

MERIDIAN BIOSCIENCE INC
Form S-3
September 26, 2003

As filed with the Securities And Exchange Commission on September 26, 2003
Registration No. 333-_____

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

**FORM S-3
REGISTRATION STATEMENT
UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933**

Meridian Bioscience, Inc.

Ohio

31-0888197

(Exact Name of Registrant as
Specified in Its Charter)

(State or Other Jurisdiction
of Incorporation
or Organization)

(I.R.S. Employer Identification
Number)

**3471 River Hills Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 45244
(513) 271-3700**

(Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number,
Including Area Code, of Registrants' Principal Executive Offices)

**Mark A. Weiss, Esq.
Keating, Muething & Klekamp, P.L.L.
1400 Provident Tower
One East Fourth Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
(513) 579-6599**

Facsimile (513) 579-6956
(Name, Address, Including Zip Code, and Telephone Number,
Including Area Code, of Agent For Service)

with copies to:

**William J. Motto
Chairman of the Board
Meridian Bioscience, Inc.
3471 River Hills Drive
Cincinnati, Ohio 45244
(513) 271-3700
Facsimile (513) 271-3762**

(Cover continued on next page)

Approximate date of commencement of proposed sale to the public: From time to time after the effective date of this Registration Statement as determined by market conditions and other factors.

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If the only securities being registered on this form are being offered pursuant to dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box. []

If any of the securities being registered on this Form are to be offered on a delayed or continuous basis pursuant to Rule 415 under the Securities Act of 1933, other than securities offered only in connection with dividend or interest reinvestment plans, please check the following box. [X]

If this Form is filed to register additional securities for an offering pursuant to Rule 462(b) under the Securities Act, please check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. []

If this Form is a post-effective amendment filed pursuant to Rule 462(c) under the Securities Act, check the following box and list the Securities Act registration statement number of the earlier effective registration statement for the same offering. []

If delivery of the prospectus is expected to be made pursuant to Rule 434, please check the following box. []

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

| Title of Each Class of Securities to be Registered | Amount to be Registered | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price Per Security | Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price | Amount of Registration Fee |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|----------------------------|
| Primary Offering: Debt Securities, Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Warrants, Depository Shares, Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units | (1) | (1) | \$60,000,000 (2)(3) | \$4,854 |
| Secondary offering: Common Stock | 1,000,000 shares | \$9.92 (4) | \$9,920,000 | \$804 |
| Total | Not applicable | Not applicable | \$70,300,000 | \$5,657 |

(1) Not required pursuant to Rule 457(o).

(2) Such indeterminate number or principal amount of Debt Securities, Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Warrants, Depository Shares, Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units of Meridian Bioscience, Inc. as may from time to time be issued at indeterminate prices. The amount registered is in United States dollars or the equivalent thereof in any other currency, currency unit or units, or composite currency or currencies.

(3) Excluding accrued interest and distributions, if any.

(4) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457.

THE REGISTRANT HEREBY AMENDS THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT ON SUCH DATE OR DATES AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO DELAY ITS EFFECTIVE DATE UNTIL THE REGISTRANT SHALL FILE A FURTHER AMENDMENT WHICH SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THIS REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL THEREAFTER BECOME EFFECTIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(a) OF THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933, OR UNTIL THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE ON SUCH DATE AS THE COMMISSION, ACTING PURSUANT TO SAID SECTION 8(a), MAY DETERMINE.

The information in this prospectus is not complete and may be changed. We may not sell these securities until the registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission is effective. This prospectus is not an offer to sell these securities and it is not soliciting an offer to buy these securities in any state where the offer or sale is not permitted.

SUBJECT TO COMPLETION, DATED SEPTEMBER 26, 2003

Prospectus

\$60,000,000

[Meridian Logo]

Meridian Bioscience, Inc.

Debt Securities, Common Stock, Preferred Stock, Warrants,
Depository Shares, Stock Purchase Contracts and Stock Purchase Units

Selling Shareholder

1,000,000 Shares of Common Stock

Meridian Bioscience, Inc. may offer up to \$60,000,000 of the securities listed above from time to time. In addition, the selling shareholder may from time to time sell up to 1,000,000 shares of our common stock. We will not receive any proceeds from the sale of common stock by the selling shareholder. This prospectus contains general information about these securities.

When we or the selling shareholder offers securities, we will provide a prospectus supplement containing the specific terms of that offering. You should read carefully this prospectus and any supplement before you invest.

This prospectus may not be used to consummate sales of securities unless accompanied by a prospectus supplement.

Neither the Securities and Exchange Commission nor any state securities commission has approved or disapproved of these securities or determined if this prospectus is truthful or complete. Any representation to the contrary is a criminal offense.

The date of this prospectus is _____, 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS | 2 |
| WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION | 2 |
| INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE | 3 |
| SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS | 4 |
| MERIDIAN BIOSCIENCE, INC | 5 |
| USE OF PROCEEDS | 6 |
| RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES | 6 |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE SECURITIES WE MAY OFFER | 6 |
| DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES | 8 |
| DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK | 14 |
| DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK | 15 |
| DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS | 17 |
| DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES | 19 |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND THE STOCK PURCHASE UNITS | 22 |
| PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION | 24 |
| LEGAL MATTERS | 25 |
| EXPERTS | 25 |

ABOUT THIS PROSPECTUS

This prospectus is part of a registration statement filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission using a shelf registration process. Under this shelf process, we may sell the securities described in this prospectus in one or more offerings up to a total dollar amount of \$60,000,000. This prospectus provides you with a general description of the securities which may be offered. In addition, the selling shareholder may sell up to 1,000,000 shares of common stock in one or more offerings. Each time securities are offered for sale, we will provide a prospectus supplement that contains specific information about the terms of that offering. The prospectus supplement may also add, update or

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change information contained in this prospectus. You should read both this prospectus and any prospectus supplement together with additional information described below under the following heading.

The registration statement that contains this prospectus (including the exhibits) contains additional important information about us and the securities offered under this prospectus. Specifically, we have filed certain legal documents that control the terms of the securities offered by this prospectus as exhibits to the registration statement. We will file certain other legal documents that control the terms of the securities offered by this prospectus as exhibits to reports we file with the SEC. That registration statement and the other reports can be read at the SEC web site or at the SEC offices mentioned below under the following heading.

WHERE YOU CAN FIND MORE INFORMATION

We are subject to the information and reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, under which we file annual, quarterly and special reports, proxy statements and other information with the Securities and Exchange Commission. You may read and copy this information at the following location of the Securities and Exchange Commission:

Public Reference Room
450 Fifth Street, N.W.
Room 1024
Washington, D.C. 20549

You may also obtain copies of this information by mail from the Public Reference Section of the Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Room 1024, Washington, DC 20549, at prescribed rates. Please call the Securities and Exchange Commission at (800) 732-0330 for further information about the Public Reference Room.

The Securities and Exchange Commission also maintains an internet website that contains reports, proxy statements and other information about issuers that file electronically with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The address of that site is www.sec.gov. SEC filings may also be accessed free of charge through our Internet site at www.meridianbioscience.com. Information contained on our website, other than documents specifically incorporated by reference as listed below, is not intended to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus, and you should not consider that information a part of this prospectus.

