



InstantLabs Press Release – April 9, 2014

InstantLabs and the University of Guelph will jointly develop seafood identification test kits

Precise molecular species identification will combat fish fraud by producing results in less than two hours

BALTIMORE, MD– April 9, 2014 – InstantLabs® announced today that the company has entered into an agreement with the University of Guelph to co-develop a portfolio of DNA-based seafood species identification tests to combat marketplace seafood fraud by providing rapid, definitive proof that seafood is correctly labeled. InstantLabs plans to launch the kits within four months.

Recent studies have shown that fraud could be occurring in 25 to 70 percent of requests for desirable species such as red snapper, wild salmon, and Atlantic cod, according to a recent [report by Oceana](#).

“We see the collaboration with InstantLabs as a critical step forward in bringing DNA-based food authentication testing to critical points in the supply chain,” said Robert Hanner, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Guelph and leader of a global project assembling a reference library for molecular identification of all fishes. Hanner will collaborate with Primary Investigator Amanda Naaum to develop the DNA testing technology.

The University is recognized for creating DNA bar coding, a technique that can be used to identify any species of plant or animal. The University is a founding member of the [International Barcode of Life Project](#) (IBOL).

Under Dr. Hanner’s leadership, the University of Guelph team has created the world’s largest database of DNA sequences for seafood using barcodes to simplify testing and improve accuracy. Hanner and his team have worked with many global entities, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, to combat seafood fraud. Through the partnership with InstantLabs, Naaum becomes the first individual to translate this research into a commercial product for seafood identification.

Deliberate fraud or mislabeling of seafood has become an increasingly important global food security issue. Fraud can occur at any step within the supply chain from initial processing to local restaurant menus. “Not surprisingly, the major motivation for this fraud is monetary — mislabeling a less desirable and cheaper species as a more highly prized, more expensive dish,” said Steven Guterman, CEO of InstantLabs.

The cost of this fraud can be measured in billions for the food industry and consumers, Guterman said. Misabeled species also hurt honest, legitimate businesses who must compete with unscrupulous vendors and producers.

The new test kits will give importers, distributors and government customs agents as well as others in the seafood industry the tools to confirm species identification in less than two hours using InstantLab’s easy to use Hunter® Real-Time PCR system.

An industry-proven technology, the Hunter® system is already used globally to screen for food-borne pathogens such as Salmonella, Listeria and E. coli. The portable Hunter system is also being used to detect contamination of food and consumer products with pork or horsemeat.

“Even the most savvy seafood consumers cannot always positively identify what they are buying or eating through our normal sensory signals using sight, feel and taste or when fraud is being committed,” Guterman said. “DNA-based testing, however, allows for precise, no-doubt identification,” he added. “In fact, it’s the same rigorous testing used in crime laboratories.”

ABOUT INSTANTLABS: InstantLabs, a molecular diagnostic device company, developed and markets the Hunter® Accelerated-PCR system, a fully-integrated, easy-to-use, portable and affordable real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) platform for rapid, accurate pathogen detection. InstantLabs Medical Diagnostics Corp., the legal entity, offers the Hunter® system for

use with several food borne pathogen test kits for the global food industry. The Hunter® system is especially well suited for use at points-of-care and points-of-need to detect and analyze a wide variety of common and problematic pathogens. InstantLabs’ growing worldwide customer base includes some of the world’s leading food companies. InstantLabs is also developing products for additional markets, including medical diagnostics where gold-standard accuracy, combined with ease-of-use and rapid results, are critical. InstantLabs was founded in 2008 and is located in Baltimore, Maryland. For more information please visit www.instantlabs.com.

About the University of Guelph: Acknowledged as one of the leading public research universities, the University has 39 Canada Research chairs in natural sciences, energy, health services and social sciences. With a commitment to student learning and innovative research, University leaders are dedicated to cultivating the essentials for our quality of life – water, food, environment, animal and human health, community, commerce, culture and learning. The University community also shares a profound sense of social responsibility, an obligation to address global issues and a concern for international development. Learn more at www.uoguelph.ca.

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