

SEVEN DAYS

The news in brief

BUSINESS

Database case

The American Chemical Society (ACS), the world's largest scientific society, is likely to have to pay US\$11.5 million in compensation to a small start-up company after a ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court on 18 September. The court ruled that the ACS, based in Washington DC, filed a lawsuit to unfairly suppress chemical-informatics firm Leadscope of Columbus, Ohio. See page 482 for more.

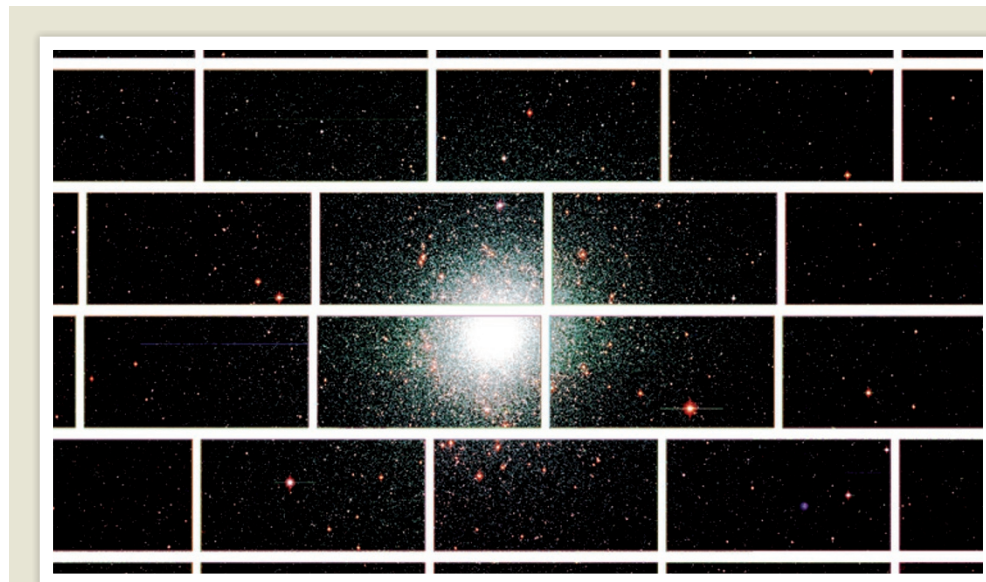
Drug-makers unite

Ten giant pharmaceutical companies have formed a non-profit organization called TransCelerate BioPharma, with the goal of making clinical trials more efficient. By setting universal standards in trial design and data collection, the group could shave time and expense off the drug-development process, says Garry Neil, head of TransCelerate and a former vice-president of science and technology at Johnson & Johnson. Smaller companies are invited to join the team. See go.nature.com/jj2sky for more.

POLICY

Stem-cell funds

The European Parliament's legal committee has recommended that research involving human embryonic stem cells should not be funded in the European Union's upcoming Horizon 2020 research programme. The committee refers to a decision by the European Court of Justice, which ruled on ethical grounds last October that treatments based on such cells were not patentable (see *Nature* 480, 310–312; 2011). Horizon 2020 is intended to



DARK ENERGY SURVEY COLLABORATION/FERMI LAB

First light for dark-energy lens

A camera designed to hunt for signs of dark energy, a force thought to be responsible for the Universe's rapid expansion, snapped its first images on 12 September. The images from the Dark Energy Survey camera (*Nature* 489, 190–191; 2012), which is mounted on

the 4-metre Blanco telescope in Chile, were generated as part of a testing phase that is set to end in December. This stitched-together image of sections of sky shows the globular star cluster 47 Tucanae, which is around 5,000 parsecs from Earth. See go.nature.com/ya5y2p for more.

promote Europe's economic competitiveness, and the parliamentary committee argues that research that cannot be patented should not be supported under the programme.

Ethics hub

A US\$1.5-million online resource for scientists teaching responsible conduct of research (RCR) was officially launched on 20 September. The Ethics CORE website (www.nationalethicscenter.org) is funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and directed by C. K. Gunsalus, an expert on research integrity at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The America COMPETES Act of 2007 made RCR training mandatory for all NSF grant

recipients; the foundation implemented the requirement in 2010. See go.nature.com/m38bnp for more.

Rainforest threat

Deforestation is on the rise again in the Brazilian Amazon. The amount of clear-cut land hit 522 square kilometres in August 2012, up from 163 km² in the same month last year, according to satellite measurements made by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE), based in São José dos Campos. Deforestation had been on the wane since April 2011. See go.nature.com/b7ej2p for more.

Immigration bill

The US House of Representatives rejected a bill on 20 September that would

have granted permanent residency — commonly referred to as 'green card' status — to 55,000 foreign scientists and engineers with advanced degrees from US universities each year. Both presidential candidates have expressed support for admitting more workers in these disciplines, but the bill failed to garner the two-thirds majority needed to pass. See go.nature.com/hatvjq for more.

