

Changes at Analytical Technologies

After a mutually successful partnership lasting 14 years, Sebia and Analytical Technologies have agreed to transfer the Sebia business to a new company, Sebia (UK), a wholly owned subsidiary of Sebia France. Sebia (UK) will begin trading this month and will immediately assume responsibility for sales, service and technical support of all Sebia electrophoresis equipment and reagents. Analytical Technologies will continue to support YSI, Gonotec and its other product lines. Sebia's significant

investment reflects its commitment to the UK market and will allow it to focus more resources on providing the highest level of customer support. With personnel from Analytical Technologies joining the new company, customers should experience a smooth 'business as usual' transition. Sebia (UK) will be based at new premises in Camberley (pictured) where the company will enjoy an expanded office space, including excellent facilities for in-house training and demonstrations.



Enter Q10 on card

Certified reference materials from Optiglass

All Starna heat-sealed certified reference materials (CRMs) for spectrophotometry are now covered by a lifetime guarantee. Starna heat-sealed CRMs, manufactured in the UK by Optiglass, are available for the validation of wavelength accuracy, absorbance accuracy, stray light and resolution in the ultraviolet (UV) and visible regions. These certified references are traceable

to NIST primary standards via an ISO 17025- accredited process. The new guarantee applies if the parameter value of any CRM moves outside the specified uncertainty budget, provided that the failure is not due to physical damage or abuse in normal use and that the references have been routinely recertified by Optiglass. Optiglass has held ISO 17025 accreditation for its calibration processes for over five years, but ISO now recommends that CRM producers also be accredited to its Guide 34, covering manufacturing processes. Optiglass is participating in the pilot programme set up by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) to establish an accreditation programme for reference material producers to ISO Guide 34.



Enter Q11 on card

Eppendorf in battle against avian flu

Eppendorf real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) systems are providing vital speed and accuracy in laboratories responsible for screening large numbers of samples from domestic poultry and wild birds for the presence of the avian flu virus. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the use of real-time PCR in local veterinary diagnostic laboratories to detect nucleic acid of the influenza A virus, and in national reference laboratories where the virus subtype (eg H5N1) is determined. The Eppendorf Mastercycler ep *realplex* offers real-time PCR in less than 30 minutes. Consistently high sensitivity and reproducibility of results are combined with ease of use. Excitation of fluorescence dyes in samples is achieved by an array of 96 individual LEDs, which have a substantially longer life than

halogen lamps. With a minimum of moving parts in the optical detection module, Mastercycler ep *realplex* is more robust and faster than filter systems. The epMotion 5070 liquid-handling workstation provides safe and accurate automated pipetting for sample preparation, reducing the influence of manual error and enhancing the precision of PCR assays. An optical sensor identifies labware, tips and reagent volumes, while the compact control panel enables easy programming.



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Fighting scarlet fever with Oxoid

News of an outbreak of scarlet fever among young children in south-west England serves as a timely reminder that we have not yet seen the last of this once-common disease. Recently, 50 cases were confirmed in Wiltshire, with clusters seen in two nurseries. The erythrogenic toxin produced as a result of infection with β -haemolytic streptococci (usually group A) is responsible for the distinctive 'scarlet' rash. While the rash and attendant symptoms of sore throat, fever and general malaise normally respond well to antibiotics, there is always the potential for more serious immune-mediated outcomes to develop if cases are left untreated. These

include rheumatic fever, glomerulonephritis, osteomyelitis, septicaemia and even death, underlining the importance of early diagnosis and therapy. Oxoid offers a wide range of products to aid in the culture, identification and grouping of β -haemolytic streptococci, including Blood Agar Base No 2 and Columbia Blood Agar Base with COBA Selective Medium, which has been specially formulated for the selective isolation of *Streptococcus* species. Streptococcal grouping kits are also available in wet and dry latex agglutination formats, enabling group A streptococci to be differentiated reliably on the basis of specific carbohydrate antigens.



Enter Q13 on card

Benchtop equipment and antimicrobial protection

Barloworld Scientific has launched its largest catalogue devoted to the renowned Stuart range of benchtop equipment. The 123-page publication, now in its 14th edition, is available free and features many new and exciting products including a new range of tube rollers, a new shaking water bath and a new contact thermometer for accurate liquid temperature control. The new edition also introduces the



launch of BioCote antimicrobial protection. BioCote is a special silver-based system that inhibits bacterial reproduction and is available across the entire range of Stuart benchtop equipment. More information on the benefits of BioCote is included in the new technical information section of the catalogue or can be found on the company website (www.barloworld-scientific.com).

