



PRESS RELEASE

July 20, 2006

Avesthagen sowing 'Seed-For-Food' with Limagrain

Avestha Gengraine Technologies Pvt. Ltd. ('Avesthagen'), a leading biotech company based in Bangalore has entered into a strategic alliance with Group Limagrain ('Limagrain'), a French major in Global Seed business. Groupe Limagrain is a farmers co-operative and therefore having interest of farmers at heart is what attracted Avesthagen.

This strategic alliance is a long-term, mutually beneficial agreement between Avesthagen and Limagrain, in which resources, knowledge and capabilities will be shared with the objective of enhancing each partner's competitive position.

"Alliances are becoming increasingly important in Agri. industry to bridge the gap between the Field experience and emerging technologies. This is because larger Seed companies need to increase research productivity and biotech companies are representing one of the major sources of this cutting edge research. It is this symbiotic relationship that fuels an increasing number of opportunities. Pursuit of creative collaboration and partnership is a key requirement to success" says Dr. Viloo Morawala Patell, Founder & CEO, Avesthagen.

Daniel Chéron, Deputy CEO of Groupe Limagrain said: "With this global alliance, Vilmorin & Cie will have opportunities to speed up the development of new potential for growth already engaged in India by its vegetable subsidiaries. It will furthermore bring opportunities to operate collaborative R&D programmes in biotech, especially related to GMO's field plant trials. It will also provide development opportunities for Group Limagrain Ingredients division"

The current move in establishing alliances between Avesthagen and Limagrain, will allow Limagrain to strengthen its position on the Indian Market and various technology platforms along with Intellectual Property from Avesthagen. In turn Avesthagen will have access to Limagrain's expertise regarding elite germplasm breeding and global seed marketing.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is being created to jointly develop a Seed Business Unit in India. This will help in marketing the improved plant varieties developed in collaborative R&D programmes aimed to develop agrotechnologies that can add value to seed and food products. Limagrain has also shown interests to introduce innovative plant varieties, including transgenic ones, for the Indian markets. Avesthagen will also work closely with Limagrain, its subsidiaries and partners to conduct research programs to develop novel seed varieties and to take them to farmers through the SPV.

As farmers are facing a limited choice of new seed traits, seed companies are looking forward to developing projects that are required to supplement their product pipelines. Avesthagen's late-stage projects including HYBRID-FIT™ Technology, abiotic stress tolerance, and enhanced nutrition project will play a vital role to bridge the gap.



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About Limagrain:

Limagrain is a farmers owned international group specialised in plant breeding and plant valorization. Based near Clermont-Ferrand, France, Limagrain, operating through subsidiaries in more than 30 countries, has revenue of more than € 1 billion and spend annually more than € 100 millions in R & D.

Through Vilmorin & Cie, Limagrain is the 4th largest international seed group. Vilmorin has leading position in seed field (European leader) and in vegetable seed (World N° 2 for professional vegetable seeds and N° 1 for home garden seed products). With Limagrain Cereals Ingredients, Limagrain is European leader for functional cereal flours. With Jacquet, Limagrain is N°2 of French bread slice market.

Limagrain believe that partnership is an essential way to increase its long term development capabilities. Limagrain, which has already entered in several strategic partnerships, in biotechnologies research domain (Biogemma, Génoplante, Keygene) and in business (AgReliant in North America, etc...), plan to develop complementary partnerships, especially in emerging countries like 'India or China. For Limagrain on the web: www.limagrain.com

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About Avesthagen:

Avesthagen was founded in 1998 by one of India's leading biotech pioneers/entrepreneurs Dr. Viloo Morawala-Patell, who got her PhD at Louis Pasteur University in Strassbourg, France, in 1993. Avesthagen was the first agri-biotech company in India.

Since then Avesthagen has grown into one of India's leading healthcare technology group in India, and its activities include, in addition to its agri-biotechnologies product pipeline, development of scientifically validated bioactive nutraceuticals, derived from Indian medicinal plants, as well as the development of a pipeline of 11 bio-similar drugs. Avesthagen's other partners include Nestle (co-development of nutritional bioactives), Cipla (one of India's largest pharma companies; co-development of 11 bio-similar drugs), bioMerieux, France (co-development of DNA based diagnostic tools for Tuberculosis).

Avesthagen intends to partner at every stage in the value chain with appropriate partners, both public and private, for access to and exchange of technology and expertise, financial support, access to facilities, infrastructure and distribution channels and to leverage the 'India advantage' for the mutual benefit of Avesthagen as well as for its partners. Avesthagen employs 200 people worldwide.

For Avesthagen on the web: www.avesthagen.com

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