INCORPORATION OF CERTAIN DOCUMENTS BY REFERENCE

We are incorporating by reference into this prospectus certain information that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission, which means that we are disclosing important information to you by referring you to those documents. The information incorporated by reference is deemed to be part of this prospectus, except for any information superseded by information contained directly in this prospectus. This prospectus incorporates by reference the documents set forth below that we have previously filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. These documents contain important information about us and our finances.

| SEC Filings (File No. 0-14902) | Period |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Annual Report on Form 10-K | Year Ended September 30, 2002 |
| Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q | Quarters Ended December 31, 2002, March 31, 2003 and June 30, 2003 |
| Current Report on Form 8-K | Dated September 25, 2003 |
| Registration Statement on Form 8-A | Filed on August 15, 1986 |

All documents that we file with the Securities and Exchange Commission pursuant to Section 13(a), 13(c), 14 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act from the date of this prospectus to the end of the offering of the securities under this document shall also be deemed to be incorporated herein by reference. Any statement contained in this prospectus or in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus will be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this prospectus to the extent that a statement contained in this prospectus or any other subsequently filed document that is deemed to be incorporated by reference into this prospectus modifies or supersedes the statement. Any statement so modified or superseded will not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this prospectus.

You may request a copy of these filings, at no cost, by writing or calling us at the following address or telephone number:

Melissa A. Lueke
Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary
Meridian Bioscience, Inc.
3471 River Hills Drive

Exhibits to the filings will not be sent, however, unless those exhibits have specifically been incorporated by reference in this prospectus.

Information contained on our website is not intended to be incorporated by reference in this prospectus and you should not consider that information a part of this prospectus.

You should rely only on the information incorporated by reference or provided in this prospectus and the prospectus supplement. No one else is authorized to provide you with any other information or any different information. We are not making an offer of securities in any state where an offer is not permitted. You should not assume that the information in this prospectus is accurate as of any date other than the date on the front of this document.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FORWARD LOOKING STATEMENTS

This prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference contain forward-looking statements regarding our earnings and projected business, among other things. The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 provides a safe harbor from civil litigation for forward-looking statements accompanied by meaningful cautionary statements. Except for historical information, this prospectus and the documents incorporated by reference contain forward-looking statements which may be identified by words such as estimates, anticipates, projects, plans, expects, intends, believes, should and similar expressions and which also may be identified by their context. Such statements are based upon our current expectations and speak only as of the date made. These statements are subject to various risks, uncertainties and other factors that could cause actual results to differ, including, without limitation, the following:

Our continued growth depends, in part, on our ability to introduce into the marketplace enhancements of existing products or new products that incorporate technological advances, meet customer requirements and respond to products developed by our competition.

While we have introduced a number of internally-developed products, there can be no assurance that we will be successful in the future in introducing such products on a timely basis.

Ongoing consolidations of reference laboratories and formation of multi-hospital alliances may cause adverse changes to pricing and distribution.

Costs and difficulties in complying with laws and regulations administered by the United States Food and Drug Administration can result in unanticipated expenses and delays and interruptions to the sale of new and existing products.

Changes in the relative strength or weakness of the U.S. dollar can change expected results.

One of our main growth strategies is the acquisition of companies and product lines. There can be no assurance that additional acquisitions will be consummated or that, if consummated, will be successful and the acquired businesses successfully integrated into our operations.

We undertake no obligation to publicly update or review any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future developments or otherwise.

MERIDIAN BIOSCIENCE, INC.

We are a fully integrated life sciences company that develops, manufactures, markets and distributes a broad range of innovative, disposable diagnostic test kits and related diagnostic products used for the rapid diagnosis of infectious diseases. We also offer biopharmaceutical capabilities through our cGMP protein production laboratory at our Viral Antigens subsidiary.

Our diagnostics products provide accuracy, simplicity and speed, and enable early diagnosis and treatment of common medical conditions such as gastrointestinal, viral, and respiratory infections. All of our diagnostics products are used in procedures performed in vitro (outside the body) and enhance patient well-being while reducing total outcome costs of healthcare.

In addition to the diagnostic business, we are expanding further into the area of life sciences. Through recent acquisitions, we have the technical expertise to enable research efforts of genomics scientists in drug and vaccine development. The expansion into life sciences prompted

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our decision to change our official name to Meridian Bioscience, Inc. in fiscal 2001.

Our diagnostic product development strategy is to combine existing technologies with new product designs, both through internal or joint product development, and through product acquisitions, licensing or supply arrangements. Internal and joint product development activities focus on the development or enhancement of immunodiagnostic technologies and applications to simplify, accelerate or increase the accuracy of diagnoses of certain infectious diseases. Since 1990, we have acquired or obtained rights to distribute numerous products and technologies.

We utilize our resources to serve each of the strategic domestic and international medical markets it has targeted: hospital networks and clinical and hospital laboratories; outpatient clinics, and health maintenance organizations (HMOs); and new markets, including veterinary laboratories and water treatment facilities. We market over 200 products representing four major disease states through a direct sales force in the United States, Italy, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, supplemented by a network of national and international distributors.

Our principal executive offices are located at 3471 River Hills Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45244, and our telephone number is (513) 271-3700. We maintain our corporate website at www.meridianbioscience.com. Information on our website is not part of this prospectus.

USE OF PROCEEDS

Unless otherwise indicated in an accompanying prospectus supplement, we expect to use the net proceeds from the sale of any securities offered by us for general corporate purposes. Until the net proceeds are used for these purposes, we may deposit them in interest-bearing accounts or invest them in short-term marketable securities. The specific allocations, if any, of the proceeds of any of the securities will be described in the prospectus supplement.

We will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of shares of our common stock under this prospectus by the selling shareholder.

RATIO OF EARNINGS TO FIXED CHARGES

The following table sets forth our ratio of earnings to fixed charges for the periods indicated.

| Nine Months Ended June 30, | | Year Ended September 30, | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| 2003 | 2002 | 2002 | 2001 | 2000 | 1999 | 1998 |
| 6.94 | 5.02 | 4.82 | (1) | 4.04 | 3.13 | 5.80 |

(1) For the year ended September 30, 2001, earnings were inadequate to cover fixed charges by \$14,906 on a pre-tax basis.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SECURITIES WE MAY OFFER

General

We may issue, in one or more offerings, any combination of senior or subordinated debt securities, common stock, preferred stock, warrants, depositary shares, stock purchase contracts and stock purchase units.

This prospectus contains a summary of the general terms of the various securities that we may offer. The prospectus supplement relating to any particular securities offered will describe the specific terms of the securities, which may be in addition to or different from the general terms summarized in this prospectus. The summary in this prospectus and in any prospectus supplement does not describe every aspect of the securities and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to all applicable provisions of the documents relating to the securities offered. These documents are or will be filed as exhibits to or incorporated by reference in the registration statement.

In addition, the prospectus supplement will set forth the terms of the offering, the initial public offering price and net proceeds to us. Where applicable, the prospectus supplement will also describe any material United States federal income tax considerations relating to the securities offered and indicate whether the securities offered are or will be listed on any securities exchange.

Book-Entry System

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Unless otherwise indicated in a prospectus supplement, the securities we offer will be issued in the form of one or more fully registered global securities. These global securities will be deposited with, or on behalf of, the Depository Trust Company and registered in the name of its nominee. Except as described below, the global securities may be transferred, in whole and not in part, only to DTC or to another nominee of DTC.

DTC has advised us that it is:

- a limited-purpose trust company organized under the New York Banking Law;
- a "banking organization" within the meaning of the New York Banking Law;
- a member of the Federal Reserve System;
- a "clearing corporation" within the meaning of the New York Uniform Commercial Code; and
- a clearing agency registered pursuant to the provisions of Section 17A of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

DTC was created to hold securities for institutions that have accounts with DTC (participants) and to facilitate the clearance and settlement of securities transactions among its participants through electronic book-entry changes in participants accounts. Participants include securities brokers and dealers, banks, trust companies, clearing corporations and certain other organizations, some of whom (and/or their representatives) own DTC. Access to DTC's book-entry system is also available to others that clear through or maintain a custodial relationship with a participant, either directly or indirectly. DTC administers its book-entry system in accordance with its rules and bylaws and legal requirements.

