Ag & Vet Weekly

Monday December 16 – Friday December 20, 2019

All the news on ASX-listed agriculture and veterinary companies

*** DEC 20: ASX DOWN, AVW-45 UP: AVECHO UP 14%; OPYL DOWN 21%**

*** AG & VET WEEKLY SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

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*** ABARES: 'CLIMATE VARIABILITY' CUTS FARM PROFITS 22%**

*** VETPARTNERS $250m NATIONAL VETERINARY TAKE OVER**

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*** HOT DRY CONDITION REDUCE COSTA BERRIES**

*** ANATARA: 'GARP ENHANCES ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES IN MICE'**

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*** ROOTS, SEACH PARTNER ON MARIJUANA RZTO STUDY**

*** CANN GROUP, IDT 1st COMMERCIAL MARIJUANA PRODUCT**

*** AUSCANN COMPLETES TESTING OF MARIJUANA HARD-SHELL CAPSULES**

*** CANN GLOBAL, KOEGAS SOUTH AFRICA MARIJUANA J-V**

*** MGC SHIPS MARIJUANA COGNICANN FOR DEMENTIA, ALZHEIMER'S**

*** PERPETUAL TAKES 6.3% OF ELDERS; PENDAL GROUP REDUCES TO 4.9%**

*** FONTERRA TAKES 14% OF CHILE'S PROLESUR**

*** PERENNIAL REDUCES TO 8% OF NATIONAL VETERINARY CARE**

*** INVESCO QUITS NATIONAL VETERINARY CARE**

*** JAMBER TAKES 12% OF CRESO**

*** ELIXINOL TO RELEASE 78m ASX ESCROW SHARES**

*** ECOFIBRE RELEASES 2.3m ESCROW SHARES**

*** MGC REMOVED FROM BNY MELLON PERSHING LIST**

*** FONTERRA APPOINTS TEH-HAN CHOW INTERIM CHINA CEO**

*** ELIXINOL LOSES EXECUTIVE PAUL BENHAIM, CONTINUES AS DIRECTOR**

*** CANN GROUP LOSES DIRECTOR NEIL BELOT**

*** THC APPOINTS ANGELA MACQUIRE COO**

MARKET REPORT

The Australian stock market was down 0.25 percent on Friday December 20, with the ASX200 down 16.8 points to 6816.3 points. Nineteen of the AVW-45 stocks were up, 14 fell, seven traded unchanged and five were untraded.

Avecho was the best, up 0.05 cents or 14.3 percent to 0.4 cents, with 698,000 shares traded. Roots climbed 7.1 percent; Palla and Regeneus were up more than six percent; Ecofibre, Pharmaust and Terragen were up five percent or more; Anatara improved 4.4 percent; Clover and Costa climbed more than three percent; Primary Hemp, Seafarms and Select rose two percent or more; Bubs and Synlait were up more than one percent; with Bega, National Veterinary, Nufarm and Tassal up by less than one percent.

Opyl led the falls, down 3.5 cents or 21.2 percent to 13 cents, with 35,966 shares traded. Ocean Grown Abalone fell 10.3 percent; Cannpal and Elixinol lost more than eight percent; Cann Global was down 6.7 percent; Apiam fell 4.5 percent; Althea, Auscann, Clean Seas and Memphasys shed two percent or more; Cann Group and THC lost more than one percent; with A2 and Ridley down by less than one percent.

AG & VET WEEKLY SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Ag & Vet Weekly is proud to publish its 20th Edition and the last for 2019.

We shall take a four-week holiday over the extremely hot Australian summer and come back ready for a big year of innovation in the agriculture and veterinary industries.

We would like to thank Cannpal's Layton Mills for pushing Biotech Daily to expand to Ag & Vet, as well as all our founding subscribers, especially David Williams of Kidder Williams who was the first to fill in the subscription form.

Ag & Vet Weekly believes the future belongs to innovation, and have been impressed to learn the stories behind innovative agriculture and veterinary companies including Nanollose, Wide Open Agriculture, Clean Seas and Terragen (see below).

