DHARMACON AND 10 LEADING RESEARCH INSTITUTES ESTABLISH GLOBAL INITIATIVE TO ADVANCE RESEARCH USING THE WORLD'S FIRST HUMAN-GENOME-WIDE SIRNA LIBRARY

-Founding Members Include Leading Biomedical Research Institutes in Six Countries-

LAFAYETTE, Colo., Oct. 6, 2005 - Dharmacon, Inc., the world's leading supplier of innovative RNA and RNA interference (RNAi) research products, today announced the formation of the Genome-Wide RNAi Global Initiative, an alliance of leading international biomedical research centers. The initial goal of the Global Initiative is to accelerate the scientific and medical discoveries made possible by the recent availability of the first complete siRNA library to target genes across the entire human genome.

Genome-wide siRNA libraries have the potential to fundamentally change biological research by dramatically increasing scientists' ability to understand disease mechanisms and facilitating faster new drug discovery and development. The Global Initiative will provide a forum for member institutions to share research protocols, establish experimental standards and develop mechanisms for exchanging and comparing screening data. This ongoing interaction between Global Initiative members is expected to help researchers optimize high-throughput human- genome-wide siRNA screening and accelerate drug discovery.

Global Initiative founding members include The Campbell Family Institute for Breast Cancer Research at Princess Margaret Hospital and Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital, both with The University of Toronto; Cancer Research UK (CRUK) funded scientists at the London Research Institute and the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR); The German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ); UNMC Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI); The Scottish Centre for Genomic Technology and Informatics based at the University of Edinburgh Medical School (GTI); University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and Yale University. The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and The University of Cambridge scientists at the Cambridge Institute for Medical Research and MRC Cancer Cell Unit are also expected to join the Global Initiative, pending final institutional approval.

"We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our fellow researchers to accelerate the adoption and enhance the utility of this revolutionary technology," said Dr. Michael White, professor of cell biology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. "The genome-wide siRNA library provides an unprecedented opportunity to explore the molecular fulcrums of biological systems in an unbiased format -- largely free from the constraints of preconceived notions or assumptions."

"We are pioneering a 'pathway biology' approach to biomedical research," said Professor Peter Ghazal, director of The University of Edinburgh Medical School's Scottish Centre for Genomic Technology and Informatics (GTI), known for its expertise in integrating post-genomics, bioinformatics and translational medicine. "Access to the genome-wide siRNA library will enable us to systematically and selectively explore the role of individual components in our molecular networks, dramatically enhancing the power of this holistic approach."

The founding members encompass a broad spectrum of biomedical research interests. A number have announced their intention to house the genome-wide siRNA library in central high-throughput screening facilities to increase its availability throughout their organizations, and many will focus their initial efforts on using the library for cancer research.

Professor René Bernards of the Netherlands Cancer Institute, whose past work includes the functional identification of a number of genes in cancer-relevant pathways, noted, "The genome-wide siRNA library will be an important tool for identification of genes involved in cancer. We expect this work to complement our earlier screens using viral vector libraries. Genome-wide siRNA libraries represent a fundamental tool in functional genomic research, and we anticipate that the interaction between the Global Initiative members will be very valuable in helping to speed the progress of biomedical knowledge that RNAi is making possible."

Dr. Michael Boutros of the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) added, “Our recently published work on RNAi screening in Drosophila cells demonstrated the power of conducting unbiased genome-wide screens. With this new library we are now able to conduct genome-wide screens in human cells -- a critically important step in understanding the biological basis of human cancers. We expect this Global Initiative to foster interaction between scientists from a variety of disciplines to discuss insights and issues obtained by using this important new tool as part of their ongoing research programs.”

The membership of the Global Initiative, which is already scientifically and geographically diverse, is expected to expand further as additional not-for-profit research institutions from North America, Europe and Asia join in the coming months. Its first meeting will take place in Boston, on Oct. 17 and 18.

