UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15 (d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

DATE OF REPORT (Date of earliest event reported): November 22, 2002

COMMISSION FILE NUMBER 333-92383

CHARLES RIVER LABORATORIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

(Exact Name of Registrant as specified in its Charter)

DELAWARE (State of Incorporation)

06-1397316 (I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

251 BALLARDVALE STREET, WILMINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01887

(Address of Principal Executive Offices) (Zip Code)

978-658-6000 (Registrant's Telephone Number, Including Area Code)

ITEM 9. REGULATION FD DISCLOSURE

On November 22, 2002, Charles River Laboratories, Inc., wholly-owned subsidiary of the Registrant, posted to its company website an updated investor presentation, a copy of which is filed herewith as Exhibit 99.1.

EXHIBIT 99.1

Investor Presentation

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, we have duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

CHARLES RIVER LABORATORIES INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Dated: November 26, 2002 By: /s/ DENNIS R. SHAUGHNESSY

Dennis R. Shaughnessy, Sr. Vice President, Corporate Development, General Counsel and Secretary

QuickLinks



3rd Quarter 2002 Presentation



SAFE HARBOR STATEMENT

This presentation includes "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements may be identified by the use of words such as "anticipate," "believe," "expect," "estimate," "plan," and "project" and other similar expressions that predict or indicate future events or trends or that are not statements of historical matters. These statements are based on management's current expectations, and involve a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from those stated or implied by the forward-looking statements, and the company expressly does not undertake any duty to update forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date of this document. Those risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to: acquisition integration risks; special interest groups; contaminations; industry trends; new displacement technologies; outsourcing trends; USDA and FDA regulation; changes in law; continued availability of products and supplies; loss of key personnel; interest rate and foreign currency exchange rate fluctuations; and changes in generally accepted accounting principles. A further description of these risks, uncertainties, and other matters can be found in the Risk Factors detailed in the Company's registration statement on Form S-3 as filed on April 9, 2002, with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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CONTRIBUTING TO THE SEARCH FOR HEALTHIER LIVES

Leading provider of products and services that facilitate drug discovery and development



A unique focus on the pre-clinical space

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INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Predictable and consistent financial performance
- Leading market shares
- Longstanding customers
- Acquisition track record

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- Growth driven by pharma **R&D** spending
- Preclinical outsourcing

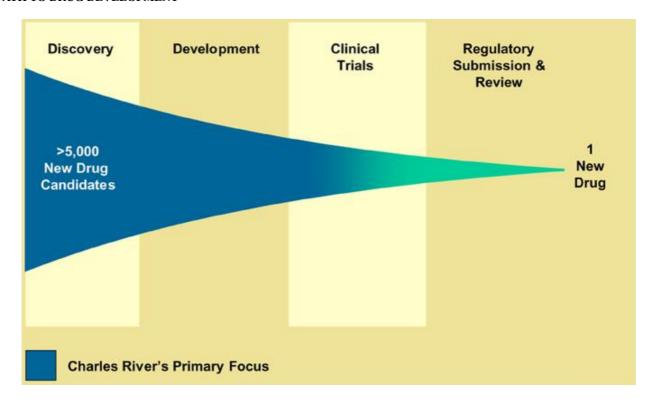
INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 55 years in business
- More than 3 decades of consistent growth and profitability
- 2001 financial results
 - Revenues—\$466 million
 - Operating margin—19.4%
- 5000 employees worldwide
 - 20% have been with Charles River 10 years or more
 - Management team average experience—20 years



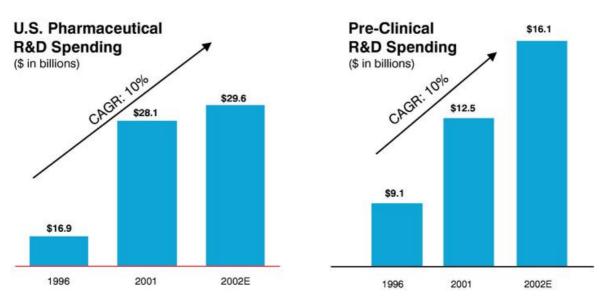


CRITICAL PATH TO DRUG DEVELOPMENT



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GROWTH IN PHARMA R&D SPENDING



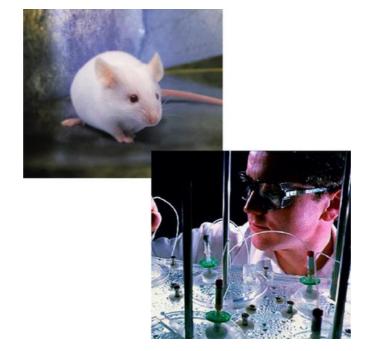
Source: 2001 PhRMA Annual Survey—U.S. Pharma R&D spending, domestic and abroad.

