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## German Federal Plant Variety Office approves a new generation of high-performance KWS sugarbeet varieties with Cercospora tolerance

**Following extensive research and development, the KWS Breeding division has managed to decode an effective new source of resistance for Cercospora. The resulting varieties INSPIREA KWS and BLANDINA KWS, combined under the label CR+, were just approved by the German Plant Variety Office. They feature characteristics such as optimum leaf health even with Cercospora and a strong performance level for both severe and light infections.**

Cercospora has become the dominant leaf disease found in most sugarbeet agricultural regions throughout Germany. The leaf spot disease can lead to yield losses of up to 50 percent and reduce the processing quality. The increasing amount of regulations concerning crop protection and the rising pathogen resistance to fungicides underscore the importance and urgency of cultivating varieties with healthier leaves that offer higher Cercospora tolerance.

“Until now, sugarbeet farmers simply accepted lower yields when they opted for a higher degree of Cercospora tolerance,” explains Dr. Alexander Coenen, Regional Director German-Austria, Business Unit Sugarbeet. “From now on, they will however benefit from our CR+ varieties, which provide the highest degree of protection against Cercospora, combined with superior yields.” Due to this stable performance, CR+ varieties not only secure yields for crops with severe Cercospora infections, they could be used as location-adapted variety for many farms even in the event of lighter cases. Precisely this combination of tolerance and performance under all cultivation conditions poses the greatest challenge and requires many years of work in the field of breeding. The development of the newest variety is based on the classic breeding processes and offers a new dimension in terms of protection against Cercospora.

### **CR+ varieties INSPIREA KWS and BLANDINA KWS**

The two-year-long assessment conducted by the German Federal Plant Variety Office simultaneously revealed two impressive high-performance CR+ varieties. BLANDINA KWS is a nematode-tolerant variety that offers optimum leaf health even with Cercospora. The rizomania-tolerant variety INSPIREA KWS has a very high sugar content and exhibits an excellent yield – regardless of the extent of the Cercospora infection – especially when it comes to trials without fungicide.

Through a lower infection frequency and magnitude as well as slower progression of the disease, the healthy and productive leaf surfaces are retained in the CR+ varieties over an extended period of time. This serves as the basis for a solid photosynthetic performance of plants, thus resulting in higher yields and a stable sugar content. Furthermore, healthy leaves suppress the spread of the disease and could potentially reduce the use of fungicides. Coenen: “Thanks to the impressive leaf health and yield stability of our CR+ varieties, we offer farmers even more independence when dealing with Cercospora. The new varieties therefore represent a key factor when it comes to the productivity of beet cultivation. They will

significantly contribute to integrated crop protection as well as competitiveness and the future of sugarbeet cultivation.”

The new CR+ varieties will already be tested in practical field cultivation in 2021. Those who are interested and would like more information about the practical cultivation of these varieties are encouraged to contact their personal KWS consultants.

#### **About KWS\***

KWS is one of the world's leading plant breeding companies. In the fiscal year 2019/2020, more than 5,700 employees in 70 countries generated net sales of EUR 1.3 billion. 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 more than 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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