Upon issuance of a global security representing offered securities, DTC will credit on its book-entry registration and transfer system the principal amount to participants accounts. Ownership of beneficial interests in the global security will be limited to participants or to persons that hold interests through participants. Ownership of interests in the global security will be shown on, and the transfer of those ownership interests will be effected only through, records maintained by DTC (with respect to participants interests) and the participants (with respect to the owners of beneficial interests in the global security). The laws of some jurisdictions may require that certain purchasers of securities take physical delivery of those securities in definitive form. These limits and laws may impair the ability to transfer beneficial interests in a global security.

So long as DTC (or its nominee), is the registered holder and owner of a global security, DTC (or its nominee) will be considered, for all purposes under the applicable indenture, the sole owner and holder of the related offered securities. Except as described below, owners of beneficial interests in a global security will not:

- be entitled to have the offered securities registered in their names; or
- receive or be entitled to receive physical delivery of certificated offered securities in definitive form.

Each person owning a beneficial interest in a global security must rely on DTC's procedures (and, if that person holds through a participant, on the participant's procedures) to exercise any rights of a holder of offered securities under the global security or any applicable indenture, or otherwise. The indentures provide that DTC may grant proxies and otherwise authorize participants to take any action which it (as the holder of a global security) is entitled to take under the indentures or the global security. We understand that under existing industry practice, if we request any action of holders or an owner of a beneficial interest in a global security desires to take any action that DTC (as the holder of the global security) is entitled to take, DTC would authorize the participants to take that action and the participants would authorize their beneficial owners to take the action or would otherwise act upon the instructions of their beneficial owners.

We will make payments with respect to offered securities represented by a global security to DTC. We expect that DTC, upon receipt of any payments, will immediately credit participants accounts with payments in amounts proportionate to their respective beneficial interests. We also expect that payments by participants to owners of beneficial interests in a global security held through them will be governed by standing instructions and customary practices (as is the case with securities held for customers accounts in street name) and will be the responsibility of the participants. We will not have any responsibility or liability for:

- any aspect of the records relating to, or payments made on account of, beneficial ownership interests in a global security for any securities;

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maintaining, supervising, or reviewing any records relating to any beneficial ownership interests;

any other aspect of the relationship between DTC and its participants;

the relationship between the participants and the owners of beneficial interests in a global security.

Unless and until they are exchanged in whole or in part for certificated securities in definitive form, the global securities may not be transferred except as a whole by DTC to its nominee or by its nominee to DTC or another nominee.

The securities of any series represented by a global security may be exchanged for certificated securities in definitive form if:

DTC notifies us that it is unwilling or unable to continue as depository for the global security or if at any time it ceases to be a clearing agency

registered under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934;

we decide at any time not to have the securities of that series represented by a global security and so notifies DTC; or

in the case of debt securities, an event of default has occurred and is continuing with respect to the debt securities.

If there is such an exchange, we will issue certificated securities in authorized denominations and registered in such names as DTC directs. Subject to the foregoing, a global security is not exchangeable, except for a global security of the same aggregate denomination to be registered in DTC's or its nominee's name.

DESCRIPTION OF DEBT SECURITIES

General

The debt securities are governed by a document called an indenture. An indenture is a contract between Meridian Bioscience and the trustee named in the applicable prospectus supplement, which acts as trustee for the debt securities. There may be more than one trustee under each indenture for different series of debt securities. The trustee has two main roles. First, the trustee can enforce your rights against us if we default. There are some limitations on the extent to which the trustee acts on your behalf, described under Remedies If An Event of Default Occurs. Second, the trustee may perform administrative duties for us, such as sending you interest payments, transferring your debt securities to a new buyer if you sell, and sending you notices. We anticipate that we will perform these duties with respect to the debt securities.

The debt securities may be secured or unsecured and may include senior debt securities and subordinated debt securities.

This section summarizes the general terms of the debt securities we may offer. The prospectus supplement relating to any particular debt securities offered will indicate whether the debt securities are senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities and will describe the specific terms of the debt securities, which may be in addition to or different from the general terms summarized in this section. The summary in this section and in any prospectus supplement does not describe every aspect of the senior or subordinated indenture or the debt securities, and is subject to and qualified in its entirety by reference to all the provisions of the indenture and the debt securities. The forms of the indenture and the debt securities are or will be filed as exhibits to or incorporated by reference in the registration statement. See Where You Can Find More Information for information on how to obtain a copy.

The prospectus supplement relating to any series of debt securities will describe the following specific financial, legal and other terms particular to such series of debt securities:

the title of the debt securities;

any limit on the aggregate principal amount of the debt securities;

the date or dates on which the debt securities will mature;

the rate or rates (which may be fixed or variable) at which the debt securities will bear interest, if any, and the date or dates from which the interest will accrue;

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the prior price and other terms on which the debt securities may be redeemed, at our option or otherwise;

the dates on which interest on the debt securities will be payable and the regular record dates for those interest payment dates;

the place or places where the principal of and premium, if any, and interest shall be payable, where the debt securities may be surrendered for transfer or exchange;

the date, if any, after which and the price or prices at which the debt securities may, in accordance with any option or mandatory redemption provisions, be redeemed and the other detailed terms and provisions of any such optional or mandatory redemption provision;

any mandatory or optional sinking funds or analogous provisions or provisions for redemption at the holder's option;

if other than denominations of \$1,000 and any integral multiple thereof, the denomination in which the debt securities will be issuable;

if other than the principal amount thereof, the portion of the principal amount of the debt securities which will be payable upon the declaration of acceleration of the maturity of those debt securities;

any addition to, or modification or deletion of, any events of default or covenants with respect to the securities;

any index or formula used to determine the amount of payment of principal of, premium, if any, and interest on the debt securities;

any provision relating to the defeasance of our obligations in connection with the debt securities;

any provision regarding exchangeability or conversion of the debt securities into our common stock or other securities;

the terms of any transfer, mortgage, pledge or assignment as security for the debt securities;

whether any debt securities will be issued in the form of a global security, and, if different than described above under "Description of the Securities We May Offer - Book Entry System," any circumstances under which a global security may be exchanged for debt securities registered in the names of persons other than the depository for the global security or its nominee;

whether the debt securities are senior or subordinated debt securities;

the terms of any guarantee of the securities;

any change in the subordination provisions applicable to the subordinated debt securities; and

any other material terms of the debt securities.

The terms of any series of debt securities may vary from the terms described here. Thus, this summary also is subject to and qualified by reference to the description of the particular terms of your debt securities to be described in the prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement relating to the debt securities will be attached to the front of this prospectus.

The indenture and its associated documents contain the full legal text of the matters described in this section. The indenture and the debt securities are governed by Ohio law.

Events Of Default

General

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You will have special rights if an event of default occurs, with respect to any series, and is not cured, as described later in this subsection. Under the indenture, the term event of default means any of the following:

we do not pay interest on a debt security, in the case of senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities, within 30 days of its due date;

we do not pay the principal or any premium on a debt security on its due date;

we do not make a sinking fund payment on its due date;

we remain in breach of any covenant or warranty described in the indenture for 60 days after we receive a notice stating we are in breach;

we do not comply with the provisions of the indenture relating to mergers and consolidations affecting us;

we fail to pay an amount of debt (other than the debt securities) totaling more than \$25,000,000, our obligation to repay is accelerated by our lenders, and this payment obligation remains accelerated for 10 days after we receive notice of default as described in the previous paragraph; or

certain events of bankruptcy, insolvency or reorganization of us.

Remedies if an Event of Default Occurs

If an event of default has occurred and has not been cured, the trustee or the direct holders of 25% in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the affected series may declare the entire principal amount of all the debt securities of that series to be due and immediately payable. This is called a declaration of acceleration of maturity.

