

WACKER Opens mRNA Competence Center in Halle an der Saale, Germany

WACKER has reached a milestone today by opening an mRNA competence center at its biotech site in Halle (Saale), Germany. The new facility enables the large-scale production of active ingredients based on messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA), such as anti-Covid mRNA vaccines. WACKER invested more than 100 million euros in this construction project. More than 100 highly qualified jobs have already been created in Halle. Some of the new capacity will be made available to the German government as part of its pandemic-preparedness plan in order to rapidly supply Germany with vaccines as and when required.

With 300 guests from politics and business, as well as employees in attendance, WACKER today celebrated the opening of its new mRNA competence center, a key project for the Group's future. During the Covid pandemic, mRNA-based actives saved millions of lives – an experience that has underlined the importance of being prepared for these kinds of future challenges. Expansion of WACKER's Halle site into an mRNA competence center enables the company to produce mRNA actives on a large scale going forward. Four new production lines have more than trebled the site's capacity, some of which will be available to the German government as part of its pandemic-preparedness program. The remaining production capacity is for other customers. The first contracts in this regard have already been signed.

Sven Schulze said: "By expanding the site into a competence center for mRNA actives, WACKER brings both a future-oriented technology and highly qualified jobs to Saxony-Anhalt. This investment underscores the site's appeal and has the potential to strengthen our region's economic power."

"The importance of medical biotechnology is on the rise. More than half of the new active ingredients approved in Germany are now biopharmaceuticals and the percentage of mRNA therapeutic agents will continue to grow. That's why I am delighted that we have an efficient biotechnology hub at the Halle research site, with Wacker Biotech as a driver of innovation," explained Armin Willingmann.

Given the initial vaccine shortage during the coronavirus pandemic, the German government has secured the production and supply of vaccines for the future. Companies were able to apply for pandemic-preparedness contracts with the German government. As joint bidders for the production readiness of mRNA-based vaccines, WACKER and CordenPharma were among those companies awarded a contract. In the event of a new pandemic, WACKER and CordenPharma intend to produce 80 million vaccine doses a year within an extremely short time. The two companies will receive an annual stand-by fee for keeping production capacity and expertise available. The stand-by phase will last for at least five years.

Should the need arise, the German government will contact the developer of the specific mRNA vaccine that is required. WACKER and CordenPharma will then jointly produce this mRNA vaccine in line with the highest pharmaceutical quality standards. Most of the production steps will take place in Germany.

Biotechnology is a strategic growth field for WACKER. By 2030, WACKER BIOSOLUTIONS plans to contribute around €1 billion to Group sales. The development of the Halle site into a competence center for mRNA will aid this strategy. The next milestone is expected to be reached this year when a new Biotechnology Center goes on stream in Munich.

About Wacker Biotech

Wacker Biotech GmbH, Wacker Biotech B.V. and Wacker Biotech US Inc. are full-service contract manufacturers of therapeutic proteins, live microbial products (LMPs), plasmid DNA (pDNA), messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) and vaccines based on microbial systems. Wacker Biotech's portfolio extends from strain/process development and analytical testing through to production for clinical and commercial applications. Wacker Biotech operates three GMP-compliant, FDA- and EMA-certified production plants at its Jena and Halle sites in Germany and in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. In addition, Wacker Biotech has had a plant in San Diego (Wacker Biotech US Inc.) since February 2021. Wacker Biotech GmbH, Wacker Biotech B.V. and Wacker Biotech US Inc. are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Wacker Chemie AG.

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