

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Early Trends May Point to Record Snakebite Season

**Melville, NY – May 23, 2007 – ALTANA Inc, a member of the Nycomed group** announces the start of the summer season with a warning that the 2007 snakebite season is already a busy one. The frequency of snakebites increases during the summer holidays because that is the time that snakes and people are most active. The number of bites in any given season depends on a variety of factors including geography, rainfall and temperature. Many experts believe that increasing development (for living and recreation) into natural snake habitats is a significant factor in the increased number of bites.

“We’ve treated a lot of snakebites and it is still early in the season,” said Dr. Sean Bush, Staff Emergency Physician & Envenomation Specialist, Loma Linda University Medical Center. “Depending on where you are in the U.S., warm weather patterns mean more snakes are out in search of food and water. Also, many of our housing developments coincide with snake habitats, and excursions into snake territory mean more people are at risk for snakebite.” Roughly 8,000 venomous snakebites occur in the U.S. each year. About a dozen fatalities are reported annually.

Recent media reports across the U.S. indicate an increase in the frequency of reported snake activity. The Scottsdale, Arizona Fire Department has reported 411 snake removal calls since April 1, up from the 353 calls fielded last spring during the same timeframe. Professional snake wrangler Bo Slyapich in Los Angeles has logged three times the usual number of emergency calls so far this season.

“With the increase in reported snake activity and the advent of warmer climatic conditions, we may be witnessing the start of a very busy snakebite season. We have worked very hard as an organization to help ensure hospitals are stocked with adequate supplies of antivenom,” said Jackie Beltrani, Director of Institutional Sales and Specialty Marketing. “We are confident that in partnership with the poison control centers we will be able to meet the challenges of the 2007 snakebite season.”

CroFab<sup>®</sup> Crotalidae Polyvalent Immune Fab (Ovine) is the only widely available antivenom for North American crotalid snakebite envenomations in the United States. Approximately 7,000 to 8,000 of the estimated 45,000 snakebites seen each year in the United States involve a venomous species. Snakebite season begins in mid-March and runs through the fall, the time of year when snakes are most active and people are most likely to encounter them. When a snakebite victim enters a hospital and requires treatment with antivenom, delaying care can be dangerous. Hospitals should have adequate stocks of antivenom to prevent treatment delays, even if they expect to see just one snakebite patient this year.

### About CroFab<sup>®</sup>

CroFab<sup>®</sup> is indicated for the management of patients with minimal or moderate North American crotalid envenomation. Early use of CroFab<sup>®</sup> (within 6 hours of snakebite) is advised to prevent clinical deterioration and the occurrence of systemic coagulation abnormalities. The term crotalid is used to describe the *Crotalinae* subfamily (formerly known as *Crotalidae*) of venomous snakes that includes rattlesnakes, copperheads and cottonmouths/water moccasins. With the exception of coral snakes, CroFab<sup>®</sup> can treat mild to moderate envenomations from any venomous snake indigenous to the United States.

CroFab<sup>®</sup> works to stop venom from destroying tissue. It does not reverse the damage already done by the snake venom. The more time that elapses between the time of bite and the time of treatment the greater the chance of complications. The phrase “Time is Tissue<sup>™</sup>” is often used to articulate the need to treat bites quickly to prevent tissue damage.

In October 2002, Fougera assumed responsibility for the distribution of CroFab<sup>®</sup> from Savage Laboratories. Both companies are divisions of Altana Inc. CroFab<sup>®</sup> was developed and is manufactured by Protherics PLC.

Additional information about snakebites and snakebite treatments can be found at [www.snakebitenews.com](http://www.snakebitenews.com).

**Important Safety Information**

The most common adverse events reported in clinical studies were mild or moderate reactions involving the skin and appendages (primarily urticaria, rash or pruritus), which occurred in 14 out of 42 patients. Two patients experienced severe allergic reactions (severe hives and a severe rash and pruritus) following treatment. One patient experienced recurrent coagulopathy due to envenomation, which required re-hospitalization and additional antivenin administration. In clinical trials, recurrent coagulopathy (the return of a coagulation abnormality after it has been successfully treated with antivenin), characterized by decreased fibrinogen, decreased platelets and elevated prothrombin time, occurred in approximately half of the patients studied. Recurrent coagulopathy may persist for 1 to 2 weeks or more. One patient discontinued CroFab<sup>®</sup> therapy due to an allergic reaction. Patients with allergies to papain, chymopapain, other papaya extracts or the pineapple enzyme bromelain may also be at risk for an allergic reaction to CroFab. For additional information on adverse events, please refer to the full prescribing information for CroFab available at [www.snakebitenews.com](http://www.snakebitenews.com).

**About Fougera**

Fougera is a leading manufacturer and distributor of a wide range of multi-source topical and ophthalmic pharmaceuticals in prescription and over-the-counter dosage forms, as well as treatments for emergency/critical care.

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