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Pigs to be Genotyped to Improve Selection and Breeding for Pancreatic Islet Cell Research

New DNA testing technology to help in finding a cure to diabetes

February 12, 2009 – MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Cutting-edge DNA testing technology provided by GeneSeek Inc. (Lincoln, NE), a privately held biotechnology company, will be used for medical-grade source pigs which are being developed by Spring Point Project, a Minnesota non-profit organization providing pig islet cells for transplantation to cure diabetes. With this technology, GeneSeek, a certified Illumina CPro laboratory and global leader in contractual high-throughput genotyping, will help Spring Point Project and the Schulze Diabetes Institute of the University of Minnesota identify pigs that are naturally superior donors of pancreatic islet tissue for diabetes cure.

GeneSeek will take samples from Spring Point Project's pigs to genotype for over 60,000 DNA markers using the new Infinium HD Porcine SNP60 Bead Chip from Illumina, Inc. (San Diego, CA). This will provide Spring Point Project with high quality DNA information to link DNA profiles with characteristics of islet tissue. The information will help Spring Point Project supply the optimum islets for transplantation.

“We are thrilled to donate our genotyping services in support of Spring Point Project's charitable efforts to improve care and find a cure for type 1 diabetes,” says Daniel Pomp, PhD, co-founder and Chief Science Officer of GeneSeek. “We are very impressed by the synergistic nexus between agricultural and biomedical research represented by Spring Point Project and are excited to help them apply state-of-the-art genomic tools to advance their important work.”

Spring Point Project operates a biosecure facility, known as the Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation (DRWF) Islet Resource Facility, where high-health, ‘medical-grade’ source pig donors are produced. The Schulze Diabetes Institute at the University of Minnesota works in partnership with Spring Point Project by conducting the preclinical and clinical trials. In this partnership, the two organizations provide the science and the source needed to move toward a cure for diabetes.

“We have known since the founding of our herd that we have captured the high islet yield characteristic in our animals. Use of the state-of-the-art Infinium HD PorcineSNP60 BeadChip technology to link specific genetic profiles with this characteristic will allow us to further refine our selection and breeding program to provide an unlimited source of pig islet cells to accelerate the availability and affordability of islet transplantation to cure diabetes,” says Tom Spizzo, Spring Point Project’s Director of Operations. “We are sincerely grateful for GeneSeek’s donation of genotyping services to make this significant advance possible.”

Currently, several litters of second generation piglets are being raised at the DRWF Islet Resource Facility operated by Spring Point Project. These pigs are the first pigs in the facility which can serve as donors of islet cells suitable for transplantation in diabetes patients. The first clinical trials are slated to begin within one year.

About GeneSeek

Established in 1998 with headquarters in Lincoln, NE and facilities in the UK and India, GeneSeek, Inc. is a privately held, global biotechnology company dedicated to providing quality DNA-based diagnostic and discovery products and services. GeneSeek is committed to being an innovative and dynamic company serving the agribusiness, food safety, biomedical and pharmaceutical markets. GeneSeek's high throughput genotyping capabilities range from one SNP to a million SNPs per sample and are relevant to gene discovery, diagnostic testing, marker-assisted breeding and identity management across many species.

www.GeneSeek.com

About Spring Point Project

Spring Point Project is a nonprofit organization with the mission to provide an unlimited source of pig islet cells to accelerate the availability and affordability of islet transplantation to cure diabetes. Spring Point Project and the Schulze Diabetes Institute at the University of Minnesota work in partnership to provide the source and science needed to move toward a cure for diabetes. www.springpointproject.org.

The Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation (DRWF), a not-for-profit worldwide network based in Washington, DC, has made a substantial contribution of \$6.2 million to Spring Point Project. In recognition of this significant donation, the Islet Resource Facility was named after the DRWF.

www.diabeteswellness.net.

The Ryan Companies US, Inc., a leading national commercial real estate firm led by third-generation family members, is another major donor to Spring Point Project. Pat and Ann Ryan and Jim and Colleen Ryan have contributed \$3 million. Their donation included personal gifts and contributions through the company. In addition, the company built the facility in which Spring Point Project’s research is conducted. For more information about the Ryan Companies. www.ryancompanies.com.

Schulze Diabetes Institute at the University of Minnesota. www.diabetesinstitute.org.

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