

## Press release

Bubendorf & Bern, 16 October 2001

**Plans for vaccine against melanomas, malaria, hepatitis C and Alzheimer's**

## **Bachem and Berna Biotech establish company to develop new therapeutic and prophylactic vaccines**

**Bachem Ltd of Bubendorf and Berna Biotech Ltd of Berne are joining together to found a company with a starting capital of CHF 20 million. This new institution will harness the expertise of both partners to develop innovative vaccines. Bachem-Peptides and Berna Biotech-Virosomes, as well as mimetic-technology, will form the basis for therapeutic and prophylactic vaccines against melanomas (malignant skin tumors), malaria, hepatitis C and Alzheimer's disease. The new company, in which both partners are taking a 50-percent stake, should be operational at the beginning of 2002 and will take a leading role worldwide in the peptide vaccine sector.**

Bachem Ltd is the global leader for the manufacture of high-quality and specialist peptides for the pharmaceutical industries. Peptides are short, protein-like molecules that are formed from amino acids and fulfill a wide range of biological functions. Berna Biotech Ltd (the former Swiss Serum and Vaccine Institute Berne), can look back on 100 years of expertise in vaccine development. Its virosome technology gives it a unique platform for the optimum production of formulated peptide vaccines. Thanks to the combination of virosomes and peptides, the vaccines developed should achieve a breakthrough in both the prophylactic and therapeutic areas.

The aim of jointly founding a company with a starting capital von CHF 20 million, in which the partners each have a 50 percent stake, is to combine the entrepreneurial drive and power of a dedicated start up company with the solid expertise of the two existing firms. In this way, highly promising research projects should be pushed ahead with greater focus and quickly brought to market. The two founding partners will license the know-how required to the joint company.

The first projects will be outsourced by Berna Biotech to the new company: these are ongoing pre-clinical projects aimed at developing vaccines against melanomas (malignant skin tumors), malaria, hepatitis C and Alzheimer's disease. Alongside traditional prophylactic vaccines, the step towards therapeutic vaccines will play an important role. These projects, along with a series of newly defined projects, are being developed in conjunction with external partners (universities, other companies), and taken through to clinical phase I/II. If they are successful, the various projects and products could be licensed out to other firms.

In the initial phase, the start-up company will be financed by the two partners. In a later phase, the company will be opened up to further partners.

The new company is being officially founded at the start of 2002.

*Bachem Ltd is an independent, technology-focused company that manufactures innovative products and develops processes in the area of biochemicals and active pharmaceutical ingredients. From its head office in Bubendorf, Switzerland, and its offices in Europe and the USA, the company works all over the world, occupying a leading market position in its areas of operation. With around 370 employees, Bachem achieved sales of more than CHF 110 million and a profit of almost CHF 49 million in the year 2000.*

[www.bachem.com](http://www.bachem.com)

*Berna Biotech Ltd (the former Swiss Serum and Vaccine Institute Berne), the independent Biotech company in the field of immunization is a leading developer and producer of viral and bacterial vaccines. In the year 2000 Berna Biotech generated with its approximately 650 employees sales of around CHF 200 million as well as a profit before restructuring costs of CHF 4.8 million. Berna Biotech is a public company with a broad shareholder base. Its share is listed on the SWX Local Caps.*

[www.bernabiotech.com](http://www.bernabiotech.com)

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