



**Media Release – for immediate release**

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## **Partnership forged to research M. bovis testing kits**

Auckland-based biotech company Pictor has partnered with Timaru-based South Pacific Sera to further research the development of invitro diagnostic testing kits.

These include an IgG antibody test for COVID-19 infection, which will provide a result in less than an hour, and a new diagnostic for Mycoplasma bovis (M. bovis).

Pictor is collaborating with the University of Melbourne on the M. bovis diagnostic and has been supported in developing it through a research agreement with the M. bovis Programme (Ministry for Primary Industries, DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb NZ).

Pictor chief operating officer Howard Moore said the prototype for the M. bovis test has now been developed and will enter a validation process.

“That is a major milestone in this project,” said Mr Moore. “We expect the process of fine tuning, and the validation process which will be undertaken at the University of Melbourne, to take a further six months.”

South Pacific Sera produces top quality products for use in therapeutic, cell culture, microbiology and immunology applications around the world. Pictor is upgrading its technology for developing and manufacturing multiplex immunodiagnostic kits, featuring the latest microarray technology, and SPS is installing identical technology.

Dr William Rolleston, SPS’s production director, said: “Our partnership with Pictor will allow them to leverage the manufacturing infrastructure at our Washdyke facility, where we manufacture products for many of the world’s major pharmaceutical companies.”

The process line for manufacturing Pictor’s diagnostic kits will include the latest microarray technology imported from Germany. Pictor will also use SPS’s automation capabilities to fully automate its process line. This technology and increased capacity will enable Pictor to focus even more strongly on its diagnostics research and development, rather than routine manufacture.

“Pictor’s patented immunodiagnostic platform can detect multiple biomarkers from a single sample of liquid, such as blood, serum or milk,” said Mr Moore. “This allows

for multiple diseases to be tested for simultaneously or diagnoses of a disease through the detection of multiple biomarkers for that specific disease.

“The process reduces the analysis costs, complexity, and sample volume. We hope that once validated our M. bovis testing regime can be a valuable tool in the eradication of this disease from New Zealand.”

During 2021, Pictor will develop a bovine panel to be used in the dairy industry which will allow diagnosis for Johne’s disease – which is found on many New Zealand dairy farms – while at the same time testing for pregnancy.

## **ENDS**

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Howard Moore, and request images, please contact: Mark Russell – +64 27 297 0178 or [mark@hotmetal.nz](mailto:mark@hotmetal.nz)

## **About Pictor**

Pictor was founded in 2005 by two entrepreneurial scientists, Dr Anand Kumble and Dr Sarita Kumble. The founders retired from Pictor in 2017 and New Zealand life sciences serial entrepreneur Howard Moore was appointed CEO. Since 2017, the Pictor team has expanded and now has 20 employees located in New Zealand, Europe and India. Some 250 laboratories in India are using Pictor’s multiplex PictArrays to screen for maternal infections, auto immune diseases and hepatitis. Pictor is commercialising its multiplex technology platform through the ongoing development of an expanding portfolio of diagnostic tests. In August 2020 Pictor established Pictgor Inc. in the United States and appointed Dr Thomas Schlumberger as its new CEO, based in the company’s office in San Francisco.