

Lest We Forget

Mark the 90th Anniversary of Armistice Day with Iconic Prints

News Site of the Year | The 2008 Newspaper Awards

TIMES ONLINE

NEWS COMMENT BUSINESS MONEY SPORT LIFE & STYLE TRAVEL DRIVING ARTS & ENTS ARCHIVE OUR PAPERS SITE MAP

MARKETS ECONOMICS INDUSTRY SECTORS COLUMNISTS MOVERS & SHAKERS LAW ENTREPRENEUR CAREER & JOBS MANAGEMENT

Where am I? Home Business Industry Sectors Consumer Goods



“ Don't let crusaders who see drug-injecting evil everywhere screw things up ” Gabriele Marcotti

From The Times

February 14, 2008

Syngenta is fighting an ideological battle

Carl Mortished

Mike Mack runs Syngenta, one of Europe's leading businesses, but in one respect he has almost given up hope on the Continent. Europe has turned its back on a technology that some believe will be essential for feeding the world in the 21st century.

He runs a Swiss company that is a hybrid of long-established European businesses of top vintage. Behind Syngenta are Novartis and Astra-Zeneca, the pharmaceutical giants. Their parents were equally distinguished: respectively Ciba and Sandoz, of Switzerland, and ICI, once Britain's leading industrial company.

ICI has disappeared, absorbed by Akzo Nobel. The British chemical giant was in decline for a long time, but it did have a seeds business. That was shed with the demerger of Zeneca in 1994 – and in 1996 Zeneca brought the first genetically modified tomato to the market place: a tomato puree called Flavr Savr.

It was clearly identified as GM and it was an instant consumer success, but it did not last long, suffering an intense and relentless assault, including lawsuits, from opponents of the technology.

Mr Mack says that GM seeds are only 5 per cent of sales, while European crop protection - herbicides and fungicides – is a huge business, serving an enormous agricultural market. However, it is the GM seeds that will grow fast. They account for half of an \$800 million (£407 million) research budget. Within five years, he expects GM technology to represent 10 to 11 per cent of the company's revenues. Mr Mack is an American, but the future, as he sees it, is in Asia and in the Americas. The genetic technology has left Europe to be developed on more fertile soil, he argues.

He said: "We don't conduct any GM research in Europe. We took all our GM research to the US years ago. Our financial ambitions are not underpinned by the EU because we cannot see that happening anytime soon. We are looking to the US, to Canada, to Latin America, primarily Brazil and Argentina and we are looking to Asia, primarily China."

More research money is going into China and seed development stations are popping up in Brazil. Still, the EU refuses to approve Syngenta's seeds, despite repeated clearances from the European Food Safety Authority.

It is an ideological battle about who should carry the burden of proof: must opponents show that GM is dangerous or must Syngenta prove it is safe?

For Mr Mack, the proof is obvious, because livestock eat imported GM maize and soya: "Every European gets a dose of GM every day."

The Syngenta chief was born in Detroit. His father sewed upholstery on a Ford Motor assembly line and he jokes that until he arrived at Syngenta, he believed that corn grew out of a can. His job now is to convince people that it can grow in a test tube and he thinks that Europeans will wake up to the cost of ignoring

TIMES RECOMMENDS

- Circuit City files for US bankruptcy
- Wall Street's early gains cancelled out
- Fannie Mae losses swell to \$29 billion

ADRO	RYW	HPF	EWG	YJ	SLK	IGV
-0.91%	-0.81%	0.81%	-0.84%	0.36%	-0.26%	0.57%
EWG	EWJ	EWK	LT	EWY	EWV	EW
-1.01%	-1.01%	-1.04%	-1.08%	-1.11%	-1.11%	-1.14%
EWG	EPF	EWV	EWY	EWY	EWY	EWY
-1.17%	-1.19%	-1.23%	-1.24%	-1.30%	-1.30%	-1.34%
EW	WGH	EW	EW	EW	EW	EW
-1.66%	-1.62%	-1.71%	-1.80%	-2.04%	-2.20%	-2.30%

Need to Know

Top business stories, daily business video and interactive heatmap

QUOTE SEARCH

Company Fund

UK, European or US Companies

ENTER COMPANY NAME

Summary GO

Company Lookup

My Portfolio

WORLD MARKETS

Europe America Asia



FTSE 100 4,103.78 -1.87%

DAX 4,584.93 -3.71%

CAC 40 3,217.67 -0.49%

More market data

Delayed by 15 minutes Data from Hemsco



Up-to-the-minute market headlines from our sister site, MarketWatch.com

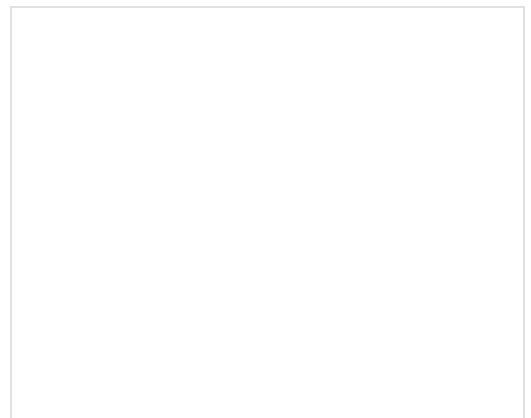
Charlotte Russe gets \$198.3 mln bid from 2

MY PROFILE | SHOP | JOBS | PROPERTY | CLASSIFIEDS

MOST READ MOST COMMENTED MOST CURIOUS

TODAY

- Royal Navy in firefight with Somali pirates
- 8,000 Beduins stake their claim as the lost...
- Dubai hotel issues etiquette guide after sex...
- Baby P's mother boasts: I'll be home by...



