

ON THE MARKET

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

The GeneRuler **biotinylated DNA ladder** from KPL is a convenient pre-labeled molecular-weight marker intended for use on Southern blots. It contains a mixture of labeled and unlabeled DNA, allowing visualization either through fluorescent staining or enzymatic detection. GeneRuler yields 21 discrete fragments ranging in size from 100 base pairs (bp) to 10 kilobases (kb). Bright bands at 3,000 bp, 1,031 bp and 500 bp serve as reference points. It can be visualized on X-ray film or a membrane when used with enzyme-labeled streptavidin and chemiluminescent or chromogenic substrates. It can also be observed in a gel prior to transfer after fluorescent staining with ethidium bromide or SYBR Green.

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GENE TRANSFER/EXPRESSION

RetroXpress is Clontech's complete **system for retrovirus-mediated gene transfer and expression**. The kit includes the RetroPack PT67 packaging cell line and RetroXpress vectors for introducing genes into a wide variety of mammalian cell types both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Clontech says the PT67 packaging cell line contains stably integrated retroviral structural genes for the safe production of high titers of infectious, replication-incompetent retroviruses.

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TRANSFECTION TOOLS

TCS Biologicals now offers **purified HMG-1 (high mobility group 1) protein**, a natural chromatin constituent isolated from calf thymus, which is said to increase transfection rates with mammalian cells. It has been shown to bind to DNA in a site-specific fashion to produce a stable compact complex. Such complexes are transcriptionally active and vector DNA condensed in this way has been shown to be efficiently taken up and stably expressed by mammalian cells, according to TCS Biologicals.

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GENOTYPING GEMS



For automated DNA genotyping by microsatellite analysis.

Beckman Coulter offers a new **fragment analysis capability** for its CEQ2000 DNA analysis system, allowing automation of DNA genotyping by microsatellite analysis. The instrument separates DNA fragments by capillary electrophoresis, using eight capillaries concurrently. Researchers can multiplex many samples simultaneously in each of the capillaries, along with an internal size standard that ensures reproducible sizing. A new software module for the CEQ2000 has been designed to call alleles based on fragment sizes. The system is suitable for applications involving genetic linkage analysis and genetic mapping. Users of the instrument can easily switch between DNA sequencing and fragment analysis work, according to Beckman Coulter.

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PARP INHIBITION ASSAY

Recent literature supports a role for Poly (ADP-ribose) polymerase (PARP) in Parkinson's disease, cancer, retroviral infection and inflammation. Inhibitors of PARP can sensitize cancer cells to certain DNA-damaging chemotherapies and radiation. Trevigen now offers a non-isotopic, 96-well microplate **assay for investigating the effectiveness of PARP inhibitors**. The kit is based on a newly synthesized biotinylated NAD molecule, which serves as a substrate for the PARP enzyme, forming biotinylated polymers of ADP-ribose on substrate proteins within the wells of the plate. Inhibitors of PARP reduce the polymerization, and the level of inhibition is quantitated colorimetrically.

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BACTERIAL SLEUTHS

The Acid Fast (Blue) Special Stains kit for use on the automated OptiMax Plus Consolidated Staining System can be used to **determine the presence of mycobacteria**, including *M. tuberculosis*, *M. kansasii*, *M. avium* and *M. leprae*, in tissue sections and smears. Mycobacteria can be difficult to demonstrate by other staining techniques due to the fatty acid capsule surrounding the organism, says BioGenex Laboratories, the company that sells both the kit and the staining system. With this procedure, dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) is added to pararosaniline dye in a phenol solution, which is said to accelerate the infiltration of the dye. A decolorization step removes the red color from all tissue components except the acid-fast bacilli. Methylene blue solution is then used as a counterstain.

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VIRAL LOAD



Amplicor system provides rapid viral detection and viral load monitoring.

The Amplicor PCR range from Roche Diagnostics now includes **qualitative and quantitative assays for the detection and monitoring of viral disease**. For maximum flexibility, both manual and automated versions of the qualitative Amplicor PCR tests are available, offering rapid and accurate detection of a range of viruses, including HIV-1, HCV, CMV and HTLV. The Cobas Amplicor HIV-1 Monitor test version 1.5, for example, measures the amount of HIV circulating in an infected person's blood. The test is also said to provide accurate quantitation of HIV-1 subtypes A-G, ensuring the integrity of viral load measurements across patient populations.

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