We have not editorialized on Climate Change, because the publication is directed to companies that understand science, rather than those who reject the facts that confront them. If you want to know what "adaptation" to a world without action on Climate Change looks like, take three hours to watch Kevin Costner's Waterworld over the summer break – preferably with your children or grand-children. You'll get the idea.

While we are away, the sector will be monitored for any important announcements, noting any company that tries to bury bad news on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve.

Finally, a special thank you to all our staff: Tim (Dr) Boreham, Alex Langsam (deputy editor and head of information technology), Alice Lynch (assistant check editor), Rebekah Andrews and Tobias Serr-Li.

We shall return with a bumper 'while you were away' edition on Monday January 20, and wish all our readers an excellent Summer Solstice, Channukah, Christmas and Hogmanay/New Year.

David Langsam, Editor

DR BOREHAM'S CRUCIBLE: TERRAGEN HOLDINGS

By TIM BOREHAM

ASX code: TGH

Share price: 19 cents;

Shares on issue: 186,820,902;

Market cap: $35.5 million

Chief executive officer: Justus Homburg

Board: Dr Paul Schober (chair), Justus Homburg, Sam Brougham, Dr Greg Robinson, Dr John Ryals, Ingrid van Dijken

Financials (year to June 30 2019)*: revenue $981,000 (up 15%), loss before interest, tax depreciation and amortization $3.55 million (previously $4.54 million deficit), after tax loss $3.21 million (previously $3.44 million loss), cash of $1.83 million**.**

***** From IPO prospectus. At that time Terragen was an unlisted public entity.
****** The company raised $20 million in this month's initial public offer to list on the ASX

Major shareholders: Sam Brougham (Stamina Pty Ltd, Crofton Park Development) 6.3%, Rubi Holdings (John Rubino super fund) 2.25%, Washington H Soul Pattinson 2.14%, Dempsey Capital (Greg Robinson) 2.14%, Scobie D Ward 2.14%, Action Always Pty Ltd 2%.

For the last century, intensive agriculture has done a damned fine job of keeping the world's swelling populace - or at least the part of it known as the western world - well nourished.

CEO Justus Homburg says that Mother Earth is starting to show signs of productivity fatigue, with both arable land and the yields on the available acreages declining.

An exponent of "biological agriculture", ASX newcomer Terragen has developed products that address soil health, plant productivity and animal health and nutrition without relying on chemical fertilizers, pesticides or antibiotics.

"The cumulative effects from decades of increasing reliance on - and often inappropriate use of - these inputs has led to many unintended detrimental consequences which are increasingly evident to farmers," the company says.

Despite the $20 million offer being oversubscribed, Terragen shares closed at 20 cents on the December 11 debut, shy of the 25 cents listing price.

The offer was underwritten by brokers Bell Potter and Evans Dixon.

What udder relief

To date Terragen has gleaned most of its revenues from Great Land, a live microbe soil conditioner. Its other commercial product is Mylo, which is not a warm malt drink but a probiotic feed supplement for production animals.

Terragen also has two veterinary medicines simmering away for production animals, notably dairy cattle.

One is Lactolin, a teat conditioner to improve the udders of lactating beasts. The other is Halo, an anti-inflammatory to treat dairy cattle with mastitis.

Halo also has potential to treat companion animals with mobility issues related to inflammation, such as arthritis.

To date, Terragen has derived most its sales from selling Great Land in Australia and New Zealand, while it launched Mylo in February this year.

The company is preparing to sell the products in the US, with an initial focus on the California-based dairy sector. For Mylo, the extensive feedlot cattle industry is also an attractive target.

Terragen is also preparing for commercial trials of Lactolin locally and in Europe, while Halo is subject to early-stage registration trials.

Mr Homburg says soil health is complex, because it depends on variables such as climate, soil characteristics and how the soil is used. “That why it’s taken us years to understand how to get all of those elements correct,” he says.

“You don’t just put Great Land on and walk away. You have to make sure the bugs do their thing under the most suitable conditions.”

