

Algenex to open new manufacturing facility and hunt for series C this year

28 Feb 2020 NEWS



[Joseph Harvey@JHJournalist](mailto:Joseph.Harvey@JHJournalist) joseph.harvey@ihsmarkit.com

Spanish firm Algenex is aiming to secure some major milestones in 2020, as it aims to further progress its protein-based products.



The company is developing vaccines, therapeutic molecules and diagnostic reagents for the animal health sector.

To support this portfolio, Algenex will open a new GMP manufacturing facility this summer in Madrid. The firm has rented an existing building, which should take around three months to refurbish. It is part of a business park – a location that allows for easy expansion without significant investment or burden, the company stated.

Speaking to *Animal Pharm* at the recent Animal Health Investment Europe forum in London, the company's general manager Claudia Jimenez commented: "This is a large milestone for us.

It will allow us to supply frozen antigen to our customers, who will only need to carry out standard downstream processes."

She said Algenex excels in the complex area of protein manufacturing – something the new facility will further underline. The firm claims to be the leading provider of bioreactor-free baculovirus-based protein production.

The company's CrisBio baculovirus-expression platform has so far primarily been used to produce subunit veterinary vaccines. It is a "versatile, reduced-cost and scalable" insect-based protein production system that delivers significant advantages over insect cells cultured in bioreactors, according to Algenex. The [first veterinary vaccine](#) using this system was submitted for European approval last year.

Ms Jimenez said up to 250 million pupae can be reared in three months for the CriBio system. Each pupa can produce between 10-80 vaccine doses depending on antigen and dose regimen. It takes the company less than two months to produce a new protein or update a vaccine antigen.

She said this production system offers flexibility, scalability, a speedy time to market and cost reduction to its clients.

Algenex is also working on its TopBac system – a plug and play technology that "significantly increases the productivity of existing baculovirus systems".

More funding and partnerships

Algenex intends to begin sourcing investment as part of a series C round this summer. Ms Jimenez said the firm was three times over-subscribed during the second tranche of its [series B funding](#). She also said Algenex is in advanced negotiations with several potential partners for its pipeline of compounds. Towards the end of 2019, the firm secured its [second commercial agreement](#) with Italy's Fatro for development of a swine vaccine.

Algenex claims to have successfully produced over 200 molecules and gained proof-of-concept data in more than 20 vaccines.

ASF diagnostic update

As well as working in the vaccines space, Algenex is also active in diagnostics. Last year, it teamed up with UK business [Global DX](#) to develop a point-of-care rapid diagnostic test for African swine fever (ASF). Ms Jimenez said this relationship has advanced considerably, with the test ready to go through validation at a reference center in March.

Algenex is now searching for a third-party distribution deal to launch the ASF test. She said the company took the "opportunistic approach" to use its expertise in antibody production to work in the area of diagnostics. The advantage of the test is that it can detect ASF antibodies – an essential tool in eradication campaigns given the high variability in clinical disease of ASF, which ranges from acute to unapparent carriers.