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DuPont and Athenix Collaborate to Advance Insect Control in Corn, Soybeans

DES MOINES, Iowa, and RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C, Jan. 15, 2009 – DuPont and Athenix today announced they have entered into a research collaboration to improve insect control in corn and soybeans. Under the agreement, DuPont business Pioneer Hi-Bred will use proprietary insect-resistance trait genes from Athenix to develop and commercialize next-generation corn and soybean seed products. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

“The novel products developed through this partnership will build upon industry-leading insect control solutions from Pioneer,” said William S. Niebur, DuPont vice president – Crop Genetics Research and Development. “We look forward to partnering with Athenix to enhance our line of products with these new traits to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability for Pioneer customers.”

Athenix will focus on microbial screening, molecular biology and genomics to discover gene leads that protect corn and soybeans against destructive insect pests including corn rootworm, European corn borer, earworms and cutworms. Pioneer researchers will validate and further develop these gene leads through their proprietary trait enhancement tools, including gene shuffling. Accelerated trait integration processes will be utilized to incorporate these traits into industry-leading new products that will directly address the global demand for superior agricultural productivity.

“Development of new traits for insect control is important not only to provide growers with enhanced options but also to solve the challenges of resistance management. We are pleased to be working with an industry leader like Pioneer to bring Athenix’ novel insect control options to the market,” said Mike Koziel, chief executive officer at Athenix.

Under the agreement, Pioneer will have exclusive ownership of novel insect control genes enhanced through its gene shuffling technology and the corn and soybean germplasm it develops using Athenix and Pioneer-enhanced genes.

Pioneer currently offers Herculex® insect protection traits, which provide the broadest spectrum of in-plant insect control available. Pending regulatory approval, Pioneer intends to leverage the unique properties found in the Herculex® family of traits to introduce the industry's first reduced, in-the-bag corn rootworm refuge solution – Optimum™ AcreMax® 1 Insect Protection – in 2009.

Athenix is a leading biotechnology company that develops novel products and technologies for agricultural and industrial applications, including biofuels and bioconversions. Athenix has established an outstanding intellectual property portfolio and market access ability around enhanced plants, microbes, genes, enzymes, and processes with emphasis on two major markets: 1) novel agricultural traits for growers such as insect resistance, nematode resistance, herbicide tolerance, and their use for the crop production industry; and 2) the discovery of genes and proteins for use in the sustainable chemical industry with a focus on biofuels like ethanol and other natural products.

Pioneer Hi-Bred, a DuPont business, is the world's leading source of customized solutions for farmers, livestock producers and grain and oilseed processors. With headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa, Pioneer provides access to advanced plant genetics in nearly 70 countries.

DuPont is a science-based products and services company. Founded in 1802, DuPont puts science to work by creating sustainable solutions essential to a better, safer, healthier life for people everywhere. Operating in more than 70 countries, DuPont offers a wide range of innovative products and services for markets including agriculture and food; building and construction; communications; and transportation.

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