



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:00 HOURS ON MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2002**

**ETIOLOGICS, A NEW COMPANY SPUN OUT OF THE MRC MAMMALIAN  
GENETICS UNIT, HAS UNIQUE ABILITY TO ACCURATELY IDENTIFY  
GENES ASSOCIATED WITH HUMAN DISEASE**

**Oxford, UK, 7 October 2002.....Etiologics Ltd, a new company focused on the identification of genes associated with human disease, has been established in the UK by the Medical Research Council (MRC) and through the initial venture capital backing of £3.5 million/ \$5.25 million from MVM and ABN AMRO Capital. Etiologics will commercialise research and technology developed by the world leading MRC Mammalian Genetics Unit (MGU) at Harwell, Oxford through the discovery and validation of novel therapeutic targets for its own account and in collaboration with pharmaceutical and biotechnology partners.**

The MGU is one of the world's leading academic centres for the study of the underlying genetic causes and progression of human disease. It currently receives total annual funding of £4.25 million and employs around 130 staff. The Unit will also benefit from a £23 million, five year investment programme to upgrade and extend the facilities at Harwell. The MGU has developed technology to generate and screen unique and novel mouse strains on a scale which addresses the needs of multinational pharmaceutical companies. Many of these disease models carry new and/or informative mutations (changes) in their genes.

The MGU has also developed a unique informatics system, Mutabase, which supports the effective management and interpretation of the large data sets associated with extensive screening programmes. Mutabase has been developed over the last five years and it enables ready access to and cross-referencing of all data and reports on phenotypic (physical symptoms resulting from genotype) and genotype information.

Under the terms of the five-year agreement with the MRC, Etiologics has exclusive rights to commercialise the work of the Company's scientific founders, Professor Steven Brown and Dr Roger Cox in certain fields and options to commercialise emerging intellectual property resulting from the Unit's research.

'One of the key challenges for the pharmaceutical industry is to harness the knowledge derived from the explosion in genomics in order to identify new therapeutic targets' commented Professor Steve Brown, Director of the MGU and MRC Mouse Genome Centre and co-scientific founder of Etiologics.

'The mouse is a key model in pharmaceutical research. Our expertise and technology supports the rapid discovery of new gene pathways and novel gene functions associated with disease and enables us to provide more detailed, accurate information compared with many alternative techniques. Our models and Mutabase are already being used by international pharmaceutical companies such as GlaxoSmithKline to accelerate and improve the success of their discovery and development programmes. Etiologics has been created to extend and manage such collaborations on a commercial footing'.

Etiologics can provide mouse strains which model a wide range of diseases including heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, visual impairment, renal failure, abnormal cholesterol metabolism, neuro-degenerative disorders and hearing impairment. The company is based at Harwell, Oxford, UK. A full management and commercial team will be recruited in the coming months.

## **ENDS**

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **MRC**

The Medical Research Council (MRC), established in 1913, aims to improve health by promoting research into all areas of medical and related science. It is funded mainly by the government but is independent in its choice of which research to support. About half of the MRC's expenditure of approximately £412 million is invested in over 50 of its Institutes and Units, where it employs its own research staff. The remaining half goes in the form of grant support and training awards to individuals and teams in universities.