

# Algenex adds to Fatro relationship with second vaccine license

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NEWS

**Joseph Harvey** Spanish start-up Algenex has entered another commercial license agreement with Italy's Fatro for development of a swine vaccine.



Fatro will use Algenex's CrisBio baculovirus vector-mediated expression platform to develop a vaccine for a "major swine indication".

The latest deal strengthens an existing collaboration between the two companies signed in 2015. The pre-existing partnership allowed Fatro to develop a recombinant vaccine for an undisclosed indication with the CrisBio technology. This recently culminated in the first submission of a CrisBio-based vaccine for [European centralized approval](#).

Algenex's platform "harnesses the power of insects to act as natural single-use bioreactors". The Madrid-based firm claims this system is a versatile and robust alternative to current bioreactor-based expression technologies. CrisBio also offers "additional benefits including linear scalability, reduced production costs and increased productivity, reaching gram-per-liter yields".

Dr Francesco Meliota – vice president of immunological veterinary medicinal products at Fatro – remarked: "For Fatro, CrisBio technology represents an important opportunity to expand its portfolio of vaccines for veterinary use with a series of highly innovative products and the excellent results obtained during the development of the first product further reinforced our belief in its practical potentialities, convincing us to sign this new agreement with Algenex."

Fatro – headquartered in Bologna – is the leading animal health business located in Italy. Established in 1947, the company works exclusively in the animal health industry. It has subsidiaries in Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic, Poland, Argentina, Uruguay and India. The firm also exports its products to over 90 countries.

## **Pipeline includes ASF vaccine**

Algenex claims to have successfully produced over 200 molecules and gained proof-of-concept data in more than 20 vaccines in collaboration with public and private partners, including "multiple international pharmaceutical companies".

As well as CrisBio, the company is also developing vaccine candidates using its TopBac system. This technology features in a proprietary patented expression cassette and, when incorporated into the genome of a baculovirus vector, it "significantly improves the productivity and quality of recombinant proteins produced by host cells".

Algenex's pipeline features three CrisBio-based vaccines that are also part of commercial partnerships with undisclosed companies. These are for rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus, porcine circovirus type 2 and African swine fever (ASF). The firm is also working on two vaccines – for porcine circovirus type 2 (using the TopBac technology) and avian influenza (CrisBio) – that currently require commercial partnerships.

The firm's general manager Claudia Jiménez told *Animal Pharm*: "For ASF, we have an ongoing partnership for the development of a potential vaccine but we are also in the process of validating a [rapid test](#) that could be on the market at a substantial discount to current diagnostic kits thanks to the fact we produce the protein in CrisBio.

"In avian influenza, we are generating some pretty interesting data that could serve as proof-of-concept for flu indications and other developments, including in humans."

While Algenex is currently focused on animal health, it intends to expand its scope into the human health sector in the future. Currently, the firm has one commercialized product – a bovine diarrhea virus vaccine Vedevax block, which is sold in Argentina by local firm Vetanco and based on an Algenex patent.