Cancer stem cells are a small population of cells within the tumor that are resistant to chemotherapy and which are believed to be responsible for treatment failure and tumor regrowth. Alchemia’s HyACT technology targets drugs to CD44, a protein target that is overexpressed in most cancers and on cancer stem cells. Data presented by Alchemia at the American Association of Cancer Research meeting last year showed that drugs formulated using the HyACT platform showed up to a 40 fold increase in potency against cancer stem cell populations.

“For a modest investment, this cutting edge trial is expected to yield important insights into the clinical and commercial value of our HyACT platform,” said Alchemia CEO, Peter Smith. “This is in keeping with our strategy of exploring the utility of this flexible technology whilst focusing Alchemia’s financial resources on the planned pivotal Phase III study.”

Alchemia is about to initiate recruitment to a 390 patient pivotal Phase III study of HA-Irinotecan in metastatic colorectal (bowel) cancer. This study will be used for registration (approval) of the drug in major markets, the end-points having been agreed with the US Food and Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency. In a previous Phase II study in colorectal cancer, HA-Irinotecan reduced tumor progression by more than half compared to unformulated irinotecan.

There are approximately 220,000 new cases of lung cancer in the US, accounting for around 15% of all new cancer diagnoses and 28% of cancer deaths. Of all lung cancer cases, 15-20% will be SCLC, which is particularly aggressive with median survival from diagnosis of 2-4 months without treatment. Overall, small cell carcinoma of the lung is associated with the poorest prognosis of all types of lung cancer; even with treatment 5-year survival is only 5%. SCLC responds well to chemotherapy but a cure is difficult to achieve because SCLC has a greater tendency to be widely disseminated by the time of diagnosis.

ShangPharma Subsidiary and Jiangsu Hengrui Medicine Partner in Therapeutic Antibody Research and Development

ShangPharma Corporation a leading China-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology research and development outsourcing company, and Jiangsu Hengrui Medicine Co., Ltd. (“Hengrui”), a leading Chinese pharmaceutical company, announced that Shanghai ChemPartner (“ChemPartner”), a wholly owned subsidiary of ShangPharma, and Hengrui have entered into a strategic partnership for the development of novel therapeutic monoclonal antibodies (“mAbs”).

Through the partnership, ChemPartner and Hengrui will initially collaborate on the development of novel therapeutic mAbs in a major therapeutic area. ChemPartner will head pre-clinical research activities, including target protein preparation and assay system establishment, generation and optimization of lead antibodies, as well as pharmacokinetic and preformulation studies, while Hengrui will lead drug development for the mAb. Following the project’s completion, Hengrui will retain the intellectual property rights of the mAb and any patents related to the mAb’s development. The first program will have several preclinical and development milestone payments, as well as a timeline-based incentive payment.

Mr. Michael Xin Hui, chairman and chief executive officer of ShangPharma, commented, “Hengrui is the first major domestic pharmaceutical company to form such an antibody partnership with ChemPartner, and the program is the first of its kind in China. The indication and market potential for the first mAb is very broad. We are proud to be working with Hengrui, one of the major domestic pharmaceutical companies.”

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companies. We expect our collaborative work will lead to further domestic and multinational partnerships in biologics development, and pave the way for innovation and growth in China’s own biotechnology industry.”

Dr. Lianshan Zhang, Hengrui’s President of Global R&D, added, “Hengrui, as a domestic leader in innovative medicines, recognizes the importance of external discovery capability, especially in the area of biotherapeutics. We are pleased to be working with one of the leading CRO companies in China. Hengrui has chosen to partner with ShangPharma and its ChemPartner subsidiary for their exceptional capabilities and platform in biologics R&D, and we will work together toward a successful partnership.”

Pfizer And Guoyuan Form Joint Venture To Expand Development, Manufacture And Distribution Of Animal Vaccines In China

Pfizer Animal Health, a business unit of Pfizer Inc. and Jilin Guoyuan Animal Health Company, Ltd., an innovator in animal health vaccines based in Huinan, announced an agreement to jointly develop, manufacture and distribute animal health vaccines in China. The new joint venture, Jilin Pfizer Guoyuan Animal Health Co., Ltd., will bolster the capabilities of both companies to offer a comprehensive range of vaccine products tailored to help China’s livestock producers meet increasing demand for a safe and abundant supply of pork, beef, dairy, and poultry from healthy animals.

The animal vaccine market in China is valued at $800 million per year. Pfizer Guoyuan Animal Health will focus initially on developing vaccines to protect the health of swine. Vaccines for swine have high growth potential as China is the world’s leading pork producing nation, with an annual population of more than 600 million pigs. The joint venture provides a strategic platform for growth in China, a $3.4 billion animal health market and the second largest worldwide with an expected compound annual growth rate of approximately ten percent.

“The Pfizer Guoyuan joint venture affirms our commitment to invest in and expand our research and development capabilities in China,” said Juan Ramon Alaix, president, Pfizer Animal Health. “We view China as a global center for innovation. Guoyuan, with its strong vaccine development program and scientific expertise, and newly completed manufacturing capacity in the Huinan Economic Development Zone in Jilin, makes the company the optimal partner for Pfizer Animal Health.”

Dr. Hua Wu, General Manager of Jilin Guoyuan Animal Health Company, Ltd., added that the new joint venture begins operations from a position of strength. “Pfizer complements Guoyuan with its world class R&D, manufacturing, regulatory and operational expertise, its founding leadership in the International Veterinary Collaboration for China, a Veterinary Alliance, as well as its growing field force and customer base in China. I believe that Pfizer Guoyuan is well positioned to become the leading innovator of animal health vaccines and the partner of choice for China’s rapidly expanding animal agriculture industries.”

Terms of the agreement were not disclosed. The joint venture is subject to approval by government authorities in China. The joint venture represents an important step in Pfizer Animal Health’s growth strategy and affirms the company’s commitment to help assure a safe, sustainable food supply from healthy food production animals by providing comprehensive animal health solutions.

Earlier this year, Pfizer Animal Health integrated the feed medicine and water soluble product portfolio of King/Alpharma LLC following Pfizer’s acquisition of King Pharmaceuticals. The company entered the aquaculture sector in May 2010 with the acquisition of Microtek International and the animal diagnostics sector by acquiring Synbiotics Corporation in December. With the integration in 2010 of Vetnex, the leading generic animal medicine company in India, Pfizer Animal Health built its New Established Brands platform to develop and distribute a comprehensive portfolio of generic medicines and vaccines.

DSM and Sinochem Group Establish Global Anti-infectives Joint Venture

Royal DSM, the global Life Sciences and Materials Sciences company, announces today that it has established the 50/50 global joint venture for its business group DSM Anti-Infectives with Sinochem Group. All applicable regulatory approvals and customary clearances from competition authorities have been received. The agreement to form the joint venture was announced in December 2010.

As part of the agreement to form the joint venture, Sinochem Group has taken a 50% equity interest in the business group for a total cash consideration of €210 million on a cash and debt-free basis with 1 January 2011 as effective date. Sinochem Group and DSM share on a 50/50 basis the cash in- and outflow of DSM Anti-Infectives as from that