

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

**ATTENTION: Science, Biotechnology, Environment and Health Journalists**

**Teleconference at 1:00 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, December 5, 2006**

***ARE WE PREPARED FOR LIFE ON A BIOTECH PLANET?***

***Expert panel will address the flaws in risk assessment of current and emerging biotechnologies and genetic engineering***

**November 28, 2006, Washington, DC** – Bioterrorism, synthetic biology, nanotechnology and concerns about the viability of risk assessments for transgenic plants and animals are among the cutting edge topics explored in a sobering new book entitled, *Intervention: Confronting the Real Risks of Genetic Engineering and Life on a Biotech Planet* (Hybrid Vigor Press, 2006). Author Denise Caruso, former Technology columnist for *The New York Times* and co-founder and director of the Hybrid Vigor Institute, along with a panel of scientists and risk experts, will discuss these and other themes from Caruso's new book in a teleconference on Tuesday, December 5 (see details below). The panel will highlight the problems with using standard risk assessment methods for genetic engineering and biotechnology, the critical scientific uncertainties that biotech risk evaluations dismiss or ignore, and what can be done to correct the situation.

These themes will be discussed in light of historical examples, as well as the next wave of commercial development that warrants serious caution and re-examination in terms of risk: "pharm" crops that produce drugs or industrial chemicals; the potential hazards of gene silencing, which include both industrial sabotage and bioterrorism; synthetic biology; and nanotechnology.

Chapter synopses and copies of *Intervention* are available at <http://hybridvigor.org/intervention>.

**What: Teleconference: Are We Prepared for Life on a Biotech Planet?**

**When: Tuesday, December 5, 1:00 pm EST by conference call.**  
***\*This call will last approximately one hour.***

**How: Please RSVP to Alison Strock at [astrock@venturecommunications.com](mailto:astrock@venturecommunications.com) or (202) 628-7772. Conference call dial-in information will be given out upon RSVP.**

**Who: Moderator:**  
**Denise Caruso, author of *Intervention***  
*Caruso is the co-founder and executive director of The Hybrid Vigor Institute, a not-for profit research and consulting practice that began operations in 2000. For the five years prior to founding Hybrid Vigor, she wrote the Technology column for The New York Times.*

**Panelists:**

**Roger Brent, Ph.D.**

*Brent is president and research director of the Molecular Sciences Institute, an independent nonprofit research laboratory that combines genomic experimentation with computer modeling. Brent also serves as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Biopharmaceutical Sciences at the University of*

*California, San Francisco. In parallel to his academic work, he advises various bodies in the U.S. and abroad on functional genomics and computational biology, including the National Institutes of Health, the Wellcome Trust, the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and other parts of the US Defense Department.*

**Baruch Fischhoff, Ph.D.**

*Fischhoff is Howard Heinz University Professor in the Department of Social and Decision Sciences and the Department of Engineering and Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University, a past President of the Society for Risk Analysis and recipient of its Distinguished Achievement Award. He serves on the scientific advisory boards of the Department of Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency, where he chairs the Homeland Security Advisory Committee. He is a member of the World Federation of Scientists Permanent Monitoring Panel on Terrorism.*

**David Rejeski, M.P.A., M.E.D.**

*Rejeski directs the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. For the past six years, he has been the Director of the Foresight and Governance Project at the Center. He is a former representative to the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and also worked at the White House Office of Science and Technology (OSTP). Rejeski serves as a member of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Science Advisory Board.*

**Kim Waddell, Ph.D.**

*Waddell is associate research professor in environmental geosciences at Texas A&M University. Waddell previously spent four years as a study director for a series of research and policy studies on agricultural biotechnology, pesticides, Pierce's disease, and other related subjects for the National Academies in Washington, D.C. He has also served as the executive director of the American Vineyard Foundation, a educational foundation which supports research in viticulture and enology for the U.S. wine industry.*

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