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**CELLine**  
Introduction

# Introduction

Martin Wolf Ph.D. | Wilson Wolf Corp. | Minneapolis | USA

The CELLine culture devices are based on a compartmentalization approach. Cells are cultured in a cell compartment separated from nutrient medium by a semipermeable membrane. Cells in the cell compartment are maintained in a small volume and supported by a larger volume of nutrient medium contained in the nutrient medium reservoir. Successful culture in CELLine devices require manipulation of both the cell compartment contents and the nutrient medium. Attributes such as high cell density, reduced serum use, ease of handling are available to the user through this compartmentalization approach. The following overview is provided to highlight certain features and functions of the CELLine devices to assist the user in development of individual and varied applications.

## High cell density:

Cells can be cultured at high density within the cell compartment of the CELLine. In comparison to traditional static culture, the number of cells per milliliter, which can be maintained within the cell compartment of the CELLine is much higher. For example, hybridoma cells, lymphocytes and leukemic cells can reach concentrations which are 20 to 30 fold greater when compared to growth in static vessels. This provides benefits to the user by providing increased concentrations of secreted effector molecules, high antibody concentrations, and unique cell culture environments not available in traditional low density culture.

The separation of the cells from the nutrient medium by a semipermeable membrane allows for trapping or retaining cell secreted factors and the ability to conserve the use of exogenous culture factors. The 10,000 MWCO semipermeable membrane allows the retention of many cytokines which are approximately 10,000 MW or larger. For instance, IL-2 provided only to the cell compartment exerts full biological activity on the cells in culture. Conversely, secreted cytokines produced within the cell compartment can reach levels not normally associated with traditional static culture. Conditioned medium can be produced with significantly different levels of effector molecules in the CELLine than in traditional static culture.

For production of monoclonal antibodies the benefits of the compartmentalized strategy provide cost savings and labor savings. Hybridoma cells can be cultivated at high density within the cell compartment of the CELLine producing highly concentrated titers of antibody within the cell compartment volume. Antibody titers in excess of 1 mg/ml are routinely achieved. Concentrated antibody in small supernatant volumes can be diluted and used directly or concentrated supernatant can be applied directly to affinity purification columns.

Importantly, the consumption of serum can be significantly reduced by providing serum only to the cell culture compartment and eliminating serum from the nutrient medium. A 1 liter culture in the CELLine consumes only milliliters of serum in contrast to hundreds of milliliters of serum which would normally be consumed in static culture. These savings in serum cost quickly accumulate as the duration of culture increases. An added benefit, is removal of interference from serum proteins during antibody purification, as the product is obtained at mg/ml concentrations in a 10% serum supernatant. This is in marked contrast to concentrating serum components in conjunction with the desired antibody during processing leading to difficulties in purification and contamination of antibody preparations with non specific immunoglobulin molecules and other serum proteins. Use of serum to generate highly concentrated supernatant of antibody molecules is not as problematic as down stream concentration steps are eliminated.



## Cell compartment:

Understanding the concept of a viable cell capacity for the cell compartment is important in the operation of the CELLine for maximum performance. The cell compartment in the CELLine has an upper limit to the number of viable cells which can be maintained within it. This is termed cell compartment viable cell capacity. As the number of viable cells within the cell compartment increases, the consumption of metabolic substrates and accumulation of metabolic byproducts also increases. Diffusion across the semipermeable membrane begins to become limiting when the viable cell numbers reach the viable cell capacity in the cell compartment even when a maximum diffusion gradient is provided across the semipermeable membrane. Importantly, cell proliferation does not cease, as shown in **Fig. 1**, when viable cell capacity has been reached. Cells continue to proliferate within the cell compartment after viable cell capacity is reached. Therefore, at viable cell capacity, the number of viable cells no longer increases however total cell numbers do continue to increase. This can lead to an accumulation of very high numbers of total cells. Splitting back the cell compartment influences the ratio of total and viable cells. Splitting back the culture when capacity of the cell compartment is reached will maintain high cell viability. Splitting back several days after capacity is reached does not lead to loss of viable cells but can lead to increased product concentration and increased total cell numbers.

The handling strategy for the CELLine should be based on the needs of the operator. For high percent viability it is important to split the cell compartment back when cells reach viable cell compartment capacity. This prevents accumulation of non viable cells. For higher total cell concentrations and increased product concentrations less frequent splitting of the culture is acceptable. The ratio at which the cell compartment is split during harvest will determine the time required for cells to return to maximum viable cell capacity. Cultures split back two fold, will return to maximum viable cell numbers sooner than cultures split back 4 fold. To provide extended durations between handling, the cell compartment can be split further than 50%. Results obtained with the CELLine will be dependent upon the strategy used in manipulating the cell compartment contents and in the exchange of nutrient medium as discussed below.

