



PRESS RELEASE

F U N C T I O N A L C H E M I C A L S

Pakistan takes concrete steps to reduce iron deficiency anemia

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The Pakistan Ministry of Health has awarded Fortitech Asia Pacific the contract to manufacture and supply vitamin and mineral premix, containing the highly bioavailable iron FeNaEDTA, for its National Wheat Flour Fortification Program. When implemented, most Pakistani children will no longer have to suffer from iron-deficiency undermining their health and cognitive development.

The decision was taken after a thorough and transparent technical and financial bid process involving multiple international and local suppliers, which resulted in Fortitech Asia Pacific achieving the highest aggregate score. "By awarding the contract to Fortitech Asia Pacific, the Pakistan government shows its commitment to deliver quality products that benefit a large portion of the population," says Dr. Ram Chaudhari, Fortitech Co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer. He continues, "Fortitech chooses to partner with Akzo Nobel, the world leader of this highly bioavailable iron source under brand name Ferrazone®."

Developed by Akzo Nobel's Functional Chemicals, Ferrazone® FeNaEDTA is a highly bioavailable form of iron which leaves no taste when added to food and remains stable under storage and cooking conditions. It also prevents rancidity, while research into the product's molecule has proved that Ferrazone is absorbed into the human body two to four times better than with other iron compounds.

The Pakistan Ministry of Health has recently announced that the National Wheat Flour Fortification Program will proceed as planned. This is the first large scale national wheat fortification program that adheres to the recently published WHO recommendation to fortify whole grain flour with the highly bioavailable iron source, FeNaEDTA. Numerous iron fortification programs have not achieved the expected reduction in iron deficiency due to low bioavailability of the iron fortificant. Pakistan is demonstrating the practical implementation of the WHO recommendation and other countries are expected to begin similar programs. The national wheat flour fortification program is partly funded by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

Commenting on the announcement, Dr. Regina Moench-Pfanner, Senior Manager, Food Fortification Program at GAIN says, "This is an exemplary example of public-private partnership to improve the quality of lives of the population, which GAIN has championed since its inception. We congratulate the Pakistan Government in taking this concrete step."

According to UNICEF estimates, iron deficiency affects half of the developing world's infants, undermines the health of 500 million women of reproductive age and leads to more than 60,000 childbirth deaths a year. It also causes a range of other problems in millions of

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people, including impaired cognitive development in children, fatigue, maternal mortality and low productivity in the workplace.

“This is a triumph for the scientific community which has toiled for so many years to show that FeNaEDTA is probably the best source of iron in many cases to combat iron deficiency and iron deficiency anemia” says Mr. Geoff Smith, Director, Health Chelates at Akzo Nobel. “This is also a triumph for Pakistan public health officials who have the foresight and courage to implement the WHO recommendation in their effort to reduce the high prevalence of iron deficiency anemia in Pakistan. A new study just published in the The Lancet reinforces the importance of using bioavailable iron. We at Akzo Nobel are glad to be part of this ongoing progress and development to improve the nutrition status of the world’s population.”

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Note for the editor

GAIN’s mission is to reduce malnutrition through the use of food fortification and other strategies aimed at improving the health and nutrition of populations at risk. GAIN has set itself a target of reaching 1 billion people with food fortification programs. Current projects are expected to reach 600 million people when at full scale and new strategies are being developed to reach 400 million more.

Fortitech Inc. is the world leader in nutrient premixes who emphasizes the highest standard of quality with peerless R&D and customer service.

Akzo Nobel, based in the Netherlands, serves customers throughout the world with healthcare products, coatings and chemicals. Consolidated revenues for 2006 totaled EUR 13.0 billion. Akzo Nobel Functional Chemicals manufactures and sells a variety of chemical intermediates, formulation ingredients and/or process aids on a global basis.

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* Pursuant to the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act 1995.