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ITI TECHMEDIA TO INVEST £4.75M IN SENSORS & NETWORKS TECHNOLOGY

Condition-based monitoring technology platform to track health of cattle

ITI Techmedia today announces plans to apply sensors and networks technology to the development of a condition-based monitoring platform which could be used to manage remote assets across a range of industries, from the farming and equine sectors to renewable energy and general healthcare.

The sixth R&D programme for ITI Techmedia, the organisation which develops market-driven intellectual property (IP) for the benefit of Scotland, is expected to take three years and will see an investment of £4.75m.

The programme will create an innovative sensor and reader platform, based on wireless communications, multiple monitoring capabilities and behavioural models, to detect and communicate target conditions with improved accuracy.

The ITI programme will initially focus on the farming sector, where the technology under development will enable the behavioural and physiological monitoring of beef and dairy cattle, allowing the animal's condition to be continuously monitored. ITI Techmedia aims to apply sensors and wireless technology to provide welfare status information on a range of conditions, including oestrus (i.e. the monitoring of fertility) and pregnancy. This will improve the monitoring of calving and post-partum conditions.

The architecture of the technology platform will allow its application to a wide set of monitored conditions where low cost remote mobile sensor platforms can be usefully applied. For example, wireless communication for monitoring the health of commercial farm animals could also be applied to horses and other companion animals. The technology platform could also have applications across a number of industrial and energy sectors.

The demand for electronic identification of farm animals is growing rapidly as a result of the legislative need to provide traceability of food sources in the global market. The programme has been driven by these market trends, as well as by the growing requirement to prove the good health and welfare of animals.

David Creed, CEO of ITI Techmedia, commented: "The application of sensors and networks technology presents numerous opportunities for ITI Techmedia and we have already looked at a number of these in detail. According to our market analysis, predictive intervention in animal health is an area of global market opportunity which Scottish skills and research expertise are well placed to address. There are well-established skills within the area of animal monitoring, both in research and commercial environments, which is why we have chosen this to be the

primary focus for the programme. However, once proven, the principles being applied here could easily find application in countless markets and present opportunities for many Scottish companies.”

In the initial stages, ITI Techmedia has engaged the services of seven organisations to carry out the work involved in the programme. These organisations are:

- Blue Sky Telemetry
- Scottish Agricultural College
- University of Strathclyde
- TTP
- Roslin Welfare Consultants
- Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC)
- Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

Deputy First Minister, Nicol Stephen, said: "Scotland's ITIs play a crucial role in our drive to increase innovation and R&D activity across the country. The Techmedia ITI is making good progress in identifying and commissioning a range of pioneering programmes, and this latest award is another exciting and positive development. Every project our ITIs support can help generate significant economic benefits for Scotland, creating new business opportunities by developing world-leading technologies to meet future global market needs. I wish this project every success."

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Notes to Editor

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About ITI Techmedia

ITI Techmedia is a member-based organisation that identifies, develops and manages commercially driven Intellectual Property for the benefit of Scotland. It acts as a catalyst to create world-class technology in the digital media and communication sectors. Working with its members and the technology community, ITI Techmedia commissions and funds R&D to the point of commercial viability.

Further information is available on the website: www.ititechmedia.com.

About Blue Sky Telemetry

BlueSky Telemetry designs and manufactures specialist and highly innovative wildlife telemetry GPS (Global Positioning System) collars and associated accessories to track wild herbivores, carnivores and semi domesticated farm animals. The company is headquartered in Aberfeldy.

Further information is available on the website: www.blueskytelemetry.co.uk.

About Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre (EPCC)

EPCC was established in 1990 to transfer high performance and novel computing technology from academia to industry and business, and has successfully led a wide range of collaborative projects over the last 15 years. EPCC has built up a team of highly experienced consultants and software engineers with expertise in technologies including grid computing, data access and integration, machine vision and process optimisation.

Further information is available on the website: www.epcc.ed.ac.uk.

About Roslin Welfare Consultants

Roslin Welfare Consultants provide scientifically-based practicable solutions to practical problems in the field of animal welfare and health in an agricultural and commercial context. The consultancy was established in 2005 by Malcolm Mitchell, following his departure from Roslin Institute after 24 years in research focussed on the physiological analysis of stress and welfare of livestock in commercial agricultural conditions in the UK and in many other parts of the world.

About Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at the University of Edinburgh is one of the leading veterinary schools in the world. Approximately 100 BVM&S degrees are awarded each year, which are recognised by the UK, European and American veterinary governing bodies. In the 2001 UK Research Assessment Exercise, the School was rated as '5' (representing international excellence), with the highest number of active research staff of all UK veterinary schools.

The University dairy farm is based at Langhill Farm, and with 220 milking cows, Langhill is the largest dairy herd attached to any UK veterinary school. Langhill has a long track record of delivering quality teaching, and of work on cattle welfare and the economics of dairy farming.

Further information is available on the website: <http://www.vet.ed.ac.uk/>.

About Scottish Agricultural College (SAC)

SAC is an innovative, knowledge-based organisation which supports the development of the land-based industries and communities through its specialist research and development resources, its education and training provision and its expert advisory and consultancy services. Its work is wide ranging, with particular emphasis on agriculture and related sciences, rural business development and management, food chain quality and safety, and rural resource and environmental management.

SAC has three main campuses, at Aberdeen, Ayr and Edinburgh, twenty three local farm and rural business services offices, eight veterinary centres and five research farms. It carries out much of its work in partnership with government departments levy boards, other academic and research organisations and local authorities.

For more information visit www.sac.ac.uk

About TTP

TTP is Europe's leading independent product and technology development and licensing company, working with start-ups, SMEs, public bodies and some of the largest and most successful companies in the world, creating new business based on advances in technology. TTP specialises in sensors, microdevices, communications, and other technologies related to the emerging market for condition-based monitoring.

For more information visit www.ttp.com

About University of Strathclyde

The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow — the 'place of useful learning' — is Scotland's third largest university, offering over 200 undergraduate degree combinations and over 160 postgraduate taught courses to almost 20,000 students across five faculties. The University emphasises flexible and innovative teaching and learning, commercially relevant research and employable graduates.

The University has generated over £30M in royalty income from research patents, making Strathclyde one of the UK's top 10 university earners in patent income. More than 30 spin-out companies have been formed from Strathclyde research and technology, and the Cabinet Office of Science and Technology has cited Strathclyde as one of the UK's most successful universities for working with industry and commercialising research.

www.strath.ac.uk