



## **Crucell's PER.C6 Cell-Line Used In Merck's HIV-1 Vaccines Research Program**

**Leiden, The Netherlands, April 3, 2001** – Crucell N.V. (NASDAQ: CRXL, EAX Amsterdam: CRXL), a leading biotechnology company focused on the discovery of unique drug targets on disease associated cells and on the development of huMADE™ biopharmaceuticals, today announced that Merck & Co., Inc (NYSE: MRK) is applying Crucell's PER.C6 technology in its HIV-1 vaccine program.

Merck is conducting early (Phase I) clinical trials using novel vaccine technology that their scientists hope will lead to the development of a vaccine that can effectively *prevent* the development of AIDS from HIV infection, as well as *treat* HIV infection in infected patients taking anti-retroviral therapy. Merck utilizes an extensively modified adenovirus (adenovirus is a cause of the common cold), that is grown on Crucell's PER.C6 cell line. Crucell and Merck signed an agreement in October 2000, granting Merck an exclusive commercial license to Crucell's PER.C6 platform to develop vaccines for the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. Yesterday is the first public announcement specifying Merck's application of PER.C6 in HIV vaccine development. The agreement provides for up-front and ongoing fees and royalty and milestone payments paid by Merck to Crucell, and further provides Merck the option of extending the exclusivity to cover three additional diseases in the future.

During the first public presentation of animal and cellular immune response data delivered yesterday at the Keystone Symposium in Keystone, Colorado, Dr. Emilio Emini, who heads Merck's HIV-vaccine research, described the experiments that led Merck to begin human testing of the experimental AIDS vaccine in February. In his presentation, Dr. Emini showed that the adenovirus based vaccine provoked a killer-cell response sufficiently strong in monkeys exposed to the AIDS-like virus, that they remained healthy, even though they still harbor small amounts of the virus.

Dr. Dinko Valerio, President and Chief Executive Officer, says: "We are happy to be able to announce that Merck has selected our technology to help develop its experimental HIV-vaccine. This is an important agreement for Crucell as it is our first exclusive license with one of the leading vaccine companies."

In 2000, more than 5 million people were infected with HIV virus, bringing the total number of people living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2000 to approximately 36 million, according to AIDS Epidemic Update, UNAIDS.

## About Crucell

Crucell is a leading biotechnology company focused on the discovery of unique drug targets on diseased cells and on the development of huMADE™ biopharmaceuticals. Crucell's two broadly applicable human technology platforms form the basis for this. The first is a human cell line expression platform, PER.C6™, on which a wide range of biopharmaceuticals can be developed and manufactured, such as vaccines, antibodies, therapeutic proteins and gene therapy products. The second technology is called MAbstract™, a set of tools based on phage antibody-display libraries and proprietary subtraction and selection technology, to discover novel drug targets and develop human monoclonal antibodies as therapeutics for a variety of diseases.

Crucell makes its technologies available under exclusive or non-exclusive license agreements, and has currently signed 15 agreements with major pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies for its PER.C6™ technology. Crucell focuses on the development of therapeutics for treatment of cancer, inflammatory diseases and for the prevention and treatment of influenza and other infectious diseases.

Crucell currently employs approximately 130 people in its facilities in Leiden, Utrecht and Leuven (Belgium).

**This press release contains forward-looking statements that involve inherent risks and uncertainties. We have identified certain important factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from those contained in such forward-looking statements. See our Registration Statement, as filed on Form F-1 with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on October 26, 2000, (the "Registration Statement") and the section of the Registration Statement entitled "Risk Factors."**

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