

# Hong Kong firm targets globalization of poultry vaccines

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- **INTERVIEWS**



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Hong Kong-based biotechnology company Pacific Gene Tech (PGT) said it is close to commercializing two poultry vaccines in the global animal health market.



The company, which was founded in 2009, is engaged in research, development and commercialization of vaccines and related adjuvant/delivery system technologies that address unmet global needs caused by a broad range of infectious diseases in both animals and humans.

The firm holds exclusive rights to a range of proprietary vaccine technologies that have been in-licensed from recognized research institutions in the US. The company also has active research collaborations in Asia and Europe. The in-licensed vaccine technologies are covered under several patent families that are either issued or pending on a global basis.

Speaking to *Animal Pharm* from the company's office in Hong Kong, the chief executive of PGT Tim Collard confirmed initial products will be aimed at poultry.

"In 2016, PGT expects to launch its Hercules adjuvant/delivery system with an orally administered avian influenza vaccine," said Mr Collard. "In 2017, depending on the results of ongoing trials, a launch for the Javelin delivery system with an H5N1 vaccine is possible.

"Also, PGT is in the early-stage regulatory process with a salmonella food safety vaccine, which is cross protective in poultry against multiple salmonella strains, with an approval expected in 2018."

PGT has a pipeline of seven animal vaccines undergoing research for poultry, swine and ruminants. At the same it is researching two adjuvant/delivery system platforms.

Although based in Hong Kong, PGT sees itself as a global company with ambitions beyond its Asian environment. PGT's approach to commercializing its products is to develop the best marketing option for a specific product in a targeted segment.

## **Acquire and out-license strategy**

When appropriate, PGT will out-license its vaccine candidates to suitable commercial partners manufacturing and distribution. For most products, it will be with international partners for global marketing. However, in certain circumstances PGT will partner with national vaccine companies in regional markets, for example, with avian influenza vaccines in Asia.

Mr Collard said PGT's strategy is based on acquiring rights to vaccine and adjuvant technologies for human and veterinary applications that require commercial development, distribution and intellectual property protection, and then implementing a technology development plan that optimizes the value of the technology for both the inventors and PGT.

PGT owns the exclusive global rights for Aegis, a patent-pending technology platform initially developed to produce effective and low cost vaccines against viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases in animals using microbial vectors, including both bacteria and yeasts.

"Aegis vaccines are broad spectrum, relying on conserved antigens that are cross-protective among strains and even species and can target bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases. At the time the company was founded, the University of Arkansas had proof-of-concept data with the Aegis platform against a number of poultry diseases including salmonella, campylobacter, avian influenza and the apicomplexan parasite Eimeria," said Mr Collard.

"Since that time, the company has focused on developing those vaccines in poultry, including for food safety applications, and in expanding the application of the same antigens and vaccines in other host species and also in related diseases."

The company's primary focus is to profitably commercialize in-licensed vaccine technologies that combat the escalating threat of infectious diseases in

both animals and humans. PGT will continue to enlarge its product base through Aegis and build its adjuvant delivery systems business.

In the medium to long term, PGT will also acquire other novel vaccine technologies that are applicable to major unmet needs in both animal and human health.

Mr Collard said he knew of only one other animal vaccine company in Hong Kong. That company is developing an avian influenza DNA vaccine for the China market. PGT currently has a total of nine full time staff: five in Hong Kong; three in Taiwan; one in the US; and a panel of scientific advisors scattered around the world in the US, Asia and UK.