Animal health is a little easier because it doesn’t involve the same variables: if Daisy the cow’s coat gets sleeker and she puts on a few kilos, you know the treatment is working.

The story to date

Terragen was founded in May 1996 by parties including Athol Hodgetts, a Tasmanian Australian Rules football legend who played for his local club Cooee, before joining North Melbourne.

In case you’re wondering about the relevance, he had links to the dairy industry.

The company was largely inactive up to 2009, but then hit its straps after acquiring the relevant genome-sorting technology from two Queenslanders, organic chemist Dr Wayne Finlayson and microbiologist Dr Karen Jury.

(Dr Jury remains the company’s manager of discovery sciences).

Terragen became a public company in 2014, after which it embarked on commercializing Great Land by partnering with select farmers (not just dairy cockies but macadamia, grape and banana growers as well).

Along the way, Terragen used independent research organizations to undertake validation trials.

A Fulbright Scholar, Mr Homburg took the CEO role in 2017. He worked for Monsanto for 15 years and was also the chief of the ASX-listed Progen Pharmaceuticals (founded by Dr Finlayson), Nestle's Vital Foods and Chirogen Pharmaceutical Technologies.

Dr Schober has 30 years of animal health experience, with roles at Eptech, the ASX-listed Anatara Lifesciences and Apex Laboratories.

Terragen has a close relationship with the University of Queensland's veterinary school, which conducts animal health and nutrition trials for the company.

In 2018, the company opened its research and production facility at Coolum, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Putting microbials to good use

Terragen sources the microorganisms - generally from the lactobacillus group - from soils, plants and animals and then creates a genomic profile of them.

The microbes are then tested against various targets, with micro-organisms combined to achieve optimal efficacy against specific target applications.

Mr Homburg acknowledges there are other microbial treatments on the market, but Terragen is moving away from treating just one deficiency.

"If you are trying to kill off a particular insect or disease [many of the current microbial products] work really well," he says.

"I wouldn't say so much that we're better than anyone else, just different. We are not just adding one particular microbe to the soil microbiome, but changing the whole microbiome's structure."

As a soil conditioner, Great Land is classed in the same regulatory bracket as fertilizer, so it did not need approval from the ag and vet gatekeepers. Ditto Mylo, which as an exempt nutritional and dietary supplement merely needs to adhere to 'generally recognized as safe' ingredient guidelines.

As animal therapeutics, Lactolin and Halo will require approval from the vet drug police, although that's not the case with Lactolin in the US where only a label notification and review process is required.

Mr Homburg says the company could develop other applications, such as fungicides which would require regulatory assent.

Finances and performance

The float prospectus shows Terragen chalked up $981,000 sales in 2018-’19, mainly direct-to-farmer sales of Great Land.

The company is in the “early stages” of generating revenue from Mylo.

The products are sold via agency tie ups with Elders Rural Services, Rural Co, Murray Goulburn and EE Muir and Sons.

The agents typically take a base commission of 20 percent, plus up-to another 10 percent based on on-time payments and meeting sales targets.

Of the $20 million raised in the initial public offer, $4.3 million is earmarked for Australia and New Zealand commercialization activities, while a further $8 million goes to marketing support for both the soil and animal products.

The Coolum facility is running at only four percent capacity and at full bore it would be able to generate $25 million to $33 million of annual revenue. This means the company can chalk up additional sales with little additional manufacturing cost.

Dr Boreham’s diagnosis:

According to Grand View Research, the biological agriculture sector was worth $US16 billion ($23 billion) in 2018 and is forecast to rise to $US32 billion by 2025 (compound annual growth of 11 percent).

The company says it has no “distinct competitor” in what are highly fragmented sectors.

While Terragen is harnessing the ‘feed the world’ macro theme, in reality its products need to be affordable, or else Daisy’s udders are going to remain swollen and sore.

Mylo, for example, sells for the equivalent of 10.5 cents to 12 cents per animal. But three separate field trials showed that the beasts were seven to 23 percent bigger when fed the substance, so it’s marvelous what a difference Mylo makes.

