

January 2019



MONTHLY

The Global Biocontrol & Biostimulants E-Newsletter

A DunhamTrimmer and New Ag International Publication
www.2BMonthly.com

Mr. Ido Dor, Executive Vice President & General Manager, Ag-Biologicals, Evogene

In November 2018, Evogene announced the formation of a new subsidiary, AgPlenus Ltd, which will focus on design and development of agro-chemical products. We have also heard recently about plans to reorganize Evogene into separate business units. Can you elaborate on the scope of this move? Will it follow the AgPlenus model? To what extent will this change impact the Ag-Biologicals unit?

Evogene's CEO, Ofer Haviv, announced the reorganization of Evogene's activity into market-oriented business units. This structure is based on a technological core that can provide predictions and outputs in various fields of life science. This technological core, which we have named the CPB Computational Predictive Biology Platform, has been made available to the market-oriented business units for the development of products through exclusive licensing.

The main idea behind this move was to improve product development efficiency by allowing dedicated teams to focus on products in specific markets. Following the reorganization, we initiated a process in which the business units will be spun off from Evogene into independent subsidiaries focusing on products and building value. This structure will allow better focus and potential fund raising in the future. AgPlenus, which is the business unit that focuses on ag-chemicals, has been established as a standalone subsidiary.

We expect the Ag-Biologicals division to follow in the footsteps of AgPlenus. I expect this change will impact the Ag-Biologicals division by allowing it to showcase the division's strong capabilities in this field with more clarity

and strengthen the team's focus on the path of introducing effective ag-biologicals, contributing to productivity, sustainability and food quality.

One of Evogene's strengths has been synergy between seed, chemical and Ag-Biologicals business units. How will this reorganization impact future collaboration between these groups?

One of Evogene's strengths has been synergy between seed genomics, chemicals and microbes. The synergy in the creation of a 'system approach', leveraging 'big data', integration and analysis of the data from all of these disciplines together is at the cornerstone of Evogene's activity. As part of Evogene's CPB platform, subsidiaries will maintain access to these capabilities, as before the reorganization. Product development for different product types and markets have unique characteristics, and the interdisciplinary integration and analyses of data allows us to generate innovative solutions. For example – developing microbial-based products is highly dependent on understanding the complex interaction between environment-plant-microbes populations. The CPB platform supports us exactly there.

In recent years, you have become more active in the area of microbiome research. Why have you decided to target this area and what are some of the goals and objectives you have for this research?

Looking forward, we believe that agricultural market needs are going to go beyond the pressing need for productivity. Sustainability and consumer health considerations are becoming key issues that will need to be addressed.

Ag-Biological products, which are derived from natural sources, are key in addressing the rising needs of agriculture. In light of favorable regulatory process, Ag-

Biologicals development cycle is relatively lean and short (5-7 years) and holds a promising return on investment. A promising segment in Ag-Biologicals is based on plant microbiome which are microbe communities that are closely connected to the plant and holds a big promise as a source for new Ag-Biological products - scientific understanding and genomic technologies evolvement established the understanding that billions of microbes matter!

We are uniquely positioned to address this opportunity - our unique and proven approach, leveraging the CPB platform for Ag-Biologicals product discovery, optimization and development allows us to decode the complex interaction of environment-plant-microbes. This enables us to amplify positive, eliminate negative and retrieve lost interactions within the biological system. Our product programs aim at bringing to market 'next generation' microbiome-based biostimulants and biopesticides with improved stability and efficacy.

Evogene has a clear strength in the area of computational biology and the use of data processing tools to uncover correlations in large datasets. How are you using these capabilities in the Ag-Biologicals business unit?

Computational biology is the backbone of our work and continues to be our main competitive advantage. In developing Ag-Biological products, we leverage the CPB platform's capabilities, leveraging the genetics understanding, from the discovery phase - where we identify novel strains or strains consortia with the potential to become a product, through the optimization and development phases where we improve the efficacy and stability of our leading candidates' products through the design of function composition, formulation technologies and fermentation protocols. These support the end product, which is a combination of live microbial strains and their formulation.

There are a number of start-up companies active in the area of microbiome research - AgBiome, Bioconsortia, Indigo Ag to name a few. How does your approach differ from theirs? Do you view them as competitors or as potential collaborators?

I believe that the key differentiator of what we do relies in the implementation of our CPB platform - combining the understanding of complex interaction environment-plant-microbes and harnessing this understanding, not only for the discovery but also for the optimization and development of novel Ag-Biologicals products.

We are proud with our pipeline progressing forward and from the promising results, and look forward toward product launches in the next few years.

Given the 3rd Quarter 2018 financial results published by Evogene show an operating loss of \$14.7 million for the first nine months of 2018, what are your plans to make Evogene sustainable in the long term?

We expect Evogene's new corporate structure will allow direct investments in its subsidiaries by external investors, allowing Evogene to reduce its cash burn rate.

You have published news on research cooperation with a broad range of companies including BASF, Bayer, Corteva, Marrone Bio Innovations and Monsanto among others. What do you look for in a partner and how do you measure success of your current partnerships?

One of Evogene's main strengths is in its ability to initiate collaborations in a relatively short time. We measure the

success of such collaborations in the type of relationship we foster with our collaborators, for instance the interest of the other side in extending the relationship to additional fields and collaborations. Another important parameter in which success is measured is the achievement of a commercial product.

In Ag-Biologicals, we have areas and potential products in which we seek to engage in collaboration in order to reach the market - a good example for this is the collaboration with Corteva. This is a co-development collaboration of corn biostimulant seed treatments. The main motivation for such a collaboration is the opportunity to secure go-to market with an industry leader.