



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Predict Potential for Cow Longevity Earlier Than Ever Before** *IGENITY® profile now analyzes markers specific for productive life and dairy form*

Duluth, Ga. — October 1, 2006 — Through advances in DNA technology, a newly updated IGENITY® profile gives producers the tools to understand and improve cow longevity. Now producers can make more informed and confident selection, management and marketing decisions — earlier than ever before.

The comprehensive IGENITY profile — available to the dairy industry from Merial, a world leader in animal health and Select Sires, North America's largest A.I. company — continues to turn science into on-farm success by adding new DNA markers for productive life and dairy form both leading indicators of cow longevity.

"By using the power of DNA to identify and analyze genetic markers associated specifically with productive life and dairy form, IGENITY provides the inside information to help producers understand and manage the potential for animals to perform and transmit economically important traits," says Jennifer Daniels, business development manager of IGENITY. "Best of all, this information can be known early in an animal's life, rather than at the end of their productivity."

Recent research released by Merial and Select Sires demonstrates a difference of 3.44 months of productive life between a female receiving a low score of 1 for the productive life analysis, as part of the comprehensive IGENITY profile, and one receiving a score of 10.<sup>1</sup> This research also shows meaningful differences related to dairy form.

"Using even the conservative USDA-AIPL economic value of the PTA for productive life of \$29,<sup>2</sup> this extra 3.44 months could mean an additional \$99.76 of income per animal," Daniels explains. "Multiplied over a herd, the additional dollars are significant."

(more)

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The impact of productive life and dairy form on longevity has been well documented, but until now, selection efforts to improve longevity have proven to be difficult because:

- Heritability of productive life is low<sup>3</sup>
- Using traditional methods, productive life could not be reliably calculated until late in an animal's life<sup>4</sup>
- Selecting for lower dairy form has usually meant selecting for lower milk production

Now the industry is learning that ignoring these traits can significantly decrease on-farm profitability.<sup>5</sup>

Because productive life is recorded so late in life, longevity potential is extremely difficult to predict. Industry experts have long argued that genetic evaluation of productive life should be supplemented with other information to improve reliability.<sup>6</sup>

"The new IGENITY profile, which includes analysis for both productive life and dairy form, provides a viable alternative for early and accurate predication of cow longevity," Daniels says. "As part of the comprehensive IGENITY profile, this inside information is available to producers at a cost-effective price and all from a single DNA sample."

In recent months, IGENITY has introduced a first of its kind in the industry approach to DNA analysis — called a profile. This profile approach combines multiple DNA analysis for a growing number of economically important traits, including milk production traits, coat color, genetic recessives and cheese production proteins — in addition to the longevity-related traits of dairy form and productive life.

"The profile approach to DNA analysis helps producers better understand and manage this new technology," Daniels says. "Using this advanced information from a comprehensive IGENITY profile along with other traditional selection tools like PTAs, producers can now make the best decision possible with all available information."

Producers who want to learn more about the comprehensive IGENITY profile can visit [www.igenity.com](http://www.igenity.com), call (877) IGENITY or (877) 443-6489, or talk to a Merial or Select Sires sales representative.

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,000 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2005 sales were in excess of \$1.9 billion. Merial Limited is a joint venture between Merck & Co. and sanofi-aventis. For more information, please see [www.merial.com](http://www.merial.com).

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<sup>1</sup> Data on file at Merial (IGENITY profile for dairy form performed at University of Missouri; IGENITY profile for productive life performed at University of Nebraska).

<sup>2</sup> VanRaden and Multi-State Project S-1008. 2006. <http://www.USDA-AIPL.gov>. Accessed September 22, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> de Vries A. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AN158>. Accessed September 12, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> VanRaden and Klaaskate. 1993. *JDS* 76:2758-2764.

<sup>5</sup> Dechow, et al. 2004. *JDS* 87:3534-3541.

<sup>6</sup> Weigel, et al. 1998. *JDS* 81:2040-2044.