

“We are planning to launch a new bioprocess controller in Q1 2021”

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Bioprocess engineers develop and produce a multitude of products and ingredients available today.



Their applications are diverse, and the products can be found in pharmaceutical, chemical, and nutrition industries. With an integrated portfolio comprising software, instruments, consumables, and services, Eppendorf can satisfy the demands of bioprocess development through production. To find out about what major is in store at Eppendorf Bioprocess, BioSpectrum Asia spoke to Richard Mirro, Business Manager, Bioprocess at Eppendorf, Inc, US.

What are the current opportunities and challenges at Eppendorf Bioprocess?

Eppendorf serves the upstream bioprocess market with scalable bioprocess systems, reusable and single-use bioreactors and fermenters, and software solutions. This market is an extremely diverse landscape including therapeutics, food, chemicals, and biofuels. Both challenges and opportunities arise from this diversity. Finding the right balance between dedicated bioreactors serving limited market segments, and supplying flexible bioprocess controllers and software capable of supporting any process requirements is an ongoing challenge. However, serving various segments may compensate market fluctuations. Exponential growth and investment within some biotechnology market areas, particularly vaccine research and development, have significantly increased demand and buffered slowdowns in other market segments. Technology-wise, we observe a trend towards decreasing vessel sizes and single-use solutions, especially in the field of biologics. This clearly favours the Eppendorf single-use bioreactor portfolio, currently covering working volumes up to 50 L, but also our reusable

solutions at small and bench scale. As indicated, bioprocess applications and techniques change and so need to do our products. Balancing new product introductions and continuing support of legacy equipment is another challenge.

How is the company responding to the pandemic? What all steps have been taken so far?

Eppendorf is continuing to strive to meet our customers' expectations for product supply and availability. Production, employees, supply chain, and service are our pillars for stable business operation. At Eppendorf bioprocess we prioritise COVID-related projects expediting the manufacture and shipment of these opportunities when possible. We monitor and adjust to possible supply shortages and increased lead times from suppliers to ensure continuous production. In addition, we prepare for a possible spike in business as previously locked-down countries and regions come back online. We strive to enable our customers and employees to use the full potential of the remote capabilities of our bioprocess instruments and software. In times of travel restrictions, our technical and application specialists offer remote training and remote service and installation whenever possible. Many of our bioprocess control systems allow for remote system monitoring and control, which can help reducing the time the user needs to spend in the lab.

What are the strategies in store for the post-covid era? Anything particular for the APAC region?

We are not making any fundamental changes to our business strategy because of COVID-19, because we believe we have a strong and sustainable long-term strategy. However, some elements of our strategy including digitalisation, the introduction of innovative solutions and the expansion of addressable market are being expedited.

What would be the impact of COVID-19 on the bioprocess industry?

COVID-19 will impact the bioprocess industry at various levels. Currently, I assume budgets to be redistributed. In some organisations, non-essential product development programs currently may receive reduced funding as budgets get shifted to vaccine-related projects. Economic difficulties may cause the recession of non-COVID related bioprocess industries. As a long-term effect of COVID-19, I expect an increase in local manufacturing capabilities to respond more quickly to future pandemics. Furthermore, new supply chain models for critical consumables are likely to become commonplace. The current pandemic is fostering an increasing acceptance of virtual communication. The trend towards a decreased reliance on and interest in (in-person) industry conferences and trade shows may continue in the future.

How was the previous FY for the company and what are the expectations from the current one?

Fiscal year 2019 was a strong year for the global life science market, and Eppendorf was able to take advantage of the positive dynamic growth in this sector. Overall, the Eppendorf Group's business development was very good. Nearly all the Group's divisions and all regions developed positively. In comparison with the same period in the previous year, this corresponds to an increase of 10.2 per cent (prior year: 5.6 per cent). As a result of the rapid spread of the coronavirus since the beginning of 2020, the entire world has been experiencing significant economic upheaval. Even so, Eppendorf is well and strongly positioned with competitive products for a variety of markets and applications. In line with the company's mission, the Eppendorf Group will do its part to support research aiming to combat the corona pandemic through its devices, consumables and services.

What are the major plans for 2021?

At Eppendorf Bioprocess we are planning a major product launch in Q1 2021 including a new bioprocess controller and consumables targeting clinical and production-scale upstream bioprocesses. In addition, we are going to present continued product enhancements and new feature releases across the entire product portfolio, including small scale, bench scale and production scale bioprocess instruments as well as our consumables according to our product agile release strategy.

What are the major investment and expansion plans at Eppendorf Bioprocess?

The positive development of the Eppendorf Group during the past fiscal year shows that Eppendorf has succeeded in implementing its growth strategy. Notable examples are Eppendorf's digitalisation initiative. Eppendorf again invested heavily in many of its worldwide locations with a view to either expanding or modifying them. A major focus is the ongoing renewal of the product portfolio. As part of the innovation initiative, agile product development was implemented as a standard throughout Eppendorf's global operations in 2019. SciVario twin, the newest bioprocess controller from Eppendorf was one of the first products developed following the agile product development process. New products will be released following an agile process, increasing our innovation pace, response to customer and market needs and ensuring and flexibility.

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