In summary, the cell compartment can be treated as a standard tissue culture flask except that cells are present at high concentrations. Splitting back cells in the cell compartment provides control over cell numbers and percentages of viable cells. When cells have reached the maximum capacity of the cell compartment, proliferation continues and accumulation of total cells will take place.

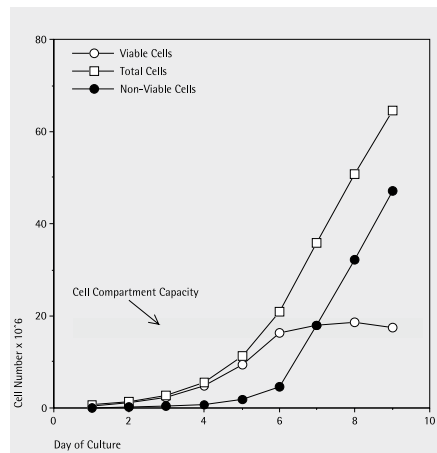


Figure 1: Growth curve example.

Theoretical growth of cells within the cell compartment of the CELLine is depicted. The open circles represent viable cell numbers and plateau when the cell compartment capacity is reached. Total cells represented by open squares continue to increase throughout the culture period. Non-viable cells represented by filled circles begin to accumulate after cell compartment capacity is reached.

## Nutrient Medium:

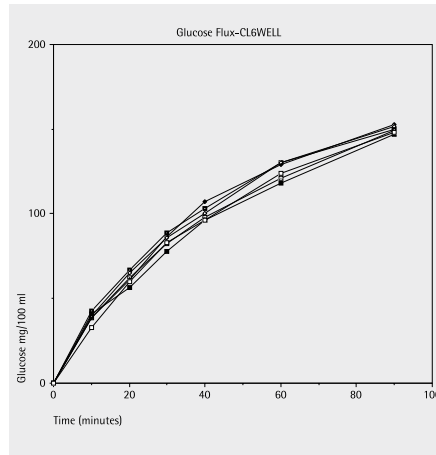
The rate of nutrient medium exchange also impacts culture results. Diffusion across the semipermeable membrane is driven by concentration gradients established between the nutrient medium and the cell compartment medium. Glucose flux across the semipermeable membrane is shown in Fig. 2. As nutrient medium is depleted, the driving force for solute diffusion across the semipermeable membrane is also reduced. A decrease in viable cell mass is associated with depleted nutrient medium and accumulation of metabolic byproducts.

The nutrient medium does not change color as significantly as it does in static culture flasks. The direct gas exchange across the bottom of the cell compartment reduces the accumulation of acid within the nutrient medium. Color change of nutrient medium can be used as an indicator of metabolic activity but is not as accurate for assessing when nutrient medium should be exchanged. Tracking cell numbers is the most accurate.

As shown in Fig. 3, increased nutrient medium exchange does not significantly increase cell compartment capacity. Note the maintenance of the viable cell mass and the further accumulation of total cells after viable cell capacity has been reached.

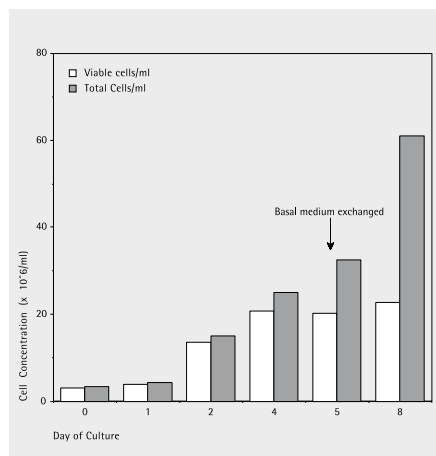
In summary, nutrient medium can be exchanged to maintain the highest possible gradient for diffusion across the semipermeable membrane, or it may be exchanged less frequently to maximize the efficiency of medium use. The user can determine which strategy is most suitable for a particular application.

