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News Release

Major Veterinary Centre to Increase Throughput of Antibiotic Potency Testing By Installing Sixteen ProtoCOL Automated Inhibition Zone Sizing Systems

Cambridge, UK: Synbiosis, a world-leading manufacturer of automated micro-biological systems, is pleased to announce that an internationally recognised centre of excellence in veterinary research, the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), has chosen to install sixteen specially customised ProtoCOL, automated colony counting and zone sizing systems. The systems, which will be sited at every VLA unit across the UK, will be used to speed up testing of veterinary antibiotics for therapeutic use and to collect and monitor zone size data for surveillance purposes.

The VLA ProtoCOL systems, which consist of a computer controlled, high-resolution CCD camera integrated with image analysis software, can read an entire plate, including measurement of inhibition zones and transcription of results, in minutes. This will save VLA's microbiologists hours of repetitive tasks, as well as improve the accuracy of results by eliminating manual measurement and trans-cription errors.

The software included with the VLA ProtoCOL is so well designed it can measure inhibition zones with a resolution better than 0.05mm from the edge of an antibiotic disc to automatically produce data on the zone size only. This will save VLA scientists' time because they will be able to perform tests with different antibiotic disc sizes on one plate without having to measure and subtract disc diameter sizes from their calculations. The VLA ProtoCOL is also fully GLP compliant, with the data generated automatically transcribed into Excel or transferred to the VLA LIMS system to allow results to be safely stored or statistically analysed.

Martin Smith of Synbiosis stated: "Our ProtoCOL's inhibition zone measurement capabilities were compared extensively against a number of other commercial systems by the VLA so we are delighted such a prestigious agency has decided ours is the best in class for this application. Sixteen is the largest number of installations we currently have at one institute and demonstrates that the ProtoCOL is an intelligent choice for any forward thinking organisation looking to significantly increase the productivity of their antibiotic development programmes."

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Note to Editors

About Synbiosis

Synbiosis is a world-leading supplier of integrated imaging solutions for automatic counting and analysis of microbial colonies and zone measurement. The ProtoCOL and åCOLyte systems from Synbiosis are installed in food, pharmaceutical, environmental and research microbiology laboratories world-wide. Synbiosis uses established distribution channels to market its products internationally.

Synbiosis, founded in 1998 is a division of the Synoptics Group based in Cambridge UK. The Group's other divisions, Syncroscopy and Syngene, specialise in digital imaging solutions for microscopy and molecular biology applications respectively. Synoptics currently employs 50 people in its UK and US subsidiary operation.

About the Veterinary Laboratories Agency

The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), which is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), consists of a regional network of 16 veterinary laboratories, including one in Scotland, two in Wales, and a central facility near Weybridge in Surrey. The VLA provides all sectors of the animal health industry with animal disease surveillance, diagnostic services and veterinary scientific research, as well as being a reference laboratory for livestock diseases.