

Short Takes!

Healthful oils from GM plants

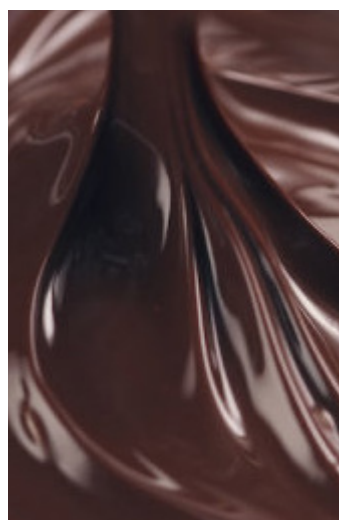
HEALTHFUL oils derived from plants are processed by the human body in exactly the same manner as when fish oils are eaten, according to a research led by the University of Southampton's Faculty of Medicine. Omega-3 fats are mainly present in fish oil and are vital for health and development. Because of Omega-3 source limitation, Rothamsted Research scientists developed a seed oil plant (*Camelina sativa*) using genetic engineering to produce an enhanced vegetable oil with similar amount of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) as fish oil.

Conference on microbes' role in agriculture

A NEW study published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution* led by scientists from the University of Chicago challenges one of the classic assumptions about how new proteins evolve. The research shows that random, noncoding sections of DNA can quickly evolve to produce new proteins. These de novo, or "from scratch," genes provide a new, unexplored way that proteins evolve and contribute to biodiversity.

Worms suffer from PTSD, too

IN a new study published in *Current Biology* by Dr Alon Zaslaver and research associate Dr Yifat Eliezer at Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Genetics Department, the researchers discovered that even a very basic animal life form like the *C. elegans* worm has the ability to learn from past experiences. Further, Zaslaver and his team pinpointed the exact neurons that store these memories and the physiological changes the worms undergo when they retrieve memories to cope with future hardships.



A COMPLEX MIX OF SCIENCE... Scientists have uncovered the physics behind the process -- known as conching -- which is responsible for creating chocolate's distinctive smooth texture. The findings may hold the key to producing confectionary with lower fat content, and could help make chocolate manufacturing more energy efficient. A team led by the University of Edinburgh studied mixtures resembling liquid chocolate created using the conching process, which was developed by Swiss confectioner Rodolphe Lindt in 1879.

Industry-Academia Partnership

Biogenes signs exclusive licensing agreement with IUKL

BY SHAMIRA SHAMSUDDIN

BANGI: Biogenes Technologies Sdn Bhd (Biogenes), a Malaysian-based company in the field of molecular diagnostics and genomics has signed a licensing agreement with Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL) to commercialise Aptamer technology.

Aptamer, a synthetic alternative to antibodies acts as molecular probes to detect and measure desired target molecules in a sample. This innovation is revolutionary and it may change the way the human body is monitored for clinical purposes as well as to check for pathogens and other contaminants in food and the environment.

"We are very pleased to announce this licensing agreement with IUKL, said Tang Kok Mun, Biogenes Chief Executive Officer during the signing ceremony at their office in IUKL here.

"The R&D venture between Biogenes and IUKL has successfully



developed a technique of using computational software to design these aptamers rapidly - ten times faster and cheaper than the conventional way.

"We believe that this partnership will further explore the diversity

Tang (far right) exchanging MoA with Ideris while witnessed by Dr Harcharan Singh, Senior Vice President, Technology Solutions, Bioeconomy Corporation.


of applications of aptamers, said Tang.

Prof Dr Ideris Zakaria, President & Vice-Chancellor of IUKL said: "This is an example of the power of an industry and university collaboration, which allows both parties to rely on each other for their strengths."

The signing ceremonies also saw the establishment of Technology Incubation Centre at IUKL.

Through this incubation centre, Biogenes and IUKL are looking to incubate start-ups that would produce ground-breaking research and innovation that solves complex problems, drives economic growth and creates a more skilled workforce.

"We have put in place framework to ensure that the ecosystem is favourable to more partnerships, access to funds and ease of business networking," he said.

"At this phase, the centre will only focus on aptamer research. In the future, we plan to have more players from different industries," said Tang. 

Intellectual Property

"Check it before you wreck it"



BY HAZIQ ADAM HANAFFI

COMMUNICATION has always been a significant key performance indicator for every profession especially for those in the consultation field. A simple miscommunication may be the "butterfly effect" to destroy a client's life and business. Communication between clients and consultants should be clear and precise without holding back any hidden information.

Not too long ago, an interesting dispute took place between Hong Yik Plastics (M) Sdn Bhd (plaintiff) and Ho Shen Lee (M) Sdn Bhd and TNL Plastic Manufacturer Sdn Bhd (defendants).