FOCUS ZONE

Asian Cuisine:

Explore your passion for food with the delights of Thai, Indian & Chinese cooking



Need to Know Social Entrepreneurs Asian Cuisine

James Bond Business Travel More reports...

Business City Guides

Overseas contacts and local business information



BUSINESS TOOLS

- Equities Data
- Funds Data
- Investor Information
- Portfolio Service
- Currency Converter
- Redundancy Pay

FINANCE & INSURANCE

- Business Insurance
- Factoring
- Invoice Discounting
- Commercial Mortgages
- Buy-to-let Mortgages
- Landlord Insurance

High Performance

Shire Pharmaceutical under the spotlight



technology.

He said: "When I go to Brazil or the United States, how is it that food is so much more affordable? When people look at the meat counter, they are going to marvel at the price of meat. They are going to have less of it and they are not going to know the truth. My hypothesis is that we lack the political will to tell the truth."

RELATED LINKS

- Frankenstein foods are not monsters
- Europe facing meat crisis over GM wrangle

HIDE THE FORM

HAVE YOUR SAY

300 characters left

* Name * Email

* Town Country

* Required

Remember me

[Terms and conditions](#)

SUBMIT

- PRINT
- EMAIL
- POST TO DELICIOUS
- POST TO FARK
- POST TO YAHOO!
- POST TO DIGG

ALSO IN CONSUMER GOODS

- Just when game seemed easy, Japan video games sales fall
- Subway sees slowdown as its chance to grow
- Former S&N chief develops a taste for Magners with role at rival cidemaker

ALSO IN INDUSTRY SECTORS

- Need to know: Gazprom; E.ON; Aldi; InBev
- Taxman rolls out guns for second offshore patrol
- Temperature set to rise by 6C, energy agency warns

Ads by Google

Seed Catalog
 Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds 1200 Vegetables & Flowers
 RareSeeds.com

Brazil Manufacturers
 Connect with Traders in Brazil Join Now!
 Alibaba.com

Organic Farming
 Learn how to farm organically Books, magazine on crops, livestock
 www.acresusa.com

- firms
- Sears to start holiday layaway program Nov. 16
- European shares shake

MONEY CENTRAL



House price crash: Five experts predict how far prices will fall

Money Central

ENGINEERING



US car makers scramble for funding

BIOFUELS



The answers are in. Find out where you are on the biofuel debate as Shell's Rob Routs gives his side of the story

FIND A LAWYER



Need legal advice?
 Take the stress out of finding a lawyer to help your business. Let them find you with our new matching service

SPECIAL
Need to Know
 The business world today

+9.382	+6.907
+5.199	+5.394
+4.724	+1.888
+7.209	+4.237
+1.879	+3.774

BUSINESS SERVICES

- Business Directory
- Business City Guides
- Business Travel
- Job Search
- Business IFAs
- Free CV Review

POPULAR SEARCHES ON TIMES ONLINE

- art school
- bollywood news
- chess
- fantasy football 2008
- fashion
- london film festival 2008
- mortgages
- need to know
- podcasts
- property
- recipes
- redundancy
- savings
- sudoku
- university guide
- US election
- wine

Shortcuts to help you find sections and articles

CLASSIFIEDS

- CARS
- JOBS
- PROPERTY
- TRAVEL

CARS

Volkswagen Touareg Altitude
 2007
 £30,000

Porsche Cayman
 2007
 £45,000

Mini Cooper
 2006
 £10,750

Car insurance
 Great car insurance deals online

Search for more cars and bikes

Place your advert now

Search Ad Reference:

SEARCH

Contact our [advertising team](#) for advertising and sponsorship in Times Online, The Times and The Sunday Times, or place your [advertisement](#).

Times Online Services: [Dating](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Property Search](#) | [Used Cars](#) | [Holidays](#) | [Births, Marriages, Deaths](#)
News International associated websites: [Globrix](#) | [Property Finder](#) | [Milkround](#)

Copyright 2008 Times Newspapers Ltd.
This service is provided on Times Newspapers' [standard Terms and Conditions](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). To inquire about a licence to reproduce material from Times Online, The Times or The Sunday Times, click [here](#). This website is published by a member of the News International Group. News International Limited, 1 Virginia St, London E98 1XY, is the holding company for the News International group and is registered in England No 81701. VAT number GB 243 8054 69.