**Cell inoculation:** For certain cells a relationship between cell density at inoculation and the initial rate of cell growth in the cell compartment has been observed. The cell density dependent outgrowth of a murine hybridoma cell is shown in Fig. 4. When cells were inoculated at lower concentrations they took longer to reach cell compartment capacity, in comparison to cells inoculated at higher density. The responses of certain cells to low density inoculation may be due to dilution of growth promoting or conditioning effects currently not well characterized. Certain cell lines may benefit from higher initial inoculation densities. For production purposes maximum performance is attained when the CELLLine is operated at or near viable cell capacity and inoculating a higher number of cells at culture initiation can lead to more rapid attainment of viable cell capacity.



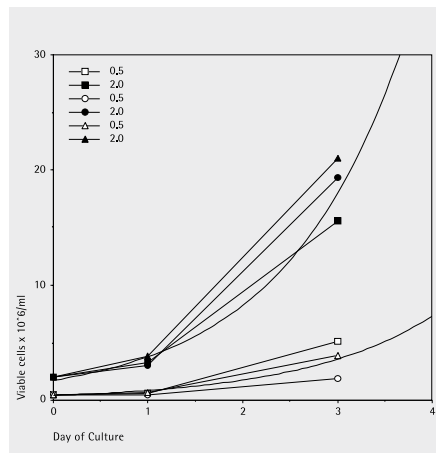
**Figure 2: Glucose diffusion across semipermeable membrane**

Tests conducted at room temperature. RPMI-1640 was placed in nutrient reservoir of individual CL 6 WELL compartments. The cell compartment filled with distilled water. Cell compartment harvested at indicated times and glucose concentration determined. The driving force for glucose flux decreased with time as the cell compartment glucose concentrations increased. Flux of nutrients across the semi permeable membrane during culture will be influenced by depletion of nutrients during culture.



**Figure 3: Growth curve of murine hybridoma cells in CL 1000.**

10% FBS, Nutrient compartment 0.8% FBS, 1% vitacyte. Concentrations of viable and total cells are plotted during culture. The viable cell concentration remained relatively constant after cell capacity had been reached. Total cell concentration continued to increase with culture. Note that exchange of basal medium did not significantly increase the viable cell numbers.



**Figure 4: Cell outgrowth and initial cell concentration.**

AC. 04 murine hybridoma cells were inoculated at  $0.5 \times 10^6$  and  $2.0 \times 10^6$  cells/ml into individual wells of a CL 6 WELL Cell compartment 15% FBS, nutrient compartment 0% FBS, RPMI-1640. At days indicated cells were counted and viable cell concentrations determined by trypan blue exclusion.

## Osmotic Flux:

Water flux across the semipermeable membrane is driven by differences in protein concentrations across the membrane. When serum is not provided in the nutrient medium an oncotic gradient between the cell compartment and the nutrient medium compartment is established. This can lead to increases in the cell compartment volume during culture. The change in volume can be controlled by manipulating the oncotic gradient across the semipermeable membrane through the addition of an inexpensive protein hydrolyzate (lactalbumin) to the basal medium. In most applications the slight flux of water into the cell compartment is insignificant and can be compensated by providing slightly higher concentrations of serum or supplements to the cell compartment. As shown in Fig. 5, changes in the cell compartment volume can be influenced by serum concentration differences across the semi permeable membrane, the amount of cells in the cell compartment and the duration between handling of the cell compartment.

**Cell compartment volume capacity:** The cell compartment volume is variable. As shown in Fig. 6, the cell compartment can be varied significantly due to the compliance associated with the semi permeable membrane. For the CL 1000 units, a slight change in volume of the cell compartment can be induced with no significant increase in pressure. This allows the user to explore protocols with different cell compartment volumes. It is recommended that for routine use, the specified cell compartment volumes be adhered to as increased stress on the semipermeable membrane is associated with significant departure from recommended cell compartment volumes. Additionally, the impact of stretch on the semipermeable membrane and solute diffusion is not fully characterized.

**Scale:** Results obtained in any of the CELLine models can be useful in predicting results expected in the other devices. As shown in Fig. 7, the cell concentrations and growth rates obtained in the small scale CL 6 WELL were also obtained in the CL 350 and CL 1000 in independent culture of the same cell under identical conditions.

This allows experimental work to be conducted in the small scale CL 6 WELL and carried directly into the larger CELLine units for scale up purposes. The scale of CELLine devices is related to the surface area of the semipermeable membrane. The larger the surface area the greater the viable cell capacity. The viable cell capacity of the CL 6 WELL and CL 350 are approximately 1/30 and 1/3 of the CL 1000 respectively.

