19 May 2009

Plant Health Care plc
("Plant Health Care" or "the Company")

The Journal of the American Society of Horticultural Science recently published the findings of an extensive testing and research progamme carried out on Plant Health Care's harpin product when used with lettuce (J. AMER. SOC. HORT. SCI. 134(1):141–147. 2009.).
A summary of the findings is set out below.

Researchers from three US academic institutions (Rutgers University, University of California, Davis and University of Arizona), led by Dr. Jorge M. Fonseca at the University of Arizona's Yuma Agricultural Center, have investigated the effect of a pre-harvest treatment of head lettuce with Plant Health Care's harpin protein which is known to boost plants' growth processes and resistance to disease.

Lettuce plants grown at the three locations were treated, five days before harvest with three different rates of the harpin A/B second generation protein. After processing and bagging the lettuces were cool-stored and their quality evaluated over a period of 20 days.

At the two higher rates, the harpin-treated lettuce from California consistently showed better visual quality and lower microbial population than the control. Similarly in Arizona, for part of the storage period, microbial population was lower and visual quality was higher in lettuce treated with harpin at the two higher rates. Overall results in New Jersey showed no major differences among treatments.

In additional experiments it was shown that antioxidants increased by 40% in head leaves when plants were treated with the two higher rates of harpin, but no visible changes were observed in outer leaves. Furthermore, phenolic content was higher in all treated lettuce than in the control lettuce after 24 hours. Six days later, the levels fell back to the initial stage.

Overall, it was shown that a pre-harvest, field application of harpin can improve quality of fresh-cut head lettuce under certain environmental conditions. The results with antioxidant activity and phenolic content suggest that improvement in quality is probably the result of alteration of metabolites' composition.

The study clearly shows the potential for harpin use as a pre-harvest treatment to improve several important health and appearance-related aspects of this important produce crop.

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About Plant Health Care plc:

Plant Health Care plc is a leading provider of natural products for plants and soil. Established in 1995 in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) in the United States, Plant Health Care currently has approximately 90 employees and has operations in the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Spain, and the Netherlands. The Company listed on the AIM market of the London Stock Exchange in July 2004. Ticker symbol is PHC.

Plant Health Care's products are aimed at the agriculture and landscape industries and are environmentally beneficial. Through the commercialisation of these products, Plant Health Care is capitalising on current long-term trends toward natural systems and biological products for plant care and soil and water management. Further information is available at: www.planthealthcare.com