

COVER STORY

COPING

with bio-terrorism

The biotech and pharmaceutical industries give homeland security initiatives a shot in the arm

by Julie E. Williamson

When President Bush commissioned the biotechnology industry to step up its biological warfare defense efforts, few could have predicted the level of commitment that would follow. ■ Since the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., the number of companies enlisted in the fight against bioterrorism has grown exponentially, with pharmaceutical companies offering federal agencies a range of services from drug donations and broad-based technical expertise to cutting-edge products that show promise in eradicating emerging public health threats. ■ The biotechnology industry is doing a great deal to handle bioterrorism, and is very committed to promoting and protecting public health and national security," says Brent Erickson, a spokesman for the Biotechnology Industry Organization, Washington. "In spite of the immediate concerns and challenges facing the nation, we've seen a lot of recent developments come about in the last few months that look very promising."

Ratcheting up resources
Although the biotech industry's involvement in federal bioterrorism efforts isn't new, the sense of urgency spurred by the recent anthrax attacks certainly is. What was once viewed as a hypothetical threat has now become a sobering reality — one that commands top resource priority on all fronts. ■ In response to mounting concerns, the Department of Health and Human Services is proposing a \$1.5 billion bioterrorism preparedness package, up from just \$50 million spent on the cause in fiscal year 2001. Many products likely to be developed as a result will fulfill conventional healthcare needs (for example, broad-spectrum antibiotics), while others, such as the smallpox vaccine, will be more limited in application. ■ Health and Human Services, which awarded a \$428 million contract to Deerfield, IL-based Baxter International Inc. and Cambridge, MA-based Acambis Inc. to produce 155 million doses of smallpox vaccine

by the end of 2002, admits a substantial sum of money is being devoted to products it hopes the nation will never use. In light of such uncertainty, however, agency officials call it money well spent. ■ "While the probability of an intentional release of smallpox virus is low, the risk does exist and we must be prepared," said HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson in a prepared statement. "If these efforts can prevent just one death, or even better, help deter a biological attack altogether, then it will all be worthwhile." ■ Some pharmaceutical companies have voluntarily joined the fight against bioterrorism, going above and beyond what is expected to improve biotechnology, offer available resources and ultimately save lives. In October, a group of companies created a task force on emergency preparedness to coordinate biotech efforts and offer formal assistance to the Bush administration and Congress on various public health challenges. ■ "As the government identifies and sets the health priorities for the nation, the pharmaceutical industry will coordinate a strong response to meet the need, whether it's new research, increased production or other expertise. We are determined to do whatever it takes, in the short term and the long term, to protect public health," notes Alan F. Holmer, president of the Washington-based Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America and member of the emergency preparedness task force.

Cause for commitment
Initiatives set forth by the task force include offering authorities free antibiotics to treat those exposed to or infected with anthrax, offering to develop and manufacture a smallpox vaccine, pledging to boost production of medicines as needed, allowing government scientists access to company laboratories and production

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Budgets Pharma Meetings



Best Bang for the Buck

Seven simple tips to get the most out of your meeting budget. **By Ronald J. Naples**

MEETING PLANNERS ARE UNDER CONSTANT pressure to deliver the biggest bang for the buck. And despite millions of dollars being pumped into sales incentive meetings, training programs, product launches, and conferences every year, the days of lavish affairs and pharma galas are gone. Meeting professionals must be great event planners, but equally good at running their business as a business.

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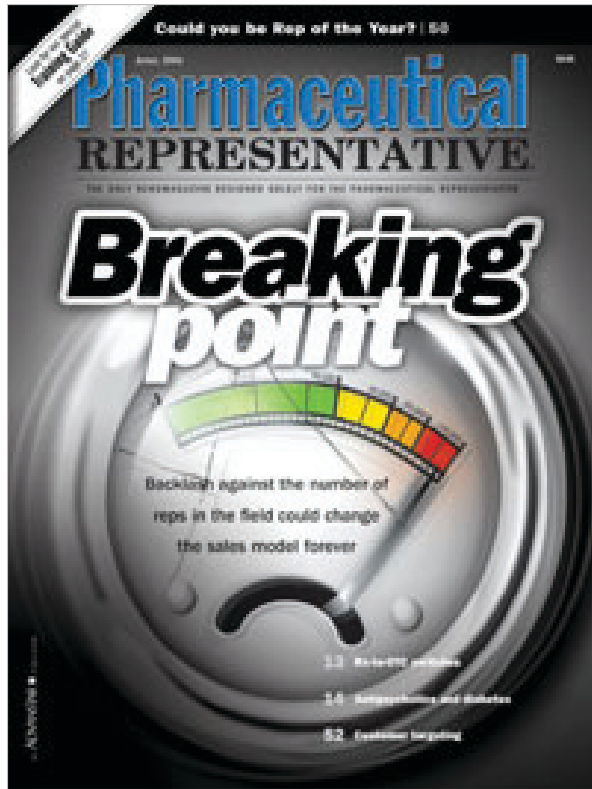
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By **GENE LYNCH**

25%
of respondents use lasers in their clinical practice.
Source: 2004-2005 Survey

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