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# KWS opens new segment in oilseed-rape breeding

**KWS has entered a new segment in oilseed-rape breeding by developing varieties that are less susceptible to the cabbage-stem flea beetle, according to the highly respected French research institute Terres Inovia. Independent studies from the institute came to this conclusion for the first time in June 2020 for the oilseed-rape variety Feliciano KWS. An additional variety, Allesandro KWS, has now been added to the KWS portfolio. Found by researchers to have a clear connection between the variety's genetics and reduced larval infestation, Allesandro KWS will be sold for the next growing season in Germany.**

The cabbage-stem flea beetle is one of the main pests faced by farmers who grow oilseed rape. An infestation by the pest can cause yield losses that range from significant to complete. The damage caused by the cabbage-stem flea beetle is expected to likely increase in the future as a result of the ban on neonicotinoid seed treatments in EU countries and increasing restrictions on using insecticides. Against this backdrop, the breeding of strong, healthy varieties with excellent genetics to provide natural protection from infestations will play a critical role in efforts to facilitate profitable and sustainable cultivation of oilseed rape in Europe.

Extensive research conducted by KWS has confirmed the excellent genetics of Allesandro KWS. “We evaluated the number of larvae in plants that had been treated with insecticides and in plants that had not been treated. We then compared our varieties with the major European competing varieties,” said Andreas Krull, the oilseed-rape product manager at KWS. “Allesandro KWS performed exceptionally well.” Allesandro KWS fundamentally acts on the same level as Feliciano KWS. Studies found the number of larvae on competing varieties that had not been treated with insecticide were occasionally more than twice as high as the levels of both KWS varieties. The number of larvae found on Feliciano KWS and Allesandro KWS fell even farther when insecticides were used. The total was well below the levels of competing varieties. Andreas Krull said, “One of the interesting things we discovered was that our untreated KWS varieties had as many flea-beetle larvae as the treated competing varieties.” This means the KWS varieties do not reach damage thresholds at all or only at a later stage. Damage thresholds are used to determine the time when insecticides should be applied. “Our KWS varieties enable farmers to reduce their use of insecticides — and that really promotes increasingly sustainable agriculture and, naturally, helps farmers lower their costs,” Krull said.

The latest breeding successes for oilseed rape make a significant contribution to KWS's 2030 Sustainability Ambition, an initiative with which the company has set ambitious and measurable goals in its drive to deliver solutions to foster sustainable, socially responsible farming. State-of-the-art plant breeding plays a key role in this effort by helping minimize the use of resources and continuously boost yields. Innovative varieties of oilseed rape like Felicano KWS and Allesandro KWS clearly underscore the company’s commitment to this research.

Sustainability begins with seeds: Learn more about our 2030 Sustainability Ambition at www.kws.com/sustainability

**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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