

# Mass. may gain biotech plants

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## Two firms looking for best location to make new drugs

By Todd Wallack, Globe Staff | January 3, 2009

Two unidentified life sciences companies are considering developing large biotechnology manufacturing plants in Massachusetts, meaning the Bay State could be poised to become a more significant biotech drug manufacturing center, according to economic development officials.

One company is searching for a 100,000-square-foot building with an existing 20,000-liter fermentation facility, a type of plant typically used to manufacture biotech drugs or ingredients. Separately, another firm is searching for 25 to 35 acres of flat land close to Worcester to build a 650,000-square-foot biotech manufacturing plant, which would be used to develop new drugs, according to the Massachusetts Alliance for Economic Development, a nonprofit that works with the state to help companies expand or move here.

Officials caution that both companies appear to be in the early stages of scouting sites, and other states or even countries are likely to be under consideration. The companies have concealed their identities by working through intermediaries, called site selection consultants, making it harder for local officials to discern where they stand.

"I don't think we have that good a feeling for how much of a chance we have," said Douglas Kehlhem, director of corporate site location for the alliance.

Massachusetts, already considered one of the world's hubs for drug development, is increasingly courting drug manufacturing plants as well.

[Bristol-Myers Squibb](#) is building a \$750 million biotech manufacturing facility at the former Fort Devens Army base. Cambridge biotech giant [Genzyme Corp.](#) broke ground on a \$150 million expansion of its manufacturing plant in Allston in 2007 and is building a \$250 million plant in Framingham. Several other companies, including Wyeth and [Biogen](#) Idec, operate biotech manufacturing plants in Massachusetts. Also in 2007, [Novartis](#) AG pledged \$65 million to develop a drug manufacturing research program at MIT.

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