

## News Release

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September 22, 2016

## **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Presents Displaying Futures Award for the First Time**

- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, fosters young entrepreneurs and researchers with individual mentoring, access to a global network and total funding of US\$ 150,000**
- **The winning teams come from the University of Central Florida, Kent State University and the Eindhoven University of Technology**

Darmstadt, Germany, September 22, 2016 – Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, continues to foster young entrepreneurs, now for the first time with the Displaying Futures Awards. The aim of this award is to identify new applications for our materials and to support the further development of these materials. The first awards were presented at the company's headquarters in Darmstadt on Wednesday, September 21. This year's winning teams have devoted themselves to technologies such as color displays that are readable in sunlight, liquid crystal sensors for detecting chemical gases and labels for monitoring the cold chain of medical supplies and food. The Displaying Futures Award is worth a total of US\$ 150,000.

In a preselection stage, more than 30 submissions had been narrowed down to ten teams, who yesterday presented their innovations related to liquid crystals. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, did not look for start-ups that had already been launched, but searched for teams from university or institutional settings. At the end of the event, a jury from Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, consisting of various specialists from all areas of the company chose three winning teams. The winners were evaluated based on the criteria of novelty, business potential, and impacts on society and the environment. The winning teams come from the United



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States and the Netherlands. A project from the University of Central Florida focuses on e-skin displays. These highly efficient display utilize ambient light and can also be used in very bright daylight. At the same time the technology could make it possible to produce displays that are so thin and flexible that they can be made into any shape. Kent State University is working with liquid-crystal sensors to detect the presence of hazardous chemical gases and display the results visually on a surface. The third winning team from the Eindhoven University of Technology has developed "fresh strips", a technology that changes color to indicate whether foods or medical supplies have been exposed to excessively high temperatures and can still be consumed or used.

The winners of the Displaying Futures Awards will receive exclusive mentoring from experts within and outside of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, access to a global network as well as financial support from Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. This year, the jury decided to support each of the winning teams with US\$ 50,000.

Commenting on the inaugural event, Dieter Schroth, Senior Director at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, who is responsible for novel applications of liquid crystals within the Display Materials business unit, said, "The teams here on site have impressively demonstrated the wide variety of applications for liquid crystals beyond displays and the great future potential of liquid crystals."

As part of its innovation strategy, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, specifically focuses on international exchanges with young entrepreneurs who are working on future-oriented business ideas. In addition to formats such as the Displaying Futures Award, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, has been collaborating intensively with start-ups and universities for years and also conducts, for example, the Accelerator program for start-ups at its sites in Darmstadt, Germany and Nairobi, Kenya. Moreover, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, regularly holds hackathons and invests in start-up companies via corporate venturing.

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**Picture caption:**

The three teams that won this year's Displaying Futures Award come from universities in the Netherlands and the United States. ©Photo: Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany

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Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is a leading science and technology company in healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 50,000 employees work to further develop technologies that improve and enhance life – from biopharmaceutical therapies to treat cancer or multiple sclerosis, cutting-edge systems for scientific research and production, to liquid crystals for smartphones and LCD televisions. In 2015, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 12.85 billion in 66 countries.

Founded in 1668, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is the world's oldest pharmaceutical and chemical company. The founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed corporate group. Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, holds the global rights to the Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, name and brand. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the company operates as EMD Serono, MilliporeSigma and EMD Performance Materials.