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## **US Department Of Energy Awards Metabolix, Inc. \$7.4 Million To Expand The Development Of Bio-Based Plastics Production In Plants**

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Cambridge, MA Sept. 30 - Metabolix, Inc. is the recipient of an award totaling more than \$7.4 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to continue the company's pioneering efforts to produce polyhydroxyalkanoate (PHA) biopolymers directly in plants. The goal of the 5-year program is to produce PHA plastics and derived chemicals directly in switchgrass, while providing biomass for alternative energy generation. Direct production of PHAs in plants will yield economics competitive with those of existing large-volume petrochemical polymers. Program success will establish an economically and environmentally sustainable basis for a substantial portion of the world's plastics and chemicals with corresponding reductions in greenhouse gases and a reduction in the nation's reliance on oil. Metabolix will cost-share the \$14.8 million budget with DOE. The project will bring Metabolix together with academic and government partners across the United States.

The award, one of the largest of 11 projects announced by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, is part of the DOE's competitive Agriculture Industries of the Future (IOF) program operated by its Office of Industrial Technologies, aimed at promoting promising technologies for achieving a more sustainable basis for the energy, plastics, and chemicals industries. The Biomass Biorefinery Project is part of the National Energy Plan's initiative to foster increased development of bioproducts and bioenergy through agriculture. The project will help to develop the technology for producing chemicals, plastics, materials, and other products, using the ability of plants to fix carbon from the atmosphere.

"The Biomass Biorefinery program at Metabolix directly supports the Plant/Crop-Based Renewable Resources 2020 Vision and Roadmap", said Mark Paster, DOE Team Lead for the Agriculture IOF effort. "Achieving success with this project will help provide the opportunity to reach a fivefold increase in renewable resource use for biobased chemicals and materials by 2020, and will set the stage for a further ramp-up in use of sustainable resources beyond 2020."

"This DOE award will significantly accelerate the development of plants with economically recoverable yields of PHA biopolymers," said Dr. Oliver Peoples, Metabolix's Chief Scientific Officer and Vice President, Research and Development. "The low costs achievable with plant-crop production of PHAs will allow polymers, materials, and chemicals derived from them to serve as realistic, cost-effective, sustainable alternatives to many of the largest volume plastics and chemicals now made by the petrochemical industry."

Founded in 1992, Metabolix, Inc. uses sophisticated biotechnology to produce environmentally-friendly performance plastics and specialty chemicals from renewable resources. The company is a world leader in applying the advanced tools of metabolic engineering and molecular biology to create efficient production of biopolymers in microbial systems via fermentation and, ultimately, directly in non-food plant crops. The company's first generation polymers will be introduced into specialty markets later this year. In May 2001, the company acquired the assets of Biopol™ from Monsanto, supplementing Metabolix's already strong intellectual property position and opening several markets to rapid development.

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