

# Introducing

## ALPHA CHEMICAL & BIOMEDICAL LABORATORIES

Northern California is home to the Silicon Valley electronics empire and now the Telecom Valley telecommunication groups (including the French company Alcatel) in Petaluma, California. Petaluma is also home to one of the most respected U.S. laboratories for contract analytical services to the booming nutraceutical industry.

Alpha Chemical & Biomedical Laboratories was founded in 1982 with a focus on natural products chemistry and innovative methods development for botanicals. Alpha has grown up with the U.S. herbal supplement companies as an integral scientific partner for their R&D, quality control, label substantiation, and regulatory needs. In 1994, U.S. Congress passed the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) which provides a regulatory framework for the industry. This legislation opened the door to exponential growth for Alpha.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Alpha had already developed analytical methods for popular medicinal herbs such as Ephedra, Echinacea, Ginkgo, and Ginseng. Testing includes identity of raw materials as well as confirmation of active and marker compounds



Tom Miller Ph.D., Lab. Director, and Libby Harvey, President

in finished products (capsules, tablets, gelcaps, liquid extracts). A team of qualified scientists in this showcase state-of-the-art facility use GC, HPLC, GC-MS, HPLC-MS, FTIR, UV-Vis, and HPCE (High Performance Capillary Electrophoresis) instrumentation. Alpha is the contract laboratory leader in CE method applications for dietary



Petaluma CA from Sonoma Mountain (credit: Scott Hess photographer)

supplements. Alpha is registered and inspected by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, and operates under cGMP compliance guidelines.

Alpha's co-founder and President, Libby Harvey, is a chemist whose family roots include a chemical engineer father and a long line of Swiss pharmacists on her mother's side. In 1997 she initiated an educational seminar series "Botanicals – Let's Talk Science" with invited speakers who share details of analytical methods and technologies for botanical dietary supplements. Because of these ongoing seminars and other contributions at the national level, Libby received the American Herbal Products Association 1999 Volunteer Service Award.

Consumer interest in nutraceuticals is taking off in Europe as well. Through their link-up with Alpha, this well-established testing service in the US is now also available to Eurofins Scientific's European customers.

**Libby Harvey, USA**  
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## Authenticity has no Boundaries...

The 5th European Symposium on Food Authenticity was held from 9 to 11 June in La Baule (France) and gathered more than 200 participants from Europe and the USA, and even Australia, New Zealand and Japan! The 1999 edition was -once again- a success and presented an update on methods available to test the authenticity of food and beverages. Many different products were dealt with (alcohol, fruit juices, flavours, meat, fish, dairy products...) as well as various analytical techniques: molecular biology, spectroscopy, chromatography.

A new dimension was given to the Symposium this year with a presentation of the 5th Framework programme of DGXII of the EU Commission, providing the participants with the opportunity to meet their colleagues to discuss and initiate new collaborative projects.

If you were unable to attend, the proceedings are still available. Contact Chantal Ménard, Eurofins Scientific, Rue PA Bobierre, BP 42301, 44323 Nantes Cedex 3, France - Tel +33 (0)2 51 83 21 04 - Fax +33 (0)2 51 83 21 10 - e-mail : [ChantalMenard@eurofins.com](mailto:ChantalMenard@eurofins.com)

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