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Media Contact:
Caroline Pritchard
Marketing Communications Manager
Phone: 720-890-5146
Email: caroline.pritchard@thermofisher.com

Thermo Fisher Scientific Welcomes New Members to RNAi Global Initiative

Group Now Represents 37 Renowned Research Institutions

LAFAYETTE, Colo. (Feb. 26, 2009) — Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc., the world leader in serving science, announced today that two new members have joined the RNAi Global initiative — an alliance of the Thermo Scientific Dharmacon Products team and leading international research centers.

The new member institutions include the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute and the University of Leiden in The Netherlands. With the addition of these members, the RNAi Global Initiative represents 37 research institutions in 14 different countries. All of the members are using the Thermo Scientific Dharmacon whole-genome small-interfering RNA (siRNA) library in their research.

At the **Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)** Research Institute, scientists are exploring a variety of genomic functions, including the signaling mechanisms of host/virus interactions, mitochondrial dynamics, cap independent translation and programmed cell death. The goal is to better understand these biological activities so that ultimately they can be manipulated to improve human health.

"We have adopted RNAi screening strategies using the Thermo Scientific Dharmacon libraries as part of a multifaceted approach to understanding the basic biology governing these central themes in human health," said Dr. David Stojdl, who works in the Apoptosis Research Centre at CHEO. "As part of the RNAi Global Initiative, we hope to plug into a vibrant community of like-minded people with varied expertise and that as a group we will be able to achieve more than we can individually."

At the **University of Leiden-The Netherlands**, Bob van de Water and Erik H.J. Danen and their teams within the Division of Toxicology will use siRNA screening to better understand the molecular mechanisms of cancer and the responses of normal and tumor cells to DNA damaging anticancer drugs.

"We will use the siRNA libraries for two broad research lines," said Dr. Danen. "First, we will seek to identify players in adverse drug reactions. For example, we will delineate pathways mediating DNA-damage responses in stem cells or interactions between inflammation and hepatotoxicants. Here, the aim is to use this information for the design of novel cell-based predictive models for drug toxicity. Second, we want to unravel cancer progression programs in the context of cancer cell adhesion and migration. In this case, we would use identified genes to test their relevance in living models for cancer metastasis. This might lead to the identification of new potential cancer drug targets."

Dr. Danen said he expects the RNAi Global Initiative to help his team be as effective as possible in setting up these large-scale screens. “By contacting other groups involved in this type of work, some of the pitfalls in designing and interpreting functional genomics screens may be avoided,” he said.

Founded in 2005, the RNAi Global Initiative is advancing the use of whole-genome RNA-interference screening, an increasingly important tool in biological research and drug discovery. Members share information and develop common research standards to advance the productivity of RNAi gene-silencing techniques.

“The growth in membership from 10 founding member institutes in 2005 to 37 at the outset of 2009 is indicative of the value of this initiative,” said Michael Deines, global director of marketing for genomics at Thermo Fisher Scientific. “The breadth of research expertise that each institute brings to membership expands the scope of what they can collectively achieve in addressing medically relevant questions in areas of cancer biology and infectious diseases.” According to Mr. Deines, the combined activities of the member institutes account for the majority of all genome-wide screening conducted globally.

The RNAi Global Initiative holds two international gatherings each year. Members also communicate through monthly teleconferences, on-line Web forums and meetings of sub-groups focused on topics of special interest. Visit www.rnaimglobal.org for more details.

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