By now, readers might be wondering why Terragen is not playing in the human health sector with its microbial manipulation.

The answer is that the human applications are licenced to Servatus Biopharmaceuticals, an unlisted Coolum-based outfit headed by no other than Doc Finlayson. Servatus is progressing separately with its programs and it sounds like a case of ‘watch this space’.

In the meantime, Terragen is happy to assist humanity by promoting a farming future that’s organic, chemical-free and capable of feeding the world’s heaving billions.

Disclosure: Dr Boreham is not a qualified medical practitioner and does not possess a doctorate of any sort. He has seen enough natural fertilizer on media releases over the years to nourish a whole paddock.

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS AND SCIENCES

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences says that what it calls "climate variability" has reduced farm profits by 22 percent.

The ABARES Insights report, titled 'The effects of drought and climate variability on Australian farms', avoided referring to climate change, instead describing "climate variability" or changes in the climate since the 1950s.

In a section titled "How can governments help to manage farm climate risk?" the report discusses drought relief, preparedness, self-reliance and insurance markets, but omits reducing carbon emissions.

The report said average profits from the cropping sector had reduced by 35 percent, which at a national level amounted to "an average loss in production of broadacre crops of eight percent or around $1.1 billion a year".

ABARES said farmers were better at managing dry conditions over time, without which the effects would have been considerably larger.

Ina media release with the report, ABARES senior economist Dr Neal Hughes said that "while recent trends in rainfall have been driven at least in part by climate change, there is still significant uncertainty over long-term future rainfall" which would be an important area for further work.

"While recent trends in rainfall have been driven at least in part by climate change, there is still significant uncertainty over long-term future rainfall, Dr Hughes said.

"The implications of climate change projections for agriculture is an important area for further work," Dr Hughes said.

The report is available at: https://bit.ly/38S0dxJ.

NATIONAL VETERINARY CLINIC

National Veterinary says Sydney's Vetpartners will acquire the company through a scheme of arrangement for $3.70 a share in cash, or $250 million.

National Veterinary said the scheme consideration implied a fully diluted market capitalization of about $251.5 million and an enterprise valuation of approximately $325.5 million, based on 68 million shares and $74 million in company debt.

The company said the share price was a 56.8 percent premium to its closing share price of $2.36 on December 13, 2019.

National Veterinary said the board of directors unanimously recommend the scheme.

The company said Vetpartners owned and operated more than 140 veterinary clinics in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

National Veterinary said the takeover was subject to conditions including shareholder and court approval and, potentially, approval from the Australian Foreign Investment Review Board.

National Veterinary managing-director Tomas Steenackers said that "the coming together of National Veterinary Care and Vetpartners is an exciting milestone for both … businesses".

"Both businesses also have a shared focus on employees, education and wellness and will be able to offer a wide range of exciting new professional development opportunities for our employees," Mr Steenackers said.

"Together, National Veterinary Care and Vetpartners will continue to support and improve the broader veterinary industry across Australia and New Zealand," Mr Steenackers said.

National Veterinary was up two cents or 0.6 percent to $3.62 with 870,131 shares traded.

SYNLAIT MILK

Synlait says it has joined the New Zealand Exchange's (NZX) debt market, issuing $NZ180 million ($A176.6 million) in unsecured, subordinated, fixed rate bonds.
Synlait said 180,000,000 bonds would be issued at $NZ1.00 per bond, with an interest rate of 3.83 percent per annum and maturity date of December 17, 2024.
The company said the funds from the bonds would be used to repay a portion of Synlait's existing bank debt and the funding sources to support the company's growth strategy.
Synlait said that its listing was "one of the largest unrated bonds to list on the NZX debt market" since November 2010, and was the third new debt issuer to join New Zealand's debt market this year.
Synlait was up 11 cents or 1.3 percent to $8.68 with 242,825 shares traded.