Hong Kong Ming, a director of the plaintiff, made claims for declaratory and other prohibitory reliefs and damages arising out of alleged patent infringement of their patent entitled "Throating for forming a groove on a ledge".

From the other side of the room, the defendant argued that Hong King Ming is not the owner of the plaintiff's patent and the plaintiff's patent is not patentable due to not being novel and not involving inventive steps. Further, the defendant counter-claimed for invalidation of the plaintiff's patent.

Interestingly, the plaintiff had instructed solicitors to write a letter to the defendants in 2013 referring to an earlier letter dated in 10 February 2012, alleging infringement.

However, the plaintiff only filed a suit against the defendant in 13 March 2017. From section 59 (3) of

the Patents Act 1983, the plaintiff is not entitled to institute a suit for infringement of patent because the 5 year limitation had been exceeded.

Further, the Court doubted the evidence of the plaintiff as the plaintiff was unable to explain to the Court the so-called "detailed instructions" to enable the patent agent to draw the detailed drawings, and draft the explanations.

The Court expressed its concern that if Hong Kong Ming is not able to explain it to the Court, how then could he have been able to explain it to his patent agent?

Moreover, Hong Kong Ming did not even know what prior art was, and left everything to his patent agent, who claimed that since Hong Kong Ming did not ask him to research prior art, he did not do so.

The plaintiff did not even know if the drawings were computer-aided and explained that he had instructed his patent agent to "do up the drawings" thinking that the patent agent was able to produce them.

Hong Kong Ming did say that he gave the patent agent something to look at. However, the Court found that the object provided by the plaintiff and the drawing prepared by the patent agent were different.

The Court found the plaintiff was heavily dependent on his patent agent, so much so that the agent was able to apply for an amendment of the patent without Hong Kong Ming's instructions. This begs the question of whether it was really Hong Kong Ming's invention.

In terms of novelty, the key features had existed way before the grant of Hong Kong Ming's patent.

Moreover, the Court noted that the patent agent did not even mention prior art in the document. This is considered material failure due to failure to disclose.


The nail in the coffin was when the defendant showed that corner bead and groove joint combinations have been in existence since 2006, with one

registered in the US Patent Office in 1959. Hong Kong Ming even mentioned that he had bought a sample of a corner bead for the patent agent as reference for the drawings.

The Court found that the plaintiff's patent should be invalidated on the grounds that the invention was not novel, existed in prior art, and that plaintiff and his agent gave incomplete information and failed to disclose prior art. Consequently, the plaintiff's claim was dismissed with costs and the defendant's counterclaim was allowed with costs of RM 80,000 to be paid by the plaintiff to the defendant.

This case highlights the importance of thorough communication regarding each step of the patenting process between the inventor/patent owner and the patent attorney, and the importance of filing an infringement suit before it is too late.

Here at KASS, it is always emphasised that future consequences may arise from errors like these. With this in mind, we are motivated to not just professionally serve our clients, but also to educate our clients in depth about their decision making.

The study, "Particulate methane monooxygenase contains only mononuclear copper centers," was supported by the National Institutes of Health (award numbers GM118035, GM111097 and 5T32GM008382) and the National Science Foundation (award number 1534743). 

NOTE: Haziq Adam Hanaffi is a Patent Executive at KASS International, an established intellectual property firm with offices in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Myanmar. He specialises in the drafting and prosecution of patent applications in fields relating to Mechanical, Manufacturing and Materials Engineering. For more information, visit www.kass.asia or drop an e-mail to kass@kass.asia.

Neurology



A brain region for Pokémon characters?

Adults who played Pokémon videogames extensively as children have a brain region that responds preferentially to images of Pikachu and other characters from the series.

IF your childhood involved countless hours spent capturing, training and battling Pokémon, there may be a wrinkle in your brain that is fond of images of Wobuffet, Bulbasaur and Pikachu.

Stanford psychologists have identified preferential activation to Pokémon characters in the brains of people who played Pokémon videogames extensively as kids.

The findings, published online in the journal *Nature Human Behavior*, help shed light on two related mysteries about our visual system.

"It's been an open question in the field why we have brain regions that respond to words and faces but not to, say, cars," said study first author and former Stanford graduate student Jesse Gomez.

"It's also been a mystery why they appear in the same place in everyone's brain."

A partial answer comes from recent studies in monkeys at Harvard Medical School. Researchers there found that in order for regions dedicated to a new category of objects to develop in the visual cortex -- the part of the brain that processes what we see -- then exposure to those objects must start young when the brain is particularly malleable and sensitive to visual experience.