

## PRESS RELEASE

### **LEDA TECHNOLOGIES OFFERS SOLUTION FOR FOOD INFECTIONS WHEN USING (RAW) EGGS IN PROFESSIONAL KITCHENS**

**DEURNE, 18 MARCH 2002 – Leda Technologies, a young Belgian company, is launching a product concept that eliminates the risk of bacterial infection in fresh egg food preparations in the professional kitchen. The Leda equipment – a world-wide breakthrough – ensures that eggs can be pasteurised in the shell and stored for long periods in a perfectly safe manner. The equipment is also capable of perfectly cooking the pasteurised eggs in different ways and with a consistent quality.**

Thousands of people die annually as a result of food poisoning caused by the use of bacterially infected fresh eggs in the professional kitchen. According to the World Health Organisation, at least 40% of reported food poisoning cases in Europe are to be attributed to food containing infected eggs, with Salmonella playing a particularly prominent role (1). According to Dutch statistics, 1 out of every 300 eggs is infected with Salmonella (2). The EU announced last year that 165.659 Salmonella infections were reported and confirmed in 1999 (3). The elimination of Salmonella in raw eggs and the perfectly safe preservation of Salmonella-free eggs is a top priority to David Byrne, the European commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection. The immediate consequences often remain confined to vomiting, diarrhoea, intestinal cramps and fever. However, in persons with a weaker immunity system (elderly, patients, children, ...) the infection may prove fatal, as was tragically demonstrated in October 2001 at the Isala Clinics in Zwolle, the Netherlands. Danish statistics indicate that almost 3 % of all Salmonella-related hospitalisations have a fatal outcome (4). Moreover, food infections can in the long run cause incurable reactive arthritis (Reiter's syndrome) (5).

After two years of intensive research and development, Leda Technologies has resolved this problem by developing a heat pasteurisation technique for eggs in shell. In this process, Leda Technologies combines positive achievements of the old (conventional pasteurisation) and the new economies (intelligent software) for food safety. Leda Technologies' technique is protected worldwide by a patent. Eggs that are treated with Leda Technologies' equipment are guaranteed to be totally bacteria-free while retaining their nutritional value and cooking properties. All conceivable preparations (chocolate mousse, bavarois, mayonnaise, sabayon, ...) remain possible after pasteurisation and become perfectly safe. The eggs can also be stored for a prolonged period of time. Eggs that are boiled with the Leda equipment invariably offer the same perfect quality. The pasteurisation equipment's pre-programmed settings allow the cook to determine with great accuracy to what extent the egg white and/or yolk should coagulate. The equipment thus makes it possible to introduce and maintain a worldwide standard for soft-boiled eggs. After treatment, the soft-boiled eggs can be kept in an attractively designed breakfast buffet appliance at a convenient consumption temperature, totally bacteria-free and without coagulating any further, for the remainder of the day. The Leda equipment offers the catering community a solution in its pursuit of perfectly safe, perfectly prepared and perfectly storable eggs within the framework of HACCP and Good Hygienic Practice.

Leda Technologies' pasteurisation equipment has been certified by SGS Agrilab, an independent laboratory that is part of the Swiss Société Générale de Surveillance. SGS is the world leader in the field of verification, testing and certifications. Having tested Leda Technologies' equipment, SGS Agrilab confirmed that it is capable of totally eliminating an infection of up to 100 million Salmonella Enteritidis germs per egg. In addition, the

general germ count, which includes other bacteria, clearly remains within the legal standards after pasteurisation (6). Leda Technologies thus exceeds the US Food and Drug Administration's pasteurisation standards for eggs in shell. The SGS certificate further specifies that Leda Technologies' pasteurisation technique influences neither the natural vitamin content nor the protein content of the white and the yolk.

Leda Technologies intends to become the expert in intelligent food safety equipment. The company is committed to introducing other new applications on the market before the year's end. "The Leda equipment is positioned at the most crucial and verifiable point in the food chain: as close as possible to the actual consumption. That is why our approach complements the EU's efforts to tackle Salmonella poisoning at the source. Leda Technologies' applications perfectly fit in with the hygienic kitchen guidelines as prescribed by the European Union," says managing director Chris Van Steenberg.

Leda Technologies works in close co-operation with the Food Technology and Nutrition research group at Ghent University. Professors André Huyghebaert and Koen Dewettinck, food safety experts: "The way in which Leda Technologies has resolved one of the biggest food safety issues - salmonellosis in raw eggs - inspires confidence. It was by no means an easy task to pasteurise raw eggs while safeguarding their nutritional value and cooking properties. Leda Technologies' logic to protect food at the end of the chain proves that the company appreciates what genuine food safety is all about. The solution proposed by Leda Technologies was interesting enough for us to devote a post doctorate to it." This study is conducted in collaboration with the Biosystems Engineering research group at Ghent University, professor Jan Pieters and the Institute for the encouragement of Innovation through Science and Technology (the Flemish government's main research stimulating body).

Leda Technologies focuses on professional kitchens (hotels, company restaurants, hospitals, rest and nursing homes...) in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. The company plans to introduce its applications in the rest of Europe and to other continents before the end of the year.

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#### References:

- (1) Statistical Information on Food-borne Disease in Europe – microbiological and chemical hazards, Dr Cristina Tirado, Food Safety Regional Adviser for Europe, WHO
- (2) Productschappen Vee, Vlees en Eieren, Actieplan Salmonella Eiersector 2001+
- (3) Press release of the European Commission of 1 August 2001
- (4) M Helms, P Vastrup, P Gernet-Smidt, K Molbak of the Statens Serum Institut, November 2001
- (5) Reiter's Information & Support Group
- (6) Certificate SGS Agrilab