OCEAN GROWN ABALONE

Ocean Grown Abalone says its fully-underwritten, one-for-eight, rights issue at 13 cents a share has raised $2,899,618.
Ocean Grown said it had applications for $1,875,602 or 14,427,708 shares and the shortfall of 7,877,046 shares had been placed with the underwriter Morgans Corporate, raising a further $1,024,015.
The company said the funds would be used for its Esperance, Western Australia feasibility study, the development of the hatchery and its 500-tonne a year grow out facility.
Ocean Grown Abalone was down 1.5 cents or 10.3 percent to 13 cents.

REGENEUS

Regeneus says it has received a $50,000 Innovation Connections Grant from the Federal Government's Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.
Regeneus said it was awarded the grant for its mesenchymal stem cell pain management study with Melbourne's Monash University.
The company said the funding matched its project spending over four months.
Regeneus was up half a cent or 6.25 percent to 8.5 cents.

MEMPHASYS

Memphasys said it has shipped the first batch of Felix sperm separation devices to key opinion leaders in Japan, India, Canada, Iran the US and China
Memphasys said the Felix device separated high quality sperm from semen, for use in human in-vitro fertilization, would be shipped with a total of six consoles and 320 cartridges by the end of December 2019.
The company said the majority of the sites receiving the first Felix devices were in countries believed to have a regulatory framework that matched Memphasys' objectives and timeframes, with New Zealand being in advanced discussions to secure an agreement, and devices to being sent to other sites by April 2020.
Memphasys said it planned for its staff to visit the sites in early January 2020, to assist with initial training and assessment activities, and had commenced the verification and validation process required to be completed before sales in the market could commence.
The company said it had filed a request with the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration for a pre-submission meeting, ahead of a planned meeting with the TGA in early 2020 and planned commercial sales in mid to late 2020.
Memphasys was down 0.1 cents or two percent to 4.9 cents.

COSTA GROUP HOLDINGS

Costa says that due to dry, hot conditions, it will remove "a significant part of the … annual raspberry crop and early prune some … lower value blueberry varieties".

Costa said that the crop reductions were due to lower than average rain forecasts at its Corindi, northern New South Wales berry farms.

The company said the Corindi priority would be focused "on protection of the perennial blueberry crops which will be pruned and therefore require a lower watering regime".

Costa said that there would "be no impact on our forecast for … 2019" but expected the Corindi farm to "experience some loss of earnings in 2020".

The company said that its "berry farms in Tasmania and far north Queensland [were] not affected by drought".

Costa was up seven cents or 2.95 percent to $2.44 with 8.3 million shares traded.

ANATARA LIFESCIENCES

Anatara says its pineapple-stem bromelain-derived product for human gastrointestinal disorders has indicated safety and enhancement of anti-inflammatory effect in mice.

Anatara chief executive officer Steven Lydeamore told Biotech Daily that the company had conducted a series of mouse trials that showed the gastrointestinal reprogramming, or Garp, supplement did not affect the uptake or potential activity when administered with probiotics and showed a synergy with anti-inflammation drugs.

Antara said the dietary supplement had been developed to specifically target inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome, and had the potential to reduce the dose of disease-modifying medications know to have negative side-effects.

In the media release, Mr Lydeamore said the data "adds to the strong scientific proof that our Garp dietary supplement has the potential to be game changing".

"Meeting this milestone keeps Anatara on track to an anticipated partnering deal by [the end of] 2020," Mr Lydeamore said.

Anatara was up one cent or 4.4 percent to 23.5 cents.

PALLA PHARMA (FORMERLY TASMANIAN POPPY INDUSTRIES)

Palla says it has "negotiated an early exit of a legacy manufacturing agreement with an non-opiate contract manufacturing organization Karo Pharma by February 2020.

Palla said the supply agreement was inherited as part of the acquisition of Palla Pharma's downstream Norway operations in October 2017 and was due to run until June 2020.

The company said that the early termination released about $3 million of working capital used as safety stock and allows it to pursue more profitable opioid-based tablet manufacturing contracts, freeing up more than one billion tablets of tableting capacity which could generate additional revenue from higher margin opiate-based tablets.

