

**SERUM SHORTAGE**

To the editor:

Your editorial (*Bio/Technology* 6:455 May '88) on the supply of fetal calf serum compels me to comment. The "unnamed marketing director of one of the major US suppliers of fetal bovine serum" is obviously not in touch with the marketplace. Away in the Pacific in New Zealand, we are being subjected to exactly the same forces that are driving up the prices of FBS in the United States. Suppliers and brokers are fighting over the ever decreasing supply of fetal serum and offering the producer more and more for the blood. The same thing is occurring in New Zealand and Australia, which collectively produce about one quarter to one third of the world's supply.

The number of pregnant cattle being presented for slaughter is falling in North America and Australia so the law of supply and demand is being activated and the price being paid to the producers for blood goes up and up.

The prices started going up well before the U.S. Government paid farmers to reduce their dairy herd size. Biotech scale-up was booming and the demand was very strong before the dairy cow slaughtering even started. They just caused a blip in the supply.

The only people to win out in this war to supply are the slaughterhouses. Very high prices paid for blood have encouraged them to open more collection plants. The dwindling supply has reduced total output.

The losers are the major suppliers, brokers and the end users. They have suffered lower margins in sales, and higher production costs in processing.

But suppliers, brokers and end users only have themselves to blame, fighting over the scraps of a dwindling raw material supply, and failing to plan for the future.

Roll on FBS replacers.

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**ADJUVANT CORRECTION**

To the editor:

Delighted as we are to see our product ImuVert™ featured in the (*Bio/Technology* 6:773-777 July '88) article on adjuvants, we wish to clarify several points.

First, we would like to disclose that ImuVert™ is derived from the non-pathogenic Gram-negative (not Gram-positive) bacterium *Serratia marcescens*. Secondly, the product consists of natural membrane vesicles of defined size associated with ribosomes (not only highly purified ribosomes).

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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**SAFE SERUM**

To the editor:

In her article entitled "Notes on Culture Media" (*Bio/Technology* 6:575-577, May '88), Jane Williams incorrectly described Ventrex's serum-free media products. HL-1 (not HL-2) is a defined serum-free medium which does not contain mitogens and can be used completely without serum. We do offer a serum-substitute called HL-1 Supplement which can be used with a variety of base media. Similarly, this product does not contain mitogens and can be used to supplement media without the need to add serum.

In addition, I would like to contradict Ms. Williams' suggestions that serum-free media may be contaminated with adventitious agents such as HIV or hepatitis B viruses. It would be foolish for any company that manufactures media containing human-derived proteins not to screen for agents, particularly these. I am sure that any serum-free media producer is very open, as we are at Ventrex, about the purity of the reagents used to manufacture these products.

We certainly do not begrudge Ms. Williams, as she managed to make a succinct description from a vast amount of information. Also, we appreciate her mentioning our products favorably but we simply wish to make these clarifications.

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 and Development  
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**ERRATUM**

**Fermentation Special Report.** May '88, page 510.

Due to erroneous information supplied by the manufacturer, the entry for "Temperature Control" for New Brunswick Scientific's Microlift bioreactor in the chart on page 510 is incorrect. The entry should read "water-jacketed."

**New Software Aids Analysis of 2-D Gels.** June 1988, page 631.

The first full paragraph on p. 631 should have read as follows:

In 6-8 months, Bio-Image will introduce a new Visage product that includes software for DNA sequence reading and analysis.

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