



12<sup>th</sup> May 2006

## GRANT TO LEICESTER FIRM WILL HELP DEVELOP NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

A high-tech Leicester firm announced today that it has won a prestigious Government grant to help develop its revolutionary new technology which uses space-age science to increase medical understanding.

BioAstral Limited is a spin-out company from the University of Leicester and combines the joint expertise of the University's Space Research Centre and its School of Biological Sciences.

The Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) has now backed BioAstral with a £72,000 grant to help develop new systems which bring space imaging technology to bear on medical diagnostics and drug discovery. The DTI Grant for Research and Development came through the East Midlands Development Agency and is being matched by a further £53,000 raised by BioAstral's shareholders.

The start-up funding will be used to build an advanced prototype instrument to detect the smallest changes in human genes.

Dr Trude Schwarzacher of Leicester's School of Biological Sciences and a founder of BioAstral explained: "Microscopic changes in people's genes can cause serious and long term diseases. Our powerful new system will enable researchers to detect these changes and to get more accurate results on a larger scale than ever before. This should lead to better understanding of diseases and to the development of new and more effective treatments."

BioAstral's Chairman, Dr Paul Brankin said: "We are most grateful for this DTI support which is a vote of confidence in our exciting technology and its significant commercial potential."



Building on successes with the prototype instrumentation, BioAstral Limited is now looking to expand its development programme and to build partnerships with key research laboratories.

BioAstral Limited employs advanced space-science imaging technology to address the needs of biomedical research. The emerging Company, founded in 2004 and based at Leicester University, is currently focussed on the research, development and application of instrumentation for significantly improved imaging and the interpretation of microarray-based diagnostics.

ENDS

For further information please call Professor Pat Heslop-Harrison, Department of Biology, University of Leicester, tel 0116 252 5079/3381, e-mail [phh4@le.ac.uk](mailto:phh4@le.ac.uk). Details of the Company and its technology are available on our website [www.bioastral.com](http://www.bioastral.com)