Palla chief executive officer Jarrod Ritchie "changes like this allow us to free up production to harness our competitive advantage as the lowest-cost, high-quality, vertically-integrated [narcotic raw material] producer servicing the world's legal narcotics market".

"It also allows Palla to explore more favorable contracts with opioid-based products on healthier margins," Mr Ritchie said.

"The early termination allows Palla to reduce direct labor costs associated with the Norway plant and improve manufacturing efficiencies," Mr Ritchie said.

Palla said it had a new contract with Karo to continue to provide its codeine phosphate-based tablets on favorable terms for a further period of two years.

Palla was up 6.5 cents or 6.3 percent to $1.095.

PALLA PHARMA

Palla Pharma says it has negotiated more favorable terms for its debt facility with major shareholder Washington H Soul Pattinson.
Palla Pharma said it had reduced the interest rate from 11.2 percent to 8.25 percent, had extended the maturity date from August 2020 to August 2021 and had amended the facility limit from $31 million to $16 million.

REGENEUS

Regeneus says AGC Asahi Glass has agreed to terminate its manufacturing licence and joint venture agreement.
In 2016, Regeneus said AGC would pay $US16.5 million ($A22.9 million) for exclusive rights to manufacture Progenza in Japan and take a 50 percent interest in Regeneus Japan (BD: Jan 22, 2017).
Today, the company said it had achieved the intent of the original agreement transferring its cell therapy manufacturing know-how to AGC and AGC leading the identification of potential partners in Japan.
Regeneus said AGC elected to convert $US2.5 million of their upfront and milestone payments into equity ownership in the company at a fixed subscription price of 16 cents a share, a 100 percent premium to the December 19, 2019 share price.
The company said that AGC would become the company's largest shareholder with about eight percent.
Regeneus chief executive officer Leo Lee said AGC had been "instrumental in advancing our commercialization discussions in Japan and opened doors for us in the market".
"Our mutual agreement to terminate the joint venture gives Regeneus flexibility to develop a go-to-market model where commercial partners can manufacture, develop and commercialize Progenza OA in Japan," Mr Lee said.
"Additionally, we look forward to AGC becoming our largest shareholder and participating in the growth in Japan and globally," Mr Lee said.

ANATARA LIFESCIENCES

Anatara says it has finalized the trial protocol for its pineapple-stem bromelain-derived dietary supplement for irritable bowel syndrome but did not disclose the trial design.
Anatara said its gastrointestinal reprogramming dietary supplement (Garp) was being developed to target both irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).
The company said it had begun the process of selecting a clinical research organization.
Anatara chief executive officer Steven Lydeamore said, "there is a major unmet medical need and significant market opportunity for an evidence-based dietary supplement for IBS".
"Meeting this milestone keeps Anatara on track to commence this human clinical trial in 2Q 2020," Mr Lydeamore said.

ROOTS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES

Roots says its root zone temperature optimization technology (RZTO) increases protein content in peas and beans for artificial meat crops.

In October, Roots said it was testing its temperature optimization technology on four high-protein crops at its Bet Halevi, Israel research hub, with planting beginning on September 10 and first-stage results expected by January 2020 (AVW: Oct 21, 2019).

The company said that the roots of two peas and beans plants were cooled with its RZTO technology and resulted in 57 percent to 67 percent more pods per plant for both the peas and beans when compared with uncooled plants.

The company said the first stage proof-of-concept study showed its technology could result in a weight increase per plant and more pods being generated per plant, with “significant benefits” for growers in a commercial environment.

Roots chief executive officer Dr Sharon Devir said “We are very encouraged by the results from this [proof-of-concept], conducted at our experimental farm, without the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides using our proprietary RZTO technology.”

“This is very promising for Roots as it pursues opportunities in the high end, organic artificial meat replacement industry which relies on industrially grown, high protein crops with heavy use of herbicides and pesticides,” said Dr Devir.

Roots was up 0.2 cents or 7.1 percent to three cents.

