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VIDO celebrates certification of the International Vaccine Centre at the U of S

Saskatoon – New vaccine research and development against existing and emerging diseases can now proceed thanks to final certification of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization's International Vaccine Centre (VIDO-InterVac) at the University of Saskatchewan.

"This project is a collaborative effort among many partners, who all deserve our heartfelt thanks," said VIDO-InterVac Director Andy Potter. "This vision, initiated by our former director, Lorne Babiuk, was achieved thanks to substantial efforts from a team led by our associate director of operations Cam Ewart, working with our partners at the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency."

Since the facility will study both animal and human pathogens (e.g. bacteria and viruses), it had to meet the safety and operational standards of both the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for certification. That certification has now been achieved.

"InterVac greatly enhances our capacity to develop new tools, technologies and policies to help prevent disease and save lives," said U of S Vice-President Research Karen Chad. "Scientists at InterVac will work at the forefront of efforts to combat human and animal infectious disease threats, creating new knowledge and unparalleled education and training opportunities in this globally important 'one health' signature area of U of S research."

InterVac, a \$144-million expansion to VIDO, is one of the world's most advanced containment level three vaccine research centres and one of the largest of its kind. It is the product of a funding partnership among the Government of Canada, Canada Foundation for Innovation, Government of Saskatchewan and City of Saskatoon, with support from the U of S.

"I am delighted to see a decade of planning, design and construction come to fruition with this certification," said Babiuk, the former director of VIDO-InterVac. "I look forward to witnessing the national and international collaborations that this facility will help stimulate."

InterVac provides facilities for scientists to safely conduct research into level three diseases like tuberculosis, hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, avian influenza, as well as prion diseases like mad cow disease and chronic wasting disease in elk and deer. Scientists from across Canada and around the world will be able to use the facility.

"The attention to detail in this facility will ensure the safety of the community and staff as they develop new vaccines for diseases that affect all of us," said Susan Lamb, chair of the VIDO-InterVac community liaison committee. "We are pleased to have been a part of this process and look forward to our continued role as liaisons for the community."

"We are excited to witness the contribution this facility will make to advancing human and animal health to the

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benefit of Canadians and internationally,” said Bob Clarke, chair of the board of VIDO-InterVac. “It helps keep Canada on the forefront of discovery science.”

About VIDO-InterVac

Created in 1975, VIDO-InterVac is a research organization of the University of Saskatchewan with financial support from the Government of Canada, Government of

Saskatchewan, various foundations, corporations and producer groups. VIDO-InterVac has developed eight commercial vaccines. With some of the world’s most advanced containment Level two and three facilities, as well as a 160-acre research station, VIDO-InterVac develops new approaches to respond to infectious disease threats. For more information visit www.vido.org.