Except in cases of default, where a trustee has some special duties, a trustee is not required to take any action under the indenture at the request of any direct holders unless the direct holders offer the trustee reasonable protection from expenses and liability (called an indemnity). If reasonable indemnity is provided, the direct holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the relevant series may direct the time, method and place of conducting any lawsuit or other formal legal action seeking any remedy available to the trustee. These majority direct holders may also direct the trustee in performing any other action under the indenture.

In general, before you bypass the trustee and bring your own lawsuit or other formal legal action or take other steps to enforce your rights or protect your interests relating to the debt securities, the following must occur:

you must give the trustee written notice that an event of default has occurred and remains uncured;

the direct holders of 25% in principal amount of all outstanding debt securities of the relevant series must make a written request that the trustee take action because of the default, and must offer reasonable indemnity to the trustee against the cost and other liabilities of taking that action;

the trustee must have not taken action for 60 days after receipt of the above notice and offer of indemnity; and

the trustee must not have received from direct holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of that series a direction inconsistent with the written notice during the 60 day period after receipt of the above notice.

However, you are entitled at any time to bring a lawsuit for the payment of money due on your debt security on or after its due date.

Modification

There are three types of changes we can make to the indentures and the debt securities.

Changes Requiring Your Approval

First, there are changes that cannot be made to the indentures or your debt securities without your specific approval. Following is a list of those types of changes:

- change the payment due date of the principal or interest on a debt security;
- reduce any amounts due on a debt security;
- reduce the amount of principal payable upon acceleration of the maturity of a debt security following a default;
- change the place of payment on a debt security;
- impair your right to sue for payment;
- reduce the percentage in principal amount of debt securities, the consent of whose holders is required to modify or amend the indenture;
- reduce the percentage in principal amount of debt securities, the consent of whose holders is required to waive compliance with certain provisions of the indenture or to waive certain defaults; and
- modify any other aspect of the provisions dealing with modification and waiver of the indenture.

Changes Requiring a Majority Vote

The second type of change to the indentures and the debt securities is the kind that requires consent of the holders of a majority in principal amount of the outstanding debt securities of the particular series affected. With a majority vote, the holders may waive past defaults, provided that such defaults are not of the type described previously under *Changes Requiring Your Approval*.

Changes Not Requiring Approval

The third type of change does not require any vote by direct holders of debt securities. This type is limited to clarifications and certain other changes that would not adversely affect holders of the debt securities.

Consolidation, Merger And Sale Of Assets

We may consolidate or merge with or into another entity, and we may sell or lease substantially all of our assets to another corporation if the following conditions, among others, are met:

where we merge out of existence or sell or lease substantially all our assets, the other entity must be a corporation, partnership or trust organized under the laws of a State or the District of Columbia or under federal law, and it must agree to be legally responsible for the debt securities; and

the merger, sale of assets or other transaction must not cause a default or an event of default on the debt securities.

Form, Exchange, Registration And Transfer

Generally, we will issue debt securities only in registered global form. However, if specified in the prospectus supplement or in the certain instances described in *Description of the Securities We May Offer - Book-Entry System*, we may issue certificated securities in definitive form.

You may have your debt securities broken into more debt securities of smaller denominations or combined into fewer debt securities of larger denominations, as long as the total principal amount is not changed. This is called an *exchange*.

You may exchange or transfer debt securities at the office of the trustee. The trustee acts as our agent for registering debt securities in the names of holders and transferring debt securities. We may appoint another entity or perform this role ourselves. The entity performing the role of

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maintaining the list of registered direct holders is called the security registrar. It will also perform transfers. You will not be required to pay a service charge to transfer or exchange debt securities, but you may be required to pay for any tax or other governmental charge associated with the exchange or transfer. The transfer or exchange will only be made if the security registrar is satisfied with your proof of ownership.

If the debt securities are redeemable and we redeem less than all of the debt securities of a particular series, we may block the transfer or exchange of those debt securities during the period beginning 15 days before the day we mail the notice of redemption and ending on the day of that mailing, in order to freeze the list of holders to prepare the mailing. We may also refuse to register transfers or exchanges of debt securities selected for redemption, except that we will continue to permit transfers and exchanges of the unredeemed portion of any debt security being partially redeemed.

Payment And Paying Agents

We will pay interest to you if you are a direct holder listed in the trustee's records at the close of business on a particular day in advance of each due date for interest, even if you no longer own the debt security on the interest due date. That particular day, usually about two weeks in advance of the interest due date, is called the regular record date and will be stated in the prospectus supplement. Holders buying and selling debt securities must work out between them how to compensate for the fact that we will pay all the interest for an interest period to the one who is the registered holder on the regular record date. The most common manner is to adjust the sales price of the debt securities to prorate interest fairly between buyer and seller. This prorated interest amount is called accrued interest.

We may choose to pay interest, principal and any other money due on the debt securities at the corporate trust office of the trustee. You must make arrangements to have your payments picked up at or wired from the trust office.

We may also arrange for additional payment offices, and may cancel or change these offices, including our use of the trustee's corporate trust office. These offices are called paying agents. We may also choose to act as our own paying agent. We must notify you of changes in the paying agents for any particular series of debt securities.

Notices

Notices to holders of debt securities will be given by mail to the addresses of such holders as they appear in the security register.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMON STOCK

The following summary of some provisions of our common stock is not complete. You should refer to our articles of incorporation and regulations, which are incorporated by reference as exhibits to the registration statement of which this prospectus is a part, and applicable law for more information.

General

Our articles of incorporation provide that we can issue up to 50,000,000 shares of common stock. As of July 31, 2003, we had 14,708,928 shares of common stock outstanding. Holders of our common stock are entitled to one vote for each share held of record on all matters submitted to a vote of shareholders. Shareholders do not have the right to cumulate their votes in the election of directors.

Holders of our common stock are entitled to share in dividends as declared by our board of directors in its discretion. In the event of our liquidation, each outstanding share of common stock entitles its holder to participate ratably in the assets remaining after payment of liabilities. Shareholders have no preemptive or other rights to subscribe for or purchase additional shares of any class of our stock or any other securities of ours. We do not have any redemption or sinking fund provisions with regard to our common stock. All outstanding shares of common stock are fully paid, valid issued and non-assessable.

The vote of holders of 66-2/3% of all outstanding shares of common stock is required to amend our articles of incorporation and to approve mergers, reorganizations, and similar transactions.

Provisions Affecting Business Combinations

Our articles of incorporation require approval by 66-2/3% of the voting power of disinterested shareholders for any business combination between an interested shareholder and us for five years after such party became an interested shareholder. An interested shareholder is one beneficially owning 15% or more of the voting power. Business combinations include mergers, sales of assets and similar transactions. Our articles of incorporation also require any person who becomes an interested shareholder to offer to purchase all of our voting securities and securities convertible into or constituting warrants or options to purchase our voting securities within 25 days after achieving 15% ownership.

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The price to be paid would be the higher of the highest price paid by the interested shareholder in acquiring such beneficial ownership or the highest trading price during the 45 day period commencing 70 days prior to the date that such person became an interested shareholder. These provisions are not applicable if the proposed business combination is approved prior to its consummation by a majority of disinterested directors or if the transaction by which a person becomes an interested shareholder is approved at any time prior to that time by a majority of disinterested directors.

We are also subject to Chapter 1704 of the Ohio Revised Code which prohibits us from entering into transactions with persons owning 10% or more of our outstanding voting power for at least three years after attaining 10% ownership unless the Board of Directors has approved the acquisitions of shares resulting in such ownership. We are also subject to §1701.831 of the Ohio General Corporation Law requiring shareholder approval of acquisitions by persons beyond 20%, 33-1/3% and 50% of our voting power. Ohio Revised Code §1707.043 requires a person or entity making a proposal to acquire control of us to repay us any profits made from trade in our stock within 18 months after making the control proposal.

