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New corn treatment INITIO Bird Protect: Sustainable treatment component supports phosphate production

Protecting vulnerable seeds from diseases and pests directly after they are sowed and strengthening them at the same time: Our treatments are up for the task. KWS is offering a new range of treatments for corn. In addition to fungicide components, it contains biological ingredients and microorganisms as well as an active ingredient that protects birds from the treated seeds. These strengthen the young plants and are primarily capable of supporting the crucial phosphate production phase during early growth, in cold conditions.

Seed treatments are ideally composed of multiple components that work together to generate the best-possible course of action. In addition to the standard fungicide treatment with Redigo M, which prevents damage during the early growth phase from fungus, farmers can also get treatments from KWS for other optional ingredients with INITIO Bird Protect. Ziram protects the seeds from being eaten by birds – and protects birds from eating treated seeds. And then we have the Biologicals, which are becoming increasingly important. Biologicals are composed of sustainable plant extracts and microorganisms that strengthen the plants during early growth and support the development of roots and in young stages as well with absorbing nutrients. KWS is the only seed specialist to enrich its sustainable Biologicals with additives such as a phosphate-mobilizing organism known as *Bacillus megaterium*. “After the seeds have been sown, cold conditions can make it difficult for young corn plants to actively absorb phosphate from the ground, because the root system has not yet been fully developed. And this is precisely where *Bacillus* comes into play: It frees up the phosphate that is stuck in the ground for the plants, even in cold conditions,” explains Constanze Holzfuß, a seed treatment expert at KWS. Other components of KWS Biologicals are humic acid, zinc and manganese. Humic acid supports the growth of fine roots, improves the roots’ ability to absorb nutrients, and stimulates root growth as well as the metabolic processes of the seedling. Zinc and manganese also support root growth, as well as improving cell wall formation and stabilizing cell membranes. On top of that, they support the plant’s ability to regenerate and its resistance to stress.

“We know at this point that extreme weather is becoming increasingly common. That increases the risk of abiotic stress for the young corn plants due to cold, wet conditions during their early growth phase,” Holzfuß says. “Biologicals with which we enrich our seed treatments increase the plants’ tolerance for this stress.” KWS is systematically testing the efficacy of Biologicals across Europe in large-scale field trials. Holzfuß explains: “We want to create a solid foundation for our custom-prepared seed treatments, and the promising results of our field trials are proving us right.” The new seed treatment INTIO BIRD PROTECT for corn will be available for sowing in 2020.

About KWS*

KWS is one of the world's leading plant breeding companies. In the fiscal year 2018/19, more than 5,500 employees in 70 countries generated net sales of EUR 1.1 billion and earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) of EUR 150 million. A company with a tradition of family ownership, KWS has operated independently for more than 160 years. It focuses on plant breeding and the production and sale of seed for corn, sugarbeet, cereals, rapeseed, sunflowers and vegetables. KWS uses leading-edge plant breeding methods to increase farmers' yields and to improve resistance to diseases, pests and abiotic stress. To that end, the company invested approximately EUR 200 million last fiscal year in research and development.

*All indications excluding the results from the companies accounted for using the equity method AGRELIANT GENETICS LLC, AGRELIANT GENETICS INC. and KENFENG – KWS SEEDS CO., LTD.

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