


Sugarbeet Record Harvest

 Breeding progress is key to competitiveness

 Investment in innovation is crucial

Barbara Becker had a world record harvest of 196.7 metric tons of sugarbeets per hectare* during the 2016 season. She has to thank sugarbeet breeders for much of that success, she says.



4 questions for Barbara Becker

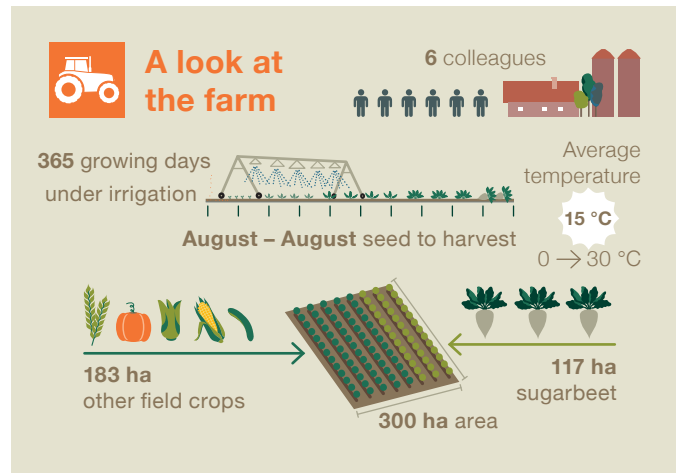
The 65 year old farmer Barbara Becker from Santa Fe in Chile beat the world record.

How does it feel to have broken the world record? When IANSA called me up to the stage to give me the award, I felt a little uncomfortable. I don't like being the center of attention. Besides, it would have been impossible to set that record without my team and my family. It's recognition for our hard work and having done things at the right time and well.

What role do sugarbeet breeders play in your work? They have a very important place in the sugarbeet production chain. Without continuous genetic improvement regarding yield and resistances against diseases and pests, we wouldn't be able to increase our harvests year after year.

What do you think will be the three most important challenges that sugarbeet breeders will have to cope with in the future? Continuing to improve rhizoctonia and sclerotium resistance is one. Plus sugarbeet varieties that can tolerate cercospora and nematodes while still delivering good yields. And since the weather has been changing faster and faster, we also have an urgent need for varieties that can survive extended dry spells.


When do you want to harvest 200 t/ha? As soon as possible, of course. I'm very optimistic that we'll have a very good harvest. We haven't decided on a crop area for the season after this one. But I'll definitely be using KWS varieties again.



*at 16 percent sugar content

Profitability – made by breeding: The sugarbeet has stayed competitive and will remain competitive in the future thanks to ongoing work by and investment of sugarbeet breeders like KWS.

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Chile won the world record for sugarbeet harvests in 2016 for the fourth time since 2010. Dr. Hans-Henning Voss, sugarbeet breeder at KWS and responsible for the Chilean market, explains the success factors.



4 questions for Dr. Hans-H. Voss

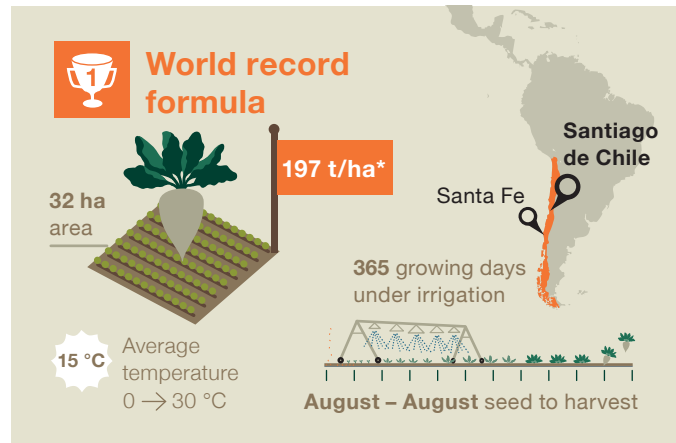
The 38 year old breeder Dr. Hans-Henning Voss works for KWS in Einbeck, Germany.

How does it feel to hold the world record? It feels great when our varieties deliver outstanding results. But records are ultimately the result of teamwork between breeders, farmers and the sugar industry.

Why do you think Chile has such high-yield sugarbeet harvests? Strong solar irradiation, a long growing season, intensive irrigation and professional field management make these extremely high yields possible. But these conditions also benefit diseases like cercospora and rhizoctonia. So the only way to get record yields is with sugarbeet varieties that are specially adapted to local conditions.

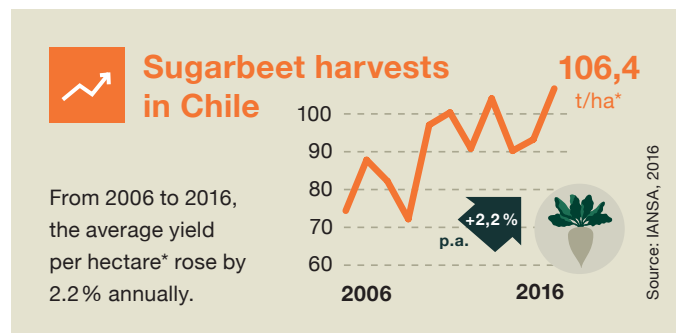
How much of a role does breeding play in Chile's performance? 70 percent of the crop area for sugarbeets requires varieties with a very high resistance to rhizoctonia and/or sclerotium. The MAGNOLIA variety, which was approved in 2005 and offers double resistance as well as moderate protection against cercospora, laid the cornerstone for the survival of the Chilean sugar industry.

Chile's 2016 sugarbeet yields generated almost 200 t/ha which equals about 30 tons of sugar/ha. Do sugarbeets have even more potential than that? We actually do have varieties on the market and in the approval process that offer even more potential. But what is more important to KWS than higher yields is securing yields under difficult and changing conditions.



Yield security is crucial

Chile's climate conditions are nearly ideal for growing sugarbeets. With this in mind, the Chilean sugarbeet industry is expecting sugarbeets to offer more growth potential and is raising its target to 200 t/ha*. But breeders face continuous work to make those future successes for the sugarbeet farmers in Chile really happen. For improving or maintaining sugarbeet yields the sugarbeet has to be resistant to diseases like rhizoctonia and sclerotium. With the optimized sugarbeet varieties from KWS farmers stay profitable even when the individual farm conditions are less than ideal.



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