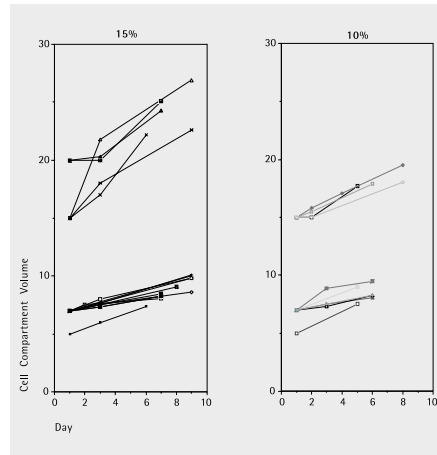


Figure 5: Osmotic water flux into cell compartment of CL 1000 and CL 350 units during cultivation.

Osmotic water flux into cell compartment of CL 1000 and CL 350 units during culture. Cell compartment volumes are plotted at beginning and end of harvest intervals taken during culture. Cultures were conducted with cell compartment serum concentrations of 10% (0.8% nutrient compartment) and 15% (0% nutrient compartment).

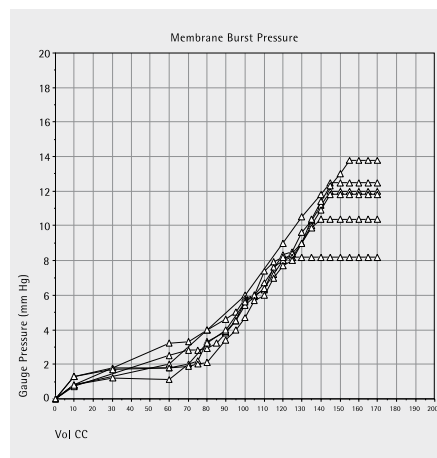


Figure 6: Cell compartment volume and pressure relationship.

Cell compartment volume and pressure relationship. The volume of infused air into a wetted cell compartment of individual CL 1000 units is plotted versus gauge pressure. Units were tested with 250 ml of water placed atop of cell compartment. Pressure was incrementally increased in 20 sec intervals until membrane burst or developed leak.

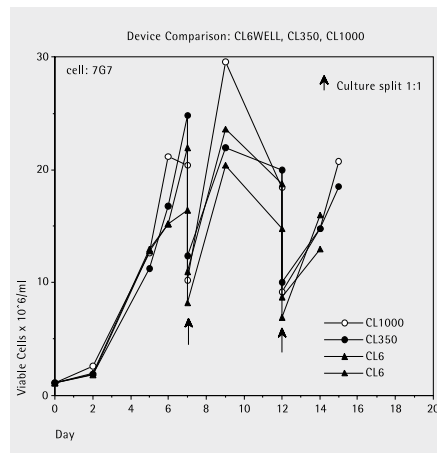


Figure 7: Murine hybridoma cells cultured under identical conditions in different CELLine devices.

Murine hybridoma cells cultured under identical conditions in different CELLine devices: Cell compartment 15% FBS, RPMI-1640, Nutrient compartment-0% FBS, RPMI-1640. Cell sample removed from cell compartments on day indicated and cells counts determined. Counts were obtained from a single CL 1000, CL 350 and 2 CL -6 WELL units. The results from the CL 6 WELL were obtained from a single well. Cultures were split back on indicated days.

# Sales and Service Contacts

For further contacts, visit [www.sartorius.com](http://www.sartorius.com)

## Europe

### Germany

Sartorius AG  
Weender Landstrasse 94-108  
37075 Goettingen

Phone +49.551.308.0  
Fax +49.551.308.3289

[www.sartorius.com](http://www.sartorius.com)

Sartorius BBI Systems GmbH  
Schwarzenberger Weg 73-79  
34212 Melsungen

Phone +49.5661.71.3400  
Fax +49.5661.71.3702

[www.sartorius.com](http://www.sartorius.com)

### U.K.

Sartorius Ltd.  
Longmead Business Park  
Blenheim Road, Epsom

Phone +44.1372.737100  
Fax +44.1372.720799

[www.sartorius.com](http://www.sartorius.com)

### Austria

Sartorius Ges.m.b.H. Wien  
Franzosengraben 12  
A-1030 Vienna

Phone +43.1.7965763.18  
Fax +43.1.796576344

### Belgium

Sartorius Technologies N.V.  
Leuvensteenweg, 248/B  
1800 Vilvoorde

Phone +32.2.756 0680  
Fax +32.2. 756 0681

### Denmark

Sartorius A/S  
Himmelev Bygade 49  
4000 Roskilde

Phone +45.70.23.4400  
Fax +45.46.30.4030

### France

Sartorius S.A.S.  
4, rue Emile Baudot  
91127 Palaiseau Cedex

Phone +33.1.6919.2100  
Fax +33.1.6920.0922

### Italy

Sartorius S.p.A.  
Via dell'Antella, 76/A  
50011 Antella-Bagno a Ripoli (FI)

