

Nürnberg, Germany 14.– 17.2.2018

# BIOFACH2018

into organic



PRESS RELEASE

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## **BIOFACH 2018: plants and animals bred organically to give the industry more independence**

- **BIOFACH special show illustrates what organic breeding has already achieved and what is going to be important in the future**

When the organic industry meets in Nuremberg once again for its first major event of the year from 14 to 17 February 2018, “The Organic from the Outset Meeting Place” will be premiering. The aim of this BIOFACH special show is to illustrate what organic breeding has already achieved and which areas require more work if the independence of organic agriculture in the breeding of plant varieties and animal species is to be preserved and expanded further. As mentioned above, “The Organic from the Outset Meeting Place” is a BIOFACH special show. Its content is being managed by bioverita and will include numerous breeding initiatives.

“The Organic from the Outset Meeting Place”, which will be centrally situated in the exhibition venue’s Mitte entrance area, will cover various breeding topics divided across several main groups. In addition, a number of breeding initiatives will be presenting their projects. The special show will also have a communication forum during which different breeding projects will be presented and general topics connected to organic breeding will be discussed.

### **Organic breeding for independent organic cultivation**

Plant breeding is vitally important to organic agriculture. Markus Johann, bioverita’s managing director, said: “Organic farmers are dependent on varieties that provide good results without the aid of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Varieties that meet the requirements of organic farming and organic producers are not yet available for many cultures. And where they

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are available, their future is anything but secure, because the threat posed to the organic industry by new genetic engineering methods and the fact that the industry is becoming more and more concentrated across a few suppliers is immense. The work of organic breeders is helping the organic movement to become more independent and is also acting as a counterpoint to the increasing amount of power falling into the hands of large seed multinationals. Thanks to the many years of development work carried out by pioneers, organic grain farmers today are able to have organically bred varieties that are already well established in the market.”

“Another important part of thinking sustainably here is varieties that have been bred specially for organic agriculture,” Mr Johann continued. The organically bred varieties should produce harvests that are as good and stable as possible, but that’s not all; they also have to be able to transform the limited quantities of nutrients given to them by the ground into the best possible quality, be very resistant to diseases and pests, produce good straw yields, develop strong roots and be able to produce good results when processed or baked. For example, the organic cultivation of dessert fruits differs from conventional intensive fruit growing enormously, especially when it comes to fertilization and pest management. Most common varieties on the market require intensive protection from pests, which is very expensive with organic agents and often doesn’t guarantee sufficient yield security. The development of new varieties that combine first-rate quality with excellent suitability for organic cultivation is therefore very important. Experts expect the first common varieties produced through organic fruit breeding to appear on the market in the next few years.

## **Organic animal breeding**

Independent breeding for organic agriculture is essential in animal breeding too. Mr Johann said: “In the case of cattle, female animals in particular are already being bred on organic farms. Ruminants are perfectly designed to digest cellulose and to be walking continuously.

Organic cattle breeding therefore concentrates on good pasture land, health and longevity.

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The industry has achieved success working intensively on alternatives to existing methods for chickens. Initial breeding practices, such as no killing of male chicks even in the organic industry, are being realized by ökologische Tierzucht gGmbH and others. ökologische Tierzucht gGmbH is an initiative launched by the organic farming associations Bioland and demeter.

## The breeding initiatives that will be at “The Organic from the Outset Meeting Place”:

- Apfel:gut Obstzüchtung (organic fruit breeding)
- Bingenheimer Saatgut AG (organic seed breeding)
- bioverita - für ein Bio von Anfang an (for organic from the outset)
- Ellenberg's Kartoffelvielfalt GbR (potato diversity)
- Forschung & Züchtung Dottenfelder Hof - LBS e.V. (research and breeding)
- Getreidezüchtung Peter Kunz (grain breeding)
- Getreidezüchtungsforschung Darzau (grain breeding research)
- Keyserlingk Institute
- Kultursaat e.V. (vegetable varieties)
- Ökologische Tierzucht gGmbH (organic animal breeding)
- Poma Culta Apfelzüchtung (organic apple breeding)
- ReinSaat KG (organic seed breeding)
- Saat:gut e.V. (organic plant breeding)
- Sativa Rheinau AG (organic seed breeding)
- Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft – Saatgut- und Tierzuchtfonds (foundation providing funding for seed and animal breeding)

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