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CJ CheilJedang and Arkema announce a project to build the world's first bio-methionine plant and a thiochemicals platform in Asia

CJ CheilJedang (CJ Group) and Arkema have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding to build a bio-methionine and thiochemicals platform in South East Asia (Malaysia or Thailand). This project entails the construction of the world's first world-scale methyl mercaptan integrated bio-methionine plant, which will enable CJ to respond to strong demand for methionine, a sulfur amino acid widely used for animal feed in Asia, and Arkema to better serve its Asian customers from a new industrial platform. The project represents overall investments of \$400m split equally between both partners.

The project would pool together two sets of complementary expertise. CheilJedang has indeed developed a new innovative and highly competitive industrial bio-fermentation process to produce L-methionine from plant-based raw materials. L-methionine is digested more efficiently by animals than DL-methionine currently on the market. Meanwhile Arkema has extensive know-how and experience in the production process of methyl mercaptan, a sulfur-based intermediate that is key to the manufacture of methionine.

The 80,000 ton bio-methionine production plant, which would be unique in the world, and the thiochemicals platform would come on stream at the end of 2013.

“We are looking forward to this future collaboration with CheilJedang, which has extensive expertise in bio-fermentation processes. This joint venture will enable us to establish our first thiochemicals industrial facility in Asia in the very near future, where we will manufacture other high added value thiochemicals in addition to methyl mercaptan, We will then have over 50,000 tonnes of new capacities for DMDS and mercaptans, primarily for the gas and petrochemicals markets », stated Philippe Chartres, Managing Director of Arkema's Thiochemicals Business Unit.

“We believe now is the right time to launch production of L-methionine as we are confident that L-methionine via the bioprocess technology today can compete favorably in terms of performance and cost with DL-methionine made from chemical processes. Moreover, this bio-fermentation process benefits from its ability to use different renewable feedstocks”, said Chul-Ha Kim, President of CJ's Bio Business Unit.

“The construction of this plant is a strategic decision for CJ’s Bio Business Unit: CJ will be the first and only company in the world to produce and supply customers globally with the four major amino acids - the building blocks of proteins used for animal feed - from bio-fermentation processes, including L-lysine, L-threonine, L-tryptophan, and now L-methionine”, pointed out Chul-Ha Kim.

***CJ CheilJedang**, a Korean based food, feed, and bioscience company, is leading the way as No.1 global company in the world in the area of industrial biotechnology with innovations in fermentation, and purification technologies. CJ is a leading producer of fermentation-based products such as feed amino acids, MSG, and Nucleotides with global manufacturing and business operations in 6 continents. As a socially responsible company, CJ strives toward practicing carbon-neutral manufacturing operations by utilizing renewable raw materials and developing value-added co-products to minimize waste into the environment.*

*A global chemical company and France’s leading chemicals producer, **Arkema** is building the future of the chemical industry every day. Deploying a responsible, innovation-based approach, we produce state-of-the-art specialty chemicals that provide customers with practical solutions to such challenges as climate change, access to drinking water, the future of energy, fossil fuel preservation and the need for lighter materials. With operations in more than 40 countries, 14,000 employees and 8 research centers, Arkema generated annual revenue of €5.9 billion in 2010, and holds leadership positions in all its markets with a portfolio of internationally recognized brands. **The world is our inspiration.***

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