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AHEAD, PREPARING THE FUTURE WITH A NEW PERSPECTIVE

(Berlin) The Alliance for Wheat Adaption to Heat and Drought, short AHEAD, was founded in 2020 in order to concentrate science expertise from all around the world to face growing issues of wheat crop cultivation in terms of climate crisis. In this context, AHEAD is focussing on promoting an international science network to adapt wheat production to problems caused by heat and drought. Under the Wheat Initiative, an international body coordinating global wheat research, the AHEAD network builds up intersections between scientists and different stakeholders from economic, policy and non-governmental sectors in order to expand the network and to reach as many people as possible worldwide to share expertise and knowledge about possible ways to adapt wheat to tolerate heat and drought.

Since its establishment in 2019, the German Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants, the Julius Kühn-Institut (JKI) supported AHEAD and the position of a Global Coordinator. The Commitment of the JKI to support the AHEAD initiative was very much appreciated by the international community. In 2020, AHEAD was founded and the first Steering Committee took place. Corinna Harms, at that time global coordinator of AHEAD, did a great job in establishing a network and providing a framework for AHEAD.

In 2021, the Wheat Initiative welcomes Dr. Stefanie Hagemann, as the new AHEAD Global Coordinator. Dr. Hagemann started working for the Julius Kühn-Institute and for the Wheat Initiative this summer. She has a background in immunology where she was studying T cell populations in the gut and their variability in context of the composition of the microbiota. Later on, she was managing a project for the development of human antibodies for a biotechnology company in Brunswick, Germany. Her arrival to AHEAD has been a career change, and she has proved already to be highly motivated to support the development of AHEAD using the knowledge she obtained throughout the years of working in different projects in science and in a private company. We look forward to the new perspectives she will bring to AHEAD and anticipate a great development of the alliance.

“The world is facing many problems in different sectors caused by climate change. These problems cannot be solved by one person alone, one country or even one continent. We have to cross borders and come together to reach for the best possible outcome. AHEAD is one piece of the great puzzle of organisations, which are tackling this problem already, bringing specialists for wheat, heat and drought together on a global level. It’s a great chance to solve issues caused by climate change and I am happy to support that in my future contribution in the AHEAD organisation.”

The Wheat Initiative is welcoming Dr. Stefanie Hagemann as part of its team and is looking forward to the future work!

CONTACT - WHEAT INITIATIVE

Programme Manager: Teresa Saavedra
E-Mail: wheat.initiative@julius-kuehn.de
Web: www.wheatinitiative.org
Twitter: @WheatInitiative