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Roche and Novo Nordisk agree on a world-wide strategic alliance for feed enzymes

Roche and Novo Nordisk A/S (NYSE:NVO) have agreed on a world-wide strategic alliance in the area of feed enzymes. The objective of the strategic alliance between Roche's Vitamins and Fine Chemicals Division and Novo Nordisk's Enzyme Business, is to support growth by pioneering and driving the development of new significant feed enzyme applications, which will benefit both the health of livestock animals and the environment.

Within this alliance Novo Nordisk will provide its extensive know-how in basic research, product development and production, while Roche will contribute its broad experience in application development, marketing and sales as well as its international presence. Thus, Roche will distribute the alliance's feed enzymes in most of the world. The agreement, which will be effective from January 2001, is an extension of existing collaboration between the two companies.

Feed enzymes are a new category of micronutrients, which improve feed digestion by animals. One example is phytase, which improves an animal's ability to absorb phosphorus from plant feedstuffs. In addition to an improved utilisation of this important micronutrient the excretion of this mineral into the environment is reduced thereby diminishing the risk of polluting rivers and lakes.

Novo Nordisk A/S is the world leader in insulin and diabetes care and also manufactures and markets a variety of other pharmaceutical products. Furthermore the company is the world's largest producer of enzymes for industrial use. Headquartered in Denmark, Novo Nordisk employs approximately 15,200 people in 68 countries and markets its products in 179 countries. Its B shares are listed on the stock exchanges in Copenhagen and London. Its ADSs are listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "NVO". A demerger of Novo Nordisk with the intention to spin off the Enzyme Business into a separately listed company is expected to take place around the turn of the year 2000/2001.

Roche's Vitamins and Fine Chemicals Division is the world market leader in bulk vitamins and carotenoids. It has its own research centres, production facilities and world-wide sales and distribution network to serve the feed, food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries with high-quality vitamins, carotenoids and other micronutrients. In 1999, the Division realised sales of more than CHF 3.6 billion and employed some 7500 people.

Headquartered in Basel, Switzerland, Roche is one of the world's leading research-oriented healthcare groups in the fields of pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and vitamins. Roche's innovative products and services address prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, thus enhancing people's well-being and quality of life.