Enter Q14 on card

Salisbury introduces rapid MRSA screening

Salisbury District Hospital has announced its decision to introduce Acolyte's new BacLite flex Rapid MRSA system for screening. Salisbury was one of the primary evaluation sites in the NHS for this innovative new technology. Laboratory manager Stuart Matthews commented: "As part of the evaluation process we were able to clearly identify the impact of this rapid technology on our screening programme. Its excellent performance enables us to screen for negatives in one working day, delivering valuable information to our infection control team". Tim Coombs, chairman of Acolyte,

added: "We are delighted that Salisbury District Hospital has decided to introduce the BacLite flex Rapid MRSA system. We believe that the benefits identified at Salisbury will be of interest to other NHS trusts in their efforts to address healthcare-associated infections." Bernie Almond, divisional director of BioStat Healthcare, said: "As the exclusive UK distributor of this new technology, we are confident that the routine introduction of the BacLite flex Rapid MRSA system at Salisbury District Hospital will be followed by many opportunities in other NHS sites in the UK."

Enter Q15 on card

Atomic absorption explained

Thermo Electron has published a new brochure that provides an overview of the benefits and capabilities of its innovative new Mi and Si atomic absorption (AA) spectrometers. The new easy-to-use spectrometers not only save time and samples, by reducing the risk of sample re-runs, but also increase confidence in the quality and validity of the analytical data produced. The brochure provides an in-depth description of the full range of added intelligence



enhancements now available with these fully automatic instruments that are designed to offer superior performance, improved ease of operation and regulatory compliance. The eight-page brochure describes the benefits of the Mi and Si AA products for users in high-throughput situations in environmental, food and beverage, petrochemical, metallurgy and clinical laboratories. The new brochure is available now at www.thermo.com/aa.

Enter Q16 on card

Beckman Coulter immunoanalysis at Beaumont Hospital, Dublin

Ireland's national reference centre for thyroid and endocrine-based diseases, the 600-bed Beaumont Hospital in north Dublin, has expanded its laboratory resources to cope with steadily increasing workloads. The laboratory has installed a Beckman Coulter UniCel Dxl 800 immunoassay analyser, a high-volume, random-access instrument with the capacity to run 400 tests an hour, as well as the company's data management system, Remisol 2000. Workloads have grown consistently by 10% in each of the last five years, and the laboratory now handles 120,000 tests a year – a figure set to increase further over the next five years. "A high-throughput analyser with the flexibility of sample processing allows us to offer a fast, accurate

service in spite of greater workloads," explained Paula O'Shea, principal biochemist in the endocrinology department. Commenting on the Beaumont contract, Jag Grewal, market manager for the UK and northern Europe said: "We are delighted to be working with the laboratory as it seeks to expand its services both in the hospital and externally. The Dxl 800 offers the throughput, menu and ease of use needed to meet the expected increase in workload without adding to staff costs." Beckman Coulter is represented in Ireland by Brennan. Since the 1960s, the company has been a major supplier of highly specialised technological equipment to the Irish scientific, medical and clinical markets.



Enter Q17 on card

Applied Biosystems aids leukaemia research

Researchers at the Institut des Hautes Études Scientifiques and the Institut de Recherches Interdisciplinaires in France are using the Applied Biosystems Expression array system to understand the gene regulatory events involved in the development of acute promyelocytic leukaemia. Dr Arndt Benecke, head of the Systems Epigenomics Group, explained: "Using the 1700 chemiluminescent microarray analyser and TaqMan gene expression assays, we are looking at samples from leukaemia patients to define multidimensional gene signatures. We are combining those studies with other microarray technologies, such as chromatin

immunoprecipitation (ChIP)-on-chip, and translating the experimental results into probability maps using different computer algorithms. We then superimpose these probability maps on to the genomic sequence and develop methodology for analysing these data, using covariance and correlation coefficients, in order to make predictions concerning regulatory events. Eventually we hope that our approach will allow sets of several potential pharmaceutical targets to be identified simultaneously for multifactorial diseases. This has never really been established successfully, but it is something that we are working towards."

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