



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

Issued: Tuesday 04 April 2016

UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 BST WEDNESDAY 05 APRIL 2017

£10m deal to boost impact of animal science innovations

Innovations that improve the health of farmed animals and raise agricultural productivity will be brought to market with the support of a £10 million investment.

The investment in the new company Roslin Technologies will develop business opportunities arising from the University of Edinburgh's world-leading animal science research.

The deal will allow researchers to explore the commercial potential of technologies that enable low-cost manufacturing of new medicines using chicken eggs.

Methods of preserving frozen stocks of reproductive material from bird species are set to benefit from the funding. Such technologies aim to safeguard the future of rare bird species, which may carry useful genetic information that makes them resistant to existing – and future – diseases.

The company will also bring to market new veterinary vaccines and tools for diagnosing diseases that affect farmed animals.

Roslin Technologies Ltd was launched to facilitate the commercialisation of research from the University of Edinburgh's Roslin Institute and Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.

It is thought to be the largest agriculture biotechnology start-up in UK history to focus on research projects aimed at improving animal health and raising agricultural productivity.

The company is a partnership between the University, the agriculture-focused private equity advisors JB Equity and the British Innovation Fund, a newly-formed fund that invests in leading innovation venture funds and companies from British universities.

An initial fundraising round has recently concluded, securing £10 million from institutional investors.

The Roslin Institute - which receives strategic funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council – is located with the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies on the University of Edinburgh's Easter Bush campus.

Ranked among the top universities in the world

Research on the campus is focused on the applications of basic animal sciences in human and veterinary medicine, the livestock industry and food security.

The past five years has seen more than £200m of capital investments in research facilities on the campus, making it the largest concentration of animal science anywhere in Europe.

Sir Timothy O'Shea, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, said: "This investment recognises the strength of the University's innovation capacity and cements our position as one of the world's leading research-intensive universities."

Mr Griff Williams, Co-Founder of Milltrust Agricultural Investments and Chief Investment Officer of the British Innovation Fund, said: "With a global population increasing beyond nine billion by 2040, innovation and investment in animal science and sustainability will be critical to ensure global food security. Roslin Technologies provides us with the opportunity to couple sustainable impact with generating investor returns."

Mr Glen Illing, Chief Executive Officer of Roslin Technologies and partner in JB Equity, said: "There is incredible demand for innovations that address desperately needed productivity increases in agriculture. This investment allows us to deliver a technology pipeline that spans across The Roslin Institute's core focus on food, environmental security and animal and human health."

Professor Bruce Whitelaw, Interim Director of The Roslin Institute, said: "The Roslin Institute is internationally recognised for providing a strategic research base for large animal genetics and health science within the UK. Having pioneered the commercialisation of animal biotechnology for three decades, the establishment of Roslin Technologies now provides an exciting platform to accelerate the translation of Roslin's data driven innovations into the commercial sector."

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