ROOTS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES

Roots says that with Israel medical marijuana producer Seach Medical Group, it will study its root zone temperature optimization (RZTO) technology on cannabis crops.

Roots said Search had been growing marijuana since 2008 and supplying it to patients with a medical cannabis licence issued by the Israeli Ministry of Health.

The company said the study would test the effect that RZTO technology had on the weight, salinity, acidity and soil moisture levels of cannabis crops.

CANN GROUP, IDT AUSTRALIA

Cann Group and IDT say the first commercial medical marijuana product has been produced at Cann Group’s Melbourne Southern cultivation facility and packed by IDT.

Cann and IDT said the cannabis dried flower was packed and labelled in 10gm bottles and would undergo stability testing, before the first sales expected by April 2020, allowing a commercial launch in Australian in early 2020 under the special access scheme.

Cann Group was down half a cent or 1.05 percent to 47 cents with 1.2 million shares traded.

AUSCANN GROUP HOLDINGS

Auscann says it has completed manufacturing and testing of its hard-shell capsules for marijuana medicines and has released a commercial sized batch for clinical evaluation.

Auscann said the capsules were tested to ensure product quality and were found to meet all applicable pre-defined criteria.

The company said the clinical evaluation would inform dose selection and validate it as a commercial producer of reliable, stable and standardized pharmaceutical products.

Auscann said it would progress to commercialization and would products to physicians for availability to patients by July 2020.

Auscann was down half a cent or 2.1 percent to 23 cents with 2.1 million shares traded.

CANN GLOBAL

Cann Global says it will establish a joint venture, Cann Global South Africa, with Koegas Medicinal Herbs to produce and distribute medical marijuana in Africa.
Cann Global said four South African locations would provide access to more than 1,500 acres with power and irrigation for greenhouse and broad acre growing.
The company said Koegas would hold 30 percent of the joint venture and it would issue Koegas 10 million Cann Global shares for its 70 percent, with Koegas managing personnel, logistics, government support and other resources, while Cann would provide technical, regulatory and operational expertise and access to networks.
Cann Global fell 0.1 cents or 6.7 percent to 1.4 cents with 5.8 million shares traded.

MGC PHARMACEUTICALS

MGC says the first shipment of its Cognicann for dementia and Alzheimer's disease is en-route to Australia from Slovenia and will arrive in the coming days.
MGC said the shipment of the marijuana-based Cognicann from its Ljubljana Slovenia facility would allow it to commence the 50-patient phase IIb clinical trial of dementia and Alzheimer's disease patients, in partnership with the Perth, Western Australia-based University of Notre Dame (BD: Jan 22, Nov 12, 2019).
The company said the trial would assess the best effectiveness and safety dose for symptoms associated with dementia and Alzheimer's.
MGC was unchanged at 3.1 cents.

ELDERS

The Sydney-based Perpetual and its subsidiaries have increased their substantial shareholding in Elders from 7,430,576 shares (5.25%) to 9,705,816 shares (6.25%).
Perpetual said that between November 8 and December 18 it bought and sold shares in more than 150 transactions with the single largest purchase 255,396 shares for $1,551,358 or $6.07 a share.
Elders was unchanged at $6.42 with 797,733 shares traded.

ELDERS

Pendal Group says it has ceased its substantial shareholding in Elders.
The Sydney-based Pendal said that between November 14 and December 17 it sold shares 181,340 for $1,151,278 or an average of $6.35 a share.
According to Elder's most recent Appendix 3B and the previous substantial shareholder notice Pendal, Biotech Daily calculated that Pendal continued to hold 7,680,271 shares or 4.94 percent of the company.

FONTERRA

Fonterra says that it has paid $NZ29.3 million ($A28.1 million) for 13.7 percent of Chile-based milk processor Prolesur, taking its ownership to 99.9 percent.
Fonterra said Prolesur operated in southern Chile and sold most of its production to Soprole, a Chilean consumer branded dairy company 99.9 percent owned by Fonterra.
The company said the move would allow Fonterra to simplify the relationship between Prolesur and Soprole and take steps to better integrate the two businesses.
Fonterra was untraded at $3.82.

