

Nature Biotechnology turns 20!

This month marks the twentieth anniversary of *Nature Biotechnology's* launch in March 1996. To celebrate we have brought together a collection of Features that summarize where we have been and where we may be heading.

The biotech sector has had many triumphs over the past 20 years. Rob Carlson presents an analysis of this industry's contribution to the US economy (**Feature, p. 247**). He notes that revenues from biotech products and activities have grown on average >10% each year over the past decade—much faster than the rest of the economy.

But it has not all been plain sailing. The sector has also had its fair share of setbacks. Some of these have been attributed to consumer resistance to its products, particularly in the area of food. Going forward, the sector must do more to engage in a dialog with its publics and prepare the ground for the new products and technologies on the horizon (**Editorial, p. 213**).

In three Features, we revisit some of the most influential papers from over the past two decades that reflect the diversity and excitement of research published in our pages. 20 years is a long time and a lot of papers, so we have divided the analysis into papers reporting biomedical applications (**Feature, p. 256**), nonbiomedical applications (**Feature, p. 262**) and research tools (**Feature, p. 267**).

Of course, rather than looking back, we prefer to look forward. With this in mind, we have asked over 50 researchers working in various areas represented by our scope to provide their views on the most exciting frontier in their field and the most needed technologies for advancing knowledge and applications (**Feature, p. 270**).

Our readers appreciate that biotech is not only about science and technology; it is also about business. Thus, we have approached a group of individuals working as ethicists, executives, entrepreneurs, investors, tech transfer officers and foundations to provide their views on the ethical, social and commercial challenges likely to challenge the sector in the coming years (**Feature, p. 276**). We have also asked our Editor-at-Large, John Hodgson, to take a look at business events from the past 20 years that some in the sector might prefer to forget (**Feature, p. 284**).

The success of this journal since 1996 is testament to you, our contributors and our readers. We are truly grateful to the community for its ongoing support and guidance. We look forward to the next 20 years of publishing the very best in biotech and bioengineering research.



The Editors

Patent roundup

Several recent US Supreme Court decisions have eroded the strength of life science patents. Arti Rai and Jakob Sherkow look back at 20 years of biotech patent law and business practice and suggest where patenting in the life sciences may be heading in the coming years (**Feature, p. 292**). MF

Next month in

nature biotechnology

- Inactivation of HIV-1 provirus in humanized mice
- Genetic correction of hematopoietic stem cells from patients with chronic granulomatous disease
- Poly(lactate-co-glycolate) production in *E. coli*
- Engineering T-cell receptors for purification and expansion