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BUSINESS SEGMENTS

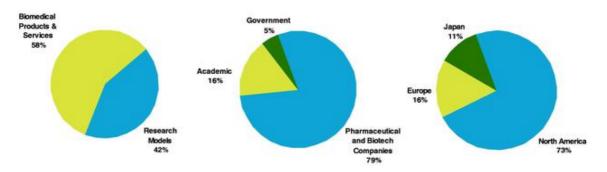
Research Models

Biomedical Products & Services



REVENUE COMPOSITION

2001 Sales: \$466 million

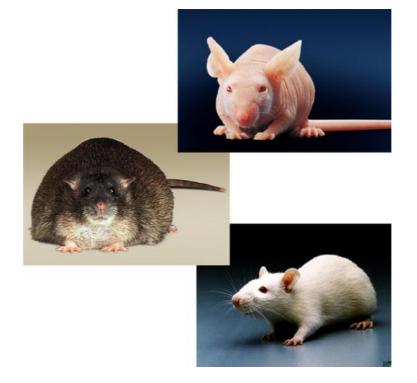


- Customers include all major pharmaceutical and biotech companies
- No commercial customer accounts for > 3% of revenues

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ANIMAL RESEARCH MODELS: 42% OF REVENUES

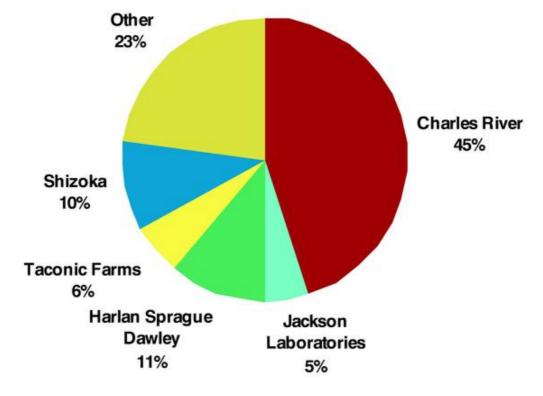
- More than 130 genetically and virally defined research models
- Movement towards disease models—Diabetes, Alzheimer's, Cardiovascular
- Mandated by FDA and global regulatory agencies



UNIQUE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

- Global reach
- Long-standing customer relationships
- Scientific depth
- Biosecurity





Charles River is 4x Larger than its Next Competitor

Source: Company estimates

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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JACKSON LABORATORIES

- Premier mammalian genetic research institution
- Hundreds of unique mouse models
- Exclusive distribution in Europe and Japan



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CAPACITY EXPANSION

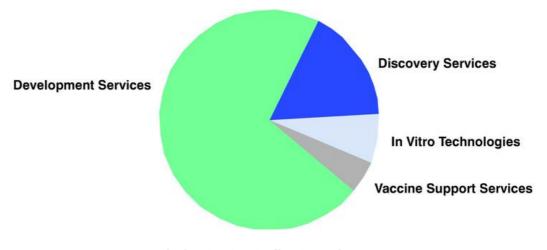
Canada production facility

- Added 25% more space
- Massachusetts production facility
 - Added 40% more space
- California production facility
 - Added 33% more space



BIOMEDICAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: 58% OF REVENUES

- Focus on **high-growth** areas of drug discovery and development
 - **Discovery** Services
 - Development Services
 - in vitro Technologies
 - Vaccine Support Services
- Enables customers to outsource required drug development procedures



Charles River is #1 in all major markets

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DISCOVERY SERVICES

Transgenic Services

• Facilities in US, France, Japan

Laboratory and Research Services

- Genetic testing
- Infectious disease testing
- Drug efficacy testing

Contract Site Management

\$25 million five-year NCI-Frederick contract

4 year CAGR: 43%



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NEW DEVELOPMENTS

DISCOVERY SERVICES

• Growth of Transgenic Services business

.



DISCOVERY & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Contract site management
 - 9 new contracts worldwide
 - 10% headcount increase



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FULL RANGE OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Entire range of services to take molecule from discovery to FDA filing

- Drug Safety Assessment
- Pharmacokinetics/Metabolism
- Bioanalytical Chemistry
- Surgery/Pharmacology
- Biosafety Testing

.

