing operation targeting India's thriving life science and analytical instrumentation markets. The partnership provides a strong growth opportunity for PerkinElmer and underscores the company's commitment to customers in the region.

PerkinElmer will hold a majority interest in the joint venture, which will be headquartered in Thane, with demo facilities and sales offices in Bangalore, Baroda, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkatta, Lucknow, Mumbai, New Delhi, Pune and Thane.

PerkinElmer India will employ 180 people dedicated to direct sales, service, technical support and administration. "India represents a key growth market for a number of PerkinElmer businesses including biopharma, environmental and chemical and genetic screening," said Peter Coggins, president, PerkinElmer Life and Analytical Sciences. "We are pleased to be working with Lab India to bring the full range of our life and analytical sciences product and service portfolio to India's rapidly expanding community of scientists and researchers."

"This joint venture is the natural extension of a relationship that has been successful for more than 23 years," said Shriram Bhalerao, managing director of Lab India. "PerkinElmer India will harness the combined strengths of both companies to drive the growth opportunities" Lab India's superior knowledge, service and support of the India market and PerkinElmer's operational excellence and technology expertise."

Imperial Bio-Medic to set an application support facility soon

Imperial Bio-Medic (P) Ltd., a fast growing supplier company offering a broad portfolio of research products and services to the biotech industry, is marching towards a new milestone by setting up an application support facility soon. The facility will provide support for various kinds of genetic and molecular biology applications. At the facility personnel will be trained for performing different applications on real time PCR system from Stratagene (Imperial Bio-Medic is the exclusive distributor for Stratagene in India) and professionals will look after the entire assay designing and optimization module. Highly educated and trained molecular biologists will be hired for troubleshooting related to primer/probe design, PCR and cloning strategies. "We strongly feel that above facility will strengthen the relationships with our valued customers and we shall be able to serve them in a better way with high quality products," said SK Gupta, managing director, Imperial Bio-Medic. The company represents more than 40 international companies in the Indian market including Bethyl, BioEnzyme, Biogene, CBS Electrophoresis, etc.

Sartorius focusing on profitable growth

Sartorius is on a consolidation drive and its financial results of the first quarter of 2004 indicate positive trends for sales revenue and earnings. In the 2004 annual shareholders' meeting of Sartorius, Dr Joachim Kreuzburg, spokesman of the executive board and group CEO, described the year 2003 as that of consolidation that was strongly characterized by the restructuring measures implemented. (In 2003, the company earned sales revenue of 442.3 million euros.) "Now we can concentrate on profitable growth," stated Kreuzburg. "The focus of our work is now on innovation and selling, marketing and distribution. We will be developing a number of innovative products and be launching these on the markets. Beyond this, we will also keep an eye on the cost side and work on improving our cost structures." The Goettingen-based company founded in 1870 currently employs about 3,660 persons. Its biotech segment focuses on filtration and separation products, bioreactors and proteomics. Sartorius has its own production facilities in Europe, Asia and America as well as sales subsidiaries and local commercial agencies in more than 110 countries.