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COMPANY WINS OVERSEAS ORDERS FOR CUTTING-EDGE EQUIPMENT

A company which uses unique technology to measure microbe content in fluids has won major overseas orders for the sale of cutting-edge equipment shortly after receiving significant investment funding.

CellFacts Instruments Limited - established in 2001 - adopts a novel way of identifying microbial growth in a number of sectors. The machines they manufacture and supply have won orders from Pfizer Nutrition through Innovative Biotech of Singapore.

CellFacts Instruments, based at the University of Warwick Science Park, Coventry, manufactures and supplies precision analysis systems which provide real time detection, enumeration and physiological characterisation of microbial cells.

The company has recently received a £75,000 investment from Midven's Early Advantage Fund, which is allowing it to diversify into new markets. A further investment has been made by a small number of high net worth individuals, resulting in a total equity injection of at least £230,000. The company uses unique, cutting-edge technology which can be utilised in a number of markets including food and drink production, soluble oils, biocide management and healthcare.

Crawford Dow, chief executive of CellFacts Instruments, said the company had won orders for two machines from Pfizer Nutrition, as well as an order for a further machine from Innovative Biotech.

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He said: “There is the further likelihood that Pfizer will introduce this technology to other sites around the world. We see this as an exciting and significant milestone in the continued growth of the company.”

Dr Dow said the technology could be used across a range of sectors, and the investment funding received was helping them move into new markets: “Certain food and beverages undergo regular microbial testing and analysis. This becomes even more prevalent in foods and drinks such as yoghurt, milk, fruit juices and beer in which there are a number of naturally occurring micro organisms. There needs to be stringent quality checks in terms of the type of organism, number and status to ensure the safety of the consumer and accurately predict shelf life. Almost any liquid but especially those that contain water can harbour microbial growth,” he said.

“Our analysis systems combine ease of use and reliability, offering a range of scalable solutions with the key differentiators being the speed of the technology, lower operating costs and the accuracy of the results.

Andrew Waterfall , chairman of CellFacts, said: “Midven’s backing, and that of the other investors, will give us the opportunity to exploit new markets, allowing us to roll out to sectors where the technology is able to achieve significant commercial benefits that have not been available previously.”

Midven’s Early Advantage Fund provides investment for small businesses across the West Midlands.

Duncan Kerr, investment director at Midven said: “This is an exciting time for the company, and we’re delighted to be helping them move to the next stage in partnership with others. This is an innovative company with high growth prospects and has some loyal customers and an impressive pipeline of prospective orders.”

The Early Advantage fund can make an initial investment of up to £125,000 if matched by private money, and can invest a further £275,000 in later rounds.

The fund is open to high growth start up, early stage medium sized enterprises.

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About Midven Limited/Early Advantage

Midven Limited is a privately owned commercial fund manager with a successful track record of investing in and exiting from small and medium-sized enterprises in the Midlands. Midven manages five funds representing £61m under management. The funds have invested in a wide variety of sectors, including software, bio technology, healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and distribution. Midven's £8m Early Advantage fund provides investment for small, high growth businesses at start-up and early-stage in the West Midlands.

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