

# Biosurfactant innovator Holiferm joins Sci-Tech Daresbury and launches pilot plant

Holiferm, the award-winning University of Manchester biotech spin out that specialises in developing environmentally friendly bio-surfactants for use in detergents and toiletries, has launched its new pilot plant in the Techspace One laboratory building at Sci-Tech Daresbury.

Biosurfactants are a key ingredient in the manufacture of detergents and personal care products, but current mainstream goods primarily use hydrocarbon, petrochemical and tropical oil-based surfactants, which cause significant harm to the environment.

While environmentally-friendly products in this sector do exist, they use a costly yeast-based batch fermentation process. Holiferm has developed an approach which allows this yeast-based approach to be carried out as a semi-continuous process, allowing the delivery of green products to the mass market at the correct volume and price point.

The new pilot plant, which follows a prototype plant in Manchester, will allow Holiferm to drive forward this approach. The company's long term vision is to develop a range of sustainable, green biosurfactants that will eradicate the global surfactant market's dependency on petrochemicals.

Holiferm's presence at Sci-Tech Daresbury has been supported by a £400,000 grant from the Inward Investment Facilitation Fund (I2F2) set up as part of the £75m Business Growth Package introduced by Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region. Five Holiferm staff will be based at the plant, with a view to recruiting a further seven positions as a result of the new facility.

A fully commercial plant in Wirral, which would potentially create 25 further jobs, is earmarked for future development.

Richard Lock, managing director of Holiferm said: "We chose Sci-Tech Daresbury as we find the campus offering a unique one. At each stage of the process they've been extremely flexible and worked with us during the scale up stage and during seeding and expansion into fundraising. Being based within such a vibrant, supportive campus will be crucial in us achieving our aims of full commercialisation and industrial scale production, and ultimately, obliterating the use of petrochemicals in detergents and personal care products and helping to create a more sustainable world."

John Downes, chief executive officer of Langtree and chairman of Sci-Tech Daresbury, said: "Holiferm is developing a range of products which could prove vital in helping us to create a more sustainable world, and the company is an excellent new addition to our dynamic business community at Sci-Tech Daresbury and build the capabilities on the campus both in life sciences and materials, important sectors for us. I'm confident that the world class science facilities and collaborative culture on site represents the perfect environment for the company to truly flourish. The launch of the pilot plant is a really exciting milestone in their work manufacturing biosurfactants that are both cost-effective and eco-friendly, and we look forward to supporting the company's staff on this potentially game changing endeavour."

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, said: "These are tough times for the country and our region, but we are doing everything we can to protect people's jobs and businesses, while trying to attract and create new ones. I'm really glad that we were able to attract Holiferm to the region through our Business Growth Package – and I hope they'll be the first of many. It's brilliant news to see that they have their pilot plant up and running already."

"Retaining as many businesses, jobs and investment as possible, while attracting new ones will be really important in helping our region recover from the economic effects of this pandemic, but we're already making a start!"

**For more information visit: <http://www.sci-techdaresbury.com/> or contact Tom Carlin, 07827 957740, [carlin@thisisinfluential.com](mailto:carlin@thisisinfluential.com)**

