

CRS Expands Product Line with New Reagent Kits for Genomic Research and Drug Discovery

Burlington, Ontario (October 11, 2000) - CRS Robotics Corporation (TSE: ROB) today announced the launch of a new product line of proprietary reagents, containers and automation tools for genomics and drug discovery research. The new product line includes proven biochemical assay kits (Bilatest®) as well as a full line of consumables (Thermosprint® microtiter plates and reagents) and the benchscale Autosprint robotic liquid handler. These products were developed and have been launched successfully into the European market by BILATEC GmbH of Rudolstadt, Germany. The new products will be marketed in North America under an exclusive agreement by CRS. The products are complementary to existing CRS technologies and will be marketed to genomic and drug discovery research laboratories throughout North America. The expansion of the product line allows CRS to address the different throughput needs of customers with a turnkey solution including automation hardware, software and validated bio-chemical reagent kits from the lab bench up to full-scale production systems.

Dr. Hansjoerg Haas, Managing Director of Laboratory Automation at CRS noted, "CRS will now be in a position to address a key issue with many research laboratories in both developing and supplying reliable and scientifically superior assay kits designed and tested with CRS hardware. The benefits to the customer will be significant time savings in validating assay protocols with automation hardware. Customers' will now have a source for automation and reagent kits with guaranteed purity, yield and throughput. In addition, the combined availability of reagent kits and consumables, integrated with proven automation technology, is a big step forward in providing turnkey solutions. This is particularly true for the genomics research laboratory where the need is the greatest."

Assay kits are based on a new type of proprietary magnetic particle that is an excellent answer to many issues which made traditional assays difficult to automate. CRS already has a worldwide install base of automated systems in genomic research, including standard systems for DNA purification performing separation with magnetic particles. Other standard systems include DNA Amplification, Plate Replication, Immunoassays, Ultra High Throughput Screening and Cell Growth Systems.

In addition to the reagent assays and consumables, CRS is adding the Autosprint genomic workstation to its product line. The Autosprint is a dedicated, small footprint, self-contained tabletop workstation designed for the new Bilatest reagent kits and Thermosprint plates. The self contained unit offers a unique system for liquid and magnetic bead handling, lid handling and plate moving while addressing operator safety and cross contamination issues. Used with Bilatest purification kits, a broad selection of nucleic acid purification protocols are possible for the isolation of DNA from sources including plasmids, blood, animal tissue and plants.

Dr. Haas adds, "Autosprint expands CRS' traditional role by extending the benefits of larger systems to the smaller genomic laboratory. Although thousands of samples can be processed with our larger systems, thousands of smaller labs need the efficiency and guaranteed results provided by this type of automation. The Autosprint unit is the ideal solution for these laboratories".

Dr. Gerhard Bienhaus, Managing Director of BILATEC GmbH adds: "We are delighted about the partnership. CRS is recognized as being at the forefront of supplying innovative automation technology to the genomics market. We are glad that we could partner with CRS for the exclusive distribution of our intelligent consumables, new assay technology and Autosprint unit. We are convinced that we have selected the right partner for our product line and we are looking forward to a mutually satisfying business relationship." All new products made their North American debut, with considerable interest, at The Genomic Sequence & Analysis Conference held on September 12-15, 2000 in Miami Florida. CRS has been acknowledged as one of the few companies on the forefront of laboratory automation technology. Core competencies of the company include standard lab automation solutions using advanced software for biotechnology and pharmaceutical research applications marketed worldwide. In addition, CRS manufactures and supplies robotic systems for advanced manufacturing niche markets. CRS is headquartered in Burlington, Ontario and has subsidiaries in the United States and Europe. Further information can be found at the company's web site at www.crsrobotics.com and www.bilatec.de.