

● BUSINESS

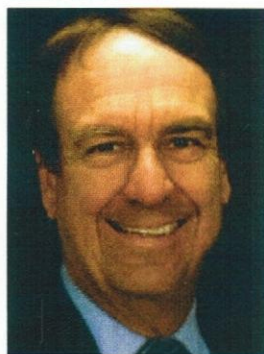
Rare focus: Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, headquartered in New York, has agreed to buy FoldRx, a biotech company based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for an undisclosed sum. FoldRx's lead drug candidate, tafamidis meglumine, is designed to treat transthyretin amyloid polyneuropathy, a rare inherited disease that leads to the build-up of misfolded protein deposits in nerves. The move comes less than three months after Pfizer set up a rare-disease research unit, also in Cambridge. Separately last week, Pfizer abandoned a deal made with Celldex Therapeutics based in Needham, Massachusetts, to fund the development a brain-cancer vaccine.

● RESEARCH

Go GOCE: The European Space Agency's Gravity field and steady-state Ocean Circulation Experiment (GOCE), knocked out by a software glitch on 18 July, has resumed transmitting data to the ground. The satellite could become fully operational again as early as next week, according to Reiner Rummel, chair of the GOCE mission advisory group.

Vulture haven: The numbers of three endangered Asian vulture species — white-rumped (*Gyps bengalensis*), slender-billed (*Gyps tenuirostris*) and red-headed (*Sarcogyps calvus*) — are now either stable or on the increase in Cambodia, according to an annual census by the Cambodia Vulture Conservation Project. Elsewhere on the continent,

NEWS MAKER



James Enstrom

The controversial epidemiologist's appointment has not been renewed by the University of California, Los Angeles. His work questions the link between soot particles and deaths in California — findings he says are being ignored by regulators.

many vulture populations have fallen by more than 95% since the mid-1990s owing to ingestion of toxic levels of diclofenac, a veterinary cattle drug present in their carcasses. But the drug is rarely used in Cambodia. See go.nature.com/pQLQaI for more.

Higgs hope: A physics advisory committee has recommended that the Tevatron, a particle accelerator at the Fermi National

Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois, should continue operating until 2014 at a cost of around US\$150 million, rather than cease operation in 2011 as planned. An extended run would give the Tevatron a chance to find evidence of the elusive Higgs boson, according to the committee's report. See go.nature.com/YGL4Tr for more.

● PEOPLE

Ghostbuster departs: After a decade running the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), Catherine DeAngelis will step down as editor-in-chief in June 2011. She will head to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, to establish a centre for professional medical ethics. During her tenure, JAMA adopted a tough stance on publication of pharmaceutical industry-funded research, prohibiting ghostwriting and requiring the clinical trials it publishes to be publicly registered. The journal has also called for independent statistical analysis of pharma-sponsored research.

● EVENTS

New Zealand shaken: A magnitude-7.0 earthquake hit New Zealand's South Island on 3 September, causing widespread damage to Christchurch, the country's second largest city. There have been no reports of fatalities. The tremor's epicentre was about 50 kilometres west of Christchurch, and about 90 kilometres from two active faults, the Alpine fault and the Hope fault.

THE WEEK AHEAD

12-15 SEPTEMBER

Two powerhouses of medical research, the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and the Wellcome Trust, are hosting their fourth conference on Infectious Disease Genomics and Global Health, which takes place in Hinxton, UK.

▶ go.nature.com/jzJtuJ

12-16 SEPTEMBER

The World Energy Congress in Montreal, Canada, discusses how to meet the world's future energy demands.

▶ wecmontreal2010.ca

12-15 SEPTEMBER

Agadir, Morocco, hosts the 3rd International Conference on Advanced Nano Materials, which includes sessions on biomaterials and energy.

▶ <http://anm2010.nanoac.org>

● AWARDS

Million-franc awards: Shinya Yamanaka of the Institute for Integrated Cell-Material Sciences in Kyoto, Japan, has claimed one of this year's Balzan Prizes for his work reprogramming adult cells to show the characteristics of embryonic stem cells. He will receive one million Swiss francs (US\$989,000), half of which must go to research projects. The other science prize went to Jacob Palis of the Institute of Pure and Applied Mathematics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for his work on dynamical systems.

BUSINESS WATCH

The fraught romance between drug makers Sanofi-Aventis and Genzyme — a courtship that has had the world of biotechnology on the edge of its seat — came closer to turning hostile last week when Paris-based Sanofi ended a month of closed-door negotiations and on 29 August publicly announced its intention to buy Genzyme, of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The move was intended to appeal to Genzyme's shareholders, who have enjoyed a nearly 30% hike in the company's stock price since news of Sanofi's advances broke in late July.

At that time, Genzyme's stock was hovering around US\$54 a share, driven low by manufacturing problems that have restricted

supplies of two of the company's top drugs and may not be corrected for up to four years. Sanofi has offered \$69 a share, for a total of \$18.5 billion: a premium that was rejected by Genzyme's board of directors on 30 August. The board called the proposal "opportunistic" and argued that the price failed to consider Genzyme's value once manufacturing woes have been addressed and further drugs come onto the market. But Christopher Viehbacher, head of Sanofi, said that Genzyme was "stonewalling", and that its management had "a history of over promising and under delivery". He has suggested that if negotiations continue to stall, Sanofi may attempt a hostile takeover.

