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University of Utah Awarded U.S. Patent for Rapid PCR

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH – September 7, 2004 The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office has issued the University of Utah U.S. patent No. U.S. 6,787,338 (the '338 patent) relating to methods of rapid nucleic acid amplification. The issuance of this patent reinforces the University's patent portfolio in the area of real-time nucleic acid amplification, quantification, and melting analysis. . The '338 patent and other patents in the portfolio are exclusively licensed to Idaho Technology, Inc., a molecular biology instrumentation and reagents business in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The '338 patent is the most recent to join the portfolio of patents owned by the University of Utah, which includes U.S. patent No. 6,174,670 for monitoring nucleic acids with probes or dyes during or after amplification reactions such as the polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and U.S. patent No. 6,569,627 which relates to real-time PCR using certain dyes such as SYBR Green I.

The '338 patent describes a method to perform PCR five to 10 times faster than conventionally believed possible. This allows one to complete most PCR amplification reactions in less than 30 minutes, rather than the two to three hours needed with conventional methods. The ability to rapidly amplify nucleic acids is particularly important for pathogen detection in clinical diagnostic applications (especially in near-patient testing), as well as in industrial applications (such as food and environmental safety), and homeland security applications. Rapid PCR is also used in the detection of genetic diseases, oncology, and life science research. Rapid PCR was first demonstrated in 1990 by University of Utah scientist Carl Wittwer M.D., Ph.D. Since then, the method is practiced worldwide by use of commercial devices such as the LightCycler[®] sold under license by Roche Diagnostics. The work leading to this invention was supported by the University of Utah, Department of Pathology.

About Idaho Technology, Inc.

Idaho Technology, Inc. is a privately held biotechnology company based in Salt Lake City, Utah. Founded in 1990, Idaho Technology licensed the rapid PCR technology from the University of Utah. Through funds from the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense, the company has created many commercial instruments and reagents for use in research and applied fields. Several of these products, including the LightCycler, have been sublicensed to Roche Diagnostics. Researchers, medical technicians, law enforcement officers, and soldiers in the field use the company's devices to detect or study disease-causing organisms. For further information, please visit www.idahotech.com.

Source: University of Utah

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