Arsenic in rice

Two US reports have reignited worries about arsenic poisoning from rice and prompted politicians to introduce legislation on 21 September that would limit the toxic substance. On 19 September, the consumer protection group Consumers Union, based in Yonkers, New

York, and the US Food and Drug Administration released reports that found inorganic arsenic in rice products. The presence of the substance is probably the result of the use of arsenic-based pesticides in cotton fields that were later used for rice farming. See go.nature.com/puezou for more.

PEOPLE

Development boost

Chinese President Hu Jintao announced a US\$1.5-million donation to TWAS, the academy of sciences of the developing world, on the opening day of the organization's 23rd general meeting in Tianjin, China, on 18 September. The donation means that China overtakes Brazil as the largest contributor to the organization, which is based in Trieste, Italy. Chemist Bai Chunli, current president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was also elected as the organization's president.

AZT-maker dies

Jerome Horwitz, the chemist who inadvertently created the first antiretroviral drug for AIDS, azidothymidine (AZT), died on 6 September, aged 93. News of his death emerged last week. Horwitz (pictured) created AZT in the 1960s to combat cancer, but he shelved



the drug after it showed little efficacy against the disease. A company that later became part of GlaxoSmithKline patented AZT in the 1980s when it was found to be effective against AIDS. Horwitz received no money for his discovery because he no longer owned the compound, but he did go on to produce treatments for diseases such as cancer at the Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Michigan, until he retired in 2005.

Fraud inquiry

Cardiff University is launching an investigation into allegations of scientific misconduct in the laboratory of its dean of medicine, Paul Morgan, a spokeswoman for the UK institution confirmed on 17 September. The allegations — that images have been manipulated in at least six of the laboratory's research papers — appeared on the website science-fraud.org

in July, and the university launched an initial screening panel on 6 August. The panel recommended the formal investigation.

RESEARCH

Chimp research cut

The US National Institutes of Health (NIH) is ending its funding for chimpanzee work at the largest centre for such research that it supports. The agency will retire 110 chimpanzees from the New Iberia Research Center, part of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, it said on 21 September. There are still 308 chimpanzees available for invasive experiments at two other NIH-supported centres; the agency says that these animals are sufficient for dwindling research needs. See go.nature.com/8mkgnf for more.

Cancer ambitions

A leading US cancer centre said last week that it will spend up to US\$3 billion over the next ten years on a programme to significantly increase the odds of surviving eight cancers. Under the Moon Shots initiative, research teams at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, will focus on cancer of the prostate, lung and ovary, and on a type of breast cancer as well as melanoma, two leukaemias

and a related blood syndrome. See go.nature.com/lrevbl for more.

XMRV ruled out

The retrovirus XMRV is not linked to chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), a definitive study that cost US\$2.3 million concluded on 18 September. A 2009 paper found signs of XMRV infection in people with CFS (V. C. Lombardi *et al. Science* 326, 585–589; 2009), but was retracted in 2011 because of concerns that the results were caused by contamination. The latest study (H. J. Alter *et al. mBIO* 3, e00266-12; 2012) is co-authored by members of two teams that reported associations between XMRV and related viruses and CFS. See go.nature.com/vadrb7 for more.

EVENTS

Arctic drilling stops

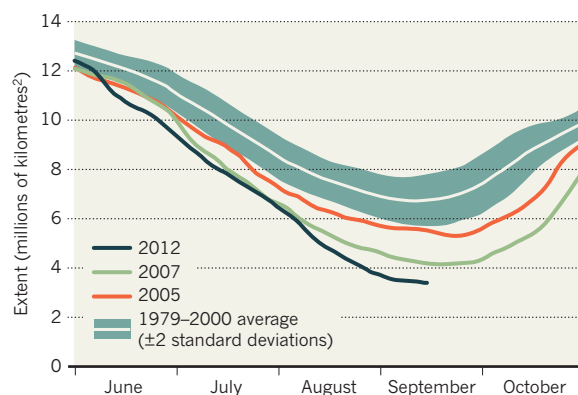
Plans to drill for oil and gas resources off the coast of Alaska have been abandoned following damage to oil containers on the spill-clean-up barge *Arctic Challenger*, oil company Shell announced on 17 September. The setback means that the mission no longer meets the safety requirements for a permit to drill specific wells. Shell will continue to bore exploratory 'top holes' in the Chukchi Sea in preparation for further drilling, which has now been delayed until 2013. See go.nature.com/zynxtq for more.

TREND WATCH

Arctic sea-ice coverage reached the lowest point of this year's summer melt on 16 September, the US National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, has declared. On that date, around 3.41 million square kilometres of sea in the Arctic were at least 15% covered in ice, under the measurement system used by the data centre. The new low is by far the smallest figure seen in 33 years of satellite measurements — and possibly the lowest late-summer ice extent in more than 5,000 years.

SHRINKING ARCTIC SEA ICE

Sea-ice coverage in the Arctic bottomed out this week at the lowest extent ever measured by satellites.

**CORRECTIONS**

The story 'Yellow river turns red' (*Nature* 489, 182; 2012) should have termed the Yangtze the golden river. And the story 'Murder plea' (*Nature* 489, 341; 2012) wrongly located the Madison County circuit court. It should have been in Huntsville, Alabama.

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