

## YISSUM - TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER COMPANY OF THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY - A CASE STUDY

Posted Sunday, Jul. 17, 2005 on IsraCast.com

---



Cherry tomatoes developed in the Hebrew university

**A small Israeli company has been tapping into the knowledge of some of the best scientific minds in the country for more than forty years in order to bring forth new and innovative technology. The ability to successfully commercialize academic research is a goal shared by every University across the world and it is this dream that the Hebrew University turned into economic reality. Helping develop projects ranging from cherry tomatoes to cancer and Alzheimer drugs Yissum - TTC of the Hebrew University, has not only helped save lives but also received millions of dollars in royalties for its patents.**

Font Size:  

For the last forty-one years this Israeli company has been striving to transform some of the best scientific work in Israel into a technological reality. Yissum (the Hebrew word for "application") was founded in 1964 as a commercial company owned by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the seconded largest university in Israel. With more than 24,000 students on four campuses, 1,600 post-graduate students in Biotechnology alone and more than 320 researchers in Applied Sciences, the Hebrew University is a leading center for scientific research conducting nearly 40% of all civilian scientific research in Israel.

Yissum has a relatively small staff of about 20 people and is located in the Hi-Tech Park on the outskirts of the Hebrew University campus in Givat Ram. Despite its size, the companys long history and exceptional reputation allows it to attract a large part of the applicable research being carried out at the Hebrew University. Much of the work being done by Yissum revolves around what is known as technology transfer Simply put technology transfer is the process of converting scientific findings from research laboratories into useful products by the commercial sector. In order to achieve this goal

Yissum performs a number of tasks. The first is to locate potential applicable research and protect them by applying for patents in the U.S., Europe, Israel and elsewhere, and then try to commercialize the patent either by licensing the patent to major companies or by creating start-up companies that will develop the product themselves. The second important function of Yissum is to continue monitoring the application of the research in order to ensure the royalties will reach the researcher, the university and Yissum itself. Yissum discovered long ago that equity in profit sharing is one of the key points of technology transfer, and therefore has a strict policy of giving a substantial amount of the profits (usually 40% or more) back to the researcher and his team. This in turn helps motivate the researchers and promote even more advanced applicable research.

Ads by Google

[האזן לרדיו 102FM](#)

ולכל תחנות הרדיו בישראל  
בלחיצת כפתור  
[www.iradio.co.il](http://www.iradio.co.il)

Over the years Yissum has helped raise many start-up companies based on the scientific research conducted in various research

areas in the Hebrew University. A few examples are SENSOGENE, which among other things specializes in the fabrication of unique electronic DNA sensors and DNA-chips; BioCancell which specializes in the development of patient-oriented DNA-based therapy, and [CBD Technologies](#) which focuses on forest improvement and the development of biologically-based, clean processes for paper manufacturing. It isn't a coincidence that many of Yissum's companies are related to the fast growing biotechnology industry, as this wide field of research is especially advanced at the Hebrew University and also yields a large percent of Yissum's royalties. These royalties brought Yissum Revenues that rose from 17 million dollars in 2000 to more than 35 million in 2004 and put it in front of big names such as M.I.T. and Harvard in the race to commercialize intellectual property in 2003.

Over the past few years Yissum has had a number of high profile successes. Among the most famous ones are the development of cherry tomatoes by Prof. Nachum Kedar and Prof. Haim Rabinowitch from the Faculty of Agriculture at the Hebrew University. These tiny tomatoes sold 40 million dollars worth around the world in 2004.

A less known success but one that helped save countless lives and has also brought great economical success is Doxil, developed by Prof. Yechezkel Barenholz as a treatment for ovarian cancer and has had worldwide sales of 250 million dollars in 2003 alone.

The most successful project developed by Yissum in recent years is the drug Exelon for

the treatment of Alzheimers and Dementia. The sales of Exelon exceeded 420 million dollars worldwide in 2004 and may be even higher in 2005. Exelon should turn into a generic drug in the not too distant future but Yissum is already working on a number of projects which it hopes will be at least as successful as Exelon has been.