“Dharmacon is fostering the formation of this Global Initiative to enable leading researchers from around the world to share their experiences and exchange ideas on how best to realize the potential of Dharmacon’s si*ARRAY*® Human Genome Library, the first complete human genome-wide siRNA library available to researchers,” said William S. Marshall, Ph.D., vice president of technology and business development for Fisher Biosciences. “This library already represents an unprecedented tool for functional genomic research, and we believe its potential will be greatly expanded by the focused collaboration between leading international laboratories that the Global Initiative is designed to encourage. We look forward to collaborating with these world-class investigators in pursuit of our shared goal of using RNAi technology to advance science and medicine.”

In addition to the individuals quoted above, the following will direct the Global Initiative at their respective institutions: Dr. Tak Mak, The Campbell Family Institute for Breast Cancer Research at Princess Margaret Hospital and Dr. Jeffrey Wrana, Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital, both with The University of Toronto; Dr. Julian Downward and Professor Christopher Marshall, Cancer Research UK (CRUK) funded scientists at the London Research Institute and the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR); Dr. Kenneth Cowan, UNMC Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; Dr. Kevin White, Yale University; Dr. Gordon Mills, The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center; Professor Ashok Venkitaraman, MRC Cancer Cell Unit/Hutchison-MRC Research Center; and Professor Paul Luzio, Cambridge Institute for Medical Research, University of Cambridge.

About the si*ARRAY*® Human Genome siRNA Library
The si*ARRAY*® Human Genome siRNA Library from Dharmacon consists of preselected groups of *SMART*selection™ designed siRNA reagents—individual duplexes or *SMART*pool® reagents targeting all unique human genes in the NCBI RefSeq database—conveniently arranged in 96-well plates for easy storage and rapid preparation. The Human si*GENOME* siRNA Library is designed to accelerate functional genomics research and to make siRNA *SMART*selection technology accessible to all researchers for detailed analysis of gene families and metabolic pathways.

About the Genome-Wide RNAi Global Initiative
The Genome-Wide RNAi Global Initiative is an alliance of leading international biomedical researchers, established to increase and accelerate the utility of human genome-wide siRNA libraries. The Global Initiative will provide a forum for member institutions to share research protocols, establish experimental standards and develop mechanisms for exchanging and comparing screening data. Membership is open to not-for-profit biomedical research institutions across North America, Europe and Asia. The Global Initiative is being coordinated under the auspices of Dharmacon, Inc. Its founding members include The Campbell Family Institute for Breast Cancer Research at Princess Margaret Hospital and Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital, both with The University of Toronto; Cancer Research UK (CRUK) funded scientists at the London Research Institute and the Institute of Cancer Research (ICR); The German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ); UNMC Eppley Cancer Center at the University of Nebraska Medical Center; Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI); The Scottish Centre for Genomic Technology and Informatics based at the University of Edinburgh Medical School (GTI); University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and Yale University; The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and The University of Cambridge scientists at the Cambridge Institute for Medical Research and MRC Cancer Cell Unit.

About Dharmacon
Dharmacon is a business unit within the Fisher Biosciences group and the world's leading provider of reliable, high quality RNA oligonucleotides, small interfering RNA (siRNA) and related RNA-interference (RNAi) products and technologies. Using its core expertise in chemistry, biology, bioinformatics and production, Dharmacon has developed industry-leading siRNA design, chemical modification, and delivery technologies for maximizing the efficiency of gene silencing. Dharmacon's proprietary *SMART*selection™ and *SMART*pool® technologies result in potent and specific gene-silencing agents that can accelerate life-science research and drug discovery. Dharmacon's si*GENOME*™, a comprehensive and flexible siRNA collection, offers guaranteed silencing reagents for all unique human, mouse and rat genes. The company's advanced siRNA modification technologies further enhance silencing specificity, stability, and *in vivo* performance. For more information about Dharmacon products and services visit www.dharmacon.com or call 303-604-9499.

About Fisher Biosciences
Fisher Biosciences, a unit of Fisher Scientific International Inc. (NYSE: FSH), manufactures and supplies a wide range of products and services across the general-chemistry and life-sciences arenas. From fine and high-purity chemicals, clinical diagnostics, proprietary protein-research and cell-culture products, and sterile-liquid-handling systems, to innovative RNA-interference technology, Fisher Biosciences serves scientific-research, healthcare, drug-discovery, and general-industrial customers around the world.