

NEWS AND VIEWS

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Touching base

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NIH acquires knockout mice

A new joint initiative funded by 19 branches of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) will give academic scientists worldwide unrestricted access to a collection of private mouse knockout lines generated by Deltagen and Lexicon Genetics. In the first year of the three-year contracts, the NIH will acquire ~250 independent lines along with detailed phenotypic information about each mutant. Officials estimate that it will take NIH-funded repositories roughly six months to expand the initial stocks of frozen embryos before distribution, though some lines should be available sooner. Complete phenotype information for each mutant line will be available in November as static reports, with searchable lists indexed by phenotype available by the end of the year. Ultimately, the NIH plans to make the raw phenotype data fully searchable and integrated with The Jackson Laboratory's Mouse Genome Informatics page (<http://www.informatics.jax.org/>). The acquisition of these private lines lays the groundwork for ongoing efforts by the NIH to develop a complete public repository of knockout lines for every mouse gene (the Knockout Mouse Project). Further information on the newly acquired mutant lines can be obtained through the NIH mouse page (<http://www.nih.gov/science/models/mouse/index.html>). KV