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Contact: KansasBio, K. Pierce 785-554-0447
Ventria, S.Fuhrmann 877-835-8362 ext. 2006

Kansas Officials Announce Agreement for Bioprocessing Facility in Junction City
Facility for plant-made pharmaceuticals continues Kansas' advancement in biotechnology

Junction City, Kan. – Kansas state officials announced Friday the signing of an agreement that will bring a bioprocessing facility for plant-made pharmaceuticals to Junction City. State officials said the opening of the plant by Ventria Bioscience of Sacramento, Calif., is a significant advancement in Kansas' involvement in bioscience.

"Agriculture has long been the backbone of the Kansas economy, so it's appropriate we would embrace this opportunity to make the most of scientific advances in plant-made pharmaceuticals," said Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius in a statement. "I welcome Ventria Bioscience to Kansas and look forward to their contributions to the health of children worldwide."

Ventria is developing products that enhance human health. A recent clinical study showed that Ventria's product helped reduce the duration of diarrhea in children by 30 percent, from 5.2 days to 3.7 days, as part of an oral rehydration solution. Childhood diarrhea is the second leading killer of children, claiming 1.9 million lives annually according to the World Health Organization.

The facility, to be located in Junction City, will process a variety of rice developed by Ventria. Proteins extracted from the rice will be incorporated into oral rehydration solutions to address childhood diarrhea. Ventria is also developing other products using these proteins. The rice itself is then discarded.

Junction City led the effort to attract Ventria to Kansas.

"The bioprocessing facility is an exciting opportunity for new jobs in Junction City and is expected to contribute \$40 million to the Kansas economy by the time it is fully operational," said Junction City Mayor Terry Heldstab.

Farmers are expected to be among the project's major beneficiaries, as those who grow the rice that supplies the facility can earn a premium compared to their next most lucrative crop, said Kansas Agriculture Secretary Adrian Polansky.

"This is as an important development for Kansas farmers, who stand to benefit from the additional income," he said. "They also have the satisfaction of knowing they are helping provide affordable healthcare products to children who desperately need it."

(MORE)

Ventria CEO Scott Deeter said the decision to establish this part of his company's operations in Kansas was the result of an impressive, coordinated effort by key players at the state level, as well as on the local level in Junction City.

"The new bioprocessing facility in Junction City will provide the infrastructure to deliver affordable healthcare solutions on a global basis to those who need it most," said Deeter. "In working with Kansas to choose this location, we have been extremely impressed by the state's clear commitment to biotechnology, its support of the growing field of plant-made pharmaceuticals, and its understanding of how this field will improve healthcare for all."

The effort to attract Ventria to Kansas involved a number of players, including Governor Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Agriculture Adrian Polansky, the Kansas Department of Commerce, Junction City and Geary County, Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC), KansasBIO, Kansas State University and Kansas Farm Bureau.

"This announcement today is very satisfying, as KTEC and our partners have worked for over a year to bring Ventria's operation to Kansas," said Tracy Taylor, President and CEO of KTEC. "Strategically, Ventria provides an outstanding opportunity for Kansas, given our agricultural strengths and focus on the biosciences."

For more information on plant-made pharmaceuticals visit:

<http://www.plantpharma.org>

<http://www.bio.org/healthcare/pmp>.

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