

Days of Wine and BIO

Several hundred BIO participants mobbed the Australian display pavillion for its wine tasting event. The wine-tasting event at the annual BIO conventions began five years ago to promote Aussie wines but now is used as a vehicle to draw biotech industry officials to the pavillion. Attendants dispensed about a dozen cases of wine in plastic glasses.

Peter Riddles, past president of AusBiotech, said about 400 Australians made the 24-hour flight to Philadelphia for BIO 2005; 90 from New Zealand also made the trip. AusBiotech negotiated with BIO organizers so that the Austrailians had the only social event at 2 p.m. today, which made it a popular destination inside the Convention Center. The Austrailian pavillion, one of the larger ones, is designed to be open to passersby. "We make it so that people just walk through. You always find a buzz around the Austrailian pavillion," said Riddles, of Brisbane.

Australian biotech industry has about 400 companies, including those in medical devices. One of the largest, CSL Ltd., develops vaccines.

- Bob Fernandez