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BASED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMBINANT DNA technology, molecular biotechnology emerged as a new research discipline in the late 1970's. Since those early days, there has been a veritable explosion of knowledge in the biological sciences. With the advent of PCR, chemical DNA synthesis, DNA sequencing, monoclonal antibodies, directed mutagenesis, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, and more recently, specific genomic modification techniques, our understanding of and ability to manipulate the biological world has grown exponentially. When the first edition of *Molecular Biotechnology: Principles and Applications of Recombinant DNA* was published in 1991, nearly all of the transgenic organisms that were produced included only a single introduced gene. Now, 23 years later it is common for researchers to engineer organisms by both modifying the activity and the regulation of existing genes and also by introducing entire new pathways. In 1991, only a handful of products produced by this new technology had been commercialized. Today, as a consequence of molecular biotechnology, hundreds of new therapeutic agents are available in the marketplace with many more in the pipeline as well as dozens of transgenic plants. DNA technologies have become a cornerstone of modern forensics, paternity testing and ancestry determination. A number of new recombinant vaccines have been developed, with many more on the horizon. The list goes on and on. Molecular biotechnology has clearly lived up to its promise and all of the original hype that has existed since the late 1970's. Worldwide there are several thousand biotechnology companies, in virtually every corner of the globe, employing hundreds of thousands of scientists. When the exciting science being done at universities, government labs and research institutes around the world is factored in, the rate of change and of discovery in the biological sciences is absolutely astounding. This fifth edition of *Molecular Biotechnology*, building upon the fundamentals that were established in the previous four editions, endeavors to provide readers with a window on some of the major developments in this growing field. Given the enormity of the field of molecular biotechnology, we have had to be highly selective in the material we included in this edition. Moreover, the window that we are looking through is moving. This notwithstanding, we both expect and look forward to the commercialization of many of the discoveries that are discussed here, and in the future to the development of many new approaches, insights, and discoveries.