

**Press RELEASE**  
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## **PCR-based detection kits for rapid food safety testing: BIOTECON Diagnostics and MERCK KGaA start worldwide marketing alliance**

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In order to enhance the worldwide launch of its innovative food safety testing systems, **BIOTECON Diagnostics** has formed a strategic marketing alliance with the globally operating **MERCK KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**. Merck KGaA sells the **foodproof®** range which has been available in almost all countries of the world since January 1, 2008. More new products will be launched jointly during the year 2008.

Dr. Kornelia Berghof-Jaeger, CEO, BIOTECON Diagnostics: "In this alliance Merck KGaA will contribute significantly through its expertise in microbiology and its excellent customer relationships. Jointly we are able to fulfill the customer needs by introducing this new technology to the food safety testing labs around the world."

"For Merck KGaA this partnership means a consequential advancement in order to underline our leading position in specialty chemicals, especially in analytical reagents and test kits" comments Wolfgang E. Schmidt, Head of Microbiology, Hygiene and Microscopy at Merck KGaA. "Our philosophy of highest quality demands is perfectly met by the solutions offered by BIOTECON Diagnostics."

The increasing use of rapid food safety testing is receiving more and more attention. The major reason for this key trend is that the food industry requires quick and accurate results. Traditional microbiological methods are relatively slow and sometimes inaccurate in comparison to innovative molecular biological techniques. Fast and reliable detection systems are therefore the method of choice. In particular, advanced real time PCR technology is increasingly being used in the rapid detection of food pathogens and spoilage microorganisms. PCR stands for polymerase chain reaction, a technique that allows an exponential amplification of DNA from just a few to more than a billion copies in less than one hour. This enables a significant reduction in the time taken to achieve results in comparison with conventional cultivation techniques.

After a simple sample preparation – just a small amount of bacteria is needed - the PCR testing can be easily performed in one hour, thereby effectively reducing costs, i.e. time and labor: As a result, the finished goods can be released several days earlier.

Under its **foodproof®** brand BIOTECON Diagnostics has developed real-time PCR detection kits for *Enterobacteriaceae* plus *E. sakazakii* (new), *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* O157 etc. The range also comprises a unique kit for the screening of beer spoilage organisms as well as GMO testing kits.

**BIOTECON Diagnostics** GmbH with its headquarter in Potsdam / Berlin (Germany) has been a competent partner for molecular biological and microbiological issues for more than ten years. The focus is the development, production and marketing of PCR-based rapid detection systems. BIOTECON Diagnostics offers solutions for the food and beverages industry as well as for pharmaceutical and cosmetics manufacturers.

**Merck** is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of EUR 7.1 billion in 2007, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by 30,968 employees in 60 countries. Its success is characterized by innovations from entrepreneurial employees. Merck's operating activities come under the umbrella of Merck KGaA, in which the Merck family holds an approximately 70% interest and free shareholders own the remaining approximately 30%. In 1917 the U.S. subsidiary Merck & Co. was expropriated and has been an independent company ever since.

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