These provisions of our articles of incorporation and Ohio law would be important in any attempted takeover of us and could operate, depending on how utilized by the Board of Directors, either to discourage a hostile takeover or to enable the Board to negotiate a higher price than may be initially proposed in any such situation.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED STOCK

The following briefly summarizes the material terms of the preferred stock that we may offer, other than pricing and related terms disclosed in a prospectus supplement. You should read the particular terms of any series of preferred stock that we offer which we will describe in more detail in any prospectus supplement relating to such series. You should also read the more detailed provisions of our articles of incorporation and the statement with respect to shares relating to each particular series of preferred stock for provisions that may be important to you. The statement with respect to shares relating to each particular series of preferred stock offered by the accompanying prospectus supplement and this prospectus will be filed as an exhibit to a document incorporated by reference in the registration statement. The prospectus supplement will also state whether any of the terms summarized below do not apply to the series of preferred stock being offered.

Our board of directors is authorized to issue up to 1,000,000 shares of preferred stock. Our board of directors can issue shares of preferred stock in one or more series and can specify the following terms for each series:

the number of shares;

the designation, powers, preferences and rights of the shares; and

the qualifications, limitations or restrictions, except as otherwise stated in the articles of incorporation.

Before issuing any series of preferred stock, our board of directors will adopt resolutions creating and designating the series as a series of preferred stock, and the resolutions will be filed in a statement with respect to shares as an amendment to the articles of incorporation.

The rights of holders of the preferred stock offered may be adversely affected by the rights of holders of any shares of preferred stock that may be issued in the future. Our board of directors may cause shares of preferred stock to be issued in public or private transactions for any proper corporate purpose. Examples include issuances to obtain additional financing in connection with acquisitions or otherwise, and issuances to our officers, directors and employees and our subsidiaries pursuant to benefit plans or otherwise. The preferred stock could have the effect of acting as an anti-takeover device to prevent a change in control of us.

Unless the particular prospectus supplement states otherwise, holders of each series of preferred stock will not have any preemptive or subscription rights to acquire more of our stock.

The transfer agent, registrar, dividend disbursing agent and redemption agent for shares of each series of preferred stock will be named in the prospectus supplement relating to such series.

Rank

Unless otherwise specified in the prospectus supplement relating to the shares of any series of preferred stock, the shares will rank on an equal basis with each other series of preferred stock and prior to the common stock as to dividends and distributions of assets.

Dividends

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Unless the particular prospectus supplement states otherwise, holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive cash dividends, when, as and if declared by our board of directors out of funds legally available for dividends. The rates and dates of payment of dividends will be set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to each series of preferred stock. Dividends will be payable to holders of record of preferred stock as they appear on our books. Dividends on any series of preferred stock may be cumulative or noncumulative. We may not declare, pay or set apart for payment dividends on the preferred stock unless full dividends on any other series of preferred stock that ranks on an equal or senior basis have been paid or sufficient funds have been set apart for payment for:

all prior dividend periods of the other series of preferred stock that pay dividends on a cumulative basis; or

the immediately preceding dividend period of the other series of preferred stock that pay dividends on a noncumulative basis.

Partial dividends declared on shares of preferred stock and any other series of preferred stock ranking on an equal basis as to dividends will be declared pro rata. A pro rata declaration means that the ratio of dividends declared per share to accrued dividends per share will be the same for all such series of preferred stock.

Similarly, we may not declare, pay or set apart for payment non-stock dividends or make other payments on the common stock or any other stock of ours ranking junior to the preferred stock unless full dividends on all series of preferred stock have been paid or set apart for payment for:

all prior dividend periods if the preferred stock pays dividends on a cumulative basis; or

the immediately preceding dividend period if the preferred stock pays dividends on a noncumulative basis.

Conversion and Exchange

The prospectus supplement for any series of preferred stock will state the terms, if any, on which shares of that series are convertible into or exchangeable for shares of our common stock.

Redemption

If so specified in the applicable prospectus supplement, a series of preferred stock may be redeemable at any time, in whole or in part, at our option or at the option of the holders, or may be mandatorily redeemed.

Any partial redemptions of preferred stock will be made in a way that our board of directors decides is equitable.

Unless we default in the payment of the redemption price, dividends will cease to accrue after the redemption date on shares of preferred stock called for redemption and all rights of holders of such shares will terminate except for the right to receive the redemption price.

Liquidation Preference

Upon our voluntary or involuntary liquidation, dissolution or winding up, holders of each series of preferred stock will be entitled to receive distributions upon liquidation in the amount set forth in the prospectus supplement relating to such series of preferred stock, plus an amount equal to any accrued and unpaid dividends. Such distributions will be made before any distribution is made on any securities ranking junior to the preferred stock with respect to liquidation, including common stock.

If the liquidation amounts payable relating to the preferred stock of any series and any other securities ranking on a parity regarding liquidation rights are not paid in full, the holders of the preferred stock of such series and such other securities will share in any such distribution of our available assets on a ratable basis in proportion to the full liquidation preferences. Holders of such series of preferred stock will not be entitled to any other amounts from us after they have received their full liquidation preference.

Voting Rights

If we issue voting preferred stock, holders of preferred stock will be entitled to one vote per share on each matter submitted to our shareholders. If we issue non-voting preferred stock, holders of preferred stock will have no voting rights, except as required by applicable law. The prospectus supplement will state the voting rights, if any, applicable to any particular series of preferred stock.

DESCRIPTION OF WARRANTS

We may issue warrants for the purchase common stock, debt securities or other securities registered pursuant to this registration statement and described in this prospectus. We may issue warrants independently or together with other securities that may be attached to or separate from the warrants. We will issue each series of warrants under a separate warrant agreement that will be entered into between us and a bank or trust company, as warrant agent, and will be described in the prospectus supplement relating to the particular issue of warrants. The warrant agent will act solely as our agent in connection with the warrant of such series and will not assume any obligation or relationship of agency for or with holders or beneficial owners of warrants. The following describes certain general terms and provisions of debt warrants or common stock warrants we may offer. We will set forth further terms of the debt warrants, common stock warrants or warrants to purchase other securities and the applicable warrant agreement in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Debt Warrants

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any debt warrants, including the following:

- the title of the debt warrants;
- the offering price for the debt warrants;
- the aggregate number of the debt warrants;
- the designation and terms of the debt securities purchasable upon exercise of such debt warrants;
- if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which such debt warrants are issued and the number of such debt warrants issued with each security;
- if applicable, the date from and after which such debt warrants and any securities issued therewith will be separately transferable;
- the principal amount of debt securities purchasable upon exercise of a debt warrant and the price at which such principal amount of debt securities may be purchased upon exercise;
- the date on which the right to exercise such debt warrants shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;
- if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of such debt warrants which may be exercised at any one time;
- whether the debt warrants represented by the debt warrant certificates or debt securities that may be issued upon exercise of the debt warrants will be issued in registered form;
- information with respect to book-entry procedures, if any;
- the currency, currencies or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;
- if applicable, a discussion of certain United States federal income tax considerations;
- the identity of the warrant agent for the warrants;
- the antidilution provisions of such debt warrants, if any;
- the redemption or call provisions, if any, applicable to such debt warrant; and
- any additional terms of the debt warrants, including terms, procedures and limitations relating to the exchange and exercise of such debt warrants.

Common Stock Warrants

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any common stock warrants, including the following:

the title of such warrants;

the offering price of such warrants;

the aggregate number of such warrants;

the designation and terms of the common stock issued by us purchasable upon exercise of such warrants;

if applicable, the designation and terms of the securities with which such warrants are issued and the number of such warrants issued with each such security;

if applicable, the date from and after which such warrants and any securities issued therewith will be separately transferable;

the number of shares of common stock issued by us purchasable upon exercise of the warrants and the price at which such shares may be purchased upon exercise;

the date on which the right to exercise such warrants shall commence and the date on which such right shall expire;

if applicable, the minimum or maximum amount of such warrants which may be exercised at any one time;

the currency, currencies or currency units in which the offering price, if any, and the exercise price are payable;

if applicable, a discussion of certain United States federal income tax considerations;

the identity of the warrant agent for the warrants; and

the antidilution provisions of the warrants, if any.

DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITARY SHARES

The following briefly summarizes the provisions of the depositary shares and depositary receipts that we may issue from time to time and which would be important to holders of depositary receipts, other than pricing and related terms which will be disclosed in the applicable prospectus supplement. The prospectus supplement will also state whether any of the general provisions summarized below do not apply to the depositary shares or depositary receipts being offered and provide any additional provisions applicable to the depositary shares or depositary receipts being offered. The following description and any description in a prospectus supplement may not be complete and is subject to, and qualified in its entirety by reference to the terms and provisions of the form of deposit agreement filed as an exhibit to the registration statement which contains this prospectus.

Description of Depositary Shares

We may offer depositary shares evidenced by depositary receipts. Each depositary share represents a fraction or a multiple of a share of a particular series of preferred stock that we issue and deposit with a depositary. The fraction or the multiple of a share of preferred stock which each depositary share represents will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We will deposit the shares of any series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares according to the provisions of a deposit agreement to be entered into between us and a bank or trust company which we will select as our preferred stock depositary. We will name the depositary in the applicable prospectus supplement. Each holder of a depositary share will be entitled to all the rights and preferences of the underlying preferred stock in proportion to the applicable fraction or multiple of a share of preferred stock represented by the depositary share. These rights include any applicable dividend, voting, redemption, conversion and liquidation rights. The depositary will send the holders of depositary shares all reports and communications that we deliver to the depositary and which we are required to furnish to the holders of depositary shares.

Depositary Receipts

The depositary shares will be evidenced by depositary receipts issued pursuant to the deposit agreement. Depositary receipts will be distributed to anyone who is buying the fractional shares of preferred stock in accordance with the terms of the applicable prospectus

supplement.

Withdrawal of Preferred Stock

Unless the related depositary shares have previously been called for redemption, a holder of depositary shares may receive the number of whole shares of the related series of preferred stock and any money or other property represented by the holder's depositary receipts after surrendering the depositary receipts at the corporate trust office of the depositary, paying any taxes, charges and fees provided for in the deposit agreement and complying with any other requirement of the deposit agreement. Partial shares of preferred stock will not be issued. If the surrendered depositary shares exceed the number of depositary shares that represent the number of whole shares of preferred stock the holder wishes to withdraw, then the depositary will deliver to the holder at the same time a new depositary receipt evidencing the excess number of depositary shares. Once the holder has withdrawn the preferred stock, the holder will not be entitled to re-deposit that preferred stock under the deposit agreement or to receive depositary shares in exchange for such preferred stock.

Dividends and Other Distributions

The depositary will distribute to record holders of depositary shares any cash dividends or other cash distributions it receives on preferred stock. Each holder will receive these distributions in proportion to the number of depositary shares owned by the holder. The depositary will distribute only whole U.S. dollars and cents. The depositary will add any fractional cents not distributed to the next sum received for distribution to record holders of depositary shares.

In the event of a non-cash distribution, the depositary will distribute property to the record holders of depositary shares, unless the depositary determines that it is not feasible to make such a distribution. If this occurs, the depositary may, with our approval, sell the property and distribute the net proceeds from the sale to the holders.

The amounts distributed to holders of depositary shares will be reduced by any amounts required to be withheld by the preferred stock depositary or by us on account of taxes or other governmental charges.

Redemption of Depositary Shares

If the series of preferred stock represented by depositary shares is subject to redemption, then we will give the necessary proceeds to the depositary. The depositary will then redeem the depositary shares using the funds they received from us for the preferred stock. The redemption price per depositary share will be equal to the redemption price payable per share for the applicable series of the preferred stock and any other amounts per share payable with respect to the preferred stock multiplied by the fraction of a share of preferred stock represented by one depositary share. Whenever we redeem shares of preferred stock held by the depositary, the depositary will redeem the depositary shares representing the shares of preferred stock on the same day provided we have paid in full to the depositary the redemption price of the preferred stock to be redeemed and any accrued and unpaid dividends. If fewer than all the depositary shares of a series are to be redeemed, the depositary shares will be selected by lot or ratably or by any other equitable method as the depositary will decide.

After the date fixed for redemption, the depositary shares called for redemption will no longer be considered outstanding. Therefore, all rights of holders of the depositary shares will cease, except that the holders will still be entitled to receive any cash payable upon the redemption and any money or other property to which the holder was entitled at the time of redemption. To receive this amount or other property, the holders must surrender the depositary receipts evidencing their depositary shares to the preferred stock depositary. Any funds that we deposit with the preferred stock depositary for any depositary shares that the holders fail to redeem will be returned to us after a period of two years from the date we deposit the funds.

Voting the Preferred Stock

Upon receipt of notice of any meeting at which the holders of preferred stock are entitled to vote, the depositary will notify holders of depositary shares of the upcoming vote and arrange to deliver our voting materials to the holders. The record date for determining holders of depositary shares that are entitled to vote will be the same as the record date for the preferred stock. The materials the holders will receive will describe the matters to be voted on and explain how the holders, on a certain date, may instruct the depositary to vote the shares of preferred stock underlying the depositary shares. For instructions to be valid, the depositary must receive them on or before the date specified. To the extent possible, the depositary will vote the shares as instructed by the holder. We agree to take all reasonable actions that the depositary determines are necessary to enable it to vote as a holder as instructed. The depositary will abstain from voting shares of preferred stock deposited under a deposit agreement if it has not received specific instructions from the holder of the depositary shares representing those shares.

Amendment and Termination of the Deposit Agreement

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We may agree with the depositary to amend the deposit agreement and the form of depositary receipt at any time. However, any amendment that materially and adversely alters the rights of the holders of depositary receipts will not be effective unless it has been approved by the holders of at least a majority of the affected depositary shares then outstanding. We will make no amendment that impairs the right of any holder of depositary shares, as described above under **Withdrawal of Preferred Stock**, to receive shares of preferred stock and any money or other property represented by those depositary shares, except in order to comply with mandatory provisions of applicable law. If an amendment becomes effective, holders are deemed to agree to the amendment and to be bound by the amended deposit agreement if they continue to hold their depositary receipts.

The deposit agreement automatically terminates if a final distribution in respect of the preferred stock has been made to the holders of depositary receipts in connection with our liquidation, dissolution or winding-up. We may also terminate the deposit agreement at any time we wish with at least 60 days prior written notice to the depositary. If we do so, the depositary will give notice of termination to the record holders not less than 30 days before the termination date. Once depositary receipts are surrendered to the depositary, it will send to each holder the number of whole or fractional shares of the series of preferred stock underlying that holder's depositary receipts.

Charges of Depositary and Expenses

We will pay all transfer and other taxes and governmental charges arising solely from the existence of the depositary arrangements. We will pay all charges of the depositary in connection with the initial deposit of the related series of offered preferred stock, the initial issuance of the depositary shares, all withdrawals of shares of the related series of offered preferred stock by holders of the depositary shares and the registration of transfers of title to any depositary shares. However, holders of depositary receipts will pay other taxes and governmental charges and any other charges provided in the deposit agreement to be payable by them.

Limitations on Our Obligations and Liability to Holders of Depositary Receipts

The deposit agreement expressly limits our obligations and the obligations of the depositary. It also limits our liability and the liability of the depositary as follows:

we and the depositary are only liable to the holders of depositary receipts for negligence or willful misconduct; and

we and the depositary have no obligation to become involved in any legal or other proceeding related to the depositary receipts or the deposit agreement on your behalf or on behalf of any other party, unless you provide us with satisfactory indemnity.