NATIONAL VETERINARY CARE

Perennial Value Management has reduced its substantial holding in National Veterinary Care from 7,972,528 shares (11.87%) to 5,199,747 shares (7.74%).
The Sydney-based Perennial said it sold shares in various trades on December 17, 2019, with the single largest sale of 1,263,764 shares for $4,540,148 or $3.59 a share.

NATIONAL VETERINARY CARE

Invesco Australia says it has sold all its shares in National Veterinary Care.
Earlier last week, the Melbourne-based Invesco said it sold 4,165,432 shares between August 17 and December 18, 2019 for $14,376,495 or $3.45 a share and later said it had sold the remaining 3,425,070 shares or 5.10 percent of the company.

CRESO PHARMA

Jamber Investments says it has increased its substantial shareholding in Creso from 8,000,000 shares (5.30%) to 20,369,753 shares (11.73%).
The Sydney-based Jamber for the Amber Schwarz Family account, said it was allocated 5,825,250 settlement shares and acquired a further 6,544,503 shares in a placement for $1,250,000 or 19.1 cents a share on November 29, 2019 (BD: Nov 28, 2019).
Creso was unchanged at 12 cents.

ELIXINOL GLOBAL

Elixinol says that 77,870,572 ASX escrow shares will be released on January 8, 2020.
Elixinol said that after the release of the above securities there would be no securities subject to ASX restrictions with 137,894,112 shares available for trading.
Elixinol was down 5.5 cents or 8.6 percent to 58.5 cents with 1.1 million shares traded.

ECOFIBRE

Ecofibre says 2,259,212 shares will be released from ASX escrow on December 31, 2019.
According to Ecofibre's most recent Appendix 3B new issue announcement, following the release it would have 119,669,931shares available for trading, 3,384,582 shares in ASX escrow until February 4, 2020 and 191,907,744 in ASX escrow until March 29, 2021.
Ecofibre was up 14 cents or 5.4 percent to $2.73.

MGC PHARMACEUTICALS

MGC says it has been removed from the Bank of New York Mellon's Pershing Securities restricted list for Australian marijuana companies.

FONTERRA

Fonterra says it has appointed Teh-Han Chow as its interim chief executive officer for Greater China.
Fonterra chief executive officer Miles Hurrell said the creation of the role reflected the importance of the China market, and would sit alongside the other regional chief executive officers, Kelvin Wickham for Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North Asia and Americas and Judith Swales for the Asia Pacific.

ELIXINOL GLOBAL

Elixinol says that founder, former chief executive officer and chief innovation officer, Paul Benhaim, has resigned for personal reasons, effective immediately.
Elixinol said that Mr Benhaim would continue as a non-executive director.
Mr Benhaim said his trust held 54,623,008 shares in ASX escrow which would be released on January 8, 2020.
Mr Benhaim said he would not sell more than 10 percent of his holding for six months following the release from escrow and no more than 10 percent in the next six months.
Elixinol chairman Andrew Duff said the board thanked Mr Benhaim “for his important and long-standing contribution to Elixinol since its inception”.

CANN GROUP

Cann says director Neil Belot has resigned from the board effective December 14, 2019, following his resignation from Aurora Cannabis, Cann’s largest shareholder.
Cann said Mr Belot had joined the board in February 2018.
The company said that Aurora would nominate a person to replace Mr Belot and the Australian Office of Drug Control needed to assess directors for suitability.

THC GLOBAL GROUP

THC says it has appointed Angela Macquire as chief operating officer of THC Pharma, which operates its Southport, Queensland facility, effective from late January 2020.
THC said Ms Macquire had more than 30 years’ experience in the pharmaceutical industry in Australia and the UK and held senior managerial and technical roles at PCI Clinical Services, Leo Pharma, IDT Australia, Glaxo Smith Kline and Pfizer.
THC fell half a cent or 1.3 percent to 37 cents.