

Breaking News on Drug Discovery

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MonoSol buys UK edible films company

19/04/2004- **US water-soluble films company MonoSol has bought the UK division of Aquafilm, giving it access to substantial manufacturing capabilities in Europe and its range of edible films, report Phil Taylor and Dominique Patton.**

Aquafilm claims to have the largest product offering in edible and oral care water-soluble films anywhere in the world and last August launched its first commercial nutraceutical product, Orange C oral strips, based on its proprietary edible film technology.

Oral film strips have hit the mainstream in the last few years as a new way of freshening the breath, from companies such as Wrigleys. The gel-like wafers are slipped into the mouth and dissolve quickly to release a minty flavour. Drug companies are now exploring this approach as a way of delivering active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) for the over-the-counter and prescription drug markets.

Oral-dissolve formulations of drugs - usually in the form of dispersible tablets that dissolve on the tongue - are well-represented on the market. For example, Eli Lilly sells a quick-dissolve version of its blockbuster schizophrenia drug Zyprexa (olanzapine), designed to make it easier for patients to comply with their medication.

The market for oral film strips is less well developed. [Last year](#), US company [Zengen](#) launched a strip delivering benzocaine, a local anaesthetic, for the treatment of sore throat. At the time, the company claimed this was the first time that this type of delivery system had been used for an API.

The acquisition of Aquafilm marks the second deal for MonoSol in this area. Earlier this year it set up MonsolRx after acquiring drug delivery specialist [Kosmos Pharma](#) which has developed a film technology called FDTAB that dissolves directly on the tongue without the need for water or chewing.

Aquafilm claims to be the market leader in blown extruded water soluble films, and its acquisition gives US-based MonoSol substantial manufacturing capabilities in Europe. It also brings together a diverse variety of cast films, blown extruded films and edible film, expanding MonoSol's product range.

In addition, with the acquisition, MonoSol expands production of blown extruded soluble films in North America and cast water soluble films in Europe.

"Our complementary technology and our synergistic businesses lead to the creation of a stronger and more diversified global operation," said Scott Bening, MonoSol's chief executive. Financial terms of the acquisition were not disclosed.

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