Resignation and Removal of Depositary

The depositary may resign at any time by notifying us of its election to do so. In addition, we may remove the depositary at any time. Within 60 days after the delivery of the notice of resignation or removal of the depositary, we will appoint a successor depositary.

Reports to Holders

We will deliver all required reports and communications to holders of the offered preferred stock to the depositary, and it will forward those reports and communications to the holders of depositary shares.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STOCK PURCHASE CONTRACTS AND THE STOCK PURCHASE UNITS

We may issue stock purchase contracts, representing contracts obligating holders to purchase from us, and obligating us to sell to the holders, a specified number of shares of our common stock at a future date or dates. The price per share and the number of shares of our common stock may be fixed at the time the stock purchase contracts are issued or may be determined by reference to a specific formula set forth in the stock purchase contracts. The stock purchase contracts may be issued separately or as a part of stock purchase units consisting of a stock purchase contract and, as security for the holder's obligations to purchase the shares under the stock purchase contracts, either:

senior debt securities or subordinated debt securities;

shares of preferred stock; or

debt obligations of third parties, including U.S. Treasury securities.

The stock purchase contracts may require us to make periodic payments to the holders thereof or vice versa, and such payments may be unsecured or prefunded on some basis. The stock purchase contracts may require holders to secure their obligations in a specified manner and, in certain circumstances, we may deliver newly issued prepaid stock purchase contracts upon release to a holder of any collateral securing such holder's obligations under the original stock purchase contract.

The applicable prospectus supplement will describe the terms of any stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units and, if applicable, prepaid stock purchase contracts. The description in the prospectus supplement will not purport to be complete and will be qualified in its entirety by reference to:

the stock purchase contracts;

the collateral arrangements and depositary arrangements, if applicable, relating to such stock purchase contracts or stock purchase units; and

if applicable, the prepaid stock purchase contracts and the document pursuant to which such prepaid stock purchase contracts will be issued.

SELLING SHAREHOLDER

The following table sets forth information about the selling shareholder's beneficial ownership of our common stock as of August 31, 2003 as provided by the selling shareholder and after the sale of the common stock offered by the selling shareholder under this prospectus and the applicable prospectus supplement, assuming all such shares are sold. The selling shareholder has not committed to sell any shares under this prospectus. The numbers presented under "Shares Beneficially Owned After the Offering" assumes that all of the shares offered by the selling shareholder are sold and that the selling shareholder acquires no additional shares of our common stock before the completion of this offering. The selling shareholder may offer all, some or none of the shares of our common stock beneficially owned by him, and there are currently no agreements, arrangements or understandings with respect to the sale or distribution of any of our common stock by the selling shareholder. We will pay all expenses incurred with respect to the registration and sale of his respective common stock except that the selling shareholder will pay all underwriting discounts and commissions related to any shares sold.

| Name | Shares Owned Before Offering | | Shares Offered | Shares Owned After Offering | |
|------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| | No. | Percentage of Our Common Stock Outstanding | | No. | Percentage of Our Common Stock Outstanding |
| William J. Motto | 4,002,146 | 27.1% | 1,000,000 | 3,002,146 | 20.4% |

PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION

We or the selling shareholder may sell the securities through underwriters or dealers, directly to one or more purchasers, through agents, through remarketing firms, through direct sales or auctions performed by using the internet or a bidding or ordering system, or through a combination of these methods. The prospectus supplement will include the names of underwriters, dealers, agents or remarketing firms that we or the selling shareholder retains. The prospectus supplement will also include the purchase price of the securities, proceeds from the sale, any underwriting discounts or commissions and other items constituting underwriters' compensation, and any securities exchanges on which the securities may be listed.

In some cases, we may also repurchase the securities we issue and reoffer them to the public by one or more of the methods described above. This prospectus may be used in connection with any offering of securities through any of these methods or other methods described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

The securities we or the selling shareholder distributes by any of these methods may be sold to the public, in one or more transactions, either:

at a fixed price or prices, which may be changed;

at market prices prevailing at the time of sale;

at prices related to prevailing market prices; or

at negotiated prices.

We may solicit offers to purchase securities directly from the public from time to time. We may also designate agents from time to time to solicit offers to purchase securities from the public on our behalf. The prospectus supplement relating to any particular offering of securities will name any agents designated to solicit offers, and will include information about any commissions we may pay the agents, in that offering. Agents may be deemed to be underwriters as that term is defined in the Securities Act.

In connection with the sale of securities, underwriters may receive compensation from us or from purchasers of the securities, for whom they may act as agents, in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions. Underwriters may sell the securities to or through dealers, and such dealers may receive compensation in the form of discounts, concessions or commissions from the underwriters and/or commissions from the purchasers for whom they may act as agents. Underwriters, dealers and agents that participate in the distribution of the securities may be deemed to be underwriters, and any discounts or commissions they receive from us, and any profit on the resale of the securities they realize may be deemed to be underwriting discounts and commissions under the Securities Act. Any such underwriter, dealer or agent will be identified, and any such compensation received will be described, in the applicable prospectus supplement.

Unless otherwise specified in the related prospectus supplement, each series of the securities that we issue will be a new issue with no established trading market, other than the common stock. Any common stock sold pursuant to a prospectus supplement will be listed on the Nasdaq National Market, subject to official notice of issuance. We may elect to list any of the other securities on an exchange, but are not obligated to do so. It is possible that one or more underwriters may make a market in a series of the securities, but will not be obligated to do so and may discontinue any market making at any time without notice. Therefore, no assurance can be given as to the liquidity of the trading market for the securities.

If dealers are utilized in the sale of the securities, we or the selling shareholder will sell the securities to the dealers as principals. The dealers may then resell the securities to the public at varying prices to be determined by such dealers at the time of resale. The names of the dealers and the terms of the transaction will be set forth in the applicable prospectus supplement.

We or the selling shareholder may enter into agreements with underwriters, dealers and agents who participate in the distribution of the securities which may entitle these persons to indemnification by us against certain liabilities, including liabilities under the Securities Act, or to contribution with respect to payments which such underwriters, dealers or agents may be required to make in respect thereof. Any agreement in which we or the selling shareholder agree to indemnify underwriters, dealers and agents against civil liabilities will be described in the applicable prospectus supplement.

In connection with an offering, the underwriters may purchase and sell securities in the open market. These transactions may include short sales, stabilizing transactions and purchases to cover positions created by short sales. Short sales involve the sale by the underwriters of a greater number of securities than they are required to purchase in an offering. Stabilizing transactions consist of certain bids or purchases made for the purpose of preventing or retarding a decline in the market price of the securities while an offering is in progress.

The underwriters also may impose a penalty bid. This occurs when a particular underwriter repays to the underwriters a portion of the underwriting discount received by it because the underwriters have repurchased securities sold by or for the account of that underwriter in stabilizing or short-covering transactions.

These activities by the underwriters may stabilize, maintain or otherwise affect the market price of the securities. As a result, the price of the securities may be higher than the price that otherwise might exist in the open market. If these activities are commenced, they may be discontinued by the underwriters at any time. These transactions may be effected on an exchange or automated quotation system, if the securities are listed on that exchange or admitted for trading on that automated quotation system, or in the over-the-counter market or otherwise.

Neither we nor the selling shareholder has authorized any dealer, salesperson or other person to give any information or represent anything not contained in this prospectus. You must not rely on any unauthorized information. This prospectus does not offer to sell or buy any securities in any jurisdiction where it is unlawful.

Underwriters, dealers and agents may engage in transactions with or perform services for us or the selling shareholder, or be customers of ours, in the ordinary course of business.

