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International DSM Award for Chemistry and Technology 2003 granted to Dutch researcher for eliminating toxic side effects of chemotherapy

Dutch researcher Dr. Vincent de Groot today won the first International DSM Award for Chemistry and Technology. An international jury selected De Groot, a laureate from the University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, for his research in the field of Organic Chemistry. De Groot designed, synthesized and evaluated new types of tumor-activated prodrugs with the aim to deliver an anticancer drug in the tumor in a highly specific way. The result is the reduction of toxic side effects of current anti-cancer drugs. Vincent de Groot received a cash prize of EUR 6,000 from the hands of Mr Jan Zuidam, vice-chairman of DSM's Managing Board. 14 other laureates received a prize of EUR 1,250.

Upon presenting the diplomas and prizes to the 15 winning laureates, Mr Jan Zuidam, vice-chairman of DSM's Managing Board, said at a ceremony held at Vaalsbroek Chateau in Vaals (Netherlands): *"Innovations is more than just good science. It is also about the ability to turn knowledge into economic value. Today's prizewinner not only concluded excellent research, but he also started up his own company to promote his prodrug concept into the pharmaceutical industry."*

Apart from Belgian and Dutch candidates, this year's Award competition was also open to candidates from the German Nordrhein-Westfalen region. Regional juries selected five laureates from their region. The best three laureates from each region were nominated for the International DSM Award. They presented their research for an international jury yesterday. Today the jury announced the winner.

Encouraging pioneering research

The DSM Award for Chemistry and Technology was introduced in 1986 and is presented annually. The competition is rapidly becoming a well-known international event. Until 2001, the competition was only open to Ph.D. research scientists from research institutes in the Netherlands and Flemish-speaking Belgium. In 2002 it was opened to participants from French-speaking Belgium as well. And from this year onwards, researchers from the German state of Nordrhein-Westfalen were also able to join the competition.

A great deal of DSM's R&D work is carried out in close collaboration with universities. Through its annual DSM Awards for Chemistry and Technology, DSM wants to stimulate young research scientists to engage in creative, pioneering research activities. DSM considers this to be of importance as it is often this kind of research that provides the basis for the development of new, knowledge-intensive industrial processes and high-tech products. DSM is also of the opinion that high-quality scientific research is closely dependent on academic education of a high order.

Professor Emmo Meijer, chairman of the international jury and Chief Technology Officer of DSM, adds: *"Although the decreasing interest for scientific studies bears concerns, I am pleased to see that the quality level of academic graduates is still excellent. The contributions of this year's prize winners emphasize this."*

Jury report

In its report, the jury states: *"We are impressed by the creativity and the broad approach of the research carried out. The elegance of the concept is that unwanted toxic side effects of the drug are reduced."* The jury expects that the outcome of the research will prove useful in chemotherapy of tumors, more in general in targeted drug delivery.

Dr. De Groot performed his research at the University of Nijmegen as a member of the Department of Organic Chemistry under the supervision of Doctor Hans Scheeren and Professor Roeland Nolte.

Other winners

The other fourteen prizewinners were each awarded a cheque of EUR 1,250. They are:

Belgium

Mr. S.P.B Kremer	Catholic University of Louvain
Mrs. C. Sioncke	Catholic University of Louvain
Mr. C. Koulic	University of Liège
Mr. K. de Smet	Catholic University of Louvain
Mr. R. Dumeunier	Catholic University of Louvain

Germany – Nordrhein Westfalen

Mr. A. Leitner	Max Planck Institut Mülheim
Mr. R. Fechete	Aachen University
Mrs. A. Hoffmann-Röder	Dortmund University
Mr. L. Bialy	Max Planck Institut Dortmund
Mr. R. Becker	Bochum University

Netherlands

Mr. J.A.A. Demmers	Utrecht University
Mr. A.H. Janssen	Utrecht University
Mr. W.A. van Winden	Delft University of Technology
Mrs. C. Chassagne	Delft University of Technology

Note for the editors:

Photos of the presentation of the award to the winner by Jan Zuidam, vice-chairman of the DSM Managing Board, can be downloaded from www.dsm.com.

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