

Basel, 23 April 1998

**Roche to invest in new Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> Plant in Germany**

Roche builds in Grenzach (Germany) a new biotechnical plant to produce vitamin B<sub>2</sub> by fermentation. The new plant in Grenzach will have a production capacity of 3000 tonnes per year, and requires an investment of CHF 110 million. It will come onstream in the year 2000 and will replace the former production facilities in Grenzach and Fukuroi (Japan), which produce the vitamin by chemical synthesis. It is expected that the new process will half the cost of the present production.

In comparison to the existing chemical process, the new process does not use any organic solvents and consumes mainly natural and renewable raw materials. This will significantly reduce the environmental impact of the B<sub>2</sub> production.

Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> plays an important role in the metabolic conversion of nutrients into energy. Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> is used as food and feed additive and is also included in pharmaceutical multivitamin products. Roche is the world-wide leading producer of vitamin B<sub>2</sub>.

The investment in the new plant illustrates the Division's strategy to employ, in a responsible way, the most advanced technology in order to strengthen further its position in this highly competitive market.