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**Biotechnology in California**

Biotechnology, a technology which uses living organisms to make innovative products that improve our lives, is one of flourishing and promising industries in California. Since the mid 1950’s, the Bay Area in Northern California, where Stanford University, UCSF and UC Berkeley are located, has been known for innovation, research, and discovery. The world’s first biotech company, Genentech, was founded in 1976 by venture capitalist Robert A. Swanson and biochemist Dr. Herbert W. Boyer, who pioneered a new scientific field called recombinant DNA technology. In 1982, Genentech was approved to sell the first biotech drug, human insulin. This date marked the beginning of biotechnology industry making profit. With Genentech’s success, biotechnology in Northern California grew enormously. By 1987, boasted 112 companies, 19400 jobs, and total sales of $2 billion. Since then, California has been one of the major centers of biotechnology in the U.S. The factors that have contributed to the level of biotechnology are a comprehensive higher education system with distinguished research institutions, an educated and highly skilled workforce and abundant private and public funding in the form of research grants and venture capital. Today, California has the largest number of biotechnology companies in the U.S.: 2700 companies with 100,000 to 150,000 employees. Seven top biotechnology companies have locations in California and three of the top companies: Amgen, Genentech, and Gilead, are headquartered here. With all these humongous resources, biotechnology promises a brighter future for California and the U.S.

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