Pathology Services



2001 pro forma growth of 20% (4 year CAGR: 156%)

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MAJOR ACQUISITIONS

BIOLABS —June 2002

Description Privately held pre-clinical outsourcing

services in western Ireland

Performs bioassay, animal health, and

medical device support

2001 Revenue \$10 million

Rationale Established a base for expansion of our

services portfolio in Europe

EPS Impact Accretive in 2002 by \$0.01 to \$0.02



SPRINGBORN LABORATORIES —October 2002

Description Privately held Ohio-based general and

specialty toxicology services

LTM Revenue \$15 million

Rationale Expanded geographic base and

customer base to medium and small biopharmaceutical customers

EPS Impact Neutral to slightly accretive in 2002

and accretive in 2003 by \$0.03 to \$0.04 after amortization of intangibles

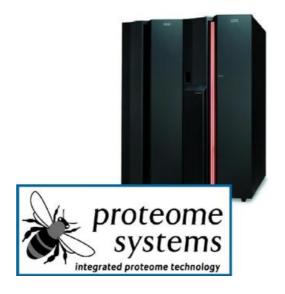


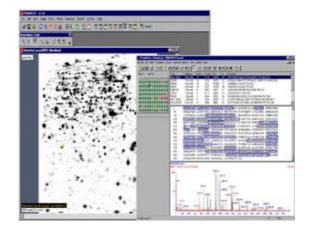
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JOINT VENTURE

CHARLES RIVER PROTEOMICS SERVICES—October 2002

80/20 joint venture between Charles River and Proteome Systems Ltd provides leading-edge proteomics testing and analysis to enable researchers to rapidly identify proteins that may have commercial value as drug targets, biomarkers, or as the basis for diagnostic tests





IN VITRO TECHNOLOGIES

- Only FDA-approved alternative to animal testing
- Endotoxin testing for injectable drug / medical device lot release

4 year CAGR: 18%



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IN VITRO (NON-ANIMAL) TECHNOLOGIES—EXPANDED MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- In Vitro Pyrogen Test
 - Aimed at \$50 million market for lot-release testing of products derived from human blood and biologicals



IN VITRO (NON-ANIMAL) TECHNOLOGIES—EXPANDED MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- Portable LAL Device
 - Allows endotoxintesting in the workplace in real time
 - Developed in house
 - Technology leader
 - FDA approval in process
 - Once approved, doubles the market opportunity



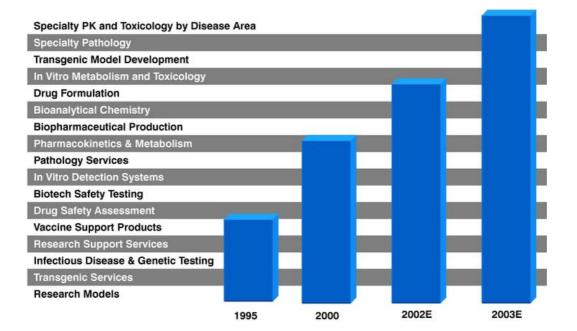
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CORPORATE OBJECTIVE: DELIVER 20% ANNUAL GROWTH *

DRIVERS

- Increased pharma/biotech R&D spending
- Increased **outsourcing**
- Investment in genomics and proteomics
- Creating new specialty models
- Expanding *in vitro* technologies
- Increased R&D focus
- Acquisitions

^{*} Assumes 12-15% organic growth and 5+% acquisitive growth.



Note: Results are not to scale.

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GROWTH THROUGH STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS

- 21 acquisitions and alliances since 1994
- Stringent criteria for acquisitions
 - Non-dilutive
 - 20% operating margin
 - 15%+ top-line growth
 - Leading player
 - Scientific leadership
 - Leverage worldwide infrastructure

