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Goodwin Biotechnology expands in Plantation

South Florida Business Journal - June 16, 2006 by [Brian Bandell](#)

Florida's largest contract manufacturer of biotechnology drugs is undergoing an expansion expected to increase its production capacity fivefold in the next year.

Plantation-based [Goodwin Biotechnology](#), a subsidiary of India's [Wallace Pharmaceuticals](#), is \$1.5 million into a \$5 million local expansion. It will grow from 28,000 square feet and 50 employees to 32,000 square feet and 75 employees, CEO Stephanie Finnegan said. Just a year ago, it had 25 employees, but it has been hiring in preparation for its larger facilities and new equipment.

This is relatively fast growth for an industry with such high-paying jobs. But the company's long-term growth might be more in India than Florida, she said.

Goodwin Biotech makes monoclonal antibodies - proteins the immune system uses to fight diseases - for small to mid-size biotech companies. It has produced about 320 biotech drugs in its facilities since being spun off from the Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research in 1992.

Drug makers depend on Goodwin Biotech to establish manufacturing procedures for their biotech drugs in line with the rigorous requirements of the FDA.

This function is done at Goodwin Biotech's process development lab, which will be triple its current size when the construction is finished in July. That will give the manufacturing plant room to expand with one 200-liter and one 500-liter stir tank bioreactor. These tanks mix the proteins in a blood-like solution so they can be harvested as drugs.

The project will expand its production capacity from two kilograms a year to 10 kilograms a year, Goodwin Biotech Chairman Karl Pinto said. That may not sound like a lot, but its valuable products are churned out by the microgram.

"The most expensive product on earth isn't gold or diamonds - it's microproteins," Pinto said.

Goodwin Biotech's revenue increased 300 percent from 2004 to 2005, said Pinto, who declined to specify it, other than saying it was less than \$10 million. He expects 50 percent to 60 percent growth in 2006, on its way to having \$50 million to \$60 million in revenue by 2010. The company is profitable, Pinto added.

Goodwin Biotech needs a group of well-trained biotech manufacturing and research employees to execute its plan. Finding these technical employees in South Florida has been difficult, Finnegan said. Most of its new hires have come from biotech-heavy regions in other states or countries.

The colleges and universities need to add biotech training to their curriculums, she said. Even someone with an associate's degree can have a career in biotech manufacturing. These jobs often pay the equivalent of the salary someone with a four-year degree would make, she said.

Pharmaceutical companies, such as [Andrx](#) and [Noven](#), have also publicly stated that it's difficult to find technical workers in South Florida, although many colleges are investing more into these programs. Palm Beach Community College recently broke ground on a bioscience complex and Miami Dade College is launching a bioscience program. The public universities are also expanding their programs.

Biotechnology's high U.S. pay scale is the main reason Finnegan said the future growth of commercial biotech manufacturing will be offshore. Goodwin Biotech has already opened a small process and development lab in India, and it is considering that country for outsourcing pieces of its work and, eventually, a full-scale commercial manufacturing plant.

"India keeps churning out technical people who speak English and at a low cost point," Pinto said.

Pinto believes that having Goodwin Biotech oversee the manufacturing in India will give American companies enough comfort to go there. Manufacturing in India should cost 50 percent less than in the United States, he said.

"The focus will always be on innovation in the U.S.," Pinto said. "But much of the process will be done in India."

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