LEGAL MATTERS

The validity of the securities offered hereby other than the preferred securities will be passed upon for us by Keating, Muething & Klekamp, P.L.L., Cincinnati, Ohio.

EXPERTS

The financial statements as of September 30, 2002 and for the year ended September 30, 2002 incorporated in this prospectus by reference to the Current Report on Form 8-K dated September 25, 2003 have been so incorporated in reliance on the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, independent accountants, given on the authority of said firm as experts in auditing and accounting.

Our consolidated financial statements as of September 30, 2001 and for the two years then ended, which are incorporated by reference in this registration statement, have been audited by Arthur Andersen LLP, independent public accountants, as indicated in their report with respect thereto, and are included herein in reliance upon the authority of said firm as experts in giving said report. Arthur Andersen LLP has not consented to the inclusion of their report in the registration statement, and in reliance upon Rule 437a of the Securities Act, we have not filed their consent. Because Arthur Andersen LLP has not consented to the inclusion of their report in the registration statement, it may become more difficult for you to seek remedies against Arthur Andersen LLP in connection with any material misstatement or omission that may be contained in our consolidated financial statements and schedules for such periods. In particular, and without limitation, you will not be able to recover against Arthur Andersen LLP under Section 11 of the Securities Act for any untrue statement of a material fact contained in the financial statements audited by Arthur Andersen LLP or any omission of a material fact required to be stated in those financial statements.

PART II**INFORMATION NOT REQUIRED IN PROSPECTUS****Item 14. Other Expenses Of Issuance And Distribution.**

The following table sets forth the expenses in connection with the offering described in this Registration Statement:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Registration Fee | \$ 5,657 |
| Printing Costs | 25,000 |
| Legal fees and expenses | 25,000 |
| Accounting fees and expenses | 25,000 |
| Blue sky fees and expenses | 10,000 |
| Miscellaneous | 9,343 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total | \$ 100,000 |
| | <hr/> |

All of the above expenses other than the Registration Fee are estimates. All of the above expenses will be borne by the Registrant.

Item 15. Indemnification Of Directors And Officers.

Ohio Revised Code, Section 1701.13(E), allows indemnification by the Registrant to any person made or threatened to be made a party to any proceedings, other than a proceeding by or in the right of the Registrant, by reason of the fact that he is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the Registrant, against expenses, including judgment and fines, if he acted in good faith and in a manner reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Registrant and, with respect to criminal actions, in which he had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful. Similar provisions apply to actions brought by or in the right of the Registrant, except that no indemnification shall be made in such cases when the person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct to the Registrant unless deemed otherwise by the court. Indemnification is to be made by a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested directors or the written opinion of independent counsel or by the shareholders or by the court. The Registrant's Code of Regulations extends such indemnification.

Item 16. Exhibits And Financial Statement Schedules.

| Exhibit No. | Description of Document |
|-------------|---|
| 1* | Form of Underwriting Agreement |
| 4.1** | Articles of Incorporation of the Registrant (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.1 of the Registration Statement on Form S-3 (File No. 333-02613) filed by the Registrant on April 18, 1996) |

| Exhibit No. | Description of Document |
|-------------|---|
| 4.2** | Code of Regulations of the Registrant (incorporated by reference to Exhibit 3.2 of the Registration Statement on Form S-1 (File No. 33-6052) filed by the Registrant on May 29, 1986) |
| 4.3 | Form of Indenture |
| 4.4 | Form of Debt Security (contained in Exhibit 4.3) |
| 4.5* | Form of Preferred Security |
| 4.6* | Form of Deposit Agreement |
| 4.7* | Form of Depositary Receipt |
| 4.8* | Form of Warrant Agreement |
| 5* | Opinion of Keating, Muething & Klekamp, P.L.L. |
| 8* | Opinion of tax counsel |
| 12 | Statement Regarding Computation of Earnings to Fixed Charges |
| 23.1 | Consent of Independent Auditors |
| 23.2 | Consent of Keating, Muething & Klekamp, P.L.L. |
| 24 | Powers of Attorney (contained on the signature page) |
| 25.1 | Statement of Eligibility on Form T-1 under the Trust Indenture Act of 1939, as amended, of LaSalle Bank, National Association |

*To be filed as an exhibit to a Current Report on Form 8-K.

**Incorporated by reference from other documents filed with the Commission as indicated.

Item 17. Undertakings.

(a) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:
 - (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;
 - (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) under the Securities Act if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table in the effective Registration Statement.
 - (iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the Registration Statement or any material change to such information in the Registration Statement;

Provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) above do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed by the registrants pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that are incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement.

- (2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

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- (3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b)

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The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each filing of the registrant's annual report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

- (c) If the securities to be registered are to be offered at competitive bidding, the undersigned registrant hereby undertakes: (1) to use its best efforts to distribute prior to the opening of bids, to prospective bidders, underwriters, and dealers, a reasonable number of copies of a prospectus which at that time meets the requirements of Section 10(a) of the Act, and relating to the securities offered at competitive bidding, as contained in the Registration Statement, together with any supplements thereto, and (2) to file an amendment to the Registration Statement reflecting the results of bidding, the terms of the reoffering and related matters to the extent required by the applicable form, not later than the first use, authorized by the issuer after the opening of bids, of a prospectus relating to the securities offered at competitive bidding, unless no further public offering of such securities by the issuer and no reoffering of such securities by the purchasers is proposed to be made.
- (d) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act of 1933 may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the registrants pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Securities and Exchange Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the registrants of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.
- (e) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes that
 - (1) for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, the information omitted from the form of prospectus filed as part of this Registration Statement in reliance upon Rule 430A and contained in a form of prospectus filed by the registrants pursuant to Rule 424(b)(1) or (4) or 497(h) under the Securities Act shall be deemed to be part of this Registration Statement as of the time it was declared effective; and
 - (2) for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act of 1933, each post-effective amendment that contains a form of prospectus shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.
- (f) The undersigned registrant hereby undertakes to file, if necessary, an application for the purpose of determining the eligibility of the Trustee to act under subsection (a) of Section 310 of the Trust Indenture Act of 1939 in accordance with the rules and regulations prescribed by the Securities and Exchange Commission under Section 305(b)(2) of such Act.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, Meridian Bioscience, Inc. certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-3 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized in the City of Cincinnati, State of Ohio, as of the 25th day of September, 2003.

MERIDIAN BIOSCIENCE, INC.

BY: /s/William J. Motto

William J. Motto
Chairman of the Board and
Chief Executive Officer

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS, that each person whose signature appears below hereby constitutes and appoints William J. Motto and Melissa A. Lueke, and each of them acting individually, his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact and agent, each with

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full power of substitution and resubstitution, for him or her and in his or her name, place and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement and to sign any and all registration statements relating to the same offering of securities as this Registration Statement that are filed pursuant to Rule 462(b) promulgated under of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and to file the same, with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Securities and Exchange Commission and any other regulatory authority, granting unto said attorney-in-fact and agent, full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and necessary to be done in connection therewith, as fully to all intents and purposes as such person might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that said attorney-in-fact and agent, his substitute or substitutes, may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the dates indicated.

Director September 25, 2003

| Signature | Capacity | Date |
|---|--|--------------------|
| <u>/s/William J. Motto</u> *William J. Motto | Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer (Principal Executive Officer) | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/John A. Kraeutler</u> *John A. Kraeutler | President, Chief Operating Officer and Director | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/James A. Buzard</u> *James A. Buzard | Director | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/Gary P. Kreider</u> *Gary P. Kreider | Director | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/David C. Phillips</u> *David C. Phillips | Director | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/Robert J. Ready</u> *Robert J. Ready | Director | September 25, 2003 |
| <u>/s/Melissa A. Lueke</u> *Melissa A. Lueke | Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Secretary (Principal Financial and Accounting Officer) | September 25, 2003 |