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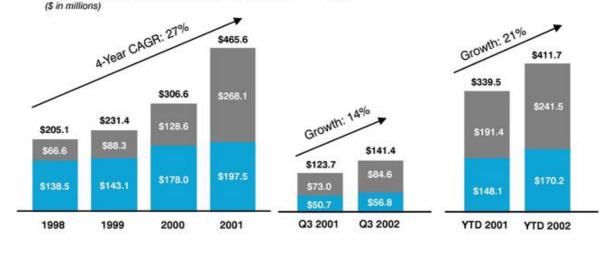
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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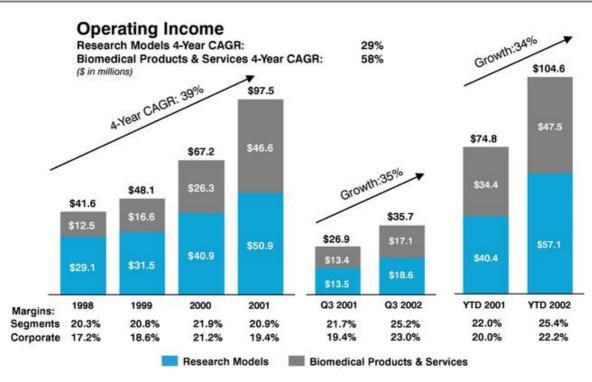
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

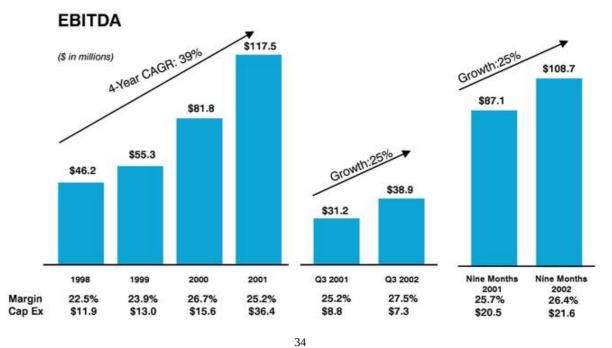
Net Sales

Research Models 4-Year CAGR: 11% Biomedical Products & Services 4-Year CAGR: 52%



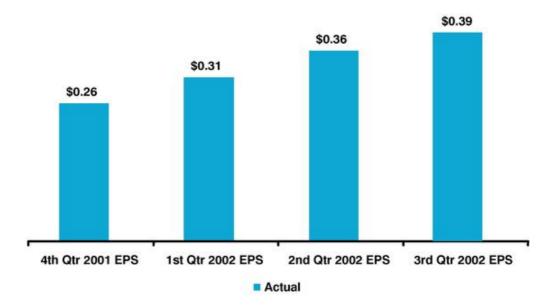
Research Models Biomedical Products & Services





SOLID FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- Exceeded Wall Street earnings estimates in all 9 quarters post IPO
- Provided guidance of \$1.41 to \$1.43 for CY 2002 vs. \$0.94 for CY 2001(1)



⁽¹⁾ Excludes \$0.02 Q4:01 consolidation charge.

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STRONG CAPITALIZATION

		As of Dec. 29, 2001 Actual		As of Sept. 28, 2002 Actual	
	A				
		(\$ in millions)			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$	58.3	\$	117.4	
Term Loans	\$	68.6	\$	0.0	
Senior Subordinated Notes		78.9		0.0	
Other Debt		9.3		3.5	
Senior Convertible Debentures		0.0		185.0	

Total Debt	\$	156.8	\$	188.5
Shareholder's Equity	286.1			332.8
Total Capitalization	\$	442.9	\$	521.4
Net Debt/Total Capitalization		22.2% 13.6%		13.6%
Net Debt/EBITDA		0.8x		0.65x

(1) Adjusted for subsequent retirements of Senior Subordinated Notes and the Senior Convertible Debenture offering.

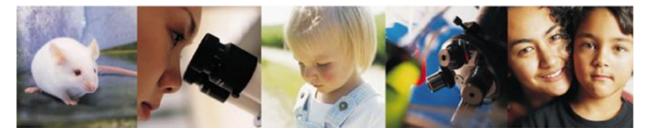
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FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES

	1997 - 2001 CAGR	2002 Guidance	Long-Term Growth Targets(1)
Revenue Growth	27%	20%	20+%
Research Models	11%	_	8% to 10%
Biomedical Products & Services	52%	_	25% to 30%
Operating Income Growth	42%	_	20% to 25%
Net Income/EPS Growth	NA(2)	50%	25+%
Operating Margins	Improved from 15% to 20%	21% to 22%	22+%

- (1) Includes acquisitions.
- (2) Not meaningful due to recapitalization transaction and prior ownership by B&L.

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Contributing to the Search for Healthier Lives

Ticker: CRL



QuickLinks

Exhibit 99.1

3rd Quarter 2002 Presentation