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MR Solutions offers to maintain MRI scanners from Agilent

MR Solutions Ltd (Guildford, Surrey), a developer of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology based on cryogen-free superconducting magnets, has developed "a package of maintenance and upgrade solutions" for existing MRI preclinical imaging equipment from **Agilent Technologies Inc** (Santa Clara, CA) following the company phasing out the production of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and MRI products over the last two years (see *IN 6* (11) 6; online 16/10/14), coming to Agilent with the acquisition of Varian in 2010. Aim of the move is to "ensure that [Agilent MRI instruments and those from other manufacturers] stay abreast of modern technology", according to MR Solutions' press release.

"We have been approached, not only by customers who want to upgrade their systems, but also by customers, who want to make the change now to facilitate ongoing maintenance and future upgrade. This can be done at a very competitive price", Dr David Taylor, founder, president and CEO of MR Solutions, told *Instrument News*. The initiative includes an offer by MR Solutions to upgrade existing systems with the installation "of not only [MR Solutions'] latest EVO spectrometer for much better imaging performance, but updates on all aspects of the scanner".

There is no indication that this maintenance package has been developed with Agilent approval, as Agilent stressed six months ago that "our service agreements are seven years in length, and Agilent will honour the full terms of those agreements". Asked about any agreement, Taylor said: "There is a need and we are fulfilling that need." MR Solutions already supported customers globally, either

directly or through arrangements with local partners from Australia, Taiwan, China, the Middle East, Europe and North America, he said.

"Our magnet technology uses a cold finger that is in contact with the magnet. Thus the magnets require no liquid Helium at all and are dry magnets, and at up to half the price of other superconducting magnet systems," Taylor explained. Asked about competition in the cryogen-free market, he stressed: "MR Solutions is the only company to have successfully delivered cryogen-free technology to the market". He would not reveal possible partners for the magnets or other aspects of the technology.

MR Solutions was founded in 1985 to commercialise innovative MRI technology and sells spectrometers for clinical MRI, mainly through OEM agreements with medical instrument companies. Over the last decade, the company began to branch out into pre-clinical MRI systems for live animal imaging, for which it now offers a range of products with a magnetic field strength of 3, 4.7 and 7 Tesla, and bore sizes of 17, 24 and 31 cm

"The OEM business for clinical MRI systems is still a mainstay of the business, however pre-clinical imaging now accounts for the lion's share of annual revenues and employs 30 of a workforce of 40," Taylor explained. Of the over 1000 installations over the last 30 years, 200 are of preclinical systems, and Taylor has high hopes of the business developing ever more rapidly, especially with a major player in the market dropping out. Supporting this expected growth is Fabrice Chaumard, who joined MR Solutions in April last year as vp global sales and marketing. ■