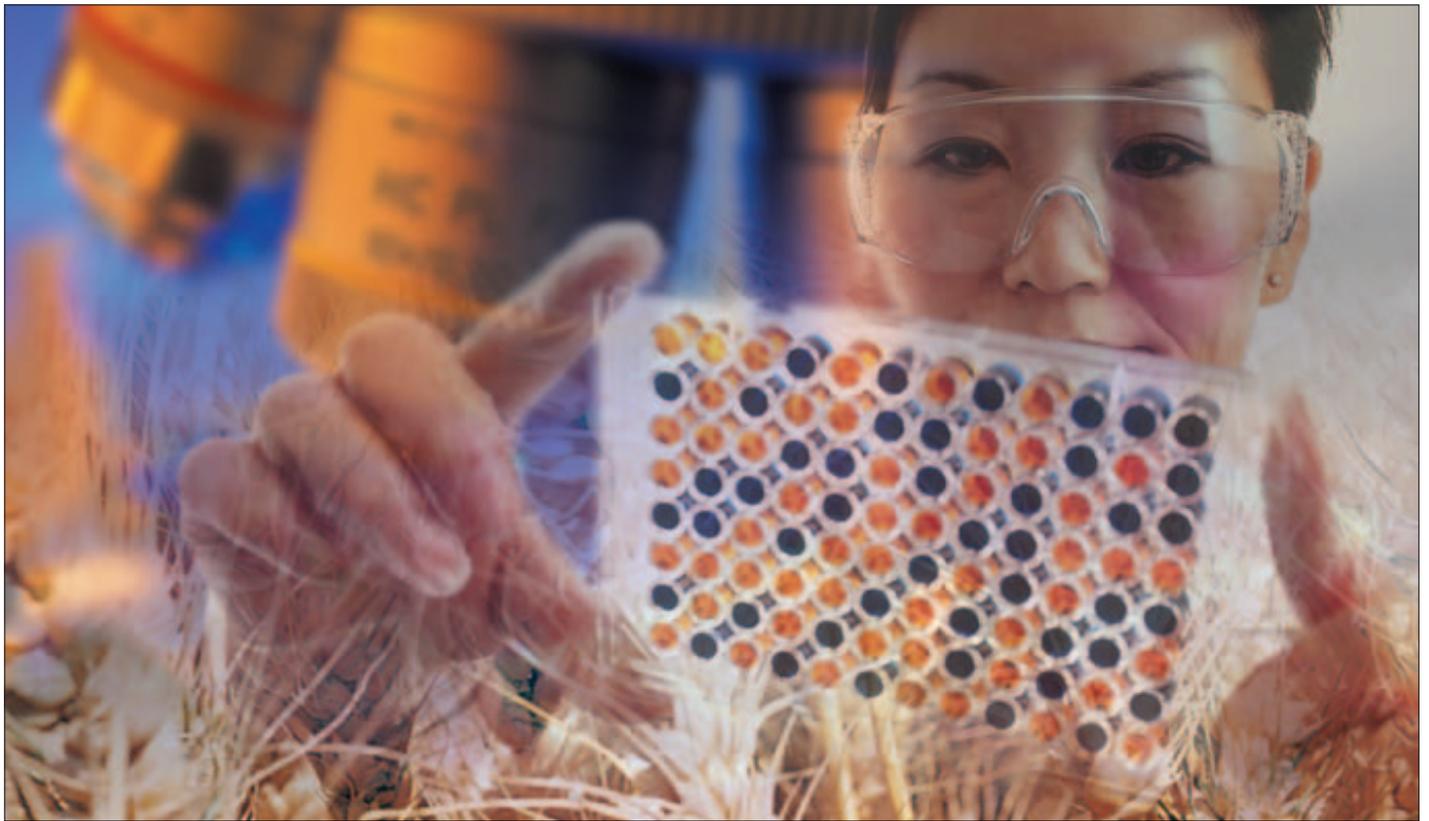


NewsWatch



Bioscience a boon to Kansas farmers

By **BILL SPIEGEL**

VENTRIA Bioscience's plan to convert a warehouse in Junction City into a processing facility that transforms protein from biotech rice into medicine for children is Kansas' first foray into bioscience. This industry, state officials believe, can create wealth for Kansas farmers, rejuvenate local economies and boost the state's image as a bioscience-friendly state.

Huge potential

"Within the next 20 years, the potential for bioscience in Kansas, whether it is human health, animal health, plant health or creating products from

Key Points

- Kansas business and government leaders want to recruit bioscience businesses.
- Plant-made pharmaceuticals rely on farmers to grow specialty crops.
- Considerable research is devoted to making medicines from crops.

biomass, is huge," says Tracy Taylor, president of the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corp. "We want to be in it."

Kansas can be a leading state in the bioscience industry, he continues. "Ventria having its processing plant here is huge. We believe it will allow us to attract other companies to the region."

The state's agriculture industry, Taylor insists, can play a key role in making that happen.

"We have a chance to be a world leader in plant-made pharmaceuticals. We have a chance to grow more acres of plant-made pharmaceuticals in the next few years than anyone in the United States," he explains.

Farmers fill a niche

According to the Web site www.plantpharma.org, scientists can use plant-made pharmaceuticals to produce healthful proteins, which can then be converted into medicines. For example, Ventria Bioscience has genetically altered a variety of rice plant so the plant

will create a protein called lysozyme, which is found in a mother's milk. The rice is processed by Ventria, which makes several health products from proteins in the rice grain, including a product called Lysomin.

Studies show that Lysomin can dramatically reduce the duration of diarrhea in children — a disease that, according to the World Health Organization, kills some 1.9 million children worldwide every year. Many of these children are in Third World countries, where healthy diets are not as prevalent.

So, with Ventria coming to Kansas, the state has claimed its first bioscience success story.

"From my perspective, this is the first

NewsWatch Notes

Movers and shakers

U.S. Bank has named Kansas native **Elizabeth Hund** the head of its Food and Agribusiness Division. Hund, a Kansas State University graduate, has more than 25 years of agribusiness lending experience, most recently at Rabobank International. ... **Phil Burns**, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Town and Country Bank, Las Vegas, receives the Bruning

Award this month for his commitment to agricultural banking by the American Bankers Association Center for Ag and Rural Banking. Burns is a native of northeast Kansas and a graduate of K-State. ... **Doug Powell** has joined K-State's College of Veterinary Medicine as an associate professor. Powell started the Food Safety Network at the University of Guelph, Ontario, in 1994; it will now be operated from K-State

in conjunction with the University of Guelph. ... **Becky Tipton**, Atchison, has been named to a three-year term on USDA's National Honey Nominations Council. ... Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has named **Brian Norton**, Girard, to a four-year term on the Kansas Agricultural Remediation Board, which assists with the costs of environmental cleanup. ... **Laura Pearl**, St. Mary's, was reappointed to the board.

Phillipsburg ethanol biorefinery begins production

Prairie Horizon Agri-Energy, Phillipsburg, officially opened its 40 million-gallon-per-year ethanol biorefinery in September. The facility will use more than 15 million bushels of corn and grain sorghum each year to create ethanol. The plant will produce 125,000 tons of distillers grain annually. The facility is Kansas' 12th ethanol plant, with one