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Press Release

Contact: Vivienne Gaskell
Vice President, Corporate Communications
Tel 32.10 - 47 59 71

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IBA To Improve Food Safety Using USDA-Approved Pasteurization Technology

World's Largest Ionization and Sterilization Business Announces Test Facility Opening, U.S. Expansion Plans

Ion Beam Applications of Belgium (IBA), which now owns the world's largest ionization and sterilization business, today announced plans to provide the meat and poultry industry with a US-wide network of pasteurization centers for pasteurizing meats. The announcement comes on the heels of Tuesday's long-awaited USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) approval of the use of pasteurization of meat to improve food safety by eliminating or dramatically reducing the risk of hazardous microorganisms.

IBA's first new facility is an X-ray test center, opening in Long Island, New York in February of 2000. The network will also include three new commercial processing centers using IBA's proprietary X-ray and e-beam technology, the most sophisticated pasteurization tools available in the food market. The centers will provide large-volume capacity for food producers and eventually serve as back-up facilities for IBA customers using on-site, in-plant systems. In addition, IBA has initiated a USDA Grant of Inspection process for five existing facilities to allow meat and poultry pasteurization services in early 2000. IBA's pasteurization network expansion plans represent an investment of over \$30,000,000.

IBA is the only company poised to act quickly on the new USDA guidelines because of its existing network of pasteurization and sterilization facilities and its patented systems, which can operate both the X-ray and electron beam modes. The USDA announcement allows for pasteurization treatment of both refrigerated and frozen raw meat and meat products. The new guidelines are significant, because while the U.S. food supply is among the safest in the world, diseases caused by food may be responsible for an estimated 325,000 serious illnesses each year, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control.

IBA's cold pasteurization process is used to eliminate a large variety of the potentially harmful microbes found in foods, the most important of which include E.coli 0157:H7, Listeria monocytogenes, Campylobacter jejuni and Salmonella.

"We expect to be the preferred provider of pasteurization services and systems to the food industry," says Pat Adams, president of the Food Division, IBA Group. "IBA offers over 15 years of food pasteurization experience, unparalleled technology and the operational and engineering expertise to match the appropriate e-beam, X-ray or gamma system to each customer's specific needs."

The IBA X-ray systems are ten times more powerful than directly competing technologies, generating a uniform field of high intensity and deeply penetrating photons. These electrically driven systems are of particular interest to food processors, because it will allow them to utilize cold pasteurization of meat and poultry cuts (thicker than 7.5 cm or with non-uniform orientation) without redesigning their packages.

For food processors requiring treatment of thin profiles, IBA's e-beam technology provides superior flexibility and consistent treatment levels.

The new facilities planned by IBA in the U.S. will add to the Group's extensive worldwide network of pasteurization and sterilization facilities. Kevin Swan, CEO of the Sterilization & Ionization Business, IBA Group emphasizes, "IBA is not only the world's largest provider of sterilization and ionization services, it is also undisputedly the most experienced company in the cold pasteurization process. We look forward to expanding our U.S. presence and using our technology to improve the quality and safety of food."

The Sterilization & Ionization Business of the IBA Group, is headquartered in Chicago. Launched in September 1999, it represents the integration of industry-leaders Griffith Micro Science, SteriGenics and RDI (Radiation Dynamics Inc), combining e-beam and X-ray technology, gamma radiation and processing by ethylene oxide. IBA's network includes 37 service centers worldwide.

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