

Press release

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Südzucker earns certificate for sustainable beet cultivation in Europe

Südzucker AG and its sugar beet farmers in Belgium, France, Germany and Poland have successfully demonstrated that their beet cultivation are sustainable.

By obtaining the REDcert2 certificate in Germany, France and Poland they have additionally proven that the methods used comply with the silver status criteria of the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI) at the first go. In Belgium, they could refer back to the existing Vegaplan system for this. More than 34,000 sugar beet growers and Südzucker document that their operations comply with strict environmental and social standards related to raw material cultivation and processing. The farmers' focus is on optimizing plant protection and providing adequate but not excessive fertilization, in addition to taking steps to increase soil fertility and biodiversity. Südzucker, which has a long tradition of conducting business sustainably, worked with its beet growers to develop and implement a documentation system that customers could use to demonstrate the sustainability of the practices seamlessly along the entire value chain.

"We are proud to have been able to transnationally document the sustainability of our beet growing operations together with the farmers. The fact that Südzucker Group was able to successfully demonstrate compliance with REDcert2 certificate and SAI requirements is thanks mainly to the trusting partnership we have with our farmers. It would not have been possible without their unwavering commitment to sustainability," said Dr. Thomas Kirchberg, member of Südzucker AG's Executive board. "The certificate confirms that our sustainability programs are on track. We will continue along this path together with the farmers because we are confident that by doing so we are responding to the demands of the market," he added in signaling the company's policy going forward.

Attached picture: An employee of Südzucker Sugar Beet Department (left) with a sugar beet farmer on a beet field in Germany.

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About Südzucker Group

Südzucker, with its sugar, special products, CropEnergies and fruit segments, is one of the leading companies in the food industry. In the traditional sugar business, the group is the world market leader, with 29 sugar factories and two refineries, extending from France in the west via Belgium, Germany and Austria, through to Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bosnia and Moldova in the east. The special products segment, consisting of the functional ingredients for food and animal feed (BENEO), chilled/frozen products (Freiberger), portion packs (PortionPack Europe) and starch divisions, is an important growth driver. The CropEnergies segment covers the bioethanol activities in Germany, Belgium, France and the UK. In the fruit segment, the group operates internationally, is the world market leader for fruit preparations and is a leading supplier of fruit juice concentrates in Europe.

In 2015/16, the group employed about 16,500 persons and generated revenues of EUR 6.4 billion.

About VSZ

The Verband Süddeutscher Zuckerrübenanbauer e.V. (VSZ, association of beet growers in southern Germany) is an amalgamation of seven regional associations representing 17,000 sugar beet growers who together own about 130,000 ha of beet fields.

About SAI

The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform SAI is the leading global initiative for promoting sustainable farming methods. The non-profit organization was founded in 2002 and currently has over seventy members. Südzucker has been a member of SAI since June 2015. Additional information is available at www.saipatform.org

About REDcert

The REDcert Gesellschaft zur Zertifizierung nachhaltig erzeugter Biomasse mbH (company for certification of sustainably produced biomass) was founded in 2010 by leading associations and organizations in the German agricultural and biofuel sector with the aim of establishing a sustainability certification system for the biofuel sector. The REDcert-EU system, recognized by the European Commission, gives REDcert a sustainability certification system that can be applied throughout Europe regarding sustainable cultivation of plant-based raw materials. REDcert² is based on the successfully implemented REDcert-EU system and was endorsed by SAI. REDcert² is an expanded sustainability certification system for the food industry. The REDcert² certification system can be applied to the raw material production and acquisition, trading and processing stages of the subject process. Additional information is available at www.redcert.org.