Phone +39.055.63.40.41  
Fax +39.055.63.40.526

### Ireland

Sartorius Limited  
Unit 41, The Business Centre  
Stadium Business Park  
Ballycoolin Road  
Dublin 11

Phone +353.1.8089050  
Fax +353.1.8089388

### Netherlands

Sartorius Technologies B.V.  
Edisonbaan 24  
3439 MN Nieuwegein

Phone +31.30.6025080  
Fax +31.30.6025099

### Spain

Sartorius, S.A.  
C/Isabel Colbrand 10 -12,  
Planta 4, Oficina 121  
Polígono Industrial de Fuencarral  
28050 Madrid

Phone +34.91.3586102  
Fax +34.91.3588804

### Switzerland

Sartorius Schweiz AG  
Lerzenstrasse 21  
8953 Dietikon

Phone +41.1.746.50.00  
Fax +41.1.746.50.50

### U.K.

Sartorius Ltd.  
Longmead Business Park  
Blenheim Road, Epsom  
Surrey KT19 9 QQ

Phone +44.1372.737100  
Fax +44.1372.720799

## America

### USA

Sartorius North America, Inc.  
131 Heartland Blvd.  
Edgewood, New York 11717

Phone +1.631.254.4249  
Toll-Free +1.800.3687178  
Fax +1.631.254.4253

Sartorius BBI Systems, Inc.  
2800 Baglyos Circle  
Bethlehem, PA 18020

Phone +1.610.866.4800  
Fax +1.610.866.4890

### Argentina

Sartorius Argentina S.A.  
Calle Avalos 4251 (B1605ECS) Munro  
Buenos Aires

Phone +54.11.4721.0506  
Fax +54.11.4762.2333

### Brazil

Sartorius do Brasil Ltda.  
Rua Santo André, 331  
09020-230 Santo André  
São Paulo

Phone +55.11.4438.3833  
Fax +55.11.4438.2355

### Mexico

Sartorius de México S.A. de C.V.  
Circuito Arquitectos No. 11  
Despacho 201  
Ciudad Satélite  
53100 Naucalpan, Estado de Mexico

Phone +52.55.62.1102  
Fax +52.55.62.2942

## Asia Pacific

### China

Beijing Sartorius Instrument Et System  
Engineering Co., Ltd.  
- Beijing Rep. Office -  
Dong Hu Qu, Wang Jing  
Industrial Zone  
Chao Yang District  
100102 Beijing, P.R.C.  
P.O. Box 8516

Phone +86.10.6439.2552  
Fax +86.10.6439.2726

### Sartorius Ltd.

Unit 1110-12, Lu Plaza,  
2 Wing Yip Street  
Kwun Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Phone +852.2774.2678  
Fax +852.2766.3526

### India

Sartorius India Private Ltd.  
10, 6th Main, 3rd Phase Peenya  
KIADB Industrial Area  
Bangalore - 560 058

Phone +91.80.2839.1963|0461  
Fax +91.80.2839.8262

### Japan

Sartorius K.K.  
KY Building, 8-11  
Kita Shinagawa 1-chome  
Shinagawa-ku  
Tokyo 140-0001

Phone +81.3.3740.5407  
Fax +81.3.3740.5406

### South Korea

Sartorius Korea Biotech  
B-1023, Paragon  
17-2, Jungja-Dong, Bundang-Gu  
Sungnam, Gyunggi-Do  
463-811, South Korea

Phone +82.31.782.7011  
Fax +82.31.782.7666

### Malaysia

Sartorius (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd.  
Lot L3-E-3B, Enterprise 4  
Technology Park Malaysia  
Bukit Jalil  
57000 Kuala Lumpur

Phone +60.3.8996.0622  
Fax +60.3.8996.0755

### Singapore

Sartorius Singapore Pte. Ltd.  
10, Science Park Road, The Alpha  
#02-25, Singapore Science Park 2  
Singapore 117684

Phone +65.6872.3966  
Fax +65.6778.2494

### Australia

Sartorius Australia Pty. Ltd.  
Unit 17/104 Ferntree Gully Road  
Waverley Business Park  
East Oakleigh, Victoria 3166

Phone +61.3.9590.8800  
Fax +61.3.9590.8828